

# The **BEE CAUSE**

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

November 2001

Free to Members

Volume 4: Issue 3

## **Important Dates:**

Next Meeting Date is:  
13 November 2001  
7:30 PM Upstairs Meeting Room

Program: Jim Campbell will show slides of "The Year In Review", a synopsis of the activities and events of RRAA during 2001. Cake will be served as we celebrate our year end with a "Spousal Appreciation Night".

DOOR PRIZE: Ted Scheunemann will have Wintering Board, Jim Campbell will provide Candle holders and Coasters.

## **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**

As usual, our members continue to share their successes and experiences. Thanks to those discussing the past honey season. The crop year extended into early September in the Interlake, while some sunflower crops yielded only about 30 pounds of honey. In other areas, alfalfa honey granulated already! Early capped honey held over 20% moisture. Bears are becoming a pest around Birds Hill Park, while skunks are still making their presence known. Lots of things to contend with.

At our November meeting, I plan to show you a sneak preview of the presentation we will give at the MBA Annual Meeting on November 26. It will be a "Year In Review" for the RRAA.

What a GREAT Honey Show at St. Vital Shopping Centre the weekend of 26 October! My THANKS goes out to all the volunteers. The display was very impressive.

One day, while attending the show, I counted an average of 5 new people every minute from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. stopping by the display. What a great testimony to the helpfulness of our members providing positive "Honey" information to the public. Many young children were

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## RRAA Executive Members

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excited to hear the "Buzz" from the "Live Bees", as they placed their ear close to one of the air holes of the observation hive, or felt the heat they make!

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 "Year in Review", some coffee, and cake. We realize that it may be a long weekend for some, yet we also recognize that this remembrance day, many will be thinking of the tragic events from September 11 (just two months ago).

See you at our November 13th meeting!!!

Jim Campbell

## **Red River Apiarists' Association**

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting - October 9, 2001**

The regular meeting of the Red River Apiarists' Association was held at the River Heights Community Club on October 9, 2001. Jim Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with 19 members and guests present.

#### **Minutes:**

Jim Campbell reviewed the minutes of the September 11 regular meeting.

#### **Committee Reports:**

##### **Newsletter:**

Jim Campbell requested that members submit articles to Doug Henry for inclusion in the Bee Cause. These articles may be original or material chosen from other publications which is suitable for our newsletter.

Minutes from September and October will appear in the Nov. Bee Cause.

Heather Laird, editor of the Manitoba Beekeeper, could also use original articles and photos.

##### **Honey Show:**

Members were urged to volunteer their time for the Honey Promotion at Kildonan Place on Oct 19 to 21 and the Honey Show at the St. Vital Shopping Centre on October 26 to 28. The phone committee will contact our membership to draw up a schedule. Henry Wiebe observed that posters and photographs attract more attention than video presentations at honey show.

##### **Nominating Committee:**

A nominating committee will be set up at the next executive meeting on October 11, 2001.

##### **Financial Report:**

Dennis Ross reported that the RRAA account is presently \$3068.45

##### **MBA Report:**

Don Dixon informed us that the MBA business meeting will be held at the Canada Inn at Polo Park, in Winnipeg, on Nov. 26, 2001. The MBA Convention will take place at the Victoria Inn in Brandon on February 11 and 12th.

##### **Executive Meeting:**

An executive meeting will take place at Perkins Restaurant (Kildonan Crossing) on Oct. 11 at 3:30 PM.

##### **November Regular Meeting:**

Winding up the year 2001. Jim is preparing a Power Point slide show showing some of the many RRAA

activities for the MBA Convention. We will be able to enjoy the preview.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM**

##### **Program:**

Don Dixon gave us a slide presentation on preparing bees for winter.

Ron Rudiak (Secretary - RRAA)

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## **Red River Apiarists' Association**

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting - Sept 11, 2001**

The regular meeting of the Red River Apiarists' Association was held at the River Heights Community Club on Sept. 11, 2001. Rhéal Lafrenière called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with 27 members and guests present.

#### **Minutes**

Rhéal Lafrenière detailed the motions passed and the highlights of the last executive meeting.

