

Red River Apiarists' Association

# Bee Cause



Volume 2, Issue 8

November 2000



*The last issue of 2000  
Christmas isn't far off*

## Meeting Location

**River Heights Community Center**

**1370 Grosvenor St.  
(intersection of Oak & Grosvenor)**

## Meeting Date

**November 14th**

7:30 PM in the upstairs meeting room

Guest speaker(s):

unknown at press time

Topic(s):

Brief Bee Videos, and Spousal Appreciation  
Evening

Guests are always welcome and coffee will be  
served as usual, byob&b's :)

RRAA Website URL:

<http://www.granite.mb.ca/~rwayne/RRAA.html>

The *Bee Cause* newsletter is published by the *Red River Apiarists' Association* eight times per year (monthly excluding June, July, August and December).

Membership in the *Red River Apiarists' Association* is \$20.00 per year and includes a subscription to the *Bee Cause*.

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## ***President's Comments***

What a GREAT Honey Show at St. Vital Shopping Centre the weekend of 27 October! My THANKS goes out to Ted Rebenchuk, year 2000 Honey Show Chair. The display was very impressive.

While attending the show, I counted the number of people visiting the Observation Hive. It seems that there was an average of 6 new people every minute from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. What a great testimony to the helpfulness of those people providing information to the public. The "Live Bees" continues to be an attractive feature of our public awareness program. Many young children were excited to hear the "Buzz" from the bees, as they placed their ear close to one of the air holes of the display.

Several youth had very good questions about the life and products derived from our little friends. Many were surprised to learn that bees have three tongues, for collecting water and nectar. Several were also disappointed to learn that the Queen was not in the hive. This confirmed that many are aware of some elements of our industry.

Talking with people also provided an opportunity to explain the difference between Bees and Wasps. With the hive adjacent to the honey display, we were also able to explain the different colours of honey. Several adults viewed us with skepticism as they believed we added colour to the honey, rather than the colour coming from the floral source. Hard to imagine where some ideas come from! Another interesting observation was the instant fear that was transmitted from a mother unto the children. After some

coaxing however, children learned for themselves that a buzzing sound does not necessarily mean we should be afraid.

The colourful backdrop to the judging display certainly added to the attractiveness of our promotion. This was enhanced by the inclusion of the MBA display shelf as well.

Now that this promotion is behind us, lets focus on our next celebration. During the November meeting, we will have a "Spousal Appreciation Night". Lets meet for a short video, some coffee, and some cake. Also, In November we will be establishing a nominating committee for the 2001 elections. If you have a desire to help out with the organization, let me know, and we will work at a plan to get you more involved.

See you at our November 14th meeting!!!

Jim Campbell

## ***Editor's Note***

Well this is the last issue of 2000.

I've added a few articles from other beekeeping publications to touch base on some of the topics discussed at some of the earlier meetings.

Hope this newsletter finds its way to you a little earlier than the last one did, but I can honestly say the delays this month weren't of my making :)

Hope you all have a excellent Christmas and safe holiday season, see you in 2001 !

Later Ron

**Red River Apiarists' Association**  
***Minutes of the Regular Meeting***  
**October 10, 2000**

The regular meeting of the Red River Apiarists' Association was held at the River Heights Community Club on October 10, 2000.

**Ron Rudiak called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM** with seventeen members present.

**The minutes of the Sept. 19 executive meeting were read and approved.**

**Committee Reports:**

**Honey Show:** Ted Rebenchuk asked the members of the RRAA to suggest a colour scheme for the backdrop to be used to highlight the show honey display. Members suggested that the signage for the events should be black on a white background.

Rhéal Lafrenière said that the MBA display had to be brought in from Elgin MB for the honey show.

Dennis Ross conformed that the prize ribbons had been ordered and would be available in time for the honey show.

**Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM Carried**

Ted Scheuneman and Ron Rudiak gave a presentation on preparation of honey for the honey show. Ted also described in detail his specialized bottom board which incorporates a screen, entrance reducer, bottom leakproof tray and a layer of Styrofoam insulation on the bottom. These bottom boards which are dipped in a wax and rosin mixture and never need painting. They are designed to last a lifetime.

