

# Things to Consider when Hiring A Beekeeper



**METRO BEEKEEPERS**

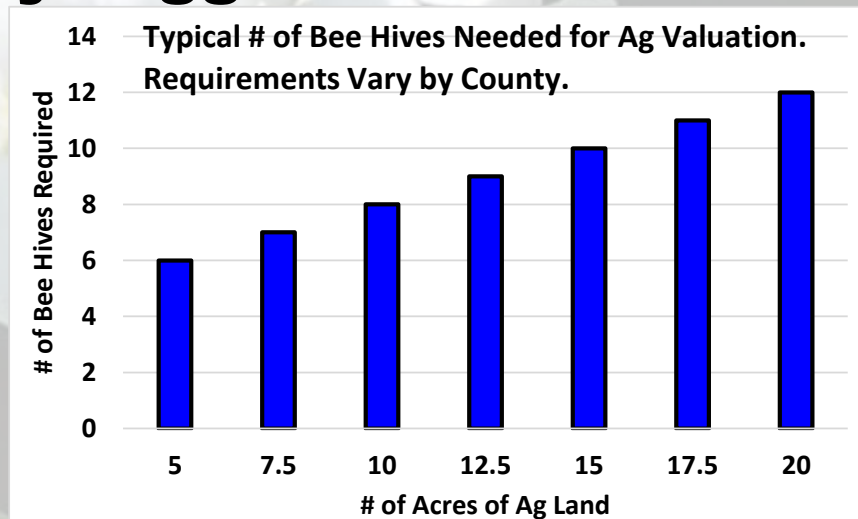
- **Metro Beekeepers Assoc is not a lawyer**
- **This is not legal advice**
- **We summarized info from public sources**
  - **To help people be aware of considerations**
  - **To promote beekeeping**

# Why Hire a Beekeeper?

- **Potential benefits**
  - **Ag Valuation lowers taxes (after 5 years)**
  - **Pollination improves plants & environment**
  - **Honey (make agreements with beekeeper)**
  - **Get mentoring in becoming a beekeeper**
  - **Enjoy watching bees**
- **Options**
  - **Beekeeper does all the work**
    - **A lot of work, cost, & knowledge needed**
  - **Landowner shares work & learns beekeeping**
  - **Beekeeper teaches landowner to take over or substitute**
- **Costs vary based on agreements**
- **Contract is highly recommended**

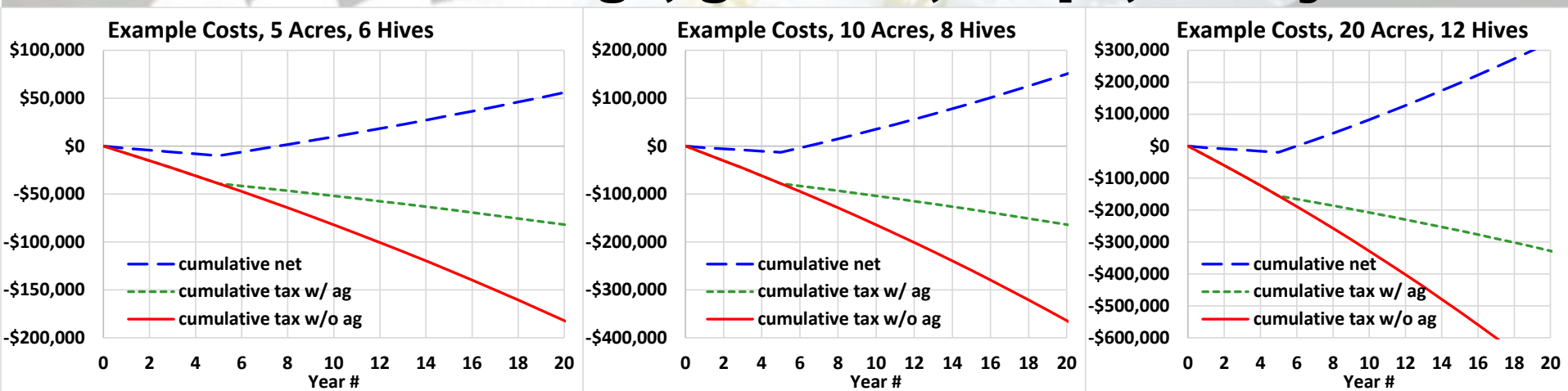
# Texas Property Ag Valuation

- **Agriculture Valuation, aka Ag Exemption**
  - Lower tax rate for land used for agriculture
  - Honey bees qualify in Texas
- **Typical rules**
  - Ag land must be 5 to 20 acres (not incl home)
  - Min 6 bee hives for 5 acres, plus 1 hive per 2.5 acres, up to 12 hives for 20 acres
  - Land use must qualify for 5 of past 7 years
  - If land use changes, may trigger back taxes
- **Rules & tax benefits vary by county**
  - Contact your county tax assessor



# Example Costs & Tax Savings

- **Examples. Each case differs.**
  - **Taxes: \$1500/acre without Ag; \$450k/acre with Ag**
  - **Pay Beekeeper**
    - **\$100/hive for setup + \$300/hive/year (incl year 1)**
    - **Account for setup, maintenance, replacements**
  - **Landowner & Beekeeper work out details**
- **Short-term investment provides significant savings**
- **Benefits: tax savings, gardens, crops, honey**



