

THE BEE CAUSE

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Tis Was a Nice Year!

The 2006 honey season can be summarized in just a few words – **long, hot, and dry** – at least in most areas. Colonies were relatively strong in the spring thanks to the mild winter, and plants, in particular dandelion, supported their develop-



ment with a good nectar and pollen flow early on. The canola flowed well in July, and many producers have a good amount of August alfalfa honey in their storage as well. In some areas, the alfalfa honey continued to trickle in at the end of August. Areas that received more moisture, like the northern Interlake and western half of the province, did better than drier areas, such as the Central region, yet overall the average production is expected to be higher than normal this year. Fortunately, the price of bulk honey has moved up from last year as well.

Now that the honey flow is over, or nearly over, and honey supers are removed, producers should be getting their hives ready for the long winter ahead and feeding and treating their bees as necessary. Generally, each hive, whether double or single, should receive 4-6 gallons of "66%" or "2:1" sugar syrup (ie. 2 parts sugar to 1 part water (by weight)) – this year, however, colonies may require more feed given the early halt of flow. In many areas of the province, there is little confidence in Apistan this year, as the varroa continues to resist the product, and producers are choosing to control varroa with CheckMite or a formic acid application. Nosema disease is also a concern and honey bee tracheal mite (HBTM) can be particular damaging in combination with varroa mite. Please read the label before applying a treatment and enjoy the fall season ahead!

David

David Ostermann M.Sc.



Special Points of interest:

PROGRAM:

The September 12th program will feature Rhéal Lafreniere on fall Management using formic acid and a summary of the honey season

NEXT MEETING: Date is September 12th ,7:30 pm @ the River Heights Community Center. Located at 1370 Grosvener street.

"Articles published in THE BEE CAUSE are the opinions of the Authors and are generally printed as received. They do not necessarily express the opinions of the Red River Apiarists Association,

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Red River Apiarists' Association**Red River Apiarists' Association
Minutes of the General Meeting May 9, 2006**

Heather Laird opened the meeting at River Heights Community Centre, Winnipeg.

Minutes: Moved by Emil Rekrut to accept the minutes of the April 11 meeting as published in the Bee Cause. Seconded by John Badiuk. Carried.

Canadian Census: The federal government requires that everyone is counted on either the Household Census form or the Agricultural Census form. If an individual keeps a few colonies of bees for their own garden or personal supply of honey they would be required to fill out the Household form. Where income is generated and deductions for business expenses are made a beekeeper would be required to fill out the Agricultural form.

2006 Honey Bee Swarm Response List: A sign-up list was circulated for those willing to retrieve swarms within their area.

Canadian Honey Council: Ron Rudiak discussed the present situation regarding the antidumping complaint.

Manitoba Beekeepers' Report: Jim Campbell provided an update on an expanded and improved insurance policy for the beekeepers of Manitoba. Coverage with the present insurance company has eroded and no longer covers much other than public events such as the honey show.

Moved by John Russell Badiuk and seconded by Fred Yelinek that the RRAA accept the Co-Operators Liability Insurance Proposal. Carried

Moved by Margaret Smith and seconded by Ron Rudiak that the RRAA share the cost of the improved insurance (1/3 - 2/3) with the MBA Carried

Moved by Emil Rekrut and seconded by Ken Rowes to share our mailing list with Co-Operators for sending out Liability Insurance information to RRAA members.

