

News For South Carolina Beekeepers



June '98

Vol. 9, No. 2

President's Message

As we make plans for our Summer 98 Beekeeping Conference, many of us are still checking bees, making sure we have good queens and surplus honey. It has been a very busy year for most of us. If you asked how the honey flow was this year, the answer would depend which part of the state you had your bees in.

The executive committee recently met in Columbia to plan for the summer conference and select an Extension Agent and a Beekeeper of the year. We still have a number of local associations who did not submit nominees.

The proposed constitution has been approved by the executive committee and David MacFawn, Secretary-Treasurer sent each member a copy for review. This proposed constitution will be voted on at our business meeting on July 17.

We are in the process of developing a South Carolina Membership Directory. It would have your name, address, city, local phone number and local association. Members would be sorted by name and by local association. This directory can be helpful when you need assistance. You will be able to call a beekeeper to discuss your situation. Another use would be at the state fair booth when a person says they are interested in becoming a beekeeper or would like to buy some local honey, they would be directed to a local beekeeper in their area. If you do not want your name and phone number in this directory, tell us when you register for the summer meeting.

David MacFawn our Secretary-Treasurer has resigned his position due to his new work schedule. We have selected as his replacement for the remainder of his term, Katherine Price of the Midstate Beekeepers. She will be

at the registration table helping David at the Summer Meeting.

Another issue that has come up is several request for our mailing list of members. We need to know if you do not want your name released to vendors. Many of these vendors are the ones who supply door prizes at our meetings. We really do appreciate their support of our programs.

Our summer meeting is July 16 - 18, at Clemson. Mike Hood, our State Apiculturist has put together an excellent program. Make plans to attend and lets have a big turn out. Spread the word!

This past Saturday, I learned about the life of a "Pollinator" the hard way. I was moving 14 colonies to a watermelon field and the trailer came loose. Pin jumped out as the farm trailer hit a bump. Fourteen beehives ended up in a pile about four feet high. I remembered teaching with Archie Biering the "emergency response" class. We smoked the bees, they settled down and placed the hives back together and back on the trailer. One super frame and two bottom boards broke. We were lucky. The weather helped us and we did not panic when it happened. Lesson learned: wire the pin.

As we continue our beekeeping task, I wish you success in your beekeeping programs and look forward to seeing you at the Summer 98 meeting.

Ron Taylor
President of South Carolina Beekeepers
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SCBA Summer Meeting

The summer meeting of the South Carolina Beekeepers will be held at Clemson University, Clemson, SC on July 16-18. The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Thursday, 17 July in Newman Hall Auditorium with an intermediate beekeeping short course which is the journeyman level instruction of the South Carolina Master Beekeeper Program. John Ambrose (Extension apiculturist, N.C. State Univ) and Mike Hood will be instructors for this course. All beekeepers are invited to attend these sessions but the instruction will be primarily for experienced beekeepers. A written test will be administered on Saturday, July 18, for beekeepers who wish to become journeyman qualified. All other sessions will be held in the adjacent P&A Building Auditorium.

On Friday, 17 July, we will begin with a general session with several out-of-state speakers including Susan Cobey from the Ohio State Univ, John Ambrose from N.C. State Univ, Sherry Jennings (Asst. Exec. Director, National Honey Board) from Longmont, Colorado, Tom Sanford from the Univ. of Florida, and Reg Wilbanks from Wilbanks Apiaries, Claxton, Georgia.

An afternoon of workshops are planned for Friday including a presentation on "Managing Honey Bees for Pollination". Other workshops include an "Overview of Instrumental Insemination" by Susan Cobey, "Detection and Treatment for Honey Bee Mites" by Tom Sanford, and "Marketing Honey on a Small Scale" by Sherry Jennings. A continuation of the intermediate beekeeping short course will also be held on Friday afternoon.

On Saturday morning, we will have another general session that will include many interesting topics. For more meeting details, see the program that is included with this newsletter.

A chicken barbecue dinner is planned for Friday evening July 17, at Jimmy Howard's home in Pendleton. Activities scheduled are the annual horseshoe pitching tourney and tall tales contest. Dinner including half chicken, cole slaw, beans, chips, bread and tea will be served for \$5/plate.

