

Newsletter

Wasatch Beekeepers Association

February, 2004

This issue brought to compliments of the APIS Newsletter <<http://apis.shorturl.com>>, written by Dr. Malcolm T. Sanford, Professor Emeritus, University of Florida and Bee Culture Magazine <<http://www.beeeculture.com>>.

Thanks to those sending suggestions about the content and future of the Apis newsletter. It is gratifying to see how involved the readership is in this endeavor. The Jacksonville, FL American Beekeeping Federation was a great event and there appear to be more and more valuable information coming out of this meeting each year. Bee sure to attend next year's event <<http://www.abfnet.org/>>.

An insight I received in Jacksonville is that pesticide issues, which have been on the back burner for a number of years, are becoming more prevalent. Dr. Jerry Bromenshenk has seen a number of incidents and both Patti Elzen and Frank Eischen discussed these. Patti discussed how pesticides in general affected beehives and Frank and Box Cox discussed effects on bees from the continuing use of the fungicide Captan <<http://extoxnet.orst.edu/pips/captan.htm>> in California almonds.

Research: A recent meeting of Florida's Honey Bee Technical Council revealed that many beekeepers are increasingly despondent now that both legal chemicals, fluvalinate and coumaphos, appear to be losing their effectiveness for mite control. There is nothing on the horizon that will compete with their knockdown abilities. A section 18 label is being issued for Apilife Var in Florida <http://www.apis.admin.ch/english/pdf/Varroa/Apilife_e.pdf>, a product based on essential oils, but many questions remain about its effectiveness in warm climates and what specific instructions its label will contain. In addition, it is clear that the effectiveness varies based on a large number of variables and that it is much more labor intensive than other materials. Many in Florida are not sold on formic acid (the legality of such treatment is not clear; the safety issues are significant; treatment is hard on bees and queens), although there was information that a label was being pursued in other states..

Those at the meeting called for immediate, urgent research on mite control. Ideas about funding such research varied from beekeepers putting up the money themselves to asking the legislature and commodities affected by honey bee pollination (fruit and vegetable growers).

It was clear that there was no identifiable way to determine what research was in fact taking place at that moment. Granted Florida is a unique environment, but still research that is being done elsewhere should be recognized. The Florida bee industry does not exist in a vacuum. Thus, research being undertaken by other groups such as the American Beekeeping Federation, Eastern Apicultural Society and state beekeepers associations (California, for example) is valuable, and especially that at the Federal bee labs (Logan, Beltsville, Tucson, Weslaco, increasingly Gainesville). The National Honey Board has now become a research player as well with the recent announcement from CEO Bruce Boynton: "The National Honey Board is requesting proposals for research dealing with honey bee colony production. The goal of this research is to help producers maintain colony health while assuring the maintenance of honey quality. A modest sum of money has been earmarked for practical studies, with control of Varroa destructor and Apis woodi the primary objectives. Other projects will be considered and research outside the U.S. is possible."

A pressing need, therefore, is for some compilation of research contrasted to need (a white paper on pollination needs, honey bee supply?) that is in fact taking place around the country as more groups become involved in funding studies. State beekeeping associations or other groups must be informed of the nature and scope of research in order to have their pleas for help and support adequately addressed. There is also plenty of research going on around the world that can be referenced. For example, that in Australia:<<http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/Index2.htm#Honeybee>>.

Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees Scholarship Announcements:

The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc. is a charitable research and education foundation sponsored by the American Beekeeping Federation, Inc. The ABF recently gave the Foundation a grant of \$50,000 from funds the ABF received from the estate of Glenn and Gertrude Overturf. The Foundation Trustees have chosen to use a portion of the grant to offer five \$2,000 scholarships to graduate students in apiculture with the stipulation that a portion of the funds be used to attend the 2005 American Beekeeping Federation meeting in Reno, Nevada, to present their research. The Board of Trustees hopes that the scholarships will encourage young apicultural scientists and looks forward to their contributions to the 2005 ABF meeting.

Applications for the scholarships will be accepted until June 1, 2004. Applicants should submit a cover letter from their advisor, a curriculum vitae and a research summary (not to exceed 3 pages) to the Board for consideration. The research summary can cover research completed within the past 12 months or proposed research that will be completed prior to the American Beekeeping Federation meeting. Recipients will be selected in June of 2004.

