

*2030: These not arable sites became known as brownfield sites and by 2027 they were more defined as not usable. The “Hot Buzz” movement was created by those who believed that all pollination should be done by humans and natural pollinators, not artificial ones. In the past decade, with the absence of bees, the world has hit its low. Now, however, the world is becoming more stabilized and adapting to their new circumstances and making changes. The worst has past.*

## **2025-2030**

### **Citizen 1a**

In the late 2020s, attempts to fix the pollen issue started to be used on a large scale, mainly to patch what was broken, therefore not as a permanent fix.

Since I turned 30 and was able to afford a house with modest land. I also decided to invest in self-pollination, or the process of spreading pollen by hand. This is a tedious system, but proves to be very efficient. After work, I come home and hand pollinate my garden to produce the berries and vegetables I call mine. It may take an hour or so, but ends up being fulfilling when I can sustain it.

Before the pollen crisis, my lifestyle was structured differently. I used to be very lackadaisical about what I buy and when. I could go to the grocery store anytime of the year and buy fresh fruits and vegetables, canned fruits/veggies, fruit juice, dried fruits/veggies, and additionally any type of meat. As I would toss my leftover food in the trash, never would the thought of saving or preserving cross my mind. This has all changed. The widespread influence pollinator bees had on the environment was astounding. Yesterday, I went shopping and was able to buy assorted vegetables, but very little fruit. Some plants are self-pollinated and did not change, but others, are very sparse. Therefore, supermarkets halted the sale of seasonal fruits out of season because they were now unavailable at certain times of the year. Growing food at home and pollinating the plants myself compensates for this because it eliminates my reliance on the supermarket. Unfortunately, there are certain things that did affect my family greatly. Livestock everywhere suffered greatly because of the lack of food, and the US surplus ran out before 2030 and therefore many food producing animals died of starvation. When I was looking for protein yesterday I found a package of steak for \$40, so I decided to purchase it and cook it for dinner tonight. Buying meat is not something we can afford to do every day in 2030, even things like beef jerky, just are not around anymore. My wife told me that I should not buy steak again for a very long time, and I agreed. Nowadays, steak is a treat, and it is not the same as when I was a child, it tastes different.

### **Scientist 2**

Our lack of fruits, veggies, and livestock lead to a consequential surge in illnesses. Such illnesses include scurvy and iron deficiency, which was an indicator that we still had work to do to re-balance our system. A policy change was a must in order for people to be healthy and contribute to society. In considering a new system to offer more balance, a policy change that guaranteed nutritional health for all Americans while subsidizing vitamins and supplements for those receiving public aid might prove successful and spark solution. This would drastically decrease the amount of malnourished cases coming into the emergency rooms and decrease the public cost from rampant health issues and poverty.

## Archivist 2

As 2027 started, countries with surpluses were weary of sharing and many ceased, focusing internally to ensure their own safety first. Within the course of the year small countries surrounding larger nations, or satellite nations, were annexed by larger ones in hopes that their land could be used for farming. Minor conflicts broke out across the globe as countries and conglomerates formed for better chances of growing food. Existing structures like the European Union were stressed, but the structure succeeded in helping Western Europe stay alive, Eastern Europe was engulfed in conflict.

Farmers in 2019 decided to forgo the crop rotation schedule and use crops that they know could be planted and grown to harvest. In localized areas, some farmers used recycled food waste manure to help replenish some vital nutrients in the soil. This was done in small communities where farmers had easy access to these resources. Livestock across the globe endured with much less food and many food animals were killed or starved to death in order to allow the remaining animals to be fed. A common site in the United States was a filled supermarket, and in 2019, there were signs that food would eventually not stock every shelf.

## Citizen 2b

*Interview With Hand Pollinator*

*The following is a transcript of an interview conducted on April 23, 2030 and aired on television on May 15, 2030. Reporter Stephanie Colby to [LOCATION REDACTED] to speak with [NAME REDACTED], called Sergei over the course of the interview.*

*Names and official location have been removed from transcripts and broadcasts to protect the lives of the interviewees.*

*Narration provided by Stephanie through post-interview voice over.*

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Narrator: Bees. Small yellow and black insects who once supported around thirty percent of all pollination in the world. The creature that can only be found in history textbooks nowadays was once a common sign of spring's coming warmth and beautiful weather. But twenty years ago, the bees disappeared. Since the loss of the bees, scientists and politicians have scrambled to find solutions to support the job the bees once handled. Over the last two decades, many different answers to the question of "What can replace bees?" have sprung up, one of which was the Human Pollination movement. Government-funded farms hired people affected by agricultural loss to manually pollinate fruit and vegetable bearing plants to help sustain market and nutritional demands. Recently, I had the chance to sit down with Sergei, a lifelong farmer who, like many, turned to Human Pollination after his farm suffered from the disappearance of bees. Cutaway: The screen displays a man in his forties, shabby clothes spotted with dirt too deep embedded in the cloth to be washed away. His face is wrinkled and tan, hardened from years of work under the sun. He stands in front of a small, plain looking wooden building, his home shared by his wife and two daughters. An old rocking chair sits in the grass near their front door. Sounds of his children playing drift to the camera from inside the house.

