



# The **BEE CAUSE**

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

September 2001

Free to Members

Volume 4: Issue 1

## **Important Dates:**

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

Speaker 1: Jim Thwaites will talk about using bee venom for health purposes.

Speaker 2: Rhéal Lafrenière will give a presentation on treatment for mites.

## **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 available.

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**

Seems like such a long time ago when we had our last meeting and get together! It will be great to see each other once again. By now, I'm sure all of you have completed extracting, and filled all the customer containers. Honey crop looks good despite all the rain.

I've noticed several of my customers are increasing their consumption of honey, while others are decreasing. It seems as though the children are growing up and leaving home, thus the use of honey changes. In other families, there is more cooking being done with honey as the sweetener. More and more customers are becoming health conscious. This is all good news to a honey producer.

As we move along into September, the scenery around us is changing. Tree leaves are drying, and our bees are searching for more nectar and pollen, as our colonies prepare for over wintering. Just a reminder again, Fall treatment is critical to keep the upper edge on the health of our colonies. Hopefully you have already begun to feed syrup, pollen and

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## RRAA Executive Members

**President:** Jim Campbell  
Ph 467-5246  
Box 234  
Stonewall, MB R0C 2Z0  
Email: jaycam@mb.sympatico.ca

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:** Rhéal Lafrenière  
Ph 945-4825  
Manitoba Agriculture & Food  
204-545 University Crescent.  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5S6  
Email: Rlafreniere@agr.gov.mb.ca

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:** Gilles Lantagne  
Email: lantagne@mb.sympatico.ca

**Secretary:** Ron Rudiak  
Ph 326-3763  
Box 1448  
Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0  
Email: manbeekr@mb.sympatico.ca

**Treasurer:** Dennis Ross  
Ph 878-2924  
Group 125, Box 10, RR1  
Vermette, MB R0G 2W0  
Email: rosskr@mb.sympatico.ca

**MBA Delegate:** Jim Campbell  
Ph 467-5246  
Box 234  
Stonewall, MB R0C 2Z0  
Email: jaycam@mb.sympatico.ca

**Reporter:** Ron Rudiak  
Ph 326-3763  
Box 1448  
Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0  
Email: manbeekr@mb.sympatico.ca

**Past President:** Ron Boudreau  
Ph 885-3344  
795 Pepperloaf Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB R3R 1G2  
Email: goldrod@netcom.ca

**Newsletter & Website:** Doug Henry  
PH 757-4694  
Group 321, Box 6, RR3  
Selkirk, MB R1A 2A8  
Tel: 757-4694  
Fax: 833-2566  
Email: ve4tg@rac.ca

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also to treat.

By this time I had hoped to have someone volunteer as chair of the 2001 Honey Show, however, this has not happened yet, so later this month, several of the executive will be looking for ideas on how to improve our show. If you can help, please give me a call. In the meantime, we are well underway with plans for our Honey Show. We have a large space at St. Vital: about 16' x 25', so lots of room for displays. We are preparing wood shelves to mount along the back edge of the tables to better display the sales products. I trust each of you has set aside some good quality honey for the competition. Make sure the liquid honey is clear of granulations, bubbles, and foreign objects. In past years several entries were not up to par with products to be displayed. One observer was quite upset that we had not placed all entries on display. I would rather err on the side of good quality than creating doubt in our customers mind about the looks of our honey.

I'll be away in Nova Scotia, so I'll not see you at our September 11 meeting!!!

Jim Campbell

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### RRAA Executive Meeting Minutes 23 August 2001

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

**Jim Campbell called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.**

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### **Sept 11 Meeting:**

An overview of the importance and need of fall feeding for Mite control will be presented by Rhéal Lafrenière. Dennis to get door prize from Bee Maid. Rhéal will also chair the meeting as Jim will be away. Dennis to call Jen Thwaites for talk about Bee Venom Therapy for Sept meeting.

### **Mini Mall Presentation:**

Jim noted progress for the arrangements for a mini honey demonstration and sales area at Kildonan Place. The dates are Friday October 19 to Sunday October 21. It will be a busy time as a "Sidewalk Sale" is taking place that weekend. Registered packers are invited to participate. Ron Rudiak could be in charge, same as last year.

