

2009 4-H Beekeeping Essay Contest

The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc. has announced the essay topic and rules for the 2009 4-H Beekeeping Essay Contest. There will be three cash prizes for the national winners: 1st Place, \$750; 2nd Place, \$500; and 3rd Place, \$250. Each state winner, including the national winners, will receive an appropriate book about honey bees, beekeeping, or honey.

The Essay Topic is: **The Dance Language of Bees.**

Honey bees possess the ability to communicate the distance and direction of resources to their nest-mates. They employ a symbolic dance language in which the position of the sun is symbolically represented by gravity, and a trained observer can watch their dances and predict where they are foraging. The use of symbolic language by an insect has made them one of the most studied animals. This year's essay contest invites participants to learn about the honey bee's dance language, how it was discovered, how it works and how it provides colonies the ability to find and exploit floral sources.

Sources of information: Karl Von Frisch was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1973 for his work with insect communication. His classic text is *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees*, (1967) Harvard University Press. There are dissenters to Von Frisch's findings. See "Anatomy of a Controversy: The Question of a 'Language' Among Bees," (1990) Columbia University Press. The results of scout bees leading nest-mates back to a new food source can be demonstrated by a beekeeper.

The scope of the research is an essential judging criterion, accounting for 40% of your score. The number of sources consulted, the authority of the sources, and the variety of the sources all are evaluated.

Personal interviews with beekeepers and others familiar with the subject are valued sources of information and should be documented. Sources, which are not cited in the endnotes, should be listed in a "Resources" or "Bibliography" list.

Note that **honey bee** is properly spelled as two words, even though many otherwise authoritative references spell it as one word.

Rules: 1. Contest open to active (dues paid) 4-H Club members only. Previous winners of 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place **at the national level** are not eligible, but previous state winners are.

2. Requirements (failure to meet any one requirement disqualifies the essay)

- a. Text to be typewritten or computer-generated, double spaced, 12 point Times or similar type style, on one side of white paper, following standard manuscript format.
- b. Write on designated subject, only.
- c. All factual statements must be referenced with bibliographical-style endnotes.
- d. The length of the essay, proper, is to be 750-1,000 words, not including endnotes, the bibliography or references, or the essayist's biographical sketch.
- e. The essayist must include a brief biographical sketch, including date of birth, gender, complete mailing address and telephone number on a separate page.

3. Essays will be judged on (a) scope of research – 40%; (b) accuracy – 30%; (c) creativity – 10%; (d) conciseness – 10%; and (e) logical development of the topic - 10%.

4. Completed California essays must be mailed in order to be received on or before Friday, **February 13th, 2009**, by Dr. Eric Mussen, Entomology Department, University of California, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616. The winning state essay will be forwarded to the national competition and the results should become available on May 1st, 2009. All national entries become the property of the Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc. and may be published or used as it sees fit. No essay will be returned (save a copy for your Record Book before you submit the final text).