



# The **BEE CAUSE**

*The Official Publication of the Red River  
Apiarists' Association*

May 2001

Free to Members

Volume 3: Issue 5

## **Important Dates:**

Next Meeting Date is:  
11 September 2001  
7:30 PM Upstairs Meeting Room

Speaker 1: Mite treatments,  
presentations by Rhéal Lafrenière and  
possibly Ted Scheuneman. .

Speaker 2: To be announced..

## **Meeting Location:**

River Heights Community Centre  
1370 Grosvenor St.  
(Intersection of Oak & Grosvenor  
Door Prizes will be offered, Guests are  
welcome and free coffee will be avail-  
able.

The Bee Cause Newsletter is published by the **Red River Apiarists' Association** eight times per year 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**.

## **President's Comments**

I continue to be pleased with our meeting turnout. It is great to have a bunch of enthusiastic people seeking friendship and advice. I appreciate your feedback as well! Together we can keep improving our information flow so we benefit from each other. Thanks to Don Dixon for the mini workshop information on detection of AFB. Although the frames were "smelly", many took advantage of the situation to have a good look at the scales and cappings. Hopefully we will be able to keep our hives clear of this pest.

As we move along into May, the scenery around us is continually changing. And thank goodness, since the snow didn't seem to want to leave in March! Tree leaves are green, the grass will soon be ready to cut, and our bees are searching for more pollen, as our colonies grow from successful over wintering. However, there have been many reports that outdoor colonies suffered greatly from too high moisture in the hive. Some report over 80% losses. Probably due to the temperature fluctuations in early winter causing the top air hole to freeze up. Just a reminder again, Spring treatment is critical to get the upper edge on the health of our colonies. Hopefully you are already treating using the 2001 rec-

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## RRAA Executive Members

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ommendations. The latest copies reflect a reduction in the concentration of medication. A level of 8:1 is recommended now.

Thanks to Ron Rudiak for the capping scratcher, Charles Polcyn for the surprise jar, and Jim Campbell and Dennis Ross for the Fume Boards for our April meeting door prizes. By the way, if you have some extra items that could be donated to RRAA for door prizes, please give me a call. Congratulations to the winners. At the next meeting, we will deliver the fume boards, sorry about that.

Got your taxes in on time this year? I filed over the Internet this year using QuickTax and the Netfile option. This is easier than shipping off all the paperwork. Somehow it always seems to be a last minute job though doesn't it? However, now that you've recognized several areas in your bookkeeping that need attention, why not get the upper hand. Keep all invoices and receipts. Perhaps carry a large envelope in your vehicle. Then whenever you have a purchase, toss the receipt into the envelope. At the end of the year, everything will be together. The next task will be to remember where you stored the envelope.

For our May 26 tour of the University of Manitoba Beekeeping yard, we are pleased to provide a workshop on Queen Rearing. Ted Scheuneman will present the Jenter system, Ron Rudiak will talk about Swarm Boxes. See the ad in this newsletter. Hopefully the later date in May will be warmer than our previous picnic dates. Later this summer, we will be looking for ideas on how to improve our 2001 Honey Show. If you can help, please give one of the executive a call.

See you at our May 8 Meeting, or the May 26 Picnic!!!

Jim Campbell

## RRAA Executive Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2001

The executive meeting of the RRAA was held at Perkins restaurant, Kildonan Crossing, 1615 Regent Avenue with Jim Campbell, Dennis Ross, and Ron Rudiak, Rhéal Lafrenière, Gilles Lantagne and Doug Henry present.

**Jim Campbell called the meeting to order at 3:40 PM.**

### Committee Reports:

#### Financial Report:

**Barry Fingler Research Fund:** Moved by Ron Rudiak, seconded by Gilles Lantagne to send the contribution of \$64.00 to the Barry Fingler Memorial Research Fund.

**Carried**

#### Liability Insurance:

Moved by Rhéal Lafrenière, seconded by Gilles Lantagne to remit \$336.00 to the MBA for our share of the joint liability insurance policy for 2001.

**Carried**

#### Meeting Room Rental:

A cheque for \$47.10 was issued to pay for the meeting room and coffee for the month of April.

#### \$100 Working Advance:

Moved by Gilles Lantagne, seconded by Rhéal Lafrenière to advance Ron Rudiak \$100.00 to pick up the food for the May 26th field day.

