

ILLINOIS STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

November/December 2004 • Volume 86, Number 6

President's Message Movin' On

It hardly seems that three years have past since **Dr. Earl Lutz** called me on the phone one evening, informed me that he was on the **ISBA Nominating Committee**, and asked me to run for **ISBA President**. With some extensive verbal arm-twisting, reluctantly, I said okay, I'll run. Of course, I knew that as soon as the nominating committee gets one candidate to fill a position, they stop looking for another, and you're "it" unless someone is nominated from the floor on the day of the election.

Looking back, I'm pleased that my reluctance didn't win out, because if it had, I would have missed out on a very rewarding experience in my beekeeping life. The position of president opened a **door of opportunity** for me to work with people I would never have had the need to be in contact with on my own - not beekeepers alone, but people from many walks of life. As you know, **ISBA** works

The ISBA Constitution limits the president's term to no more than three consecutive years.

independently but closely with the **Illinois Department of Agriculture**, as well as with **universities, state extension services, the USDA bee labs** and **Specialty Growers** of fruits and vegetables. Then there is the ever-present challenge to educate

the general public about the benefits of bees and pollination to the environment, and promoting a positive image of bees, beekeeping and honey. Now, that really keeps one from getting bored.

The ISBA Constitution limits the president's term to no more than three consecutive years. So, a new president will be nominated and elected at our **Annual Fall Meeting on November 13, 2004**. I hope you will be able to join us that day in **Springfield** in the **Ag Building auditorium** on the **State Fair Grounds**. Better than that, I urge you to run for one of the five elected offices open that day,

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and **Northern Director**. I guarantee that serving in any one of those offices will be a rewarding experience that you would not otherwise have in your life.

Besides the elections that occupy a small time slot in the meeting program, our guest speakers will be our keynote, **Bob Cox** from the **Weslaco, Texas Bee Lab**, and **Elizabeth Watkins** from the **Illinois Department of Public Health**. From Bob, you'll learn results of his research on bee diseases and his search for alternative varroa mite control; from Elizabeth you'll learn some ins and outs of food processing, how it relates to honey extracting and requirements to build an approved honey house. Incidentally, if you have a favorite **gadget, invention** or **special beekeeping method** that works for you, bring it to the meeting and be prepared to talk about it with your fellow beekeepers during show-and-tell gadget time.

As for me, at the end of this year, I'm "movin' on". You might see me around occasionally, but only in an advisory role. It's been great! See you in Springfield.

John Hansen
President, ISBA

Who will be the Illinois beekeeper of the year?

Find out at the ISBA fall meeting
9:00am
November 13, 2004
Agriculture Building
Illinois State Fair Grounds

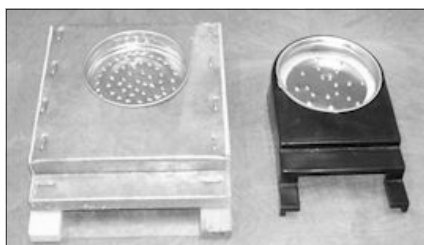
Thoughts on Feeding Our Bees

Marion D. Ellis
University of Nebraska

Plan Sugar Feeding to Achieve Specific Goals

Before feeding bees sugar, carefully consider what you are trying to accomplish. Following are some reasons to feed bees sugar:

1. Adding food reserves to colonies.
2. Stimulating the queen to lay and expand the colony population.
3. Stimulating bees to lavishly feed newly grafted queen larvae.



Boardman (entrance) Feeder Available in wood or plastic. Just add a quart jar of sugar syrup.

4. Stimulating nest cleaning and recovery from diseases, parasites, pesticide injury, or a poor honey flow season.
5. Aiding newly hived packages to draw foundation.

Your management objective

will determine when to feed, how much to feed, the type of feeder to use, and the desired syrup concentration. As an example, fall winter and spring feeding recommendations are compared.



Two Gallon Pail that is inverted over colony when filled with sugar syrup. Holes are drilled in the top to provide access to the syrup.

Late fall feeding to add weight

Strong honey bee colonies require about 55 pounds of honey to overwinter in Nebraska. A colony in 2 deep hive bodies that weigh 125 pounds will contain 55 pounds of honey. The best time to feed bees to add weight is in the fall. (Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 is ideal.) Use a feeder that allows the bees to take the syrup quickly, and keep the feeder full constantly until the bees have added sufficient weight. Make a thick syrup by dissolving two parts sugar in one part boiling water. Use a feeder that allows the bees

to remove the syrup as quickly as possible. Your goal is to plug the nest with syrup quickly before the queen, who is stimulated to lay by the incoming syrup, has an opportunity to fill the nest with eggs. A feeder that allows only slow removal of syrup or intermittent feeding, which allows a feeder to remain empty for a period before being refilled, often results in colonies that convert feed into brood in excess of their needs. Colonies fed to 125 lbs. in late fall can be packed away and forgotten about until mid-March.

