

The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 36, Number 1

January-February 2011



Sean McCann

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Image above: With the increasing hours of daylight, the bees wait for spring to keep its promise to return. As we prepare for a new season, we may also attend seminars presented by candidates for the honey bee entomologist position at Oregon State University (page 2), participate in bee schools beginning to take place around the state (pages 5–6), and help implement the Oregon Master Beekeeper certification program (page 8). Save the dates!

BEEKEEPERS ASK EPA TO REMOVE PESTICIDE

In light of new revelations by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a November 2, 2010, memorandum that a core registration study for the insecticide clothianidin has been downgraded to unacceptable for purposes of registration, the American Beekeeping Federation has recently signed a letter addressed to the Honorable Lisa Jackson, Administrator, EPA, in support of a request that the agency take urgent action to stop the use of this toxic chemical. The letter was written as a joint effort of the National Honey Bee Advisory Board and two environmental groups, Beyond Pesticides and the Pesticide Action Network.

Clothianidin is a member of the neonicotinoid family, a systemic pesticide used extensively for seed treatment on corn, canola, cereal grains, soybeans, sugar beets, and sunflowers. It has been banned in Germany, Italy, and Slovenia, and France declined to even register it. It is believed to be a major player in losses being described collectively as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). All beekeepers should be paying close attention to the handling of the clothianidin problem.

Below is a copy of the full press release distributed on December 8, 2010, by Beyond Pesticides and the Pesticide Action Network.

If you have any questions, please contact David Mendes, ABF president and NHBAB member, at davidmendesn@aol.com.

SAN FRANCISCO and WASHINGTON, DC—Beekeepers and environmentalists today called on EPA to remove a pesticide linked to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), citing a leaked EPA memo that discloses a critically flawed scientific support study. The November 2nd memo identifies a core study underpinning the registration of the insecticide clothianidin as unsound after EPA quietly re-evaluated the pesticide just as it was getting ready to allow a further expansion of its use. Clothianidin (product name “Poncho”) has been widely used as a seed treatment on many of the country’s major crops for eight growing seasons under a “conditional registration” granted while EPA waited for Bayer Crop Science, the pesticide’s maker, to conduct a field study assessing the insecticide’s threat to bee colony health.

Bayer’s field study was the contingency on which clothianidin’s conditional registration was granted in 2003. As such, the groups are calling for an immediate stop-use order on the pesticide while the science is redone, and redesigned in partnership with practicing beekeepers. They claim that

Continued on page 12

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

So much to do, so little time! It seems like I have been a hamster in a cage for the past few months, just running around in circles but getting nowhere. I look at my desk and wonder if I will ever see the wood again. We visited the Idaho Honey Industry Association meeting in Boise and had a great time. We are all concerned about the same things: How are your bees looking? What do you think the price will be in California? Do you have enough bees to cover your contracts? Are you nervous yet? Dr. Eric Mussen talked on Colony Health and CCD and the factors supporting colony health. We all seem to be putting a lot into our bees right now, so when is enough pollen substitute really enough? I don't think that the answer here is when you run out of time and money!

I am looking forward to attending the North American Beekeeping Conference and Tradeshow in Galveston, Texas, in January. It is a lesson in multitasking because there are so many discussions going on simultaneously that you want to be in two places at one time. If you have never attended, please give it a try. Maybe we will find out how much pollen substitute is *really* enough!

I asked around at the Idaho meeting about the future of HopGuard and the Mite Away Quick Strip. It sounds like HopGuard is still being processed and we should know shortly about availability, and today I received an e-mail from Liz Corbett from NOD Apiary Products concerning the Mite Away Quick Strip. The final rule on the petition for the biodegradable paper wrap is being written and should be posted this week. After they reinstate the Section 24(c) in Oregon, NOD will be able to ship MAQS to their warehouse in Reno. Liz is working with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to make sure that we are ready when the strips become available.

If you have questions that I can help you with, please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail, and do not forget that we are always looking for bee questions for our new article in *The Bee Line* for Dr. Sagili and Dr. Caron. The questions are anonymous, and please send them directly to Rosanna at osba.newsletter@gmail.com.

