

Package bees and queens primarily are shipped to the Northern tier states and Canada and also sold to the many hobby beekeepers in Georgia. In addition, the insects have become an international commodity being exported to England, Germany, Saudi Arabia, South America and other foreign countries. The market for package bees peaks in April and May.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture plays a vital role in the package bee and queen industry. The apiary inspection program, provided by the Department helps control infectious diseases and parasites and allows Georgia beekeepers

to move and ship their insects to other states and countries. All shippers of package bees and queens must be licensed with the Department. Currently there are nearly 100 Georgia beekeepers registered to produce and ship bees.

For years, Georgia has led the nation in package bee and queen production and now is surpassed only by California. While it may be small compared with other farm commodities, the industry is making an impact on Georgia's agricultural economy contributing \$5.3 million in 1986, according to estimates compiled by the Georgia Extension Service.