Sergei: My family had always been farmers. My mother was raised alongside our apple trees, as was her father, and his father, and his mother before him. Each child added to the orchard and

brought a piece of themselves to the land. It was as indelible a part of them as their smile, the sparkle in the eyes, or the wrinkles like seed rows that lined their faces. I had already started clearing land for my eldest daughter's first plot when the bees disappeared. Even though she was only one at the time, I wanted to think ahead and have things ready. Plans changed fast.

Cutaway: The pair sits inside at a ramshackle dining table. The inside of the house is small and in need of repair. Papers, tools and books litter the floor.

Stephanie: You weren't the only one to be affected where you lived correct? Other farmers in the area started to take hits and lost their land in the agriculture collapse.

Sergei: You are correct. We and many of our neighbors took bad hits in the first year or two. I recall losing almost half of my orchard within that time. And we were the lucky ones. I remember old [NAME REDACTED] lost everything. He and his family struggled, but the community being as tight-knit as it was, we all stepped in and tried to help them how we could. Some work here, food there, money for various necessities. We lasted longer than most because we figured out how to pollinate our own crop by hand, but it was hard work. Other creatures, bats and insects mostly, could do some of the work, but we had put too much emphasis on bees that the system collapsed without them. Hand pollinating covered only so much, and in total we lost probably eighty-five percent of our orchard.

Narrator: Sergei's loss was large, but in reality it was on the low end for many farmers. Most privately-owned orchards shut down in the first five years of the bees' disappearance.

Stephanie: Now, you came to the conclusion of hand pollination on your own, but many were not in that position. Did you have a hand in the Human Pollination movement or did that happen on its own?

Sergei: I wouldn't say I had a direct hand in the movement's beginnings, but I think I and many other farmers who figured out the tricks to hand pollination were indirectly responsible. It was a necessity to us. There weren't many solutions at that time, and the few that existed were wildly expensive. We shared what we learned, farmer to farmer down the line, and it blossomed into what it is now.

Cutaway: A poster hangs on the wall. It is reminiscent in design of mid-1900's propaganda posters. A stylized bee in flight makes up the backdrop on which a man and woman pollinate a tree. Bolded are the words "Natural Pollination. The Only Pollination".

Stephanie: Since its beginnings, the Human Pollination movement has sprouted many different reasonings and purposes. Many look for payment and work reform, while others seek it to be the only, or at least national, solution to pollination. What are your thoughts on this?

Sergei: As I said earlier, I think a lot of this has roots in the early methods and feeling that farmers like me felt. Solutions crafted by scientists were complex, technical and too expensive for farms to employ on large scales. We all felt left behind as they tried to take the human element out of farming. Our solution came from the inaccessibility of their methods. Large government farms, like this one, employ hundreds of former farmers to hand pollinate, and while I appreciate the method, I have to admit we are not compensated nearly enough. Agriculture is the backbone of the world. How can you work if you're hungry? We do something vital but get little in return. From that perspective, I appreciate what the movement has done. While there is more work to do, I am happy I can give apples to my daughters. Such a luxury was not possible before.

Stephanie: How do you feel about the movement some members have taken regarding the "purity" or naturalness of hand pollination as opposed to other solutions, such as the robotic bees that were introduced commercially?

Sergei: I still can't believe the way some of those airheads act. Rioting, attacks on farms that employ only robotic pollination, and that damned Arthur C. Beeman and those Hot Buzz weirdos are making things difficult on the rest of us. I understand where they are coming from through the perspective of "people or robots" and what's closer to natural, but the violence is ridiculous. I just want to give my daughters a proper life.

Narrator: Sergei's feelings are echoed by many farmers and human pollinators across the globe. In the past few months, the Human Pollination movement has worked to distance itself as best as it can from pollination naturalists and the Hot Buzz, a body of people who maintain that pollination should be done by creatures only, and any technological solution is an affront to the Earth and the natural order. For people like Sergei and his family, human pollination is good, honest work and a way to make a life for themselves, not a political tool as many have turned it into. We wish them the best.

Stephanie Colby. Out in the world.

[END TRANSCRIPTION]