The Clemson House Residence Hall on campus has rooms for lodging at \$22 per night, single or double occupancy (linen cost \$6 extra). Linen packets include sheets, two towels, washcloth, blanket, and pillow. Room registration will be at the Clemson House front desk. You may make reservations by calling (864) 656-0594 between 8-4:30. The new Madren Continuing Education and Conference Center located on campus will be open for lodging beginning 1 July. Suites begin at \$90 and Executive rooms, king bed, are \$65 including contl. bkfst. For reservations, call toll free 1-888-654-9020.

Other accommodations are available off campus in the Clemson area as follows: Clemson Holiday Inn, \$45.50, (864)-654-4450; Clemson Comfort Inn, \$45, (864)-653-3600, includes

contl. bkfst; Clemson Hampton Inn, \$50, (864)-653-7744, includes contl. bkfst; Clemson Ramada Inn, \$44, (864)-654-7501, includes contl. bkfst; Clemson Days Inn, \$44 for one & \$51 for two, (864) 653-4411, Clemson Sleep Inn, \$49 for one & \$54 for two, (864) 653-6000. Mention that you are attending the South Carolina Beekeepers Convention and would like to get the University rate.

Let's continue to make the South Carolina Beekeepers summer meeting a great success; invite some beekeeping friends to come along for an educational vacation. If you have questions about the meeting, please contact Mike Hood, ph. 864-656-0346 or President Ron Taylor, ph. 843-835-2482.

1998 State Fair

The 1998 South Carolina State Fair is scheduled to be held October 8-18, in Columbia. Our beekeeping exhibit at the Fair provides us a great opportunity to promote our products and the beekeeping industry. Fair visitors have been fascinated by our attractive displays of honey and other apiary products, including the observation hive and other educational items.

Our hats are off to those who participated in the 1997 Fair, especially Jack Morris who served as coordinator of our booth. Cliff Ward has agreed to serve this year as coordinator and will be giving a "State Fair Report" at our summer meeting in Clemson. Beekeepers who worked the booth last year were given the opportunity to sell their honey. I've heard some beekeepers did quite well so come to our summer meeting prepared to sign up to spend a day at the Fair.

Plan now to enter some of your most attractive products and possibly an exhibit in the competition. Honey will be judged on absence of granulation, cleanliness (absence of lint, wax and foam), flavor, color and brightness, and overall appearance of the container. There will be two classes of honey competition, light and dark. Each class will have the following entry categories: 1 lb. jar extracted, pint jar extracted, pint jar with comb, quart jar extracted, quart jar with comb, 2 lb jar extracted and 1 lb jar with comb. There will be a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winner for each category with a monetary prize of \$10, \$8 and \$6 awarded respectively. Other categories include 1 lb beeswax.

A "Best Beekeeping Display" offers the largest monetary prizes (\$75, \$50, and \$25). Displays are judged on educational value, advertizing value, attractive arrangement, originality and variety, appearance, and quality of products.

For more details of our South Carolina State Fair booth, call Cliff Ward in Columbia at (803) 794-5633.

1998 South Carolina Beekeepers Summer Meeting

Clemson University

July 16-18, 1998

Thursday, July 16, 1998

- 12:00 N Room Registration - Clemson House
Meeting Registration - P&A Bldg Lobby - \$3 Members, \$5 Family, \$8 Nonmembers
Exhibitor Setup - P&A Bldg Lobby
- 1:00 PM Intermediate Beekeeping Shortcourse
- 5:00 Dinner on your own
- 6:30 Intermediate Beekeeping Shortcourse (Continued)
- 8:30 Adjourn - SCBA Executive Committee Meeting

Friday, July 17, 1998

- 8:00 AM Invocation
Welcome to Clemson University - Bill Wehrenberg, Dean, College of Agriculture,
Forestry & Life Sciences, Clemson University
- 8:10 Announcements and Introductions - Mike Hood, Extension Apiculturist, CU
Executive Secretary, SCBA
- 8:20 President's Address - Ron Taylor, SCBA, Cottageville
- 8:35 Legislative Update - TBA
- 8:50 News from the American Beekeeping Federation - Reg Wilbanks, Past President,
ABF, Claxton, GA.
- 9:00 Ten Ways to Promote Beekeeping - Sherry S. Jennings - Assistant Executive
Director, National Honey Board, Longmont, Colorado
- 9:30 SCBA Business Meeting - Ron Taylor, President - SCBA
- 9:55 Break - Visit Exhibitors
- 10:20 Door Prizes
- 10:25 Latest News on Honey Bee Mite Control - Tom Sanford, Univ. of Florida
- 10:55 Queen Rearing - Susan Cobey, Research Apiculturist, Ohio State University
- 11:25 Purple Brood: A Plant Induced Disease of Honey Bees - John Ambrose,
Extension/Research Apiculturist, N.C. State University, Raleigh, N.C.

- 11:55 Lunch on your own
- 1:15 Announcements, Door Prizes and Workshop Introduction
- 1:30 Concurrent Workshops (All sessions begin on the half hour)
1. Overview of Instrumental Insemination - Susan Cobey
 2. Managing Honey Bees for Pollination - TBA
 3. Detection and Treatment for Honey Bee Mites - Tom Sanford
 4. Marketing Honey on a Small Scale - Sherry Jennings
 5. Continuation of the Intermediate Beekeeping Short Course - John Ambrose
- 4:30 Depart for Evening Activities
- Horseshoe Pitching Tourney
 - Chicken Barbecue Supper
 - Tall Tales Contest

Saturday, July 18, 1998

- 8:30 AM . . . Announcements
- 8:35 When Should You Treat for Varroa Mites ? - Mike Hood
- 9:00 Some Issues Related to Queen Problems - Tom Sanford
- 9:30 Queen Breeding & Selection Methods - Susan Cobey
- 10:00 Break - Visit Exhibitors
- 10:20 Door Prizes
- 10:30 New World Carniolan Program - Susan Cobey
- 11:00 District Reports
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Savannah River Valley | 4. Sandhills |
| 2. Charleston | 5. Piedmont |
| 3. Pee Dee | 6. Mountain |
- 11:30 Written Test for the Journeyman Level (SC Master Beekeeper Program)
- 12:00 End - Have a Safe Trip Home !
- SCBA Executive Committee Meeting

SPOUSE/FAMILY PROGRAM

Friday, July 17, 1998

- 8:30 AM Meet at P & A Bldg Lobby
- 8:35 Depart P&A Building for a "Tour of the Old Town of Pendleton"
- 11:30 Return to P&A Building

Varroa Bee Mite, Now Resistant to Miticide, Again Threatens Honey bees

Gainesville— Beekeepers in Florida are facing their once and future nemesis, the Varroa bee mite, but this time they are doing it without a weapon, say University of Florida and state honey bee specialists.

When the mite first threatened honey bees 10 years ago upon its arrival on U.S. shores, beekeepers could turn to a miticide formulated in a plastic strip called Apistan. They placed the strip in the hives and as bees brushed against it they received protection from the mite.

Recently, however, beekeepers noticed the treatment was failing. Bee specialists investigated and found several colonies in which the mites have developed resistance to the miticide, and honey bees are beginning to die by the millions. Worse, there are no other approved miticides in beekeepers' arsenal.

"By late spring, we could see an awful lot of bees die," said Laurence Cutts, the state's top bee inspector with the Florida Division of Plant Industry. "We're in considerable trouble."

As bees die, honey production could be hurt. In the U.S., honey bees yield about 220 million pounds of honey a year, and Florida ranks in the top five annually in honey production, said Malcolm Sanford, the bee specialist at UF's Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences.

But the potential devastation doesn't stop there.

Honey bees are also master pollinators, and many fruit, vegetable and horticultural crops depend on their assistance for pollination and fruit and seed set. And those crops are not limited to Florida. The state's bees are shipped up and down the Eastern Seaboard, into the Midwest, and sometimes as far as California to pollinate crops.

The spread of the Varroa bee mite worldwide is the most significant event affecting beekeeping in the last century, Sanford said. As the mite hopscotched from continent to continent, Sanford said, beekeepers tried more than 140 different chemical treatments to fight it with little success.

