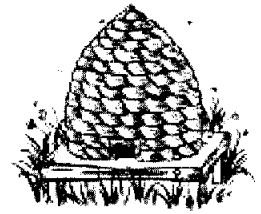


The Bee Cause



Volume 4, Issue 6

November 2007

Manitoba Extension Report

Points of Interest:

- Next general meeting is 7:30 Tuesday, November 13th at the usual place. Program is "Technical Night".
- Remembrance Day, November 11th.

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- David Ostermann (Extension Apiarist)

2007 Spring Inspection Results

This spring, 282 operations and 5300 hives in the province were inspected for AFB. The disease was found in 34 of these operations including 2 with resistant AFB (rAFB). Last year (2006), AFB was found in 26 operations, and the year before that (2005), 44. To date, rAFB has been found in 8 active operations in the province, located in the Northwest and Central regions. As an update to last fall's (2006) discovery of 2 adult Small Hive Beetles in an operation, no beetles have been found in any operation in the province this year.

2007 Spring Lab Results

Varroa control continues to be a major issue

for beekeepers in Manitoba. This spring, varroa resistance to coumaphos (i.e. CheckMite+) was confirmed in a third operation. The resistant operations are located in the Southwest, Central, and Southern Interlake regions. There does not appear to be any link between the operations, therefore it believed the resistance built up independently of each other.

It is expected that the number of operations with coumaphos-resistant mites will grow quickly in the next 1-3 years, as resistance develops within operations then spreads, or vice versa. Varroa resistance to coumaphos has also been documented in the U.S. and in several other provinces in Canada. Producers are strongly advised to monitor the effectiveness of any and all

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President's Comments

The end of another beekeeping season always is a time of reflection forwards and as well backwards. We have seemed to have had a good summer of honey production, and with all the news of CCD and/or shortage of spring bees, the expectation was that the wholesale price of honey would move well above a dollar. But it hasn't as recent information shows that 90 cents or less has been the norm for offers from the larger packers. WHY is the question that remains difficult to answer.

I suspect that it is a reflection of even larger quantities of offshore honey coming into Canada, being blended and then given a Product of Canada label and put out on store shelves. As the price is lower, the consumer buys the product because of price, tries it, is disappointed and likely doesn't buy any more. Result is another disappointed honey consumer.

At this years honey show at The Forks we set up a taste table where visitors could sample Manitoba Honey as well as Offshore Honey. The comments from older people we heard were often negative about the Offshore Honey, while younger visitors were that the Manitoba Honey was not as

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If the bees FEEL prosperous,
They will BEE prosperous.

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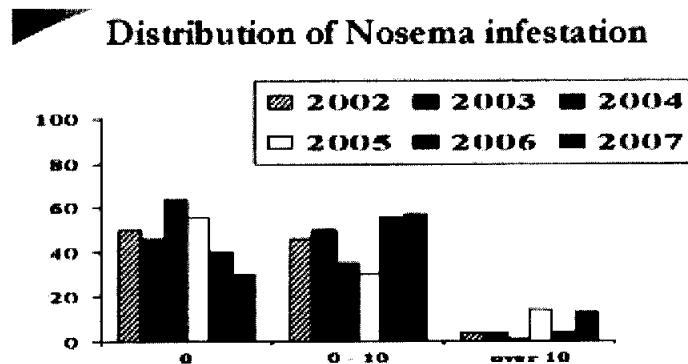
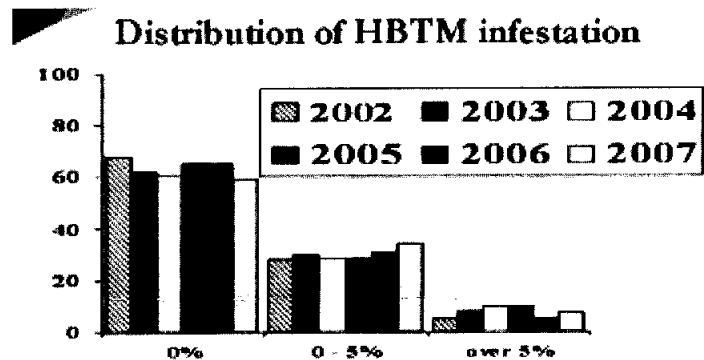
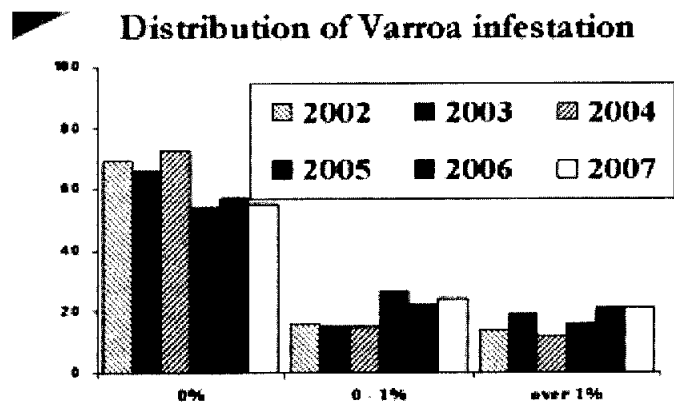
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Manitoba Extension Report

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varroa treatments.

