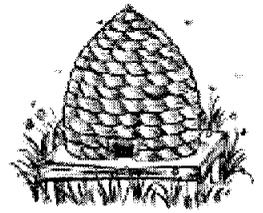


The Bee Cause



Volume 4, Issue 2

March, 2007

Points of Interest:

- Next general meeting is Tuesday, March 13th. David Ostermann of MAFRI will be talking on Spring Management.
- First day of Spring-March 21st. (Wednesday)

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Chile Anyone?

- Rhéal Lafrenière (Part One appeared in the Autumn 2005 issue and Part two in the Winter 2006 issue of *The Manitoba Beekeeper*.)

As the third installment in the Chilean Adventure series, I would like to comment on some of the opportunities that may exist between Manitoba and Chile. Firstly, many of the Chilean beekeepers that we have met during our travels to Chile have expressed great interest in working for Manitoba beekeepers during their off-season (i.e. April – September). In addition to the extra money they would earn working here, their primary reason for wanting to come to Manitoba would be the experience they would gain by working for commercial beekeeper. The offer could also go both ways! Beekeepers in Manitoba could spend the winter working for commercial beekeepers in Chile.



Given that the laws in Chile are very supportive when it comes to foreign investment, in fact one would say that they strongly encourage outside investment. For this reason, it is extremely possible for a Manitoba beekeeper to expand his/her

(Continued on page 3)

Presidents' Comments

- Charles Polcyn, President

March is here and still the snow is piled high wherever one looks. The beekeepers are beginning to wonder when the spring thaw will come so that the outdoor wintered hives can be assessed, even though not much can be done for them at this time. It is another story for the indoor wintered hives as dead outs can be found and removed for clean up, as well as those hives that seem light in weight can have a small front feeder attached containing sugar syrup.

The March month is always a challenge for wintered bee hives, indoors or out, as the queen has likely begun to lay eggs again, and the bees will be using up more of the stored honey and pollen to raise new brood. Temperatures have to be increased in the brood zone and the bees are much more active. You can actually hear a different type of sound from your hives now as the bees begin to anticipate a new season on the way.

The recent MBA meeting at one of the Canad Inns in Fort Garry on Pembina Highway early in February was well attended and enjoyed by many beekeepers. The presentations were timely and reminded all of us that there are no easy answers to the challenges

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Did You Know! Very little is known of how a bee collects propolis. It is collected by the their mandibles, gathered by their legs and placed in their pollen baskets.

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President's Report

(Continued from page 1)
of keeping healthy and productive bees.

Dr. Guzman from Guelph University and Dr. Nasr from Alberta Agric. & Food were key speakers on a variety of topics. A key message seemed to be that the days of chemical fixes for beekeeping problems have a short life span, while the development of better bee genetics will be more successful in the long run. The miticides of the 90's are now limited in their effectiveness as the mites have evolved for their own survival, which is a lesson from nature that humans seem to forget. The hoped for success of oxalic acid treatments has its limitations, while some of the other treatments with oils or acids vary widely in their effectiveness.

It is important for us to pay attention to the advice and directions provided by the Provincial Apiarists as they have the best current information on how to deal with honeybee problems in Manitoba. An opportunity to learn more about bees and other insects will be at the annual meeting of the NE Entomological Society Meeting on March 25th in the afternoon at the Delta Hotel in downtown Winnipeg. Contact your Provincial Apiarist for more information.

