



Miscellaneous Ramblings on a Fine Spring Day

As I sit here finishing this month's newsletter, I'm looking out over my hives and marveling at how beekeeping has improved my life. I now see Spring through the eyes of another animal, it is a marvel. There is pollen a-plenty, and the maples and blueberries are budding out. Although we had a rough Winter, Spring looks great!

I've had a few reports from California from commercial beekeepers that the season has been pretty good without the weather problems of the last few years. They are all packing up and heading up to Hood River now and looking forward to a good year.

It's been many a year since beekeeping has looked like a fair business to be in. Finally, pollination rental rates are creeping up to where they need to be to be in line with costs and value. And, of all things, honey AND beeswax are in demand and fetching a fair price. For the first time in a long time, there are beekeepers with new trucks and smiles on their faces!

We have finally adapted to *Varroa* and tracheal mites, and this year, talk has it that formic acid will receive EPA approval for treatment of mites on honeybees, and we will have a treatment that is low cost and effective for both mites, and is an element already present in honey!

But, my thoughts also turn to all that is happening in agriculture and how the public reacts to media reports. I see how easily stories that I have written for this newsletter are picked up in newspapers. And, I see how the media and public react to something like the "mad cow" reports out of Britain and what they have done to British cattlemen, or how "killer bees" are reported. I can't help but wonder what would happen if a "60 Minutes" or "Dateline", decided to make a story out of beekeeping. Maybe something about how beekeepers have "caused" mites to spread worldwide and honeybees are now "threatend" with "total extinction" in the wild. Or maybe they try to make something out of one of the honey adulteration cases, or worse yet, they find

that there are "traces" of Fluvalinate "poisoning" honey.

We have all seen how easy it is easy for the media to take a story out of context and blow it out of proportion. How do you think the beekeeping industry would fair?

Then I read about Washington beekeepers being all up in arms about a program to help beekeepers, and I think back on our own Fall meeting and our talks about forming a group to promote commercial beekeeping and how far THAT has gone. I read in the magazines all the comments on how the National Honey Board is not doing the job beekeepers want with few ideas or suggestion on what should be done.

Then a ray of hope comes in a press release from the American Beekeeping Federation that they have generated a list of not only things that are wrong with the beekeeping industry, but they also developed a list of things that they can do to CHANGE the way things are. And, I get my monthly copy of Dr. Sanford's APIS electronic newsletter with an article on how Florida beekeepers are trying to get legal descriptions as to what is organic and raw honey.

So, now I'm feeling pretty good again, I get my March issue of APIS and Tom Sanford has an article out of Australia about a Dr. Pike stating that honeybees are a non-native species and that "evidence was mounting to support the idea that the honeybee was having a long-term impact on the environment." He feels that honeybees have diminished or eliminated native foragers and therefore represent a "danger" to native species.

That may or may not be true, but just think what would happen if a group in this country started a campaign to eradicate honeybees because they are not a native species!

Well, so much for my paranoid thoughts. I just have to look up from my keyboard and watch my bees, and all is well and good again. I hope all is well and good with you too.

Ron Bennett

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Basics in Northwest Beekeeping

by Ron Bennett

Spring is here and your bees are bringing pollen (the first sign of a healthy hive - they wouldn't be collecting pollen unless they were raising new bees). But the weather can change on them and they can starve out in just a few days time! So, watch your hives' store and don't let the colony's stores get below about 15 lbs.

You should feed your hives as you did in March.

The first week in April is the time that bee packages are arriving at the local suppliers, so you should get ready to install package bees that you might have ordered.

Re-queen any failing queens with queens you ordered in February, or contact your supplier and get any queens you might need now. Getting a few more queens than you think you need is a good idea, you can use any extra queens to make two-queen colonies out of your stronger colonies, to be split later for increase or to hold for re-queening other colonies later.

If you find one of your colonies much stronger than some others, exchange the position of overly strong colonies with weaker ones, to give weaker hives more field bees and stronger hives less tendency to swarm.

Reverse the hive bodies on two story colonies in which queen is laying in the upper story. This will most likely be all of your hives that wintered over in two boxes. The bees move up to the top box, leaving the lower one empty. The queen will not move down to lay in the former brood box by herself (bees always tend to work up, not down), so by swapping the boxes, the bees will have room to raise new bees without crowding out and swarming.

Give the single story colonies getting full of bees a second story.

Apple blossom time . . . put a queen excluder on the colonies with bees and brood in both stores and add a full depth super of drawn comb for possible honey flow. (In the Willamette Valley, we can get a super maple flow starting right now).

Don't give foundation at this time, wait about a month until there are enough bees in your colonies and there is a steady honey flow on.

Keep on the lookout for American or European foulbrood and noseema and treat before it is time for honey supers.

Look through your hives and

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honey assessment would fall on beekeepers.

- Industry fragmentation and distrust, including the perception that honey packers are making all the money in the sales of honey.

NHB SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

As the one unified industry activity concerned with promoting the sale and use of honey, the National Honey Board was closely examined, especially the NHB scope and structure and organization. Should the Honey Board's role be expanded to address some of the needs which had been identified? Is the Honey Board organized so as to be most beneficial to the industry? Are those who benefit from the Honey Board contributing their proper portion of the NHB cost? Among the items discussed in this area were:

- The nominating process - Secretary of Agriculture's role and the National Honey Nominations Committee's role.
- USDA involvement and oversight.
- Packers serving on the Board when they don't pay assessments.
- Importer representation on the NHB does not reflect their percentage of contribution.
- If packers were assessed, could they receive credit for their own advertising efforts?
- Refunds of assessments.
- Should only producers comprise the Honey Board?
- Can/should the Honey Board be involved in beekeeping research?
- Can/should the Honey Board be involved in honey quality assurances.

WHERE TO GO?

The participants at the Summit Meeting agreed that the National Honey Board is the proper vehicle to address most of the needs identified. In particular, the group felt that industry-funded and industry-directed beekeeping research and honey quality assurance activities should be conducted under Honey Board auspices. The consensus was, "Let's improve the Honey Board and enhance the likeli-

hood the Honey Board will be re-authorized in the next referendum." The participants agreed that the following changes should be pursued:

Beekeeping Research—8 percent of the Honey Board's annual assessment revenues would be allocated to beekeeping research. If there are not sufficient worthy research projects to be funded in a given year, the non-appropriated allocation must be carried forward for future research expenditures. The beekeeping research would be directed by the Board through a committee which may include outside expert(s).

Quality Assurance—The envisioned plan would include a program of testing honey voluntarily submitted by producers, packers, and importers; testing for enforcement purposes; and the development of a "seal of approval" program for companies participating in the voluntary program. The enforcement methods would include "no-notice" sampling and referring violators to state and federal authorities; an experienced attorney would be retained to assist in the enforcement procedures.

Packer Assessment—The cost of the expanded Honey Board program would be paid by an assessment on honey packers equal to that levied on producers and importers—one cent (1 ¢) per pound. All assessments would be mandatory, as they are now. Producer-packers would pay assessments relative to their activity; i.e., 1¢ per pound on their production activity; 1¢ per pound on their packing activity.

Every honey packer—whether an independent packer, a cooperative, or a producer packer—would be eligible for a credit for a portion of its qualified advertising expenditures against its assessments. The plan is to have a packer pay the full assessment into the Honey Board, then submit his advertising expenditures to a panel of non-industry experts. Approved expenditures would be credited against the assessment, up to 50% of that packer's assessment.

The proposed expanded assessment is projected

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to take in about \$6 million per year. The allocation for beekeeping research would require approximately \$480,000 of that; the quality assurance program would require \$1 million, possibly more.

The question of whether other segments of the industry—packages and queens, pollination services, bee supplies, etc.—should be assessed was also discussed. A decision was made that these activities should not be assessed at this time, but that the industry should study the possibility of such assessments in the future and the equitable means of levying such assessments. Likewise, the possibility of "unbinding" the one-cent per pound honey assessment was discussed and various ideas for relating the assessment to the value of the honey were tabled for future consideration.

Board Representation—In recognition of the assessment on honey packers, the Honey Board would be expanded to 14 members; the public member position would be dropped and the two additional seats would be filled by packers. The make-up would be 7 producers, 1 cooperative representative, 4 packers, two importers (one of which can be an exporter).

