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August 2016 | Vol 29 # 3

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Cover picture - Shannon checking a honey frame for extracting at Jim Campbells' apiary, Manitoba.

Photo: Jim Campbell

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Canadian Honey Council Report



Rod Scarlett, Executive Director, CHC



Food Safety, traceability, bio-security – these are consumer buzzwords but what does it mean to beekeepers. The Canadian Honey Council has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars getting programs out to beekeepers with the completion of the “Honey Bee Producer Guide to the National Bee Farm-Level Biosecurity Standard” and the Canadian Bee Industry Safety Quality Traceability Producer Manual (CBISQT). In addition we are in year two of a program promoting and attempting to integrate both manuals. For those who have taken the time to go through the manuals, the feedback has been, for the most part, positive. Yes they are long, yes they are repetitive, and yes many of you are already practicing what is being outlined. But practicing and documenting are two entirely different beasts.

I understand when people say they are being buried in paperwork. Believe it or not, you are not alone. All businessmen are faced with the prospect of burgeoning paperwork as is anyone who deals with governments. It is part of the job, and like it or not, it is probably going to get worse instead of better. For all intents and purposes, food safety, bio-security and traceability are paperwork intensive. My guess, and it is only a guess is fewer than 5% of commercial beekeepers have adopted either CBISQT or the bio-security program in full. Some may have adopted portions and others ...well...it's just too onerous and there is no monetary value for the extra work. To

those I say, the world it is a changing.

Consumer demands are quite different than previous decades and with it higher expectations. Not only do Canadian consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it was raised, so too do the nations and packers we export product. Some countries are far ahead of us in this respect, others not so much so. In any event, in certain cases there are opportunities for premiums if well-defined programs are being followed. But it is more than that. All we need is one instance of a food safety or biosecurity violation and it impacts everyone. All along it was the intent to have CBISQT a certifiable program, not just voluntary. That day is coming and it is coming sooner than people realize. These programs were designed to put beekeepers in front of the curve, allow for growth opportunities and keep ahead of consumer trends, not to put up impediments. I urge all of you who have not yet adopted these programs to take a good look at your operation and consider implementing as much as possible. You may be surprised at the outcome.

A couple of other quick updates. Consultations on the new suite of Growing Forward programs has begun, both federally and provincially, and if you have the opportunity to provide input, now is the time. In addition, the CHC is providing input and staying abreast on issues of antimicrobials, (where and how beekeepers will access veterinary drugs – tylosin and oxytet) and labelling of sugars. Both could have some pretty big impacts. ■

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Higher Education to Sustain Bees' Surprising Contribution



Quebec City, March 21 2016 – In view of the unprecedented transformation of the beekeeping industry and the vital importance of bees in ecosystems, Université Laval will enhance education in this field by establishing a Chair in Educational Leadership (CEL) in apicultural science.

More than ever, demand for the pollination services of honeybees is growing. From cranberries to blueberries, small fruit production depends on effective, sustainable pollination. In order to ensure the survival of bee colonies and better equip producers, Université Laval aims to become a key leader in apicultural science education.

“The spectacular symbiosis between bees and flowering plants is evident in the agrifood industry today. The Chair in Educational Leadership in apicultural science is the fruit of historical collaboration between beekeepers, blueberry producers and Université Laval. Bees seem to be showing us the way to sustainable development!”, says Pierre Giovenazzo, Chairholder and professor in the Department of Biology of Université Laval’s Faculty of Science and Engineering.

The beekeeping industry has experienced constant growth since 2003. Agricultural producers are also increasingly calling on bees to help with pollination. From 1998 to 2013, the number of bee colony rentals doubled in Quebec. In 2014, there were 309 beekeepers and 49 635 bee colonies in the province, of which 44 214 were being used for pollination services.

Despite the vitality of the apicultural sector, there are few experts in this field. “Quebec desperately needs specialists with university-level training in apicultural science. This CEL will play an essential role in improving beekeeper productivity and ensuring the sustainability of the apicultural industry by offering producers high-calibre training”, says the Dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Engineering, André Darveau.

“The creation of this CEL will help train the apicultural sector’s next generation of professionals by enhancing our course offerings at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and consolidating the contribution of a dynamic professor with over 15 years of experience in the



From left to right, Léo Buteau, president of the Quebec Beekeepers Federation, Pierre Giovenazzo, Chairholder, Jean-Paul Laforest, president of the Deschambault Animal Science Research Center and Marc Larouche, president of the Quebec Blueberry Union. Photo: Louise Leblanc

field of apiculture”, adds the Rector of Université Laval, Denis Brière.

This new CEL was created thanks to the support of several key players in apicultural science, including the *Table filière apicole du Québec* of the *Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec* (the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture’s Beekeeping Working Group). Together, the *Centre de recherche en sciences animales de Deschambault* (Deschambault Animal Sciences Research Centre), the *Syndicat des producteurs de bleuets du Québec* (Union of Quebec Blueberry Producers) and the *Fédération des apiculteurs du Québec* (Quebec Beekeepers Federation) are contributing \$350 000 over a five-year period.

About the Chairs in Educational Leadership program

Université Laval’s Chairs in Educational Leadership (CEL) program was established in the spring of 2011. Created in partnership with socioeconomic stakeholders, each CEL fosters pedagogical innovation by integrating scientific and technological advances and adapting them to the needs of students. To date, 23 CEL have been created with the aim of addressing specific educational issues in business administration, science and engineering, theology and religious studies, social sciences, education and agriculture and food sciences.

About la Grande campagne, Université Laval’s fundraising campaign

The theme of Université Laval’s 7th Grande campagne fundraising campaign, its most ambitious to date, is “Leave a lasting imprint, 350 years of excellence”. From now until May 2017, the university aims to raise \$350 million to support excellence and strengthen its mission of teaching, research and innovation. Through *La Fondation de l’Université Laval*, the university’s foundation, all graduates are invited to support the training of competent, creative and responsible citizens, as well as the production of cutting-edge knowledge. ■



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Regional Reports



Maritimes



Mario Swinkels

Well back in February the Maritimes expected an early spring with few losses, however, mother nature has her own way of changing things. A cold March and April lead to normal bee losses for the regions. Bees that made it through the winter were as strong as we've seen in many years, leaving room for lots of spring splitting.

