



CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

October, 2026

Join us on Thursday, October 15th at the Newport Extension office from 1:30 to 3:30pm to hear a presentation by Dr. Ramesh Sagili. Professor in the Department of Horticulture, OSU and head of the Honey Bee Lab at OSU.

Subject: Varroa and Nutrition Management

Dr. Ramesh Sagili will be speaking about honey bee nutrition, what beekeepers need to know about nutrition supplements and sterols, and what he has learned about controlling Varroa mites. In the presentation he will also discuss the relatively new Varroa management products such as Norroa and VarroxSan.

Hope to see you all there!

A heads up about the November meeting!!!!

Charlie VandenHeuvel will be joining us on November 19th to share some research he is working on related to the use of Norroa and its effect on the health and success of hives. Mark your calendars now!

2026 PAm Honey Bee MVP Spotlight: Dr. Jay Evans

Project Apis m. and Bee Health Collective are proud to honor Dr. Jay Evans as one of our Honey Bee MVPs this year. Evans has been a Research Scientist at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) at the USDA since 1998. He pushes the needle towards better honey bee survival through genomic research on honey bees and their pests. Out of many projects he has worked on, he was a leader of the Honey Bee Genome Project that helped develop genetic insights into bee breeding and disease diagnostics. In the following Q&A, Evans shared with PAm his story about how he got involved with bees, what drives him and the various roles he has played in building a better future for bees.

PAm: How long have you worked with bees and in what capacities?

Jay Evans: I have worked with bees for nearly 30 years and spent ten years before that studying their wingless but fascinating counterparts, ants. I was exploring queen production in ants but faced some setbacks (dirt, dirt, dirt, it was really hard to see what was going on in colonies). When we

tried the same strategy in bees, it worked great. My first real experiments in bees were enabled by Professor Diana Wheeler and Dr. Gloria Degrandi-Hoffman. That brief stint in Tucson in 1998 inspired me to look at more applied work for beekeepers. I was hired that fall to join the USDA-ARS Beltsville lab, initially for foulbrood work but eventually tackling other diseases and bee biology.

PAm: How would you describe some of the roles you've played in the beekeeping community?

Evans: USDA has provided a great platform for doing science and addressing stakeholder needs. I was given support to build a lab and attract some incredible teammates from inside and outside the U.S. Along with past and present BRL (Beltsville Bee Research Laboratory) members running their own labs, we focused on threats to bees and beekeepers and reducing impacts through detection and management. Luckily, I was drafted into the Honey Bee Genome Project early on. Those intense years were incredibly exciting and helped me appreciate the power of building collaborative research teams. These teams have tackled bee breeding and immunity, pesticide threats, emerging pathogens and 'systems-based' studies of colony health. I am most proud of being a 'coach' for dozens of students and professionals, and I feel this has helped train people to become leaders and have a great impact on the field.

Dr. Jay Evans working in the USDA-ARS Beltsville lab. (Photo courtesy Jay Evans)

PAm: What do you love most about bees?

Evans: Everything from their incredible social biology to the way they smell. I can't help but smile at seeing a cluster of hives along the roadway and seeing them forage in our yard, thinking of how they will go back to a colony that is just an incredible creation. I also very much enjoy

beekeepers and their spunk and advocacy for the environment, which helps all bees.

PAm: How do you see solutions working for bee health and minimizing colony losses?

Evans: Given their crowded lives and wealth of resources, honey bees will always face pressure from parasites and pathogens. There have been some great breeding advances lately against mites and even viruses, that trend helps explain some of the survivors in the face of disease. I am very optimistic about a field-ready and safe treatment for viruses. We have tested hundreds of candidates and many show promise. My hope is that these efforts, and parallel efforts to identify and develop new medicines (supported strongly by PAm) will give relief from disease outbreaks. Otherwise, collaborative efforts to identify drivers of loss and protect bees from them; whether forage, chemical or weather stress.

PAm: Are there examples of success in your experience that led to better solutions for bees?

Evans: As frustrating as it must be for beekeepers, the various developments in miticides and treatment advice have been important and helped reduce damage. Diagnostics, from AFB to viruses, and even chemical poisonings have taken some of the mystery out of bee losses and shaped behaviors. I feel the work in bee nutrition from forage plantings to supplements has been phenomenal. I try to keep up with it for occasional [essays](#) and am so impressed at the multiple ways bee nutrition is being addressed.