Well, our Eastern Oregon bees are nestled all snug in their beds with visions of almond pollen dancing in their heads, and I in my kerchief and Vince in his cap have both settled down for our long beekeepers' nap! Happy New Year to all. I hope that 2011 is an incredible year for each and every one of you.

Jan

HONEY BEE ENTOMOLOGIST POSITION

The Search Committee at Oregon State University is planning on conducting interviews for the full-time tenure track Honey Bee Entomologist Assistant Professor position this month. **Beekeepers and others interested are welcome to attend the seminars to be presented by candidates on January 12, 13, 14, and 24.** Please watch the OSBA website (www.orsba.org) for further information. Be sure to mark your calendar!

NORTHWEST APICULTURE FUND FOR HONEY BEE RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION

With appreciation to all who have made donations to the Northwest Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research, Extension, and Education. Names are listed as provided by the OSU Foundation as of December 2010.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
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| Annie's Honey Comb | Mr William Edward Krieg |
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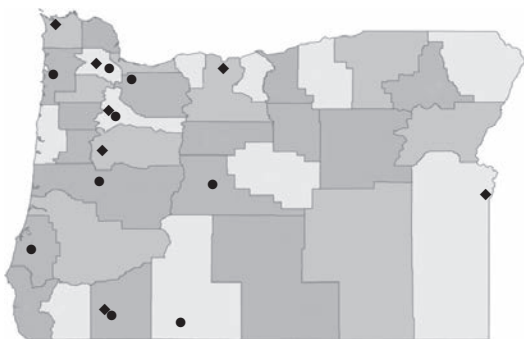
DONATIONS TO THE ENDOWMENT FUND

- Make your check out to: **OSU FOUNDATION**
- On the memo line, take care to write: **THE NORTHWEST APICULTURE FUND FOR HONEY BEE RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION**
- Mail to: Oregon State University Foundation at 850 SW 35th St, Corvallis OR 97333-4015

If you have any questions regarding details of the fund or how to donate, please contact Kenny Williams, Chair of the OSBA's Endowment Fund, at 541.456.2631.

IMPORTANT: Making your check out only as described above ensures that your donation is correctly applied to the appropriate Endowment and not to any other program.

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Southern Oregon: Floyd Pawlowski
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fmpawlowski@ashlandwireless.net

North Willamette Valley: Harry Vanderpool
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shallotman@yahoo.com

South Willamette Valley: Jason Rowan
80881 Turkey Run Rd, Creswell 97426
541.942.6479; beetanical@q.com

• OSBA REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Tuesday, Bend
63211 Service Rd, Suite 130
President: Dennis Gallagher; 541.389.4776
For information, please contact: John Connelly
johncobka@gmail.com

Coos County Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Saturday (except December)
Ohlsen Baxter Bldg, 631 Alder St, Myrtle Point
President: Shigeo Oku; 541.396.4016
Vice President: John Gardner; 541.572.3847
Secretary: Bobbi Gardner; 541.572.3847
Treasurer: Jane Oku; 541.396.4016
jane_oku@hotmail.com

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Meets 9:00 AM, last Saturday (except Nov/Dec),
Klamath Falls; OSU Extension, 3328 Vandenberg Rd
President: Tom Chester; 541.850.8384
klamathbeekeepers@gmail.com
Vice President: Jim Smith; 541.892.5888
Secretary: Donna Schmerbach; 541.891.3066
Treasurer: Ed Geise; 541.892.6016

Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, third Tuesday, Eugene
Trinity United Methodist Church, 440 Maxwell Rd
President: Judy Scher; 541.344.2114
judy_scher@catdreams.com
Vice President: Barbara Bajec; 541.767.9086
Secretary: Lane Hillendahl; 541.942.6838
Treasurer: Nancy Ograin; 541.935.7065
woodrt@pacinfo.com
Website: www.lcbaor.org

