

THE BEE CAUSE

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Special Points of Interest:

PROGRAM:

The March 8th program will be a presentation from Dr. Rob Currie. He will be providing a talk on "Manitoba Queen Stocks and how they compare to Others",

NEXT MEETING: Date is March 8th, 7:30 pm @ the River Heights Community Center. Located at 1370 Grosvenor street.

Cargill Discontinues selling Honey Replacement !

Mann Lake Ltd has a partnership with Cargill Sweeteners providing HFCS and Sucrose products to beekeepers as a livestock feed. They purchase a large volume of HFCS products annually from Cargill Sweeteners.

In a letter from Mann Lake, dated Feb 2 2005 they let Cargill know about the concerns of beekeepers ranging from illegal foreign dumping of honey on the US market to ultra-filtered honey from China that bears little resemblance to real honey. Mann Lake Ltd mentioned that feelings of goodwill towards Cargill as a company have been changed to an adversarial attitude as they market imitation honey as an 'affordable honey product'.

Following lengthy discussions Cargill decided to discontinue the sales of Likewise™ product.

Presidents Comments

The signs of spring are still rather dim here in Manitoba. Some beekeepers are worried that some of their outside hives may not be showing any signs of life now. It is not generally a good idea to disturb the hives now as the cluster may not be able to close up tight enough to keep up the desirable temperatures.

If the hive took down 1 to 2 gallons of liquid syrup last fall, they should be OK to carry thru into April. If they are wintering on a late canola flow, they will find it difficult to re-liquefy the crystallized honey for their needs. Not much can be done at this time other than hope for several days of +10 weather so that the hive can process the stored honey.

The MBA meetings were well attended and people found the afternoon workshop on disease recognition very useful. AFB is certainly becoming a larger problem and beekeepers have to be able to recognize the early signs of this problem.

I had a chance to see some bees in SW Mexico and found them very active in their protection of the hive area. The honey produced was dark in color with a distinct wildflower taste. The beekeepers have found that they have to keep their hives in a much more isolated area so that neighbors or livestock are not disturbed. However production is higher than in the past, and there has been an increase in local sales.

It is still time to keep up with equipment repair and frame building during these waning days of winter. Also it is useful to have a good look at any brood frames in storage, or any frames from hives that have died out already for any signs of AFB or ? Let us hope for an early dry spring so that the bees can do some early flying this year.

Happy Easter to all.

Charles Polcyn

RRAA Executive Members

President: Charles Polcyn
Ph 284-7064
845 kebir
Winnipeg, MB
Email: charlespolcyn@yahoo.com.

1st Vice President: Heather Laird
Ph 475-2307
1003 Jessie Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3M 1A1
Email: hlaird@mb.sympatico.ca

2nd Vice President: Judith Roe
Ph 895-2266
Winnipeg, MB
Email: N/A

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

Treasurer: Dennis Ross
Ph 878-2924
Group 40, Box 20, RR2
Lorette, MB R0A 0Y0
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: Jim Campbell
Ph 467-5246
Box 234
Stonewall, MB R0C 2Z0
Email: jaycam@mb.sympatico.ca

Newsletter : Dan Lecocq
PH 255-1043
166 Desjardins Dr
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3X 1M6
Email: dnlecocq@mts.net

Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the General Meeting Feb. 8, 2005

Jim Campbell opened the meeting at 7:30 PM with 34 members and guests present.

Minutes: Jim asked if there were any errors or omissions noted in the minutes of the January meeting which were circulated in the February Bee Cause. No errors or omissions were noted. Moved by Ron Rudiak and seconded by Rod Boudreau that the minutes be accepted. Carried.

MBA Convention: Jim presented a summary of the 2005 MBA Convention.

Funeral Announcement: Jim Campbell announced that the funeral for Fred Jones would be held at the Highway Tabernacle in Portage la Prairie on February 11 at 2:00 PM.

CHC Convention: Ron Rudiak gave a presentation on the PMRA proposal for reduced-risk pesticide registration.

Program: Mr. Rasoul Bahreini of Iran gave a presentation on varroa mite and controls used in Iran.

