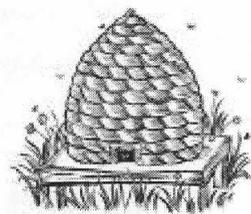


# The Bee Cause



Volume 5, Issue 1

January 2008

### Points of Interest:

- Next general meeting is the Annual General Meeting 7:30 Tuesday, January 8th at the usual place. Agenda: Update On CCD (Rheal); Year-end Reports; CHC Final Report (Ron Rudiak); Nominations Report; Annual Election

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## Overwintering 2-Frame Nucs in Manitoba

(continued from October issue)

The bottom board can be modified to provide a separate entrance for each of the 5 nucs in the single box (Fig. 2); one forward, one backward, and two out to the sides. Ted uses a screened bottom board to improve ventilation to the nucs, and to monitor natural varroa fall.

Each of the 5 nucs should have a separate cover, with a hole(s) in the cover for feeding, and the cover should fit flush with the top of the divider pieces and the top of the hive box. The separate covers allow for each nuc to be worked separately without disturbing the other nucs.

The feeding holes can be covered with a heavy tape (eg. aluminum foil tape), or plastic plug; however, bees have been found to chew through lighter material such as masking tape and duct tape. The flush covers with feeding



Fig. 2. The entrances may be cut out of the bottom board. A brick between 2 entrances on one side (left) acts as an orientation cue to

(Continued on page 2)

## President's Comments

For beekeepers, January is often the month of resolutions and plans for the rest of the year. Some of the time we build equipment, make lists of needed repairs, attend meetings and occasionally look at how our bees are coming thru the winter. Another thing to consider is how your RRAA beekeeping organization is doing, and what things you might do to contribute to its operation.

Attending the regular meetings is one part, but another part is the offering of suggestions, volunteering when a request is made, raising issues of concern that relate to beekeeping and participating when a RRAA event is taking place.

I wasn't able to attend the November meeting, but was disappointed when I heard that nobody volunteered to be a part of the Nominations Committee for next years Executive. Two members at large are required, along with two Executive members to canvass the existing officers and determine what positions might be needed for

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**Manitoba Extension Report**

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holes allow for clean individualized nuc feeding with Ted's modified hive-top feeder (Fig. 3).



Fig 3: Ted's modified hive-top feeder

About 6-10 days after establishing the nucs, they should be checked for queen acceptance (e.g. eggs). If a queen is missing, add another queen cell or introduce a mature queen. Honey supers (standard sized and not divided) should be added to the 5-plex nuc box as necessary, and a

queen excluder is needed to prevent any direct interaction of the queens while supered up. It is generally okay for workers from each nuc to mingle during the honey flow; however, ap-

proximately 15% of nucs are lost by the time hives are fed in the fall. It is not known exactly what causes these losses.

Where a nuc colony is lost, a viable nuc colony should be put in its place. These losses must be considered in the calculation of number of hives desired to go into winter. That year, depending on when the nucs are put together and the type of year, some honey may be produced; however, if the interest is not honey production, the nucs may be divided. Ted has found that a 5-nuc box (a "5-plex" as he calls it), prepared at the end of May to early June, can produce 4-6 boxes of honey.

When the honey flow is over, the supers are removed, and feed is put on immediately. This usually occurs in early September. Fig. 3 shows Ted's modified hive-top feeder. Putting feed on at that time is important due to the limited storage space in the nucs. The feeder's flat bottom provides a direct channel for the bees and the 5 divisions allow for individualized nuc feeding. Each nuc colony generally takes down about 1 gallon of feed (3:2 sugar to water).

*(continued in next issue)*

**RED RIVER APIARIST'S ASSOCIATION  
2008 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM**

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

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROV: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NEW MEMBER [ ] RENEWAL [ ] STUDENT (free 1<sup>st</sup> year) [ ]

Mail to: Dennis Ross, RRAA Treasurer  
Box 20, Group 40, RR2, Lorette, MB R0A 0Y0

## Manitoba Honey Wins Again

- Jim Campbell, MBA Rep.

Congratulations go to some Manitobans taking prize ribbons at the recent Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. In past years we have had several RRAA members walking off with top prizes, and this tradition of entering quality honey continues.

For the 2008 Show, Charles Polcyn, Winnipeg, took three Reserve Champion Ribbons in the Granulated, Liquid, and Other Than White Liquid Honey categories.

These ribbons are a colourful rosettes celebrating the 85th year of the Royal. Congratulation to Robert Heath, Virden, on winning the Canadian Honey Council Challenge

Trophy for Best Exhibit of Granulated Honey. Robert also captured first for wax candles.

In addition Charles Polcyn, Robert Heath, and Jim Campbell won first, second and third in the Liquid White (West) category. *also Pierre Faure 2nd Buckwheat.*

*also Pierre Faure - 2nd Buckwheat*

## MBA Sets New Plans

- Jim Campbell, MBA Rep.

The Manitoba Beekeepers' Association (MBA) are setting a new direction for 2008. At the recent AGM, resolutions approved will set new fees for all producers and also increase the hive levy to 40 cents per colony (up to max 1000 colonies).

One resolution supported the change Canadian Honey Council (CHC) has been working on for the past 4 years. CHC will present a plan for increased staffing and redirected efforts beginning in 2008. Members at their AGM are expected to approve the plans, which call for a per hive levy for each province. MBA will have to roll out a plan to collect these fees from all honey producers across Manitoba. With that in mind, another resolution directed MBA to set appropriate regulations in place.