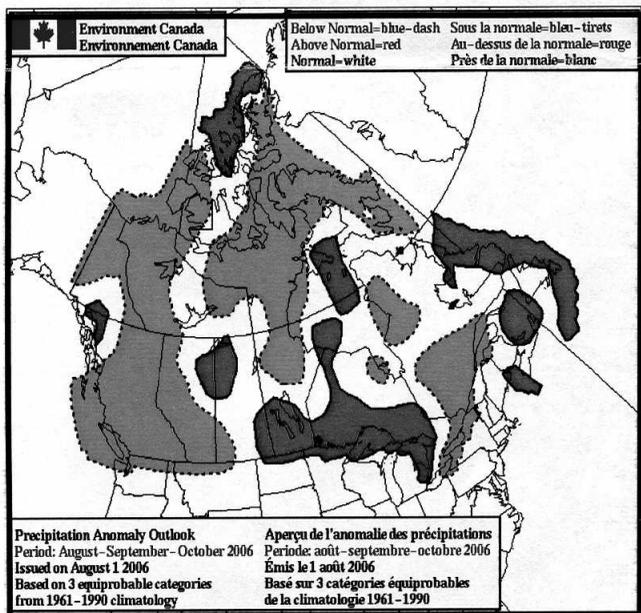
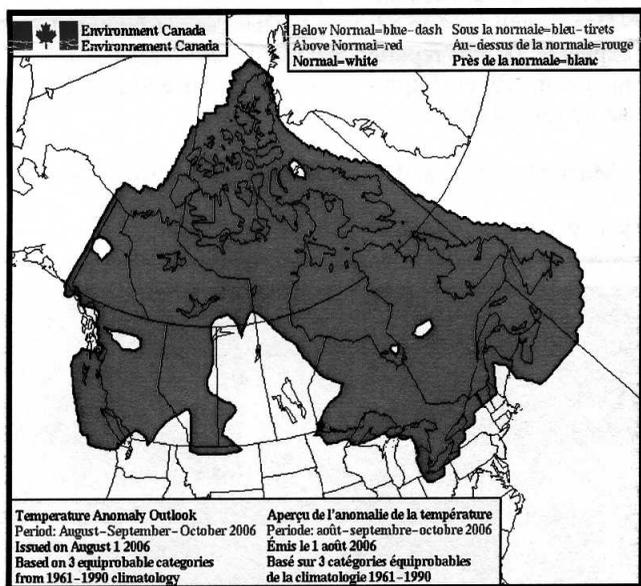
Program: Ron Rudiak gave a presentation on the value added marketing of honey.

Loonie Draw: The loonie draw was made for several items including an Apimondia book donated by Emil won by Nelson Szwaluk and a Beekeeping history book donated by Bee Maid and won by Howard Alexander. George Chwist's name was

drawn for the queen bee donated by John Badiuk. The draw proceeds totaled \$16.00

Ron Rudiak, RRAA Secretary

Fall Weather predictions for August , September and October 2006 for the Manitoba area



Honey - There's More to It Than You Think

While honey has the reputation of being a healthy food to consume, nevertheless, some people choose not to eat it because they consider it to be only a source of sugars that gives no special health benefits.

Researchers in the Agriculture and Life Sciences Division at Lincoln University have recently completed the first study of the health promoting compounds of a range of honeys and honeydew produced in New Zealand. They discovered that some honeys contain health promoting compounds such as antioxidants and that the color of the darker honeys may be an indication that they also contain high levels of minerals.

The honey studied all came from single varieties of flowers (mono-floral) and included: manuka, clover, rata, viper's bugloss, kamahi, nodding thistle, honeydew, rewarewa, tawari and thyme provided by Airborne Honey Limited of Canterbury.

Honeydew and thyme honey contained the highest levels of phenol compared to the other honeys, while thyme and rewarewa had the highest antioxidant activity of the ten honeys giving them the potential to play an important role in providing antioxidants to humans in a pleasant form.

-- Visit www.honeybeeworld.com/bee-1 for rules, FAQ and other info ---
GO TO: www.apitherapynews.com

Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the Executive Meeting - August 15, 2006

- **The RRAA executive meeting** was held at Off the Bridge on Pembina Hwy. with Heather Laird, Charles Polcyn, John Badiuk, Rhéal Lafrenière, Dennis Ross, Margaret Smith, David Ostermann, and Ron Rudiak present. Heather called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM.

- **Fall Program:** September - Treatment of bee diseases using organic acids -David Ostermann and Rhéal Lafrenière
October - Hive Manipulations - David Dawson
November - Journey to the Philippines - Charles Polcyn

- **2006 Honey Show at St. Vital Shopping Centre:** Oct. 13 to 15 in the same location as last year (front of Sears).

Colors of Manitoba Honey display- Beekeepers everywhere in Manitoba will be encouraged to submit two standard 500 gram jars of liquid honey for a display at the Honey Show. Jars will be made available at the Co-Op and at our meetings. Rhéal and David will provide a regional map which will be used to display where each sample comes from. At least 20 samples (two jars each) are required for display. Ron can furnish the varnished maple boards which were used for a similar display in 2005. Charles provided the tags for each jar with the beekeeper's name, location and honey source last year. Margaret has photographs of many of the common honey plants in Manitoba. Rhéal will assist with pictures for the display.