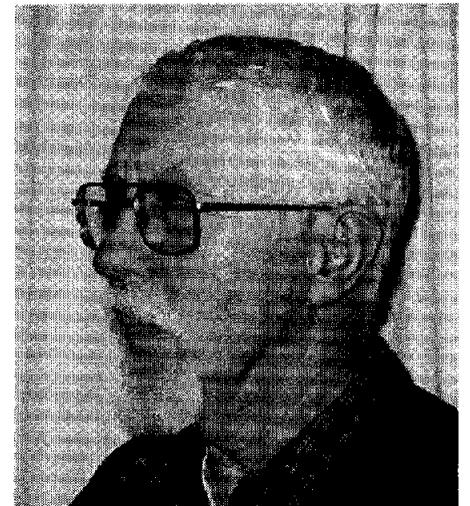
And speaking of beekeeping problems, the news coming from beekeepers in the USA is ominous; as many hives last fall have had many of their bees disappear in a short period of time. It has been called the "Bee Dwindle Disease", and much effort is being done to guess or find out what is happening. One characteristic that is strange is that no other bees move in very soon to take advantage of the food stores available, nor do any other insects such as wax moths or small hive beetle. Why are they not quickly taking over that available food supply?? The problem is serious as rates of loss in some apiaries are close to 90% in some cases. Time will tell when Canadian beekeepers begin to see some of this same type of problem in our own

bee yards.

At our RRAA meeting in February a survey was done with 17 beekeepers reporting a total of 1028 hives put away for the winter. We hope to report back on their overwintering results at our April meeting, if weather and spring cooperate.

And to close with some good news, the Federal Department of Agriculture has finally recognized one of the requests from the beekeeping industry and has made a grant of \$440,000 towards supporting the Canadian Honey Council work. This money is to be used only for re-structuring of the CHC, not as a part of the operating funds. The chief source of operating funds is from beekeepers who belong to the CHC and benefit for the outstanding work being done by CHC on a limited budget. All beekeepers should belong to this organization as it is a national voice for our concerns. The beekeeping industry is fortunate to have Heather Clay working very hard for us for many years, despite having to utilize one of the rooms in her basement as the CHC office.

I hope to see many of you at the March meeting where the evening's topic of "Spring Management" might be even more appropriate this year.



Residues Found in BC Hives

Amitraz Detected in Beehives in British Columbia

The federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) in collaboration with the BC Ministry of Agriculture & Lands carries out routine inspections of honeybee colonies during the fall and winter to ensure beekeeper compliance to the registered use of pesticides in beehives.

Amitraz residues have recently been detected in samples of honeycomb and dead bees collected from colonies wintered in the south Okanagan. PMRA will contact the commercial beekeeper and take appropriate action. The detec-

tion of chemical residues in honeycomb may indicate their presence in honey and as a result, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) may decide to step up its honey monitoring program.

It is incumbent upon beekeepers not to use illegal chemicals and drugs in their honeybee colonies. Not only is their use unlawful and their presence a potential human health risk, but it greatly jeopardizes the public's belief in the purity of honey and the trust in Canadian honey producers.

Paul van Westendorp
Provincial Apiculturist (BC)

Sweet 'n Sour Honey Spareribs

3 lbs. spareribs
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup vinegar
1 (19 oz.) can pineapple chunks
1 green pepper

Place ribs in large dutch oven or electric saucepan. Add soy sauce. Mix to coat. Allow to stand 15 minutes. Brown the meat lightly. Drain pineapple, reserving the syrup. Mix this syrup with honey and vinegar. Pour over spareribs. Bring to boil. Cover and simmer 1 hour until tender. Cut pepper into thin strips. Add pineapple chunks and pepper strips. Continue simmering for 5 minutes. Serve with rice.

YIELD: 4-6 servings.

-originally published in "Hydro Lines")
-original author was Elizabeth
-reprinted by kind permission of Manitoba Hydro

Chile Anyone?

(Continued from page 1)
beekeeping operation to include operating honey bee colonies for honey production, pollination and/or other beekeeping products in Chile. In fact, equipment manufacturing and queen production are two activities that show great promise in Chile.

In the not so distant future, I would like to organize a trade mission of interested beekeepers/businesses/

entrepreneurs from Manitoba to travel to Chile to meet with Chilean beekeepers/businesses/entrepreneurs to explore some of these opportunities. Currently, there are several beekeeping groups in Chile that have expressed interested in traveling to Manitoba to tour our beekeeping industry to better understand how we keep bees. Most Chilean beekeepers are absolutely fascinated by the quantity of honey we are able to produce in such a short period of time. They are also dumfounded how we are able to winter bees under our extreme conditions. The Oohs and Ahhs you get when you show a Manitoba hive

stacked up with supers or buried under the snow is regarded as a complement to the Canadian beekeeper.