I'm also so impressed by how advocacy nonprofits like PAm and the major bee groups, and individuals, are testing and promoting bee nutrition solutions. I just read the excerpt on bee forage in Jennie Durant's book 'Bitter Honey' and loved how people have put their time and dollars on the line to promote better forage for bees. Like all experiments, some things work and some don't, but nothing defines the American spirit like the humans behind the

Bee and Butterfly Fund, PAm's efforts, and many others including federal scientists. There's lots of altruism for the colony in those efforts.



Evans with colleagues building USDA pollinator resources. (Photo courtesy Jay Evans)

PAm: Are there specific successes particularly at Beltsville that would be hard to replicate elsewhere?

Evans: With the Disease Diagnostic Service and its 100+ year history, I think we are constantly reminded when samples come in of how much beekeepers care to keep their bees healthy. Many samples come from the great network of bee inspectors while others come from individual beekeepers seeking some resolution of a colony loss. The team that handles those samples, and has started looking for historical trends, is awesome. We have great resources on campus for genetics and diagnostics, along with great individual lab spaces and 12+ widespread apiaries. Those have been key for measuring bee stress and developing/testing bee medicines. I respect and follow USDA admin and don't pretend to know the cost-benefit calculations of moving the group, but our work has certainly benefitted from the climate, community and invested resources on our campus.

PAm: What's hopeful for the beekeeping industry as we move forward?

Evans: Beekeepers and bees are their own best ambassadors. The passion shared by beekeepers with their neighbors, politicians, clients, or crop farmers always comes through and this leads to awareness of the importance of bees and the steps people and groups can take to push back on challenges. I am on a midwestern driving trip right now and have seen planned flowering strips in every state, along the highway, at rest stops, business offices, homes – a great reminder that the message is getting out and that it can be a beautiful thing to take steps to help bees. This is hopefully leading to change at the larger scales of agriculture and lands. I do of course also feel that science-based approaches can help the industry.

PAm: You wrote the book 'Bee Optimism: Translational Research Can Rescue Honey Bees and Other Pollinators.' What inspired you to write this and what do you hope readers will take from it?

Evans: I had written essays about bee science for a while, but I was inspired by Kim Flottum and now Jerry Hayes as leaders in the bee world to start writing these short letters about cool new discoveries. That platform gave me the discipline to collect material and write something up on a deadline. I see these as short dispatches from the battlefield and a chance to highlight the creative work of many people doing their best to understand and help bees. That book came about thanks to Kim and the International Bee Research Association.

PAm: How can people learn more about your work?

Evans: The USDA-ARS has a Communications Department and they are our main venue for describing recent work to the public outside of our writings. I do truly enjoy beekeeping meetings large and small, and love to represent USDA science at those. I would love to keep writing about science and the wonder of bees, and am glad for now to have a venue via *Bee Culture*.

Jay Evans' book 'Bee Optimism: Translational Research Can Rescue Honey Bees and Other Pollinators' is available for purchase [here](#).

This interview was conducted by Clarisa Diaz, Communications Manager for Project Apis m. and Bee Health Collective

The Oregon Master Beekeeper Program and why you may want to consider it...

Our Program Goals

The primary goal of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program is to improve and maintain the health of honey bee colonies throughout the region. To meet this goal, the program has the following objectives:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of honey bees and beekeeping
- Provide guidance in appropriate management and consistency in the practice of beekeeping
- Encourage ongoing education of beekeepers at all levels
- Create a web of beekeepers who serve as instructors and mentors to beekeepers enrolled in the program
- Support and encourage participation in the regional community of beekeepers
- Actively inform and increase public awareness through outreach events about the honey bee, the role of honey bees in contemporary culture, and ways to contribute to improving the health of honey bee colonies

Levels of Instruction

There is a path for all experience levels from Getting Started with Bees, Apprentice to the Apprentice Challenge. Participating beekeepers can continue to gain experience as Journey and Master students. Each Level provides opportunities and support for additional learning, practice in the field, and community service.

'Getting Started with Bees' Certificate Program

This program is the starting point in the participant's journey into beekeeping. The emphasis here is to give the new or prospective beekeeper sufficient knowledge and experience to get started. A certificate of achievement is awarded upon completion. Once complete, the student can place his/her name on the Apprentice waiting list.

- Zero to 1 year of experience, 1 to 3 years' experience without access to a hive, those who qualify for the Apprentice Program who are unable to be assigned a mentor
- No hive required
- No assigned mentor
- All applicants accepted - no waiting list

Apprentice Level

At this level, the program emphasizes hands-on training with a mentor. Classroom-based and online instruction is available throughout the state. Completion of this level gives participants a solid foundation in beekeeping.

Journey and Master Levels

These offer additional training in advanced beekeeping topics. These levels also involve bee-related research projects and community service to educate others about honey bees and beekeeping.

