
THE BEE LINE



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 25, Number 4

May 2000

Fort Worth Federation Meeting

By George Hansen

Let me set the scene for the January 12-15 American Beekeeping Federation meeting in Fort Worth, Texas. Honey prices were at an historical low. Bees in the Midwest and California were dying in alarming numbers. Section 18 approval for coumaphos CheckMite strips was in limbo and the EPA might not reapprove. The suspension agreement against the Chinese honey imports was nearing its end, and an antidumping suit against Argentina was predicted to cost \$600,000, with no guarantee of success. The National Honey Board's CEO had resigned just as a referendum on an expansion of the marketing order was in the works. Relations between the Federation and the American Honey Producers were fractious once again, mostly because of differences about the causes and needed remedies for the issues named above.

As the meeting opened, the atmosphere was tense. Behind the scenes and in the hallways rumors and discussions abounded on why so and so wasn't present and what the EPA was likely to do, etc. Meanwhile, one phase of the program concentrated on what beekeepers are doing to reposition themselves in this new climate. Ideas on ways to market honey were presented, and a government program to help start marketing and purchasing cooperatives was explained. I was a presenter on the subject of how to make more money from pollination. I outlined some of the management challenges a full-time pollinator faces, and some of

the things beekeepers can do to provide better pollination services. Speakers explained various ideas for diversification. There was a very informative presentation about the global honey market, its history and trends, and specifically how the American market fits in.

There were several very good presentations from ARS scientists. Dr. Patty Elzen from the Weslaco lab spoke on her work with mite resistance for fluvalinate and Amitraz. Her explanation of the dynamics of resistance explained how varroa is becoming resistant to fluvalinate and Amitraz simultaneously, even where Amitraz has never been used. Dr. Eischen explained his work with Africanized bees and their interaction with varroa. There are some behaviours of the AHB that make it somewhat more tolerant of varroa, and feral colonies are returning to the Arizona test areas.

The update on hive beetles seemed to show that beekeeper's vigilance in ground treatments, hive treatments and not leaving comb untended in the yard or warehouse has brought the pest more or less under control. The largest losses due to hive beetles in the southeast currently seem to be from damage in warehouses to stored unextracted honey and stored empty comb. It is still not absolutely clear what the range of this pest might be.

(cont. on page 4)

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Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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President's Notes

by Ray Varner

Special thanks to George and Susan Hansen for hosting the Field Day, and for help from several Regional Associations. The Portland Beekeepers provided signs that helped folks find their way, directed parking, and provided refreshments. The Tillamook Beekeepers came all the way from the coast to help with registrations.

Want to host the OSBA Summer Picnic? We're looking for a place to go this summer that would be in conjunction with an Association's own summer picnic (last year we went to Tillamook and enjoyed an oyster feed!). First one to volunteer gets the job!

Dr. Lynn Royce spoke at the Board meeting last Saturday about a summer research project she is overseeing involving Russian queens and mites (see **related article on page 9**). She is about \$3,000 short of funding the project, and requested assistance with funding the project, and/or contributions of equipment in good condition. Donations are tax deductible and gladly accepted. Make checks payable to: Agriculture Research Foundation (ARF) and send to Dr. Lynn Royce at Dept. of Entomology, Cordley Hall 2051, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97333-2907.

Time is near to super up for the coming nectar flow. Be prepared and have a good season!

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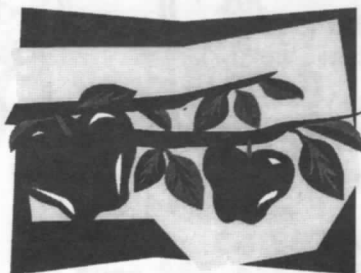
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Northwest Beekeeping

May: Crops in bloom producing nectar and/or pollen: Maple, clover, fruit trees, meadowfoam.

- Don't let colony stores get below 15 lbs. or three full frames of honey. Continue feeding as in April if foundation is being drawn or colonies are small.
- Supply water.
- Examine colonies every ten days. Lift 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 and larvae in the queen cells and the hive is crowded with bees, remove all cells --- top and bottom. Put the hive body containing mostly worker eggs or larvae on the bottom board, and the other containing mostly sealed brood on top. Add supers to provide 10-18 empty full-depth combs, or their equivalent. **IF you find** sealed or ripe queen cells, or possibly hatched ones, divide the colony. **NOTE:** queen mating is always dependent on decent mating weather and the supply of drones this time of year. **IF you find** eggs and no attempt to rear queens, and the hive is full of bees, examine the supers and add more to provide 10 to 18 empty combs or their equivalent.
- If the bees seem reluctant to work in the supers through a queen excluder, reverse the two hive bodies. This causes them to rearrange their stores and they will have to move through the excluder. Some colonies need training to go through the excluder.
- Continue to be on the lookout for American and European Foulbrood.
- Remove and extract supers containing well-ripened honey.

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

(cont. from page 1)

I was especially interested in the presentation on bee nutrition, specifically the values of pollen to honeybees. Bees seem to prefer certain kinds of pollen. They appear to consider texture, "flavor" and nutritional value in choosing what pollen to collect. In any case, a hive ends up with a variety of pollens with a good nutritional blend, even though they sometimes collect virtually useless materials because they seem right, or they are desperate. In California, before the almonds begin blooming, bees will collect grain dust they find at dairies. I have seen our bees bring back loads of cracked corn in their pollen baskets, and then observed the corn dumped out in front of the hive the following morning. Bees will sometimes collect sawdust in much the same circumstance.

As you must be aware by now, the EPA has since granted an additional year's use of CheckMite, but with a new label that prohibits its use on hives that are going to produce comb honey, and increases the buffer time between application and the adding of honey supers. Input from beekeepers about their hive losses this last winter seemed to bring the EPA to the realization that this material is essential, but it is apparent that coumaphos is being found in honey and wax. It is also becoming clear that some beekeepers have found a source of the active ingredient and are supplying it in unregulated and illegal dosages. Anyone surprised?

The Federation has hired a law firm to explore further action against China as the order expires, and to see if a case could be brought against Argentina. The report has not been presented, but the initial feedback is that such action would cost at least \$600,000 and only have an even chance of prevailing. Many of us wonder if that amount could be raised when the industry is in such straits. About half that amount was raised over the last five years to cover the antidumping effort against China. Some discussion advocates spending our efforts, instead, trying to build a quality assurance program as would be in the Honey Board referendum, and to lobby our legislature to include beekeepers in disaster relief and loan deficiency programs available to most of the rest of the agriculture community. In any case, the funds for such efforts would have to be raised

from the industry, as there is no money left in any of the beekeeping organizations' treasuries after the antidumping effort.

Next year's meeting will be held in San Diego in mid-January. The new president is Clint Walker from Rogers, Texas and the vice president is Pat Heitkam of Orland, California.

After my report last year about the Grand Ole Opry and Billy Ray Cyrus' performance of "Achy Breaky Heart," some of you have been wondering how I found this year's expedition to Billy Bob's, the biggest honky-tonk in Texas, or is it the world? As with the trip to the Opry, you either have to like this kind of stuff, or you have to be in a certain frame of mind. I enjoy country music when it tends towards the blues, folk or bluegrass, but after a few beers even corn pone country is funny instead of stupid. Billy Bob's is a real piece of work, and at least a little less of an overt tourist trap compared to the Opry. The place is huge, with a full-size bull riding ring at one end, two or three live bull riding "competitions" per night, and a good sized concert stage with seating at the other end. About fifty closed circuit TVs played continuous bull riding catastrophes. There are live performances by "big name" stars nightly. The middle section of the building has about twenty bars, and two huge dancing areas with live bands providing the music on and off. Professional dancers give demonstrations and kind of seed the action. If Texas had bottle deposits, the returns on one night's consumption could probably pay off the national debt. This is a real family place judging by the number of children bellying up to the bar for beer. Anyone who advocated prohibiting smoking in public places in Texas was lynched long ago, but the ventilation was roaring away, so it was tolerable.



(cont. on page 5)

Beekeeping Web Pages

International Bee Research Association:

<http://www.cf.ac.uk/ibra/>

American Beekeeping Federation:

<http://www.abfnet.org>

National Honey Board: To order Teachers Packet for beekeeping with lots of fun pages for kids to color, decorate and read; to order PRIDE packet re: honey purity; to get information on analytical testing labs that can test the purity of your honey: www.nhb.org or www.honey.com

USDA Website: Article re: Varroa tolerant bees

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/aug99/bees0899.htm>

American Institute of Baking: www.aibonline.org

OSBA members Jim & Karen Gifford's business is called Dancing Bee Acres. View their site at www.dancingbeeacres.com. It's a good one!

Oregon State Entomology Department:

www.ent.orst.edu/entomology/



Kid's Corner

WORKER BEE PUZZLE

Locate and circle the following honey bee words in this puzzle: beeswax, beehive, comb, queen, drone, clover, worker and colony. Words may be found across or down.