In Part 4 of the Chilean Adventure, I would like to discuss in more detail some of the initiatives that Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives will be undertaking to support new business development opportunities for Manitobans looking at taking advantage of the relationship that has been developing between Manitoba's beekeeping industry and Chile.

Symposium Topics Prove Timely

- Jim Campbell, MBA secretary.

The topics at the recent Manitoba beekeepers' Association Convention attracted a wide variety of producers.

The Canad Inns, Fort Garry, in Winnipeg was the site for the 101st Convention February 9-10, 2007. Guest speak-

ers from across Canada spoke to the more than 90 people in attendance.

Starting off the program, Grant Rigby, from Rigby Orchards Ltd, Killarney, promoted his ventures into the "value add" marketplace. He told of the challenges faced in meeting regulations and the patience needed to finalize all as-

pects of the marketing plans. Rigby produced organic crops on the homestead his grandfather established in 1882, yet the main attraction is the raspberry wine produced in their own winery, established in 1999. In addition to wine, Grant produces a Saskatoon Berry Desert topping.

(Continued on page 4)

Symposium Topics Prove Timely

(Continued from page 3)

Dr. Ernesto Guzman, University of Guelph, led the group through the results of applications of Natural Miticides in controlling Varroa Mites. Some of the miticides included Thymol, Oxalic Acid, and Essential Oils such as Clove oil, Marjoran, and Spearmint were also discussed. Studies continue to determine the best dates for application and the best carriers for the materials.

Meanwhile Dr. Medhat Nasr, Alberta Agriculture and Food, provided some key Integrated Pest Management Principles and Practices for Mite Control. He noted IPM is the intelligent selection and use of pest management tactics. The critical components are Pest Identification, Monitoring Pest Popula-

tion, and Taking Action. Medhat talked about testing several devices for Oxalic Acid application in another session.

The celebrations continued on into the evening with the banquet and awards taking place Friday. Following a sumptuous beef supper, MBA honoured two of our members. J. Bev Clark (Lorna), who began with 3 hives in 1955 received the Life Membership Award. The Bee Hive Award went to Lorne Peters (Ingrid), in recognition of his long time service to the industry, having been on the executive for many years, plus some key initiatives including the Cash Advance roll over plan, and importation protocol for Hawaiian Queens while our CHC rep.

Other convention reports included a plan for pollination services, CHC activities, an Armenian adventure, and updates on several U of M research projects.

A symposium on Small Hive Beetle, by

Rhéal Lafrenière, MAFRI, wrapped up the sessions on Saturday. This workshop provided attendees an opportunity to hear first hand that since confirmation the SHB recently found in Canada was from Australia, the CFIA has stopped the importation of Australian packages until discussions can ensure proper protocols are followed. During the workshop, samples of SHB larva, pupa, and adult were available for all to see.



Pierre Faure

Bee Musings - What We Need is Another Mite!

- Jack Lee (editor)

At the Manitoba Beekeeper Conference a few weeks ago, Dr. Medhat Nasr, after running through all the miticides that have been used and to which the mites only became resistant, paused and summarized the sad history with two succinct words:

“That is Nature”.

Honey bees, being a social animal, derive many benefits of communal living, of which the collection of vast quantities of honey is an obvious consequence. But everything has its downside. Because they live in such close quarters and share fluids amongst themselves, they must be very clean and adopt behaviours that limit the spread of parasites and microbes.

It is no different for any other animal

that lives in a society. Take our experience with the bubonic plague, small pox, or the Spanish Influenza of the past. All these diseases were at one time unknown and isolated, but once they get mixed into a population that was transient, they strike with extraordinary lethality.

To the first mite that ever walked into a bee hive, it must have seem like nirvana. Unlimited resources and no competition. Mites, like any other animal, need to cat and raise families. Mites, in other words, is nature's way of saying that they want a piece of the action. We had it good but we can no longer have it all.

Fortunately a hint of an answer was penned by a famous English mathematician and logistician, Augustus De Morgan, who nearly 150 years

ago wrote this little ditty in his book, *A Budget of Paradoxes*:

Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em,

And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*.

