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THE BEE LINE



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 23, Number 9

October 1998

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The "Northwest Corner" Beekeepers' Conference – Nov. 12-14, 1998 at the Best Western Oceanview Resort, Seaside, Oregon

The agenda for the "Northwest Corner" Beekeepers' Conference has come together, according to Bart Snyder, conference coordinator. This should be a "must attend" event for hobbyists, meliners and commercial beekeepers alike from all parts of the Great Northwest, including British Columbia, Washington, Idaho and Oregon.

Speakers include Dr. Eric Mussen from the University of California at Davis, our own Dr. Michael Burgett and Dr. Lynn Royce from Oregon State University, Dr. William Wilson from the Meslaco Bee Lab in Texas, Mr. Gene Brandi from the National Honey Board, and Dr. Steve Shephard from Washington State University.

A registration form is enclosed. Avoid long lines at the registration table! Reserve your space now by completing the form and sending it to Bart Snyder by October 25th. Also, make your room reservations as soon as possible. The Best Western Oceanview Resort can be reached at 1-800-44-8439. Editor's note: For room information at other motels, call the Seaside Chamber at 800-452-6740 (Seaside Oregon only). Another contact is a free service called Overnight Success at 800-365-6343 that lists over 100 lodgings. Postal regulations prohibit non-profit groups from listing or recommending specific motels or

AGENDA

Thursday evening, Nov. 12, 1998
7 pm - Registration

7-8:30 pm Welcoming reception---mead, wine and cheese tasting social

Friday morning, November 13, 1998

7-8 am Registration

8:30 am Welcome from the OSBA President, Torey Johnson

8:45 am Conference details – Bart Snyder, OSBA Vice President

8:50-9:50 am "How About Those Queens" – Dr. Eric Mussen, UC Davis Bee Lab
Following a history of the question, there will be an open forum discussion.

9:50-10:20 Refreshment break

10:20-11 am "Amitraz Study Report" – Dr. Lynn Royce, OSU

(cont. on page 3)

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- * Pacific NW Colony Mortality...Dr. Mike Burgett
 - * Varroa Control with Coumaphos...Dr. Frank Eischen
 - * State Fair Winners and Photos
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Oregon State Beekeepers Association

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association and is published ten times a year. Subscriptions are included with OSBA membership.

To join the OSBA, complete the membership application in this issue and send with payment to: Phyllis Shoemake, 1874 Winchester NW, Salem, OR 97304

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Advertising Rates

Business Ads, per issue:

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Quarter page	20.00
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Copy, art and payment must be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Contact the editor for any special requirements and mechanical information.

Classified Ads, 30 words, per issue:

OSBA members	\$ 2.00
Non-members	\$ 3.00



On the Web

Following are some web sites that may be of interest:

National Honey Board: <http://www.nhb.org>

Designed to meet the needs of the general honey industry as well as focusing on the food service and food manufacturing industries.

NHB's consumer web site: www.honey.com

Designed for consumers. Provides general honey information, cooking and storage tips, recipes and even a kid's section. The web site was identified as a "kid friendly" site by the editors of Bonus.com, the Supersite for Kids.

Apimondia '99: <http://www.apimondia99.ca>

President's Notes

by Torey Johnson

The truck is loaded and I'm going hunting, but first an update on the Executive Board meeting held Sept. 25th. Here's another reason to attend the Northwest Corner Conference in November: the new official OSBA t-shirts will be available for sale! The Board approved one design out of several that were submitted, and we think you will be happy with the result. Wearing the shirt will be a great way to promote the OSBA and will let the public know who you are, especially when you are involved in marketing or promotions, or attending events like the State Fair. They will also make terrific gifts for family and friends, since we are pricing them at only \$8.00!!! The shirts are a heavy-weight, 100% cotton fabric with a design printed on the front. For the Conference we are pricing them to cover costs only, so plan to pick some up at this "can't beat it" price!

