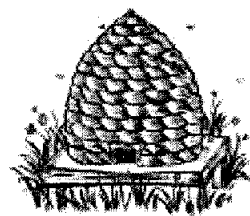


# The Bee Cause



Volume 4, Issue 4

May 2007

## Bee Masters Course—2007

### Points of Interest:

- Next general meeting is 7:30 Tuesday, May 8th at the **Honey Coop** for a tour of the packing plant.
- Mother's Day, Sunday May 13th in Canada. May 10th in Mexico.

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### Margaret Smith—"Marg's Honey"

When Rob came home one day late last Fall and said that we should think of taking the Bee Masters course, I wasn't so sure. It was to be held February 26- March 2, 2007, at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. So many questions whirled through my head. What would it cost? How could we find someone to keep an eye on everything here at home? What about the weather at that time of the year? Wasn't that rather risky? Where would we stay? What about all the other things we are involved in and what about the two significant birthdays in the family? When we put the suggestion to the family, they were most enthusiastic. How could we afford not to take it, they questioned?

Determinedly, Rob proceeded to gather information. Several of the family took on things to

make it possible for us to be away for two weeks it would take us to drive there and back and to take the course. Gradually, we sorted out almost all the obstacles. When we received our parking pass and various other pieces of identifying information through the mail, the reality hit me - I became more and more excited about the prospect of this venture.

Our trip to Vancouver was relatively trouble free. We had stayed with friends and acquaintances along the way, keeping a close eye on the weather as we went. Our friends in New Westminster welcomed us on Sunday evening with a wonderful supper. Through the evening, Rob and our friend pored over a map to give us good directions to arrive at the University early Monday morning.

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## President's Comments

The Manitoba overwintering bee losses results runs a gamut from only a few hive losses to very many in some corners of the province. The bees are out and flying in good numbers in all places, but there are questions related to fall preparations and winter weather of 2006/2007. Beekeepers are asking themselves the questions of what happened last fall and in this past winter that has lead to such a wide range of losses, from the traditional 10 to 15 %,to the unexpected 40 to 60 % or more that is being reported. Beekeepers from all across

the province are saying that some yards came thru great while others were almost wiped out.

Indoor wintering results varied as well, but not with the same degree of variability as the outdoor yards. In examining dead outs from some outdoor yards, a common pattern seems to be of stages of brood being seen, and the bees starving out despite frames of food being nearby. Other dead outs indicate that food was in short supply, number of bees was small or for no reason other than they likely died off in midwinter. Did the warm days of December and early January perhaps convince/suggest to the colonies or queens to go into active work

*(Continued on page 2)*

If the bees FEEL prosperous,  
They will BEE prosperous.

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## President's Report

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mode.

The good news is that there hasn't been any news relating to the colony collapse/disappearance situation that has occurred in many of the USA beekeeping states. The Manitoba bees haven't disappeared from sight, but there are many less bees and colonies this spring than there were last fall.

Beekeeping operations that I saw during my visit to China in April were a wide variety. One area near the Laos/Cambodia border beekeepers were collecting a flow from the leaves of rubber trees. The beekeepers were camped out in tents along with their bees to protect their hives from going astray.

The honey they were taking off was light in color, very fluid in the jar and sold at roadside for \$2.50/kg. Moisture content is 22% and has a fruity taste. I came across a store selling honey in Kunming that featured 18 different large vats/crocks of honey ranging in price from \$2.40/kg to \$6.50/kg. The most expensive honey was well set, while the cheaper honey was liquid.

There were a large set of posters on the walls in the store with information on floral varieties, beekeeping practices as well as queen cell grafting models. The information was all in Mandarin, but the pictures were explanatory.

I met one former beekeeper with 150 hives who used to move bees from Outer Mongolia in the fall to tropical areas for the winter and places in between during the rest of the year. He lived with his hives, rented a truck for moving to other flows and camped his way across the country. His extractor equipment consisted of a 2 frame hand cranked galvanized barrel and a long uncapping knife. His production averaged 20 kg/hive in a good year. He no longer is beekeeping as he finds being an English speaking guide and teacher pays better.