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Thursday, Oregon City
Clackamas Comm College, Clairmont Hall, Room 118
President: Nancy McFarlane; 503.260.3930
nancymariemcfarlane@yahoo.com
Vice President: Paul Hardzinski; 503.631.3927
breadstick@ccwebster.net
Secretary: Alvalea Fong; 503.742.0910
mamagoose@mac.com
Treasurer: Barbara Derkacht; 503.631.3063
bderkacht@yahoo.com

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, first Monday, Central Pt
So OR Res & Ext Ctr, 569 Hanley Rd

President: John Jacob; 541.582.BEES

john@oldsolenterprises.com

Vice President: Floyd Pawlowski

415 Pompadour Dr, Ashland; 541.482.4797

Secretary/Treasurer: Jonathon Boulton

jonnyboulton@hotmail.com

Website: www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org

Tillamook County Beekeepers

For meeting and other information, please contact:

President: Bob Allen; 503.322.3819

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, last Wednesday, Beaverton

OSU Ext, #1400, 18640 SW Walker Rd

President: Herb Brasington; 503.701.4180

herb@hwbsystems.com

Vice President: Kevin Beckman; 503.539.5996

kevin_beckman2@msn.com

Secretary: Jerry Maasdam; 503.648.7906

jmaasdam@mac.com

Co-Treasurers: Brigette and Michael Hendrickson

503.625.3828; mdhendri@gmail.com

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, fourth Monday, Salem

Chemeketa Comm College, Bldg 34, Rm A

President: Richard Farrier; 541.327.2673

Vice President: Harry Vanderpool; 503.399.3675

shallotman@yahoo.com

Secretary: Mike Rodia; 503.364.3275

drodia@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Patricia Swenson; pkswenson@gmail.com

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NW Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research,

Extension, and Education: Kenny Williams

Nominations: Chuck Sowers

Public Relations: Paul Andersen

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Dr. Ramesh Sagili

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sagilir@hort.oregonstate.edu

REGIONAL NEWS**Regional Association****Lane County Beekeepers**

Our November meeting was the last meeting of 2010. Members had the opportunity to show off the best of their 2010 honey. Everyone formed panels to judge 6–7 samples, the best of which were put into a final judging, and from that group the three top winners were chosen. These lucky folks each received a gift certificate to GloryBee Foods. The judging of taste is highly subjective, of course, but everyone had a lot of fun. Every year it always amazes people that honey can taste so different, even though the jars may look identical.



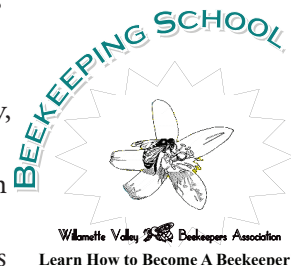
Left: Honey judging during the November taste-off. **Right:** The winning entries (left to right) held by Lonnie Sexton (first place), Jim Rundell (second place), and Dean Burkhart (third place).

The January meeting will be our annual supper meeting. Jeff Green, Food Safety Spec from Oregon Department of Agriculture, will be our speaker. Lane County beekeepers will have a booth at the Good Earth and Garden Show at the Lane County Fairgrounds on January 21–23. At the end of this event, we usually have our bee school filled, most of the club honey sold, and many local people more knowledgeable about bees and beekeeping.

—Judy Scher

Bee Schools

Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association Bee School, 7 PM on **February 17, 22, and 23** at Chemeketa Community College, 4000 Lancaster Dr, Salem, Oregon, Building 34. Sessions include: Beekeeping History, Life Cycle of Honey Bees, Beekeeping Equipment, Safety, Working with Bees, Products of the Hive, Getting Started in Bees, Pests and Diseases, and Nutrition. \$25, which includes



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all materials and one-year membership in WVBA. For further information, or to download a registration form, go to www.orsba.org and click on “Beeschools”. Questions? Contact Harry at shallotman@yahoo.com, or call 503.399.3675 or 503.364.3275.

Astoria Bee School, 9 AM–4 PM on **March 5** at Clatsop Community College, Columbia Hall Room 221, 1651 Lexington Ave, Astoria. \$15 for an individual; \$25 for a family. This is a lecture class with over 500 slides and an equipment demo. Register at class and bring a sack lunch. For more information, contact Thom at ccbees@gmail.com.

