

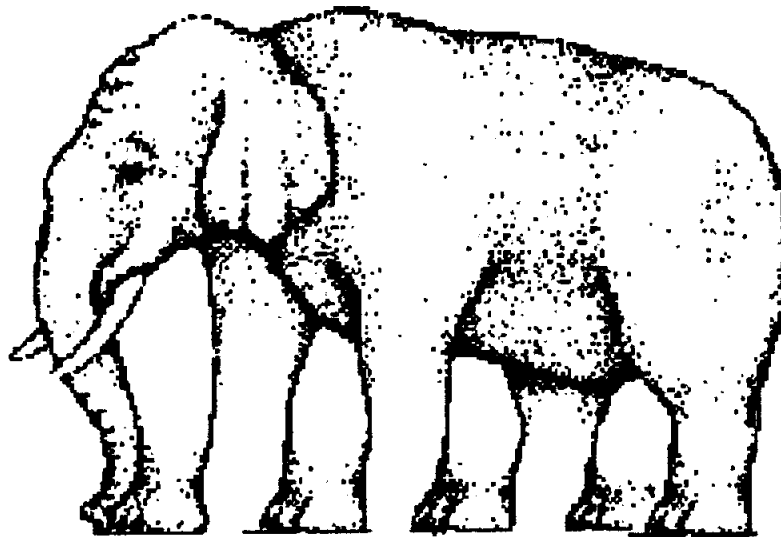
Red River Apiarists' Association

Bee Cause



Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2001



*Sometimes our senses can fool us?
By the way how many legs does this
Elephant really have ?*

Meeting Location

River Heights Community Center

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

Meeting Date

January 9th

7:30 PM in the upstairs meeting room

Guest speaker(s):

unknown at press time

Topic(s):

Early Spring Management

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 Message

What a cold time for our Bees! During December, the temperature reached the minus 30 degrees for quite a few days. Weren't you glad to be indoors? Hopefully we will get some nicer weather as the new year starts.

It will be great to begin the year 2001 with our Annual Meeting on the 9th. Looking forward to getting together again as we begin the Thirty Eighth year for RRAA. Quite a few changes from those early beginnings. During the mid 80's we had over 240 members. We are holding our own at about 50 for the past few years. We still have an active group, with lots of ideas and questions to make the meeting interesting.

Our Annual Meeting will begin with a few formalities, then we'll hear from the Nominating Committee, headed by Rheal. Although by the time you read this article, it may be too late to add your name to the list, I would encourage you to think about helping out anyway. If you would like to be on the executive of our organization, give Rheal a call at 945-4825.

Keep in mind that The Manitoba Beekeepers Association will be holding it's Convention in Winnipeg this year. Usually it's bitterly cold for these days as well. In any event, some great speakers are being lined up, so mark your calendar for February 8 & 9, 2001. This will be different as usually we have the convention at the beginning of the week and our RRAA meeting can be co-ordinated with the sessions. This year Saskatchewan's meeting is the weekend before ours.

See you at our A.G.M.

Jim Campbell

Nominating Committee ready to report

Rheal Lafreniere, chair of the Nominating Committee is charged with the responsibility of delivering a slate of officers for approval at the RRAA Annual Meeting on January 9th.

Rheal is working with Ron Rudiak, Jim Campbell and Herb Schon to contact those people who have served the club previously, or have shown interest in helping out. If you have an interest in helping RRAA during 2001, please call Rheal at 945-4825, and let him know of your interest. We were slightly understaffed last year, and would like some new ideas to keep up the interest of our members. What about you????

Editor's Note

Happy New Year everyone! 2001, whatever became of the space odyssey? Oh well, Jupiter will just have to wait I guess.

Wow has it been COLD lately. I think we've been spoiled by the few last winters, they didn't seem to get this cold. Either that or my senses are starting to fool me in that department too. :)

I keep my bees indoors for the winter months. It seemed like such a waste of time for the last 2 years, putting the hives in the chamber, taking the hives out of the chamber with the moderate temperatures that were outdoors. But this year me thinks it was time well spent eh.