The bee hives I opened up were a full 6-9 frames of gentle bees with no signs of disease. Varroa has always been a problem, but formic acid is commonly used along with traditional Smokes. When I asked about the Smokes, he said it varies in different parts of China and depends on what seems to work.

At a recent auction in the Interlake, a lot of beekeepers were interested in purchasing equipment as well as bees to replace their own losses. Prices for good

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## CCD Culprit Accused

(from an article "UCSF scientist tracks down suspect in honeybee deaths" on the *San Francisco Chronicle* written by Sabin Russell)

A UCSF researcher who found the SARS virus in 2003 and later won a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" for his work thinks he has discovered a culprit in the alarming deaths of honeybees across the United States.

Tests of genetic material taken from a "collapsed colony" in Merced County point to a once-rare microbe that previously affected only Asian bees but might have evolved into a strain lethal to those in Europe and the United States, biochemist Joe DeRisi said Wednesday.

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## Bee Masters Course

*(Continued from page 1)*

We were warmly welcomed onto the beautiful campus of Simon Fraser University. There were 48 other people taking the course with us. We expected there to be lots of people with large operations, with others having lots more experience than we. It was surprising to find that there were only two other operations larger than ours and experience varied greatly. Most of the beekeepers had small operations. People were there from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, PEI, Ontario and one from Washington state, but most were from BC.

Coffee breaks throughout the week were interesting as we swapped stories with others. Our sessions ran from 8:30 a.m. to around 5 p.m., with 2 half-hour refreshment breaks and an hour for lunch, so there was certainly lots of sitting and listening. However, the sessions were quite varied. After my having taken the Introductory Beekeeping Course here at U of M, and nearly thirty years of beekeeping, I thought Rob and I had learned so

much, but oh, we were in for a surprise - there was so much more to learn.

Our speakers were great! We had some of the best: Daniela Bates, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Apiculture, Abbotsford, BC; Ms. Jaquie Bunse, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Apiculture, Abbotsford, BC; Mr. John Gates, Armstrong, BC, Ms. Heather Hugo, Simon Fraser University, Biological Sciences, Burnaby, BC; Adony Melathopoulos, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Apiculture, Beaverlodge, AB; Mr. Ed Nowek, Planet Bee Honey Farm, Vernon, BC; Dr. Tanya Pankiw, from Texas A&M University, Dept. Of Entomology, Faculty of Neuroscience; Dr. Steve Parnal, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Apiculture, Beaverlodge, AB; Jeff Pettis, USDA-ARS Bee Research Laboratory, Beltsville, MD; Mr. Paul van Westendorp, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Apiculture.

On the first day, our topics ranged from Honey Bee Pheromones and Swarming Biology, prevention and

Management, Inspecting your Hives, to Legislation and the Beekeeper, and a session on Orchard Mason Bees (these remind me of our Alfalfa Leafcutter Bees), ending with a campus tour and a buffet reception.

Tuesday saw us moving from Alternative Pollinators, to Queen Health and Supersedure, Bee Anatomy (in the lab), Nutrition and Supplemental Feeding, Fall Management & The Biology and Management of Colonies in the Winter. We also had our group photo taken in beautiful Convocation Square, in the middle of campus.

On Wednesday, our topics covered Pheromone Regulation of Foraging Behaviour, to Alternative Hive Products, Nuc Production, AFB Detection and Control, Genetic Resistance to AFB - A Short History, and Varroa resistance and Nosema.

Thursday, we heard about The Unsong (but Destructive) Diseases -Calkbrood, EFB, Viruses and Nosema; Bee Diseases (Lab Demonstration) Queen Rearing; Honey Characteristics and Marketing; Honey Tasting (each of us had to take some of our honey for this) and Residues in Honey. There

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## A Beekeeper's Honey

Both my time and column space is being squeezed. So my wife, Deana, has contributed this month's Bee Mused column—Jack Lee, ed.