### **Honey Show:**

Plans are well underway for our yearly Honey Judging Competition to be held at St. Vital Centre. The Show will take place Friday 26 October to Sunday 28 October. The layout will be similar to last year, in the area adjacent to Additionelle. Dennis Ross will be updating the Ribbons for the show and get 2' & 6' shelves for tables. Charles Polcyn has offered to do promotions of the show in local media. Jim still looking for a Chair.

**MSC:** That RRAA provide free standard jars (500g 375ml) for members entering the honey show. Dennis to bring a couple of boxes to the Sept meeting. Members can pick up jars at Bee Maid and charge them to RRAA, same process as last year.

**MSC:** That we change the name of the Open Basic class to reflect a Flavour or Taste competition. Jim to determine a name and modify the regulations.

### **Canadian Western Agribition-Regina:**

Jim presented a phone call request from Alvey Halbgewachs, Pres Regina Beekeepers Association, and also co-ordinator for the Honey competition for Agribition. Alvey is seeking sponsors for the November 19-24, 2001 show and requested \$500.00 (pay for ribbons & plaques). Their goal is to have a better show than the Royal in Toronto. To support the request, RRAA would have to do fundraising.

**MSC:** That RRAA encourage individual members to support Agribition by sending entries to the show, and we advertise the Ag in our newsletter.

**MSC:** That as our funds are limited, we seek feedback from our members regarding sponsorship of Ag .

### **Future Meetings:**

Jim noted that the Nov meeting could be a wind-up social type session. A nominating committee will need to be set up also. Our members have been very good at suggesting meeting topics. We should encourage this feedback.

**MSC:** that we ask members for topics and ideas for the regular Oct meeting.

### **MBA report:**

The next MBA meeting is scheduled for Sept 27. Good turnout at Fisher Branch field day. MBA display booth used with observation hive at Red River Ex in June. Lots of interest in bees.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM

JC for Ron Rudiak (Secretary – RRAA)

# MANITOBA HONEY SHOW

OCTOBER 26 - 28, 2001  
ST. VITAL SHOPPING CENTRE  
1225 ST. MARY'S ROAD  
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

## GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

1. Competitions in Class 1 and Class 2 shall be open to residents of Canada who are bona fide beekeepers registered with the Department of Agriculture in the Province where their bees are kept. Class 1 and Class 2 entries must be 2001 production and from the exhibitors' own apiaries. Class 3: "Honey Baking Competition" is open to anyone.
2. An exhibitor will be allowed only one entry in each section of each class. An exhibitor is defined as one beekeeping operation, which includes other family members that share equipment or extraction facilities for entries in Class 1 and Class 2 only.
3. Exhibitors must state the name and complete address correctly on the entry form and must also attach a tag to each entry parcel giving the name and address of the exhibitor. The name and address tag will be removed before the entry is judged. To avoid confusion in case the tag becomes destroyed, a plain sealed envelope containing similar information should be placed inside each parcel. Parcels sent by mail should be marked **FRAGILE**. Entries will be cared for and entered in the proper classes.
4. Honey entry deadline (for Class 1 and Class 2) is 4:00 P.M., Thursday October 25, 2001. There is no entry fee. Honey entries should be sent to: **MANITOBA HONEY SHOW, c/o 625 Roseberry Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0T4. ENTRIES SHOULD NOT ARRIVE BEFORE OCTOBER 22, 2001.** Entries for the Honey Baking categories must be delivered directly to the St. Vital Shopping Centre by 9:30 A.M. on Saturday, October 27,

2001.