KEEPING BEES IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY

Todd Balsiger

- ❖ Breed or purchase mite-fighting bees.
- ❖ Adopt Integrated Pest Management practices.
- ❖ Use natural chemicals for Varroa control, and synthetics only as a last option.
- ❖ Provide nutritional feeding. It seems that Bee Pro is one of the better commercially available pollen substitutes.
- ❖ In general, disturb your bees as little as possible.
- ❖ If you are concerned about starvation, lift the back of the hive to assess its weight. Provide emergency feed (e.g., drivert and a pollen patty) to light colonies.
- ❖ Brood rearing and metabolism increase at this time of year and add to hive moisture, often with condensation dripping down onto the bees. To help prevent this, make sure lids are water tight, that hives are tilted so water drains away and not into the hive, and that there is sufficient ventilation.
- ❖ Make periodic checks of your apiary, especially after a windstorm, to make sure nothing is amiss.
- ❖ Prepare for next month’s tasks—in recent times, if weather allows, we generally treat for foulbroods and for Varroa in February.
- ❖ For nonprocrastinators, this is a good time to do such things as assemble hive components, fix unresolved problems in the honey house, and go fishing.
- ❖ There is greater demand for queens and packages, so order in advance.

Adapted from: *The Bee Line*, January-February 2010.

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH ? ? ?

Question

Do Carniolan and Italian colonies respond differently when stimulated with sugar syrup and pollen? In other words, will Carniolans increase brood rearing to the extent that Italians do?

Response

Dewey Caron: Wow, a great question... Which Carniolan bee? New World or the other claimed to be Carniolan—which is not very pure Carniolan? With mites and now CCD consuming virtually all bee funding the last few years, support for studies on bee biology have been nonexistent. I know of no management studies that would answer this question. The best answer might come from readers who have had some experience stimulating both Carniolan and Italian bee colonies with sugar syrup and/or protein patties. Anyone out there with such experience able to share?

Question

Would Fumagilin affect any workings that go on in a pollen patty mixture?

Response

Ramesh Sagili: According to the label, Fumagilin should be mixed in sugar syrup and fed to the colonies for Nosema treatment. But some beekeepers feed Fumagilin in pollen patties. To date there are no scientific studies that have evaluated the effects of Fumagilin on protein availability when Fumagilin is fed in pollen patties. Fumagilin is an antibiotic. I don’t think Fumagilin will bind with the protein in pollen patties and thus make it unavailable to the bees. If bees are actively consuming pollen patties, then Fumagilin might be effective to some extent, but it might not be useful when pollen patty consumption is slow. One advantage of feeding Fumagilin in sugar syrup is that it will be stored in the comb and might be available for consumption during the next few weeks following the treatment, whereas if fed with pollen patties it might be consumed (as most of the pollen patties provided are directly consumed by nurse bees) and not stored in the combs. Also, it is believed that Fumagilin mixed in sugar syrup is disseminated in the hive faster by trophallaxis than by any other method of application.

INTRODUCING OSBA SECRETARY

Carolyn Breece

Thank you for the opportunity to be the OSBA secretary! I am thrilled to be a part of OSBA, as this is such an enthusiastic and interesting group of beekeepers. My background in bees is short, but now that I am thoroughly addicted, I expect my future in bees to extend far into old age. For many years, I was limited to reading voraciously on the subject of beekeeping. Finally, in 2007, when I lived in Ashland, I found some land for my bees and acquired my first two nucs from John Jacob of Old Sol Apiaries. By some small miracle, I was able to keep these hives alive, harvest honey, and even split them! I credit my good start to the quality bees and excellent advice I received from the Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association. After a couple of years in Ashland, I moved to Corvallis and began working for Oregon State University as a research assistant in the Honey Bee Lab. It was a major shift in careers for me, because much of my education and work experience is in the forestry field. However, it's not one I regret! My current position has allowed me to meet wonderful beekeepers all across the state, and I have learned more than I imagined about bees. I look forward to working with OSBA members and thank you again for this opportunity.