With the cold of March and April behind us Maritimers were looking for a warmer May to help build up and get ready for pollination. Well pollination was wet and cold for the duration, here's hoping it went better than it sounds. Temperatures are finally rising but Maritimers missed the

global warming.

The Maritimes see a lot of bees coming from Ontario and Quebec to help fill the pollination needs of wild blueberry growers, but with the SHB expanding in Ontario, greater restrictions are being placed on importing pollination hives in all Maritime provinces. This year saw areas restricted in some provinces and greater restrictions on how to handle SHB when spotted. The president of the New Brunswick Beekeepers Association Calvin Hicks said it best "the easiest way for this problem to be solved, is for a young beekeepers in the area to come up with 50 to 60,000 new hives". With pollination reaching an end thoughts will be going into next year's SHB tactics.

Nova Scotia is hosting the "Maritime Bee Tour" in central Nova Scotia (Truro area) August 5th and 6th. Past president of BeeMaid, Neil Specht will be the guest speaker Friday night. Saturday will be hands on beekeeping stations. This is a great time to meet with fellow beekeepers throughout the Maritimes and see how others do things. I have never gone to a meeting that I haven't learned something new. Expect to see a big gathering.

Québec



No report at this time.

Ontario



Jim Coneybear

It is interesting how time slips away in a beekeepers life in spring and early summer. My schedule somewhat "falls apart" and bees and nature become the driving force in my life until I can get a handle on things. Everything from treatments and queen replacement feeding and loading and moving bees all hours of the night consume many of our beekeeping lives. Recently I find myself also spending time with a willing but inexperienced crew who have all started working with me this year. Having said this, my report will be brief.

The warm weather we experienced in March was great for Ontario beekeepers as our queens had a chance to lay some eggs and build populations. Although April was back to winter for us the clusters looked reasonably large and most beekeepers experienced lower winter losses than the past several years. Feed was often more of an issue as populations grew. Overall our spring has been somewhat cool and drier than many. Coming into early

summer we need rain and it is not unusual to have some hot spells. The consensus is that our livestock look good and healthy for the most part.

There have been a few discoveries of SHB once again in the Niagara area in one bee operation. Thus far it is reasonably confined to a bee operation bordering the U.S.

During spring planting some beekeepers experienced bee kills due to dust issues with corn and soy. (Similar numbers to other years were reported.) Some of the kills occurred when ground was worked previous to planting. My speculation is that neonic residue from the former years crop was enough to leave writhing, dying and dead bees on hive entrances.

Generally there is optimism amongst Ontario beekeepers this year. I have heard it said that there are always two good years in beekeeping – "There was a summer 21 years ago when we had a honey crop that wouldn't stop and we all had 1% winter loss and the other excellent year isthis coming year?"

Manitoba



Allan Campbell

Bees seem to be off to a great start right across the province this summer. We've received plenty of moisture without the widespread flooding that has occurred in recent years. I've noticed a great dandelion bloom that seemed to go on for a long time just as we were bringing our bees home which was a great boost for us. Early clover and alfalfa was sure plentiful too and we were able to go out and super all of our hives before canola even started to bloom. Though there was a period in between where we were feeding sugar syrup as well, money well spent as the bees sure appreciated it! Canola crops seem to be everywhere this summer and sown at different intervals too which should

help beekeepers to extend the honey flows for a while longer through late summer. As I write this I am only days away from starting to extract canola honey which is 2 weeks earlier than most years for me.

Honey markets look unchanged from spring by all accounts. Retail prices seem to remain strong as well as consumer demand, however bulk honey has been really stagnant. As I ask around, there are really not many people whom are able to sell bulk honey at any price. I have heard a few producers sell a load here or there but at poor prices. Nobody wants to take these prices and we deserve a lot more, but sometimes we must do what we can to keep the wolves from the doorstep as it were. It disappoints me so much that this is the case but when the big packers are only offering a pittance because there is so much cheap honey available on the market it is the sad reality.

We in Canada have the safest food supply in the world and we work hard at maintaining that reputation through CFIA inspections and FSEP programs, as well as the industry led CBISQT food safety and biosecurity programs. I encourage you all that if you haven't already started to implement these programs that you do so immediately and help us all elevate our countries food safety reputation. I think moving to a mandatory FSEP would be an important move for our industry for any farm selling to the public or at least over a certain size of production. There are only two ways to survive this marketplace if it lasts very long at all- Raise the perceived value of our product so that people will want to pay more for it; or lower your cost of production. In the meantime I do my best to keep the plight of beekeepers in the public eye by making regular radio and newsprint appearances and talking to anyone who will listen about the issues we face today. I can only say that I hope we can stop the downward spiral soon.

Saskatchewan



Dani Glennie

Things in Saskatchewan have been earlier than most years, but like previous years the season has a way of catch up to itself. The canola is coming along very nicely with some of it already bolting as well as some fields still in the cabbaging stage. There seems to be a large number of bees in the province as the light winter loss has left many beekeepers with extra nucs and queens for this season. The bees are looking strong going in to the harvest season and it seems that the province has quite a few new queens and nucs on the ground already as the early season has made for some great mating.

The SBA hosted its annual Field Day on June 18, 2016 outside of Regina. The event was well attend with a large number of hobbyists that came out from the local beekeepers club. This was a great opportunity for all to share knowledge, experience, friendship, and camaraderie. There was some opportunity for beekeepers to test their beekeeping skills in The Beekeeping Olympics. The events were: Queen finding, frame building, truck tie down, and super building, the games were timed and awards given to the top two contestants in each category. Fun and laughter was had by all.

I want to wish you all the best in your beekeeping season, and hope that you have a safe and happy year.

Alberta



Kevin Nixon

It is July 4 as I write this and we have one load of bees left to move into pollination tonight. So a very busy time. Bees are looking good from what I hear all over Alberta. Up til early May it was very dry, then a week of rain followed by a week of unseasonably cold temperatures with freezing in some areas at night. Dandelion flow was very short in most areas and bees really didn't get a whole lot off them. Most beekeepers were feeding thru May and into June. With big populations and lots of brood hatching, they burn thru feed quick! The honey market continues to be depressed. I recently had a beekeeper from

Argentina at our farm and I asked him what the story is there. He told me there was not a huge amount of carry over in Argentina, but his interpretation of huge is all relative to what they had produced in total. However, he said that when they try to sell their honey, they are having difficulty getting a price quoted as well. They are told there is a lot of honey coming in from China and other countries which is believed to be transhipped Chinese honey. How do we fix this? The CHC wrote a letter to the Minister of Agriculture requesting a meeting to discuss this topic and others and 6 months later we received a response which was basically sorry for the delayed response...and that was about it. Pretty frustrating receiving that kind of a letter.

I also testified to the House of Commons committee who is doing a study on bee health monitoring in Canada. It amazed me how these folks are still stuck on a single topic as a cause of bee losses, being neonics. I guess they are susceptible to be swayed by media reports and others as well. Equally amazing was how the Ontario Beekeepers Association also got themselves on the agenda to testify, yet not one other provincial organization was represented outside of the CHC. Frankly, I am not sure why the OBA continues to be a member of the CHC yet act independent of the CHC as they continue requesting action from the national government which is in conflict with what the CHC requests. A year and a half ago, the OBA wanted to be rid of the bee health roundtable. Now they are asking to be a part of it, yet not one other provincial organization has a representative there. If a member organization does not agree with the principles and action items which are developed by the board, why would such an organization continue being a member? Why do we as an organization continue to allow membership to one of our member organizations who seems to operate on ideological principles and actions which contradict the CHC? We are seeing so many resources wasted on a single item when so many other important topics are being overlooked.

Hope everyone has had a decent summer and fall/winter preparations go well so our hives can be in good shape for next year.

British Columbia



Stan Reist

It's that time of the year when time is hard to come by. The bees are coming out of pollination, the cranberries are on their own, the bees have done their job and it's now off to the fireweed. The flow earlier in the year April /May has sustained the bees until now. We have had to do a bit of feeding just to keep them going until the Fireweed kicks in.

Talking to our regional reps. it appears we are still not getting the message through to the new beekeepers that they have to treat for mites. In the past I have referred to the Yoga position as not a valid treatment for mite control, wishing and hoping and bad information off the internet is still out there in vast quantities. One thing I have noticed about new beekeepers is they want "THE BEST WAY OF DOING THINGS". There is no best way of doing things, there are several ways of doing things and you pick what works best for you and your operation. Right now there are so many different kinds of hives and contraptions on the market, it's hard to keep up. Truthfully I am not of fan of gizmos and gadgets and do-hinckies. To the small producers join a local club listen to what's been presented and decide if it's right for YOU. You have to treat for Mites, there are lots of treatment strategies out there that are good strategies, BUT be very weary of Holistic concoctions. Thymol, Formic Acid, Oxalic Acid, Thymovar and Apivar are there to use, try them they work and they will save your bees if used the right way.

I understand that in some parts of the Province swarming is an issue right now and has been for some time. The hives are almost too strong, while it sounds good you have to keep them under control until the main crop is flowering and by the sounds of it, that's a bit of a problem. Some parts of the lower Mainland had good early flows and others not so much. In the interior there seems to have been a problem with one shipment of New Zealand packages. Queen failure was very prevalent, approx. 40 out of 150 packages were affected. Unfortunately they were mostly new beekeepers, so it was a struggle to keep them going and replacing the queens.

The SHB survey this spring turned up one beetle, out of thousands of hives surveyed, good news for all. In Paul's survey he indicated the hive mortality was in the 18% range and there seems to be a lot of agreement on that. He also put in a sloppy beekeeper category and got responses to that also, so I guess people will admit their short comings.

Jeff Lee has written a blurb on the upcoming BCHPA AGM in the lower mainland for BCHPA AGM in October 2016. Daylight is burning, things need to get done and we are all hoping for full supers and a sore back, for your work

.....
The B.C. Honey Producers Association will be holding an expanded fall convention and annual general meeting Oct. 14-16 in Richmond.

The event will include a second education day and workshop featuring best management practices for new and experienced beekeepers alike.

We've tapped into some of North America's most interesting speakers for the two-day convention, which is preceded by a business day for the BCHPA on Friday. The Richmond Beekeepers Association, one of the largest clubs in the province, is hosting the convention on behalf of the BCHPA.

Among the speakers who are coming are Danielle Downey, the new executive director of Project Apis m, which funds research to enhance honey bee colonies;

Michele Colopy of the Pollinator Stewardship Council, which works to promote agriculture without the adverse impacts of pesticides mycologist Paul Stamets, whose research on mushroom extracts is breaking new ground in hive management; Stephen Sheppard of the University of Washington on breeding better bees, and many more.

We're also bringing in both the Pest Management Regulatory Agency and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to explain two important issues affecting both commercial and hobbyist beekeepers.

Recent pesticide poisonings of honey bees offer us the opportunity to educate on "What's That Spray?" so that beekeepers are better educated about how and when chemicals are used and how to identify conditions dangerous to their hives.

Also, the federal government's new rules for prescription drugs for animals will affect beekeepers; we've asked CFIA to give us the goods on how this will work.

Leonard Foster from the University of B.C. will explain some of the findings of his Bee-omics research project into queen fertility, and we'll also get research updates from Stephen Pernal at Agri-food and Agriculture Canada.

Mark Winston, who won the Governor General's Award for non-fiction last year with *Bee Time*, will be back this year with some other literary advances, and Lori Weidenhamer, the author of *Victory Gardens for Bees* will also speak.

We've got many more speakers on tap for our convention, which will also feature a workshop-heavy agenda for Sunday.

There will also be a trade show featuring many of our bee-related businesses and partnerships with whom we cannot do without; an expanded honey, mead and wax contest, wine and cheese social, silent auctions and an evening banquet with entertainment.

The convention is being held at the Pacific Gateway Hotel, where we've booked a block of rooms.

To book rooms: Pacific Gateway Hotel,
3500 Cessna Dr, Richmond, BC V7B 1C7

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Ask for the BCHPA beekeepers convention rate.

For more information about the convention itself:

Jeff Lee, 1st VP, BCHPA - jeff@honeybeezen.com / 604-328-5028

Tim Monaghan, Pres., Richmond Beekeepers Association; thatsmyhoney@gmail.com

BeeMaid



Bernie Rousseau

According to Statistics Canada, honey consumption in Canada is on the rise, averaging 1.02 kilograms per person in 2014, a healthy 20% increase over 2013. This increase should be seen as good news for Canadian beekeepers!

In addition, consumer research is also showing that supporting local and Canadian food is important to Canadians. According to the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), 97% of consumers buy local to support the local economy and 45% made an effort to buy Canadian products in the last year. Bee Maid Honey conducted consumer focus groups in May and found that the Canadian produced message resonated with the participants in our panel. We look forward to re-launching our BeeMaid brand in 2017 strengthening the

message of our cooperative ownership and 100% Canadian commitment.

Canadian Honey Council feedback on the "Veterinary Oversight of Antimicrobial Use – A Pan-Canadian Framework of Professional Standards for Veterinarians"

Rod Scarlett, Executive Director, CHC

Setting the Stage

The Canadian Honey Council represents over 8500 beekeepers based on 2015 statistics. These beekeepers manage over 720,000 colonies of honey bees. It is generally accepted that approximately 20% of the beekeeping population manage 80% of the bees. Nearly five thousand beekeepers are from only two provinces, British Columbia and Ontario, yet combined they only represent about 20% of the colonies. Currently, there is only one bee disease that veterinary drugs are used to treat, American Foulbrood (AFB; *Paenibacillus larvae* ssp. *larvae*). AFB is highly contagious and highly infectious and occurs in both vegetative and spore forms. It is important to note that honey bee larvae are infected when they are less than 48 hours old by ingesting spores with their food. Once ingested, the spores germinate and continue to multiply until larval death. AFB can spread rapidly through a colony and the spores are extremely difficult to eliminate since they are resistant to heat and most disinfectants. They can remain viable in beekeeping equipment for years.

Currently there are two veterinary drugs that are used to control AFB – oxytetracycline hydrochloride and tylosin. Suffice it to say the beekeepers have been using oxytetracycline for over 60 years and it is a prime example of how to avoid antimicrobial resistance. The number of cases of resistance is very small when compared to length of time this drug has been used to treat AFB. Oxytetracycline does not kill the spores, it only treats the symptoms caused by the bacteria that forms in the honey bee. It was only in 2013 that tylosin was approved for use by beekeepers for treatment of AFB in Canada. In the case of both oxytetracycline and tylosin, it is usually added to sugar/syrup and fed to bees.

The issues

It is our understanding that there appears to be two main issues in the proposed standards - oversight of sale of antimicrobials and oversight of use of antimicrobials (i.e. veterinarian prescriptions). From the perspective of the Canadian Honey Council the status quo has served the industry well as it has allowed for good access to veterinary drugs and has allowed those with knowledge of apicultural practices and diseases (beekeepers, Provincial Apiculturalists and tech transfer teams) the necessary oversight, as exhibited by the very few cases of resistance. We recognize, however, that consumer and social pressures may prevent that from continuing.

The CHC has recently had discussions with Provincial Apicultural-

ists and because of short timelines, there was no clear consensus on a path forward from their perspective. Notes from that meeting summarized the discussion as follows:

There was some discussion around recommendations in response to minimizing the impact of greater oversight on availability and use of antimicrobials for beekeepers (examples below):

- *Beekeeper certification - a strategy that focuses on education for beekeepers and demonstration of education (certification) before access to antibiotics is granted.*
- *Acceptance of increased veterinarian oversight - a plan that recognizes the expertise of vets in the area of antibiotics and resistance management. Education for veterinarian to introduce bee biosecurity issues and current use patterns would be necessary.*
- *Risk assessment approach - whereby certain activities would warrant automatic access to prescriptions; such as pollination, nuc selling, interprovincial movement, etc.*
- *Provincial Apiculturalists (PAs) involvement in oversight to facilitate access to antibiotics by beekeepers as needed to meet the new VDD national policy for antimicrobial drug use - PAs would work in close concert with veterinarians to evaluate need and use of antibiotics on an individual basis.*

From the CHC perspective, if veterinarians feel comfortable enough and have the necessary expertise in entomology to provide prescriptions they should do so. We feel, however, that this would provide limited access since so few veterinarians would be qualified. As an interim solution (until such time that sufficient number of veterinarians have received the necessary training so as to not limit access by beekeepers to the necessary drugs needed for treatment) in order to address the aspect of oversight of the use of antimicrobials, we would suggest that Health Canada design a one day certification course in which Provincial Apiculturalists, bee tech team members, and registered beekeepers could enroll and be certified to issue "prescriptions". An example of this type of training in agriculture are the pesticide applicator certification programs. Because of the complexity and the number of pesticides those certification courses are quite detailed. A course looking at two drugs and one form of livestock should not have to be overly complicated. Other examples of certification include Commissioners of Oaths and Notary Publics. Those persons who successfully completed the certification course would have "official status" and may have certain obligations for record keeping. As an additional oversight, those individuals who successfully completed the certification course would be registered with the provinces Chief Veterinary Officer.

With regards to oversight of sales, only those individuals with an authorized script should be allowed to purchase the drugs from either an authorized distributor or pharmacy. We would certainly encourage a degree of expanded availability to include some existing dispensary locations such as BeeMaid, Medivet, Dancing Bee, and their agents.

The CHC realizes that this is a complex issue and is certainly willing to work with industry counterparts to come up with a solution that matches the need to follow policy with the unique needs of the beekeeping industry. ■

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Results from long-term field trials in Greece. 2012-2014 - Hatjina, F. - Hellenic Institute of Apiculture, Greece.

