Canadian BEEKEEPERS Federation

Protecting bees. Supporting beekeepers. Sustaining Canadian food.

Advocating for commercial honey producers and pollinators in Canada

PRESS RELEASE

Tariffs, and why the Business Risk Management programs are not an answer

The programs leave beekeepers out

Canadian Beekeepers Federation

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The CBF asks Ottawa to deliver emergency support that reaches producers and to raise the Advance Payments Program interest-free limit for honey to $500,000, the level canola already has.

1. What happened

- **A 50% American tariff took effect on Canadian honey on August 22, 2026.**
- **The CBF expects sales to the United States to go to zero** and stay there until the tariff comes off.
- **The United States was over 55% of Canadian honey export volume in 2025. Japan was over 40%. Together they are 97% of export value, so there is nowhere else for the crop to go. Attempts to expand the market over the decades have failed.**
- **Manitoba alone shipped 54.5% of 2025 export volume. The market loss first affects Prairie producers and then everyone else, because every beekeeper ends up selling into the same shrinking domestic market.**
- **Canada's counter-tariff of September 8 changes nothing. About three quarters of the honey shipped to Canada from the United States is other countries' honey re-exported, and it enters Canada under its original country, so the surtax never applies to it. Canadian buyers will move to another origin the week it lands.**

2. Parity, in a program already running

- **Canola was tariffed and its Advance Payments Program interest-free limit went to $500,000** for the 2025 and 2026 program years.
- **The Minister set the 2026 limit at $250,000 for all non-canola advances on April 1, 2026.** Honey producers are in the non-canola group.
- **Honey carries the same 50% tariff and is named in the annex to the American proclamations.**
- **Raising the limit costs the program interest, not principal, and it scales with the size of the sector.**

3. Why the Business Risk Management programs are not an answer

Every business risk management program is built on one of two things: a margin history, or a production loss. The beekeeper's problem is neither. The crop came off, the colonies are alive, and they have nowhere to sell.

AgriStability

- **It pays on a decline below 70% of a reference margin, an Olympic average of three of the previous five years.**
- **Those reference years were already below the cost of production.** Bulk honey sold at roughly two thirds of break-even before the tariff and at about $2 a pound for the two years before that. The program measures a fall from an already depressed price.

AgriRecovery

- **The framework excludes, in its own guide, events that are cyclical such as pricing cycles, or part of a long-term trend such as a change in markets.** A tariff is a market change. It cannot trigger AgriRecovery.
- **AgriRecovery has nevertheless paid beekeepers per colony before. The Canada-Alberta Bee Colony Replacement Assistance Initiative of June 2023 compensated commercial beekeepers with 100 or more colonies, 60/40 cost-shared, delivered by AFSC, after Alberta's 2021-22 winter loss of 49.9% against an average of about 27%.**

AgriInsurance

- **It covers production, not price.** It pays on a shortfall in honey produced or on excess overwintering mortality. A full crop sold below cost is outside it.
- **In 2025, 24 Alberta producers took bee overwintering insurance and 37 the production side.**
- **The provincial agency's own stated reasons** are that AgriStability already covers honey sales, that a small pool raises premiums, and that the product is aimed at production rather than at the price of honey.

AgriInvest

- **It is the only tool with no margin test and no reference history, and producers can withdraw the money at any time. A producer with no AgriStability history can use it immediately.**
- **The government match is too small to cover a tariff loss. Government matches the first 1% of allowable net sales to a maximum of $10,000 a year, which covers about 26 colonies at $378 a hive.**

4. No tariff response so far helps beekeepers

- **The Regional Tariff Response Initiative is a $1 billion national program for business projects such as trade expansion, manufacturing and supply chains, not payments to producers.**

- **The $7.5 billion package announced August 25, 2026 is made up of employment insurance measures, a Workforce Retention and Retraining Program and business liquidity support, all aimed at employers.**
- **Budget 2025's $97.5 million for the advance limit was commodity-specific,** and honey was not in it.
- **Every tariff measure announced so far goes to employers or to projects. A beekeeper selling a full crop below cost is neither.**

5. The cost base, and the calendar

- **The Government of Alberta's own cost-of-production study puts total production cost at $378 a hive in 2022,** with a cash cost of $260. At the provincial average yield of 101 pounds, honey has to sell for $3.74 a pound to break even.
- **Per hive the cost rose 52% between 2016 and 2022, from $248 to $378. Per pound it rose 133%, because yield per hive fell.**
- **At $2.00 a pound the loss is about $176 a colony; at roughly two thirds of break-even, about $126.**
- **Colonies are fed and treated in September and October.** Wages, feed, fuel and mite treatments are paid before the crop is sold. Money arriving after that does not reach producers in time to pay these expenses.
- **An operation that cannot pay does not shrink. It sells out, and nobody is replacing the beekeepers who have sold out in recent years.**

6. What the CBF is asking for, in order of what could move fastest

1. **Advance Payments Program parity at $500,000 for 2026 and 2027,** with repayment deferred until the crop is sold or the tariff is lifted.
2. **A targeted advance payment for honey under AgriStability, initiated by the Prairie provinces, with the 20% late-participation reduction waived. Ottawa offered provinces a Targeted Advance Payment for tariff-hit sectors in March 2025.**
3. **Extend the 2025 AgriStability terms to 2026 for tariffed commodities.** It was done once for the same reason.
4. **A one-time federal deposit into honey producers' AgriInvest accounts.** It reaches producers who cannot use AgriStability at all, needs no margin history, and pays out immediately.
5. **Name honey in the AgriMarketing expansion. An additional $75 million over five years from 2026-27 targets Africa, the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific. Japan already takes 44.1% of Canadian honey export value, so a market outside the United States already exists.**

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Sources and limits

- Tariff: Federal Register 91 FR 46663, Proclamation 11048; CBP Section 338 Canada HTS list, August 21, 2026.
- Trade shares: AAFC Statistical Overview of the Canadian Honey and Bee Industry 2025, Tables 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.
- US honey shipped to Canada, 2023-25 average: 3,831 tonnes of re-exported foreign honey against 1,124 tonnes produced in the United States, 77% re-exported. US Census data via USDA FAS GATS (apps.fas.usda.gov). Declared origin only.
- Targeted Advance Payment for tariff-hit sectors, available where a province enters an agreement: AAFC news release, March 22, 2025 (canada.ca).
- Advance Payments Program: AAFC news release, April 1, 2026.
- AgriStability and the Halifax Statement: AAFC news release, July 17, 2026; provincial announcements of August 2026.
- AgriRecovery exclusions: AAFC, A Guide to AgriRecovery. Bee Colony Replacement Assistance Initiative: AFSC news release, June 22, 2023.
- Cost of production: Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Economics of Beekeeping in Alberta 2022, 2016 and 2011 editions.
- Limits: the Alberta cost series is one province, one year, self-selected participants, and the surveyed operations are larger than the national average. It is the only published Canadian series, which is why it is used.