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MORPHOTYPIC STRUCTURE OF HONEY BEES AND THEIR MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGES

Abstract. One of the key aspects of the preservation of endemic populations of modern honey bee breeds is research in the identification of their morphological characters in apiaries, as an assessment of the cleanliness of queen bees and the potential for restoration of populations.

The research material was a sampling of summer generation bees. The volume amounted to 640 individuals from 16 bee families in three districts of the forest-steppe and steppe honey flow areas (Margaushsky (3 families - apiary of the K.I.Michurin farm firm), Krasnoarmeysky (6 families from Pchelovodcheskoe OOO) - forest-steppe zone; Batyrevsky district (7 families from Pirozhkova N.P. farm) - steppe honey flow area). The assessment was carried out according to the common method, during which 15 traits were measured.

The studies of the morphotypic structure of honey bees revealed the dominant conformity of the identified classes of workers and drones to the standard of the Central Russian subspecies. The research results showed that the morphotype of working bees is represented by the prevailing class - **O** and the minimum represented - **1R**. The drones morphotype is represented only by class O. At the same time, a complex methodology, including an analysis of the "purity" of working bees and drones, allows us to note the genetic safety, both on the maternal lineage and the paternal side, respectively. However, studies of morphological abnormalities in *Apis mellifera* revealed eye color changes only in drones, namely brown or pomegranate and white eyes.

The studies have revealed the potential for preservation of the population of the European dark (Central Russian) bee breed in Chuvashia. The decrease in the minimum tergite value recorded in the Margaushsky district beyond the standard frames of the Central Russian breed does not indicate the ongoing hybridization processes since this is the only one and can be explained by some random factors affecting biophysiological processes.

Key words: honey bees, workers, drones, morphotypes, morphological changes, eye color.

Introduction. According to experts, of the currently known 30 subspecies or breeds of honey bee (*Apis mellifera*), only the European dark bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) is adapted to life in conditions of low The bees of the European dark (Central Russian) subspecies differ in a whole complex of traits from the bees of other taxa. Moreover, they are also heterogeneous within these categories, forming the isolated groups (populations) adapted to one or another specific condition [2,3]. In the modern studies of honey bees, experts distinguish various populations (Bashkir, Ural mountain-taiga, Altai, etc.), which, to one degree or another, have an official status [4,5,6,7]. Analysis of periodicals and monographs emphasizes the absence of any detailed studies of honey bee populations in the territory of the Republic of Chuvashia and the identification of their status.

The aim of this work is a study of the morphotypic structure of *Apis mellifera* and an assessment of the morphometric characteristics of the honey bee workers in the territory of the Republic of Chuvashia.

Materials and methods. To study the morphotypic structure of *Apis mellifera*, the sampling was carried out in five regions covering all three honey flow areas of the republic: forest-steppe (Margaushsky (3 families - apiary of the K.I.Michurin farm firm), Krasnoarmeysky (4 families from Pchelovodcheskoe OOO), Krasnochetsky (4 families from private apiaries)), forest (Shumerlinsky district (2 families - private apiary)) and a steppe honey flow area (Batyrevsky (6 families from Pirozhkova N.P. farms)). The total number of investigated working bees and drones was 1140 individuals, 570 each.

During the work, the methodology for assessing the classes of honey bee morphotypes according to F. Ruttner was used [8]. Identification was carried out visually using a handheld magnifier; when photographing, a Macro lens attachment was used on the LG Ray smartphone.

The following classes are distinguished by the color of the chitinous cover of the workers: **O - Central Russian subspecies; e; E; 1R; 2R; 3R [9].**

When identifying drones, according to the methodology, there are classes: **O; I_i; I_s; I_{is}; I; 1R.** At the same time, drones of the Central Russian subspecies can be represented by both classes **O** and **I_s** [9].

When assessing the morphometric characteristics of the working individuals of the honey bees, the research material was a sample of summer generation bees. The volume amounted to 640 bees of 16 bee families from three districts of the forest-steppe and steppe honey flow zones (Margaushsky (3 families - apiary of the K.I.Michurin farm firm), Krasnoarmeysky (6 families from Pchelovodcheskoe OOO) - forest-steppe zone; Batyrevsky district (7 families from Pirozhkova N.P. farm) - steppe honey flow area).

