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# ADOPT-A-HIVE

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## Quarter 3 - 2020

This letter comes to you at the height of the beekeeping season. Right now, your adopted bees are out in full force gathering nectar, creating beeswax, and growing their numbers in preparation for the long winter ahead.

During the busiest time of the season, what is the single most important thing worker bees can be doing? If we had to put it into one word it would be: **foraging**.

While every activity performed by honey bees is of vital importance, **foraging is a make it or break it activity** that requires immense amounts of work within *tight* windows of opportunity. If the bees don't take full advantage of these opportunities they won't have enough food for the winter and will starve.

**Did you know?** The queen bee is one of the busiest bees in the beehive. After mating with a drone, she can lay **up to 2,000 eggs in a single day!**

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A worker bee's life can span up to 6 weeks during the height of the season. In that time, she rapidly progresses from being a **nurse** raising the grubs in the nursery, to a **guard** stationed at the entrance(s) to the hive, to a critically-needed **forager**. She will live out the rest of her life (approximately 3 weeks) in service to the colony in this final stage.

For the 3 weeks of her foraging life, each worker bee will visit 100,000 flowers or more. In just a single day, a worker bee can visit **up to 5,000 flowers!** She extracts nectar from each flower into a specialized stomach called a honey crop. It's in the honey crop that the worker bee mixes the nectar she's extracted with unique blend of enzymes to create honey as we know it.

**“The way humanity manages or mismanages its nature-based assets, including pollinators, will in part define our collective future in the 21st century”**

The worker bee brings her spoils back to the hive and deposits the honey inside of a hexagonal beeswax cell. Several of her cohorts will assist in making sure the cell is filled to the brim before capping it off with the highest-grade beeswax honey bees can make.

This process is repeated all day every day throughout the entire season. Worker bees are never truly done with their work until **every last ounce of their energy is gone and their life expires**. These bees are the *unsung heroes* of your adopted colony ensuring that the rest of the colony has food.

- **ACHIM STEINER**, UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM