

Beekeepers have relied on the Beltsville Bee Lab for decades. Located in Maryland, beekeepers from Maine and New England and the Atlantic states use the services of Beltsville to support honey bee health, especially for diagnosing suspected cases of the highly transferrable AFB and EFB.

Beekeepers collect bees suspected of having one of these or other viruses, mail them to the Bee Lab, and in a few days receive the results. This is all at no cost to the beekeeper.

The results are also shared with State Apiary Inspectors, which means that even if it was not you who submitted the suspected bees, if there is a positive test result, and the infected bees are in proximity to yours, (and your colonies are registered) you will be contacted by Maine's State Apiarist Jen Lund and provided information on how to proceed. Except for registering your colonies, **this is all at no cost to you.**

However, as announcements of federal cuts and closures continue, USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins has issued a plan to disassemble the Beltsville Bee Lab.

The Bee Lab is housed within the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. Disassembling the research center likely means the end of certain services for beekeepers, specifically the AFB and EFB testing, and in general, regional research on honey bee health.

There is a comment period regarding the closure which is open until **August 26th**. Public comments on behalf of the Beltsville Bee Lab are easy to submit and provide important information about the connection between honey bee health and food security.

To submit a comment, click on the following link. When that page opens scroll down to the reorganization@usda.gov link and click on that. An email page will open where you can type your comments. Comments don't have to be lengthy, even a simple "I am a beekeeper and I am (for, or) against the plan to disassemble the Beltsville Bee Lab." is enough.

Here is the link for comments-

<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/08/01/usda-opens-public-comment-period-department-reorganization-plan>