



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

LESTER SPELL, JR., D.V.M.
COMMISSIONER

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For Immediate Release

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MS Department of Agriculture confirms Pascagoula Bee Incident was not Africanized Honey Bees

Lester Spell, Commissioner of Agriculture, confirmed today that the bee swarming incident that took place on March 6th in Pascagoula were actually of the European strain which is common to Mississippi, and not the aggressive Africanized Honey Bee (AHB). The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's (MDAC) Bureau of Plant Industry, after thorough DNA testing, established that the bees were not in fact AHB, which are known to be in parts of Texas and Louisiana.

MDAC urges the public to always stay a safe distance from any bee colonies and not to confine livestock or pets near known colonies. MDAC will continue setting and monitoring swarm traps in the Pascagoula area and along the southwestern border with Louisiana to detect any possible migration of AHB into Mississippi.

Property owners who have locations where managed beehives are placed by beekeepers should not be concerned. Well managed colonies of European bees will help fill the ecological niche with desirable honey bees, which is a defense against an area becoming inhabited with wild Africanized honey bees. MDAC also monitors commercial beekeepers in Mississippi to reduce the chance that they do not inadvertently transport or maintain Africanized colonies.

If a swarming bee attack occurs, individuals should always seek safety in an enclosed vehicle or building, and the Bureau of Plant Industry should be contacted immediately to assess the situation. For more information or to report a possibly aggressive colony, please call Harry Fulton, State Entomologist, with the Bureau of Plant Industry at 662-325-3390.

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