The spring varroa, tracheal mite, and noseema sample results are summarized in the figures below. Overall the number of samples with detectable to high levels of varroa and noseema has increased the past 2-3 years approximately 200-350 samples were analyzed each year). Tracheal mite levels are

somewhat higher as well. Although, in some cases, where the submission of a significant numbers of samples by a few producers may overweight the results at a given level, it is felt that the higher parasite levels should be noted by all producers. Most producers know that high levels of any one of these parasites, or low levels of multiple infestations, can cause significant stress to a colony.



Press Release—Apicultural Research

Bill Bygarski, Chairman of Bee Maid Honey Limited is pleased to announce the continuation of apicultural research funding by Bee Maid Honey.

Bee Maid will consider project proposals in any area of apiculture or pollination research. Preference will be given to the area of honey, and the production of pure quality honey in the Canadian beekeeping industry.

Proposals for projects are to be submitted to Bee Maid Honey by December 3, 2007. Projects are expected to be completed within one year of funding, although renewal applications will be considered.

Bee Maid Honey Ltd. is the marketing arm of the Manitoba Co-operative Honey Producers Limited and the Alberta Honey Producers Co-operative Limited. Honey produced by beekeepers in western Canada is processed and packaged at Bee Maid's Winnipeg, MB and Spruce Grove, AB plants. BeeMaid Honey is North America's largest single source honey marketer, proudly packing 100% pure Canadian honey.

For further information and to receive an application for research, please contact:

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President's Report

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sweet as the other. How do those small examples of honey tasting translate into what does the general public expect in their choices of honey purchasing.

As beekeepers are the stewards of their bees and the hives, what does the future offer to us if we are not able to make a living, cover our expenses or at least be even at the end of the year.

The television program "The Nature of Things" on October 28th had as its title --The Silence of the Bees--. Its focus was on the honeybee, its importance in pollinating a third of all the food we eat, and suggested that at the rate of bee population decline, that honeybees could likely be extinct in 2035. This may seem like over dramatization, but the facts of last fall and this spring bear examination of causes.

I hope that somebody recorded the program as it worth viewing again. Let your Executive know if someone made a copy. We should have been doing all that we could this fall to ensure that we are going into the winter with the strongest colonies possible. It is too late now at this date to do much, but the spring may bring all of us another wake up call. This brings me to the end of my 2007 comments. I may be stepping down from the position of President in January and wish all of you the best for the upcoming holiday season and a Happy New Year.

Charles Polcyn - RRAA 2007 President

Is The Bee Virus Bunk ?

- excerpts from The Globe and Mail November 3rd, 2007 (Science and Ideas) by Andrew Nikiforuk

He (Professor Mark Winston) says the bee virus that officials blame for this devastation is only a minor character in a larger tragedy. The real crisis ahead is "agricultural collapse disorder," the impact of bee farming itself. And if things don't change, there is much more than honey at stake.

... He says the industrialization of bee farming has made bees more susceptible to mass die offs and abrupt disappearance. In fact, colony collapse disorder may be as much a symptom of bad agricultural management as mad cow disease among ruminants fed industrial animal feed or wasting viral diseases afflicting crowded pig factories or explosions of sea lice among farm salmon.

By "separating bees from their keepers," Prof Winston argues, modern farming has increasingly exposed bees to a host of debilitating parasites, pesticides, antibiotics and malnutrition.

... He also thinks there needs to be a grater dialogue about both beekeeping and the future of agriculture beyond the classroom. And he would like the federal government, which currently employs but one lonely bee expert, to play a much more active role—regulating chemicals and bee movement and running routine inspections of hives for disease..

Ultimately, though, what he want is less "management" and more care in the beekeeping business.

... "Our agricultural philosophy is all about overwhelming nature rather than collaborating with it." he says. "If we could hear bees talk, they would be crying right now and they would say, 'Leave us alone'."

Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the General Meeting October 9, 2007

Ron Rudiak—Secretary RRAA

Charles Polcyn welcomed twenty-seven members and guests to the October meeting at the River Heights Community Centre, in Winnipeg. Charles commented on a study from Newcastle University which found that when rats were fed honey instead of sucrose, they had an increased life expectancy.