The morphology of workers was estimated according to the common method [1,9,10], during which 15 exterior traits were measured. For identification assessment of traits, it was used the standard of the European dark bee breed according to N.I. Krivtsov, 1995 [6]. The measurement was carried out using the MBS - 10 binocular microscope.

Results. The studies have shown that in the territory of Chuvashia, the morphotype of working bees is represented by the predominant class - **O** and the least represented - **1R**. The drones morphotype is represented only by class **O** (figure 1).

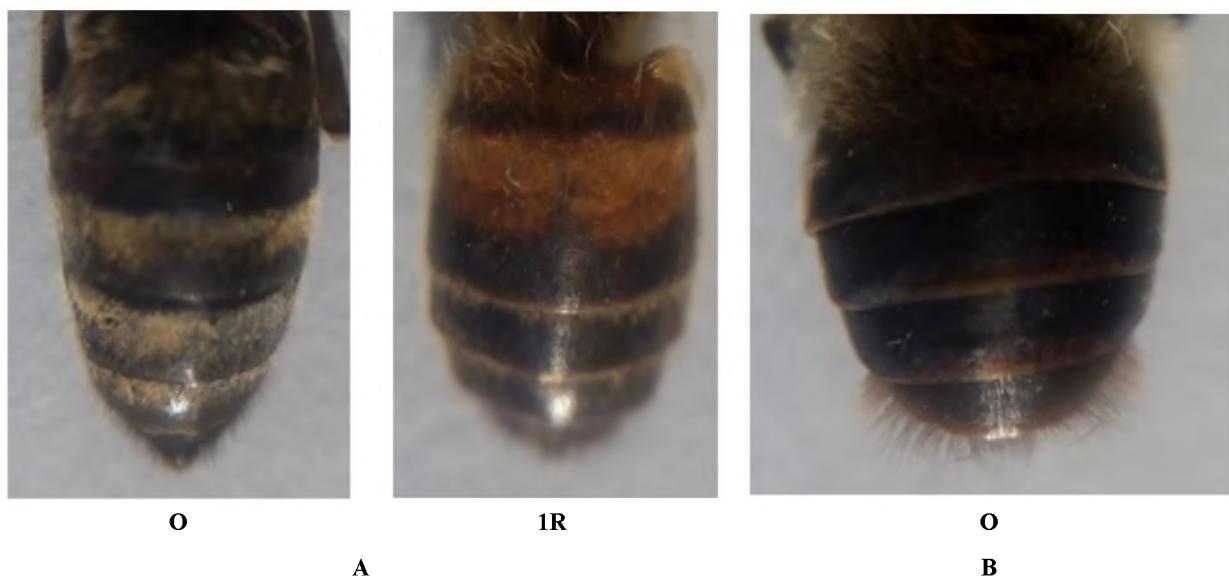


Figure 1 – Classes of honey bees morphotypes in the Republic of Chuvashia: A - workers, B - drones

In the sample of 19 families located in different honey flow areas, the bee morphotype corresponded to the standard of the Central Russian subspecies, both for working bees and for drones (table 1).

According to experts, one identified bee of the **1R** morphotype (0.2% of the sample of workers) cannot be an indicator of crossbreeding. Professor F. Ruttner noted that the sudden appearance of rings in bees of a uniform dark line is not a sign of crossbreeding [8].

Table 1 – Morphotypes of working bees and drones

District	Total number of bees	Number of workers	Morphotype class, units (%)		Number of drones	Morphotype class, units (%)
			O	IR		
<i>The forest-steppe honey flow area</i>						
Krasnoarmeysky	240	120	120 (100%)	–	120	120 (100%)
Krasnochetaisky	240	120	120 (100%)	–	120	120 (100%)
Margaushsky	180	90	90 (100%)	–	90	90 (100%)
Total for the area	660	330	330 (100%)	–	330	330 (100%)
<i>Steppe honey flow area</i>						
Batyrevsky	360	180	179 (99.5%)	1	180	180 (100%)
Total for the area	360	180	179 (99.4%)	1 (0.6%)	180	180 (100%)
<i>Forest honey flow area</i>						
Shumerlinsky	120	60	60 (100%)	–	60	60 (100%)
Total for the area	120	60	60 (100%)	–	60	60 (100%)
Total in the Republic	1140	570	569 (99.8%)	1 (0.2%)	570	570 (100%)

Given the importance of studies of nontypical morphological changes in living organisms, the work was carried out to identify eye color abnormalities in workers and drones (table 2).