Loonie Draw:

Bee Culture (Gleanings)
Eugene Kostecki
Steve Rohtaynsky
John Noll

Mann Lake Catalogue
Lance Waldner
Ed Czarnecki
Ken Fehler

Saskatchewan Beekeepers' Assoc. Pin
Morris Essar
John Badiuk

Decorative Candle
Fran Smee
Cloverfield Beeswax Foundation
Ken Fehler

Screened Bottom Board
Janice Lupinetti
Walter Wright

Thanks to those people who entered the loonie draw and those who donated the prizes.

The Loonie Draw added \$29.00 to our general account.

Ron Rudiak,

RRAA secretary

The Need for Late Winter Examination

Each year, you try to do your best to assure the presence of a healthy, young queen of preferred beestock, to provide adequate food reserves, to maintain disease-free colony conditions and to provide winter protection for all of your colonies. At this time of year, it is important to check on your colonies during a late winter colony inspection.

The purpose of a late winter inspection is to answer several important questions:

1. Is a colony alive or dead?
2. How available are the food reserves to the cluster?
3. What is the health status of the colony?

Quite simply, a dead or severely dwindled colony should



be dismantled and moved out of the apiary to a bee-tight storage area or closed up until it can be moved out. This will effectively eliminate the dead or weak colony from becoming a potential source of diseases or pests to neighbouring colonies due to robbing or drifting behaviour. Later examination of the hive equipment may allow for determination of the cause(s) of the colony's demise.

Queens in colonies wintered in Alberta generally begin egg-laying in mid- to late January and brood rearing will expand if sufficient pollen stores are available within the cluster - even when outside temperatures are well below -18 degrees Celsius. Winter survival problems can arise, even with adequate food reserves, when the cluster cannot maintain contact with its food reserves. Generally, the cluster will not leave the brood to

maintain contact with its food reserves. This is especially the case with small clusters that can cover only a few frames.

Sometimes, the cluster will simply eat its way in one direction, lose contact with its food reserves and starve in one corner of the brood chamber. The cluster may be able to expand during mild weather breaks, but due to a sudden return of cold temperatures, cannot move quickly enough to get into contact again with its food reserves. As a result, a large number of small colonies can die in January and February. This can even happen in more populous colonies if food reserves are inadequate or improperly positioned in the hive.

In the general literature, it is recommended not to examine your colonies at temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius. If you plan to do more extensive work, the ambient air temperature should not be less than 15 degrees Celsius. This is fine if you live in a place without typical prairie winters. These recommended outside daytime temperatures are really quite high compared to the temperatures that can normally occur in late February and March when outside work is necessary.

You should not delay an examination of your colonies by waiting for the warm temperatures generally recommended for handling honeybees outside. These temperatures are not realistic for Alberta beekeepers who may have to handle their honeybees in the cold or lose them. It has been the experience of many beekeepers that some colonies alive in April would not have survived without some assistance in late February or early March.

Of course, any and all hive inspections and adjustments that you do must be done quickly. Any disturbance of the cluster usually causes a rise in bee activity and a rise in cluster temperature. This is quite normal and you should go ahead with the necessary work. An outside air temperature of even 0 degrees Celsius on a clear, sunny day with little or no wind is quite acceptable for early inspections. The consensus of beekeepers who do examine their colonies in late February and March as part of their routine management is that it is a risk/benefit analysis situation when you look at your colonies in cold weather. It appears that the benefits outweigh the risks.

Prior to the actual examination, you should assemble everything you may need beforehand. You must be able to assess each colony quickly and respond accordingly to each situation observed.

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Choose a cloudy day when the outside air temperature is around the freezing mark. A warm, sunny day might induce the bees to break cluster and fly too much. That could result in the bees not being able to recluster properly and ultimately result in a lot of chilled bees.

First, remove the outdoor pack cover and any hive top insulation. With your smoker ready, gently pry up any inner cover. Use a little smoke to calm the honeybees. Leave any adhering honeybees on the cover and put them aside, exposed side up.

