



Agriculture and Markets

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

RICHARD A. BALL
Commissioner

July 18, 2023

Hon. Thomas P. DiNapoli
Office of the State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, NY 12236-0001

Re: Audit Report 2021-s-040

Dear Mr. DiNapoli,

As required by Executive Law §170, the Department of Agriculture and Markets (Department) respectfully submits this 180-day response to recommendations made in the audit report 2021-s-040 "Protection of Managed Pollinators (Honey Bees)."

The Department is committed to assisting beekeepers in maintaining their colonies in a healthy condition. Through inspection, certification, education, and outreach to beekeepers, the Division works to ensure the health of honey bees. The following actions have been taken by the Department to address the audit recommendations:

OSC Recommendation 1 – Improve the Department's registration and apiary inspection efforts which may include but not be limited to:

- Increasing efforts to identify and register active apiaries;
- Incorporating identification of additional diseases, insects, and parasites that may be contributing to colony losses in the State;
- Officially establishing and publishing tolerance levels for diseases or parasites organisms and follow-up on treatment recommendations;
- Considering the use of alternative testing methods that will help preserve honey bee populations; and
- Expanding risk assessment criteria for targeting inspection activities.

Response to Recommendation 1 - The Department has continued to develop and expand the registration and inspection efforts of active apiaries. Efforts have included:

- Outreach to apiaries previously registered in the prior registration database;
- Development of brochures and media to advertise and promote beekeeper registration;
- Working with the industry and academic partners to communicate and post information about beekeeper registration;
- Contacting sellers listing ads for nucleus colonies to ensure they are registered and inspected (if necessary); and

- Engaging the Apiary Industry Advisory Board to discuss establishing tolerance levels for various parasites and diseases.

OSC Recommendation 2 – Develop procedures to ensure honeybee shipments into the State are certified disease and parasite free and if warranted, consider reinspection upon entering the State.

Response to Recommendation 2 - The Department has increased our efforts to reach out to other states to ensure that honeybees being moved between states are healthy. The Department has sent letters to all interstate beekeepers reminding them of the inspection requirement to re-enter the state and is working with those beekeepers to ensure that inspections take place and is tracking re-entry of migratory beekeepers.

Respectfully,



Richard A. Ball
Commissioner
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor
Honorable Antonio Delgado, Lieutenant Governor
Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins, President Pro Tempore, NYS Senate
Honorable Robert G. Ort, Minority Leader, NYS Senate
Honorable Carl E. Heastie, Speaker, NYS Assembly
Honorable Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, Majority Leader, NYS Assembly
Honorable William A. Barclay, Minority Leader, NYS Assembly
Honorable Liz Krueger, Chair, NYS Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Thomas O'Mara, Ranking Member, NYS Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Helene E. Weinstein, Chair, NYS Assembly Ways and Means Committee
Honorable Edward P. Ra, Ranking Member, NYS Assembly Ways and Means Committee