Ah...the first year of marriage! A year of romance, dreams of a happy future, and...bees. Yes, bees. While other newlyweds spend the first day of their honeymoon locked away in their hotel rooms, I spent mine in my new husband's bee yard. I sat at a comfortable (for me) distance from the hives and gazed adoringly at Jack as he shared with me minute details of bee legs and pollen packets. What was more fascinating - watching the bees lumbering toward the landing board, so laden with pollen that they roll side to side, or his fascination with them?

What could be more romantic than that, you ask? How about

sharing our bedroom with a shipment of queen bees? As I write this, they are tucked safely away in our bedroom until Jack is ready to place them and their attendants in newly split hives. My husband figured that our bedroom was the best place in our tiny house to keep them away from my Airedale terrier, who excels at dispatching bees and wasps with three quick snaps. And at \$28 a pop, that would be an expensive snack for a dog. By the way, I was sure he told me they were \$10 a piece, but the invoice clearly shows \$28 each, yet another entry in our beekeeping ledger where debits far outnumber credits.

You might think I knew what I was getting into when I agreed to marry Jack. Not so! In the middle of preparing for our marriage in June 2006, Jack casually mentioned that he was thinking of keeping a few hives of bees as a hobby. He said it wouldn't take much time to get them set up and they would take care of themselves over the summer. I knew he had kept bees many years before, and that ento-

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## CCD Culprit Accused

*(Continued from page 2)*

DeRisi said tests conducted on material from dead bees at his Mission Bay lab found genes of the single-celled, spore-producing parasite *Nosema ceranae*, which researchers in Spain have recently shown is capable of wiping out a beehive.

"It is wise to strike a conservative note, because this is early data, but it is interesting," he said.

Government scientists who have been tracking the phenomenon they call Colony Collapse Disorder were skeptical, however, saying the parasite had been an early suspect in the bee die-off but that they had concluded it probably was not responsible.

With a mounting sense of urgency, agricultural scientists are trying to find out just what has caused the disappearance of as much as a quarter of the nation's 2.4 million honeybee colonies since November, when the die-off was first observed by a Pennsylvania beekeeper.

It's not just bad news for beekeepers

and honey lovers. Growers of fruits, nuts and many vegetables rely on honeybees to pollinate their crops, which contribute \$15 billion to the nation's agricultural output, according to a Cornell University study.

DeRisi is a specialist in the rapid identification of killer germs. In March 2003, he played a key role in helping the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identify the cause of SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, the viral illness that claimed 774 lives and wreaked havoc for a time on the Asian economy.

Using a laboratory tool called a microarray -- which can instantly match a sample to gene sequences from more than a thousand viruses -- he found that SARS was caused by a previously unknown variant of coronavirus, a microbial family responsible for a variety of ailments including the common cold.

The following year, he was awarded a \$500,000 MacArthur Fellowship, the prize given by the foundation to individuals who have no idea they were nominated until they win. The awards

are popularly known as genius grants.

In researching the bee die-offs, DeRisi's team evaluated samples of potential bee pathogens supplied by the Army's biodefense laboratory, the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

Scientists there had developed a technique to concentrate possible pathogens into a sample that could be run through a rapid genetic screen test such as DeRisi's. Samples taken from dead bees in a collapsed colony from Le Grand (Merced County) were shipped via overnight mail to DeRisi's San Francisco lab last week.

DeRisi used a technique that allows rapid reading of the genetic code of the suspect bug. It is the same approach, known as "shotgun sequencing," that has been used to read the genomes, or the genetic code, of creatures ranging from bacteria to human beings.

The strips of genetic code are then matched to computerized libraries of known genes from thousands of germs. It was this test that pinpointed *Nosema ceranae*.

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## Beekeeper's Honey

*(Continued from page 3)*

mology was his first love. (Truth be told, I am not sure who is first in his affections -- those queen bees or me). So, having better things on my mind, such as finding the perfect dress for a first-time bride of 52 years to wear, I smiled sweetly and replied, "Of course, dear. Now let me get on with my shopping".