Look down between the frames in the top box to check for adequate honey reserves in contact with the cluster. A fully capped frame of honey equals about 6.5 pounds of food reserves. The colony, in a standard hive, should have from four to six frames of honey in contact with the cluster. Such a colony should be secure for another three to four weeks.

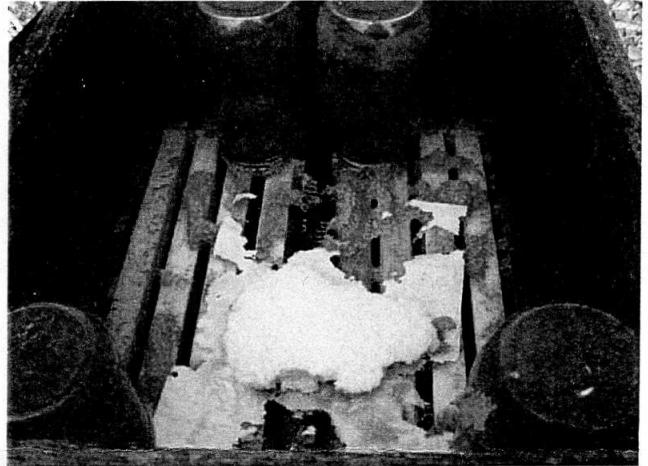
Colonies that have sufficient but improperly positioned food reserves can be quickly adjusted. Move combs of honey to the cluster, rather than the other way around. If you need to centre the entire cluster to surround it with food reserves, you must move the frames as a single unit. Do this as carefully as possible so as not to break up or disturb the cluster.

Do not remove frames that contain pollen.

If you need to feed a colony, honey is best at this time of year. A frame of honey, saved during the harvest, for each colony is an ideal source of food. You can also use granulated honey. However, in both choices, diseasefree sources must be used.

Placing an inside frame feeder filled with granulated honey or dry granulated sugar, in position adjacent to the cluster, is an effective way to feed bees. If you do feed dry sugar, you will have to provide some way to maintain moisture in the hive so that the bees can liquefy the sugar for food. If you do place the dry sugar onto an inner cover (where it can be accessed through a feed hole) you should cover the sugar with a sheet of plastic to retain hive moisture. You could add liquid honey to the sugar in a frame feeder to provide moisture as well as make the sugar more attractive to the bees.

Feeding sugar syrup at this time can cause excessive moisture, and possibly dysentery problems, especially in small colonies. It can also chill the bees, cause the cluster to become restless and can stimulate food consumption. Any sugar syrup that you feed should be warm and as concentrated as possible (2:1 sugar-water) and limited in volume initially. If you determine there is a shortage of pollen near the cluster, a pollen substitute or a pollen supplement should be provided.



In this picture a hive is feed dry sugar as an emergency.

Sometimes you may find a colony that is near starvation. The whole cluster appears restless and shivering. If the colony is worth saving (considering labour and time involved versus expected results), there are a few alternative methods you can use to try to salvage the bees. Use of a frame feeder may not be effective as the bees may be too weak to move to the feeder.

You can drizzle warm sugar syrup directly over the bees slowly. Allow the bees to clean themselves before applying more. You can also provide a frame with warm syrup or honey poured into the cells. When the bees appear to have recovered, you can then place a frame feeder filled with honey or dry sugar next to the cluster.

Another quick-fix remedy is to use frames of honey. If the honey is capped, you may have to remove the cappings to allow the cluster quick access to the honey.

Where colonies are populous, many beekeepers provide extra feed by using a division board or frame feeder filled with granulated honey or warm sugar syrup. Some fill empty brood combs with syrup using a sprayer. Others prefer to feed granulated sugar placed onto the inner cover, leaving the feed hole open to allow the honeybees access to the sugar. However, feeding sugar - dry or syrup - at this time of the year is stressful for the colony. When you provide supplemental feed, you should limit the amounts initially, gradually increasing the quantity on your next visits. Feeding large amounts at one time will usually have a negative effect on colony build-up. The colony has to divert energy to handle the sugar rather than to rear brood and maintain hive temperatures. The brood nest may also become "plugged"

with excess syrup, interfering with egg-laying by the queen.

Another method that has been used to feed a colony until other forms of supplement can be applied is the "candy-board." If you do use this method, it is recommended to use the soft or fondant formulation. One problem of the candy board is the same as when granulated honey or dry sugar is used to feed colonies. The honeybees do need some moisture to allow them to liquefy the sugar. There may be sufficient moisture in the hive from the condensed water vapour produced by the cluster as they respire. The moisture content of the candy mentioned below can reduce the need for extra moisture to liquefy the sugars in the mixture,

If you would like to try this fondant, a recipe is available from my office.

For those of you who are less adventurous there is a commercially available fondant candy available through the Alberta Honey Producers' Cooperative in Spruce Grove. Call Derrick for quantities and prices (780-962-5667). Within the last three or four years, the need for a mid- to late-winter colony inspection has taken on new urgency for beekeepers. There is a need to monitor your colonies for the presence of bee diseases and parasitic mites.

The best time to monitor and to sample your colonies is now.

For information on sampling and detection methods, contact the Apiculture office in Falher (780-837-2211) or Edmonton (780-422-1789) using the RITE system (780-310-0000).

The late winter inspection with its necessary adjustments and/or supplemental feedings of honey, sugar, pollen substitutes or supplements will generally assure the survival and normal development of your colonies until natural sources of pollen and nectar are available. When winters are severe, you may have to inspect your colonies every two to three weeks and apply additional food reserves.

Mid-winter to late winter checks, if done quickly and carefully, will not greatly stress your colonies. Removing the hive cover will not cause problems but disturbing the cluster, in anyway, will. Winter losses due to inadequate food reserves can be prevented by your inspection of each colony as early as possible. However, if many colonies require feeding at this time of year, you may have to re-examine your winter preparation schedule to ensure adequate food reserves in future years.

Oxalic Acid Registration Underway in Canada

Submitting the documentation is not the end of the process. We are only half way. It is expected to take a year for final approval. In the meantime there are fees and costs involved in the preparation of further information for the PMRA. There are gaps in the Canadian research and other unforeseen expenses. We welcome any donations to this project.

The registration of a pesticide is normally done by a chemical company. In the case of oxalic acid, the product is readily available and no drug company would be interested in paying the high cost of registration (up to \$260,000 plus 3% of sales) plus the cost of research and preparation of documentation. Apiculture is a minor use industry and there is only a limited market to provide a return on investment.

CHC members believe that we need this effective low risk pesticide. To date we have raised \$26,000 towards our project but the cost of registration is high. We need ongoing support to maintain the momentum.

Send any donations to
Canadian Honey Council
Suite 236
234-5149 Country Hills Blvd
Calgary AB T3A 5K8

Saskatraz honeybee project gets \$10,000 grant from SaskAg

National Post
Canadian Press
Tuesday, February 08, 2005

(CP) - Saskatchewan Agriculture is giving a \$10,000 grant to the Saskatchewan Beekeepers' Association for its Saskatraz project.

The name "Saskatraz" refers to an apiary of honeybee colonies that will be kept in isolation while they are monitored and selected for mite resistance.

The association started Saskatraz to find honeybee stock that is resistant to Varroa and Tracheal mites, determine the resistant genes and produce resistant breeding stock.

The goal is to allow Saskatchewan beekeepers to maintain productive colonies without the need for chemical controls.

INTRODUCTORY BEEKEEPING COURSE

University of Guelph Apiculture Field Laboratory
April 23 and 24, 2005
Cost: \$175, lunches and tax included
Limited to 24 participants

Combination of lectures, labs, and hands-on experience with bee hives.

Small group format. Topics include basic bee biology, getting started in beekeeping, equipment, site selection, colony inspections, seasonal hive management, extracting and processing honey, disease and pest control, and beekeeping regulations.

Instructors: Paul Kelly (Staff Apiarist), Dr. Gard Otis (Apiculture Professor), Dr. Ernesto Guzman (Apiculture Professor), Barb Locke (U. of G. Apiary Employee).