Apistan's arrival on the market in 1988 gave hope to beekeepers — many had lost up to 90% of their bees to

the mite — but the now-resistant mites appears poised to wreak havoc again.

Cutts said 10,000 colonies already have been lost to the Varroa bee mite in recent weeks. While that does not seem like much out of the state's 240,000 colonies, without a weapon to fight the mite the losses will continue unabated.

"We are desperately seeking a new product to use against the Varroa bee mite, but we are hitting roadblocks in every direction," Cutts said, "If we could get one new product we could be back in high cotton. Without it, this problem will accelerate and will have a very serious impact on the bee industry and on agricultural production."

The Varroa bee mite became resistant to fluralinate, the active ingredient in Apistan, in eight years of use in Europe. U.S. beekeepers have gotten an extra two years out of the miticide, but they cannot turn to the products European beekeepers use because they are not allowed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. While Apistan still works for some, most beekeepers dread its inevitable loss.

Many beekeepers have resorted to natural, botanical remedies in fighting the mite but with limited short-term success and no idea how the remedies will help in the long run.

"Nobody really knows how these alternative methods work," Sanford said. "Treating for mites, hidden within the confines of one of nature's most complex insect societies, is no easy task."

Ray Zerba, a UF extension agent who started a honey bee education program with bee inspector Tom Mozer, said beekeeping education could help disseminate any new methods that come about for controlling mites while bolstering the declining ranks of beekeepers.

Even hobbyists are important: of the 212,000 beekeepers nationwide, only 10,000 are professionals, according to Sanford's top-rated Web site, APIS, name after the honey bee, *Apis mellifera*.

But Mozer says he has mixed sentiments about beekeeping education, despite recent increased interest.

"The mite wreaked havoc when it arrived 10 years ago. It was a new phenomenon in North America. Now it's back with a vengeance," Mozer said. "So at

the same time we're encouraging people to take up beekeeping, we have to warn them of the problems that may lie ahead."

Sanford said it is unclear what the scope of the looming crisis might be. The earlier battle with the mite forced many marginal beekeepers out of business, he said. The effect of the latest skirmish with the mite, however, could be more severe.

"The era of let-along beekeeping is gone. The mite's presence demands even the most casual apiculturist actively manage the honey bee to its fullest potential," Sanford said. "Bees used to take care of themselves. Now beekeepers have to take care of the bees."

Source: UF/IFAS Educational Media & Service
News Release 3/11/98

(Editors Note: No Varroa mite resistance to Apistan has been reported in South Carolina.)

The Buzz on Russian Bees: They're Research Ready

Outdoor testing has begun to see if Russian honey bees can resist varroa and tracheal mites. If they do prove resistant, scientists could arrange to distribute hybrids — offspring of Russian queens and American drones — to beekeepers. Breeding new colonies of resistant bees might help put the mites, which are among the worst pests of bees, out of business. In February, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service gave the mild-mannered Russian bees an "all clear" for release from quarantine. ARS had determined that they harbored no foreign pests or diseases. Since their importation last July, they've been kept at Grand Terre Island near the mouth of the Mississippi River. The scientists' outdoor tests will also measure the Russian bees' honey production and other valuable traits. The bees evolved in a mite-infested region in far eastern Russia. Because of pressure from mites over time, natural selection may have favored the most resistant bees. If so, resistant bees would be an environmentally friendly alternative to insecticides. Domestic honey bees are crucial for crop pollination, as well as honey production. *Tom Rinderer, USDA-ARS Honey bee Breeding, Genetics, and Physiology Laboratory, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; phone (504)767-9280, e-mail rdanka@asrr.arsusda.gov*

Source: Agricultural Research/May 1998

El Nino May Have Pushed Killer Bees into Nevada

The killer bees have made it to Nevada, and El Nino may be to blame.

Africanized killer bees migrating northward from South America since the 1950's have been found in Nevada, their farthest point northward.

Two swarms were discovered near Laughlin in the state's extreme southern tip, state Agriculture Commission official Paul Iverson said Tuesday.

The latest northward spotting may be a result of wetter, cooler weather linked to El Nino, which has increased the growth of nectar and pollen-producing plants, Iverson said.