Read the Label display- Rhéal has some of the necessary material for this display. Shoppers taking the survey will be awarded a gift (possibly a small jar of Canadian honey or something similar). The survey questions would be professionally done, possibly by Karo, so that results may be useful to the honey industry.

An observation hive will be provided by the U of M and transported to the show by Margaret. She will also supply a blanket and insulating materials for the bees when they are placed under the display table at night.

Honey Competition: Rhéal and David will look after the judging. Jim Campbell may have some display materials.

Baking Competition: We will not have a baking section this year. Instead, we will provide handouts featuring several different ways to use Canadian honey (e.g. Honey on the Barbecue). Ron has some of this material available.

Advertising: John and Charles will work together to get advertising and will contact various community newspapers as well as CBC, Channel 13 (AM Show), Golden West Radio etc. Possibly some of the media people can be available (Brandon Boone, Judy Storie, Harry Seimens or others).

Ron will contact Heather Clay to see if Pierre the Bear can be available to attend the honey show. Pierre will be the new animated spokesman for Canadian honey.

The proposed layout submitted by Donna and Ray Hourd was discussed. Everyone was in favor of changing from the "Square" layout that has been in use for many years.

Jim may be able to provide a list of things that need to take place for the Honey Show.

- **Financial Report:** Dennis Ross reported that we have \$4172.49 in our account. At present we have 62 members.
- Dennis will send an advance to Dan Lecocq for newsletter expenses. Dennis reported that rent is now \$40.00 per evening at the River Heights Community Club and coffee is \$8.00 per pot (includes cream and sugar).

- Moved by Rhéal and seconded by Ron that we adjourn.

Ron Rudiak, Secretary

A new case of rAFB

A new case of rAFB was discovered and confirmed this week. This is the second new rAFB confirmation this spring. The rAFB was found in a large operation in the Northwest region of the province and is in relatively close proximity to other rAFB-confirmed operations in the area. The producer has been notified and follow-up inspections and treatment with Tylan Soluble will occur this fall. It is not clear how this operation contracted the disease.

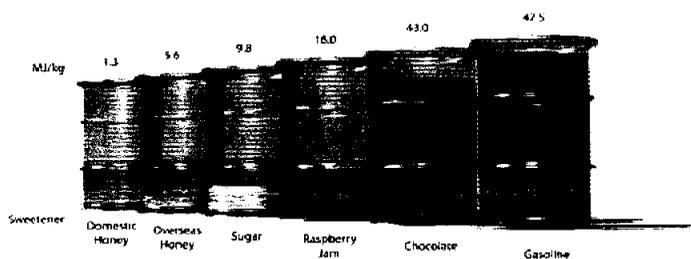
Including the (2) new findings this spring, rAFB has now been found in the province in eight operations, seven of which are currently active - six are located in the Northwest region and one is located in the Central region.

rAFB continues to pose a risk to colonies in the province. To date, MAFRI staff, working with the producers, has seen very positive results in managing the disease in the rAFB-confirmed operations. Currently, all AFB is tested in the lab for resistance to tetracycline and tylosin.

David Ostermann M.Sc.

Honey as Canada's Sustainable and Ethical Sweetener

by Andony Melathopoulos, Agriculture Agri-Food Canada, Beaverlodge, AB



Graph showing embodied energy in various commodities,

Research from Sweden provides a compelling reason for choosing honey over other sweeteners: honey is environmentally friendly.

Annika Carlsson-Kanyama and her colleagues demonstrated that locally produced honey had less impact on the environment than any other sweetener. To compare the impact of different sweeteners the researchers used Life Cycle Analysis. This method traces the energy costs for sweeteners from the time they are grown to the moment it lands in your mouth. Their calculations included the energy value of all farm inputs, of harvesting and drying crops, processing, storage and transportation up to the retailer.

Their analysis revealed that the energy required to make a pound of chocolate is equivalent to the energy embodied in an equal weight of gasoline (see figure below). Sugar and jam are not far behind. Sweets, as it turns out, are the gas-guzzlers, the SUVs, of the food world. In fact, the researchers point out that sweets, snacks and drinks contributed up to a third of total energy inputs of the average Swede's diet.

Locally produced honey, however, proved to be the exception. It took far less energy to make and deliver a pound of local honey to Swedish consumers than any other sweetener.