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Mobile Honey Extraction Technology

Submitted by Geoffrey Martinak

International Honey Products has produced the world's most advanced mobile honey extraction system. Their team has manufactured a custom 32' harvesting trailer equipped with a 120-frame extracting line. The mobile honey extracting unit allows for 24/7 honey extracting, efficiently and with minimum labour requirements. The mobile unit is a self-contained, diesel powered trailer capable of fully extracting, filtering and barreling 740 frames of honey an hour.

With mobile extracting, you simply pull into a bee yard or staging area, remove full supers and place them onto a conveyor. The trailer's technology removes full frames from the supers, uncaps the wax from the frames, loads them into an extractor for the removal of honey. The honey is barreled and filtered right on site, and the frames are reloaded onto the supers, and placed back onto the original hive.

From multiple tests conducted in Canada and the United States, International Honey Products noticed the following results;

- Lower operating costs with money saved on fuel, labour and electricity
- Reduction of equipment by putting supers right back onto hives



with no extra transportation

- Time saved processing by extracting on site rather than timely process of transporting to fixed location
- Higher honey yields by putting wet honey supers directly back onto hives
- Reduction of diseases by controlling certain pests, such as small hive beetle

With multiple units operational in North America and orders filling up for next season, the innovative concept of mobile extraction appears to be much more than just a fad within the industry.

For more information on the mobile honey extractor, you can visit www.internationalhoney.com.

To Plant or Not Plant Honey Bee Plants

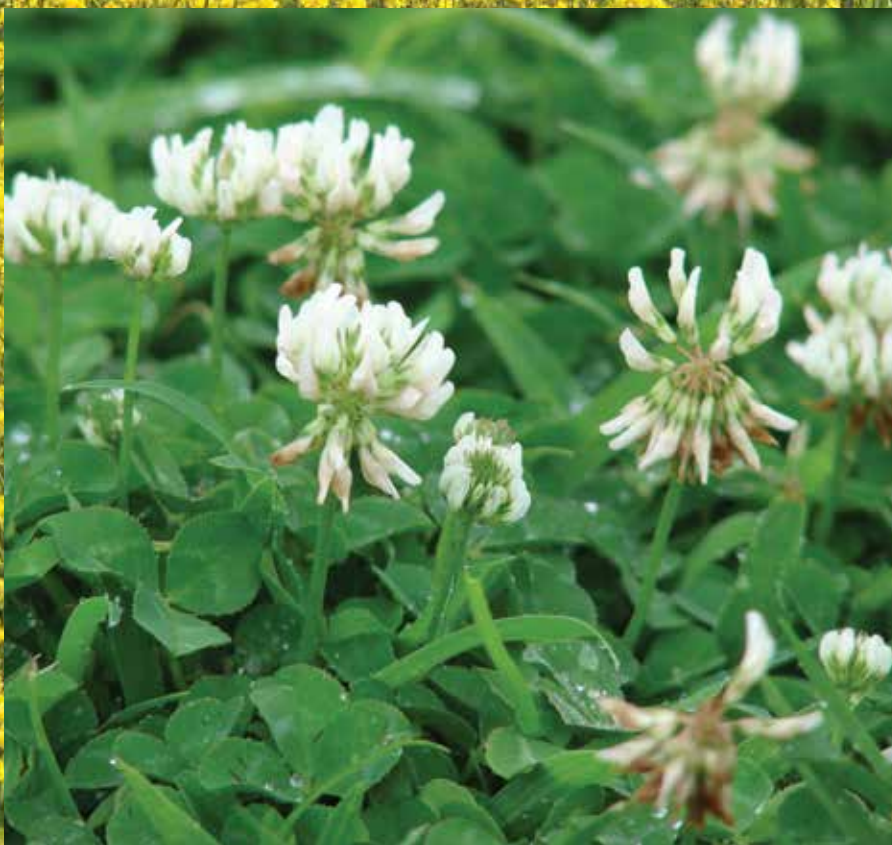
By Doug McRory, Field Editor

I often get this question from beekeepers – “Should I plant nectar producing plants for my bees?”

This is a complicated question and the answer depends on your goals for you bees and also on another question – Does planting bee plants give you satisfaction that you are helping your bees and other pollinators have a diverse source of pollen and nectar to aid in their bee health?

I would suggest that most locations in Canada in agricultural areas because the bees fly at least up to 4 miles, this gives them access to thousands of acres of forage plants to supply their nutritional needs and planting specific plants is not necessary. There are all kinds of plants in uncultivated areas within this flight area that the bees can locate and utilize. If you are in a remote area or in areas of vast areas of monoculture, this may not be the case and plantings there may be justified. In the large area there will be pockets of various vegetation that blooms throughout the foraging period of the year. The honey bees are well adapted to scouting out these sources and communicating this information to their hive mates who in turn exploit the resource to it potential.

Beekeepers with a land base will say – “What can I plant that will be useful to my bees?” There are many agricultural crops that you can grow on the land that also yield honey. Buckwheat is a good example but you need to be aware that the old varieties produce far more honey than the new varieties that are many grown for the Japanese noodle market. Pure Buckwheat honey will bring a premium price but white honey



Top Picture: Buckwheat, Bottom Picture: Clover, Background Picture: Canola

with just enough Buckwheat in it to flavour it, is very hard to market. Canola is an excellent honey producing crop. Borage is another good nectar producer. All of the clovers grown for seed crops are good honey producers. I suggest to beekeepers that if they want to seed some land and leave it just for the bees, that they get a mixture of some of the following plants: white sweet clover, yellow sweet clover, alsike clover, crimson clover, alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, ladino clover, white dutch clover, single cut red clover with small heads (the bees tongue is not long enough to reach the nectar in the large headed varieties). I suggest planting these short term plants that yield within two years to maximum honey yield. Plants like different growing conditions so using a mixture will guarantee that some of the plants will flourish in your plot of land.