Each industry segment would nominate to the Secretary of Agriculture its own Honey Board representatives: the qualified marketing cooperatives would submit nominees for the cooperative position; the National Honey Packers and Dealers Association, the packer and importer/exporter nom-

inees. The National Honey Nominations Committee would continue to nominate for the producer positions and would coordinate the other nominations.

HOW TO GET THERE?

All the changes to the National Honey Board outlined above would require changes to the Honey Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act. The industry trade organizations would work with Congress to make the changes and put them into effect as quickly as possible. A referendum of affected parties—producers, importers, and packers—would be held before the changes are implemented.

Cont. on Page 6

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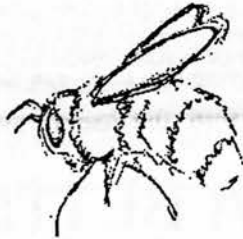
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The Reno meeting participants agreed to support the proposed changes to their respective organizations, where additional discussion is expected. Another summit meeting may be necessary to define strategies for implementing approved changes.

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

Participating in the Reno Industry Summit Meeting were:

- American Beekeeping Federation: Bill Merritt, Dave Hackenberg, Bruce Beekman, Clint Walker, Gene Brandy and Troy Fore.
- American Honey Producers Association: Bob Barnes and Steve Park.
- Sioux Honey Association: John Milam, Gary Evans, Bob Brandy Bert Belliston and Dale Bauer.
- National Honey Packers & Dealers Association: Buddy Ashurst, Dwight Stoller, Bill Gamber, Doug McGinnis, Bob Coyles and Tom Ed Burseson.
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HONEY BOARD TO DEVELOP NEW COOKBOOK

"Sweetened with Honey - The Natural Way" will be sold out this year

The National Honey Board will be developing a new low-fat cookbook this year. The new cookbook will replace "Sweetened with Honey - The Natural Way" which is expected to be sold out this year.

The new cookbook will contain over 100 delectable low-fat honey recipes plus full-color, mouth-watering photographs. The cookbook will be sold at supermarket checkout stands throughout the country in February 1997. Additional copies will be available to the honey industry through the National Honey Board.

"Sweetened with Honey - The Natural Way" is expected to be available until late 1996 but supplies are limited. To order a single copy of the Honey Board's current cookbook, send a check or money order for \$2.50 to: National Honey Board - Dept. BK P.O. Box 7760 Marshfield, WI 54449. For orders of 10-99 cookbooks, the cost is \$1.75 each. For 100 or more cookbooks, the cost is \$1.25 each. If you wish to purchase multiple copies of "Sweetened with Honey - The Natural Way," please send a check or money order to: Cookbook National Honey Board 390 Lashley St. Longmont, CO 80501

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A federal agency, like USDA ARS, is not allowed to solicit or accept contributions of the sort that are needed. So an organization has formed to handle such contributions and to accomplish the desired goals under called, "Friends of Agricultural Research - Beltsville". The mailing address is P.O. Box 1061, Beltsville, MD 20704-1061. If you would like to see the dream of a good bee exhibit become a reality, send your donation or one from your beekeeping club to the above fund, and earmark it for the bee exhibit. It will be built when adequate funds have been collected.



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ABF & AHPA FILE CHARGES AGAINST HONEY IMPORTERS

*From a recent Association of Food Industries
newsletter, submitted by Richard Turanski*

A recent letter sent to the National Honey Packers & Dealers Association by the U.S. Department of Commerce announced that on February 22, 1996, the American Beekeeping Federation and the American Honey Producers Association filed a submission with the U.S. Department of Commerce alleging that five companies are currently circumventing the anti-dumping suspension agreement on honey from the People's Republic of China (PRC). The petition alleges that Chinese honey is entering the U.S. through Canada either as a product of Canada or as a blend of Chinese and Canadian honey.

The Department of Commerce has begun an investigation of the charges and has asked the industry for its cooperation in identifying any Chinese honey imports that enter the US via Canada in circumvention of the suspension agreement.