I think the folks who winter their colonies outdoors are going to have to start checking the feed levels soon. They have to be burning up a lot of feed to keep themselves from freezing to death. I can tell just from how fast my wood pile is going down to keep me and my butt from freezing to death eh. :)

Later, remember summer will come again eh :)

Ron Wayne

Red River Apiarists' Association

Minutes of the Regular Meeting - November 14, 2000

The regular meeting of the Red River Apiarists' Association was held at the River Heights Community Club on November 14, 2000.

Jim Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with fifteen members and guests present.

Minutes of the Oct. 10 meeting were approved.

Motion by Emil Rekrut, sec. by Doug Henry that we donate \$500 in 2001 and 2002 (for a total of \$1000) to assist Rob Currie in honey bee research projects. Carried

Committee Reports:

Newsletter:

Ron Wayne would like to have the January Newsletter printed before the Xmas. holiday season.

Honey Show:

Jim Campbell discussed the changes in the Manitoba Beekeepers' Honey Show layout and displays at the St. Vital shopping Centre for 2000. Pictures taken at the Honey Show were on display at the rear of the meeting room.

Ted Rebenchuk reported on the successful honey show. The show attracted many shoppers and passers-by with improved displays and signage. Ted extended thanks to all who were able to attend the honey show to help with the displays or entered honey or wax for judging and also RRAA members for their suggestions. The vendors reported that honey sales were considerably better than sales at the Honey Show at Kildonan Place Shopping Centre two weeks previous

MBA Report:

Jim Campbell reported that the annual meeting will be held at the Viscount Gort Motor Inn in Winnipeg on November 27. The registration fee of \$12.00 includes lunch. The meeting starts at 10:00 AM. The MBA Convention will be held in Winnipeg on Feb. 8 - 9, 2001.

Financial Report:

Dennis Ross said that our bank balance is substantially the same as in October. All of the bills and receipts for the Honey Shows were not in yet but should be available for next meeting in January.

Nominating Committee:

The nominating committee is Rhéal Lafrenière (Chair), Jim Campbell, Herb Schon and Ron Rudiak. Election will be on January 9th.

Honey Crop Report:

Rhéal Lafrenière reported that some areas of Manitoba had lower than average honey production this year. Yields in the Southwest were down about 50% with the Southeast corner of Manitoba being similar. In both the west and north areas honey production was close to normal. The rains early in July contributed to a good quality buckwheat honey crop with a good yield.

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Motion by Chris Argiriou, sec. by Dennis Ross that the RRAA set the table rental fee at \$25.00/table for the vendors who participated in the Honey Show at the Kildonan Place Shopping Centre.

Carried

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM Carried

Two videos were presented on honey bees.

Ron Rudiak (Secretary - RRAA)

This article has been supplied by Tom Theobald, a commercial beekeeper from Colorado. It is intended as a call to action by beekeepers for a problem with pesticides, the EPA and what has been labeled as blatant pesticide abuse and violation of the law. Bee Culture urges you to visit the EPA site and comment on the proposed rules. But more importantly, by contacting your congressperson, you will call more pressure on EPA to change what is perceived as a serious and inflexible attitude toward pesticides and honey bees.

The EPA, Pesticides and Beekeepers.

An Editorial and call to Arms.

By Tom Theobald

In an apparently inadvertent irony of timing, the Environmental Protection Agency announced in the Federal Register its intention to seek public comment on a draft Pesticide Registration (PR) notice entitled "Guidance for Pesticide Registrants on Bee Precautionary Labeling". This announcement came on November 22, the day before Thanksgiving. In the war movies, this moment is typically accompanied by the panic cry "INCOMING"!

Pesticides hazardous to honey bees have carried a label restriction since the early 1980s. It reads: "[This product] is HAZARDOUS TO BEES exposed to direct treatment or residues on blooming crops an/or blooming weeds. Do not apply [this product] or allow it to drift to blooming crops and/or blooming weeds if bees are foraging the areas to be treated." The label restriction came about as a consequence of massive bee kills from pesticides in the 1970s.

Unfortunately the chemical industry and State Regulators (the agencies typically delegated the authority by EPA for pesticide regulation) found the restriction cumbersome, problematic and inconvenient. While the label restriction was frequently ignored or skirted, it nevertheless gave beekeepers standing before the law when their bees were killed by illegal pesticide use. Even under these conditions of unenthusiastic and even hostile enforcement, com-

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mercial beekeepers in many parts of the country had over 30% of their colonies killed or damaged by pesticides.

The current PR Notice would propose sweeping changes to not only the wording but the intent of bee protection language.

New pesticides presented for registration which fail to provide residual bee toxicity data automatically will be assumed to have a toxic period of 24 hours. This will encourage applicants to neglect this detail, and beekeepers will spend years enduring bee kills and uncompensated damages as they attempt to establish their case against new pesticides which may have residual toxicity's of 1 to 2 weeks. In other words the toxicity data will be generated at the expense of the beekeeping industry.

It dismisses the issue of drift, which is often the major culprit in bee kills, by simply omitting any reference to it. By this logic, polluters in other arenas would be free to release toxic substances into a waterway and be held harmless for any damage done downstream. The only difference between the two cases is that with agricultural pesticides it isn't a waterway but an airstream which is polluted.

Perhaps the worst part of this proposal is its caveat to the chemical industry, which says that an applicator is not responsible for following even the feeble language proposed if they participate in a "formal, state-approved bee protection program". The EPA plans to take no role in the formation, approval or monitoring of the state approved program, despite the clear evidence that it has often been State Departments of Agriculture which are the problem in protecting pollinators. In 1997 AAPCO (the American Association of Pesticide Control Officers), a professional organization to which many state regulatory people belong, formally requested that the EPA make bee protection language ADVISORY. This gives you an idea of the philosophy of many of these states and what protections they might provide given a free hand. The EPA proposed to not only put the foxes back in charge of the chicken coop despite the loss of all these chickens, it proposed to let the foxes make the rules and doesn't even intend to ask what the rules are.

Beyond the specific labeling language, the EPA is failing to carry out its basic responsibilities under the law (FIFRA). Ultimately Congress is responsible for the implementation of FIFRA. It assigns this responsibility to EPA, which in turn delegates the authority to another agency, typically a State Department Of Agriculture. It is apparent that the EPA is not only prepared to cave in to the convenience of the chemical industry, but they are willing to sacrifice American beekeeping and violate the law in the bargain. They are either incapable or unwilling to hold their delegees (the states) accountable for administering the law properly, nor are they willing to do so themselves.

Beekeepers are urged to familiarize themselves with this issue and contact their Congress-people immediately. This matter will effect all beekeepers, large or small. The indiscriminate

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and uncontrolled use of pesticides around bees, which is likely to result from the current posture of the EPA, will result in enormous and costly losses for almost all beekeepers. The EPA must be called to account by Congress and required to follow the law. The current proposal provides little or no protection to honey bees or any other pollinators, after years of input from the beekeeping industry.

More detailed information on the PR can be obtained at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/>

The comment period ends Jan 22, 2001. In addition to anything you may have to say to the EPA, you should inform your Congressperson or nothing will change.

Tom Theobald is a commercial beekeeper, freelance writer and has been a beekeeper's advocate in the pesticide arena for over 25 years. If you have further questions please email Bee Culture Magazine at kim@airoot.com

I was looking forward to meeting Tom Theobald, last February, in Niwot Colorado, just a five minute drive from our son's home in Erie. Niwot is one of the many small, thriving communities which have now become part of Boulder, thanks to a robust economy and urbanization. I was introduced to Tom two years ago through an article in the *Denver Post* which was sent to me by son's friend who knew about my interest in beekeeping. During our February 1999 visit, one of the first things on my list was to phone Tom Theobald and hope that he wasn't too busy to talk about bees. After an interesting telephone conversation I was invited to meet Tom the next day for dinner. Over lunch we talked about many of the problems facing beekeepers on both sides of the border, varroa and tracheal mites, low prices, dwindling locations, moving bees, pesticide use, extracting and other things.