Table 2 – Morphological changes in the eyes of drones

District	Number of drones	Morphological state of eyes		
		Normal	brown or pomegranate	white
<i>The forest-steppe honey flow area</i>				
Krasnoarmeysky	120	63 (52.5%)	57 (47.5%)	–
Krasnochetaisky	120	77 (64.2%)	42 (35.0%)	1 (0.8%)
Margaushsky	90	80 (88.9%)	10 (11.1%)	–
Total for the area	330	220 (66.7%)	109 (33.0%)	1 (0.3%)
<i>Steppe honey flow area</i>				
Batyrevsky	180	157 (87.2%)	23 (12.8%)	–
Total for the area	180	157 (87.2%)	23 (12.8%)	–
<i>Forest honey flow area</i>				
Shumerlinsky	60	42 (70%)	18 (30%)	–
Total for the area	60	42 (70%)	18 (30%)	–
Total in the Republic	570	419 (73.5%)	150 (26.3%)	1 (0.2%)

At the same time, color changes were not detected in workers, and two types of deviations were recorded in drones, namely, brown or pomegranate and white eyes (figure 2).



Figure 2 – Morphological anomalies of the eyes of drones: 1 - normal eyes; 2 - brown or pomegranate eyes; 3 - white eyes

In numerical ratio, the maximum number (33.0%) of drones with brown or pomegranate eyes was registered in the forest-steppe area (Table 2). Also, one drone with white eyes (0.3%) was recorded in the apiary of this territory. In the steppe and forest honey flow areas, drones with only brown or pomegranate eyes were observed - 12.8% (steppe zone) and 26.3% (forest zone).

Consequently, studies of the morphotypic structure of honey bees in the Chuvash Republic revealed the dominant conformity of the identified classes of workers and drones to the standard of the Central Russian subspecies. At the same time, a comprehensive methodology, including an analysis of the "purity" of working bees and drones, allows noting the genetic safety, both on the maternal and paternal lineages. In the opinion of some specialists, the drones belonging to the standard of one subspecies, with competent selective and breeding work (creating a "drone barrier"), allows in the future to form a purebred breeding area, and further to create an array or area with purebred bees.

However, investigations of morphological abnormalities in *Apis mellifera* revealed eye color changes only in drones. This fact allows us to note possible changes in the environmental situation that causes mutational processes. Even F. Ruttner (1981) noted that there were mutations that interfered with the normal color of point and facet eyes. Since the formation of pigments depends on many hereditary foundations, there is the possibility of the appearance of various eye mutations.

Analysis of the research results of the morphometric characteristics of working individuals revealed the presence of Central Russian bees in the territory of Chuvashia, this fact suggests the presence of a separate population of European dark breed in this area.

The indicators of the average value of the proboscis length of the bees, as well as the *Lim* limits in all the studied administrative districts, corresponded to the European dark breed: 6.28 mm - Krasnoarmeysky, 6.20 mm - Batyrevsky and 6.28 mm - Morgaushsky (standard - 5.75-6.80 mm).

Data on the length of the right front wing of the workers also emphasize the presence of Central Russian bees at all sampling places: 9.30 mm - Krasnoarmeysky, 9.21 mm - Batyrevsky and 9.25 mm - Morgaushsky (standard - 9.1-10.2 mm). A similar situation is observed in terms of the width of the wing. The investigated trait in all bees does not go beyond the limits of the corresponding standard (2.0-3.2 mm).

According to the cubital honeycomb, given the lack of standards for the length and width of the forming veins, the taxonomic affiliation of honey bees can be regarded only by the cubital index. In this case, as in the previously considered indicators, the index corresponds to the standard of the European dark breed: 62.3 ± 2.39 - Krasnoarmeysky, 61.5 ± 1.62 - Batyrevsky, and 62.3 ± 1.43 - Morgaushsky (standard - 60-65%).

By the length of tergite, the working bees of all administrative districts correspond to the standard, but according to the *Lim* width of this trait, in the Morgaushsky district, a decrease in the minimum indicator for the sample beyond the standard frames (4.5-5.1 mm) of the Central Russian breed is noted - 4.10-4.84 mm.