One or two gallon plastic pail feeders inverted over a hole in the lid or inner cover make good feeders for adding weight. Drill a 1/2" hole in the pail lid and cover the hole with a 2" by 2" window screen mesh. Embed the screen into the plastic lid by running an electric soldering iron around the edge of the screen. If temperatures are below 55 degrees F., place the pail(s) directly on the top bars above the cluster and cover the feeder with an empty hive body or winter carton.



**Hive top feeder
This plastic insert is made to fit a 4 3/4 inch super**

Emergency winter feeding

Emergency winter feeding is stressful to both bees and beekeepers. Fall feeding to add weight not only provides food stores, it also provides a heat sink which moderates temperature fluctuations in the hive. Colonies that are wintered on low food reserves are subjected to more stress. Colonies only require about 3 pounds of honey per month to winter when no brood rearing is occurring; therefore most colonies do not starve until late winter or early spring when they begin brood rearing and accelerate honey consumption. However, waiting until spring to add the necessary weight usually gives unsatisfactory results. The bees are more stressed from winter and they have often restricted brood rearing to conserve stores.

(Continued on page 3)

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In general, it is best to avoid emergency winter syrup feeding. Manipulating and curing syrup requires a lot of activity. Activity generates waste, and bees need to take cleansing flights to void their waste when they are active. Winter weather is usually not conducive to cleansing flights. The best way to provide emergency stores is to add supers or combs of honey. Be sure the honey came from colonies that were free of American foulbrood. If combs of honey are not available, candy lids can be made by boiling a quart of water and adding 25 pounds of sugar. This will require a lot of stirring and a lot of heat. Candy is cast into 2" rims and allowed to cool. The hard candy board is placed directly above the cluster. Making these once in your kitchen will motivate you to remember to fall feed next year. It is a lot of work and mess. Beekeepers who routinely make candy boards have gas burners and mechanical agitators to facilitate the process. Be sure to remove the candy lid in the spring before the bees fill the empty space with comb. Another emergency measure is to remove the lid, place newspaper over the exposed top bars, place a 2" rim on the newspaper, fill the rim with granulated sugar and replace the lid. The sugar will absorb moisture from the cluster and form hard candy-like stores. These can be a mess to work around when doing spring work in your apiary. β

Photos of feeders from the Draper's Super Bee online catalog—www.draperbee.com

Ode to the Apiary By Jonathan Caforio

Apis mellifera, the wonderful bee,
Eating the pollen fills me with glee.
Tasting the honey is truly first rate,
Swallowing propolis makes me feel great!

Vitamins, minerals and other trace elements,
Enzymes and oxides in small little increments,
Antibacterial benefits galore,
Drive me back to the hive, not the store.

Honey bees are the jewel of creation.
Just imagine a world without pollination.

*First published in
Heart of Illinois Beekeeper Association Newsletter*

Meet Mr. Keynoter

The fall ISBA meeting will feature a keynote presentation by Bob Cox, a researcher from the Weslaco Bee Lab. Many ISBA members will be familiar with Bob who previously held the position of the state bee inspector in Iowa for 13 years.

Bob's research at the Weslaco lab—where he has been since 2002—has centered on honey bee health. In particular, his work has involved the effects of pesticides and honey bee pests. Most recently the focus has been on chemical control of varroa mites and methods of detection of antibiotic-resistant American foulbrood disease.

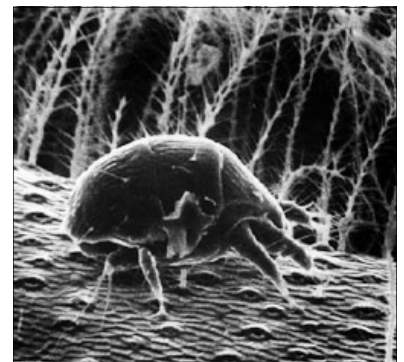
The keynote presentation will discuss the current understanding of bee diseases and thoughts on the control of apicultural enemy number one—the varroa mite. Bob says he will, "Offer a bit of hope for the future of beekeeping." This is an event you will not want to miss.

The meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2004 at 9:00am in the Department of Agriculture building on the State Fair Grounds in Springfield. β



The ace of spades on the apicultural most wanted list—the varroa mite. Is a new treatment looming in the near future? Read about the fungus *Metarhizian Anisopliae* in the next issue of the Bulletin.