The U.S. Customs Service requires all importers of record to submit a written statement certifying that the material being imported was not obtained under any arrangement, swap, exchange, or other transaction designed to circumvent the Agreement. This statement must be presented as a condition of physical release of the merchandise.

The suspension agreement puts limits on imports of Chinese honey and sets minimum prices. It went into effect at the same time that a world shortage of honey occurred, driving prices to historical highs.

New Washington beekeeper group proposed

Apiary program critics test interest in separate group for commercialized operations

By MITCHELL TREBON
Capital Press Staff Writer

YAKIMA, Wash.—Unhappy with the industry's year-old apiary program, a small group of Washington beekeepers has set out to form a new association to press for the program's elimination.

Led by beekeeper Chester Ferguson, the group is in the process of soliciting interest in an association that would include only mid- to major-sized commercial beekeepers.

The new group would be called the Commercial Pollinators of Washington. Currently the Central Washington Beekeepers Association, which includes bee operations of all sizes, is the state's major bee organization.

Ferguson says at least 35 beekeepers have expressed interest in the group. He estimates there are between 75 and 100 beekeepers who would fit the group's stated requirement that they make a substantial portion of their livelihood pollinating crops.

The impetus for forming the new group is dissatisfaction with the industry-supported apiary program run by state apiarist Jim Bach. That program was instituted last year by beekeepers and orchardists after legislators cut state funds for the program. Ferguson says administrative costs gobble up most of the program's revenues, which are derived from bee colony registration fees and a 60-cent-per-hive charge to orchardists and other customers.

Ferguson also says the program primarily serves hobby beekeepers, with little benefit for larger commercial beekeepers who must collect a large share of the program's budget. He says he was shouted down when he tried to express these concerns at the annual state beekeepers meeting last month.

"It has become either start this new group or give up," he said. "It is not practical for the backyard operator to determine how this industry should function."

Eric Olson, a commercial beekeeper instrumental in developing the apiary program, expressed anger

at Ferguson's charges. The small bee operations contribute as much to the program's revenues as the larger ones, he said.

The program is designed to provide research, education and some inspection activities so the industry can maintain and improve its bee colonies, he said.

"The reason the program has offered these people nothing is because they've never bothered to become involved in it. It's too bad you have half a dozen noisy jerks trying to ruin this program. We feel very good about how it has gone so far."

Olsen said beekeepers only have to look at their hives this year to know they need an apiary program. Many are reporting losses near 35 percent, much of it due to tracheal mites. But research needs to be conducted to look into the problem further. "Look at what's happening," Olsen said. "We're having some of our worse losses ever. The apiary program is one tool to help us figure this stuff out."

Paul Schlenvogt, a California beekeeper who played a prominent role in deregulating that state's bee industry, agrees research is needed. He believes the Washington program however, funnels too much money into administration.

Schlenvogt says he stopped bringing his bees to Washington largely because he didn't want to support the program. He is director of the Cal-Dak Beekeepers Association, a group *Cont. on Page 9*

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Cont. from Page 2

that fought government regulation in California and North Dakota.

"In California the administration of the program got very high handed," he said. "They were using disease control research money for administrative projects to impose unreasonable restrictions and quarantines."

Olson said the Washington program is unique because it is primarily educational, rather than regulatory, although the program's apiary board and Bach are developing a penalty schedule to enforce payment of registration fees and hive assessment collections.

"First of all, it's the law—people have to pay," Olsen said. "But it's also unique because it is a positive program aimed at helping the industry rather than regulating it."

Olsen dismisses claims that Bach hand picked the current apiary board, noting that meetings were held throughout the state during the program's formation.

"Anyone could have become a part of this," he said.

Olsen defends Bach's performance on inspections, noting that Bach appears whenever inspections are requested, and that the program is intended to be more educational and research oriented.

"You can't just throw money at research," Olsen said. "You need someone to contract for it, monitor it and evaluate it. You have to have some administration."

Ferguson said orchardists have gone along with the program because they haven't been educated about its costs and benefits to the bee industry. Ron

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Wilcox, chairman of the Washington State Horticultural Association's pollination committee, said his group is not about to get into the middle of another industry's problems.