The indicators of the sternite length (average values and *Lim*) as well as the considered characteristics are aligned with the standards of indigenous bees (2.6-3.2 mm). The same was recorded in terms of width, i.e. the bees from the studied sample corresponded to the Central Russian breed (standard is 4.75-5.50).

Wax mirrors, which are one of the main vital structures of the body, were characterized by average lengths and *Lim* values corresponding to Central Russian bees: 1.74 ± 0.01 (1.73-1.75 mm) -

Krasnoarmeysky, 1.69 ± 0.08 (1.55-1.75 mm) - Batyrevsky and 1.64 ± 0.05 (1.51-1.70) - Morgaushsky (standard - 1.5-1.75 mm). According to the values of the width of the wax plate, the workers also corresponded to the standard of this breed (2.35-2.75 mm).

According to the parameters of the right rear leg, as well as the cubital honeycomb, there are no standards for the length and width of tarsus in literary sources. The results of estimating the average values of the tarsal index and Lim revealed the compliance of bees of all samples with the standard of the European dark breed: 54.1 ± 0.54 - Krasnoarmeysky, 53.3 ± 0.92 - Batyrevsky and 52.4 ± 0.31 - Morgaushsky (standard according to N.I. Krivtsov - 52-58%, 50-55% according to the common standards).

Conclusion. These studies carried out as part of an inventory of the taxonomic belonging of the bee population in the Chuvash Republic, as well as an assessment of morphological abnormalities, revealed the preservation of the Central Russian subspecies in this territory and some distribution of eye color anomalies. Further scientifically based breeding and veterinary measures, as well as the collection of information on other administrative regions, will help maintain stability, quantitative and qualitative composition of the population of the Central Russian subspecies in the republic. Most importantly, the research results would allow planning activities in the beekeeping and cultivation of certain types of cereal crops, in particular triticale [12,13], throughout the Chuvash Republic.

Studies of the morphometric characteristics of *Apis mellifera* workers in apiaries, primarily engaged in selection and breeding and subsequently distributing the breeding material to commodity apiaries in the Chuvash Republic, found the presence of genetically and biologically "clean" material for maintaining and preserving the population of Central Russian honey bees in this territory. In our opinion, a decrease in the minimum value of bee tergite length in the Morgaushsky district beyond the standard of the Central Russian breed does not indicate the ongoing hybridization processes taking into account that this fact is the only one and can be explained by some random factors affecting the biophysiological processes.

At the same time, the carried out work and the results are of scientific and practical importance in creating an information base on the honeybee population of the Central Russian breed in Chuvashia, i.e. according to the literature [4,5,6,12], only detailed studies of the morphometric traits of bees of Vladimir, Tatar, Vologda, Oryol, Novosibirsk, Chelyabinsk, Bashkir and some other populations are known.

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БАЛ АРАСЫНЫҢ МОРФОТИКАЛЫҚ ҚҰРЫЛЫМЫ МЕН МОРФОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ ӨЗГЕРІСТЕРИ

Аннотация. Жұмыстың мақсаты – *Apis mellifera*-ның морфотиптік құрылымын зерттеу және Чуваш Республикасындағы жұмысшы бал арапарының морфометриялық сипаттамаларын бағалау.

Жұмыс істейтін арапардың морфологиясы жалпы қабылданған әдіс бойынша бағаланды, 15 сыртқы белгілер өлшенді. Таңбаларды сойкестендіру үшін Н.И. Кривцов (1995 ж.) негізделген орталық орыс ара тұқымының стандарты пайдаланылды. Өлшем MBS-10 бинокулярлы микроскоп арқылы жүзеге асырылды.

Бал арасының морфотиптік құрылымын зерттеу барысында жұмысшы және атальқара класының орталық орыс ара тұқымының стандартына сәйкес келетіні анықталды. Зерттеу нәтижелері жұмысшы арапардың морфотипі басым класы – **O** және ең азы – **1R**. Ерек арапардың морфотипі тек **O** класы арқылы ұсынылған. Сонымен катар, құрделі жұмыс әдісі, жұмыс істейтін ара мен атальқара «тазалығы» талдау аналық жағынан да, атальқ жағынан да гендік информационың сақталатынын ескеру қажеттігі айқындалды. Алайда *Apis mellifera*-ны зерттеуде морфологиялық ауытқуы тек атальқ араның көзінің қоңыр немесе анар түске және ақ түске өзгерісі барысында анықталды.