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TODAY

October 1998

(AGENDA cont. from page 1)

11-11:45 am "Zoecon Report on other than Apistan Treatments" – speaker to be announced

11:45 am-1 pm No host lunch

Friday afternoon sessions

1-1:30 pm Subject to be announced – WSU Grad students

1:30-2 pm "Essential Oil Study" – Dr. Lynn Royce, OSU

2-3 pm "Apistan Resistance by Varroa Mites-Latest Information" – Dr. William Wilson, Weslaco Bee Lab, Texas

3:15-3:45 pm American Beekeeping Federation and National Honey Board Report – Mr. Gene Brandi

3:45-5 pm State/Province Business Meetings – rooms to be announced

Friday evening dinner

5:30-6 pm No host social half-hour

6-7 pm Banquet

7-8 pm "Earning a Guinness World Record Entry for the Largest Bee Beard" – Dr. Eric Mussen, UC Davis Bee Lab

8-10 pm OSBA Benefit Auction

Saturday morning, November 14, 1998

7:30-8 am Registration

8am-2:45 pm Commercial exhibits open for inspection

8-8:15 am Announcements and drawings

8:15-9 am "Parasitic Mite Control" – Dr. Steve Shephard, Washington State University

9-10 am "Small Hive Disease" – Dr. William Wilson, Weslaco Bee Lab, Texas

10-10:30 am Coffee break

10:30-10:45 Announcements and drawings

10:45-11:30 am "Madras Pollination Study 1998" Dr. Michael Burgett, OSU

Saturday afternoon

11:30-1:30 pm Research luncheon
Profits from the luncheon go to the OSU Bee Lab

1:35-1:45 pm Announcements and drawings

1:45-2:15 pm "Report on the OSBA Web Page and Pollinator's List" Bill Rufener, Web Keeper
Request suggested changes, additions, etc.

2:15 – 2:45 pm Final announcements and drawings

2:45-3:30 pm "Future of Queen Breeding" – Dr. Lynn Royce

Conference wrap-up – OSBA President

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct. 20 Deadline for *The Bee Line*

Nov.12-14 Northwest Corner Beekeepers Conference, Seaside, Oregon. For more information contact Bart Snyder at 503-245-4524.

Jan.7-12, 1999 American Beekeeping Federation Annual Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee. For further information visit the ABF web site at www.abfnet.org. For info about the Trade Show and advertising opportunities call the ABF office at 912-427-4233.

Sept.12-18,1999 Apimondia, Vancouver BC
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Varroa Control with Coumaphos

By Dr. Frank Eischen, Research Entomologist, Weslaco Bee Lab
Reprinted with permission from American Bee Journal, Sept. 1998.

This past April some prominent beekeepers, two scientists from our lab, and four Bayer representatives met with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in their Washington, DC headquarters to review the pros and cons of coumaphos. You may know coumaphos as the active ingredient in the European acaricide, Perizin. It's been on their market for many years and as far as I know, without complaint. The Bayer Corp. has decided to repackage coumaphos in a plastic strip similar to Wellmark International's Apistan. Those of you who know Perizin are probably saying, "What a minute! I thought Perizin was a systemic. How can it work in a strip?" As it turns out, coumaphos probably acts as a contact poison more so than as a systemic, but more on its varroa-killing ability presently.

According to a Bayer official, the company intends to market this nifty-looking strip worldwide. I say nifty because it has a slick-working flip tab for hanging the strip between the frames. Not a big deal, I know, but it's indicative of the attention to detail that the company has apparently put into the product. Dr. Bill Wilson and Mr. James Baxter from our lab have tested these experimental strips and though for reasons of confidentiality I can't give details, these veteran researchers are impressed. Just as important as its varroa-killing ability is that fact that coumaphos is not chemically related to fluvalinate, and if approved, could be rotated with Apistan for varroa control. Without doubt, rotating coumaphos with fluvalinate would reduce the probability of acaricide resistance. That's the plus side of the ledger.

While not exactly a negative, coumaphos is an organophosphate (OP). Organophosphates are not the favorites of the EPA. In fact, in a recently passed law, the Food Quality Protection Act, directs that OPs and other compounds be carefully evaluated. In response the EPA has stated that no new OP registrations would be granted until this

evaluation was complete (due in August, 1999). Apparently, these actions were motivated by interest groups wishing to protect children from dangerous chemicals. The truth of the matter is that some of the OPs are compounds you don't fool around with. They are fast-acting nerve agents. Should coumaphos (as formulated in the Bayer strip) be lumped with these heavies? Probably not, if judgment is based on its low mammalian toxicity. The EPA meeting in Washington was held so that the bee industry's side of the story could be told, i.e., 1. That coumaphos is safe when used properly, 2. That US agriculture requires honey bee pollination which is threatened by a parasite developing resistance to the only legal product we have, and 3. A major chemical firm is willing to bring a coumaphos-based product to market and stand behind it.

Decisions made by the EPA are not always easy to understand. To be fair, the EPA has its masters and follows orders. The fact that these orders are sometimes directed by those with a political agenda can cause misunderstandings. In this instance, EPA's position is not to approve any new OP pesticide labels. So we knew going in our ducks had to be in a row. During the meeting, the EPA enunciated their concept for communicating OP policy. It's a risk "cup". If the cup is full, no new compounds or uses will be approved. In their view the OP cup is full, or at least that's what they were saying at the time of the meeting. (This cup thing is a bit kindergartenish for my taste, but ah, well, it's refreshing that Madison Avenue hasn't invaded everything).

As meetings go, it must have been a humdinger. Presentations by the bee industry were pointed and snappy. Dr. Wilson's and Mr. Baxter's presentations apparently scored points. The who shebang had be practiced and choreographed the day before with the help of a former EPA staffer. The bee delegations expected to be shown the door after an hour. Discussion was still going strong at an hour and a half at which point the chief EPA representative had to leave. In doing so, he made it clear that nothing had changed, but that an internal review committee would examine the case. The bee delegation thought they saw a glimmer of light. The bit of optimism was accredited a week later when

(cont. on page 5)

(cont. from page 4)

James Baxter was recalled to EPA headquarters to outline a protocol that would answer the EPA's questions on residues in wax and honey. While under the gaze of a Quality Assurance Officer, James is conducting these tests (in cooperation with bee leaders in Florida) as I write this. We are all holding our breaths.

The next phase of this process is to generate all the necessary residual data and submit them to the EPA. Most of the data has now been collected. When it's complete, the EPA must review the residue data and decide if they are satisfactory. If so, they will set a tolerance or allowable amount in honey and wax. What that may be is unknown. It could be quite small, say in the range of one part per million in wax. When these conditions are met, a Section 18 or an emergency request for registration can be solicited by any state or the USDA.

Whew! Beekeeping has never been so much fun. I'm afraid, friends that we rugged individuals in beekeeping have run smack into the 21st century and its attendant bureaucracies, just like other phases of farming. Still, we are encouraged with events thus far.

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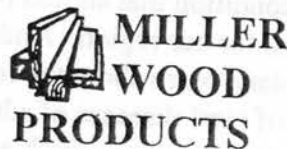
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Northwest Beekeeping

October

- Remove Apistan strips this month (after they have been on 56 days).
- Feed all light colonies with a saturated sugar solution (two parts sugar to one part water). Don't feed poor grades of honey.
- Tilt all hives, making them 3/4" higher in the back than in the front to drain condensation out of the entrance.
- Replace summer lids with metal telescoping covers and provide ventilation space under the inner cover.
- Raise hives onto stands, off the ground. The hives should be exposed to the sun and protected from winds.
- Some Northwest beekeepers do not reduce the size of hive entrances, but if you choose to do so, do so now.
- Continue precautions against robbing.
- Store comb in a cool, dry place and use moth crystals to fumigate, not moth balls.
- Repair and store equipment.
- Make plans for next year and start equipment supply order list.

