

Introduction

The honeybee industry has been heavily impacted by bushfires, with thousands of hives destroyed. As the largest beekeeping state in Australia, accounting for between 40-45 percent of the national honey crop, it is estimated that the bushfires will cause up to a 30 percent decline in honey production over the next 5-10 years.

The extensive fires have also caused an estimated 50 per cent reduction in state forest sites and 35 per cent reduction in national parks sites, which will have a significant impact for beekeepers accessing important native floral resource for their hives. This floral resource provides important pollen and floral resources which not only enables beekeepers to produce honey, but also supports healthy honeybees hives which can then pollinate a wide variety of crops.

Without sufficient bee sites and native floral resource, beekeepers will struggle to build up hive strength and numbers for pollination, jeopardising fruit and nut set for major horticultural crops such as almonds, apples, cherries and blueberries in the coming years.

This package will co-invest with commercial apiarists (beekeepers) who have been impacted by the bushfires from 31 August 2019 to assist in the targeted recovery of their hives and businesses.

The eligible activities and costs have been determined through the development of the Agriculture Recovery Plan available on the Bushfire Industry Recovery Package website.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Applicants

Commercial apiarists whose apiary ranges / sites have been directly impacted by bushfires since August 2019 resulting in loss of hives as well as access to floral resources.

Eligible Projects

Grant funding is for the purchase of, or already purchased pollen, pollen substitute or sugar for honeybee colonies in response to the impacts of bushfires since August 2019.

Eligible Costs

Direct and related costs for the purchase of:

- Pollen
- Pollen substitutes
- Sugar

Costs already claimed under the Rural Assistance Authority Special Disaster Grant – Bushfires, other State or Commonwealth programs or insurance will not be eligible.

Costs already incurred for the purchase of pollen, pollen substitutes or sugar since the bushfires occurred in the applicable apiary ranges / sites and not already claimed under another State or Commonwealth program or insurance can be used as the co-contribution or claimed against the grant amount. Participants will be required to provide evidence of purchased of pollen, pollen substitute or sugar.

Eligible Amounts and Limits

Grants for up to 50% of the cost of pollen, pollen substitutes or sugar to a maximum of \$16 per hive.

The maximum number of hives that can be claimed will be the number of hives recorded against the beekeeper's hive brands in the NSW Department of Primary Industries' beekeeper registration database as at 1 April 2020.

Co-contribution

Co-contributions can include direct cash and in-kind contributions to a project. Expenses that beekeepers have already incurred (i.e. sugar/pollen supplements for hives in preparation of autumn and winter) or purchases of sugar/pollen to support the spring build-up of hives can be deemed a co-contribution.

Application Process

All applications will be completed online. The form is available at www.nsw.gov.au/bushfire-industry-recovery-package. Applicants will be required to provide the following information:

- Business name and ABN
- Evidence of active production at the time of the fires.
- Details of losses suffered as a result of the fires (hives, equipment, colonies killed, apiary sites/ranges burned)
- Registered hive brands
- Location of affected apiary ranges / sites, including range / site number for public lands and evidence of fire for sites on private land
- Evidence of purchases of pollen, pollen substitutes and / or sugar
- Demonstration of matching co-contribution from the applicant

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority will assess your application against the eligibility criteria and may request additional information from you or your nominated financial advisor or accountant. The RAA has the right to refuse an application if you cannot demonstrate that you meet the eligibility criteria. The RAA can also refuse an application if you do not provide the information requested, in order to undertake an assessment.

Getting Support

Support can be accessed from the Rural Assistance Authority at www.raa.nsw.gov.au, rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au and 1300 678 593.

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