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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ARRIVAL OF AFRICANIZED HONEY BEES INTO SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY**

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA, -- The long predicted arrival of Africanized Honey Bees into San Luis Obispo has recently occurred. A sample of unusually defensive honey bees was recently collected by an alert local beekeeper from hive boxes in rural Arroyo Grande. The sample was confirmed through lab analysis by the California Department of Food and Agriculture to be Africanized Honey Bees.

The beekeeper took immediate precautions to control the spread of Africanized Honey Bees by implementing management techniques that involve reducing the hive population, killing the brood or next generation of young, and introducing a docile European Honey Bee queen into infested hives to counter the defensive genetic characteristics in subsequent generations. The infested hive was in a location away from humans or domestic animals, thus posing little risk.

Africanized Honey Bees are indistinguishable from European or other types of honey bees in their appearance. The venom is identical to other honey bees and each bee can only sting once before dying. However, Africanized Honey Bees are more defensive in protecting their hives, guard a larger area around their hives, and will swarm faster and in larger numbers than other types of honey bees if provoked.

Africanized Honey Bees have been migrating north from Central America since the late 1950s. San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, LA, Orange, Santa Barbara, Venture, Kern, Inyo, Kings, Tulare and Madera counties are currently considered infested. In these counties, both beekeepers and the public have learned to live with Africanized Honey Bees by taking simple precautions.

Residents of San Luis Obispo County are asked to protect themselves, their pets and livestock by doing the following:

- Remain alert for bees when outdoors, use caution when around bees and respect all bees.
- Eliminate all potential nesting sites by sealing off gaps in walls, chimneys, and around plumbing. Discourage bees from making your home their home.

- Inspect eaves of structures for signs of bees. Watch for regular entrance and exit routes used by bees
- If chased by a bee swarm, run away in a straight line, cover your head and face with your shirt or jacket, and seek protection in an enclosed structure or car.
- Call a pest control company if you find a hive in an area where people, pets or livestock could be harmed. Pest control companies are listed in the yellow pages of your local telephone directory.

If you are stung by a bee or bees:

- Retreat to a safe area away from the bees as soon as possible.
- Remove stinger quickly by scraping it out with a fingernail or a credit card. Squeezing the stinger with fingers or tweezers could release more venom.
- Wash the area with soap and water. Apply an ice pack to relieve swelling.
- See a doctor if you are allergic to bee stings, if breathing becomes difficult, or if you are stung multiple times.

For more information about Africanized Honey Bees, visit the San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner's website at [www.sloag.org](http://www.sloag.org) or the California Department of Food and Agriculture's website at [www.cdfa.gov](http://www.cdfa.gov) . For specific information about Africanized Honey Bees in San Luis Obispo County contact Marty Settevendemie, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner at 805-781-5910.

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