
THE BEE LINE



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 30, Number 3

April 2005

JOHN HERINCKX STILL LIKES THE BEES

by Mary C. Moss

The sign for *Florenjohn Honey Sales* posted on Cornelius-Schefflin Road in rural Washington County may be down temporarily, but John Herinckx hopes to change that, soon.

We decided to drop in on John and his wife, Florence, on a sunny Saturday morning. While John's health is compromised, he is still getting around and enjoying life. Right now, his supply of honey is depleted, so he took the sign down.

"I'm still playin' with the bees," says John, with a twinkle in his eye. "But I've only got a handful of hives out there now, and Jerry Schwanke (Scoggins Valley Apiary) is helping me take care of them." Indeed, a brief tour of the Herinckx backyard reveals half a dozen colonies literally buzzing with healthy and industrious honeybees.

At one time, John had at least 68 hives, but when his health began to decline, Jerry relocated most of the hives to his own apiary. He takes care of the bees, making sure John has enough honey for his own family's use as well as some to sell, etc., and both men are pleased with the arrangement.

John started life in Mountindale, a community just a short distance away from his present home. He came from a family of eight; John's father was a mason from Belgium. But, he was not a beekeeper.

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JOHN HERINCKX

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Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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President's Message

by Kenny Williams

We live in interesting times, which in some cultures is considered a curse, while in others it is considered an opportunity.

To begin with, we have had widespread resistance of mites to Apistan and Checkmite, leading to a serious collapse in colony numbers available for almond pollination in California in February. This, in turn, led to an intense demand for beehives, never seen before now, which caused pollination fees to rise from last year's \$54-range to the \$80-\$90 range, and in several cases reaching or exceeding \$125.

Demand for beehives is likely to remain high since acreage devoted to almonds is increasing. Beekeepers who lost large percentages of their numbers will spend much, if not all, of their almond pollination income in restocking their equipment. Will there be enough queens to introduce into those divides? Will there be enough packages or bulk bees available? Can numbers be restored in one year's time for next year's pollination needs? Can this coming year's colonies survive better than last? What new ideas will beekeepers discover in order to deal best with a changing industry?

Honey prices have plummeted in two years' time from \$1.50 to \$.80 and lower. Oregon is having northern California weather while southern California washes away under excessive rains.

As beekeepers, we do, indeed, live in interesting times.

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FROM DR. ERIC MUSSEN, Entomologist, UC Davis
from his Jan/Feb 2005 newsletter

PURE HONEY

Honey produced and sold by U.S. beekeepers has a reputation of being among the finest in the world. Purchasers do not have to worry about non-honey items in the barrels and the honey comes from natural sources. However, world-wide, and more recently at home, concerns over “terrorism” have caused governments to tighten up on producers, handlers and processors of food products. In the U.S., that is Part 110 – Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food. Part 110 comes from Food and Drug’s Title 21 – Food and Drugs, Chapter I – Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services – Continued. (Text in bold print is just my emphasis)

Talking with honey packers, about the only problem they find with our honeys are microbial counts that are too high. We have been schooled that microbes cannot grow in ripened honey, so what is being measured? As documented in a recent European scientific paper, spores of soil-inhabiting microbes can be found in substantial numbers in some lots of honey. When the honey is diluted and plated on media, the bacteria grow into colonies. They also grow when honey is diluted and mixed into foods while they are being processed. These microbes should be present only in exceedingly low numbers, since honey under the capping does not have many of them.

For our purposes the word “dust” is most important. The spores of soil-inhabiting microbes are quite resistant and very small in size. They blow around in the air and they are carried around on anything that touches the ground. So, it is imperative for beekeepers to harvest, transport, uncap, extract and containerize their honey with the least exposure to dust and dirt as possible. It takes a little planning, perhaps some equipment or building modifications, and attention to details to accomplish these (no dust) goals. However, the following is what is expected of other food handlers and we are going to be caught up in this web.

110.10 Personnel – Briefly (the rules are much more specific), any person who is sick or has open wounds should not be working with the food product. People who are handling food should be very clean – wearing correct outer garments to come into contact with the food, washing and sanitizing hands before and after handling the food or if hands become soiled or contaminated. Food preparation clothing should be different from your street clothes, which should not be around the food. Remove all jewelry and anything else that might fall into the food product. Proper intact gloves, hair nets, beard covers, etc. should be worn. No eating food, chewing gum, drinking beverages, or using tobacco around the food line. Taking precautions to prevent contamination of the food by microbes, perspiration, hair, cosmetics, tobacco, chemicals or medicines applied to the skin.