Thank you to Portland Beekeeper Association members Stephanie Barnes, David Gage, Rosemary Marshall, Ernie McCormack and Bill Ruhl, for Almanac review and suggestions, 1996.



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Pacific Northwest Colony Mortality 1998

By Dr. Michael Burgett, OSU Entomologist*

For the past ten years results from the OSU Honey Bee Laboratory's survey of regional beekeepers has shown annual colony losses that in excess of 20%. The results for 1998 colony mortality show a colony loss of 27% for commercial bee colonies, and a 28% loss for semi-commercial hives. The data for 1998 are nearly the "norm" for these two beekeeping groups, that is semi-commercial beekeepers have usually experienced higher losses than commercial beekeepers. The 27% colony loss for commercial beekeepers for 1998 is the second highest recorded over the past ten years (see Table 3).

A major factor for elevated colony losses has been the introduction and spread of two species of parasitic mites, the honey bee tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*), which was first discovered in the PNW in 1985, and the Asian brood mite (*Varroa jacobsoni*), which was first detected in our region in 1989. These mites quickly spread and beekeepers should now consider them ubiquitous, which means that mite control programs need to be administered at least annually and in a preventative manner.

In addition to the direct mortality of colonies from mite parasitism, there are also suspected stress interactions when colonies are infested with both species of mites, a condition that should be considered as normal for our region. And we are beginning to understand more about the role of mites in the transmission of viral diseases of adult bees, such as acute bee paralysis virus, which adds an additional stress to colonies already weakened by mite parasitism.

It should be pointed out that mite-caused colony losses are in addition to previous mortality factors. We still have colonies dying from starvation, brood diseases and predators.

Forty-two beekeepers from Oregon and Washington provided the data for the 1998 survey. There were twenty-five commercial beekeepers (each owning more than three hundred colonies) and seventeen semi-commercial beekeepers (each owning less than three hundred hives). A total of

41,183 colonies were owned by the beekeepers that cooperated in the survey. This is approximately one third of the commercial and semi-commercial colonies currently registered in Oregon and Washington.

Tables 1 and 2 present the colony losses by month for commercial and semi-commercial beekeepers respectively. The most important dates for colony losses are the first and last months, which provide the data for the overall loss figures. For commercial colonies in 1998 this was 27%, which was a decrease from the 30% reported loss in 1997. For semi-commercial beekeepers the corresponding loss was 28%, up from the 20% loss experienced in 1997. The average annual loss over the last nine years has been 22.6% for commercial colonies and 25.4% for semi-commercial hives (see Table 3).

Table 1. Commercial Hives - Living Colonies by Date¹

	Jul. '97	Sep. '97	Oct. '97	Dec. '97	Feb. '98	Mar. '98
Number of Hives	39,631	38,704	37,087	34,995	30,063	24,000
Cumulative % Loss	0	2%	6%	12%	24%	27%

¹ 25 beekeepers.

Table 2. Semi-Commercial Hives - Living Colonies by Date¹

	Jul. '97	Sep. '97	Oct. '97	Dec. '97	Feb. '98
Number of Hives	1,552	1,491	1,424	1,382	1,263
Cumulative % Loss	0	4%	8%	11%	19%

¹ 17 beekeepers.

For commercial operations the lowest reported individual loss was 7% of the colonies and the highest loss for an individual operation was 61%. At the semi-commercial level the corresponding figures were 7% and 82%. The most severe loss period occurs between December to February, where cumulative losses more than double. Additional serious losses take place from February to the beginning of March (see Tables 1 and 2).

Total colony loss for the survey beekeepers was 11,057 hives. Based on the estimated hive populations of over 110,000 colonies in the PNW, we can compute from our sample that approximately

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October 1998

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33,000 hives dies during the 1997-98 winter period. At a conservative replacement cost of \$100 per colony, this represents a minimum loss of 3.3 million dollars for the PNW beekeeping industry. This degree of loss is nearly identical to that reported for 1997.

All commercial beekeepers are not practicing some form of chemical control for mite management. For varroa control Apistan is the material used by most beekeepers, both because of effectiveness and because it is the sole material presently registered by the EPA for use against varroa. Ninety percent of the commercial beekeepers administered Apistan in 1997-98. For semi-commercial beekeepers, ninety percent utilized Apistan.


Only a few beekeepers utilized no mite control, which is a significant change from past years. While we do not yet fully understand the interactions of mite parasitism with colony health, we do know that untreated colonies infested with varroa will ultimately die, and this can happen more quickly than we had previously believed. Many more beekeepers are utilizing vegetable "grease" patties for tracheal mite management and often in combination with menthol fumigation. Concerning chemical control programs for mite management, a positive sign is a reduction in the use of untested and unregistered controls.

The author wishes to thank all the beekeepers that took the time to fill out the survey forms. Their collective efforts have provided the most accurate assessment of colony losses for any region in the U.S.

Table 3. Summary of Winter Losses for the Period 1989 - 1998

	Commercial Colonies (≥300) Loss %	Non-Commercial Colonies (<300) Loss %	Number of colonies in survey
1998	27%	28%	41,183
1997	30	20	37,458
1996	19	33	38,414
1995	24	38	50,058
1994	25	37	39,405
1993	17	33	21,791
1992	22	13	17,418
1991	19	17	20,624
1990	21	22	25,352
1989	22	13	10,812
AVERAGE	22.6%	25.4%	

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Summary for the "Average" PNW Beekeeping Operation - 1998

	Commercial (≥ 300 hives)	Semi-Commercial (< 300 hives)
Average # colonies on July 1, 1997	1,585	91
Average # colonies on March 1, 1998	1,160	66
Average colony loss	27%	28%
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Total colonies in survey	39,631	1,552
Total colony loss	10,626	431
Number of beekeepers	25	17



State Fair Report

The OSBA booth at the State Fair was one of the busiest booths in the Jackman-Long building. The bee cage and the observation hives drew crowds to the booth, and the honey displays were very attractive. While only seven participants made entries, most of them had multiple entries so the shelf wasn't too bare. Thanks to Richard Farrier for his extensive and tireless help, to those who helped set up and take down the displays and cages, and to those who manned the booth during the fair.

Following is a list of exhibitors and their ribbons:



Hobbyists:

Dan Hiscoe won ribbons with four extracted honey exhibits.

John Schoon won blue ribbons in western extracting frames and extracted honey. He also won first time exhibitor award and Ruhl's best hobbyist exhibit.

Duane Hann won ribbons in wax, western extracting frame and four extracted honey exhibits.

Phyllis Shoemake won blue in extracted honey.

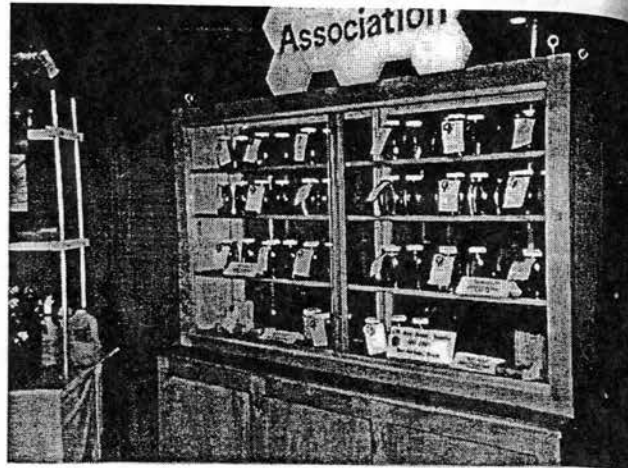
Fred Van Natta won blue in comb honey.

