LIFE HACKS

A New Lifesaving Bee 'Vaccine' that Makes them Immune to Pesticides' Side Effects

By bestfolkmedicine · 21/06/2021 · 2 min read



15 years after beekeepers' first reports of bee mass die-offs, it's still common for the average beekeeper to lose 13 of his hive yearly.

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And, it's even worse for wild bees, with many species being on the list of endangered.

One of the main culprits for bee decline is the increased usage of pesticides on farms; however, a new solution such as a 'vaccine' for bees, may be the key to keep them more immune to the disastrous effects of these chemicals.

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Could this Be the Key to Reducing the Bee Decline?

According to James Webb who worked on the new tech as a student at Cornell and the head of a startup *Beemunity*, he always thought there was a lot of research being done on finding out that bees are dying and the extent to which they are, but not many viable solutions.

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Therefore, together with other researchers, Webb tested an enzyme which can be added into sugar or pollen patties and then given to the bees in capsules the size of pollen.

When a bee consumes it, it will dissolve the pesticide in its stomach before it goes into the brain and triggers damage.

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In the published study, the team concluded that all of the bees which were given the enzyme survived their exposure to pesticide. On the other hand, the control group ones that were exposed to pesticides without being given the enzyme died.

What Kind of Enzyme Is this?

Since this enzyme can only protect from one type of pesticide or organophosphates, the team also made an alternative solution.

The microcapsule is filled with absorbent oil which can suck up the pesticides similarly to a sponge. And, eventually, the bees poop out the microcapsule. This tech is made suitable with any type of pesticide.

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The company is currently expanding their production with larger trials being conducted this summer. They plan to have the product available on the beekeeper market in 2022.

Moreover, another product intended for wild bees may be available by the end of this year.

Is this the Ultimate Solution for Bee Decline We've Been Waiting for?

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According to Webb, although this product can help save the bees now, it's not the final answer. He claims the real issue is agricultural industrialization.

He adds that the scale at which it's happening now means that the management of pests is tricky. Hence, people will resort to the cheapest stuff they can find which is obviously pesticides.

Unfortunately, in a typical beehive, the average is six pesticides.

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When the bees are exposed to them, they're also more prone to other threats like pathogens and mites. Plus, it could impede their flying ability.

What Is Webb's Goal with Beemunity?

Through Beemunity, Webb wants to increase the visibility of the underlying issues.

He claims it's finally something that will help people understand that when pesticides are taken out of the equation, wildlife thrives.

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