

Cara Doolittle  
Aware

Honeybees face extinction as the global demand for agricultural produce continues to proliferate at devastating rates. The honeybee crisis prevails in this modern consumeristic economy and poses many ethical quandaries of how to deal with the declining health of the honeybees and the quality of pollinated food. Without drastic changes at a local level to protect the bee's environment, the stability of agriculture will experience devastating consequences with the decline of the bees. Inspired by this research, I answered the call to act, and through my project *Bee Aware*, I set up awareness presentations at the local farm stand Tierra Vegetables. Tierra Vegetables, a sustainable and community supported agricultural farm, promotes healthy lifestyles, for both humans and honeybees. By altering a few aspects of people's lives, and raising public awareness for the bees' critical condition, I help encourage a more stable environment for the honeybees to thrive. As a global community, we must aspire to be self-sufficient and educate ourselves about the world around us. If we remain ignorant, we will lose one of the most crucial life forces to our health and economic stability.

Deplorably misinformed of the economic importance of the honeybees, many people sustain the media-tainted phobias of the causes of these "mysterious" bee deaths. Although the public tends to believe that they are not solely responsible for the poor health of the honeybees, they unknowingly contribute to their rapid decline. This ignorance led to many struggles throughout the past year, including the difficulty of motivating people into caring for their environment. Part of this lack of interest is due to one's "apparent" knowledge of the honeybee crisis, and even if one is aware that the bees are dying, one does not believe that he/she will make any difference. In an effort to combat this general apathy, I reached out to the local organization, Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association (SCBA), to communicate ideas about how to inspire the public. Through SCBA, we organized a group of educators to present to

Cara Doolittle  
Aware

schools around the county. In addition, I created a system of informal sessions at Tierra Vegetables to reach out to local consumers.

Through the establishment of *Bee Aware*, the growth of bee-friendly gardens evolved as a crucial solution to battling the stress and toxins bombarding the honeybees. As a measure, I transformed my own garden into a sanctuary for the bees to gather pollen without the use of harmful pesticides and the exorbitant amount of pressure placed on them to pollinate crops. The use of pesticides is one of the major factors that gravely impairs the lives of the honeybees, “Powerful chemical companies . . . have their own scientists set to refute any finding that show that the chemicals they make are responsible for any pollinator declines or deaths” (*HoneyBees & Other Pollinators*). However, according to *HoneyBees & Other Pollinators*, companies such as Bayer CropScience, Sygenta, Dow Chemical, Dupont, and other major chemical corporations, refuse to acknowledge the damages they inflict on the environment because of their greed for more lucrative revenues. In order to combat this, Robert Mendela, President of the Backyard Beekeepers Association claims, “Something the average person can do is to write to their senator and representatives in congress on the federal level and to do the same on the state level to support funding of honeybee research” (*Silence of the Bees*). Through this measure, I researched more about the effect of contacting senators and representatives, and discovered that the state of Washington hosted Bernie the Bee, a petition against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect bees and other pollinators. About half a million Americans signed the petition, demanding that the EPA defend the environment, not their source of income, “instead of ‘contribut(ing) to making our communities and ecosystems diverse, sustainable and economically productive,’ they [EPA] appear more focussed on protecting the interest of

Cara Doolittle  
Aware

chemical-industry giants like Monsanto, Bayer, Dow Chemical and Syngenta, to name a few” (honeycolony.com).

Despite the honeybees’ remarkable resilience and productivity to pollinate vast amounts of crops, their strength depletes as people inexhaustibly demand greater amounts of pollinated crops. In order to reach these demands, US industries fund few research studies to search for alternative pollinators. Jeff Pettis, of the United States Department of Agriculture, states, “There’s nothing waiting in the wings that can replace honeybees at this time” (*Silence of the Bees*). Without the bees ability to pollinate, the United States, as well as the world, would take a drastic economic downturn. By raising awareness about the root of the honeybee crisis, *Bee Aware* strives to teach others how to alleviate the damage to their country’s economy and their personal well-being. As I developed *Bee Aware*, I began to realize the magnitude of apathy the public holds toward the future of our environment. Although I address the problem through social awareness, and strive to combat this growing sense of indifference, I learned the important lesson that people have to want to change before real change can occur.

Without local support, the bees face imminent mortality. Throughout my project, I strove to accomplish my goal of gathering local support. Even small changes to the environment lead to a better living condition and support system for the bees. Researchers ponder the foreboding question whether humanity can survive without the honeybees. The lives of the bees and the health of humans interdepend on each other for a safe and stable community and world economy. Modern consumerism intimidates people’s rational logic and hinders the public’s ability to comprehend the affects on society. By raising awareness for the bee crisis among the public, I hope to encourage many to actively partake in discovering a local solution to help the honeybees. Through *Bee Aware*, I establish a system of change that will far exceed my years. The honeybee

Cara Doolittle  
Aware

crisis affects us all and will continue to impact our lives. Therefore, changing our lifestyle to accommodate the bees' health will be a challenging process, but it will reap the greatest reward.

Pictures Available;

[https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.281361508684128.1073741829.259997110820568  
&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.281361508684128.1073741829.259997110820568&type=3)

#### Works Cited

Cohen, Tamara. "Honey Bees & Other Pollinators." *Agriculture Defense Coalition*. Agriculture Defense Coalition, Jan. 2012. Web.

Cara Doolittle  
Aware

<<http://www.agriculturedefensecoalition.org/?q=honey-bees>>.

"Economic Value of Commercial Beekeeping." *Beyond Pesticides*. Pesticide Action Network North America, Jan. 2012. Web.

<<http://beyondpesticides.org/pollinators/EconomicValueCommercialBeekeeping.pdf>>.

Neumann, Peter, and Norman L. Carreck. "Honey Bee Colony Losses." *Journal of Apicultural Research* (2012): 1-6. *Guest Editorial*. International Bee Research Association, 2012.

Web. <<http://www.ask-force.org/web/Bees/Neumann-Honey-Bee-Colony-Losses-2010.pdf>>.

"Save the Bees . . . Save the World." *Save the Honey Bees*. Georgia PTA, n.d. Web. Mar. 2013.

<[http://www.georgiapta.org/documents/Programs\\_8\\_Save\\_the\\_Bees.pdf](http://www.georgiapta.org/documents/Programs_8_Save_the_Bees.pdf)>.

"Silence of the Bees." *Nature*. PBS, 2013. Web. Feb. 2013.

<<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episodes/silence-of-the-bees/introduction/38/>>.