**Carried**

#### Old and New Business

#### May 8th Meeting:

Gadgets and beekeeping tools that are found useful will be demonstrated by Jake Remple (Honey Co-Op).

#### May 26th Workshop & Picnic

The workshop and picnic will be held at the U of M at the apiary site. Members and guests will meet near the wintering building where we will have a tour of the facilities, apiary and experimental hives. After the tour we will have lunch, the cost is \$2.00 each for the food. At approximately 1:00 PM we will have presentations on the ongoing experiments at the apiary, two methods of queen rearing and demonstrations of grafting larvae for raising queens. Ron will bring his small BBQ for hot dogs. A larger BBQ will also be needed. A map will be included with the May newsletter.

#### Honey Show:

The board agreed to have the honey promotion at Kil-

donan Place on October 19 to 21. We will need 9 or 10 tables to accommodate the vendors and displays.

#### Advertising & Promotion:

To promote honey awareness, Rhéal Lafrenière has agreed to be on the advertising committee. At least one other member is required for this RRAA committee. Two people who may want to feature bees and honey on their shows are Peter Jordan of CBC - TV and Brandon Boone of CBC - Radio.

#### Loonie Draw:

The association needs donated items for the monthly draws. These can be new or used but must be in good condition.. Home-made items are very good too.

#### September 11, Meeting:

Mite treatments, presentations by Rhéal Lafrenière and possibly Ted Scheuneman. A microscope with dissected samples showing bees with tracheal mite infestations and healthy trachea would be educational.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM

Ron Rudiak (Secretary - RRAA)

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### Draw Winners at April 10 Meeting

Fume Boards - Dan Gass & Carol Anderson

Scraper - Fred Jones

Surprise bottle - Albert Anderson

Congratulations to All

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### Notice from The President

Membership fees are payable by May 8 2001 General Meeting. Members not having paid by that date will have their names removed from the membership list.

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# Propolis on the Prairies

by Ron Rudiak

It seems that propolis is everywhere when you don't want it to be. It is nearly impossible to work with bee equipment for more than a few minutes without having propolis stuck to something you're using or wearing. Collecting it is a different matter though. It is hard to find propolis in any great amounts and scraping it into a separate container from the wax and burr comb is time consuming and tedious. An alternative method for collecting a high grade of propolis is to use a plastic hive insert which has spaces that encourage bees to fill in the holes. These inserts are placed between the hive top and the frames in the top super. As the slots become filled with propolis they are moved over so that the slots which covered the top bars are now over the spaces between the frames.

Here, on the Canadian Prairies, we have available the highest quality of propolis in the world. Scientific studies have shown that propolis obtained from the poplar and aspen trees of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North-eastern Ontario contain bioflavonoids and antibacterial agents with very high activity when compared to other sources of this material.

Some types of propolis are harmful and should not be consumed under any circumstances. Some plants, such as yellow jessamine produce a poisonous nectar which could find its way into propolis collected from these hives.

Cycads, a type of plant that is widespread in warmer climates, comes in many shapes and sizes. Some resemble palm trees while others look more like a tropical pine: cycad circinalis and cycad revoluta(1,2). These plants are very old species which have often been seen as fossil remains. Cycasin, found in cycads, when taken orally in minute amounts, may accumulate and can cause severe neurological disorders (3) like Parkinsonian dementia of the Alzheimer type and a clinical variant of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig Disease), the condition in which the motor neurons in the spine are progressively degenerating. Similarly, propolis containing material from cycads will likely contain traces of cycasin. Once cycasin was consumed, sometimes many years later, ALS may develop (4). There is a suggestion that cycasin may also be absorbed in, through the skin. (3)

When collecting propolis from hive scrapings it is important to note that paint chips or flakes of paint will contaminate the product and make it unfit for human consumption. Paint often contains lead and other poisonous chemicals that we should not put into our bodies. Similarly propolis from brood chambers is not to be used either

because it will contain traces of fluvalinate from Apistan strips or possibly terramycin or Fumidil-B. If Check-Mite strips are used, the brood chambers will be contaminated with Coumaphos, a chemical more harmful to humans than the synthetic pyrethroid used in Apistan.

Propolis from hive scrapings should be no older than 3 years because in older scrapings the bioflavonoids and anti-bacterial components will be notably less effective.

(1) Spencer, P.S.:Guam ALS/Parkinsonism-dementia:A long latency neurotoxic disorder caused by slow toxin(s) in food. *Can. J. Neurol. Sci.*, 14:347-357, 1987.

(2) Williams, D.B. and Windeband, A.J.: Motor neuron disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis). *Mayo Clin. Proc.* 66:54-82, 1991

(3) Mickelsen, O. et al.: Studies with cycad. *Fed. Proc.* 23:1363-1365, 1964

(4)Garruto, R.M. et al.: Amytropic Lateral Sclerosis among Chamamo Migrants from Guam. *Ann. Neurol.* 8:612-619, 1980

## Collecting Propolis

Hive Lights, Feb. 2001

John Gates, Apiculture Specialist for British Columbia, at the annual BC Honey Producers Assoc. meeting in October 2000, demonstrated an innovative propolis collection method developed in New Zealand.

The material used for collection is windbreak/shade cloth which comes in rolls 50m x 1m. Each roll will supply 180 - 200 mats costing about 40 cents each. The mesh cloth is laid on top of the frames in the top box. When strips of propolis have been formed, the mat is moved over by the width of a frame so the bees will have new holes to fill. Propolis is easily removed by freezing, folding and rubbing the mat. After cleaning, the mats are reusable and should be more attractive as they become fuzzy with the bees chewing them. The mats can be left on for most of the season and can replace the inner cover. If the bees need feeding, simply cut an access hole in the collector material so that the bees can reach the feeder. John found that these mats will work on nucleus colonies but recommends using them on full strength colonies.

In Canada, the material is being imported by Seabreeze Trading Corp. (250)546-9120 in Armstrong, BC. Ask for the lock stitch knitted high density polyethylene material, 50% construction cloth. Mention that it is used for propolis collection.

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### **Propolis, some interesting facts**

Propolis (from the Greek pro - before and polis - city, referring to its use in partially closing the entrance to the colony - bee city)

a resinous gum gathered by bees from plant buds and bark. contains approximately 55% resins & balms, 30% wax, 10% etheric oils and 5% pollen.

soft when warm (25 - 45 deg C) brittle when cold (below 15 deg C) melts at 65 deg C.

dissolves in ethyl alcohol to produce a tincture.

provides the glue that bees use to seal cracks in their hive and to anchor hive parts.

has over 38 compounds called flavonoids, (plant derived natural pigments and active compounds) that have antibiotic, anti-fungal, anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-oxidizing properties.

has phenolics such as cinnamyl alcohol, cinnamic acid, vanillin, benzyl alcohol, benzoic acid and caffeic ferulic acid, which have antibacterial, anti-inflammatory effects.

acts as a local anaesthetic, reducing spasms, healing gastric ulcers, improving pulmonary function and strengthening capillaries.

was prescribed by Hippocrates for healing sores and ulcers, both internally and externally.

protects vitamin C from being oxidized or destroyed.

is used in the treatment of over 300 diseases.

has the ability to directly destroy penicillin-resistant staphylococcus.

has bioflavonoids that inhibit enzymes from removing the protein coating of viruses, keeping the viral material locked inside.

Ancient Greek texts refer to the substance as a "cure for bruises and suppurating sores.

Roman physicians used propolis in making poultices.

Hebrew references to the therapeutic properties of tzori (propolis) are mentioned throughout the Old Testament.

Records from 12th century Europe describe medical preparations using propolis for the treatment of mouth and throat

infections, and dental caries (Krell, 1996).

For more information on propolis check out Dtefan Stangaci's Apitherapy Reference Data Base on the internet at <http://www.sci.fi/~apither/>.

Krell, R. 1996. Value added products from beekeeping. Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, Agriculture Services Bulletin 124. Stangaci, S. 1999. Scientific basis of propolis use in medicine. Proceedings of the XXXVI Congress Apimondia 99: 77-79.

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## **Important Changes to the Drug Feeding Recommendations for Administering Oxytetracycline Hydrochloride to Honey Bees.**

### **Instructions for Oxytetracycline Treatment**

The following feeding recommendations for this antibiotic are based upon formulations containing 25 g of active ingredient per 400 g, e.g. Terramycin (TM25).

Antibiotic and icing sugar - Prepare by mixing 400 g of antibiotic to 3.5 kg of icing sugar (1:8 ratio by weight).