It is not difficult to understand why other sweeteners take more energy to produce than honey. Cane, corn and beets are among the greediest cultivated plants on the planet, demanding more fertilizer, pesticides and irrigation than any other field crops. Growing these crops not only takes a lot of energy, but it can be hard on the land. U.S. corn production, for example, erodes soil about 18 times faster than it can be reformed and uses more pesticides and herbicides than any other US crop. Cane sugar has similar impacts. Australian cane farmers, for example, use 40% of the total the irrigation water in Queensland. The resultant run-off has contributed to an annual discharge of 7,000 tonnes of nitrogen and 11,000 tonnes of phosphorous into the fragile Great Barrier Reef lagoon ecosystem.

Beekeepers, by contrast, leave virtually no trace on farm ecosystems. Honey is either a byproduct of cultivated crops or comes from unmanaged wildflowers. Our main floral sources are alfalfa and clover, both of which naturally fix nitrogen into our soil and reduce our reliance on fossil-fuel-based fertilizers. Our only major input is the sugar we feed our colonies for winter. This input, however is typically offset by the amount of honey we make; in Canada's prairie honey belt we typically produce three to four times the calories of honey compared to calories of sugar needed for winter. The difference is even wider among some of my thriftier beekeeping neighbors.

Honey also beats out other sweeteners when it comes to the energy associated with refining. Honey, in fact, has no refining step. We just spin the honey out of the frames and send it to be bottled. Honey extraction uses a miniscule amount of energy compared, for example, to the wet milling of corn for corn syrup. Wet milling is arguably the most energy intensive food-processing step in the world. Wet milling gobbles up 15% of the US food industry's total energy expenditure.

Not only does honey take less energy to produce and process than refined sweeteners, but it also travels the least distance to get to Canadian consumers. Travel is an important environmental issue

because the energy costs of transporting food can rival that of costs of processing. These transportation costs are the primary reason for the five times higher embodied energy of honey imported into Sweden compared to domestic honey.

Refined sugar takes an incredible journey to reach Canadians. Canada imports 90% of its sugar. Approximately 1 million tons of raw sugar comes into Canada, primarily from Australia and Cuba and is refined by one of four Canadian companies. Domestic sugar production is tiny by comparison and is easily missed when driving through the heartland of Canada's sugar beet industry in southern Alberta.

Not only is honey Canada's most sustainable sweetener, but also it is arguably the most ethical. When Canadian's buy table sugar they not only buy an exported product, but also a sweetener produced by laborers toiling under the most terrible of working conditions.

Political privilege and inequity are way of life in the cane sugar industry. The exploitation of cane workers is severe across most developing countries but has also plagued immigrant workers in US cane fields. Conditions that verge on slavery have been reported among Haitian refugees working in the cane fields of the neighboring Dominican Republic. The UN reports child labor is widely used in cane cultivation in Brazil, Central America, Africa and the Philippines. Cane cultivation in developing countries is largely manual, backbreaking and unsafe. Sugarcane workers labor in direct sunlight and use machetes and other sharp tools to harvest the crop, which results in high rates of injury to their arms, hands and legs.

Canadians buying domestic honey, by contrast, support a beekeeper who owns their own business and who abides by numerous health and safety regulations. Canadian beekeepers enjoy a high standard of living compared to workers in developing countries. Furthermore, buying honey supports our ailing rural communities.

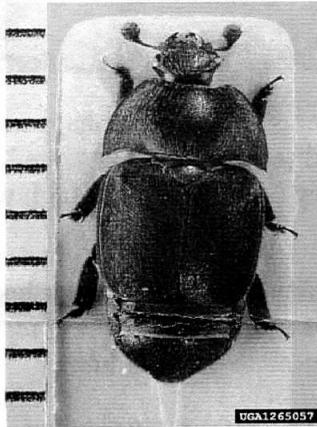
The case for buying Canadian honey seems like such a slam-dunk. Canadian honey has less impact on the environment, conforms to ethical labor practices and keeps our rural communities vibrant. It is for this reason that I get completely exasperated when I visit health food stores and see shelves stocked with cookies, chocolate and soda sweetened with organic cane syrup. Consumers buying these products firmly believe they are make a sustainable and ethical choice, but clearly this is not the case. Even conventionally produced local honey has less impact on the environment than organic cane syrup. What is going on?