Note: Carolyn was elected OSBA secretary at the general membership meeting during the 2010 fall conference in Hood River. As we say "Thank you, Marjie Ehry, for all your past work as secretary," we also say, "Welcome, Carolyn!"

AGRICULTURE REPORT

The State of Oregon Agriculture Industry Report from the State Board of Agriculture, January 2011, is now available at: www.oregon.gov/ODA/docs/pdf/bd_rpt.pdf.

SCIENCE FRIDAY

For recent *Science Friday* interviews and videos, visit: <http://www.sciencefriday.com/program/archives/201012245>.

HOPGUARD™: NATURAL VARROA TREATMENT

Fabiana Abumada

HopGuard™ is a new alternative treatment for Varroa. A naturally occurring product extracted from hops has been identified and tested for its miticidal activity, and it has been used to formulate HopGuard.

HopGuard was developed as a quick mite knockdown contact application delivered on strips. The strips are made of biodegradable material (cardboard) coated with HopGuard, which is made of food-grade components, GRAS, and used commercially on a global scale. The strips are inserted between brood frames. When the product has been delivered and is no longer in the strip, the bees chew the cardboard and remove it from the hive. The results obtained from *in vivo* studies have shown that HopGuard is effective in killing Varroa mites and does not disrupt colony behavior, brood production, or queen egg laying. Toxicity studies performed with HopGuard strips have shown that the product is not toxic to bees and is safe to use in the colony. Honey residue studies were performed during honey flow, and the results obtained from the laboratory analysis showed no signs of contamination with HopGuard. The development and delivery system of HopGuard strips as Varroa control are compatible with commercial beekeeping practices, involve minimal labor, and are very safe for the bees and beekeepers.

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MASTER BEEKEEPER CERTIFICATION

A committee comprising OSBA members, Oregon State University Department of Horticulture employees, and representatives from beekeeping associations is developing a Master Beekeeper certification program for Oregon. This program is based on the apprentice-journeyman-master model used in many states, including our neighbor state of Washington.

Implementation of the Master Beekeeper program will begin with the Certified Apprentice Beekeeper level. The training and experience provided at this level, including hands-on field experience working with bees, are designed to provide participants with the knowledge and confidence to keep bees.

The next step in the program's development is to start working with those who will be responsible for providing the education and experience to participants.

Because the Master Beekeeper program is statewide, there is need for a degree of standardization and a common understanding of program content. This includes training, testing, and field experience. The

objective is to provide those in a trainer's role an overview of the program as it has been developed thus far. Solicitation of input regarding regional differences that need to be considered and addressed will be another meeting topic. Saturday, **March 12, 2011**, has been set aside for a one-day *Train the Trainers* workshop to be held on the OSU campus in Corvallis.

If you are interested in participating in this exciting new program as a participant, trainer, or mentor, and have not already done so, please complete the interest form that was inserted in the last issue of *The Bee Line* and is also available on the OSBA website: www.orsba.org. Those who indicate an interest in a training role will be sent additional information in preparation for the March 12 meeting. An additional form is printed here for those interested in becoming trainers. Please return either or both forms, as appropriate, as soon as possible as an e-mail attachment to Carolyn Breece at breecec@hort.oregonstate.edu or send a hardcopy addressed to:

Carolyn Breece
Department of Horticulture
Oregon State University
4017 ALS Building
Corvallis OR 97331

OREGON MASTER BEEKEEPER PROGRAM INSTRUCTOR INTEREST FORM

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Oregon Master Beekeeper certification program. Please take a moment to tell us about yourself. Planning for the March 12, 2011, *Train the Trainers* workshop is ongoing, and we would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible. If you have already responded to the interest questionnaire inserted in the November-December 2010 issue of the newsletter or at www.orsba.org, we have your contact information. If not, please add it here.

Name:

I will attend the March 12, 2011, meeting. Yes No

If you are unable to attend, do you want to stay on the interest list? Yes No

Number of years as a beekeeper: Number of hives:

Are you an OSBA member? Yes No

Are you a member of a regional group? Yes No If so, name of association:

Do you currently mentor new beekeepers? Yes No

Do you use a log or other means to track your hive management activity? Yes No

Briefly describe your experience giving presentations or talking formally about bees/beekeeping, and provide any additional comments.



