



Denton Central Appraisal District
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BEEKEEPING GUIDELINES

These guidelines were approved by the Denton CAD AG. Advisory Board on February 23rd, 2021

Any review of Texas bee law must begin with a review of Chapter 131 of the Texas Agriculture Code. Section 131.001 begins with defining terms to be used in the statute. For example, an "apiary" is a place where six or more colonies of bees or nuclei of bees are kept. That means most backyard beekeepers are not covered by many of the regulations in Chapter 131. However, several of the regulations apply to all beekeepers. "Beekeeper" is defined as a person who owns, leases, or manages one or more colonies of bees for pollination or the production of honey, beeswax, or other by-products, either for personal or commercial use. "Bees" means any stage of the common honeybee, *Apis mellifera* species. A "colony" is the hive and its equipment and appurtenances, including bees, comb, honey, pollen, and brood. Written by Donald Ray Burger, Attorney at Law

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/AG/htm/AG.131.htm>

Section 23.51 (2) The term agricultural use also includes the use of land to raise or keep bees for pollination or for the production of human food or other tangible products having a commercial value, provided that the land used is not less than 5 acres or more than 20 acres.

...food or products must have commercial value, not commercial production. While human food and products must be produced, the law does not require that they be sold commercially.

1. The property must meet the same use requirements as for other agricultural production uses.
2. The property must have previously been in a qualifying agricultural use or
3. The owner/taxpayer must show a 5-year history of beekeeping or other agricultural use.

Beekeeping can be used to establish history with supporting documentation. Hives must be maintained and kept alive. Flowering plants must be planted to support hives **IF** the hives are in an area where there is limited vegetation that requires pollination.

Degree of Intensity: (first 5 acres, 6 hives, as per Section 131.001 Texas Agriculture Code's definition of an "Apiary"). Acreage Requirement: The State of Texas has set a minimum of 5 acres and a maximum of 20 acres to qualify beekeeping as an agricultural use. (Losing an acre to a homestead exemption must be accounted for in the acreage total. Eg: a six acre site with a one acre home site meets the minimum acreage requirement, a five acre site with a one acre home site does not.)

5 acres = 6 active hives	15 acres = 10 active hives
7.5 acres = 7 active hives	17.5 acres = 11 active hives
10 acres = 8 active hives	20 acres = 12 active hives
12.5 acres = 9 active hives	

The hives must be active and located on the property at least 7 months of the year. January 1st through December 31st. Production value used for Bee's will be the same as the current land use category.

When property owners initially qualify for agricultural use appraisals they must show proof of history for agricultural use/beekeeping for any of the five out of seven preceding years if outside the city. A way to do this is to ask for export, import or intra-state permits, which are required by the Texas Apiary Inspection Service to transport hives. <http://texasbeekeepers.org/ag-valuation/>

Use of bees

Pollination: is the process by which pollen is transferred in the reproduction of plants, thereby enabling fertilization and sexual reproduction.

Production of Human Food: honey, bee pollen, honey candies, sweets

Production of Products: candles, beeswax, soaps

Legitimate beekeepers will have their bees in locations that provide food for their bees, pollinate various agricultural crops, food crops, and manage their bees in a manner to keep them healthy, surviving and producing for the long term. Hives must be active.

“The intent of the law is for more people to raise bees. Bees should have an abundance of food. A bee keeper must think big, bees need sources of nectar and pollen throughout the growing season” (April-September or March through October or longer in some counties) says Dennis Herbert a conservationist who assisted the legislature to help pass the law regarding bees has also worked with the comptroller's office to develop implementation standards/guidelines for the bee law.

Beehives/Apiary: A beehive is an enclosed structure in which some of the honeybee species live and raise their young. Natural beehives are naturally occurring structures occupied by honeybee colonies, while domesticated honeybees live in man made beehives, often in an apiary. These man made structures are typically referred to as "beehives". Several species of Apis live in hives, but only the western honeybee, and the eastern honeybee are domesticated by humans. A natural beehive is comparable to a bird's nest built with a purpose to protect the dweller. The beehive's internal structure is a densely packed matrix of hexagonal cells made of beeswax, called a honeycomb. The bees use the cells to store food (honey and pollen) and to house the "brood" (eggs, larvae, and pupae).

Artificial beehives serve two purposes: production of honey and pollination of nearby crops. Artificial hives are commonly transported so that bees can pollinate crops in other areas. An apiary (also known as a bee yard) is a place where beehives of honeybees are kept. Traditionally beekeepers (also known as apiarists) are paid land rent in honey for the use of small parcels. Some farmers will provide free apiary sites because they need pollination, and farmers who need many hives often pay for the hives to be moved to the crops when they bloom. Remember bees forage in a 3 mile radius from the hive. Survey the areas around to see what is available for them to forage. Do not over saturate the area with bees, as they will be competing with themselves.

<http://txbeeinspection.tamu.edu/regulations>

Beekeeping Questionnaire

Property Owner Name: _____

Property ID #'s _____

Acreage Requirement: The State of Texas has set a minimum of 5 acres and a maximum of 20 acres to qualify beekeeping as an agricultural use. (Losing an acre to a homestead exemption must be accounted for in the acreage total. Eg: a six acre site with a one acre home site meets the minimum acreage requirement, a five acre site with a one acre home site does not.)

Number of acres on this application is _____

When property owners initially qualify for agricultural appraisal, they must show proof of history of agricultural use/beekeeping for any of the five out of seven preceding years for bees. One way to do this is to ask for export, import or intra-state permits, which is required by the Texas Apiary Inspection Service to transport hives. When did you receive your bees? _____ (Attach a copy of the apiary receipt from your purchase).

When did you obtain your equipment for the bees? _____

What type of bees are you raising? _____

How long have you been raising bees? _____

How many hives do you have on the property now? _____

Who will be managing the bee colony? _____

Is there a hired bee wrangler? If yes, who? _____

Describe any beekeeping education obtained: _____

DESCRIBE THE PRODUCTS YOU EXPECT TO HARVEST: ____ Honey – [Extracted, Comb, Chunk, Creamed or Whipped Honey ____ Beeswax ____ Propolis ____ Royal Jelly ____ Pollen ____ Bees themselves

Expected pound of production per hive is _____

How do you plan to market your products? _____

DESCRIBE ANY POLLINATION PLANS FOR YOUR PROPERTY: i.e.: What plants are on your property now? Do you have a clover? Have you planted specific flowers for the bees?

PLEASE NOTE - The bees must be alive, active & producing to qualify & are subject to annual verification.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Printed Name: _____