The bees, descendants of aggressive bees from Africa that escaped from breeding experiments in Brazil in 1956, tend to attack in swarms.

Africanized bee swarms have been blamed for the deaths of more than 1,000 people since 1956. In this country, six people in Texas and Arizona have died from mass attacks by as many as 300 bees.

Source: Associated Press via The Speedy Bee April 1998.

Off-Spec High Fructose Corn Syrup

Manitoba (Canada) beekeepers experienced severe colony losses last fall when they used off-spec high fructose corn syrup as feed. Dr. Rob Currie, University of Manitoba entomologist, advises beekeepers to avoid off-spec loads of syrup. Syrup can be off-spec for many reasons. In some cases, off-spec syrup may be acceptable as bee feed; however, other off-spec syrups can result in colony decline or death. Dr. Currie advises a simple test that beekeepers can perform to protect themselves from feeding lots of syrup that are harmful to bees. It is a simple pH or acidity test with a soil testing kit available for about \$3.00. If the pH is 3-4 do not use the syrup. If the pH is 5-6 the syrup is borderline. If the pH is 7-8 the syrup should be acceptable.

High fructose corn syrup is prepared by a series of enzyme processes, each of which requires a specific pH. In processing, acids and bases are added to regulate the pH during each step. If too much acid is added, acid hydrolysis occurs which results in the formation of compounds that are harmful and indigestible to bees. Honey bees have a limited number of digestive enzymes. While they can process nectar and pollen, many other starch and protein sources are indigestible to them. Beekeepers should

always exercise caution in considering alternate food sources to feed their bees.

— Dr. Marion Ellis, University of Nebraska

Source: via Georgia Bee Letter

“Mad bee” disease probed in France

PARIS, April 9 (UPI) — The French government today moved to combat an outbreak of what’s being called “mad bee” disease, which the scientific community says is killing millions of honey bees in western France.

With half the money coming from the European Union, the French ministries of agriculture and environment said today a total \$1 million would be spent to find out why honey bees are dying.

A high bee kill was first reported last summer by beekeepers who said increasing numbers of bees became disorientated and failed to return to their hives after gathering pollen and nectar from sunflowers. Beekeepers in the region call the malady “mad bee” disease and blame it on a widely used insecticide that the beekeepers say is destroying the insects’ sense of direction.

They report the phenomenon has drastically affected the region’s bee population and dramatically reduced production of area’s famed honey by 60 percent.

That’s more than a third of France’s total output.

At issue is what the Ministry of Environment reports may be the insecticide, Gaucho, produced by the German Agrochemical Company Bayer SA. It is used to protect sunflowers from parasites.

Ministry spokesman Andre Lesireux said this morning, “the research will tell us why the bees turn crazy and die.” The beekeepers say only those insects collecting nectar from sunflowers appear to be affected. The Bayer group has agreed to contribute 5 percent of the total cost of research.

Franck Allaitru of the FDSEA agriculture union said in Paris today “A poisoning problem from insecticide is the only explanation for the behavior of the bees and their systematic disappearance during the first week that the sunflowers bloom.”

The French Green Party has demanded the product be removed entirely from the market. Gaucho first went on sale in 1994. The producer says Gaucho is based on imidaclopride, a chemical which acts on the nervous systems of a wide variety of pests, including wireworm and aphids. Bayer SA defends the product as the most widely used sunflower insecticide in France and insists “the accusations have no scientific foundation.” Bayer SA French marketing director Bruno Feldrops says imidaclopride has been used in more than 70 countries and was subjected to rigorous testing.

Source: Tara Bee Association Newsletter
April 98.

Calendar of Events

- July 16-18, 1998 S.C. Beekeepers Summer Meeting -
Clemson, SC.
Aug. 6-8, 1998 N.C. State Beekeepers Summer Meeting-
Raleigh, N.C.

SOUTH CAROLINA BEEKEEPERS OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Respectfully submitted,



William Michael Hood
Extension Apiculturist

Cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics state of South Carolina,
Clemson University, the United States Department of Agriculture and South Carolina counties cooperating.

The Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages regardless
of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or disability and is an equal opportunity employer.