



HOPKINS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT
BEEKEEPING
DEGREE OF INTENSITY/GUIDELINES

FEBRUARY 13, 2015

Sec. 23.51 (2) of the Texas Property Tax Code identifies beekeeping as an agriculture use and state that this process shall qualify for agricultural use productivity valuation if used for pollination or the production of human food or other tangible products having commercial value.

“Agricultural use” in Sec. 23.51 (2) states “the term 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 commercial value, provided that the land used is not less than 5 or more than 20 acres”.

Acreage requirements as stated in the tax code have set a minimum of five (5) acres and a maximum of twenty (20) acres to be dedicated to this process. The property owner must be able to document a five-year history of beekeeping or other agriculture use.

Definitions as identified in Sec. 131.001 of the Texas Agricultural Code define”

“Apiary” is a place where six or more colonies of bees or nuclei of bees are kept.

“Colony” means the hive and its equipment and appurtenances including bees, comb, honey, pollen, and brood.

“Abandoned apiary, equipment, or bees” is an apiary, equipment or a colony of bees that is not regularly maintained or attended in accordance with this chapter or rules or quarantines adopted under this chapter.

“Beekeeper” is 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.

“Bee” is used to describe any stage of the common honeybee, *Apis mellifera* species.

“Director” is the director of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

“Disease” is the American foulbrood, European foulbrood, or any other contagious or infectious disease of honeybees, parasites or pests that affect bees or brood.

“Equipment” includes hives, supers, frames, veils, gloves, tools, machines, or other devices used for the handling and manipulation of bees, honey, pollen, wax, or hives, including storage or transporting containers for pollen, honey, or wax, or other apiary supplies used in the operation of an apiary or honey house.

“Inspector” is the chief apiary inspector.

“Label” as a noun, is written or printed material accompanying a product and furnishing identification or description. The term includes material attached to a product or its immediate container and material inserted in an immediate container or other packaging of a product.

“Label” as a verb means to attach or insert a label.

“Nucleus” is a small mass of bees and combs of brood used in forming a new colony.

“Pollen” is dust-like grains formed in the anthers of flowering plants in which the male elements or sperm are produced.

“Pure honey” is the nectar of the plants that has been transformed by and is the natural product of bees in the comb or has been taken from the comb and is packaged in a liquid, crystallized, or granular form.

“Queen apiary” is an apiary in which queen bees are reared or kept for sale, barter or exchange.

Intensity Requirements:

5 acres	6 Active Hives
7.5 acres	7 Active Hives
10 acres	8 Active Hives
12.5 acres	9 Active Hives
15 acres	10 Active Hives
17.5 acres	11 Active Hives
20 acres	12 Active Hives

The hives must be alive, maintained and active, remaining on the property for at least 7 months of the year.

Beekeeping use can be described as pollination, production of human food, and the production of products.

Pollination transfers the reproduction of plants enabling fertilization and sexual reproduction.

Production of human food includes honey, bee pollen, honey candies, and sweets.

Production of products includes candles, beeswax and soaps.

Bees need adequate sources of nectar and pollen throughout the growing season of April to September. Bees forage in a 3 mile radius from the hive. Flowering plants must be planted to support hives IF the hives are in an area where there is limited vegetation that requires pollination.

The intent of this new legislation was to encourage people to raise bees (*Dennis Herbert).

The productivity evaluation calculated for beekeeping will remain as the prior current land use. Acreage with a homestead exemption cannot be considered for special-use evaluation.

References and Sources:

Texas Property Tax Code, Sec. 23.51 (2)

*Dennis Herbert

Texas Agriculture Code Section 131.001

Texas Beekeepers Association

Webb County Appraisal District

Titus County Appraisal District

Ag Advisory Board members of the Hopkins County Appraisal District

*Dennis Herbert assisted in the legislation of passing this law regarding bees. He has worked with the Comptroller's office to develop implementation standards and guidelines for the production process.