Ron Rudiak (Secretary - RRAA)

**2000 Honey Show Competition Winners**  
St. Vital Shopping Centre  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
October 27-29, 2000

**Liquid White Honey:**

1. Ted Scheuneman, Winnipeg
2. Jim Campbell, Stonewall
3. Charles Polcyn, Winnipeg

**Buckwheat Honey:**

1. Ron Rudiak, Steinbach
2. Ted Scheuneman, Winnipeg
3. Lorne Peters, Kleefield

**Open Basic Honey:**

1. Ted Scheuneman, Winnipeg
2. Charles Polcyn, Winnipeg
3. Ray Hourd, Anola

**Chunk Honey:**

1. Charles Polcyn, Winnipeg
- 2.

**Baking with Honey - Cakes:**

1. Nettie Goertzen, Winnipeg
2. Lorna Miner, Winnipeg
3. Margaret Younka, Winnipeg

**Baking with Honey - Pies:**

1. Krystle Ross, Vermette
2. Lorna Miner, Winnipeg
3. Shirley Perron, Winnipeg

**Baking - Quick/Yeast Bread:**

1. Shirley Perron, Winnipeg
2. Margaret Kunz, Winnipeg
3. Diane Miner, Winnipeg
3. Margaret Younka, Winnipeg

**Baking - Bread:** 1. Nettie Goertzen, Winnipeg

**Sunflower Honey:**

1. Ted Scheuneman, Winnipeg
2. Charles Polcyn, Winnipeg
3. Brian Shewfelt, Balmoral

**Creamed Honey:**

1. Ted Scheuneman, Winnipeg
2. Ray Hourd, Anola
3. Brian Shewfelt, Balmoral

**Frame of Honey:**

1. Dennis Ross, Vermette
2. Ron Rudiak, Steinbach

**Comb Honey:**

1. Charles Polcyn, Winnipeg
2. Phil Veldhuis, Winnipeg

**Baking with Honey - Cookies:**

1. Shirley Perron, Winnipeg
1. Donna Hourd, Anola
2. Lorna Miner, Winnipeg
3. Diane Miner, Winnipeg

**Baking with Honey - Muffins:**

1. Margaret Kunz, Winnipeg
2. Donna Hourd, Anola
3. Diane Miner, Winnipeg

**Baking - Dainties + Squares:**

1. Krystle Ross, Vermette
2. Diane Miner, Winnipeg
3. Krystle Ross, Vermette

## ***Honey Show a Success***

The Manitoba Honey Show, held recently at the St. Vital Shopping Centre, Winnipeg, has once again proven to be a great attraction for consumers.

The shopping centre was a hub of activity from 27 October to 29 October, 2000. The Honey Judging competition saw several new entrants. It's good to see others striving for the first place ribbons. This verified that the competition is open to large and small honey producers. This year's show was held later than usual, to give ample time to prepare samples after the bees were prepared for winter. The honey portion attracted 29 entries, while the Baking competition on Saturday displayed 27 enticing entries.

Thanks to Don Dixon and Rheel Lafreniere for examining the honey late Thursday night. Jars were transported to St. Vital, and placed on the shelving provided by Murray Porter. The new signage, by Ted Rebenchuk, for this area proved to be quite attractive. Dennis Ross and Jim Campbell arranged the colourful winners ribbons on the entries. The Manitoba Beekeepers Association Display unit was configured adjacent to the judged honey. This unit also makes an eye appealing display, with the large Sunflowers and Bear, being visible from afar. Dennis Ross also provided several unpainted, new, supers to give a natural look to the corners of the display area.

Thanks to Rob Currie for the use of the Observation Hive with the U of M bees. Jim Campbell estimated that between 4000 and 6000 people visited the hive.

They learned that the "Buzz" isn't as bad as it seems! Thanks to Ted Rebenchuk, Dennis Ross, Jim Campbell, Brian Shewfelt and Ted Scheuneman for providing informative "mini talks" to everyone passing our way. This still proves to be a crowd pleaser for both young and not so young. Charles also provided a bee suit, and a small extractor with frames. Another item for industry interaction. This area is separated from the sales portion to help customers keep a good perspective on things.

Our three vendors, Rudiak, Polcyn, and Hourd were kept fairly busy giving out honey related samples, and serving customers. Jim Campbell is recommending that next year we will provide a shelf for each sales table so that product can be elevated for easier viewing by the customers. We originally planned to use supers, however found they would be too high. The shelf will likely be about 12" above the table.

Judy Fowler, former promotions representative of MBA, joined Barb and Shirley Rudiak, to do the Baking tasting. Thanks for making this look so easy! The Carrot Cake, and Pecan Pie sure tasted great! Next year we need to publish the baking standards.

Although there are things to do differently, I am thankful to the many who made this year's show such a great success. This truly is a job of which we can be proud!

Ted Rebenchuk, 2000 Honey Show Chair.

# BEE COLONY EQUILIBRIUM

Reprinted from the Capital Region Beekeepers' Association newsletter, *Bee Line*

The question is always asked, are you a smart beekeeper or are you a hard working beekeeper? Here are a few thoughts to ponder and you can then rate yourself. The bee colony structure is primarily dependent upon space, that is, space for the queen to lay eggs. [On average 1,500 per day, with records of 3,000 per day] and worker bee population. [The optimum number of workers is 80,000]. These numbers will give adequate numbers of foragers and nurse bees to keep an ongoing cycle of replacement bees. Secondary factors, over which we have very little control are climate and its effect upon forage availability and flying conditions.