Left: A very happy bee finding some honeydew.

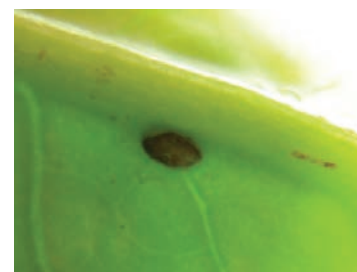
THE BUZZ IN AND ABOUT THE LAUREL HEDGE

Judy Scher

During a honey dearth last year, I observed a great many honey bees being attracted to the underside of the leaves of an English laurel bush. After doing a little research online, I found out that these leaves are host to a type of soft brown scale. This parasitic insect produces a tiny drop of honeydew as it sucks nutrients from the leaf. Indeed, the little droplets are sweet. I took some macro photos of a droplet of honeydew on a leaf, a bee collecting the honeydew and the actual scale insect on the stem. Apparently, in some European and Asian countries, the dark, strong honey made from honeydew is valued for medicinal properties.



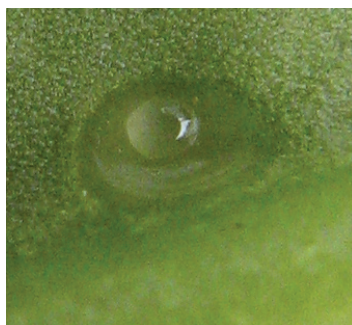
The brown soft scale on a stem of a nearby leaf.



Resulting leaf scar.



Underside of laurel leaf with honeydew droplet.



Honeydew droplet in middle of leaf damage by scale.

URBAN BEEKEEPING

Bee Culture magazine is looking for examples of Best Management Practices used by city or county beekeeping groups or government agencies when establishing guidelines for beekeepers. If your group, city, municipality, or legislative body has or uses a Best Management Practices guideline for keeping bees in an urban area, we would like to know of it and be able to incorporate it into our program. If you know of zoning regulations, and they are digital, simply send a link and we'll work out the transfer. If you have a hard copy, fax or send it by mail. In addition, if you have been prosecuted because of an alleged violation of a city rule

or regulation regarding keeping bees, we would like to know of it so we can use that, too, for our guideline.

Bee Culture and thedailygreen.com are also looking for cities that have seen the light during 2010 and have changed their laws and regulations so that, where there were no bees, there are bees today. What cities have opened their doors to beekeepers this year? Has yours? Do you know one nearby? If your city or county or municipality has changed the rules this year, let us know so we can acknowledge them.

For both of these requests, send information directly to: Kim@BeeCulture.com.

AFRICANIZED BEES IN GEORGIA

Dewey Caron

Did you see the news? New bee group forms in Albany—Albany, Georgia, that is!

In late November, nearly two dozen beekeepers organized a new local association there. This group met following the death of 73-year-old Curtis Davis, a Dougherty County resident who died after an Africanized honey bee attack, the first confirmed report of AHB in Georgia. Davis dislodged the bees while moving debris with a bulldozer. “It took them 15 minutes to shut off the bulldozer; the smoke and vibrations irritated the bees... I think the bees got here from a piece of equipment or a hose in a piece of machinery brought up here,” theorized Richard Grebel, a local beekeeper and one of the meeting organizers.

Since Mr. Davis’s death, the Georgia Department of Agriculture has monitored swarms and tested 90 samples, confirming two more AHB colonies in southwest Georgia. Both of the newly discovered colonies have been destroyed. The Georgia Department

of Agriculture, in issuing the announcement to confirm that the bees from the incident were Africanized, also acknowledged that budget cuts were affecting their “ability to offer services” and that they “plan to resume trapping in middle to late February when the bees become more active.”

Many state agriculture departments have the same types of budget and personnel problems as Georgia. Insofar as services offered, how widespread would we find AHB if we were to look? Who, for example, is looking in Oregon? If we tested 90 samples, would we find AHB here?

Don’t bet against it!