Oh, the naïvete! Instead of Jack whispering sweet nothings in my ear at night, he sits up reading *The Hive* and *they Honey Bee*, all 1324 pages of it.

Rather than helping with the housework, he has yet another super to build and then, of course, a set of frames to go in said super. I hoped I'd have my husband to myself once the bees were tucked in for the winter. Alas no. Jack made the two-hour round trip to the bee yard several times a month to make sure the bees were cozy. It's bees, bees, bees, 24/7.

However, the bees have allowed me to see sides of Jack that not many others get to see. I saw him deeply disappointed when some of the hives swarmed despite his vigilance in searching out swarm cells. I supported him through despair when his bee

yard flooded this spring and a hive drowned. I am touched by his compassion as he expresses concern for the queen bees languishing in their cages until he can place them in their hives.

Tonight I will accompany him as he introduces the queens. Jack says I might hear a queen piping to the other queens or the buzz of anticipation when the hives smell the new queens. I have another opportunity to get to know Jack and honey bees.

As Jack and I approach our first anniversary it seems that, for better or for worse, I have become a beekeeper's wife.

## Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the General Meeting April 10, 2007

John Russell welcomed the 33 members and guests to the April meeting at 7:30 PM noting Charles was away in China and Ron was in USA.

**Moved** by Rhéal Lafrenière and seconded by Dennis Ross that the March minutes be accepted as circulated in the "Bee Cause". Carried

**MBA Report:** Jim Campbell announced that Hawaii is no longer mite free and now needs to update their export paperwork before shipping any Queens. This may cause delay in first shipment due to arrive in Winnipeg around April 23.

MBA is still awaiting feedback from producers on any possible Colony Collapse Disorder symptoms. As it is too cool, few bees have ventured outside, thus it is too early to confirm. MBA and MAFRI will be collecting data on bee movement, bee feeding, floral resources, and treatments should any unusual bee losses be reported. John noted we would survey our members at the May meeting for over winter success.

**RRAA Report:** John Russell reminded everyone that the venue for this year's Honey Show would be at The Forks, downtown Winnipeg and will start September 21. Be sure to start thinking about saving some of your best honey for this. Jim noted several people from RRAA attended the American Entomological Society conference in Winnipeg at the Delta Hotel on Sunday, March 25. Very interesting presentations! A well organized event thanks to Rhéal and others.

**Financial Report:** Dennis reminded everyone that it's not too late to renew memberships.

**Program:** Using a display of hand crafted hive equipment along with a slide presentation, David Ostermann and Ted Scheuneman provided a detailed presentation on keeping small nuclear colonies alive through the winter. In a quest to ensure that Manitoba laying queens were available for early spring sales, Ted has designed a unique method for over-wintering. Incorporating specially designed tools, Ted is able to separate, feed, treat, and manage two frame colonies. Supplemental heating plus well insulated supers contribute to the success.

**Loonie Draw:** Reg Morrow won the jar of honey supplied by John Russell. There was a total of \$26.00 collected from the Loonie Draw. Thanks everyone.

Jim Campbell for Ron Rudiak - Secretary

### Did You Know!!

In England, CCD is called "Marie Celest syndrome" by some beekeepers. Marie Celest was a name of a ghost ship found drifting undamaged off the coast of Portugal in 1872 with no crew or passengers. Its sextant and chronometer were missing suggesting that it was hastily abandoned.

### President's Report

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supers and brood boxes were in the \$20 to \$25 dollar range. Winter losses in this 220 hive operation were 50% or more. Due to weather conditions only 1 yard of 10 double hives was available for pre-sale inspection. Even so beekeepers bid and bought colonies that were not viewed or accessible by truck.

I hope they are not surprised when they collect their bees as hive prices ranged from \$180 down to \$110 per unseen hive. The collection of purchased equipment at auctions almost requires 2 people, one to load and the other to keep track of purchases as the situation becomes very fluid unless items are identified before the auction begins.

Our May meeting takes place at the Honey Co-op on Ellice and Rosebury on May 8th at 7:30 PM. There will be a tour of the packing plant, a time for questions as well as our regular business meeting. This is the last issue of the *Bee Cause* until September so best wishes for everyone to have a good Bee-keeping Summer.

