



February 13, 2025

Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation,
131 Legislature Building
100800-97 Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta, TSK 2B6

RE: Declaration of Agriculture Disaster for Honey Producers in Northern Sunrise County

Northern Sunrise County declared an Agriculture Disaster for honey production on February 11, 2025, due to significant losses in honey production among local honey producers in 2024.

In 2024, honey yields in Northern Sunrise County were reported as 30-40% of normal production levels. Neighbouring municipalities, including the Municipal District of Smoky River No. 130 and Birch Hills County, declared an Agriculture Disaster for honey production on November 19, 2024, and November 12, 2024, respectively. The Municipal District of Smoky River No. 130 reported honey production losses ranging from 60-90%, primarily due to adverse agronomic and environmental factors.

Dr. Shelley Hoover, an Associate Professor at the University of Lethbridge, and Connie Phillips, Executive Director of the Alberta Beekeepers Commission, have highlighted several key factors affecting honey production in 2024. These included a shortened canola bloom period, high heat, and water stress. High temperatures, particularly during the canola flowering stage, negatively impacted nectar yields. The bees themselves also faced stress from the heat and moisture, diverting their efforts toward water collection rather than nectar gathering, further affecting honey yields. According to Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), the average honey yield in the region is 130 lbs per hive. However, in 2024, the average yield was only 30-40 lbs per hive, largely due to weather-related factors. AFSC has also reported a significant increase in honey-related claims within the Peace Region for 2024.

This declaration of an Agriculture Disaster for honey production losses in Northern Sunrise County will help raise awareness of the challenges faced by local honey producers. Thank you for your ongoing support of Alberta producers facing challenging conditions and for the collaboration with agencies to introduce initiatives that safeguard the stability of the agricultural industry.

Sincerely,

Jason Javos
Vice-Chairperson
Agricultural Service Board
Northern Sunrise County

