

'Sting' operation leads to recovery of stolen bees

Authorities found \$170,000 worth of stolen hives in a rented bee nursery space

The Associated Press

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FILE - In this July 16, 2014, file photo, a bee works on a honeycomb the Gene Brandi Apiary in Los Banos, Calif. The Environmental Protection Agency has found that a major pesticide harms honeybees when used on cotton and citrus but not on other big crops like corn, berries and tobacco. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

GREAT FALLS, Montana (AP) — A Montana beekeeper has recovered hives that were stolen from him in California, thanks to an agricultural sting operation.

Lloyd Cunniff of Choteau reported 488 hives stolen in January, after he had transported them to California for the almond pollination season.

A tip led Fresno County authorities to find stolen hives worth \$170,000 in a rented bee nursery space, a cow pasture and hidden in a drainage along a freeway.

Fresno County Detective Anders Solis, member of the county's agriculture crimes task force, says there were 10 victims in seven California counties in all.

The Great Falls Tribune reports (<http://gftrib.com/2pvUzhM>) Cunniff got most of his bees back last Sunday. He says he is keeping the recovered hives in a separate field in case they are infected with disease or mites.

Information from: Great Falls Tribune, <http://www.greatfalls Tribune.com>
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