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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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HONEYBEE BILL PASSES SENATE

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- The Senate today passed, without objection, Senator Bob Dole's bill to strengthen the Department of Agriculture's authority to prevent entry into the United States of the Africanized Brazilian honeybee -- viewed as a potential threat to segments of American agriculture and serious public nuisance.

Dole's bill tightens quarantine measures and import controls on the bees and authorizes a program of eradication and control in cooperation with the Governments of Canada, Mexico and Central America. Dole said the change in import controls would include closer inspection of international trade vessels which could unwittingly transport the bees and cause accidental, early introduction of the species into the United States. The bees can travel two hundred miles a year by natural migration.

The bill also encourages research. It is thought that genetic research could lead to a means of breeding harmful, aggressive traits out of the Africanized Brazilian honeybee. Earlier research, conducted by a special committee chaired by Dr. Charles D. Michener of the University of Kansas, shows that Africanized Brazilian Honeybees could migrate to North America and become a serious public nuisance, a major problem to the beekeeping industry, a danger to several varieties of crops and, not inconceivably, a threat to the lives of people and animals.

Senator Dole said the danger to agriculture occurs because the Africanized bees tend to drive native bees away, then migrate themselves. Bees are very important in the pollination process since recent farming techniques have cut back populations of other insects which pollinate crops. "The value of farm commodities directly dependent on insects for pollination has been estimated by USDA at \$1 billion and crops valued at \$6 billion are improved by bee pollination."