

# **Korea's Native Bee Species Preservation Project**

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The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) has announced that it will actively implement the native bee species preservation project to restore the native bee industry whose industrial foundation collapsed due to the death of approximately 80% of the total population after the outbreak of sacbrood virus (SBV) disease in 2010.

This project aims to support bee farming costs required to supply native bees to farms that are struggling due to the death of bees from the disease by doubling the number of colonies of the target farms. Farms having 30 or more colonies of native bees are eligible to apply for this project. They need to undergo a screening by the Korean Honeybee Association before submitting their application to the relevant city or gun.

In 2014, MAFRA is planning to create a demonstration complex in a disease-free zone (Yokjido, Gyeongnam) isolated from the inland and proliferate and supply 300 colonies of native bees to improve the performance of the project. This demonstration complex project is expected to be successful as it will be conducted in a disease-free zone isolated from the inland without disease media for the first time.

Additionally, MAFRA will provide subsidies to farms in proportion to their performance of proliferation and supply of native bees for the previous year, which will allow farms with superior proliferation techniques to be benefitted more from the government support. Proliferated native bees have been supplied to farms for free so far but beginning 2014, farms will be responsible for a portion of the costs to improve the success rate of the project.

As there is yet no existing treatment for SBV disease, R&D activities have also been continuously conducted to restore the native bee industry. At present, development of preventive measures and medicine for SBV disease (Animal and Plant Quarantine Agency), development of immune boosters (Rural Development Administration) and evaluation of the efficacy of prevention and treatment of SBV disease (IPET) are intensively being implemented. To establish a systematic diagnosis system, operation of a honey bee disease center and educational and promotional activities, such as tele-counseling and SMS service regarding diseases, are also continuously being carried out.

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