#### **Committee Reports:**

##### **Honey Show:**

Rhéal noted that the Open Basic class has now been changed in name to Sweet Taste. This class is for new beekeepers or those who have not entered the honey competition before..

The Honey Promotion is going ahead at Kildonan Place on Oct 19 to 21 and the Honey Show is scheduled to take place at the St. Vital Shopping Centre on October 26 to 28

##### **Loonie Draw:**

Three draws were made for boxes of feeder jars donated by Ted Scheuneman.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM**

##### **Program:**

Jen Thwaites gave us a presentation on her personal experience using bee stings to successfully control her multiple sclerosis. Rhéal Lafrenière presented information on mite control to ensure good honey production and successful wintering.

Ron Rudiak (Secretary - RRAA)

## Honey Show a Busy 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 26 October to 28 October, 2001. The Honey competition attracted 21 entries, while the Baking competition on Saturday displayed 19 enticing entries.

Thanks to Sam Barlin and Randy from Bee Maid for examining the honey late Thursday night. Jars were transported to St. Vital, and placed on the shelving originally made by Murray Porter. Dennis Ross and Jim Campbell arranged the colourful winner 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. The new bright orange "Honey" stands, by Doctor Decal, provided an attractive 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 3000 and 5000 people visited the hive. They learned that the "Buzz" isn't as bad as it seems! Thanks to Henry Wiebe, Wayne Proudlove, Ken Fehler, Ted Scheuneman, Rheel Lafreniere, Dennis Ross, Jim Campbell, Brian Shewfelt, Emil Rekrut and Mrs. Anderson for providing informative "mini talks" to everyone passing our way. This still proves to be a crowd pleaser. Charles also provided a bee suit, and a small extractor with frames. Another item for industry interaction! The industry display is a great way to communicate with the public. This year we seemed to discover a more educated visitor. Questions about vitamins in honey, bee sting impact on arthritis, use of honey or pollen for

stroke recovery, where propolis could be obtained, protein and mineral content of pollen, use of honey for wounds, and the quality of the product, were more prevalent than in any other year. In addition, many younger folks were aware of a "queen" in the hive. Seems like more people are concerned for health, and more youth are aware of "nature". The level of interest certainly meant we had to be more knowledgeable of the technical elements of our industry than in previous years.

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. This will move our image away from the typical "craft table" presentation. We originally planned to use boards, however vendors were set up before they arrived. Next year's shelf will likely be about 12" above the table.

Patti Page, St. Vital Centre, joined Brendan Boon and Ron Robinson, from CBC Radio, to do the Baking tasting under the guidance of Rheel. Thanks for making this look so easy! The Blueberry Muffins and Pumpkin Pie sure tasted great! These folks also participated in a "blind" honey tasting demonstration, much to the enjoyment of the shoppers watching the activities.

Thanks to Charles Polcyn for doing the promotions. The use of CBC staff, and the item on "A" Channel, Big Breakfast seemed to have been caught by several visitors to our display area. Several people wanted to meet Ron Robinson, as they heard him say he was coming to the show.

Although there are things to do differently next year, I am thankful to the many who made this year's show such a great success. This truly was a job of which we can be proud!  
Jim Campbell, 2001 Honey Show Chair.

## Honey of an idea launched through Food Development Centre

BY Jodi Ferguson

Manfred Villing has a honey of an idea.

The Winnipeg inventor and entrepreneur knew if he could combine the delectable flavour of honey with the smooth, spreadable consistency of butter, he could revolutionize the breakfast-spread industry. But much like oil and water, honey and butter do not mix without a lot of hard work and coaxing. And that's where the technical staff at the Food Development Centre came in.

"I was tired. I was disappointed. I was spending thousands of dollars. I needed to find a place for acceptance," says Villing, President of Wittmann Foods International Inc. "I found the right place finally."

Villing, 57, says he immediately felt at home with the qualified staff at the Food Development Centre. At a technical and laboratory level, they helped him with research and development he would not have been able to carry out on his own. The Centre was also instrumental in helping him gain access to the Manitoba Milk Marketing Board and a major honey producer for the raw products he needed.

Villing has had a diverse career. His first job as a boy in his native Germany was working in his father's bakeshop, decorating cakes and making gingerbread men. Later, he studied and was employed in window dressing and interior design. After coming to Canada in 1961, he applied his considerable creative abilities to residential construction. But his entrepreneurial mind was always coming up with new ideas for products that would one day hit the market. One of those ideas was a patented easy-pour spout for milk and juice boxes.

His heart never strayed far from the food industry where he started forty years earlier, and he became interested in developing and marketing a breakfast spread consisting of the two delicious tastes of honey and butter. The concept had been tried years ago in Europe with little success. Villing felt that the product had potential, if only he could get the two key ingredients to combine without risk of separating.

He began experimenting in his kitchen at home and then brought a sample to the University of Mani-

toba's food science department for testing. In the meantime, he performed further research and educated himself by taking courses in dairy science. What he discovered strengthened his resolve: Canada has an abundance of both butter and honey and Villing knew it would be no problem to find excellent quality raw ingredients for his product.

Then fate intervened. Seven years ago a professor at the University of Manitoba introduced Villing to a consultant at what was then the National Agri-Food Technology Centre (NAFTC) in Portage la Prairie. Villing welcomed the suggestion to bring his fledgling product out to the Centre, now FDC, for further testing and development. And Villing has never looked back.

The food product consultants and pilot plant technicians at FDC faced major challenges in helping Villing develop his honey butter product. First, they had to find an effective binding agent to keep the honey and butter together and give the product a shelf life of at least six months. Next, they had to figure out a way of preventing the honey from crystallizing. Villing also was committed to maintaining the product's high quality taste, consistency and nutritional value while using the least amount of preservatives.

One of Villing's first moves was to launch a marketing survey to gauge the consumer perception of a honey butter spread. Villing has travelled frequently to trade shows, handing out samples of his honey butter, and the reaction has been extremely positive. Because of the way it is processed, the honey butter is lower in fat than regular butter and combines with the natural goodness of Manitoba produced honey.

The refrigerated version of the honey butter is now complete and will be shelved with products like butter and cream cheese in the dairy section of grocery stores. Along with food product consultants at FDC, Villing is now working to perfect a shelf-stable version of the honey butter that he is hoping to export. The product will be located in grocery store aisles with other spreads such as peanut butter and jams.

In addition to the original honey butter flavour, Villing and the FDC product development staff have been experimenting with variations, including strawberry, banana and lemon honey butters.

Despite the myriad challenges in launching a new food product to the general public, Villing expects to

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see Wittmann's Original Honey Butter on grocery store shelves by autumn of this year. He also hopes to launch the shelf-stable version in such distant locales as Chile and Brazil and he welcomes help exporting the product.

Now that Wittmann's honey butter is ready to make its debut, Villing will have to find a place to produce it. He is considering a facility close to FDC in Portage la Prairie.

*Jodi Ferguson is a freelance journalist in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.*

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**MANITOBA EXTENSION REPORT**  
**Rhéal Lafrenière Extension Apiarist**  
**Manitoba Agriculture & Food**