In order to increase the nectar plants near my bee yards, I bartered honey for alsike seed with one of the farmers where I had a bee yard location. As my crew was loading the truck at the end of the work in the bee yard, I would take a can full of seed and walk along the ditch spreading the seed. My only investment was the seed! When it grew up, the deer loved to eat it and they would spread the next generation all over the landscape.

There are many nectar producing plants available. Check the following website for some suggestions: http://newsite.pollinator.ca/plant_ontario/index.php. There are many resources on the web for honey plants.

If you are into leaving a legacy for future generations, then consider planting nectar producing trees and shrubs near your bee yards. This is a long term project as most will not yield significant amounts of pollen and nectar for many years. Talk to your land owners and see if they will let you plant nectar and pollen producing trees and shrubs in the fence rows near your bee yards. You should choose a succession of these plants that bloom a various times of the year to supply the bees with sources of food throughout the season. You have to plant enough of these plants to make a significant difference to the bee colonies that you have at that location. Read the articles by Dr. George Ayers from Michigan State University, that he wrote over the years on this subject. There were many of these in the bee journals. Over his career George collected 22 varieties of American basswood trees that would bloom over a most of the summer period. I like the European little leaf linden tree as these bloom consistently ever year. Again there are many resources to suggest what trees and shrubs work well in your area. When I lived in Manitoba, caragana was a great source of pollen and nectar as were the willows and poplar trees. ■

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for Honey Bees

By Doug McRory, Field Editor

Varroa mites and Honey Bee Tracheal mites constitute major problems for beekeepers worldwide! Beekeepers must take proactive measures in each window of opportunity in the year to be successful at maintaining these pests of our honey bees at low levels enough levels that our colonies survive their ravages. The key thing to understand about both mites is that they feed on the haemolymph (blood) of the bees which is their food source and in so doing, they inflict wounds in the exoskeleton of the honeybees. These wounds allow the always present bee specific viruses to enter the body of the bees and the viruses are stimulated to replicate (reproduce) very rapidly. It is these viruses that cause the premature death of individual bees and ultimately destruction of the



Varroa mite on honey bee. Photo: Brad Smith.

whole colony. There is no direct effective and economical treatment available for the viruses!

Not treating honey bees is not an option with this geometrically exploding populations of these pests in our managed honey bee colonies.

You have to **TREAT, TREAT, TREAT** to have your colonies survive at an acceptable level. If you do not treat you will continue to keep all of us nuc producers very well supplied with an ever expanding market to keep replacing the colonies that you let die for no reason (I

feel that it is cruelty to honey bees not to treat them effectively for the mites to the point that they die!) Honey bees now with Varroa are a true domesticated animal that require the intervention of man to maintain their existence until the honey bee comes back into a proper host parasite relationship with Varroa mite such as is present in *Apis cerana*.

Please get with the program and diligently apply your treatments it in a timely manner to maintain as many colonies as is humanly possible! Treatments to late lead to what I call the “WALKING DEAD” syndrome which means that the timing of your treatments was too late to hold the virus counts below the economic threshold. When you do treat later than required to keep the virus in check, you do knock out the mites so you think you are ahead of the mites and your bees may even look healthy and strong but collapse early in the winter due to the heavy virus load that the mites have created in the body of the bees.

As mentioned above you have to develop a year round program and monitor the situation throughout the year and make adjustments if necessary. I will go through my IPM Program to give you an example of what you need to develop in your own program. First what is your objective in managing you bees. You will develop a different program for differing circumstances.



IPM booklets available from www.honeycouncil.ca

I operate 300 colonies to produce about 450 nucs to sell and produce a reduced amount of honey. Because of the honey objective, I have to take into account that I do not want residues in the honey so I do not treat when honey supers are on the honey bees.

Because I sell nucs and I do not want my customers to see mites on the bees when I sell them in the spring, I treat with what I consider the most potent treatment available either Apistan or Apivar strips. Apistan works for me but you need to monitor after the treatment to see if it works for you. I alternate these two treatments every

other year (to prevent development of resistance) and I prefer to get them on as early in March as possible. With my packing system using the “Bee Hogan” wraps, I can open the hives from the top to put in the strips in and pollen paddies (average 3 pounds) and do an Oxy-Tet treatment (which is followed up three times in the spring and three times in the fall). I also treat with Fumigilan 4 times in the spring for *Nosema cerana* using the trickle method. I close the colonies back up with the winter wraps intact. The wraps come off according to the weather but stay on as long as possible to give the smaller clusters every advantage of the insulation.

I make my nucs all spring beginning the last week of April with the last round beginning as soon as I can have queen cells. At that time, I make the nucs with the overwintered queen and I put a queen cell in each of my colonies which gives a break in the brood cycle that gives me a treatment equivalent to a treatment with the strips. This allows me to go right through the honey season without further treatments (which meets my objective of honey without residues) which for me is into September when my colonies are built back to where they make some honey for me (usually a 20-pound average of goldenrod and aster honey which I like as I do not want to carry large amounts of honey any more as I am “retired”). The bees do need to make some surplus honey to be in good shape for winter.

As soon as the honey is off the Formic Acid treatments start along with Oxy-Tet (3 times in the fall). Formic gets both Varroa and Honey Bee Tracheal mites. I feel that it is critical to treat at some time in the year to control Honey Bee Tracheal mite as it has been shown that if the 2 mites are present in the same hive it is game over for that hive. Formic is the only treatment that works on Honey Bee Tracheal mites.

Before I wrap my bees I do a treatment of Oxalic Acid by the trickle method as it is easy to do and safe for my personal health. This treatment to me is an insurance policy to clean up any Varroa that have escaped all my other efforts to keep them at a minimum in my colonies (you will always have some Varroa survive whatever you do to eliminate them. I do not see many mites in my bees at any time of the year but you have to continually work at it.