We took a five mile drive north of Niwot to look at Tom's extracting building. The cement block building was neatly kept. Even at this time of year when extracting was finished and the honey packed, everything had a place and the equipment was covered with sheets of plastic. Bees in Colorado are wintered outside in two boxes. Fall and spring feeding is as important in Colorado as it is in Canada. We went back to Niwot, to Tom's house, where he handed me with a jar of hard-to-get echinacea honey. He has a bee yard located adjacent to an echinacea field of about three acres. Echinacea produces a white honey with a delicate wild flower taste. Nearly all of Tom's honey is sold at the farmers' market or retailed in stores.

Colorado, at one time, was home to many beekeepers and produced a lot of honey. Today, though, there are very few hobbyists and sideliners and even fewer commercial beekeepers. Tom writes regular columns for two Colorado farm papers and submits timely and informative articles to other publications as well.

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One of the things that Tom Theobald is very knowledgeable about is pesticides. This is a serious issue in the US and is likely to become more serious in Canada as time passes. For this reason, I think that Canadian beekeepers need to be informed about the situation in the US because we will be facing the same issues, sooner rather than later. It is only about a year ago that Canadians were forced to accept the gasoline additive, MMT, in spite of evidence that it is not an environmentally friendly substance. The US manufacturer, through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), was able to collect a huge monetary settlement from the Canadian government for lost revenue. Similarly, the multinational chemical companies producing pesticides, will want to have a level playing field. They will exert pressure on our government to have the same labelling and environmental regulations as the US. Many of these regulations are not friendly to beekeeping farmers.

Footnote by Ron Rudiak

How to survive a BEAR ATTACK

First rule: avoid it. If you can't: fight.
CANADIAN CATTLEMEN - Mike Rose

It's a beautiful fall day. You are walking along the fence line thinking about next week's schedule. You look up, a noise ahead catching your attention. A bear cub looks over his shoulder at you from 50 feet away, then scrambles up a small aspen, calling loudly for his mom. You are now in trouble.

If you have attended one of Gary James Shelton's bear encounter survival courses, or read one of his books, you will know how to minimize the potentially devastating risk of contact with the mother of this bear cub. Bear avoidance is Shelton's speciality. And while his viewpoints are controversial in view of today's animal rights he is definitely worthwhile hearing from.

Rules of Encounter

Shelton boils his bear survival strategy down to a few guidelines.

1 - Never expose yourself to a bear attack without a weapon (spray - 2 large canisters - or firearm).

2 - Never play dead with any bear: always defend yourself.

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3 - If the bear is showing anger (defensive-aggressive), ready your weapon and, if possible, back away slowly.

4 - If a bear is stalking you in a predatory manner, ready your weapon, maintain eye contact and quickly chase it off by yelling, throwing rocks, beating pans and so on.

5 - If you can't determine what is going on, or if you want to boil all this down to one rule -- ready your weapon, stand your ground and defend yourself.

Note: If your weapon fails, or if you are foolish enough to believe that it's not necessary to defend yourself against bears, you have no choice but to play dead in a defensive-aggressive attack, or to fight off a predatory attack -- that is, if you are lucky enough to experience an attack that clearly falls into one of these 2 categories.

These guidelines are, of course, what to do if you have missed the point of Shelton's entire seminar: avoid bears wherever possible.

For a more comprehensive look at the subject, read Shelton's 2 books: *Bear Encounter Survival Guide* and *Bear Attacks: The Deadly Truth*. If you can't find his books locally, contact him directly by calling (250)982-2316 or write to him at Box 95, Hagensborg, B.C., V0T 1H0.

Mike Rose is the livestock manager of the family-run Quilchena Cattle Co. Ltd. in the Nicola Valley, B.C.

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The Last Page



See what happens when I have dead space to fill :)

Send them ads and articles along... See you next month...

Ron Wayne