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For Immediate Release

## **Industry members of bee health roundtable highlight progress**

*National Bee Health Action Plan released*

OTTAWA, March 18, 2015 – On March 5, 2015, the National Bee Health Roundtable (BHRT) held its third workshop since its inception in March 2014. The industry members of the BHRT were pleased to report on the achievements of the first year.

The roundtable, a coalition of stakeholders with a direct interest in the health of bees, is taking action to improve bee health and has several areas of significant progress. This includes the development of a [National Bee Health Action Plan](#) which presents key objectives and factors that contribute to the health of bees.

“The collaborative approach of the Roundtable, which brings together a wide array of stakeholders, regulators and experts, has proven to be an invaluable tool in the examination and protection of bee health,” said Rod Scarlett, co-Chair of the BHRT and Executive Director of the Canadian Honey Council. “We are able to draw upon the expertise of members from across Canada and develop a viable national framework for the protection of bees.”

The National Bee Health Action Plan identifies priority issues, fosters collaborative and innovative activities that help maintain a healthy honeybee population in Canada, and supports a competitive Canadian apicultural industry. The BHRT heard about achievements in three priority areas: reduction of Varroa Mites; the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs); and pesticide risk mitigation.

It was recognized that significant progress had been made in moving closer to providing additional tools for beekeepers to control one of the biggest threat to bee health, the parasitic Varroa mite. The BHRT has requested that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada place a high priority, as part of their minor use programs, on a new Varroa control product and an antibiotic for treatment of serious hive disease.

“Honeybee health is important to the entire agriculture and agri-food value chain”, said William van Tassel, First Vice-Chair, Fédération des Producteurs de Cultures Commerciales du Québec “Having all parties working together in a productive manner has led to real progress in a positive environment.”

The next National Bee Health Roundtable meeting is scheduled for October 2015.

Attachment: *Accomplishments of the National Bee Health Roundtable*

### **For further information:**

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**Bee Health Roundtable Industry Members belong to:**

Association of Equipment Manufacturers  
BC Blueberry Council  
Blueberry Processor  
Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists  
Canadian Honey Council  
Canadian Horticultural Council  
Canadian Organic Growers  
Canadian Seed Growers Association  
Canadian Seed Trade Association  
Canola Council of Canada  
CropLife Canada  
La Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec  
Flowers Canada Growers  
Grain Farmers of Ontario  
Grain Growers of Canada  
Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association  
Pollinator Partnership  
Retail Council of Canada

## **Accomplishments of the National Bee Health Roundtable**

As reported at March 5, 2015 meeting of the BHRT

1) **Minor Use:**

BHRT initiatives have worked towards securing two more options within beekeepers tool boxes to support their fight against two deadly pests; Varroa mites and American foulbrood. The BHRT in cooperation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Health Canada have successfully ensured that bee health products HopGuard and Lincomycin are considered a departmental priority for purposes of the Minor Use Program and piloting under the Minor Use Minor Species for veterinary drugs. Both products provide beekeepers with additional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tools and play a large role in the BHRT's long-term efforts in addressing the broader issue of honey bee health.

2) **Reduction of Pesticide Exposure:**

Reducing pesticide exposure has been identified as a potential factor that could affect bee health. A dedicated working group has designed a work plan that will examine the existing tools and approaches available to reduce potential exposures of bees to all pesticides, including those used by beekeepers to control in-hive pests. The working group will then identify any gaps and develop solutions in order to ensure that beekeepers and growers have access to the most effective tools and knowledge necessary to reduce pesticide exposure.

3) **Best Management Practices:**

Funding has been procured and work is underway to review all Beekeeper Best Management Practices (BMP) Canada-wide. The goal will be to create a new national set of BMPs. These BMPs will be national in scope but take into account regional differences in weather, habitat and whether the bees are kept for pollination services, honey production or both.