Commercial:

Richard Farrier won blue ribbons in western extracting frames, deep extracting frames; red ribbons in five extracted honey exhibits and observation hive.

Torey Johnson was sweepstakes winner, having ribbons in deeps extracting frames, shallow extracting frames, family apiary, bee pollination, four extracted honey, one chunk comb honey, wax and observation hive.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Part of the honey display



Observation hive got lots of attention



A dedicated volunteer at the bee cage

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National Honey Board News

Recent Retail Sales Data from Nielsen

Nielsen reported that retail honey sales were down 1.5 percent (pounds) and down 2.5 percent (dollars) for the four-week period ending July 4, 1998 (versus the equivalent period in 1997). During this period the average retail price per pound was \$2.36. For the 52-week period ending July 4, 1998, honey sales were down 2.3 percent (pounds) and 1.0 percent (dollars).

The Latest Numbers from Research Dimensions

Research Dimensions' packer tracking study, based on data from 15 honey packers representing approximately 50% of all honey sold, reported that total honey sales in July were up .59 percent compared to July of last year. The following are changes by segment:

- Export.....+14.13%
- Import.....+ 5.23%
- Foodservice.....-22.39%
- Bulk.....+ 8.30%

New Honey Cookbook Available

The National Honey Board's low-fat cookbook "Sweetened Naturally with Honey" is now available for purchase. The cookbook contains over 100 delectable honey recipes plus full-color, mouthwatering photographs throughout! To order a single copy of the cookbook, send a check or money order for \$2.95 to: National Honey Board-Dept. BK, PO Box 125, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495. (Please allow 6-10 weeks for delivery.)

Buy the New Cookbooks in Bulk and Sell them to Your Customers

If you wish to purchase large quantities of the "Sweetened Naturally with Honey" cookbook, please call the NHB office at 800-553-7162. You may pay for your order with MasterCard or VISA, or send a check or money order to: National Honey Board - Cookbook, 390 Lashley St., Longmont, CO 80501-6045.

- 10-49 cookbooks - \$2.65 each
 - 50-119 cookbooks - \$2.25 each
 - 120 or more cookbooks - \$1.75 each
- (Please allow four weeks for delivery)

New Leaflets Push Healthy and Bountiful Aspects of Honey

To facilitate the use of honey in promoting health, the National Honey Board recently created two new leaflets. The "Honey for Health" leaflet describes honey's antimicrobial benefits, antioxidant potential, vitamin and mineral content, as well as honey's unique sugar profile. The leaflet includes tips for working honey into everyday healthful regimes. Such everyday usage should result in increased honey sales for the industry. The "Bright and Beautiful" leaflet underscores the benefits honey adds to skin and beauty treatments. This leaflet supports manufacturers by promoting products that use honey. The piece also includes "recipes" for treatments such as skin softeners and facial masks. Each leaflet costs 12 cents. You may order copies by calling the NHB's Annette Laber at 800-553-7162.

Other Great Honey Leaflets Still Available

The following NHB leaflets are still available: (1) "Good and Golden" features baking recipes, (2) "Healthy and Hearty" contains low-fat recipes scaled for two and (3) "Swift and Savory" has speed scratch cooking recipes for preparing recipes that rely on purchased or convenience items. Traditionally, consumers have learned about these leaflets through newspaper print press release programs, publicity arising from contacts with magazine food editors and mailings to extension home economists and retail consumer affairs directors. Considering the NHB produced 200,000 copies of each leaflet, if readers made just one recipe calling for 1/4 c. of honey from each leaflet, it would result in the consumption of 112,000 additional pounds of honey! For copies of these leaflets, call Annette Laber at 800-553-7162.



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DeWayne Keller 541-889-8279
John Mespelt 541-926-1850
Bob Morgan 541-298-5719
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Jim Cramer
Oregon Dept. of Agriculture
635 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-0110
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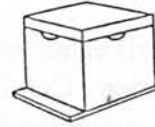
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