Send scholarship applications to:

Dr. Marion Ellis
University of Nebraska
Department of Entomology
202 Plant Industries Building
Lincoln, NE 68583-0816
Phone: 402-472-8696
Email: mellis3@unl.edu

Honey Testing: The call for honey testing continues to ring out. Latest information from Australia via AlbertaBeeNews (January 2003), published by the Alberta Beekeepers Association, reveals that nitrofurans found in Argentine honey have made their way to Australia. This and the chloramphenicol situation in China have prompted the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) to respond to calls for testing from another governmental office involved in food safety known as FSANZ. So far this has been resisted by AQIS, who says it “doesn’t test for nitrofurans in honey. Our role is really an operational one at the border.” Sound familiar. Whether this will stand as policy, of course, has political ramifications and could

quickly change. A revealing article in American Bee Journal (January 2004), “Puzzling Over Chinese Honey: Dispatches From the Front Lines,” is a must read for those following the ever-changing character of the global honey market. In addition, see “Legal Background on the Government Players Regulating Chinese Chloramphenicol-contaminated Honey,” by Rich Schell, J.D. (American Bee Journal February 2004).

2004 Beekeeping Calendar: The North Carolina State Beekeepers Association has again published its yearly calendar. This is the only document of its kind I know about, which contains information on blooming plants correlating with dates in three regions (mountains, piedmont and coastal plain). It has a retail value of \$7.00. For details see <<http://www.ncbeekeepers.org>> or contact the Association, P.O. Box 33803, Raleigh, NC 27663-3803. Join North Carolina beekeepers at their next meeting in New Bern (March 12-13) <<http://www.rtpnet.org/ncsba/>>.

Ag Literacy Day in Florida: March 16, 2004 is designated Agriculture Literacy Day by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. (FAITC). Resources are available for those interested to present good, cogent information about Florida Agriculture. For further information, see <<http://www.agtag.org>> or call 352-846-1391.

Bacterial Diversity in Honey Bees: Many of us take up beekeeping because we are enchanted by the complexity of bee society. But there’s much more to this than meets the eye, especially when the bacterial flora of a colony is considered. Dr. Marjorie Hoy and colleagues at the University of Florida have published a paper based on their studies of bacteria in bees. “Bacterial Diversity in Worker Adults of *Apis mellifera capensis* and *Apis mellifera scutellata*,” Journal of Invertebrate Pathology, 84 (2003) pp. 96-103. The authors conclude: “One objective of this study was to identify a bacterium uniquely associated with *A. m. capensis* phenotype, but none has been detected so far. Despite this, if additional surveys are conducted the possibility of finding additional bacterial species associated with these honeybees still remains, because well over 6000 bacterial strains are known to be associated with honey bees.” Stay tuned!

Bioterrorism: Bee Culture Editor Kim Flottum sent a “Catch the Buzz” article <<http://www.beeeculture.com/beeeculture/buzz/index.html>> saying that 180,000 food facilities have been registered as part of the Bioterror-

ism Act. The FDA will soon send out verifications. If you don't receive one, please contact FDA's Help desk 1-800-216-7331 or (301) 575-0156. It is becoming clear that very few will be exempted from registering. Editor Troy Fore in the American Beekeeping Federation Newsletter (November/December 2003) says that precious few, including beekeepers, will be exempt. The recommended sure way through the uncertainty is to err on the side of registering. It's free and easy. He also says that record keeping regulations will also soon be part of compliance and they also can be complex. Records must be maintained for two years. Rules for this situation were published in the Federal Register on May 9, 2003, pp. 28, 188.

Advances in Organic Products: The Fall 2003 edition of "What's News in Organic," information flier of the Organic Trade Association <<http://www.theorganicreport.com>> reveals that in the year since the USDA organic standards were fully implemented, there has been much momentum in this area. These include: a formal organic caucus in the House of Representatives, the USDA's Economic Research Service is collecting data, serious negotiations with other countries (the European Union) on reciprocal agreements are in the works, and entry of major players into the organic market (Archer Daniels Midland, Campbell's Soup). There still exist areas, however, that are not well addressed (cosmetics, fiber, and of course honey). Realistically the report concludes resolving thorny questions for some areas (honey again?) could take years. Beekeepers should not lose interest here. If wild fish can be labeled "organic" certainly there's hope for bees and honey.

Still there is some disquieting information, according to the above newsletter. Judges in the EU, for example, have upheld Italy's right to ban imports of GM corn based on the "precautionary principal." A Mexican study finds corn in 33 communities have now been contaminated with GM material. Finally, GM trials in the UK showed fewer bees and butterflies in herbicide-tolerant rapeseed. For more on this, see my article in GMOs at <<http://www.apiservices.com/articles/us/gmo.htm>>

New Generation Cooperatives: There's a different kind of cooperative out there. Sometimes characterized as a cross between a traditional cooperative and limited company, the new generation cooperative can help bridge the gap between commodity-oriented pri-

mary producers and consumer-focused markets. They are worth a look for any agricultural enterprise, including honey <[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/apa6646?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/apa6646?opendocument)>.