The first antibiotic treatment would generally occur within 4 days of installing the package or unpacking a wintered colony. Spring packages or small colonies should receive 14 g (1 tablespoon) of the antibiotic/icing sugar mixture per colony and wintered colonies should receive 28 g (2 tablespoons) of the antibiotic/icing sugar mixture per colony.

Usually three applications at 4 to 5 day intervals are required in the spring and/or fall.

In order to prevent possible contamination of marketable honey, all antibiotic treatments should stop at least 4 weeks before the main honey flow. Honey or syrup stored in the colony during the antibiotic treatment period should not be used for human consumption!

Rhéal Lafrenière

## Workshop & Picnic - 26 May 2001

As you likely have read in the minutes, the May picnic is going to be held at the U of M apiary. We will get an early start with a 10:00 AM tour of the wintering facilities and apiary.

Lunch will cost each member \$2.00, includes burger or hot dog, drink, chips and other misc. goodies and seconds. Paper plates coffee and fruit punch will be provided.

After lunch we will talk about queen rearing and have a demonstration of the Jenter system and the grafting technique. Attendees are encouraged to try their hand at grafting. A hand out will be available for the grafting method.

Phone Jim Campbell, Rhéal Lafrenière or Ron Rudiak with any questions or suggestions.

### Things to bring:

Lawn chair  
A toonie (or two loonies)  
Note pad & pen, camera  
Veil, gloves  
Hat or cap  
Sunglasses  
Mosquito repellent

For now, all the best, Ron

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## Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the Regular Meeting April 10, 2001

The regular meeting of the Red River Apiarists' Association was held at the River Heights Community Club on April 10, 2001. Jim Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with 34 members and guests present.

**Minutes** of the Feb. 13 meeting were approved (March *Bee Cause*).

Jim noted that the topic had changed slightly from that stated in the newsletter. Because AFB and rAFB (resistant AFB) is a threat to beekeepers everywhere. Don Dixon had put together a group of slides showing both healthy combs of larvae and diseased combs containing AFB, chalkbrood, sacbrood and EFB. After the slide presentation a

"hands - on" exercise will give everyone to see what actual diseased combs look like.

Jim asked those present to consider donating spare beekeeping (or other items) for the loonie draw. To date we have had a good selection of useful and interesting items donated for our monthly raffles. This month we have a sturdy barrel scraper donated by Ron Rudiak, two fume boards donated by Jim Campbell and Dennis Ross and a "Joy Bottle" donated by Charles Polcyn.

### Committee Reports:

#### Financial Report:

Jim reported that the RRAA bank balance was \$3639.00 as of the last executive meeting and we had 39 paid up members at that time. Our share of the joint MBA - RRAA liability insurance policy is \$400.00 for 2001. This policy is to cover members in case of a serious incident with bee stings where liability is proven. As well as the honey show(s) where we have a live bee display. We also have a financial commitment to the research projects at the U of M.

#### Combined RRAA & MBA annual picnic and field day:

Jim reported that the picnic and field day will take place on May 26th (last Saturday in May) at the U of M Apiary site. A map of the site will be published in the Bee cause. Queen rearing and a tour of the University of Manitoba indoor wintering building is on the agenda.

#### Honey Show:

Jim Campbell reported that Kildonan Place cannot accommodate the honey promotion on October 12 to 14 but would be pleased to have us there on October 5 to 7 or October 19 to 21.

#### MBA Report:

Jim reported that there is an ongoing study of bear fences in the Ethelbert area.

Skunks are a continual problem. The Conservation dept. has been looking at strychnine or cyanide as a possible product that could be used for skunk control.

The Centre of Excellence is under consideration

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with the U of M. Several groups could work together on research etc.

Bees from NZ will come from the South Island which has been declared mite free. All NZ bees will come with an Apistan strip in any case.

The MBA had the display booth set up at the Royal Winter Fair in Brandon. They will look into selling honey and hive products in the future.

#### **Swarms:**

A sign-up sheet was circulated for those who will pick up swarms in their area this season.

#### **Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM**

**Program:** Don Dixon gave a presentation on honey bee health.

The **door prizes** (Loonie Draw) were awarded to: Fume boards - Carol Anderson and Dan Gass; surprise bottle - Albert Anderson; Barrel scraper - Fred Jones.

Ron Rudiak (Secretary - RRAA)

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### **MBA Board Active Already**

The Board of the MBA are beginning the year with lots of activities on the agenda. At their meeting in March, issues ranged from Celebrations in 2003 to dealing with skunks.