Taking these factors into consideration, especially hive size and its resultant space, we must look very carefully at our equipment and its usage. Frames, full plastic 80 X 33 = 2,640 cells per side. Total cells available for egg laying is 2,640 X 20 = 52,800. Wood and plastic foundation is 80 X 28 = 2,240 X 20 = 44,800. A difference of 8,000 cells. How many cells will the average good queen need for her egg laying cycles? 1,500 X 21 days for a worker to emerge = 31,500 cells. From this calculation one can see that we have a surplus cell space of 21,000 cells or 14 days of egg laying.

**\*\*REMEMBER WHEN ALL OF THE SPACE IS OCCUPIED YOUR PROBLEMS BEGIN\*\***

For best results, taking all the above factors into consideration, the following proved to be the best:

A. Two Dadant brood chambers.

B. Two Dadant honey supers, which are removed immediately they are 90% capped. That is when the lower honey super is capped, it is removed and the top honey super takes its place. An empty wet super is now placed in the top position. On this basis one honey super can be robbed each week provided there is good foraging and good weather.

Benefits:

Less equipment needed and storage space required.

Less swarming and more docile bees [Working bees are good bees - protecting bees are nasty bees].

Less weight lifted, quicker extraction times due to warm honey, and wet comb benefit to the recipient colony. Production outstrips the multi-storey colony and early access to the market with a variety of flavours is rewarded with good demand and prices.

You be the judge, but whichever way you go, enjoy your beekeeping, it is fantastic therapy.

Evaluation of Mesh Bottom Boards for the Management of Varroa Mites  
Published in Hivelights, Vol 12 # 2, May 1999  
Kerry Clark,  
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food  
Dawson Creek, B.C.

#### Background

Mesh bottom boards for bee hives use instead of a solid wood surface, a mesh that allows fallen varroa mites to pass through the board and out of the hive. The supposed increased loss of varroa may increase the effectiveness of any miticide, or might give adequate reduction of varroa without added chemicals, if the bees were good enough at removing the mites from themselves.

In varroa-infested bee hives, some of the mites fall or are groomed off their adult bee host, to the bottom of the hive. During chemical treatments against varroa, sometimes half of the mites which fall are able to survive for hours to days, and return to infest a bee if one comes close enough (Wilson, personal communication). Beekeepers in France have reported stable low varroa levels and survival without varroa treatment, of a few colonies equipped with bottom boards which allow fallen mites to drop out of the hive. Calderone (personal communication) found that 25 to 60 % of varroa in untreated colonies were caught by sticky boards over a four week period, suggesting mesh bottoms might add a similar percentage reduction to chemical treatments. He kept sticky boards in colonies throughout the summer, and found 40 % fewer varroa in such hives in one apiary, but no difference in varroa infestation in hives with or without the boards, in another apiary. Researchers in Switzerland and Germany who have worked with many hives equipped with mesh bottoms for monitoring, also report the boards make little to no difference to a varroa population (Imdorf, personal communication).

If such boards are effective, the bee industry could expect a reduction or possible elimination of miticide usage. Even if the boards are only partly effective, their use could make some "less effective but otherwise attractive" methods available, providing more options, enabling a better match between methods and users, and reducing the opportunity for mites to develop resistance to one predominant chemical miticide. With a reduction in miticide use, a reduction in the risk of hive product contamination from miticides could also be expected.

The goal of this study is to measure the amount of improvement to current Canadian varroa treatment methods, to be expected from the addition of mesh bottom boards.

#### Study design:

##### Board design:

Several mesh bottom designs were considered, including some used in Europe. The design chosen for the study uses 2x4 inch boards on edge for the sides, and 2x2 boards for the front and back. It has a 3/4 inch high entrance similar to a regular bottom board, but with 8 mesh per inch galvanized mesh for the whole bottom. Two inches under the mesh is a metal sheet that can slide forward or back and can limit air flow through the mesh. Debris including varroa can be seen on the metal sheet or on any other sheet (such as paper) placed on it.