To obtain a course registration form or further course information please contact: Paul Kelly, Department of Environmental Biology, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON, N1G 2W1, (Tel) 519-836-8897 (Email) pgkelly@uoguelph.ca.

If you request a course registration form, please provide your full postal address.

After we receive your registration and fee, an acknowledgement letter, schedule, accommodation listing, and map will be sent out with your receipt.

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Paul Kelly
Department of Environmental Biology
The University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario
N1G 2W1

Tel: 519-836-8897
Fax: 519-837-0442
E-mail: pgkelly@uoguelph.ca
or: pgkelly@evb.uoguelph.ca

CFIA Reviewing Honey Regulations

Thirty seven responses were received from industry. After consideration of the comments the CFIA has produced a summary of the outcome. Producers are requested to send any further comments on the proposed changes to the CFIA before March 31, 2005.

Outcome of the Honey Regulations Consultation 2004

RESPONSES

- 37 Responses received
- 8 Associations/ Groups
- All Assessed and proposals drafted

DEFINITIONS/ APPLICATIONS

- Codex definitions and standard for honey
- Revoke indication for "Pasteurized" and prohibit opposite indicators
- Add definition/standard for:
 - Drained, extracted, comb and pressed honey
 - Honey products
 - Naming the flavor of the honey
 - Honey with(naming the ingredient)

GRADES/ STANDARDS

Main Panel : 3 statements

Same size, font and color:

- Grade NO. 1,2,3 + color;
- "Product of (One country) " or" Blended & packaged in (Country);
- Blend of (list countries by % to nearest 25%)
- Revise color standards (bulk & prepackaged)
 - * White 34mm or less
 - * Extra light amber 35-50mm
 - * Amber 51-85mm
 - * Dark 85mm or greater

New federal standard of identity:

Raw, unprocessed honey

No grade declared

OTHER SECTIONS

Health & Safety

- No significant changes

Registered Establishments

- Add minimum requirements for food establishments

Packing

- Retain standard container sizes
- Retain Ministerial exemptions

TRADE SECTIONS

- Keep export certification optional
- Maintain exemption for bulk honey movement across provincial boundaries if shipped to registered establishment

NEXT STEPS

- Any concerns with proposals?- need to achieve consensus positions
- Initiate detailed drafting of revised Honey Regulations
- Proceed with regulatory process
- Pre-publication in Part I of Canada Gazette not before 2006

dian Honey Council will be an active participant in this ongoing program.

Benefits to the industry can be in terms of pesticide registrations, research, education and communication. However, the beekeeping community must identify the requirements and priorities. The pest situation cannot be expected to remain static, but rather in a process of continuous evolution. A solution that may currently appear adequate for control of a specific pest may prove to be ineffective within a few years. This may require that the risk-reduction program will need to be continued over many years.

The PMRA objective is to facilitate access to low risk pesticides while reducing the regulatory and assessment burden for certain of these low risk products. In the US, the EPA exempted minimum risk pesticides from registration under FIFRA Section 25(b). Currently more than 30 actives, such as soybean oil, rosemary oil, mint and thyme are exempted.

Efficacy of alternatives often measures low compared with conventional pesticide materials. To make use of these alternatives, efficacy would be assessed as part of the regulatory process. By employing several controls working together, consumers may find these materials useful even though, individually, they may offer less than complete control.

Labelling on these reduced risk materials must be factual, indicating the performance levels in the instructions. With plant extract material there is a general perception that these are low risk which may or may not be true. Quality control during manufacture is important to ensure a consistent product and repeatable results. Data to support a suitable shelf life are also important.

The criteria necessary to qualify for minimal regulation include low toxicity, low risk to users, not persistent and generally not applied to a food crop. Simple first aid instructions must be made available for the user. There must be no risk of residues on off target crops, no adverse trade consequences and no potential for adverse environmental effects, even if used off-label.

Pesticide Risk Reduction Program for Honeybee Keeping

A risk-reduction strategy for honey

By Ron Rudiak - CHC Delegate

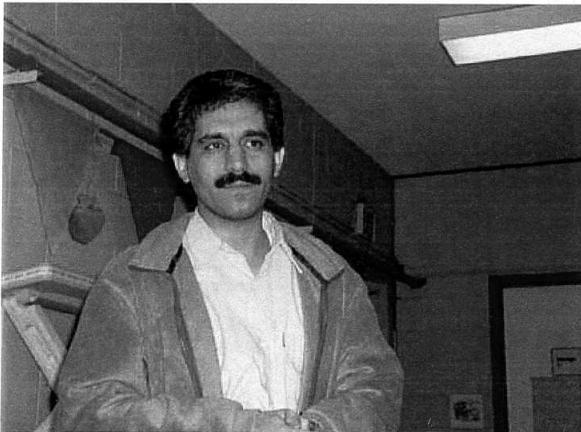
A voluntary program has been initiated by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to support beekeepers in making available low risk pesticides and producing quality honey in a sustainable industry. This will be a flexible program which will assist the beekeeping industry to address future areas of concern as they materialize.

PMRA will support the identification of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) priorities and possible solutions by the beekeeping community. This process has been initiated at the stakeholder meeting, held in Saskatoon in conjunction with the annual Canadian Honey Council meeting, on February 1, 2005. At this meeting stakeholders discussed several areas of concern expressed by the honey industry. It was concluded that the major problems, at this particular time, centre around controlling mites and other insect pests such as hive beetle and the greater wax moth. Cana-

Iran Research parallels Canada

Mr. Rasoul Bahreini, Animal Science Research Institute of Iran, Karadj, Iran, gave a presentation to members of RRAA on varroa mite and controls used in Iran. He indicated Iranian beekeepers have the same problems as here in Canada, since varroa came from Russia, in the North, during 1984. Although most beekeepers use the standard Langstroth hives, many still use hollow logs, large gourds, and skeps.

There are about 40,000 beekeepers in Iran with over 2 million colonies. Beekeepers use similar treatment products, however also use Thymol and Menthol based materials for varroa. Some treatments are geared towards using extracts from "Neem" tree

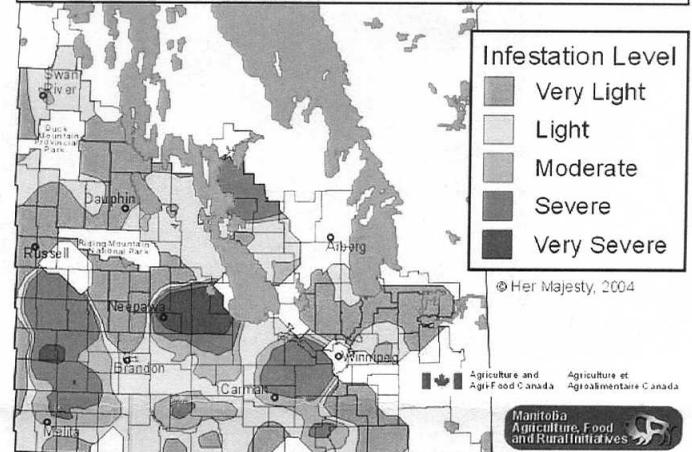


seeds. He also described treatments using Oxalic Acid in a spray and a trickling method. Since the spray is quite dangerous to the beekeeper, it is not recommended. The trickling method is preferred, as the lifting of the hive lid for a brief time does not promote "robbing" which easily happens with the spray method.

Mr. Bahreini is performing research at U of M while visiting Canada.

Jim Campbell

Manitoba Grasshopper Forecast - 2005



Hints & Tips

that make beekeeping easier and more pleasurable. The wooden wedge, or as Chris Slade says... "better still several".

If the bee-space between your boxes isn't quite it ought to be; if you haven't been liberal with the vaseline on your woodwork; if you haven't been squirting liquid paraffin into your hives every week, then you will need a wedge. At this time of year you go to lift a heavy super and find that the top bars of the box below are being pulled up as well, often too late to prevent a thorough and unfortunate disturbance and unnecessary stirring up of the bees. If you do realise in time what is happening you can lever the box up half an inch or less with the hive tool, then take the weight on your fingers while you bend down to see which frames are stuck and use the hive tool to free them. At this point your back gives up in protest.