And the great fleas themselves, in turn, have greater fleas to go on;

While these again have greater still, and greater still, and so on.

With that in mind, then perhaps we need a lesser mite to ride upon the backs of Varroa and bite them. Let us call it the messiah mite. We can all be sure this mite will come upon the scene.

But don't get your hopes up. For there will be yet another pest one waiting its turn. That is nature.

Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the General Meeting February 13, 2007

Charles Polcyn welcomed members and guests to the February meeting at 7:30 PM. Moved by Rhéal Lafrenière and seconded by Gilles Lantagne that the minutes be accepted as circulated in the "Bee Cause". Carried

MBA Report: Jim Campbell announced that he now has a supply (2700 copies) of the new CHC honey promotion brochures. These attractive folders feature honey facts, recipes and a large poster of Pierre the Bear, the mascot and spokesbear for Canadian honey. This promotional material will be used at the Manitoba Beekeepers' Honey Show and various other promotions. Beekeepers can purchase a supply of them for \$25/hundred to promote honey from their own establishment. A picture of the color brochure can be viewed on the CHC web site.

Jim also spoke about some of the informative and well attended sessions at the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association Convention held this year at the Canad Inn on Pembina Highway

MAFRI Report: Rhéal Lafrenière passed out an information bulletin on the small hive beetle and answered questions regarding SHB. Because the SHB was found in Manitoba and Alberta last year in hives established from Australian packages no further importations will take place from that country. This decision will remain until Canadian Food Inspection Agency is confident that any packages exported from Australia will come from areas not known to have SHB. Australian queens with hand picked attendants may be allowed.

Rhéal commented on the proper use of oxalic acid for the control of varroa mites. It has been demonstrated that this treatment is best used late in the beekeeping season when all of the brood has emerged. He went on to describe the progress that has been made, at the U of M, on fumigating screened package bees with formic acid to kill Varroa mites in those containers.

Rhéal announced that the American Entomological Society is planning to have a conference in Winnipeg at the Delta Hotel on Sunday, March 25 from noon until 4:30 PM. Yves LeConte, director of research - INRA, from France will be one of the featured speakers.

Canadian Honey Council: Ron gave a progress report on re-

structuring the Canadian Honey Council. He informed everyone about how the money (\$440,000) provided by Advancing Canada Agriculture and Food (ACAAF) will be used for this project. A restructured and better staffed CHC will be more capable of working for and be increasingly more responsive to the needs of the industry.

Financial Report: Dennis reminded everyone that it's now time to renew memberships.

Program: Rhéal Lafrenière gave the audience a slide show presentation on his recent experiences working with Chilcan beekeepers.

Loonie Draw: John Russell, Charles Polcyn and Gilles Lantagne each won a screened bottom board and a Mann Lake catalogue.

Stan H. won the honey bear container with honey from India, Ken Fehler, a four pound honey tin and Chris Argeriou the wax candle kit.

Brian Smith received the jar of honey spread. Ken Rowes name was drawn for a change purse and package of cucalyptus confectionary. Rhéal Lafrenière name was drawn for a pair of bee ear rings.

Ron Rudiak - Secretary

Parker's Rule of Parliamentary Procedure

*A motion to adjourn
is always in order*

Honey Harvest Down in Argentina

- email from Edith Phoblete

They say that the honey production in Argentina this season has not met the beekeepers expectations. The beekeepers say they have not seen a spectacular harvest this year and aren't satisfied with the results in any area of the country.

The good rainfall in the spring allowed for an early harvest in November 2006 but in December and over the next 60 days, the weather became very dry. In Santa Fe, San Luis, and Tucuman there was too much rain, so the harvest was also bad. There were a lots of hives located in really good fields of alfalfa and Clover but the honey harvest was very bad. Even some beekeepers move their hives to tropical

areas, but this effort was not profitable and in the end, the beekeepers came out with fewer colonies.