110.19 Exclusions – Briefly, operations engaged solely in harvesting, storage, or distribution of “raw agricultural commodities” will be excluded, but only if the product is going to be further “cleaned, prepared, treated, or otherwise processed” before going to market.

110.20 Plant and Grounds – Briefly, equipment has to be stored properly and the weeds and other debris have to be kept away from the building to prevent attracting, providing a mating place, or harborage for pests. Roads, yards, and parking lots should “not constitute a source of contamination.” Drainage should prevent water buildup that could contaminate feet or equipment or provide a breeding place for pests. Any waste should be handled in a manner that will not “constitute a source of contamination in areas where food is exposed.” The facility must be large enough to be able to place and store food handling equipment in such a way

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that it can be cleaned readily. Probably, for honey the following is most important: "... including the separation of operations in which contamination is likely to occur, by one or more of the following means: location, time, **partition**, air flow, **enclosed systems**, or other effective means." The facility should be "constructed in such a manner that floors, walls, and ceilings may be adequately cleaned and kept clean and kept in good repair." Adequate lighting is required in hand-washing areas, dressing and locker rooms, and toilet rooms and in all areas where food is examined, processed or stored and where equipment or utensils are cleaned. Safety-type bulbs and fixtures (skylights) must be used to protect against food contamination in case of glass breakage. Odors and moisture must be controlled by fans in such a way that the moving air does not contaminate the food. Screen or otherwise keep pests out of the food facility.

110.35 Sanitary Operations – Briefly, equipment and utensils coming into contact with the food should be clean and sanitized. "Cleaning compounds and sanitizing agents ... shall be free from undesirable microorganisms and shall be safe and adequate under the conditions of use." "No pests shall be allowed in any area of a food plant." Guard or guide dogs can be around as long as they are confined to areas where they won't contaminate the food. Insecticides and rodenticides are last ditch measures – proper sealing of facility is preferable. "In wet processing, ... utensils and food-contact surfaces of equipment shall be cleaned and sanitized as necessary."

110.37 Sanitary Facilities and Controls – Briefly, the water supply to the facility has to be plumbed correctly (backflow and cross contamination prevention), all fixtures working properly, and the water must pass inspections for water quality. There should be floor drains where floors are going to be washed to remove spilled food. The sewage system has to be adequate. Toilets have to be kept very clean, doors to toilet room must be self-closing, and doors should "not open into areas where food is exposed to air-borne

contamination, except where alternate means have been taken to protect against contamination (such as double doors or positive airflow systems)." There is a lot of emphasis on hand washing: water temperature, disposable or immediately dryable towels, refuse containers that prevent contamination, and written, posted instructions on how to properly clean hands.

110.40 Equipment and Utensils – Briefly, all equipment has to be cleanable and properly maintained. Lubricants, fuels, metal fragments, contaminated water, etc. should not get into the food. Seams on food-contact surfaces should be smooth and provide no place for microbes to grow. "Compressed air used to clean food-contact surfaces or equipment shall be treated in such a way that food is not contaminated with unlawful indirect food additives."

110.80 Processes and Controls – Briefly, each facility should have a quality control supervisor who oversees the sanitation of the food line. "Chemical, microbial, or extraneous-material testing procedures shall be used where necessary to identify sanitation failures or possible food contamination." Adulterated foods will be rejected or, if possible, processed to eliminate the contamination. "Raw materials and other ingredients shall be inspected and segregated or otherwise handled as necessary to ascertain that they are clean and suitable for processing into food and shall be stored under conditions that will protect against contamination and minimize deterioration." "Containers and carriers of raw materials should be inspected on receipt to ensure that their condition has not contributed to the contamination or deterioration of food." Raw materials held in bulk will be at temperatures and relative humidities that prevent the food from becoming adulterated. Raw materials shall not contain levels of microbes that may produce food poisoning or other diseases of humans. Raw materials can not have natural toxins, like aflatoxins, in them. Storage containers should be handled in such

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PURE HONEY, Continued

a way that they do not introduce contaminants (dust) into the food. Sieves, traps, magnets, electronic metal detectors or other suitable means can be used to protect against metal contamination. Food should be contained only in safe, suitable food containers and packaging materials. Physical protection should exist to prevent contamination, **particularly air-borne contamination.** "Food-manufacturing areas should not be used to manufacture non-human food-grade animal feed or inedible products unless there is no reasonable possibility for the contamination of human food."

110.93 Warehousing and Distribution – "Storage and transportation of finished food shall be under conditions that will protect food against physical, chemical, and microbial contamination as well as against deterioration of the food and the container."