Minutes: Moved by Jim Campbell and seconded by Gilles Lantagne to accept the minutes of the September meeting that was circulated with the Bee Cause. Motion was carried.

Membership and Financial Report: Dennis Ross reported that the RRAA account balance is \$5410.

Correspondence: Charles read from a letter of appreciation, sent to the RRAA, from the Forks Market Events Coordinator expressing appreciation on having the 2007 honey show located there. The coordinator communicated a desire to have the show there again next year.

MBA Report: Jim Campbell announced that the MBA annual general meeting will be held in Neepawa on Wednesday, November 14. Jim also outlined some of the highlights of the Manitoba Beekeepers' Honey Show at the Forks. He also urged us to try to minimize hive problems by checking for Coumaphos and/or Fluvalinate resistance if either of these treatments are used this fall. He also reminded us that we need to use proper safety procedures when handling or applying any of these disease treatments.

Rhéal Lafrenière noted the need for everyone to accurately determine mite levels in their colonies. Knowing mite levels will determine when treatment is needed and if the treatment is successful. Thymol, a treatment alternative, for varroa, may be registered in Canada in a year or so.

The MBA Convention will be held at the Keystone Centre, in Brandon, on February 4th and 5th (2008).

Canadian Honey Council: Ron Rudiak reported that arrangements have been made for an October Canadian Honey Council meeting in Winnipeg to finalize the restructuring document.

Program: Charles introduced Neil Vanderput from Carmen as the guest speaker for the evening's program. Neil gave a slide presentation and spoke about his experiences as a side-

liner, a horticulturist, a factory worker for General Motors and then as a commercial honey producer. Following an exciting career as a commercial beekeeper, Neil became a bee inspector for MAFRI.

Loonie Draw: Charles provided several items for the October Loonie Draw. Stan Huzey and Andy Lecocq both won a CD from Mite Away II. Stan Grysiuk's name was drawn for the small jar of acacia honey from Switzerland and Jack Lee won the 1 lb. jar of white honey from Honey Acres in Wisconsin.

Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the Executive Meeting October 2, 2007

Location—Salisbury House, Bishop Grandin & Pembain Hwy.

Charles Polcyn called the meeting to order with Rhéal Lafrenière, Dennis Ross, Margaret Smith, John Russell, Jim Campbell and Ron Rudiak in attendance. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss future meeting programs and the Manitoba Beekeepers' Honey Show that recently took place at the Forks in Winnipeg.

Red River Apiarists' Association Logo John Russell pointed out the need to develop a logo for the RRAA. This item was discussed previously this year and it was decided to ask for designs from our membership. This was done many years ago to get a design for an MBA lapel pin. One of our members came up with the bee on a crocus design which is still in use.

Treasurer's Report Dennis' report stated that the RRAA has \$4,524 in the general account. Moved by Jim and seconded by Ron that we pay the invoice for display jars from Bee Maid (\$45.24) and issue a cheque to the MBA for our share of the honey show liability insurance coverage (\$45.00). Carried

Newsletter Jack Lee will be able to send out the Bee Cause on October 3rd.

Honey Show Wrap Up Discussion

- The honey show needs to have more beekeepers available to staff the displays.
- Definite times need to be announced and/or posted

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RED RIVER APIARIST ASSOCIATION

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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.

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- for the extractor demonstrations.
- Because of fall bee work, a later date (early October) for the honey show may be preferable.
- For promotion the association may want to consider using the viewtheseads.ca truck that uses a rolling display format.
- Having our own Pierre the Bear available in Manitoba may be desirable. A mascot would cost about \$3,000
- John thought that we should see if there was some way that the City of Winnipeg Health Dept. would allow food samples from cooking demonstrations to be given out.
- Some buskers were overly loud at times and appeared randomly around the Forks Market area.
- Vendor sales were definitely down from St. Vital. Everyone was agreeable to \$25 per vendor table (or a total of \$50/ vendor).
- Because of the large amount of traffic through the Forks Market and the availability of space for 2008 we should consider returning to this location - possibly two to three weeks later in the season providing that there is still a lot of people coming to that location.
- Some improvements could be made to the honey tasting layout. E.g. Layout, plastic table cover, have comment sheets available etc.

October and November Meeting Topics:

- For the October meeting it was suggested that we have a presentation from the U of M on the package fumigation project or on successful queen rearing.
- November meeting will be a gadget night meeting. Also the nominating committee needs to be selected.

Research and Promotion:

- The need to test honey for lead and refurbish older equipment to eliminate any lead was discussed. Rhéal and Ron will work with Doug McRory of Ontario on this.
- Discussion re honey promotion and insuring that we are promoting high quality honey from producers.
- Ron and Dennis will work on the U of M observation hive to restore it using first grade materials.
- The MBA has decided to take over the Saskatoon pollination project with the U of M.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM