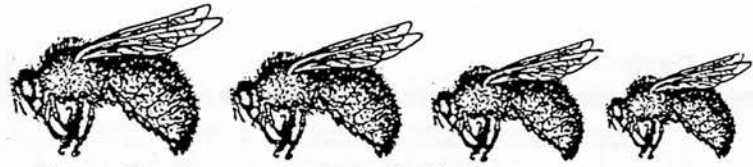


The Bee Line



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 21, Number 4

May 1996

The Spring/Summer Field Day!

Mark your calendars and bee there!

MAY 11

The OSBA has just announced the program and schedule for its annual Spring-Summer meeting and Field Day. This year's meeting will be hosted by the Tillamook Beekeepers Association at the State Forestry Center in Tillamook. Our featured presenter will be our own Dr. Michael Burgett from OSU. The OSBA and all beekeepers in the Northwest are fortunate to have a resource like Dr. Burgett, and we are excited about the program that is being put together for us for this meeting.

Not only is this your chance to see and hear the latest information on research in apiculture, it is a chance to meet old friends and make new friends. We are also planning to have **BARBEQUED OYSTERS** fresh from the bay in addition to the BYO brown bag lunch!

The program is:

8-9:00 AM

Arrival, coffee and doughnuts and meeting new and old friends.

9:00 AM

POLLINATION ECONOMICS - Dr. Burgett will discuss the economics of the pollination business in the Northwest and how the recent changes in beekeeping and farming have affected prices and beekeepers return on investment.

With the reality of varroa and tracheal mites and the awareness by farmers of the lack of wild honeybees, beekeeping has changed for large and small beekeepers. Demand is up, and with

crops like meadowfoam arriving in the Northwest, the need for pollinators is at an all time high.

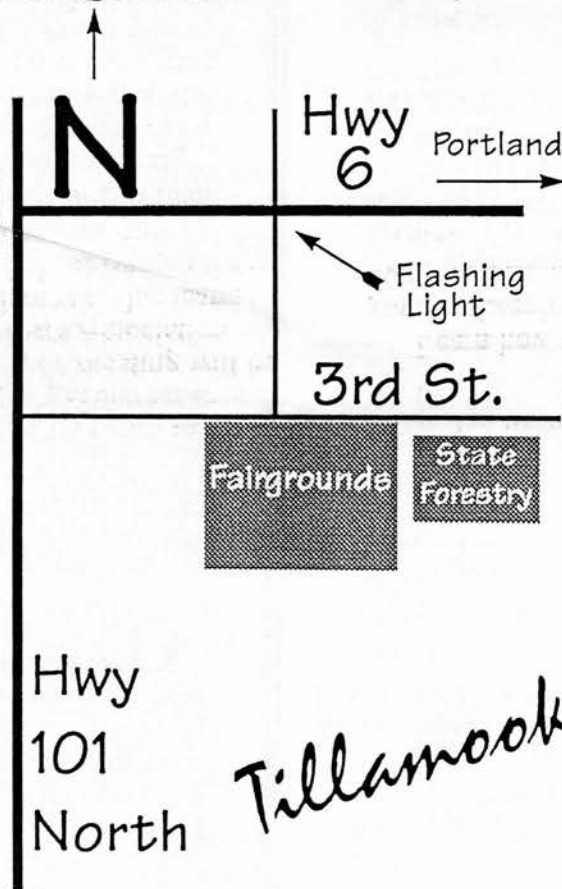
Learn how these changes will affect you and your beekeeping and what other beekeepers are doing to take advantage of the situation.

10:00 AM SPECIAL REPORT - LATEST ADVANCES AND RESEARCH WITH FORMIC ACID - Mike Rodia of the Willamette Valley Beekeepers, will report on the latest research from Canada on using formic acid for the treatment of both varroa and tracheal mites. Early indication show that this may be the answer we beekeepers have been waiting for. Not yet

approved, but with the promise of EPA labeling for honeybee applications in the near future and commercially available packaging maybe by the end of this year, formic acid has been a very effective low-cost method of treatment. Like any acid, formic acid poses some health and safety risks. Here what techniques and applications researchers have used and how we beekeepers might be using this treatment in the not to distant future.

10:30 PM MAKING NUCS AND REQUEENING YOUR HIVES - The nucleus hive is one of the best management tools available to the beekeeper. It serves as an overflow for excess brood during the swarm season and is the ideal way to requeen a hive, even late into the season. Nucs are the source of brood frames to equalize hive strength.

Cont. on Page 8



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Too Much Fun?

I sit here writing this last little bit of space left in this month's newsletter. Yesterday was the OSBA/Portland/RUHL/WVBA Field Day (we need to come up with a shorter name) at Foothills Honey. Once again, Torey Johnson came through with one of the prettiest days of the year, and 135+ beekeepers, new and old, were on hand the best hands-on field day one could hope for.

I didn't do a very good job as reporter (Judy, my supervisor and bunk buddy, had produced a Habitat for Humanity charity dinner and auction the night before and we were more than a little fried on Saturday) and I didn't write down the names of some of the beekeepers I talked to at the field day. I am always please to go to these get-to-gathers (one's coming up on May 11th) and get a chance to meet beekeepers from around the state and learn new things.

Gene Eldred from Washington has developed a slick way to transport his hives and have a "bear-resistant" platform. He has built a platform slightly larger than the bed of his truck with camper jacks at each corner. He just drives to a location, lifts the jacks, drives the truck out, drops the jacks. To pick up his hives, all he does is jack up the platform, back the truck under it, drop the jacks, secure the platform and drive off. Too cool. I hope to have an article this summer with pictures and maybe even some drawings for all of you.

Ernie McCormick had all sorts of equipment and hardware on display including a nice pollen trap system, a miniature hive with miniature frames for school demonstrations and a queen rearing three-way hive.

Rosemary Marshall had all sorts of bee plants and fruit trees and REAL good prices (good thing we were late or I'd have three times as many plants as we ended up with). And a big thanks to Stephanie "The coffee is almost ready" Barnas for all the refreshments.

On behalf of all the people who attended, many thanks to all of the people who put on this event.

One of the bad parts of this job is that not all of the news I get is good news. I am sad to report that beekeeping has lost Lu Alexander recently. Lu was an outstanding person and contributed more than words can express not only to beekeeping, but to all who had the opportunity to know him. I hope to have a detailed article soon about this remarkable man.

I'm also sad to report the passing of Marjie Erhy's mother. Our deepest sympathies go out to Marjie.

transmitted from the 4 satellites to any of the many types of mobile GPS receivers on the ground. The signals are decoded by the receiver which computes - within a few seconds -, by triangulation, its latitude, longitude, and altitude whether on the ground, on water, or in the air. The receiver operator can then log this location into the receiver's memory for future reference, or download the data points to a computer for map-making.

The GPS system is for everyone. It can be used to permanently map the location and altitude of any geographic feature or site such as a tree, a favorite fishing hole, home, camp site, workplace, or an apiary. GPS receivers are accurate to a distance of from 1 to 49 meters (~3-160 feet). The receiver can be used to store so-called 'waypoints' while enroute driving or walking to or from a location. The routes created by this process can then be followed in either direction using the GPS receiver as a compass and electronic guide pointing you in the right directions. The receiver can also be used to find the shortest route between two points and calculate the time of arrival. Some units even provide the user with real time course and speed information.

The user should understand that the Department of Defense can and does employ something known as the GPS Selective Availability (SA) feature. The intent of this feature is to provide greater resolution for U. S. military receivers than for receivers of adversaries. Employment of SA varies from day to day and can reduce the accuracy of civilian GPS receivers to 25 to 100 meters. Still, that's close enough to find an apiary.

The GPS navigational system is very easy to use. It requires only a relatively inexpensive, hand-held, battery-powered receiver with a digital display. To begin using the receiver, the operator must install a set of batteries and turn it on. The first time the receiver is activated it may require up to 15 minutes to 'acquire' or establish communication with satellites in its 'field of vision'. Thereafter, the receiver calculates its position in only 1 or 2 minutes. The first position can be

entered into the receiver's memory as a 'waypoint' or landmark by pressing another key. This waypoint can then be named, for example, 'home' or 'sunny flat apiary.' Then, by repeating the 'marking' process at meaningful intervals along the way to a destination, the operator creates a route with additional waypoints. Some of the better receivers can store up to 250 waypoints or 20 routes each with 30 waypoints. Even a large commercial beekeeping operation could be managed with one hand-held unit.

Since each route is stored within the receiver's memory, the route can be followed in reverse on the return trip, and retained for future trips. To find an apiary whose location is unknown to the operator, one needs only to get in a vehicle, turn the receiver on and place it on the dash. (Note: an external antenna may be needed to operate the receiver inside a vehicle, see below for accessories.) Then, the user logs in the name or number of the apiary and the receiver will guide the operator to the site while driving, keeping the driver headed in the proper direction. Some instruments do this via arrows while others use other symbols, or sounds. If for some reason the operator strays, the receiver directs the operator back on course.

Once a site or route has been mapped, its location is held in the receiver's electronic memory from which it can be recalled at any time, at home or on the road. If the location is no longer in use, the waypoints can be deleted. Other apiary management information such as the date, the number of colonies in the apiary, etc., can be included in the receiver's memory. If one chooses to do so, it is further possible to download this data to a second unit, or to a computer (see accessories below). Options such as these are limited only by the computer used and the skills of the operator. We should emphasize that whenever computers are used, it is always advisable to backup the files in the computer's memory.

The map coordinates for each apiary (or waypoints) can be recalled anywhere, and at any time, from the screen on the GPS receiver. Hence, the bee-

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keeper in his/her office could, for example, relay map coordinates of an apiary by phone to anyone (aerial applicator, employee or family member, bee inspector, etc). That person could, in turn, use a map or his/her own GPS receiver to find the apiary.

GPS receivers are easy to use. They require only a few hours to learn key functions and commands, and a couple of practice runs to develop self confidence with the unit. The instructions and videos that often come with the receiver are complete and easy to understand. Additionally, several books on the GPS system are available for those who might want them. Many types of GPS receivers are now on the market ranging in price from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. The inexpensive, pocket sized, hand held models will meet the beekeepers needs just fine. These are generally priced below \$450. Some units can even be purchased for \$200. Following this initial modest investment-and by having some extra AA alkaline batteries on hand, the system can be used anytime without additional charge.

There are a number of accessories available to expand the capability of the GPS receiver. These include an external antenna and cigarette lighter/power port adapter for continuous operation of the unit inside of a moving vehicle. Computer software and cables are available that enable the user to download waypoint data to a computer and upload it back to the receiver upon command. The computer interface permits unlimited acquisition of waypoints.

The computer can also be used to map apiary locations and enroute waypoints, or print out apiary location data. The information can be further used as a chronological log of apiary management activity.

It is no longer necessary to memorize the location of every apiary or scribble pencil maps onto pieces of paper that are easily lost. Once versed in using the GPS system, anyone can find a site without having to draw a map or bring a second person along as a guide. Apiaries should never be lost ever again.

GPS technology is only as far away as the yellow pages or your local sporting goods store.

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Feeding time at the Apiary

by

Ray Nabors,

from the Spring 1996 newsletter of the Missouri State Beekeepers Association

It is time to feed your bees! Most colony starvation happens in spring. The bees use up their winter feed from October through February. In February or March brood rearing begins again. It takes a lot of feed to rear brood. The bees can starve before adequate nectar is available from flowers. Feeding will stimulate the hive and you will have a stronger colony once the nectar does begin to flow. Early feeding of sugar will pay back many times over with increased honey production. A good feed is 5 pounds of sugar in a gallon container with enough hot water to dissolve the sugar and make 1 gallon of syrup. Each hive should have at least 1 gallon of syrup each spring. Sugar is less expensive than honey so feeding bees is profitable.

There are several methods of feeding available to you.

1). Hive top feeders can hold 1 gallon or more. You only need to open the cover, not disturbing the bees to fill this type of feeder. Usually the bees can reach this feed without going out of the hive. Robbing is less of a problem with this type of feeder.

2). Division board feeders take the place of 1 or 2 frames. These feeders are also not likely to encourage robbing. They will hold 1 gallon or more of syrup. Often requiring no more than one trip to the apiary for feeding. Feed can be reached without bees leaving the hive and feed is usually closer to the cluster than with hive top feeders. Hive must be opened up completely to use this type of feeder. This can cause unwanted disturbance in cold

weather.

3). Entrance feeders typically hold only 1 quart of feed. This can be remedied using one-half gallon jars in place of quarts. Entrance feeders do not disturb the hive at all. However, bees must go out of the hive to harvest the feed. It is easy to see how fast the bees take the feed and when more is needed. It does take more than one trip to the apiary to feed enough.

4). Other types of feeding are used. The easiest method I know of is to place a large container of feed in the apiary with an open top. If this method is elected, you must provide the bees with wood chips or other floating raft material to prevent drowning. Obviously the strong hives get most of the benefit and bees must have warm days to collect this feed. An open pail of feed over the frames or a pail with small holes punched in the lid and inverted also makes a good feeder. This method requires some hive disturbance but has many advantages as feed is evenly distributed with low robbing potential. Bees also can reach it without leaving the hive. The feeders can be filled up at the honey house and distributed later. Another large container method is to run spaghetti tubing to each hive from an elevated and sealed container. This method works well as long as the tubing does not stop up. This method can also be used with small cans placed over or in each hive. Whenever a pail is placed over the top frames or an inner cover, they should be surrounded by an empty hive body.

It makes some difference which method you use. Each beekeeper has certain preferences and also different material available. No matter what method you use, any feeding method is better than not feeding. All colonies in this state (*and the Northwest*) should be fed in spring for best performance during the upcoming season of honey production.



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Basics in Northwest Beekeeping

by Ron Bennett

Now starts the most exciting period of the beekeeping year. Your bees are started, treated and fed, and are in a dramatic growth mode. The queen (bless her little heart) is laying over 1,000 eggs a day. We have had many good days with the air above 50° and winds below 14 mph, and the bees have been out working very hard bringing in pollen and nectar.

But, here in the Northwest, there is about a three week period from the end of April into May where the nectar flow drops to almost zero. This is a very critical situation for your bees. They have been stimulated to build up a huge population to take advantage of the main nectar flow at end of May and are committed to raising and feed a lot of young bees. Without feed sources around, your bees, which look big and strong and hard working, can actually starve out in the next three weeks.

So, watch your bees carefully and don't let colony stores get below 15 lbs. If the colony starts to get light, FEED!!! Use a light syrup (5:1 sugar to water by volume).

Now is also swarm season. Now is when you hope that your neighbor beekeeper is not as good a beekeeper as you are and you can catch swarms from their hives while your good management practice keeps your hives from swarming. Swarm control is probably one of the least successful areas of beekeeping. Swarming is the natural way for bees to ensure the survival of their species, and like all teenagers, the instinct to reproduce is very difficult to control.

One of the best ways to minimize swarming is by requeening your hives. A swarm is a portion of your bees leaving with the old queen, and this tends to be with queens in their second year. So by requeening with new young queens each year, you not only assure yourself of a strong queen, you cut down on the chance

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of her swarming.

A second technique is to reverse your hive boxes. The bees will start the swarm process when the queen starts to run out of perceived space to lay in. Since she tends to only move upward, she does not use the space available below the brood cluster. By reversing the boxes, you force the bee to reorganize their stores and therefore create new space for the queen to lay in.

Another method is to remove queen cells as they appear. This tend to be more effort than it is worth since the bees are by that point in the swarm mode, all you are doing is cutting down on the number of virgin queens they have available. They always seem to have one more queen cell than you can find, and the constant opening of the hive is creating stress and slowing your bees down. (Opening your hive exposes eggs to ultraviolet light which kills eggs. In theory, you are offing a days laying by the queen when you go through a hive. This statement is for beekeepers who think they can stop swarming by opening their hive every day and knocking off queen cells.)

With that in mind, examine your colonies every about 10 days. Set off the supers; tilt up the second story and look for queen cells along the bottom of the brood comb.

If you find only eggs or larvae in the queen cells and the hive is crowded with bees, remove all the cells – top and bottom. Put the hive body containing mostly worker bees or larvae on the bottom board, and the other containing mostly sealed brood on top. Next put on the queen excluder and add supers to provide 10 to 15 empty full depth comb, or their equivalent in the supers. Place the empty comb directly on the excluder.

If you find sealed or ripe queen cells, or possibly hatched ones, divide the colony. Set the top body, usually with most of queen cells, onto a bottom board and cover with a lid. Put this hive on a separate stand. Remove all queen cells from the lower body; put on the excluder and add supers to provide 10 to 15 empty full depth combs, or their equivalent, above the excluder. Several hours later, look for the queen in the divide. If you find a virgin queen, let her

Cont. on Page 8

Continued from Page 7 remain, but if you find the old queen pick her up and let her run into the entrance of the colony on the old stand. Let the queen cells hatch in the divide.

If you find no attempt to rear queens, and the hive is full of bees, examine the supers and add more to provide 10 to 15 empty full depth combs, or their equivalent, above the excluder.

If the bees seem reluctant to work in the supers thru the excluder, reverse the two hive bodies. This causes them to rearrange their stores and they will move some thru the excluder. Some colonies need training to go thru the excluder.

A method recommended by Dr. Burgett is the use of slat board spacers between the bottom board and your lower box. These slat board spacers create an area for the newly hatched and "teen" bees to hang out in and therefor remove the space pressure in the brood area. I have not used these myself, but if Dr. Burgett says they work, well, that's good enough for me. They are only about \$8 and hobbyist beekeepers might be well advised to add them to their equipment system.

Give your hives 3/4 inch depth entrance for better ventilation. Some beekeepers use a additional 3/4-1" hole in the upper box as a entrance and to provide ventilation.

Make queen mating nucs from combs with ripe queen cells from the colonies you feel should be propagated.

Give supers with foundation, but only to those colonies that are working in the supers. Place directly over the queen excluder, if you are using one. If you have been fortunate and the honey flow has been good, add new supers under supers with capped honey.

Keep on the lookout for American foulbrood and treat with terramycin, but do not treat with supers on that you intend to extract honey from.

Check your stored comb for possible wax moth infestation - like rust, moths never sleep.

Remove and extract the supers containing well ripened honey.

Cont. from Page 1 Starting nucs properly to give them the maximum chance to survive and grow is an art. This session will show you several ways to start and maintain your nucs and the easy way to introduce new queens into your hives. It will cover in depth how nucs are used as a powerful management tool.

NOON: BAG LUNCH & OYSTER FEED! We are planning to have fresh barbequed oysters, hot french garlic bread, and refreshments to fill in any gaps, large or small, in your own brown bag lunch.

For those of you who don't eat oysters (and us oyster eater are not about to encourage you - more for us), the Tillamook group has arranged for Subway sandwiches to be ordered out and delivered. If you want a Subway treat, see the people at registration for your order.

This is also an opportunity to chat with both of our presenters and socialize with fellow beekeepers.

DOOR PRIZES - Well, if all of that is not enough to haul you over to beautiful Tillamook, how about some door prizes? We already have 5 deep boxes donated by Bob Allen and 4 nuc boxes donated by Charlie Mock. We have the promise of more prizes to lure you over to the meeting.

BUSINESS MEETING - President, George Hansen and Vice-president, Charles Mock will discuss some ideas on new directions for the OSBA.

WHERE - The State Forestry Center in Tillamook. See the map on the front page.

COST - The cost is only \$10 per person (\$15 for a family) for OSBA members. Non-member fee is \$20, and includes a one year OSBA membership (a \$15 value). Call

Cont. on Page 9

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Cont. from Page 8 Ron Bennett at 838-2328 or George Hansen at 824-2265 for more information.

WHILE IN THE AREA - We have left the afternoon free. There is lots to do and see in the Tillamook area. There will be an tour of the Tillamook Cheese Factory and for all you motor-heads, there is one of the marvels of engineering, the Tillamook Air Museum in the blimp hanger - a most interesting museum that is a must see.

News from the National Honey Board

"FRESH HONEY RECIPE IDEAS FOR SPRING"

To keep honey at the top of grocery lists this spring, the Honey Board provided fresh recipe ideas to newspaper food editors. Whether the occasion is a traditional Passover or Easter feast or everyday menu ideas, versatile honey is the perfect ingredient.