"Right now we are just watching," he said "To an orchardist this (per-hive assessment) is not a lot of money. We just want a strong pollination industry, so we would like see them get together and work things out".

Olsen said the issue has evolved into a personal attack on Bach.

"He has tremendous knowledge and tremendous connections, and that's just what we need to help our efforts to stop the terrible losses we're having," he said.

Bach has already been instrumental thwarting a Walla Walla County ordinance that would have limited bee deliveries into the county, has worked on other conflicts between beekeepers and canola growers, and is helping develop experiments with a troublesome pesticide and a protective mint product, Olsen said.

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Willamette Valley
Meets 7:30 p.m. fourth Mon.;
Room 112, Building 50,
Chemeketa Community College, Salem

President: Walt Nichol, 503-585-5705
Vice pres.: Richard Farrier, 541-327-2673
Secretary: Ron Bennett, 503-838-2328
Treasurer: Fritz Skirvin, 503-581-9372

Calendar of Events

April	1	So. Oregon Beekeepers
	4	Tillamook Meeting, Tillamook
	8	WVBA Bee School, Part 1, Salem
	9	Lane County Meeting, Eugene
	10	Tualitan Meeting, Beaverton
	11	Portland Meeting, Oregon City
	15	WVBA Bee School, Part 2, Salem
	19	Coos County Meeting, Coquille
	22	WVBA Meeting, Salem
	4	Tillamook Beekeepers
	27	Portland Field Day Bee School
May	11	OSBA Spring Field Day, Tillamook
August	3-4	OSBA Summer Picnic and Meeting, Tumalo State Park, Bend
August	5-9	Western Apicultural Society, Hawaii
Nov.	29-30	OSBA Fall Conference, Cannon Beach

stored equipment and remove poor comb and replace with good comb (undrawn not foundation - the bees will only chew it up).

If some of your hive boxes are a little worse for wear, transfer bees from damaged hive boxes into new or reconditioned ones. You can then clean up the old boxes and repair any damage and have boxes available when needed.

Check your stored combs for possible wax moth infestation - moths never sleep.

Make sure your dues are paid to not only the OSBA, but to your local beekeeping club. It costs them a lot of money these days to mail out meeting notices and funds that they spend on non-current members are funds not available for other beekeeping activities.

In a few weeks, your hives will be booming with new young bees and the bees will start to get into the swarming mode. We will talk next issue about some of the methods to minimize swarming, but young bees are about as easy to control as teenagers, so you should have the necessary equipment at hand and set up some decoy hives to catch stray swarms.

Recipe of the Month

from Super Formulas Arts & Crafts

by Elaine C. White

SLUG BAIT

- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/2 teaspoon baker's yeast
- 2 cups warm water (115°F.)

Mix the ingredients. Dig a shallow depression in the soil and set a container into the soil with the top edge flush with the soil surface. Pour the bait into the container. The slugs are attracted to the yeasty, fermenting mixture and drown when they fall in. Add more bait, as it evaporates.

I haven't tried this, but it should work. Doesn't say, but I guess you're also supposed to remove the drowned slugs now and then - sounds like a great job.

LOOK AT YOUR ADDRESS LABEL

Technology has finally caught up with our mailing list. You will note that there is a code or more likely a date after your last name. This is the date of expiration of your membership. We will be tightening up on past due membership dues starting next month. You will stop receiving the *BeeLine* and your membership will be inactive 60 past the due date.

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 the OSBA. OSBA Membership is \$15 per person and includes a vote in all OSBA elections, discounts on other bee-related publications, 10 issues of *The Bee Line*, and more. And, if you are already a member of a local group, your group will receive \$1.00 from your OSBA dues. Foreign membership is \$23.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

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Local Group _____

Start your savings now! Get a discount on the following subscriptions through the OSBA.

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|
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| <i>Gleanings in Bee Culture</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 yr. \$12.25 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 yrs. \$22.50 |
| <i>The Speedy Bee</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 yr. \$13.25 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 yrs. \$25.25 |

Make checks payable to OSBA and send check and this form to: Phyllis Shoemake, 1874 Winchester NW, Salem, OR 97304

CLASSIFIED ADS

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