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MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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RETURN TO NEWSROOM

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TENNESSEE APPOINTS NEW STATE APIARIST

-New position responsible for bee health and honey quality-

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee Department of Agriculture recently appointed Michael Studer as Tennessee’s state apiarist. Honeybees play an important role in increasing the quantity and quality of many agricultural crops as well as assuring the reproduction of countless species of plants including wildflowers. Also, honeybees provide several other products that are enjoyed by Tennesseans such as honey and bees wax.

“We’re excited to welcome Mike Studer to TDA,” said state Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens. “His vast knowledge of honeybees will certainly be an asset to Tennessee agriculture.

“I’m glad that we’re able to bring back this important position through Ag Enhancement funds to provide additional support and guidance to beekeepers. This position will be especially important in helping beekeepers deal with difficult bee health issues that have devastated bee populations in recent years such as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), Nosema pests and Varroa mites.”

Bee pollination is estimated to contribute as much as \$118 million in additional value to Tennessee crops as well as providing significant indirect benefits to other sectors of agriculture. The more than 800 registered beekeepers in Tennessee that continue to promote agriculture through honey production or pollination services.

The state apiarist will be responsible for inspecting apiaries to determine bee health and work with beekeepers to correct any health problems that may arise. The position is also responsible for holding workshops to educate citizens on proper beekeeping practices and potential problems. Studer has already begun working with the Tennessee Beekeepers

Association, University of Tennessee Extension and beekeepers throughout the state to offer assistance.

“Bees are a significant part of agriculture as they serve as pollinators for the many crops, flowers and nuts that are important to Tennessee and produce honey,” said state Apiarist Michael Studer. “I am pleased to begin serving the citizens of Tennessee and look forward to working with local farmers and beekeepers to ensure there is a viable number of honeybee pollinators for Tennessee’s crops.”

The state apiarist position was funded by the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program. TAEP is a state funded program established by Governor Phil Bredesen and supported by the General Assembly to increase farm income in Tennessee by helping farmers invest in better farming practices and by encouraging diversification and innovation. Through TAEP, farmers can qualify for 35 - 50 percent cost share on a variety of projects including cattle handling and genetics, hay and feed storage, dairy and milk quality, agritourism, specialty crops and specialty livestock. Beekeepers can qualify for cost share enhancement grants in order to enhance their honeybee operations and increase their pollination services and honey production. This includes apiary expansion, beehives, honey processing equipment and trailers for pollination service.

For more information on TDA’s Apiary Section, visit <http://www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/regulate/apiary>.

For more information on TAEP, visit <http://www.picktnproducts.org>.

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