They say it is not going to be possible to have 120,000 tons this year, which was what they were predicting this past spring.



period and any diseased honey which is carried within the bees digestive system will be used up during the process of drawing out the foundation. By shaking, the brood cycle is broken which will further mitigate development of the disease.

The shaking experiment was conducted during the Summer of 2005 using established colonies with sister queens. Combinations of foundation, drawn comb, and foundation with drawn comb were used. With very few exceptions, all signs of the disease were eliminated by using each of these methods while at the end of the experiment the control colonies still had a high level of American foulbrood infection.

Spore counts in the honey and on the bees themselves were found to be at a low level and over time these counts would likely further reduce. This is an intervention that does not require antibiotics and is a way of managing the disease without medication. A further benefit will be a box of newly drawn comb in the brood chamber.

Shaking Bees - A Viable AFB Option

By Ron Rudiak

From a presentation given by Dr. Steve Pernal in Langley, BC

Shaking colonies for the treatment of American Foulbrood (AFB) is a very viable method for beekeepers running smaller numbers of colonies. This treatment has been used in Europe quite extensively for the last 150 years. Shaking is a fairly simple technique which involves simply shaking the bees out of a colony infected with AFB and putting them onto clean equipment.

There are different variations of this method. In some techniques the bees are held in a ventilated box for a period of time, usually about 24 hours or perhaps overnight. In other techniques the

bees are shaken onto foundation and sometimes onto fully drawn comb.

If this technique were to be adopted by a sideliner or commercial beekeeper it would have to work in an efficient fashion so the bees wouldn't be held for an excessive period. Tests were conducted by shaking the bees onto either foundation, a mixture of foundation and drawn comb or onto fully drawn comb to test the effectiveness of each method.

It is generally accepted that shaking bees onto foundation can be an effective treatment to eliminate AFB from honeybee colonies. What was not so clear is whether by not holding the bees for a period of time but shaking them directly onto drawn comb or a mixture of drawn comb and foundation would eliminate enough AFB spores to be an effective treatment for that disease. Spores that have been consumed by the bees will be excreted after the holding

In 2006 the experiment was again conducted and which also looked at honey production. Colonies which had been shaken onto foundation were compared for honey production with over wintered single colonies and colonies established with packages. Overall there was good brood production in all shaken colonies. When honey production was measured there was very little difference between the bees which were shaken onto foundation and colonies established from packages. Shaken colonies take longer to begin producing honey but seem to catch up quickly with the packages and in many cases out produced them. Generally, colonies treated by shaking onto foundation or comb can be expected to produce about two-thirds of the amount of honey produced by an over wintered colony. This method of treatment is a viable option for American foulbrood disease and should not impose an undue economic hardship on the producer.

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale: Limited number of nucs available around the 15th of May, weather permitting. Nucs come with 4 frames of bees and brood on at least 2 with a 2006 queen from my own breeding stock.

Please Call **Ted Scheuneman** 338-6066, West St Paul

For Sale: 4 frame Nucs with (2006) local queens available in spring.

Please call **George Chwist** ph: 338-5078

For sale: frames of brood and bee's and nucs available May 2007. Please call **Mike Grysiuk**

For Sale: 30 Wintered colonies in double brood chambers ready in spring.

Please call **Javad** ph: 878-9587

For Sale. washed honey drums - \$25 ,Russian Nucs and Queens - please enquire for pricing ,and also metal hive lids - \$3.00

Please call **Paul Gregory** Tel: (204) 372-6920 or Fax: (204) 372-6635

For Sale Also Over wintered super nucs for sale next mid may. 3 frames of brood + 1 frame honey. Price is \$130.00 each.

Call **Pierre Faure:**
1 .204.248.2645



For sale: Wintered colonies ,Spring Nucs and Super Nucs (with laying queen and a minimum of 3 frames of brood available in May

Call **Rod Boudreau** ph: 885-3344

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

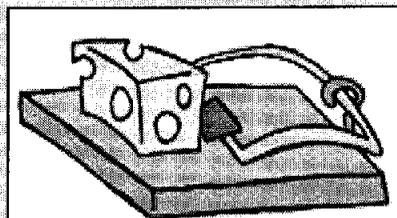
Wanted : Looking for a solar wax melter.