The proposed regulation, if approved by the Manitoba Marketing Council, will provide legal requirement for all producers with 50 colonies or more, to submit the appropriate fees

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## President's Report

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the next year. Two members have been drafted for this role, but that shouldn't be necessary. At this time, there is only one vacant position in the Executive, provided that the incumbents are willing to be nominated at the January meeting for another year.

By our constitution, at our annual meeting, nominations for positions are proposed by the Nominations Committee and a vote taken. But other nominees can be made from the floor of any qualified RRAA member for any Executive position and can be voted on by the members present. It is a process that we have used before and it works.

It seems quite clear now that Apistan resistant varroa mites are widespread thru out the province. It would be a good plan to only use Coumaphos/Checkmite for the next few years and give Apistan use a rest. For these two miticides the directions for use are clear and should be exactly followed. The other alternatives are formic acid which works well if the weather cooperates, oxalic acid when brood levels are low, screened bottom boards for ongoing monitoring as well as inspection/removal of capped drone cells. Whichever method is used it is very important to exactly follow the Directions. If this isn't done, the surviving varroa can likely become resistant to the miticide being used.

High varroa mite levels are a major stress on bees throughout the year, create disease situations for the bees as it is like an open sore for them. Anything you can do to decrease mite levels will benefit the bee population.

The hoped for, somewhat expected higher honey prices for 2007 has not happened. A lot of honey is coming into North America from offshore, our dollar has become stronger, and packers are not willing to pay a better price for quality honey. We need to make certain that retail honey is properly identified by country of origin, and Made in Canada or Product of Canada is a valued true label on all jars of honey being sold.

Those of you who winter outdoors should have a good snow cover blanket by now as it adds another layer of insulation. Be careful about shoveling a lot more snow on top of hives as it will re-crystallize into a very solid cover that is almost airtight. Around the sides could be acceptable as it forms a good windbreak, but still avoid covering your upper air vent.

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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.

**MBA Sets New Plans**

*(Continued from page 3)*

to MBA. Since this will be new to several producers, a special meeting has been called during the upcoming MBA Convention. This meeting will provide time to hear and comment on the proposal, the budget plans, and the need to act now. In addition, MBA has started work on a Strategic Plan. The second draft will be ready for review early January. It is expected this plan will also be presented at the special meeting, and will form a template for MBA priorities and activities during 2008 and beyond.

Jim Campbell, MBA rep.

**There are over  
300 chemical components  
In pure beeswax**

**President's Report**

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Indoor wintering has its own challenges in making certain that your ventilation system is working, the temperatures are being kept at about the 40 degree Fahrenheit level, bees have a fresh air supply and any moisture is being vented to the outside by your wall fans. Some indoor trickle feeding on the bottom boards can be done using shallow plastic tubs on edge with several small nail holes for the bees to collect the sugar syrup. You can fasten the tub with elastic bands and thumb tacks to the hive front. However if your hives weighed more than 75 pounds when you put them away, they should have enough feed until April.

Let's start off this year with a few resolutions to attend beekeeper meetings, get those small/large repair jobs done, stay in touch with our friends and think positive for 2008.

Best Wishes to All- Charles Polcyn-- RRAA President

# **Red River Apiarists' Association**

## **Minutes of the General Meeting November 13, 2007**

Margaret Smith welcomed everyone to the November meeting at the River Heights Community Centre, in Winnipeg. Margaret commented on the Amazing Agriculture Adventure event held at the Red River Exhibition grounds late this summer. Margaret also had a selection of pictures she took of many of the displays. Today, many young people have not had the advantage of visiting someone's farm and this event allows them to learn more about agricultural activities and food production. The Amazing Agriculture Adventure is a hands-on interactive event where students move through eighteen interactive stations featuring a variety of agricultural topics.

**Minutes:** Moved by Ron Rudiak and seconded by Jim Campbell to accept the October minutes of the regular meeting included in the Bee Cause. Motion was carried.

**Financial Report:** Dennis Ross reported that the RRAA account balance is currently \$5465.54

**MBA Report:** Jim Campbell described some of the changes being made to the Advance Payment for Crops Program and the possibility of making crop insurance available for honey producers.

**Canadian Honey Council:** Ron Rudiak described the CBISQT (Canadian Bee Industry Safety Quality and Traceability) program developed by CHC. Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada expects every agricultural commodity now being produced in Canada to develop and implement their own Canadian On-Farm Food Safety program. CBISQT is being developed for the use of beekeepers across Canada.

**Program - Gadget Night:** Ron Rudiak regularly uses two different hive tools, one the traditional style and one of the newer Maxant tools with a hooked end for lifting frames. He described the usefulness of each. He also detailed the use of several assorted plastic spatulas and scrapers in the honey house. Two other items of interest were the modern propolis trap and a barrel lifting device which lifts from the bottom of the barrel. His chain device is designed to be very economical to build, and yet is light and safe for lifting barrels with a hoist or a front-end loader.

Margaret Smith related, for everyone, the method that they use for dealing with problem skunks in their apiaries. Rob Smith makes his own skunk trap devices which hold a Conibear #120 trap in each one. Their method is very effective and is not attractive to domestic pets.

**Loonie Draw:** Several items were donated by RRAA members and Bee Maid for the November Loonie Draw. Stan Huzey won the skunk trap device donated by the Smiths. Howard Alexander's name was drawn for the herb garden kit. John Russell, Margaret Smith and Peter Raho each won a sample jar of foreign honey. Nelson Szwaluk, Dennis Ross and Wayne Campbell each won a jar of honey spread. Ron Rudiak won the sweat shirt which was donated by Bee Maid.

Ron Rudiak, Secretary RRAA