With a wedge to hand you can stuff it into the gap to take the weight and leave room to drift some smoke in. Then you can change to a sensible position, kneeling maybe, and gently free the stuck frames without hassle to you or the bees.

Of course, when you lift the box the wedge will fall into the grass and hide, so dip the blunt end into the brightest paint you have, or put some coloured tape on it or staple some orange baler twine to it and tie the twine to a belt loop on your trousers... That way it's always within your reach.

Another use of the wedge is found when you discover the hive is not as level or as stable as you thought it was when it was shorter.

The wedge should be not much shorter than your hive tool and cut at shallow angle.

Join the CHC and support beekeeping in Canada



Name	Company	
Address	City	Province
Postal Code	Phone	
FAX	E-mail	
Visa #	Expiration Date	

Please make cheque payable to the Canadian Honey Council and mail to:

CANADIAN HONEY COUNCIL
 Suite 236, 234 - 5149
 Country Hills blvd NW
 Calgary, AB T3A 5K8
 FAX (403)547-4317



The Canadian Honey Council was formed in 1940 to provide liaison between beekeepers and the government and to assist beekeeping associations in promoting honey and pollination. Through the efforts of the Honey Council beekeepers expanded markets to the UK, achieved suitable regulations for the marketing of honey and survived the invasion of parasitic mites. Today, the CHC represents 9,000 beekeepers across Canada with annual honey production of 70 million pounds and a value of hive products over \$200 million.

Canadian Honey Council is funded entirely by membership dues. The board of directors is comprised of eight voting delegates. The six largest provinces each have one delegate, the three maritime provinces have one delegate and Bee Maid, the co-op honey packer, has one delegate. There are vacant seats for the Canadian Packers Association, the Canadian Pollinators Association and the Canadian Bee-Breeders Association. At present none of these groups are official associations but the door is open if they want to get organized and join the CHC.

Although a change to the voting structure of CHC has been proposed, the directors felt that such an important decision should not be rushed. The status quo will continue until a better plan has been worked out. The costs of running a national association have increased annually without any increase in the cost of membership for many years. As a result, the directors decided to increase membership fees for the financial year starting November 1st, 2004. There has also been a change to the categories of membership to better reflect the makeup of our industry.

The fee structure is as follows.

- Hobbyist (1 to 49 colonies) \$50
- Small Commercial (50 to 299) ... \$100
- Large Commercial (300 +) \$200
- Industry \$250

CLASSIFIEDS:

(Free for members.)

For sale: 4 frame nucs in the spring, disease free by inspection of Manitoba Agriculture. \$140.00 each
call Ray Kozak @ 204-242-2819

Wanted : Looking for a 200-300 gallon water tank for feeding. Also looking for 50 queen excluders..
Call Dan at 255-1043

For Sale in the Spring: Bees,boxes,supers,frame sets, nuc boxes,miscellaneous bee equipment.
Contact Charles Polcyn at 284-7064 or
Email at charlespolcyn@Yahoo.com

Honey prices

February 10 2005

United states department of Agriculture was reporting that packers were paying Canadian beekeepers
\$.95 U.S./ lb for mixed flowers ,white and \$.84 U.S. for canola, white (this info can be found on the USDA website)
\$.95U.S. = \$1.17 CDN
\$.84 U.S. = \$1.03 CDN (This is using a conversion rate of \$1.00 US = \$1.23 CDN)

Deadline for renewing memberships in the RRAA is March 31st!

Unpaid members will be removed from newsletter mailing list after this date.



RED RIVER APIARIST'S ASSOCIATION 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Please complete and mail with your cheque, for \$25.00, payable to: The Red River Apiarists' Association

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

CITY: _____ PROVINCE: _____ PHONE: _____

NEW MEMBER [] RENEWAL []

Mail to: Red River Apiarists' Association
Dennis Ross, Treasurer,
Group 40, Box 20, RR2
Lorette, MB R0A 0Y0`