#### Treatments

The study plan was to select four treatment groups of colonies for spring treatment with conventional treatments (formic acid or Apistan) and measure any difference in efficacy between those with and without mesh bottoms. The warm, early spring of 1998 resulted in an unexpected, intense work load for the beekeeper in the Fraser Valley who had planned to do this work, and the study was postponed. In the fall, the plan was carried out in the Dawson Creek area, on colonies to be wintered indoors. One hundred hives were sampled to get a baseline varroa population, by washing varroa mites from a sample of about 300 bees taken from a brood comb. Bees and mites were counted and a percentage infestation calculated for each colony. Thirty five colonies with a similar range of infestations were assigned to the following treatment groups:

1. formic acid. 250 ml in a prolonged-release bag on the top bars
2. as # 1 except hives were equipped with mesh bottom boards

*(Continued on page 9)*

*(Continued from page 8)*

3. No treatment

4. as # 3 except hives were equipped with mesh bottom boards

5. Apistan strips.

The average infestation of the treatment groups ranged from 3 to 6 % (3 to 6 varroa from each 100 bees). Freezing weather began only a few days after treatments were applied in September, and based on the rate of formic acid evaporation, it is expected that those treatments may be less than adequate. In the spring of 1999, Apistan strips will be installed in all the colonies, and the first day's drop of mites will be counted to assess the efficacy of each treatment.

The experiment will be repeated in southern B.C. in the spring of 1999.

[Editors note: Kerry was reassigned by BCMAF and this project was terminated in spring 1999]

#### Acknowledgments

I appreciate the support of the Canadian Bee Research Fund, the Garfield Weston Foundation, and the cooperation of Van-Han Apiaries, Farmington, and Dr. Don Nelson and Paul Gatién, Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada, Beaverlodge.

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## WHAT TO DO ABOUT BEE STINGS BEE STING ALLERGIES

Re print from HiveLites

People react in different ways to bee stings. For some, a sting may only cause small, raised, itchy welts; for a few, a mild systemic reaction; but in a small number, a life threatening reaction could result. A person can be dangerously allergic to a single sting, while others only experience problems with the toxic effects of a large number of stings. Immunity enjoyed by some beekeepers is not necessarily permanent!

Basically, the common, local reaction is something you can deal with yourself. But in the case of the large local and generalized reaction, medical attention is required- usually immediately.

### REACTION TYPES

Local reactions are normal reactions- a sting in the finger will cause transient pain, redness and swelling at the sting site. Remove the stinger by scraping it quickly. Do not pull it out the stinger is barbed and more venom will be squeezed out. To ease the pain run cold water on the site or apply a compress of baking soda, slightly moistened with water.

Large local reactions are much more extensive; a sting in the finger may produce swelling in the wrist or entire forearm. Treat with an ice compress and in time the swelling will be reduced. In some cases antihistamines may be recommended by your doctor for large local reactions. If you have a large local reaction, caution is necessary as many people develop systemic or generalized reactions with future stings.

General reactions are those in which symptoms occur at sites remote from the sting site; being stung will cause hives, stomach cramps, wheezing or difficulty in breathing. The general reaction is the most life-threatening type of reaction.

### GENERAL REACTION

#### DANGER SIGNS

Seek immediate help if you experience any of the following symptoms

Generalized itching, hives, swelling

*(Continued on page 10)*

Feeling of constriction in the chest, wheezing  
Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea  
Thickened speech, confusion, collapse or unconsciousness

#### PRECAUTIONS

At any sign of these symptoms after a sting go directly to a doctor or hospital!

People who are allergic (experience severe reactions) should carry an emergency kit (eg. epinephrine containing kit such as EPI-PEN or ANAKIT) and learn ahead of time how to self administer the epinephrine. School aged children should also have a kit at school and the teacher should know how to use it. The kit should always be readily available; therefore carry it with you! Exposure to ambient temperatures and the sunlight will hasten the deterioration of epinephrine, so periodically check the colour; the kit should be replaced when the solution acquires a pinkish brown tint. Remember, the kit must be on hand to be useful- carry it with you.

Sting sensitive persons should also consider wearing a Medic-Alert identification. For further information contact your doctor.

#### LONG TERM MANAGEMENT OF BEE STING ALLERGIES

The best solution is to avoid future stings. This is not always a suitable alternative, especially for a beekeeper! At least wear proper protective clothing and never work alone. Desensitization, or immunotherapy, is another possibility for many people. Venom immunotherapy will greatly reduce the risk of a severe reaction. There are many unknown factors in these treatments and in their results. Once treatment is completed there is no guarantee of a person's immunity to future stings. The only sure way to test one's sensitivity is to be stung again under carefully controlled conditions in the presence of a doctor who is adequately equipped to deal with a reaction.

As a beekeeper or family member of a beekeeper, you should learn the symptoms of a general reaction, learn how to respond to a severe allergic reaction, have the medicines on hand and know how to use them.

Prepared by the Allergy Committee, Canadian Honey Council.

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#### ***For Sale:***

4 frame manual extractor; 40 standard supers with built out combs; 2 smokers; hive covers, bottom boards and excluders.

Phone Anne Iweczyk at (204)669-1502