All the Best- Charles Polcyn

## Hawaiian Beekeeper Almost Weeps

Associated Press (on [www.ctv.ca](http://www.ctv.ca) news)

HONOLULU -- A tiny mite that has devastated mainland honeybee populations showed up in Honolulu hives for the first time this month and has now been confirmed in bee colonies across Oahu.

The infestation by varroa mites has led the state to ask beekeepers to restrict transport of bees around the islands. There are concerns it could threaten the Big Island's thriving queen bee export industry, which has so far tested free of the mites.

"This is going to be for us a nightmare," said Michael Kliks, head of the Hawaii Beekeepers' Association and owner of Manoa Honey Co. "When I saw that mite I knew exactly what it was. I knew exactly what it meant and I fell to my knees and almost began to weep because it's inexpressible what that sea change is for us in Hawaii."

The parasites are blamed for destroying more than half of some mainland beekeepers' hives and wiping out most wild honeybees there.

Kliks discovered the mites April 6 on a pupa contained in an abandoned hive he recovered from the Makiki section of Honolulu and immediately notified state agriculture officials.

Since then the mites have been confirmed in hives in Waimanalo, Ewa, Kuna, Kahaluu and Punaluu.

Hives are still being checked elsewhere on Oahu but it is too late to hope to eradicate or even contain the infestation, Kliks said.

"The only thing we can try and do is keep the levels of infestation in our managed colonies below what's called the threshold level ... so that we can still produce honey. But keeping it at that level will certainly require quite regular, heavy application of permitted pesticides," he said.

That may mean the end of certified organic honey production on the island.

The appearance of the mites could also hurt island crops that depend on wild bees for pollination, such as coffee, macadamia nuts and pumpkins, Kliks said.

Originally from Asia, varroa mites were first discovered in Wisconsin and Florida in 1987. By the next year, the mites were found in 12 states and have since spread throughout the continental U.S. The pinhead-sized insects, which are spread through contact between bees, feed off the blood of honeybee adults, larvae and pupae.

Bees cannot legally be imported into Hawaii, and officials do not know how the mites made it to the state.

Beekeepers are being asked not to move their bees between islands or even within the same island. Once authorities have confirmed where the mites have spread, they can then work on a possible quarantine for bees throughout the state, said Janelle Saneishi, spokeswoman for the state Department of Agriculture.

"But you know a bee flies. So that's the wild card," she said.

## Bee Master's Course

*(Continued from page 3)*

was a banquet off campus, where both Dr. Mark Winston and Heather Higo were honoured and there was lots of fun and laughter. Mark has moved on from doing bee research at Simon Fraser University to other things and Heather is retiring

Friday morning we had sessions on Management of Honey Bees for Pollination; Pesticides and Pollinators and Honey Bee Races. After lunch, we moved right into the (non compulsory) 3 hour exam. Originally, Rob and I had thought that due to the late timing of the exam and our tight timing for arriving home in Manitoba, we would not

write the exam, but when the exam was moved up to early Friday afternoon, we decided to take the time to write. I didn't find this easy, as I am a person who needs time to absorb things and mull them over. I also listen very differently when I know right from the start of a course that I am to write an exam, so I had lots of scrambling to do to study for that one! Time would tell whether Rob and I "made it" for only those who pass get certificates. We were both delighted to receive ours and the group photo in the mail this week.

Highlights for me were the lab demonstrations, with our being able to see under a microscope what various dis-

eases and parts of the bee look like; getting to talk with the various speakers and listen to all the stories from each of them and from the other beekeepers; visiting the Simon Fraser site where the research had been taking place (it is being phased out unfortunately) and the banquet.

Arriving home, after driving through the States and Saskatchewan, we found Mom was still doing OK, our bees were OK, the house was still standing and amazingly, people had gotten along quite well without us.

Would I do it again? Yes, definitely! I'm sure I would listen differently next time. If you ever get a chance, take this course; it is well worth the money. In this day and age, we cannot afford NOT to take it.