B	S	B	C	B	H	B	X	I
E	S	W	O	R	K	E	R	A
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Field Day in the Beeyard

Despite threatening weather, the Field Day was dry up until the last session was ending. It was cool and cloudy all day, which kept the bees clustered. The five presenters covered lots of territory and a number of 4-H members and FFA students attended.

George Hansen covered hive, brood, comb and queen management. Bill Ruhl demonstrated splitting colonies for swarm control, and finding the queen. Torey Johnson talked about medications, including the all-important placement and timing. Dr. Lynn Royce covered bee diseases. Debbie Delaney talked about mites and demonstrated the powdered sugar roll method to test for varroa, the bottom board screen and non-chemical controls. The presenters fielded lots of questions and folks got the chance to get a lot of hands-on information.

The drawing for the colony of bees donated by Ruhl Bee Supply was won by Dave Graber, OSBA Vice President. Dave claims it's the first time he's won anything!

The turnout was not as large as past years, but for a chilly Easter weekend it wasn't too bad. There were folks from throughout the state, and the Regional Associations were well represented: Tillamook, Southern, Coos County, Tualatin Valley, Willamette Valley and Portland. Wow! 4-H members were from Oregon but the FFA teacher and student came from Mountain View High School in Vancouver, Washington. There were quite a few new beekeepers and younger beekeepers, too.

Once again, a big THANKS to George and Susan Hansen for hosting the Field Day! THANKS too to all the presenters for doing a great job and giving up their Saturday for a good cause! THANKS to the Portland Beekeepers for providing signs and refreshments, and to the Tillamook Beekeepers for help with registration. Your efforts are much appreciated.



Opening up a hive – bees weren't flying far!



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OSU Research Project: HELP!

By Dr. Lynn Royce

This summer I am overseeing work on both new and ongoing projects and looking at a budget shortfall of almost \$3,000. I could use help in the form of both monetary contributions (see President's column on page 2 for details) and new equipment (boxes, lids, bottom boards and frames). Following is a brief summary of three specific projects:

1. Set up our first drone tests that will include three treatments with five colonies each (15 total): a) varroa infested, b) coumaphos treated, and c) low varroa infested (reduce varroa population with non-chemical means. These experiments are to determine sublethal effects of mites and chemicals on reproductive casts.
2. Set up 15-20 purebred Russian queens in the Willamette Valley in stationary sites in Eugene, Summit and Corvallis and evaluate their performance in side by side tests with western bred queens and possibly Russian queens mated with western drones.
3. Continue to evaluate juniper chips as possible mite control. Experimental set up will include six treatment sets: chips in frame in brood chamber, chips in lid, juniper wood bottom board, juniper lids, juniper deep brood chamber, and pine (no control chemicals). Each set will be four colonies and these will be evaluated for mites using sticky boards and for bee population using a frame by frame estimation. We will add two new treatment sets to this experiment: one for screen bottom boards and one for formic acid gel packs.

Numbers 1 and 3 will be done by Debbie Delaney and myself, but we need help to complete #2. We propose hiring Alex Kroger who is already trained to work with bees to help complete the studies. If we could obtain donated new equipment we could hold our costs to the \$3,000.

I believe these are valuable projects and if you could help I would greatly appreciate it.



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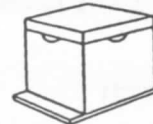
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To make tax-deductible contributions for honeybee research at OSU, make your check payable to Agriculture Research Foundation (ARF) and send it to Dr. Royce at OSU (see her address on page 10). For those who want to contribute to OSBA above the membership dues, note a line item on the form below. Your contribution can be earmarked for the Research or General Fund (specify your choice). The Board wants to hold the line on increasing dues across the board and recognizes that some members would like to make one-time or ongoing contributions. Thank you for your support!



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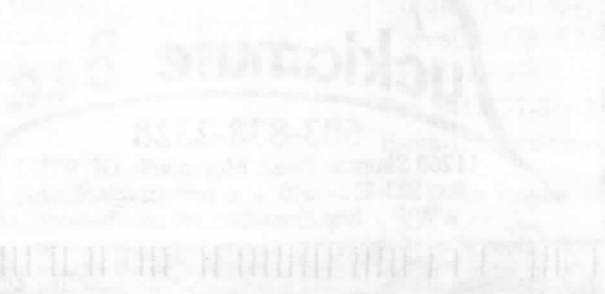
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