Doug Henry 757-4694 dhenry@skyweb.ca

For Sale: brood frames with bees \$15/frame, also have nucs with queen. Available May 2007.

Call **Bryan Grysiuk** 204 831 7838 or 204 831 0961.

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We are on the web!
www.geocities.com/ve4tg/

The Bee Cause is the official publication of the Red River Apiarist Association for distribution to its members and their colleagues in the beekeeping industry. It is published eight times a year on a monthly basis excepting December and summer months of June, July, and August.

Articles can be best submitted in HTML or RTF formats as email attachments. Though they may be edited for spelling and basic grammar, no changes will be made to their contents, message and opinions. They are those of their originator and not of the Red River Apiarist Association.

The Red River Apiarist Association, formed in 1963, represents the Beekeepers of the Red River Valley and environs in southern Manitoba. The association provides a forum for the promotion of sound beekeeping practices, education and networking opportunities through the dissemination of this monthly newsletter, meetings, field days, workshops and presentations by local apicultural experts.

Scientists Decries Misuse of Bee Study

- Sean Pratt Saskatoon newsroom

If growers of genetically modified canola wonder why they are losing the public relations war in Europe, they should look no further than a recent front page story in a major Italian newspaper, says a biotechnology advocate.

The translated headline in the Jan. 3 article that appeared in *La Stampa* reads, "Bees boycotting GM plants," with the subhead, "Insects are frightened of genes altered by man and give up on pollination."

Alex Avery, director of research at the Hudson Institute's Center for Global Food Issues, said the story was planted by anti-GM crop crusaders who are guilty of dusting off outdated research and distorting it to fit their needs.

"If farmers wonder why the public doesn't understand what they do, and are often hostile in fact, this is why," he said.

Avery said the story, which prompted a slew of other newspaper and TV stories in a nation that is in the midst of a national policy debate over whether to allow farmers to grow GM crops, grossly distorts the findings of a 2005 Simon Fraser University study.

He contends the *La Stampa* article took its cues from the U.S. based Organic Consumers Association, which resurrected the study as a news item on its website on Dec. 26, with the headline "Wild bees reject genetically engineered crop."

Mark Winston, professor of apiculture and social insects at Simon Fraser University, said both sides of the debate are trying to spin the results of the study.

"This particular controversy is a fabulous example of people taking rumour, innuendo and half truths and exploding it into a non-existent controversy."

He said the Organic Consumers Association is guilty of attaching a misleading headline to the abstract of his study. *La Stampa* went further, he added, by distorting his findings and mixing them with unsupported myths about the dangers of GM crops.

"They have woven all those things together into this real scare piece, which bothers me because there are very legitimate and substantive issues about GM crops that need to be addressed."

Winston said Avery isn't guilt free either. The professor said the biotech advocate tried to manipulate Winston and his research assistant into aggressively attacking and dismissing the reports appearing in organic circles and the Italian media.

"He wanted to use us and I don't take kindly to having my voice co-opted by others. I'm quite happy to speak for myself," said Winston.

Avery contends he was just trying to get the science community to step up and prevent their work from being hijacked and deliberately misrepresented.

Winston is not surprised by the international attention his work has garnered or by the fact it took so long to spark a reaction.

"What does surprise me is that the really interesting parts of the research have been ignored."

He said the study uncovered fascinating facts about the effects of wild bee populations on canola pollination that have been lost in the din surrounding the GM crop debate.

Winston hypothesized that GM canola had fewer bees because those crops had fewer weeds than their conventional and organic counterparts, not because bees somehow found GM crops repulsive.

Through a scientific method called modeling he was able to show that in places such as northern Alberta, where canola is mainly pollinated by wild bees, farmers would be economically better off replacing 20 percent of their canola crop with unmanaged fields containing weeds that bees like to nest in.

His advice to growers in those areas would be to grow conventional or GM canola crops to cut down on weeds, but set aside a portion of their acreage for bee-friendly habitat. That would be the best way to maximize yields in that area of the Prairies because of the seed-producing power of pollination.