110.110 Natural or Unavoidable Defects in Food for Human Use that Present no Health Hazard – Briefly, Food and Drug is supposed to establish maximum levels of such defects. Blending food out of compliance, with food in compliance, to meet the tolerance level is not acceptable. Current defect action levels may be obtained from the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (HFS-565), Food and Drug Administration, 200 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20204.

After reading this, I am sure that you can see many ways in which you could improve your honey handling practices to better meet these criteria. Several years ago the Board of Directors of the American Beekeeping Federation adopted a five and one-half page document titled: Uniform Sanitation Code for Honey Houses (Honey Extracting Facilities) that addressed most of the Food and Drug concerns. Now, the National Honey Board has appointed a Subcommittee to develop guidelines that deal with maintaining the integrity of honey from the time it is being deposited in the combs to the time that it is in the bulk containers leaving the beekeeper's property. It is likely that the document will incorporate much of the ABF Uniform Sanitation Code. ■

JOHN HERINCKX, Continued

Growing up during the Great Depression, John's family survived by farming and frugality. "We had no plow or tractor," John recalls, "So, we did all of that field work with horses. Even later on, after Florence and I got married, I was still ploughing with horses, until I was able to borrow a neighbor's tractor.

"When I was a kid, we always ate well; along with stored and dried vegetables, there'd be a side or two of beef, and my father raised hogs. The old smokehouse was an important place on our farm, and there were always good things hanging in there. And, we had dairy cattle, and sold all of the milk. Heck," John laughs, "I had to hide a tin cup in the milkhouse just so I could grab some before it got sold. Business was good. Funny thing—we were the last folks in the county to still have a horse and buggy," he notes.

When John turned 18, he joined a section gang on the railroad. At age 22, he joined the Oregon National Guard Task Force in Forest Grove. In 1941, they shipped out, arriving in the Philippines on December 6, "and you know what happened on December 7 that year!" John's section went to work in Hawaii for a year, then he volunteered for a gig at Christmas Island, and started a farm there. "I milked 15 cows every day by hand," John recalls.

Later, he returned to Hawaii, and subsequently served in the Marshall Islands, Saipan, and went on for R&R in the New Hebrides. During one leave, he met Florence and they were married. After the wedding, John shipped out again, back to the New Hebrides and then on to Okinawa.

"Boy, was that a hot place!" John remembers. "I was in the staging area when the nuclear bombs were dropped on Japan, so we were kind of held up there for a while. But finally, I got back to the States, and was discharged.

"Florence and I bought this place a couple of weeks later, in 1945," says John. The couple went on to have eight children, all of whom are still living in the Pacific Northwest.

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“It was about 1936 when I found a swarm of bees out by the barn one day. I was about 16 years old, and very intrigued by those bees. I put them in a box covered with strawberries. Of course,” John laughs ruefully, “I got stung pretty bad.” He shows how his arm swelled up from the stings.

“I was farming cauliflower and stuff for canning: peas, beans, sweet corn. Then I bought 60 more acres, bringing our land total up to 100 acres. In 1949, we started raising hogs and then began our dairy operation. I started with Jersey cattle, then got 10-12 Holsteins. Now that,” John smiles, “was a good move. It wasn’t long after that when the national awareness about too much fat in the diet came along, and those Holsteins make such lowfat milk, you can’t even get cream or butter from it. So, I sold every drop they put out, and eventually my brother came in and helped me build a plant. We were mechanized and automated—even more modern than the Mayflower Dairy in Portland.” John’s eyes shine with pride. “Soon, we had 100 cows and I got a refrigerated truck.”



John and Florence Herinckx and the family pooch. The dog thinks it’s funny to be asked, “Where are those puppies?” Maybe John should ask her, “Where are those bees?”

After several years of running the dairy, John was tiring of the intense work, and quit doing it. “But, we made money! It all paid off.”

In 1950, a barber from Forest Grove brought bees over to pollinate John’s clover crop, and John started getting into beekeeping in the 1960s.

“I caught swarms at first to start my apiary,” he explains, “and I’d no sooner got that built up to 36 hives when those confounded mites came along, and doggone it if I didn’t lose every last hive. No one knew back then what was killing ‘em. I’d been using a 2-frame extractor and selling honey. Finally, John decided to give it all up and he and Florence rented out their farm and moved to Garibaldi, over on the Oregon Coast.

“I’d had open heart surgery in 1981,” John says, “and that influenced our decision to move to the Coast. I had a friend there who played with bees, and I joined the club in Tillamook. But we moved back here in 1993. Then our son, Jack, who lived in Eugene, brought a bunch of woodenware along with him one day. There just happened to be a swarm of bees down the road, so I went and caught them. I remember one day, a friend of mine caught five swarms and carried them home in the back of his car. He had to turn on the air conditioning to keep ‘em at bay!” John laughs again.