Note the following warning to those receiving the Smoker:

To: "ricks.hive@zebra.net" <ricks.hive@zebra.net>
Too Much Bang for Your Buck!

Here is a WARNING that can't wait until our next issue. Pay attention to this "Book Recall" article gleaned from the Rhode Island Beekeepers Association newsletter.

"If you own a book "Candle and Soap Making for Dummies" published by John Wiley and Sons, contact them at <mailto:www.wiley.com> to return and get a refund. There was a wrong procedure in the book which caused an explosive reaction injurious to the user."

Honey and Low Carbohydrate Diets: My good friend Treavor Weatherhead sent the following with reference to my remarks concerning high glycemic indices of honey: "Re the high GI index of honey. Just to let you know that yellow box (Eucalyptus melliodora) honey has a low GI index. Why? Don't know."

Here's what the National Honey Board has published about this topic:

Considering a "low-carb" diet and wondering about honey? Honey, although a carbohydrate, is so unique and versatile that it can be used quite effectively with diets rich in protein. For example, a little bit of honey in a glaze or marinade (<http://www.honey.com/>) goes a long way. Transform a chicken breast or a piece of salmon with a light brushing of honey and spices with very little impact on overall carbohydrate intake <<http://www.nhb.org/buzz/index.html>>.

Other Newsletters:

For other information published in electronic newsletters, see the latest Apis-UK <<http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters04/apis-uk0104.htm>> and the February 2004 issue of ISBA Journal is available for free download from <<http://www.HoosierBuzz.com/document>>.

Photography Contest: The city of AZUQUECA DE HENARES announces its 4th annual beekeeping photography contest. For details see <<http://www.aulaapicolazuqueca.com/>>.

Harry Williams Dies: I was sad to see that one of my friends, Harry Williams died. He will be missed, but his writings live on at <<http://eppserver.ag.utk.edu/Bees/part1.pdf>>.

Gleanings from the February 2004 Bee Culture:

Richard Brewster of Andover, NH writes the following: “Five of the articles in the November 2003 issue of the Bee Culture had a preponderance of the use of the words me, my and I in the first three paragraphs. Readers, Mr. Brewster concludes would prefer more of you, we, they and us.”

Dave Kelley of Gainesboro, TN asks if anyone has considered that a magazine is needed for both commercial and non-commercial beekeepers. This is a perennial concern. There is in fact a magazine devoted to the commercial side, BEE BIZ <<http://www.apiservices.com/bee-biz/index.htm>>. Cathy Halm of Campbell, NY complains that my article on the Two RRs of beekeeping did not stress enough that pesticides are not a long-term solution to the Varroa problem. Most agree with Ms. Halm’s qualms, but are not in a position to go cold turkey and jump off the pesticide treadmill. However, there is movement here especially with the call by Dan Purvis in the January 26 edition of Georgia Buzz (Georgia Beekeepers Association) to develop or acquire, maintain, and distribute survivor stock <<http://www.gabeekeeping.com/>>.

Jim Fischer becomes “lost in translation” in discussing “Bioterrorism, the FDA and You.” Everyone should read his translations of bureaucrateze. The bottom line from this humor-filled piece is pretty sad. As Jim says, “the bottom line is that we (bureaucrats) can’t clearly explain something that we ourselves don’t understand.”

Editor Flottum discusses the reason why honey distributors are bound the get larger. It all has to do with the magic word “traceability” brought on by mad cow disease and other things (bird flu). Read his analysis of how big business and food safety are perfect for each other. Kim’s letter to Ann Veneman, Secretary of Agriculture, was not appreciated by all. Virginia Ste-

phens Webb in the Georgia Beekeepers Association newsletter (Vol. V, No. 1, January 26, 2004) writes that she thought it “unwarranted and inappropriate.”

Steve Sheppard discusses some research taken from abstracts presented at the 50th meeting of the Association of Institutes for Bee Research in Schmitten-Arnoldshain Germany, March 2003. These include studies of propolis used for wax moth control, how Varroa mites interfere with worker bee orientation and the proportion Varroa found in both worker and drone brood, which ultimately affect treatment protocols <http://www.biologie.uni-halle.de/zool/mol_ecol/Holger_S.html>.

Mark Winston says it isn’t easy making mead, describing one special bottle no longer available (he consumed it). However, he says there is one outfit that makes a superior product, Intermiel in Quebec. I agree. Both Mark and I visited the place together a few years back <<http://apis.ifas.ufl.edu/papers/CANADA.HTM-11>>. For an updated description of the firm, see <<http://www.intermiel.com/enterprise.htm>>.