Note: As Dewey suggests, we all need to be aware of the potential presence of Africanized bees. A four-page University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service publication titled *Africanized Honey Bees* provides background and safety information, including suggested changes in management practices for beekeepers in areas with Africanized bees. It is available at: http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/B%201290_2.pdf. The publication notes that beekeepers are the best defense because they can maintain high densities of European bees that then are able to “dilute” the genetics of Africanized populations.

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For those applying for certification, the firm will conduct unannounced inspections, review documents, and collect samples for country of origin verification. Every honey company is invited to become a member of the True Source Honey program. This will help create transparency within the industry and go beyond the current expectations of certifications and federal regulations with an additional layer of traceability that starts at the hive. Those who want to help eliminate

illegally sourced honey and maintain honey's natural reputation of quality and safety are encouraged to participate.

Most imported and domestic honey is from high-quality, legal sources. However, some importers, brokers, and honey companies are illegally circumventing tariffs and quality controls, selling honey to companies and consumers that is of questionable origin. In addition to creating food safety issues for consumers, this threatens the honey industry by undercutting fair market prices and damaging honey's reputation for quality and safety. For example, in September of this year, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Justice indicted 11 German and Chinese individuals and six corporations for allegedly participating in an international conspiracy to illegally import Chinese honey. Federal officials said the defendants allegedly imported more than \$40 million of Chinese honey, including honey that was adulterated with unapproved antibiotics. This indictment is the largest in a string of federal actions in the past two years directed at stopping illegal honey trade. While these federal actions are critical, further action is needed by the industry itself. The Certified True Source Honey Traceability Program will allow all interested parties along the honey chain to join together in stopping these illegal practices. Watch for further information at: www.TrueSourceHoney.com.

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Pesticide—Continued from page 1

the initial field study guidelines, which the Bayer study failed to satisfy, were insufficiently rigorous to test whether or not clothianidin contributes to CCD in a real-world scenario: the field test evaluated the wrong crop, over an insufficient time period and with inadequate controls.

According to beekeeper Jeff Anderson, who has testified before EPA on the topic, “The Bayer study is fatally flawed. It was an open field study with control and test plots of about 2 acres each. Bees typically forage at least 2 miles out from the hive, so it is likely they didn’t ingest much of the treated crops. And corn, not canola, is the major pollen-producing crop that bees rely on for winter nutrition. This is a critical point because we see hive losses mainly after over-wintering, so there is something going on in these winter cycles. It’s as if they designed the study to avoid seeing clothianidin’s effects on hive health.”

Clothianidin is of the neonicotinoid family of systemic pesticides, which are taken up by a plant’s vascular system and expressed through pollen, nectar, and gutation droplets from which bees then forage and drink. Scientists are concerned about the mix and cumulative effects of the multiple pesticides bees are exposed to in these ways. Neonicotinoids are of particular concern because they have cumulative, sublethal effects on insect pollinators that correspond to CCD symptoms—namely, neurobehavioral and immune system disruptions.

According to James Frazier, PhD, professor of entomology at Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences, “Among the neonicotinoids, clothianidin is among those most toxic for honey bees; and this, combined with its systemic movement in plants, has produced a troubling mix of scientific results pointing to its potential risk for honey bees through current agricultural practices. Our own research indicates that systemic pesticides occur in pollen and nectar in much greater quantities than has been previously thought, and that interactions among pesticides occurs often and should be of wide concern.” Dr. Frazier said that the most prudent course of action would be to take the pesticide off the market while the flawed study is being redone.


Clothianidin has been on the market since 2003. With a soil half-life of up to 19 years in heavy soils and over a year in the lightest of soils, commercial beekeepers are concerned that even an immediate stop-use of clothianidin won’t save their livelihoods or hives in time.