5. Judging for Class 1 and 2 entries will take place before October 26, 2001. Judging for Class 3 entries will take place on Saturday, October 27, 2001 at the St. Vital Shopping Centre.
6. The judges shall rule any contestant ineligible if the entry fails to comply with the exhibit rules or is not attractively displayed.
7. Awards will be made by a scale of points and, in case of a tie, the highest score for flavour will be awarded the prize.
8. Baked goods will be offered as promotional samples during the Honey Show. Winning entries in the honey classes will be used as prizes for the baking competition. One jar of honey from the winning entries may be returned to producers upon request. All other entries must be picked up by 4:00 P.M., Sunday, October 28, 2000 or they will become the property of the Red River Apiarist Association and will be donated to Winnipeg Harvest food bank.
9. There are a limited number of openings for beekeepers (vendors) to sell honey or related beekeeping products. To be eligible, a vendor must be a member in good standing of the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association or the Red River Apiarists' Association and also be registered with Agriculture Canada as a Producer-Grader and abide by the current Honey Regulations. Those wishing to be vendors must contact Jim Campbell (204) 467-5246 or Rhéal Lafrenière (204) 945-4825 by **October 19, 2001.**

## MANITOBA HONEY SHOW

### COMPETITION CLASSES

#### CLASS 1

1. Liquid Honey, White, totaling not less than 4 - 500 g glass or clear plastic jars.
2. Liquid Honey, Sunflower, totaling not less than

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4 - 500 g glass or clear plastic jars.

3. Granulated Honey, White, totaling not less than 4 - 500 g glass or clear plastic jars.
4. Beeswax - 2 kg in one cake or not more than 5 cakes.

### CLASS 2

1. Chunk Honey - totaling not less than 4 - 500 g glass or clear plastic jars, each containing one or more pieces of comb honey and the jars filled with liquid white honey.
2. Buckwheat Honey - totaling not less than 4 - 500 g glass or clear plastic jars.
3. Frame of Honey - one completely capped frame of white honey.
4. Comb Honey - totaling not less than 4 pieces of either comb honey sections or cut comb honey in individual containers.
5. Sweet Taste - any color - totaling not less than 2 glass or clear plastic containers approximately 500 g in size. (Entries judged primarily for flavour and taste using simplified judging standards )

### CLASS 3

1. Honey Baking Competition - 3 categories - each entry must have a typed recipe attached.  
A) Cakes B) Cookies C) Other

The exhibitor winning the greatest number of points in the Honey Division (Classes 1 and 2) will be declared the CHAMPION EXHIBITOR of the Manitoba Honey Show. Points are awarded as follows:

<b>PRIZE</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
FIRST	3
SECOND	2
THIRD	1

### • **Royal Agricultural Winter Fair set for November**

- The next Royal Agricultural Winter Fair is scheduled for November 2 - 11, 2001 at the Coliseum National Trade Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto, Ontario. The Fair has been an unforgettable experience for millions and has brought country to the city each November since 1922. Exhibit entries range from butter sculptures, to potatoes, to livestock. The Royal promotes excellence through world class competitions!

- The 2000 edition of the Royal recorded more than 12,000 entries for its varied livestock and agricultural competitions, And this second Royal of the 21st Century will again have ten days of competitions. The Honey Products Committee extends a welcome to all Beekeepers and Honey Producers to display or show their honey, honey products or bees wax under Section 812. Several Manitobans have entered this competition, with success. First place Rosettes, with the bright Red, White and Blue colours, are quite attractive hanging on your honey house wall. A Royal Ribbon is an indication of product excellence to our honey buying public.

- Entry details and prize books are available by contacting the Entry Department at the Royal at 416-263-3418, or check the Web Site [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org) for information. Deadline for entering is September 22. Entries must be received by Monday October 29, 2000 as judging takes place on Wednesday 31st.

Jim Campbell



## **Varroa Screens + Miticide = Effective Treatment for Varroa**

by Ron Rudiak

I have been keeping bees long enough to remember how much easier beekeeping was before the arrival of tracheal and Varroa mites. The time between then and now has caused uncertainty among beekeepers, myself included. However, the last two seasons have led to an improvement in my attitude toward Varroa mites and I can say that this summer is the first time in many seasons that I did not find myself overly concerned about these parasites.

Finding mites for the first time in your hives can be hard to accept because you know that beekeeping cannot be the same for you again. And so it was for many of us on the prairies as we came to accept the idea of using a chemical treatment for Varroa mites in order to continue our livelihood or hobby. We had to think in terms of two brood cycles (42 days) as the time required to control Varroa mites. Hive products must not be collected for harvest during the period when hives are undergoing treatment with fluvalinate strips or formic acid. Bees which were unwrapped or removed from the wintering building during the first or second week of April had to be given fluvalinate strips quickly in order to complete the treatment before the major honey flow in June.

I began to use screened bottom boards in 2000 as a tool to continuously monitor mite levels in all of our hives. The screens were in place when I put in the required two strips of Apistan. It is interesting to observe Varroa mites which fall through the screens onto the metal trays placed underneath. Most of the mites come down on the first and second day of treatment. They remain motionless (and alive) on the metal trays,

some for as long as 7 days. These motionless mites can quickly attach themselves to an object, such as a pencil tip or a bee, placed within their reach. Without the screened bottom board these mites, which fall, simply re-attach onto a passing bee for a free ride back into the cluster of bees. The process of detaching in the presence of fluvalinate or formic acid, falling onto the bottom board and re-attaching onto a passing bee may repeat many times until the mite finally starves to death or dehydrates because of being intermittently detached from a food source for too long.

When colonies are not being treated with fluvalinate or formic acid, screened bottom boards continue to trap mites as they naturally fall from within the hive. Once Varroa mites fall through the screen onto the tray they are taken out of production permanently because they cannot re-attach to a bee. It has been shown that between 40 and 60 % of Varroa mites can be removed from a colony when this system is in use. Screens help to control mites for 12 months of the year without the danger of mite resistance developing.

Including Varroa screens in a beekeeping operation is economical as well. If one decides to build their own Varroa screens during the winter, they can be produced easily from scraps of lumber, the only cost is for the metal tray (approx. \$3), screen, glue, nails and paint. Our screens cost approximately \$4.50 each and should last for 10 to 20 years because the sturdy design does not allow water to enter the joint where the screen is attached. We have discontinued the use of hive staples which we found to be a nuisance long before including a Varroa screen between the bottom board and the first brood chamber. We have made enough ratchet hive straps to hold our hives together for moving. Each one is long

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enough to hold four full boxes together for those unexpected moves to another location to avoid being sprayed. Sliding the tray out from the back of the hive about an inch provides additional ventilation for the hot days of summer. Plugging the entrance and removing the tray allows Varroa screens to double as moving screens.

A tray the size of the bottom of the hive, placed upon the bottom board, is essential for the proper operation of a Varroa screen. The most important duty of the tray is to enable accurate monitoring of mite levels within the colony. To monitor, it isn't necessary to cover the entire surface of the tray with an oily product, a little around the edge will do. In actual practice I have found that greasing the tray is largely un-necessary because the Varroa mites don't stray very far from the point where they fall but simply wait for a bee to pass within reach. The trays have to be scraped clean periodically to remove accumulated debris, especially in the spring when the bees are doing a lot of house cleaning. We use a wide putty knife and occasionally a bucket of water and a sponge to clean up the soiled trays. Checking mite levels in an out yard takes about 1 to 2 minutes per colony. Mite checks show that, initially at least, not all colonies may have the same mite levels within a bee yard. If colonies are left untreated, a colony collapse will rapidly spread mites among other colonies including those with low levels of parasitism. In a group of colonies it is not unusual to find that some colonies continually show low infestation levels. Perhaps they are exhibiting some level of resistance to Varroa infestation.

The level of mite infestation can be determined by counting the mites which fall naturally onto the tray during a 24 hour period. One fallen mite during this period

means that there are 500 alive within the colony. 2 mites in 24 hours means there are 1000 alive in the colony and so on. In some cases it may be more convenient to use a longer time period such as 72 hours. In this case we would divide the fallen mite count by 3 to get the mite count for 24 hours.