John Miller claims he will continue to listen to smart people, like Dr. Keith Delaplane at the University of Georgia. Apparently Dr. Delaplane’s description of how a hive is arranged in nature inspired Mr. Miller to develop a new bottom board for his colonies and a re-designed pallet. Others interested in what Dr. Delaplane has going on can visit him electronically <<http://www.ent.uga.edu/personnel/faculty/delaplane.htm>>. When you e-mail him from his site, tell him I sent you.

Speaking of Georgia, Dann Purvis from the Peach State writes about his project to select “survivor” bees. Survival without any treatment is indeed the only selection criterion to be used in this breeding program. It is the same protocol used by Brother Adam, known for selecting honey bees to survive tracheal mites. He selected for survivor bees using no treatment and then called or labeled his stock as Acarine-resistant <<http://www.fundp.ac.be/~jvandyck/homage/artcl/FAmethBW50en.html>>.

Dr. Richard Fell at Virginia Tech describes how to evaluate queens. He concludes this is fairly easy by looking carefully at brood nest condition and quality or pattern, but requires good record keeping <<http://www.ento.vt.edu/~fell/apiculture/>>. For another take,

see a previous Bee Culture article by Joe Latshaw <<http://www.beeculture.com/beeculture/months/03mar/03mar2.htm>>.

Bob Brachmann says that Russian bee stock <<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/oct01/bee1001.htm>> and mineral oil treatments <<http://beesource.com/pov/rodriguez/index.htm>> do mix. He will continue to do studies to show how this possible over the next few issues.

Dr. Larry Conner switches from his recent emphasis on drones to queens. He concludes that what really make a difference are treatment of queens, age, and, most important, how they look from the eye of the bee-holder. Dr. Conner got some good comments on his drone articles recently on the bee-l discussion list <<http://listserv.albany.edu:8080/archives/bee-l.html>>. Those articles are worth saving and reviewing.

Lee Messersmith urges beekeepers to make an entrance tunnel into a colony as an alternative to Killion slatted racks <<http://beesource.com/plans/bottomrack.htm>> and provides information on how to do so.

Dick Johnson describes a bee hotel, designed specifically for putting bees up temporarily so they are readily available for bee sting therapy. It is a welcome addition to beekeeping technology supporting this alternative therapy <<http://apitherapy.org/>>.

Serge LeBesque discusses revisiting the follower board, which is also part of the technology developed by the Killion's during their years of comb honey production. Mr. LeBesque concludes: "I have made some space in the brood chambers of my colonies for those sometimes-called dummy boards, and I consider them well worth the temporary sacrifice of a frame or two per hive body. Actually, I think that the easier hive manipulations and the healthier bees more than make up for those few missing frames."

Dr. Jim Tew discusses his experiences with comb honey. This is a constantly changing technology. See Jim's descriptions of chunk, comb, cut-comb, etc. <<http://www2.oardc.ohio-state.edu/beelab/>>. And check out his note that while he was writing this particular article something personal and extremely im-

portant occurred. Jim also writes about the plans he found for a New England Hive. He calls the whole thing a mystery because he can't make heads or tails of why the plans are the way they are. He, therefore, asks for help from the readership. Any takers?

Ann Harman continues her series on meeting planning. Her most important advice, "Keep the meeting on its printed time schedule."

Jimmy Reed describes a personal story leading to the title: "Sometimes It Bees That Way," first published Voice of the Delta, April 2001 Cotton Farming Magazine. See how an errant swarm provided some summer fun.

Bob Bober says its relatively easy to install an apiary in an urban environment. His words on legalities and insurance are particularly important <<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AA137>>.

I saw the energetic Kim Lehman in Austin, Texas a few years back at the American Beekeeping Federation meeting. She is doing her bee education thing each year for the Federation and now describes her considerable experience in Bee Culture. There is literally everything you need in this article to put on a quality kids 'n bees show. For more on the creative Kim see <<http://www.idea-art.org/writerbios.htm>>.

Wyatt Magnum discusses the demise of the Clark Smoker. He provides a good discussion of the forces that brought this technology to its knees. Next he will actually fire up one of these relics for the readership. Stay tuned <<http://photo.bees.net/gallery/research-na/wyatt?full=1>>.

Clarence Collison's quiz this month is entitled, "A Stressful Pestilent Spring." Find out whether honey bees are immune to American foulbrood and why. For a complete treatment of foulbrood click on English at <<http://apis.shorturl.com/>>.

Ed Colby in the Bottom Board describes being stung in various ways and places. He calls his piece "Strange Story Twice."