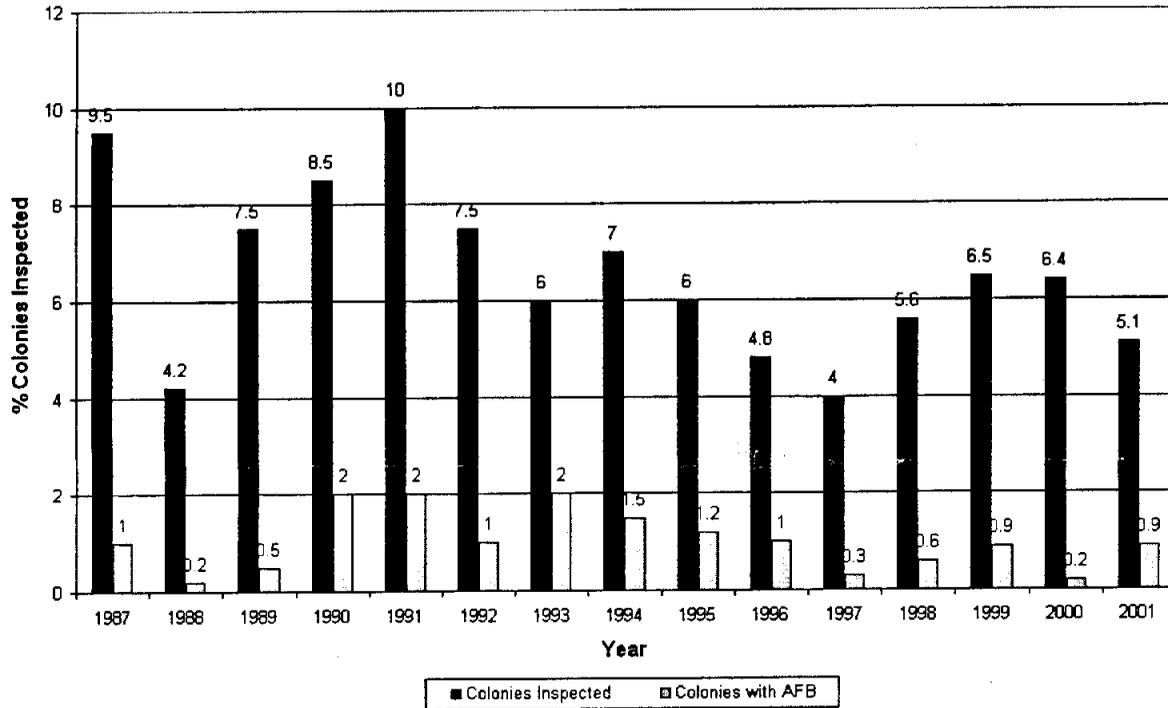
This summer the Apiary Inspection and Disease Control Program inspected 4,692 colonies, which represents 5.1% of the estimated total number of colonies in the province (**Figure 1**).

Although the level of AFB found in the inspected operations remains low (i.e. less than 1%) the number of operations with low levels of AFB is relatively high. We found disease in 15 beekeeping operations out of the 257 operations inspected (5.8%). Similar to last year, but perhaps on a larger scale, we conducted antibiotic resistance tests on the positive AFB samples that have come through our lab. This year, we tested 31 AFB sample and found all of them to be susceptible to oxytetracycline (i.e. No AFB). The fact that we continue to find operations with low levels of AFB indicates that although this disease does not appear to be out of control, it is still an important problem that requires close monitoring and effective control strategies. Removal of infected equipment and treating the surviving colony with antibiotic (i.e. oxytetracycline hydrochloride) is still the recommended AFB disease control strategy. For a complete description of antibiotic treatment used to control AFB, please consult the Manitoba Agriculture and Food "2001 Recommendations for Administering Antibiotics and

**Acaricides to Honey Bee Colonies".**

The distribution of Varroa and Honey Bee Tracheal Mite (HBTM) continues to spread, in that both mites are now considered widespread across the province. Refer to **Figure 2 and 3** for a breakdown of the Varroa and HBTM inspection results by region. In addition to finding new beekeeping operations with Varroa and HBTM we are finding more operations with low levels of both mites. It is suspected that low levels of both mites can be as damaging to the bees as high levels of either mite. At this time, we do not have good economic thresholds for cases when both mites are present; therefore we have been recommending that beekeepers should consider controlling either Varroa or HBTM prior to wintering the bees. Given that Varroa treatment using Apistan® is very simple and effective in the fall, beekeepers are often choosing to treat with Apistan® in the fall to control Varroa and formic acid in the spring to control HBTM. Although formic acid is registered to control both Varroa and HBTM, many beekeepers have reported occasional queen losses after the treatment. For that reason and because of reports of poor control in the fall, we generally have not been recommending using formic acid in the fall. For those wanting to control HBTM in the fall, the treatment of choice for most beekeepers has been menthol boards, provided they can be applied before the weather gets to cold. Two or three treatments 5 - 7 days apart has been reported to very successful at reducing the level of HBTM in the colonies. Again for a complete description of the treatment of Varroa and HBTM using Fluralinate (Apistan®), formic acid and/or menthol, please refer to the "2001 Recommendations for Administering Antibiotics and Acaricides to Honey Bee Colonies" or contact Don Dixon (204) 945-3861 or Rhéal Lafrenière (204) 945-4825 for more information.