“We are losing more than a third of our colonies each winter; but beekeepers are a stubborn, industrious bunch. We split hives, rebound as much as we can each summer, and then just take it on the chin—eat our losses. So even these big loss numbers understate the problem,” says 50-year beekeeper, David Hackenberg. “What folks need to understand is that the beekeeping industry, which is responsible for a third of the food we all eat, is at a critical threshold for economic reasons and reasons to do with bee population dynamics. Our bees are living for 30 days instead of 42, nursing bees are having to forage because there aren’t enough foragers, and at a certain point a colony just doesn’t have the critical mass to keep going. The bees are at that point, and we are at that point. We are losing our livelihoods at a time when there just isn’t other work. Another winter of ‘more studies are needed’ so Bayer can keep their blockbuster products on the market and EPA can avoid a difficult decision is unacceptable.”

Citing the imminent economic and environmental hazards posed by the continued use of clothianidin, the National Honey Bee Advisory Board,

American Beekeeping Federation, Beyond Pesticides, Pesticide Action Network North America, and Center for Biological Diversity are asking EPA administrator Lisa Jackson to exercise the Agency’s emergency powers to take the pesticide off the market.

“The environment has become the experiment and all of us—not just bees and beekeepers—have become the experimental subjects,” said Tom Theobald, a 35-year beekeeper. “In an apparent rush to get products to the market, chemicals have been routinely granted ‘conditional’ registrations. Of 94 pesticide active ingredients released since 1997, 70% have been given conditional registrations, with unanswered questions of unknown magnitude. In the case of clothianidin, those questions were huge. The EPA’s basic charge is ‘the prevention of unreasonable risk to man and the environment’ and these practices hardly satisfy that obligation. We must do better, there is too much at stake.”



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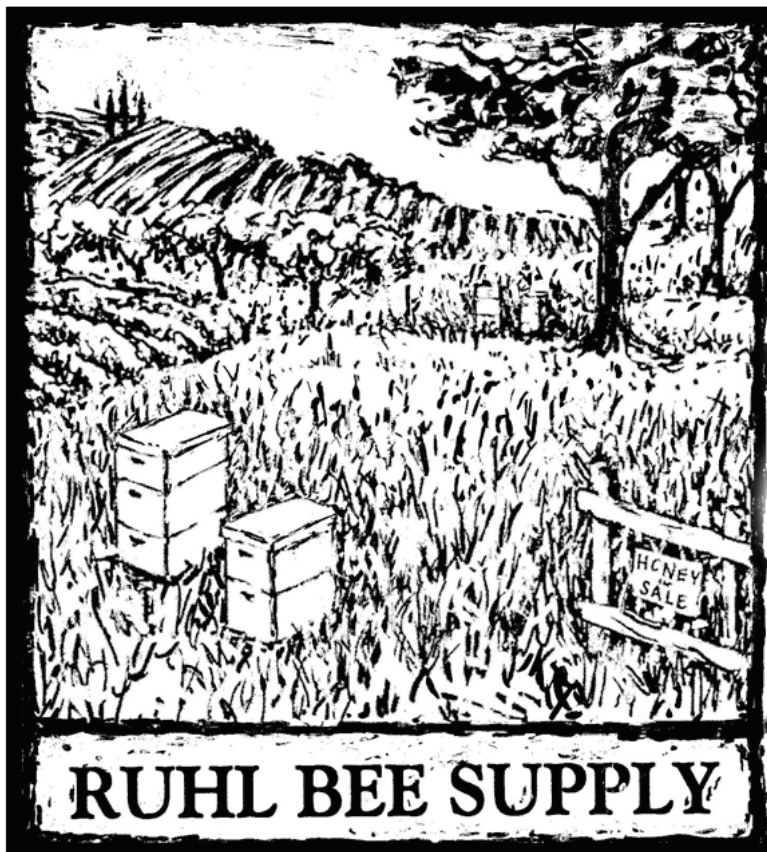
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Herb Brasington, OSBA Treasurer, 1881 NE Ashberry Dr, Hillsboro OR 97124

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Very best of wishes for the new year!

The Bee Line

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Send news about your bees and your experiences in keeping them, as well as your corrections, letters, comments, photographs and stories (both from “old” times and “new”), interviews, recipes, and ads and requests for advertising to: Rosanna Mattingly, *The Bee Line*, 4207 SE Woodstock Blvd Ste 517, Portland OR 97206; e-mail: osba.newsletter@gmail.com.

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