

## NATURE "Silence of the Bees"

Sunday, October 28, 2007

8:00-9:00 p.m. ET

– NATURE’s 26th Season Kicks Off With a Worldwide Investigation of Honeybee Die-Offs; Program Filmed in High Definition –

November 2006. A Pennsylvania beekeeper reports his bees are gone without a trace. Within days, similar devastating reports are coming in from across America. Soon, news from abroad: major hive losses in France, mysterious vanishings in Spain. By January 2007, the plague has a name — Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) — but not an explanation. An insect crucial to our food supply and economy has disappeared in droves, and no one has yet been able to say why.

From crop fields to hi-tech labs, **NATURE** follows scientists and bee experts investigating a rapidly unfolding ecological nightmare when “**Silence of the Bees**” airs Sunday, October 28, 2007, 8:00-9:00 p.m. ET on PBS. The kick-off of **NATURE**’s 26th season is available in high definition. Academy Award-winning actor F. Murray Abraham is series narrator.

“This is the first in-depth documentary to cover this breaking story of ecological crisis,” says Fred Kaufman, executive producer of **NATURE**. “People may be stunned to discover just how dire the consequences of honeybee colony collapse could be.”

Honeybees are responsible for one of every three bites of food we eat. Each year, they pollinate \$14 billion worth of crops and seeds in the U.S. alone. Their total decimation would be catastrophic, from the local to the global level — failed businesses, skyrocketing food prices, unsustainable labor costs and depleted supplies of fruits, nuts, vegetables, plants and more.

“This is like C.S.I. for agriculture — it is painstaking, gumshoe detective work,” says Dr. Ian Lipkin, a researcher at the country’s premier human pathogen lab at Columbia University, who was enlisted to help crack the mystery of CCD.

“**Silence of the Bees**” examines a number of scientific theories about the crisis. Is CCD caused by pesticides? Genetically modified crops? An AIDS-like virus? Is it even a new plague or is it perhaps a recurring cycle? The search for CCD’s cause takes viewers from the northeast United States to London, Paris, Provence, southern Spain and Sichuan Province in China.

Less than a year after the alarm was sounded, scientists are close to identifying the cause of the die-offs that began last November — but the honeybees may not be in the clear yet.

In its 25 years on PBS, **NATURE** has won more than 400 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film community, parent groups and environmental organizations, including eight Emmys, two Peabodys and the first award given to a television program by the Sierra Club. Most recently, “Chimpanzees: An Unnatural History” (2006) won a Christopher Award and the Genesis Award for Outstanding PBS Documentary, and is nominated for an Emmy.

Underwriters: Canon U.S.A., Inc., Toyota, Public Television Viewers, PBS and Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Producers: Partisan Pictures and Thirteen/WNET New York. Executive producer: Fred Kaufman. Executive in charge:

William Grant. Format: CC Stereo DVI Letterbox/HD where available. Online: [pbs.org](http://pbs.org)

– PBS –

CONTACT: Kathleen Kaan, Thirteen/WNET, Tel.: 212/560-3026; Fax: 212/560-3012;  
kaank@thirteen.org

Donald Lee, Thirteen/WNET, Tel.: 212/560-3005; leed@thirteen.org

■ Last year, to celebrate the series' silver anniversary, **NATURE** launched a redesigned and expanded Web site ([pbs.org/nature](http://pbs.org/nature)). In addition to the weekly video podcasts, new features include a newsletter, streaming video clips, an RSS feed, user bulletin boards and polls, new teacher lesson plans, photo slideshows, and more. **NATURE** video podcasts, available on iTunes and online, range from two to 10 minutes in length and feature behind-the-scenes interviews with filmmakers and producers, program excerpts and outtakes.

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