FACT SHEET

The Northern Queen Initiative

Improving Value, Availability, and Production of Mite-Resistant Honey Bee Queens in Northern Climates

This Project was funded by North Central SARE Project ONC24-153

PROJECT FOCUS

The Northern Queen Initiative was created to improve local and regional access to mite-resistant queen stock by building a practical production network for northern climates. The project focused on strengthening queen availability, supporting small-scale producers, and improving market access for selected stock.

Network reached: 6 producers

GRANT GOALS

1. Establish a network of production for selected stock to improve Michigan honey bee mating areas and develop a sustainable reservoir of selected stocks.

2. Provide local and regional access to queen stocks through local pickup from producers, bee clubs, and overnight mailing.

MARKET ACCESS OUTCOMES

- More local and regional access to selected queen stock
- Greater opportunity for small-scale producers to participate in the queen market
- Stronger reservoir of locally selected stock for Michigan and northern climates

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Built a cooperative production network among northern beekeepers and queen producers.
- Expanded availability of selected mite-resistant queen stock adapted to northern conditions.
- Improved access through producer pickup, bee club connections, and overnight mailing.
- Reduced barriers to entry for small-scale queen production and stock distribution.
- Improved education on queen selection, resistance, and practical breeding methods.
- Shared lessons learned from both successful outcomes and selection challenges.

WHAT THE PROJECT SHOWED

- Bees can live without treatment.
- Beekeepers are interested in mite resistance.
- More education is still needed to understand resistance and its mechanisms.

WHY IT MATTERS

By connecting producers, bee clubs, and customers, the Northern Queen Initiative demonstrated that locally selected mite-resistant queens can be produced, distributed, and made more accessible. The project improved queen survivabillity and long-term sustainability in northern climates.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture

NORTH CENTRAL SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education