The plain and simple answer is that consumers who worry about the environment and social justice need to know how great Canadian honey is. This lack of consumer knowledge needs to be dealt with. A good start would be if beekeepers and packers start stating our case to consumers, but we need to go further. We need more facts and for this we must encourage environmental and food science researchers to look into the sustainability of Canadian honey. We should open our honey house doors to these scientists and have them compare our honey to other sweeteners, including imported honey. This analysis will not only help sell more honey, but it will identify the areas where we can continue to reduce the environmental impact associated with putting honey on the table. Not only would this kind of research help sell our honey to consumers, but it will ultimately help us in our quest to make beekeeping in Canada more sustainable.

Reference:

Carlsson-Kanyama, A., M. P. Ekström and H. Shanahan. 2003. Food and life cycle energy inputs: consequences of diet and ways to increase efficiency. *Ecological Economics* 44: 293-307

The Discovery of small hive beetle In Manitoba



With the recent discovery of small hive beetle, *Aethina tumida* in Alberta this summer, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives decided to conduct fall inspections in some of the operations that purchased package bees from Australia in 2005 & 2006. The technique used to survey the hives for beetles activity was as follows: open the hive and look for beetle activity on the lid or inner cover, examine several brood frames and inspect the bottomboard for beetle larvae or adults. We had considered using the traps, but given the fact that we were doing hive inspections in the area already this method provided immediate results and does not involve having to revisit the hives again. Approximately 30 colonies would be inspected per beekeeping operation. On August 16, 2006, my colleague David Ostermann and one of our bee inspectors discovered an adult beetle in two of the 30 colonies inspected (i.e. two beetles in total). No larvae were found! The operation in question is located in the northwest region of the province and the beeyard contained colonies established from packaged bees purchased from Australia in 2006.

Given that we just started to conduct these fall inspections, it is possible that we may find more beetles in other operations and in other parts of the province. Since 2005, only 7 Manitoba beekeepers have purchased package bees from Australia for a grand total of approximately 3,336 packages.

This is not the first time we have discovered small

hive beetle in Manitoba. The last time was in 2002, when the pest was discovered in a wax rendering plant and a nearby beekeeping operation in the central part of the Province. The beetles were apparently brought into Manitoba in a load of beeswax cappings imported from Texas. Although small hive beetle was not named in our provincial *Bee Act*, MAFRI worked with industry and the wax rendering plant to control the spread of this pest. Protocols were developed to minimize the risk of spreading diseases and pests associated with the activities of importing wax from areas outside of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. To this day, we have not found anymore small hive beetles in the area surround the wax plant.

Given that small hive beetle is an immediately notifiable disease, we have notified CFIA (i.e. Dr. Maria Perrone) about the discovery and have asked them to investigate how they are going to control this pest from coming into the country through the importation of package bees from Australia.

Rhéal Lafrenière M.Sc. P.Ag.
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Don't forget to bring in your jars of Honey to the Bee Maid / Honey Coop supplies desk by the Tuesday October 10th for judging or just showing the great colors of our world famous Honey!

Numbers stay constant on a line from A to Bee

By Lindsay Chung, ~~AgriNews~~ Staff Writer

August, 2006

As the honeybee industry in the United States faces a decline that threatens the agricultural crops pollinated by bees, the Canadian industry is much more stable but it is facing many challenges.

The number of managed bee colonies in the US has declined drastically in the past 50 years, mainly due to pests such as the varroa mite.

Canada is also struggling with the varroa mite, but the country's numbers are better.

There was a decline in the past, but Dr. Peter Kevan, a professor in the environmental biology program at the University of Guelph, says things seem to have stabilized.

Canadian Honey Council (CHC) national coordinator Heather Clay agrees.

"The numbers are back for Canadian beekeepers," she said. "They've been managing pests and diseases quite well."

Some provinces, including Ontario, have even increased the number of managed colonies.

According to Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs provincial apiarist Doug McRory's annual report, there were 2,600 beekeepers in Ontario in 2005 with 76,000 producing colonies, up from 72,000 in 2004.

Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists president and University of Manitoba entomology professor Dr. Rob Currie says there are between 8,000 and 9,000 beekeepers in Canada and 500,000 to 600,000 colonies.

In the US, Dr. Jeff Pettis, research leader at the US Department of Agriculture Bee Research Lab in Beltsville, Maryland, says the number of managed colonies has dropped from over five-million in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s to the current 2.5-million or less.