"Consumers are busy and menu planning is often difficult to squeeze into work, school and spring cleaning schedules," said Mary Humann, marketing director for the National Honey Board. "We want to offer simple menu ideas with a variety of appeal - from sweet honey glazes for ham, chicken or lamb to spicy-sweet dressings to add zest to a side dish or salad."

Food editors received recipes including Honey Chutney Glaze for Lamb, Smoky Honey-Peppercorn Glaze for Chicken, Low-Fat Honey Crepes, Honey Thyme Mustard and Honey Mustard Roasted Potatoes. Along with recipes

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and menu ideas, the Honey Board mailed photographs and information on using honey varieties.

"COOKING FOR YOUR HONEY"

Whether you spend time baking a batch of honey buns with your kids, making a romantic dinner for two, or preparing weekend nibbles for the whole family, the National Honey Board has plenty of ideas to get you cooking! Recently, the National Honey Board sent newspaper food editors recipe ideas for celebrating the best pastime of all - spending time with your family.

Featured recipes included Cinnamon Honey Buns (a cooking project for parents and kids) Honey Chocolate Brulees (a rich and creamy dessert) and Moroccan Spiced Hummus (a low-fat Middle Eastern dip using honey.) Along with the recipes and photographs, editors were treated to sweet cooking tips using honey, information on honey varieties, and facts about storing and reliquefying honey.

"SQUEEZED FOR TIME, HONEY"

The National Honey Board has created a new recipe brochure for people who are "squeezed for time."

The new 12-panel brochure includes eight quick, low-fat recipes that follow the American Heart Association's Dietary Guidelines. The full-color brochure also includes honey tips and photographs. The "Squeezed for Time, Honey?" brochure will be distributed at walks sponsored by the American Heart Association in several cities this October. For a free sample of the brochure, write to the National Honey Board, Dept. S.I., 390 Lashley St., Longmont, CO 80501.

Additional copies are available from the National Honey Board for 15 cents each.

(The NHB has done an excellent job with the recipe brochure and deserves our thanks and support - ed)

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Klamath County
Meeting dates and sites vary.
Call officers:

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Portland Area
Meets 7 p.m. second Thurs
Clear Creek Mutual Telephone Co.
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Info: Rosemary Marshall, 503-631-7313

Southern Oregon
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S.O. Research & Extension Center
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President: Bob Allen, 541-322-3819
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President: Chuck Sowers, 503-636-3127
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Secretary: Michael Lau, 503-591-8864
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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

May	6	So. Oregon Beekeepers
	8	Tualatin Meeting, Beaverton
	9	Portland Meeting, Oregon City
	11	OSBA Spring Field Day, Tillamook Beekeepers Meeting, Tillamook
	14	Lane County Meeting, Eugene
	17	Coos County Meeting, Coquille
	20	WVBA Meeting, Salem
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



Varroa in the UK

by Pamala Munn, from the IRBA Bee World

Since varroa was first discovered in Devon, UK, in April 1992, colony losses continue to be reported. It seems that 1995 has been a particularly bad year, with reports of reduced pollination and honey production in several European countries.

Heavy colony losses by beekeepers in the UK, many of whom are experienced beekeepers carrying out the recommended treatments, have been occurring, and it has been suggested that viruses are to blame. But why? Many viruses are found in the adult bee population as latent or inapparent infections causing only minor levels of mortality.

Work by Brenda Ball and co-workers at Rothamsted, UK, found that acute paralysis virus (APV) and slow paralysis virus (SPV) were the primary cause of mortality in the varroa infested colonies in their study. This was an unexpected finding as these viruses had not

been found to cause serious disease outbreaks before.

It appears that the mite in some way induces the viruses to reproduce themselves rapidly to lethal levels. Once this process of multiplication is set off in individuals the infection quickly becomes systemic and the mites can then pass the virus to other adult bees and pupae.

Quick action is vital if this transmission cycle is to be broken and the colony is to recover. Treatment with acaricides, or other means is necessary at an early stage, to reduce the percentage of virus-infected mites, thus allowing the production of healthy brood to resume. If this increase in numbers of infected mites is not checked, the spread of virus throughout the colony will continue and treatment will no longer be effective.



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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.

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