



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
OFFICE OF MEDIA RELATIONS

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SCCC Staff and Offenders Harvest Honey from Facility's Apiary

The small five-hive apiary maintained at the Sussex Community Corrections Center (SCCC) in Georgetown has done an excellent job of keeping bees on site to increase crop production at the facility's farm, but it has also yielded an additional bonus - a quantity of honey sufficient enough to require harvesting.

Having to make the harvest was not a surprise, but the need arose earlier than expected, which prompted staff and offenders to make some quick adjustments that kept them as busy as, well, bees for several days earlier this month.

"We were reaching a point where a large number of bees were going to leave the apiary because of a lack of space in the hives brought on by the significant amount of honey that had been produced," said Cpl. Sandy Dale, who oversees the bee program at SCCC. "With bees playing such an important role in crop pollination, we needed to remove some of the honey to keep the bees around our farm."

The harvest took place in late June, with Cpl. Dale and Sgt. James Larsen donning protective beekeeper suits to remove the frames of honeycomb from the hives and female offenders from the facility refining the honey.

The offenders uncapped the honeycomb and placed the frames in a honey extractor, which removed the honey but maintained the structure of the comb so it could be returned to the hives. The honey was then passed through three sieves before it was sealed into jars. The process yielded 211 pounds of honey.

"Our ultimate goal is to provide the honey for use within Department of Correction kitchens, as it is an all-natural, protein-rich sweetener that works well within our heart-healthy menu plan," stated SCCC Warden Bill Oettel, noting the honey would especially be useful during the period of Ramadan. "But until those arrangements can be properly worked out, we will provide the jars of honey to local churches and charitable organizations and use them as gifts of appreciation to staff members and dignitaries."

An additional harvest will most likely take place in August, but enough honey will be left in the hives to help the bees sustain the fall and winter months.

- photos on the following pages -

Photos and captions for: SCCC Staff, Offenders Harvest Honey from Facility's Apiary



Shanna Coffin (left) and Holly Lathbury, offenders at the Sussex Community Corrections Center in Georgetown, jar refined honey that was harvested from the facility's apiary.



Shanna Coffin, an offender at the Sussex Community Corrections Center in Georgetown, removes a frame of honeycomb after it has been spun in a honey extractor.

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A jar of refined honey, complete with label proudly proclaiming its origins as Sussex Community Corrections Center in 'Sunny' Sussex County.

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