"What seems to have been happening recently is we've had some really bad years," Pettis said, noting they had particularly high winter losses in 2004.

Pettis attributes the high winter losses to the fact that varroa mites are becoming resistant to the products used to control them.

As well, the almond industry in California needs about one-million colonies to pollinate the crops, putting a huge demand on beekeepers. Pettis says new beekeepers have gotten into pollination to try to meet the need, and lots of the beekeepers have moved to California to pollinate the almonds.

"We're getting close to critical," he said, adding the demand in California will increase to 1.5-million colonies or more. "We can't have every bee in California."

Pettis would like to see more people get into beekeeping to keep supply ahead of the demand; however, many people are getting out of the industry because it has become so challenging in the face of winter loss.

Canadian beekeepers are also finding it more difficult to do their job.

Geoff Wilson owns Davies Apiaries, a bee-breeding and honey-producing operation in Seeley's Bay, with his wife, Svenja Belaousoff. They typically run 450 colonies and will be going up to 600, and they have owned Davies Apiaries for three and a half years.

"The industry has changed a lot since the 1950s and 1960s with the introduction of pests," he said. "It's much more expensive."

For example, they have to monitor for mites to make sure the levels are low enough, treat mites at levels that won't kill the bees, and they have

to be careful about when they treat because there can be absolutely no honey in the hives to ensure there's no contamination.

According to Currie, beekeepers also have to pay a lot more for bees shipped from Australia and New Zealand.

While the cost of producing honey has increased, the price for honey has gone down. Producers have been getting a lot less for their honey ever since cheap honey from countries like China and Argentina returned on the market.

"Honey prices have taken a nosedive," Clay said. "The low import costs have been a serious concern. It's been a recent phenomena in the last two years."

Clay says honey producers used to get over \$2 a pound. With the arrival of honey from countries like China, the price has dipped as low as 60 cents a pound, and Clay says although it has been on the increase in the last couple of years, it is still less than half what it was before.

The CHC is using what Clay calls a "multi-pronged attack" to try to reverse the damage.

"We're fighting back with better promotion of Canadian honey as a premium product," she said. "Canadian honey is one of the highest standards in the world."

The CHC would also like to see changes to labelling because honey labelled "Canada Number One" could still be imported, and it is deceiving. The CHC also wants to see clearly visible country-of-origin labelling.

Along with the variability in honey prices, the difficulty of fighting diseases is adding to the challenges of beekeeping in Canada.

"Since the mites came in, winter loss in beekeeping has increased due to extra stress on the hives," Wilson said.

However, he says Ontario beekeepers are lucky because the province has been ahead of much of North America in finding cures for mites.

"We've been proactive with finding answers before the problems occur," he said. "We're also aggressive in finding alternative controls like organic acids for controlling mites."

According to Currie, if left untreated, the varroa mite will kill colonies in three to four years, and even in low incidences, it reduces honey production.

"We're running out of effective treatments," he said. "The mites are developing resistance to the pesticides that are used to control it. I think, currently, beekeepers are keeping kind of a handle on mites, and for the most part it's successful, but it's more difficult."

In an effort to combat this, Kevan says researchers in Canada and the US are looking at different genetic strains of bees to try to find strains that are resistant to the varroa mite.

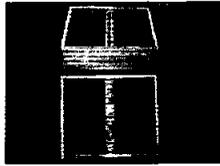
With all these threats, Wilson believes there could easily be a decline in beekeeping in Canada if pests that have previously been controlled develop a resistance to products that control them.

"There's always the risk that the numbers will be declining, especially if the economics aren't there," he said.



CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale: 15 new Conical Bee escape boards \$15.00 each also 50 telescoping lids (\$3.00). and inner covers (\$2.00)



22 Wintering pillows for a 4 pack of colonies(2 years old)
Frame wiring jig \$10.00
Ph. Dan 255-1043 or 797-3322

For Sale: Bee Boxes with empty frames, Bee Boxes, Metal Lids, Feeder Lids, Plastic Box Top Feeders, Wooden Box Top Feeders, Bottom Boards, Frame Making Pieces, Electric Fencers for Bears, other equipment, Etc. Contact Charles Polcyn at 284-7064 or Email: charlespolcyn@yahoo.com



RED RIVER APIARIST'S ASSOCIATION 2006 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`