# CLASSIFIEDS

**For Sale:** Limited number of nucs available around the 15<sup>th</sup> 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

**Wanted** Looking for a solar wax melter.

**Doug Henry** 757-4694 dhenry@skyweb.ca

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

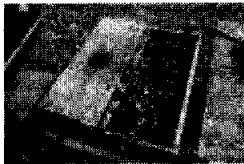
Please call **George Chwist** ph: 338-5078

**For Sale:** frames of brood and bee's and nucs available May 2007. Please call **Mike Grysiuk** ph 204 -831-0961 or 204-831-7838

**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:** 4 frame plastic uncapper on stand \$250, food grade stainless steel uncapping tank, 20 in. wide, 56 in. long, 14 in deep. stands 30 in from floor, has drain plug on one end. \$275

Contact **Dennis Ross @ 878-2924**

**For Sale:** Bee Boxes with empty frames, Supers, Brood 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

**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.

**For Sale:** Pollen Paddies. Available for April and May membership meetings. Each paddy contains 10% irradiated pollen and weights 10 ounces.

\$1.25 each. Profits will go to bee research.

**For Sale:** 60 frames Cowen extractor in mint condition.

Phone : 204.248.2645

Cell : 204.295.2856 Ask for **Pierre Faure**

**For Sale:** Complete 50 colony bee operation to be sold as a unit. All supers (350) are painted and in good condition with mostly new drawn combs. Wintered hives are strong and nearly all will require splitting. Complete stainless extracting line, bee blower and comb filler etc. Bee Maid quota can be included.

Call **Rudy Harsany** at (204) 866-2276

**Nucs For Sale:** includes 2 brood and 1 honey frame, with queen. Price \$120.00 ea. Willing to exchange honey frames. Also Queens available mid June.

Call for details. **Alex Reich**, Mitchell area, 204-326-8182.

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*We are on the web!*  
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*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.

## CCD Culprit

*(Continued from page 4)*

"The bees must have been loaded with this stuff," said DeRisi, who collaborated in the experiment with Dr. Donald Ganem of the UCSF Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

Fueling the UCSF scientists' interest in the parasite is a recent paper, published by the *Journal of Invertebrate Pathology* in January, in which a team of Spanish researchers infected hives of European honeybees with *Nosema ceranae*. Within eight days, the colonies were wiped out.

The federal government's leading honeybee scientists, however, are not ready to conclude that DeRisi has found anything significant. Jeffery Pettis, research leader for the U.S. Agriculture Department's Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., said reports suggesting that this parasite has recently ap-

peared in the United States are simply wrong. "There are historical samples from the mid-1990s," he said.

Before then, the parasite was seldom seen outside Asia, where it favored a species of honeybee found only there. It did not cause colony collapse in Asia.

Now, Pettis said, tests have shown that *Nosema ceranae* has displaced a related strain that had been the dominant form of the parasite in the United States, Pettis said. However, large quantities of the microbe have been found in bee colonies that are healthy, as well as in those that have collapsed, he said.

Pettis said the parasite could simply be taking advantage of a newly developed weakness in the insects' immune systems. "Mostly we think of *Nosema* as a stress disorder of honeybees," he said.

It is possible that a more virulent strain of *Nosema ceranae* has evolved in the United States, but Pettis doubts it. "We can't rule it out completely," he said.

Evan Skowronski, senior team leader for biosciences at the Army lab and a friend of DeRisi's, said that because the stake are high, every important lead in the search for the cause of the honeybee deaths needs to be pursued.

"We're not ready to say this is it, but it is a pathogen of interest," he said.

Skowronski said there is no reason to think that the cause of Colony Collapse Disorder is "anything other than Mother Nature." However, he said that any natural threat to honeybees has major implications for the United States. "This needs a high level of attention," he said.

DeRisi agreed that more tests will be needed to prove or disprove the parasite's role in the disappearance of the bees.

"In our results, the control bees did not have it, and the sick ones were loaded with the stuff," he said. "It is going to take a lot of time to figure out."