Араның тұмсық ұзындығының орташа мәні, соңдай-ақ барлық зерттелген әкімшілік аудандардағы *Lim* орталық орыс ара тұқымына сәйкес келді: 6,28 мм – Красноармейский, 6,20 мм – Батыревский және 6,28 мм – Моргаушский (стандарт – 5.75-6.80 мм).

Жұмысшы аралардың оң жақ алдыңғы қанаттының ұзындығы туралы мәліметтер, сонымен қатар, барлық іріктеу пункттерінде орталық орыс арасының болғандығын көрсетеді: 9,30 мм - Красноармейский, 9,21 мм - Батыревский және 9,25 мм - Моргаушский (стандартты - 9.1-10.2 мм)) Ұқсас жағдай қанаттың ені бойынша байқалады. Барлық аралардағы зерттелетін белгілер тиісті нормадан аспайды (2,0-3,2 мм).

Кубиталды клетка, қалыптасатын тамырлардың ұзындығы мен ені бойынша стандарттардың жоктығына байланысты бал араларының таксономиялық құрамын тек кубиталды индекс бойынша қарастыруға болады. Бұл жағдайда бұрын қаралған индикаторлардағыдей, индекс Орталық Ресей тұқымының стандартына сәйкес келеді: $62,3 \pm 2,39$ - Красноармейский, $61,5 \pm 1,62$ - Батыревский және $62,3 \pm 1,43$ - Моргаушский (стандартты - 60-65%).

Тергиттің ұзындығы бойынша барлық әкімшілік аудандарда жұмысшы аралар стандартқа сәйкес келеді, бірақ Моргаушский ауданында осы белгі ені *Lim*-ге сәйкес, орталық орыс тұқымының стандартынан тыс (4,5-5,1 мм) үлгі бойынша минималды көрсеткіштің темендерегеңі байқалды – 4,10-4,84 мм.

Стернит ұзындығының индикаторлары (орташа мән және *Lim*), сондай-ақ қарастырылған сипаттамалар отандық ара стандарттарына сәйкес келеді (2,6-3,2 мм). Ені бойынша ұқсастығы анықталды. Зерттелген үлгідегі аралар орталық орыс тұқымына сәйкес келді (стандарт 4.75-5.50).

Балауыз айнасы дененің негізгі өмірлік құрылымдарының бірі болып саналады және орташа ұзындығы бойынша және *Lim*, орташа орыс аралықтарына сәйкес келетін мәні бойынша сипатталды: $1,74 \pm 0,01$ (1,73-1,75 мм) - Красноармейский, $1,69 \pm 0,08$ (1,55-1,75 мм) - Батыревский және $1,64 \pm 0,05$ (1,51-1,70) – Моргаушский (стандартты - 1,5-1,75 мм). Балауыз айна енінің мәніне сәйкес жұмыс істейтін аралар да осы тұқымының стандартына сәйкес келді (2,35-2,75 мм).

Он жақ артқы аяктың, сондай-ақ кубиталды жасуша параметрлеріне сәйкес әдеби дереккөздерде төмөнгі аяғының ұзындығы мен ені бойынша нормалар жоқ. Тарсаль индексі мен Лимнің орташа мәнін бағалау нәтижелері барлық үлгілердің ара балының орталық орыс ара тұқымының стандартына сәйкестігін анықтады: $54,1 \pm 0,54$ - Красноармейский, $53,3 \pm 0,92$ - Батыревский және $52,4 \pm 0,31$ - Моргаушский (N стандартты). Кривцов жалпы қабылданған стандарттарға сәйкес 52-58%, 50-55%).

Түйін сөздер: бал аралары, жұмысшы аралар, атальқ аралар, морфотиптер, морфологиялық өзгерістер, көзінің түсі.

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МОРФОТИПНАЯ СТРУКТУРА МЕДОНОСНЫХ ПЧЕЛ И ИХ МОРФОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ИЗМЕНЕНИЯ

Аннотация. Цель настоящей работы – изучение морфотипной структуры *Apis mellifera* и оценка морфометрических признаков рабочих особей медоносной пчелы на территории Республики Чувашия.