“The apiary started growing right along then, and I dabbled a bit in queen breeding. Interesting stuff, that was,” he reflects. Soon, John was up to the 68 hives he had, up until last year when he stopped and let Jerry Schwanke take charge of the bees.

Formerly a member of the TVBA, John hasn’t been to a club meeting “in a long time,” and misses the other members. However, he and Florence enjoy their quiet lifestyle now, along with the family dog, cat and, of course, the bees. Now, at age 87, John must go for kidney dialysis treatments three times a week, and he takes a lot of medication for congestive heart failure, kidney failure and other medical problems. But, he still gets around, and likes to go to the casino now and then “to spend my honey money.” And, John concludes, “I can still keep an eye on those bees.”

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Queens, Bees, Honey & Pollination

OSBA WEB SITE NEWS

by Thom Trusewicz, OSBA Webmaster

•There is a new feature on the message board at orsba.org. Each OSBA Branch Association now has their own message board so they can communicate with one another between meetings. It's free and easy to use. Simply go to orsba.org and click on the Message Board button.

Once there you can log on to the main OSBA board, read and post messages or you can choose to view the messages of one of the Branch Associations.

•It is not too late to place a web ad or get a free Swarm Call listing at orsba.org. OSBA members may be listed on the swarm call list free of charge. Web ads for members cost \$4 per listing and \$6 for non-members. Go to orsba.org, click on the Products and Services button and see what categories people are advertising in. We can also create new categories if the ones there do not fit your needs. Advertising forms are available at the bottom of the Products and Services page.

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PORTLAND METRO BEEKEEPERS FIELD DAY PLANS

We got the news a little late, but we're including this information for anyone who may want to attend the upcoming Field Day.

On Saturday, April 9, the Portland Metro Beekeepers will hold their annual Field Day at George Hansen's farm up in Colton. This is a hands-on day, so bring your suit, veil and gloves. The session will last from about 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Each presentation will last about 45 minutes.

Field Day activities are a great way to learn new things and hobnob with your beekeeping colleagues. Don't be shy; jump right in!

Thanks to Ken Ograin for the heads-up!



See anyone you recognize?

NORTHWEST BEEKEEPING TIPS - APRIL

By Harry Vanderpool, WVBA

■ Check colony stores regularly. Add feed to light colonies to maintain 10 to 20 lbs. until the nectar flow starts in your area and elevation.

■ Equalize brood and feed between healthy colonies whenever advantageous.

■ Add second brood box to singles that are filling out. Checkerboard frames of feed upstairs.

■ Reversing brood boxes is an extremely important procedure. The decision to reverse must be based on hive conditions. Generally speaking, at this point in the year, reverse when it will result in the brood nest moving down, and available comb space with an adequate amount of feed in the upper brood box.

■ During inspections, watch for signs of scale in empty combs or spotty brood that is partially uncapped that would indicate American foulbrood. Ask a senior beekeeper to help you in disease identification if you aren't sure.

■ Dust the top bars with three tablespoons of Terramycin and powdered sugar mix often enough to keep a steady supply lasting at least 21 days.

■ Quarantine colonies showing signs of Nosema disease if possible. Scrape the top bars of all frames in the hive to remove the debris. Scrape the bottom board also. Make a note to feel Fumidil-B in the fall. Dr. Eric Mussen has found that 2 years of persistent treatment and care can clear a colony of this disease.

■ Queens are available now. Feed your "Beekeeper's Disease" and make as many splits as possible. This will give you a good excuse to buy more equipment next winter!

■ It is generally accepted that yearly requeening of colonies is beneficial in many ways. Definitely consider requeening colonies with undesirable traits, poor laying patterns, or if the queen is of an unknown age.

■ Blow the dust off your Nuc boxes and put them to good use. Nucs are great for proving out your new queens and also their smooth introduction into queenless hives.

It's not a bit too early to send us your news about picnics, Field Days, and other Spring and Summer activities. Digital or regular film photos are welcome, as is line art. We also have a good collection of electronic and other clip art if your message needs a little graphic help. Don't wait--send us your news now!

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Willamette Valley

Please see next page

Willamette Valley

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Membership and Publications

Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers Association is open to anyone who has an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. OSBA membership is \$20 per person and includes a vote in OSBA elections, discounts on other publications and ten issues of *The Bee Line*. Membership outside the US is \$29.

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