Good luck with your bees and may you keep the mites to a minimum to give the bees every chance to survive!!! ■



Tracheal mite viewed with scanning electron microscope (140x). Photo: ARS/USDA



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2015 Honey Imports

	2015 Imports - Full Year		
	Canadian Dollars	Quantity (KG)	Price per pound
CANADA	41,208,717	7,315,234	\$2.56
New Zealand	7,483,814	292,186	\$11.64
Brazil	7,301,781	1,527,975	\$2.17
United States	6,161,620	938,642	\$2.98
Australia	4,249,661	506,390	\$3.81
Spain	3,270,807	766,116	\$1.94
Thailand	2,585,800	764,835	\$1.54
Argentina	1,511,541	444,410	\$1.55
China	1,432,907	552,864	\$1.18
Greece	1,399,416	253,231	\$2.51
India	1,036,187	222,511	\$2.12
Ukraine	607,767	155,262	\$1.78
Myanmar	541,456	201,002	\$1.22
Turkey	522,648	128,462	\$1.85
Germany	489,889	67,455	\$3.30
Cuba	471,404	104,566	\$2.05
Saudi Arabia	366,877	36,484	\$4.57
Russian Federation	357,828	149,497	\$1.09
Switzerland	156,033	15,136	\$4.69
France	150,597	12,410	\$5.52
Israel	103,130	11,542	\$4.06
Viet Nam	97,364	17,843	\$2.48
Romania	93,705	9,377	\$4.54
Portugal	92,873	11,132	\$3.79
Zambia	81,322	10,985	\$3.37

Bulgaria	81,041	25,002	\$1.47
Pakistan	79,118	10,675	\$3.37
Austria	78,980	18,475	\$1.94
Hungary	77,457	13,769	\$2.56
Poland	54,924	6,373	\$3.92
Algeria	45,779	9,810	\$2.12
Republic of Moldova	45,366	6,966	\$2.96
South Africa	38,009	4,944	\$3.49
Taiwan	31,171	3,698	\$3.83
Mexico	29,995	4,945	\$2.76
United Kingdom	21,843	1,614	\$6.15
Italy	21,299	2,875	\$3.37
Croatia	10,935	1,458	\$3.41
Georgia	8,092	1,371	\$2.68
Netherlands	8,008	1,554	\$2.34
Canada	3,324	639	\$2.36
Malaysia	2,963	244	\$5.52
Ethiopia	878	91	\$4.39
Peru	839	45	\$8.47
Lebanon	648	155	\$1.90
Ecuador	444	29	\$6.96
Paraguay	216	24	\$4.09
Hong Kong	134	22	\$2.77
United Arab Emirates	118	5	\$10.73
Guinea	81	39	\$0.94
Iran	74	26	\$1.29

January 2016 Honey Imports

	2016 - January Imports		
	Canadian Dollars	Quantity (KG)	Price per pound
CANADA	3,460,685	597,844	\$2.63
Brazil	1,188,489	236,573	\$2.28
New Zealand	511,292	17,338	\$13.40
Thailand	350,651	93,960	\$1.70
United States	294,278	44,348	\$3.02
Australia	289,016	32,298	\$4.07
Greece	267,632	54,050	\$2.25
Spain	168,729	33,600	\$2.28
India	72,311	18,745	\$1.75
Myanmar	59,078	20,100	\$1.34
Hungary	49,446	7,708	\$2.92
Viet Nam	49,309	19,200	\$1.17

Cyprus	43,522	4,706	\$4.20
Pakistan	30,629	5,046	\$2.76
Germany	29,722	2,887	\$4.68
Croatia	21,870	2,916	\$3.41
Italy	10,455	1,642	\$2.89
Zambia	10,224	1,198	\$3.88
Republic of Moldova	7,903	960	\$3.74
Austria	3,538	336	\$4.79
Mexico	1,071	116	\$4.20
Fiji	929	51	\$8.28
Turkey	284	15	\$8.61
Haiti	211	36	\$2.66
United Kingdom	85	12	\$3.22
Poland	11	3	\$1.67



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2015 Honey Exports

	2015 - full year		Average price per pound for 2015 exports
	Canadian Dollars	Quantity	
United States	44,533,412	8,233,497	\$2.46
Japan	16,176,472	2,810,360	\$2.62
China	2,521,900	402,271	\$2.85
France	220,881	26,041	\$3.86
Hong Kong	287,097	43,023	\$3.03
Barbados	55,094	9,347	\$2.68
Taiwan	22,789	4,769	\$2.17
Bermuda	18,790	2,808	\$3.04
Lebanon	32,152	3,733	\$3.91
Singapore	20,687	3,762	\$2.50

South Korea	750,916	116,418	\$2.93
Saint Pierre and Miquelon	2,785	437	\$2.90
Greece	65,875	11,718	\$2.56
Burkina Faso	755	137	\$2.50
Switzerland	194	30	\$2.94
Senegal	1,540	280	\$2.50
Algeria	31,062	8,011	\$1.76
Kuwait	118,416	21,428	\$2.51
Somalia	3,840	700	\$2.49
United Arab Emirates	10,040	1,853	\$2.46
CANADA	64,875,474	11,700,749	\$2.52

January 2016 Honey Exports

	2016 - January		Average price per pound for January exports
	Canadian Dollars	Quantity	
United States	4,018,573	847,169	\$2.16
Japan	1,957,657	397,350	\$2.24
China	193,474	34,604	\$2.54
France	181	33	\$2.49

Hong Kong	139	25	\$2.53
Barbados	299	40	\$3.40
Taiwan	11,571	2,103	\$2.50
Kuwait	83,997	14,715	\$2.59
United Arab Emirates	11,492	2,013	\$2.59
CANADA	6,277,473	1,298,062	\$2.20

BOOK REVIEW:

Make Mead Like a Viking

Traditional Techniques for Brewing Natural, Wild-Fermented, Honey-Based Wines and Beers by Jereme Zimmerman, Categories: Food & Drink, Health & Wellness.

Paperback \$24.95, 240 pages, Book Art: Color photos and illustrations throughout.

Size: 6 x 9 inch, Publisher: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Paperback: 9781603585989

eBook: 9781603585996

Mead. Vikings. It's impossible to think of one without the other. So why try? In *Make Mead Like a Viking*, Jereme Zimmerman unlocks the brewing secrets of the ancient Norse and shows readers how homebrewing mead can be not only simple but fun.

As a homesteader, fermentation enthusiast, and self-described "Appalachian Yeti Viking," Zimmerman embraces the traditional

culture and rituals surrounding mead and will help others bring a sense of wildness, mysticism, and individuality to their home-crafted brews.

In this accessible, easy-to-follow guide, readers will learn how to brew their own drinks such as sweet, semi-sweet, and dry meads; melomels (fruit meads); metheglins (spiced meads); Ethiopian t'ej; honey beers; and grog—opening the Mead Hall doors to further experimentation in fermentation and flavor. In addition, aspiring Viking brewers will explore:

- The importance of local and unpasteurized honey for both flavor and health benefits
- Why modern homebrewing practices, ma-

terials, and chemicals work but aren't necessary

- Herbs and wild botanicals for use in flavoring and preserving these healing, nutritious, and magical meads, beers, and wines

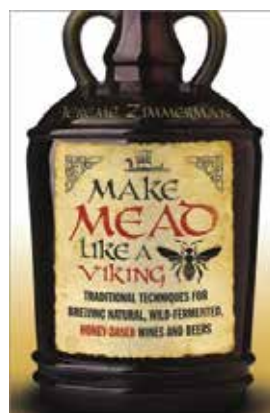
- Recommendations for starting a mead circle to share your wild meads with other brewers as part of the growing wild mead subculture

- and more

Whether you've been intimidated by modern homebrewing's cost or seeming complexity in the past or are looking to expand your current brewing and fermentation practices, Zimmerman's welcoming style and spirit will usher you into exciting new territory. Grounded in history and mythology but focused on modern self-

sufficiency, *Make Mead Like a Viking* is a practical and entertaining guide for the ages.

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Seaweeds Save Bees?



By Dara Scott (Advance Science)

I know it sounds strange doesn't it? How could plants growing in the sea help bees? New research confirms it can! Seaweeds, or macroalgae as they are also called, are full of bio-active properties, far more than land based plants. It is for this reason that they have become extremely popular in animal health. They are now routinely used in animal feeds from pigs to poultry, horses to hamsters and salmon to shrimp!

The feeding of seaweeds has come a long way in the last 10 years or so. For hundreds of years whole seaweeds were fed to animals for health benefits. Nowadays, bio-active properties are extracted out of seaweeds using specialized techniques that do not damage any of the functional actives. These extracts are fed to animals for a number of benefits such as general health (in particular gut health), immune boosting, increased productivity and weight gain. **The reason seaweeds are so beneficial is due to their anti-microbial, anti-viral, anti-fungal and immune boosting properties as well as high levels of vitamins and minerals¹⁻²⁻³⁻⁴. Different seaweeds have different properties; some are more anti-fungal, some have large amounts of specific vitamins etc. so selection of the correct seaweed species for extraction is important.**

So how does all this affect the beekeeper and their bees? Recently there have been a number studies on the use of seaweeds fed to honey bees. **Scientists wanted to see if seaweed health benefits would apply to**



our flying friends. It turns out they do. This year a French university published a study on feeding seaweed extracts to bees with *Nosema ceranae*. They found that a number of extracts from different seaweed plants had benefits for the colonies. In particular, two extracts caused not only a decrease in the level of *Nosema* spores, but also a reduction in bee mortality. They concluded by saying “experiments showed that algal sulphated polysaccharides (seaweed extracts) could be used to improve the survival of *N. ceranae*-infected honeybees and reduce the parasite load. This could represent an alternative strategy to control nosemosis as fumagillin is no longer licensed in several countries.”⁵

Encouraging, but this is not the first body of research on feeding seaweeds to bees. Advance Science, an Irish company, pioneered research in this field with a number of trials to document the properties of the product HiveAlive™. **Seaweed extracts make up the bulk of HiveAlive along with thymol and lemongrass.** Working with world renowned seaweed experts, specific seaweeds were selected, some of which are only available off the coast of Ireland. The seaweed bioactives are extracted using a unique patented process to ensure maximum efficacy. **These extracts have been proven to promote bee intestinal wellbeing, maintain colony health, reduce over winter mortality and boost production.**

Advance Science’s most recent trial on HiveAlive by the Hellenic Institute of Apiculture [accepted for publication by the Journal of Apicultural Research] tracked two groups totaling 40 colonies over two years. The only difference between the two groups was that the test group had HiveAlive added to the sugar syrup, whereas the control group did not have HiveAlive added to their sugar syrup⁶. Very early into the two-year study, the population of the HiveAlive group surpassed the control group. **By the end of the trial, the HiveAlive population was 89% greater than the control. Over-winter mortality was also reduced, 15% of colonies failed in the control group with no losses observed in the HiveAlive group.**

In addition, the levels of *Nosema ceranae* were tracked over the two years. Just under a third of the way into the trial there was an observable difference in *Nosema* levels between the two groups; the control groups had consistently higher *Nosema* levels. However, the HiveAlive group maintained lower levels for the remaining duration of the trial. Both the increase in population and difference in *Nosema* spore levels were statistically significant, $P=0.001$ and $P<0.05$ respectively.

The in-house trial on HiveAlive using 32 colonies further confirmed these findings. On completion of a one-year field trial, the HiveAlive group (when compared to a control) had a 38% increase in brood, a 22% increase in colony population and most importantly showed a 45% increase in honey produced and stored by the colonies.

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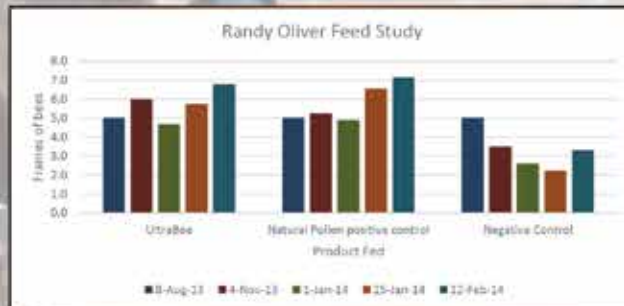
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