The skunk issue has plagued several beekeeping operations across Manitoba. Several reports indicate the increase of the skunk population. These predators depopulate the hives in spring and fall when the bees are most vulnerable. Recent observations have identified that once the skunks have a taste, they continue to bother hives throughout the year. MBA have been searching for a registered control product. As part of this search, a letter will be sent to Manitoba Conservation, suggesting they include MBA needs as they study control measures. In a similar vein, the Pest and Pesticide Committee will forward a letter to Medivet, a chemical company, encouraging the development of a control product for the beekeeping industry.

MBA has also been working with other groups such as The Manitoba Forage Association, to proceed with a Centre of Excellence. To continue this discus-

sion with government, MBA will write to the Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) to garner support for this initiative. Meetings with various levels of government have produced mixed results so far.

In response to the concern expressed during the recent MBA convention, regarding the importation of Varroa into Canada, Arataki Bees bound for Manitoba will follow a new protocol. Bees are to originate from the "varroa free" zone of New Zealand, and they will be sold with an Apistan strip included with the packages.

As a follow up to the presentation at the Annual Convention, Lorne Peters identified February 2003 will be the Centennial for MBA. The board agreed to set up a Centennial Committee to review ideas for this celebration. Some initial ideas include holding national beekeeping meetings here in Manitoba to increase the awareness of our history.

The promotion committee will be reviewing participation in the week long Brandon Winter Fair, as it is becoming difficult to staff the display booth for this duration. In the past there has been reluctance to sell products to help offset the costs of space rental. This and the possibility of having better exposure at Brandon Ag Days, will be further evaluated.

Later in the season, MBA will be holding a Queen Development workshop at Gregory Honey Farms, Fisher Branch. The tentative date is set for June 16. There will be a cost for lunch.

As a final item, the board established the honey house price of honey at \$1.50 per pound, the same as that last year.

Jim Campbell, MBA rep.

## Items for Sale

**For Sale:** Honey Bee Nucs or complete hives and miscellaneous equipment.  
Contact Charles Polcyn at 284-7064

**For Sale:** Limited number of healthy Nucs for sale from 15 April to end of May. Bees on 4 very good frames with brood on at least two of them. Comes complete with own year 2000 over wintered Queen. Only \$100.00  
Contact Ted at 338-6066 between 1800 and 2100 hours.

**For Sale:** 4 frame Nucs, some with proven queens, available approx. May 15. New supers, assembled, painted, with steel rests. \$8.00,  
Overhead feeders \$15.00  
Boxes of new frames 100 per box. \$40.00 ea  
Phone: Dennis Ross 878-2924  
Email: rosskr@mb.sympatico.ca

**For Sale:** Honey Bee Nucs for sale, ready for approx. 15 May. Dry Marine containers 20' x 8' and 40' x 8'. The forty foot container can hold 1200 supers plus.  
Contact Ron Boudreau at 885-3344

**For Sale:** 50 honey supers and 75 brood boxes  
Contact Henry Wiebe at 663-5550

## **Editor's Comments**

The RRAA Web Site is back on line. The URL is: <http://www.geocities.com/ve4tg/>. It is still under development and efforts are being made to add new material. Please check it out and let us know your comments.

This month sees the reprinting of last year's article on Mite Management using screened bottom boards and the Drone Comb method written by Ron Rudiak and Ted Scheuneman. Both these techniques help in control of Varroa and avoid the use of chemicals. It is an excellent article and well worthy of reprinting. It will be posted on the web site as well.

This is the final and definitely last call to remind you to pay your annual membership dues. If you haven't already done so please forward your payment to Dennis Ross using the form printed on the bottom of this page.

Well that's it until September. Hope to see you at the U of M for the picnic and field day activities. Have a good summer

Doug

This Space is Available to Rent

***Your Ad Could be Here***

Classified ad - 50 words (or less) non-members  
\$10.00 per insertion; 1/4 page ad - \$20.00 per issue

## **RED RIVER APIARIST'S ASSOC. 2001 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL**

Please complete and mail with your cheque, for \$20.00, payable to: The Red River Apiarists' Association.

Mail to: **Red River Apiarist's Association  
Dennis Ross, Treasurer,  
Box 10 Group 125, RR#1,  
Vermette, Mb,  
R0G 2W0**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBER [ ] RENEWAL [ ]

☼ THANK YOU ☼