- **Tax savings varies by county. This is an example.**

# What's Involved in Beekeeping?<sup>5</sup>

- **Tasks**

- **Confirm local rules. Choose location & prepare it.**
- **Buy or build boxes & stands. Set them up.**
- **Get bees (nuc, package, swarm, existing hives)**
- **Install bees**
- **Inspect hives regularly, incl queen, food, colony health, pests, housing, water, environment**
- **Harvest**
- **Maintenance, Replace lost colonies**
- **Records & documentation**
- **Beekeepers learn to see signs & take action**
  - **Threats from pests, diseases, starvation, robbing**
  - **There is much to learn**
  - **Be prepared for various potential issues**
  - **Help bees survive, produce honey, pollinate plants**

# Sample Costs

- **Bees, Boxes, Frames: ~\$500**
- **Tools, clothing (non-recurring): \$300**
- **Labor, travel, maintenance, replacements**

Suit with Veil		\$100 to \$240
Gloves		\$30
Hive Tool		\$13
Bee Brush		\$15
Smoker		\$43
Stand		\$20 to \$40
Bottom Board, Reducer		\$44
Inner Cover		\$18
Telescoping Cover		\$37
Deep Hive Box		\$27
10 Deep Frames w/ Foundation		\$40
Two Medium Hive Boxes (at least)		\$26
20 Medium Frames (at least)		\$39
Queen Excluder (optional)		\$10
Inner Feeder		\$11
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$480 to \$630</b>
Nuc		\$250
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$730 to \$880</b>



• Add hives for ~ \$500 each

- **Take a beekeeping class**
- **Improves hive survival**

# Steps to Get Ag Valuation

- **Meet requirements Tax Code section 23.51(2)**
- **Homestead rules**
- **Meet requirements of county appraisal district**
  - **# of colonies**
  - **Housing type (10 frame, 8 frame, top bar, etc)**
  - **Productivity value (used in tax formula)**
  - **Rules associated with maintaining colonies: kept alive, disease free, treatments needed.**
  - **Number of months colonies on property each year**
  - **Is property owner required to plant vegetation?**
  - **Distance to crops, if “for pollination”**
  - **Records of history of Ag use (receipts, photos)**
- **Fill out & Submit Application for Ag Valuation**

# Application for Ag Valuation

- **Texas form 50-29, Application for Ag Use Appraisal**
  - <https://www.tad.org/knowledge/doc/ag-use-open-space-deferral-111>
- **File by 1 May for the year requested**
  - **File early to allow time for rejections / corrections**
- **Applications accepted until Appraisal review board meets (typically July). Late penalty applies.**
- **Property owner must notify appraiser by 30 April if land use changes, which may trigger back taxes.**
- **Land might be allowed to be converted to wildlife management use & keep Ag Valuation**

## • References

- <https://texasbeekeepers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Steps-To-An-Agricultural-Valuation-10-04-2023.pdf>
- <https://texasbeekeepers.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Ag-Valuation-County-Guidelines-Master-List-2022-06-27.pdf>
- <http://beepeaceful.com/agricultural-valuation-for-beekeepers-in-texas/>



# How To Choose A Beekeeper

- **Experienced beeks recognize problems & act in time to minimize colony losses**
- **Hiring intermediate beekeepers is a good long-term approach to help build experienced beekeepers**
- **Your contract ensures the steps are accomplished at the agreed-to price**
- **Contract: Provides detailed agreements**
- **Insurance: Maintains appropriate protections**
- **Good to work with, people skills**
- **Member of beekeeping association**
  - **Continues to learn**
  - **Contributes to beekeeping community**

# Contract Considerations

- **A contract reduces potential for misunderstanding**
- **Protects the landowner & the beekeeper**
- **Candidate contents**
  - **Addresses & contact info**
  - **Number & types of hives**
  - **Duration of hives on land**
  - **Costs, payment due dates**
  - **Property access, days, times**
  - **Documentation (log, photos, & receipts for tax records)**
  - **Persistent water source, year-round**
  - **Who owns equip & bees**
  - **Who owns the honey**
  - **Notice of exceptions**
  - **Pesticide exposure**
  - **Insurance, liability**
  - **Posting signs**
  - **Conflict resolution**
  - **Effects of breaches**
- **Landowner & Beekeeper tailor contract for individual circumstances**
- **Some agreements have no contract, which may be fine until something goes wrong**

# Summary

- **Hiring a beekeeper can provide big benefits**
  - **Tax savings for Ag Valuation**
  - **Improve gardens/crops, plants, environment**
  - **Honey harvest**
  - **Learn beekeeping**
  - **Enjoy fascinating bees**
- **Labor, Costs, & Knowledge are substantial**
  - **Bees, Boxes, Equipment, Clothing, Tools**
  - **Labor & Travel for Inspections, Maintenance, & Replacements**
  - **Know signs & what to do to help bees thrive**
- **Hiring a beekeeper makes it easy for landowner**
- **A good contract is recommended**