

Dear Members of the Alabama Beekeepers Association (ABA),

I trust all is well with everyone.

It is with great sadness that I announce the cancellation of the 2020 Alabama Beekeepers Association Fall Conference. I was elected as Vice President September 21, 2019. Immediately thereafter, I began reaching out to varying speakers around the country, forming what would become our 2020 Fall Conference. Many of you who know the ABA Officers and Board understand our desire for the association to shine, mediocre is not an acceptable outcome. There was great excitement about some of the “out of the norm” speakers who were scheduled.

Move ahead to March 2020 – everyone’s world significantly changed due to Covid-19.

The itinerary for conference was already complete with the exception of moving speakers to different time slots to maintain better fluency. 17 speakers were scheduled over two days. On May 30, 2020 the Officers and Board of Directors of the ABA had our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter board meeting at Peach Park, Clanton, AL. I addressed the Officers and Board with the current obstacles we were facing as a result of the Corona Virus. The information is as follows:

1. Two Keynote speakers cancelled.
2. One speaker was not allowed public engagements tentatively until August 1<sup>st</sup>, with the potential of being extended.
3. One speaker was not allowed public engagements tentatively until August 8<sup>th</sup>, with the potential of being extended.
4. Our vendor chairman was not allowed public engagements tentatively until August 8<sup>th</sup>, with the potential of being extended.
5. We are held at a 50% capacity in an auditorium that seats 608. That takes us down to 304 before social distancing. (We had 475 in attendance in 2019) This would have forced a cap on registration numbers.
6. The classrooms that would tightly hold 72 people, would be reduced to approximately 18 people plus the instructor.
7. The children’s program (an enormous success) would not be held.
8. All meals would need to be catered as per current Alabama Health Department guidelines.
9. The vendor’s area would be reduced more than 50% and many vendors had indicated they would not attend.
10. Our venue was completely shut down until the end of July, with the potential of being extended.

And the list goes on...

Please realize, we began thinking WAY out of the box with ideas to hold Fall Conference. The mountain of issues and constraints was great and realistically insurmountable. Personally, I wish the outcome was different – remembering conferences past, catching up with old friends, establishing new relationships, all surrounding that special insect we have grown to love and care for is heart wrenching.

Ultimately, the buck stops here. If you have complaints, concerns, questions or suggestions feel free to contact me, my contact information is below.

In closing, I would like to thank our president, Phillip Garrison; Secretary, Heather Sinyard, and Treasurer, Wynelle Milstead for their dedication and hard work. Know too, our current Board of Directors is dedicated and very engaged. Those participating in our May 30<sup>th</sup> meeting were: Sandra Emery, Hal Hendrix, Ray Latham, Troy Latham and Scott Lucas. All of these folks listed continue to sacrifice time, and are truly dedicated to the advancement of the ABA.

Please continue to stay safe and enjoy your bees.

Sincerely,

Vince Wallace, Vice President  
Alabama Beekeepers Association  
Cell/Text: 205-339-3318  
Email: wallacebees@gmail.com