### Inspected Colonies and AFB Incidence



**Figure 1**

### 2001 VARROA MITE INSPECTION STATISTICS

REGION	POSITIVE OPERATIONS
Northwest	6 OUT OF 40 = 15%
Southwest	7 OUT OF 53 = 13%
Central	5 OUT OF 30 = 17%
Eastern-Interlake	31 OUT OF 90 = 34%
Winnipeg	12 OUT OF 30 = 40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61 OUT OF 243 = 25%</b>

**Figure 2**

## 2001 HONEY BEE TRACHEAL MITE INSPECTION STATISTICS

REGION	POSITIVE OPERATIONS
Northwest	21 OUT OF 40 = 53%
Southwest	26 OUT OF 50 = 52%
Central	14 OUT OF 30 = 47%
Eastern-Interlake	43 OUT OF 88 = 49%
Winnipeg	11 OUT OF 30 = 37%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115 OUT OF 238 = 48%</b>

**Figure 4**

**2001 Honey Show Competition Winners**  
St. Vital Shopping Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
October 26-28, 2001

**Liquid White Honey:**

1. Ted Scheuneman
2. Jim Campbell
3. Brian Shewfelt
4. Charles Polcyn
5. Ron Rudiak

**Creamed Honey:**

1. Jim Campbell
2. Ray Hourd
3. Ron Rudiak
4. Brian Shewfelt

**Buckwheat Honey:**

1. Charles Polcyn
- 2.

**Sunflower Honey:**

1. Brian Shewfelt
2. Charles Polcyn

**Sweet Taste:**

1. Ted Scheuneman
2. Ray Hourd
3. Charles Polcyn
4. Jim Campbell

**Frame of Honey:**

1. Brian Shewfelt
2. Ron Rudiak

**Chunk Honey:**

1. Ron Rudiak
2. Ray Hourd

**Comb Honey:**

1. Charles Polcyn
- 2.

**Baking with Honey - Muffins:**

1. Anne Plett
2. Lorna Miner
3. Joyce Trapmore

Margaret Kunz

**Baking with Honey - Cookies:**

1. Donna Hourd
2. Krystle Ross
3. Anne Plett
4. Lorna Miner
5. Margaret Kunz

4.

**Baking - Quick/Yeast Bread:**

1. Margaret Kunz
1. Linda Ross
2. Lorna Miner

**Baking with Honey - Cakes:**

1. Anne Plett
2. Margaret Kunz
3. Lorna Miner

**Baking with Honey - Pies:**

1. Lorna Miner
- 2.

**Baking - Dainties + Squares**

1. Linda Ross
2. Krystle Ross

## 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

### **Presenter Wanted:**

Roma Falsarella, teacher at Precious Blood School, St. Boniface, 233-4327 is looking for a French speaking Beekeeper to do a presentation on Bees and Honey for her class. If you can help, please call her and arrange a time. Please let Jim Campbell (467-5246) know if you call her, so he will stop looking for a presenter.

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

## Editor's Comments

This month the newsletter is back up to 10 almost full pages. Thanks to all the contributors for their hard efforts.

I haven't received any reports from anyone regarding the membership list and address information published last month so it seems all the information was correct. I check all the printed envelopes against the membership list to try and ensure everyone gets their copy of the newsletter.

You may have noticed a Mead recipe in last month's issue. I made a batch this weekend. I promise to let you know how it turns out if I'm still around after drinking it.

No one has come forward with any cooking recipes using honey yet. Don't miss out on an opportunity to showcase your talents.

Heard via the grapevine that our Chair, Jim Campbell, received the Reserve Grand Champion Honey award at the Canadian Western Agribition in Regina. Seems like there were 12 contestants in the liquid honey category. Jim also took 4th place in the granulated honey. Manitoba honey must be good eh? as Jim also took a first place at our own show.

Doug

### **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 ☛