Оценку морфологии рабочих пчел проводили по общепринятой методике, в ходе которой измеряли 15 экстерьерных признаков. Для идентификационной оценки признаков использовали стандарт среднерусской породы пчел по Н.И. Кривцову (1995 г.). Измерение проводили с помощью бинокулярного микроскопа МБС – 10.

Проведенные исследования морфотипной структуры медоносных пчел позволили выявить доминантное соответствие идентифицированных классов рабочих особей и трутней стандарту среднерусского подвида. Результаты исследований показали, что морфотип рабочих пчел представлен преобладающим классом – **О** и минимально представленным – **1R**. Морфотип трутней представлен только классом **О**. При этом комплексная методология, включающая анализ «чистоты» рабочих пчел и трутней, позволяет отметить генетическую сохранность как по материнской линии, так и по отцовской, соответственно. Вместе с тем исследования морфологических отклонений у *Apis mellifera* выявили цветовые изменения глаз только у трутней, а именно: коричневые или гранатовые глаза и белые.

Показатели среднего значения длины хоботка пчел, как и пределы Lim , во всех исследованных административных районах соответствовали среднерусской породе: 6,28 мм – Красноармейский, 6,20 мм – Батыревский и 6,28 мм – Моргаушский (стандарт – 5,75-6,80 мм).

Данные по длине правого переднего крыла рабочих особей также подчеркивают наличие среднерусских пчел во всех точках взятия проб: 9,30 мм – Красноармейский, 9,21 мм – Батыревский и 9,25 мм – Моргаушский (стандарт – 9,1-10,2 мм). Аналогичная ситуация наблюдается и по показателям ширины крыла. Исследованный признак у всех пчел не выходит за пределы соответствующего стандарта (2,0-3,2 мм). По кубитальной ячейке, ввиду отсутствия стандартов длины и ширины образующих жилок, таксономическую принадлежность медоносных пчел можно рассматривать только по кубитальному индексу. В данном случае так же, как и по ранее рассмотренным показателям индекс соответствует стандарту среднерусской породы: $62,3 \pm 2,39$ – Красноармейский, $61,5 \pm 1,62$ – Батыревский и $62,3 \pm 1,43$ – Моргаушский (стандарт – 60-65 %).

По длине тергита рабочие пчелы всех административных районов соответствуют стандарту, но по Lim ширины данного признака в Моргаушском районе отмечается снижение минимального показателя по выборке за рамки стандарта (4,5-5,1 мм) среднерусской породы – 4,10-4,84 мм.

Показатели длины стерниты (средние значения и Lim) так же как и рассмотренные признаки соответствуют стандартам аборигенных пчел (2,6-3,2 мм). Аналогичная ситуация зарегистрирована и по показателям ширины, т.е. пчелы из исследованной выборки соответствовали среднерусской породе (стандарт 4,75-5,50).

Восковые зеркальца, являющиеся одним из основных жизненно важных структур организма, характеризовались показателями средних значений длины и Lim соответствующими среднерусским пчелам: $1,74 \pm 0,01$ (1,73-1,75 мм) – Красноармейский, $1,69 \pm 0,08$ (1,55-1,75 мм) – Батыревский и $1,64 \pm 0,05$ (1,51-1,70) – Моргаушский (стандарт – 1,5-1,75 мм). По значениям ширины воскового зеркальца рабочие пчелы соответствовали также стандарту данной породы (2,35-2,75 мм).

По параметрам правой задней ножки, так же как и по кубитальной ячейке, стандарты длины и ширины голени в литературных источниках отсутствуют. Результаты оценки средних значений тарзального индекса и Lim выявили соответствие пчел всех проб стандарту среднерусской породы: $54,1 \pm 0,54$ – Красноармейский, $53,3 \pm 0,92$ – Батыревский и $52,4 \pm 0,31$ – Моргаушский (стандарт по Н.И.Кривцову – 52-58 %, 50-55 % по общепринятым стандартам).

Ключевые слова: медоносные пчелы, рабочие пчелы, трутни, морфотипы, морфологические изменения, цвет глаз.

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