In the spring of 2000, because we had the ability to continuously monitor mite activity, I decided to check the effectiveness of several different procedures of applying fluvalinate. The advertisement for Apistan clearly states that there is "No danger of applying too little or too much" which made me wonder how much is adequate. For this I divided my hives into groups, some were wintered as singles and others as doubles. The singles and half of the doubles received one Apistan strip while the other half of the doubles received the recommended two strips. In all cases during the first two days there was a significant initial mite fall when Apistan was applied. The amount of mites counted rapidly decreased for the next several days reaching nearly zero in 21 days. There was no significant difference in the doubles in using one strip or two. In half of the singles and half of the doubles the strips were pulled out after 21 days and the mite levels monitored during the course of the summer. Overall there was no significant difference noted in the colonies which had received the 21 day or the 42 day treatments using one strip or two. The strips which had been used for 21 days were marked with a punched hole, placed in a plastic bag and refrigerated. These strips were used again for a fall treatment for 21 days and discarded.

In 2001 all of our colonies received a 21 day treatment with a single strip. This treatment has resulted in the mites being reduced to very low levels in all colonies which are healthy and productive. These

results I attribute to the integration of a screened bottom board to the chemical treatment. By using a single strip for two 3-week treatments the cost for treatment is reduced accordingly.

By using less chemical to control varroa mites there is correspondingly less fluvalinate to contaminate the wax. Long term treatment (exposure) to fluvalinate has been associated with a reduction in honey yield because the wax becomes a reservoir for chemical residue. A shortened treatment time should make fluvalinate useful for a longer period of time. Because of the shortened treatment time we were able to remove the strips just as the spring honey was starting to come in from dandelions. We supered up for the spring honey flow and at the same time installed pollen traps. Completing varroa treatment earlier in the spring resulted in more extracted honey from early sources plus pollen collected for sale and feeding our colonies next spring.

It has been determined that a mite infestation level of 1% is cause for concern and the threshold for treatment to begin. By monitoring the tray under a varroa screen, a natural mite drop of 1 mite/24 hours tells us that 500 are alive within the colony. Assuming that there are 50,000 bees in the hive during the fall season the single mite which was counted means that we have reached the threshold of 1%. When treatment begins expect a large percentage of mites to fall during the first 24 - 48 hours. This is a good time to check for resistant mites as well. Because we have determined the mite infestation level within the colony we also know the number of mites that should appear on the tray within the first 48 hours. If the required number of mites does not appear we would use another chemical (formic acid) to see if we are dealing with fluvalinate resistant mites.

*The foregoing information is based on the author's experience and has not been scientifically evaluated.*

Ron Rudiak

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## **Honey Raisin Bread**

2 1/2 cups plain flour  
3 teasp baking powder  
1/2 teasp bi-carb soda  
1/2 cup bran cereal  
1 cup raisins - chopped  
1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
1/2 cup walnuts - chopped  
1 cup milk  
2 eggs  
1/3 cup honey  
2 tablesp melted butter

Mix together flour, baking powder, soda, bran, raisins, sugar and nuts. Combine milk, eggs, honey and butter. Stir into dry ingredients and beat until smooth. Pour batter into greased 22 x 12cm loaf pan. Bake in moderate oven approx. 1 hour or until done when tested. Serve sliced and buttered.

## Items for Sale

**For Sale:** A two frame non-reversing extractor \$75.00. Two electric uncapping knives with 6" blades \$30.00 each. Owned by Joan Pink former beekeeper. Call Jim at 467-5246.

**For Sale:** Tentest and Astrafoil winter covers \$3.00 each. Astrafoil wraps in 6 ft. lengths \$3.00 each. Contact Dennis Ross at 878-2924 or rosskr@mb.sympatico.ca

## Editor's Comments

Another honey season has past, it seems when spring arrives it will never end and then suddenly it's over. I hope everyone had good results and all your plans reached fruition. Personally my eight hives did well considering the limited management attention I was able to give them.

Ron Rudiak has submitted another excellent article this month detailing the techniques he has used to alleviate and control Varroa mite infestation. Ron cautions that although his treatment methods have been effective for him they have not been proven under sanctioned scientific field trials. Nonetheless the results are impressive and seem to offer direction for a control method that minimizes introduction of chemicals in the hive.

If you wish to place want ads please call, fax or email me with the details. My apologies to the person who called to say they would fax me an ad, I never received the fax.

If you have any recipes for cooking with honey please let me know and I'll include one or two each month.

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 ☉