A micrograph of the much smaller mite—the tracheal mite.



Illinois Department of Agriculture and Apiary Inspections

A bee inspector talks about bee inspections

By Lynn Osborn
IDOA Apiary Inspector

Each year, during the month of November, most beekeepers in Illinois renew the registration of their apiaries with the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Some states, such as Montana, limit the number of hives and restrict apiary locations to a 3 mile radius, however, here in Illinois there are no restrictions and registration is free. The registration of apiaries enables inspectors to make periodic inspections and locate apiaries in areas where a disease outbreak has occurred. Many beekeepers ask for an inspection just to get advice on honeybee management or ask questions that can only be answered during the inspection of a hive. Registration is also important so people in the Illinois Apiary Industry can sent updates or useful information.

Why is it then that a few beekeepers would prefer to keep their apiaries unregistered and their locations a secret? It certainly isn't the money because Illinois offers beekeepers a pretty good deal compared to many other states.

Illinois	no charge for registration or inspection
Florida	as much as \$10.00 per hive per year and a fee for inspections
Minnesota	\$10.00 yearly registration fee
Pennsylvania	\$10.00 yearly registration fee
Ohio -	\$5.00 per apiary
Montana	\$8.00 to \$20.00 per apiary

One beekeeper told me that the best way to keep his colonies disease free, was to keep them hidden from the bee inspector. There was no way he was going to have a stranger poking around in his hives and probably most people would be apprehensive unless they were there to see what care was taken to avoid disease transfer. Scientists at the US Department of Agriculture_Beltsville Bee Lab in Maryland say it is very hard to transfer disease on your tools or gloves but that is no reason not to adopt safe practices. I use disposable gloves and torch my equipment between yards. If I run into a diseased hive I replace the gloves and grab another hive tool before inspecting the next hive.

I try to work colonies in the middle of the day when they are flying well. This allows me to leave my smoker in the truck and not have to flame it as often. While studies have shown you need to transfer a lot of spores to get the disease started in another colony, there is little chance of any disease forming spores being transferred if good techniques are used. (Bleach will not kill spore-forming bacteria such as that causing American foulbrood disease.)

While some states like Montana limits apiary registrations and can assess heavy penalties for unregistered apiaries. Illinois works with its beekeepers in a positive and proactive manner and carries only moderate fines for not registering. Nevertheless, all beekeepers are expected to register all their apiaries and be a part of the program.

Other beekeepers have expressed concern about –

- Frames or equipment disorganized
- Damaging or killing a queen during manipulation
- Chilling brood
- Finding disease where there is none
- The inspector burning their colonies

It is preferred that the inspection be done when the beekeeper is there, so often the beekeeper is the one doing the manipulation of the hives. With normal care and attention to detail there is little chance that equipment will get disorganized or that a queen will get killed. Inspections aren't done when it is cold so chilled brood isn't a risk.

For years I have heard rumors of inspectors finding disease where there was none but reality is that American foulbrood disease is pretty easy to identify and in few days you can get a microscopic diagnosis from the Beltsville Bee Lab so there is no chance of misdiagnosis. In fact, good beekeepers are in their hives enough to spot any disease and often call the inspector for confirmation. If American foulbrood disease is found, actually it is the beekeeper's responsibility to kill the colony and burn the frames. Inspectors do not burn colonies or kill bees unless the owner cannot do it and it is a matter of last resort.

While controlling disease is key to the program, inspectors gain a lot of practical knowledge through their inspections that is shared with those beekeepers whose apiaries they inspect. By seeing many different methods practiced over an entire region, the inspector gains additional important knowledge on what works and what doesn't. That is why it is so important to register your hives and try to make time to be there when the inspection takes place.

Keep in mind that inspections are designed to be a service to the Apiary Industry, not as a means to interfere with a beekeeper's operations. Both Illinois Department Of Agriculture and the respective beekeeper benefit from the interaction during apiary inspections. β



Two worker bees communicating
about the November 13 ISBA meeting.
Coffee and donuts at 8:00am.

A slice of the beekeeper life

Want to impress your non-beekeeper friends and neighbors? Just have them watch as you hive a swarm. It works every time. ISBA member Chuck Leitner of Troy, Illinois had the



A 100 year old drawing of a beekeeper hiving a swarm as the locals look on. Little has changed.

Source: www.gobeekeeping.com

bees come to him one Saturday morning...

A few years ago we sold honey at an outdoor market on the courthouse square in a nearby town. The market was open until noon on that Saturday morning.

About 11:30—the market crowded with people—I looked up to see a swarm of bees winging down the street above all the heads. It came straight towards our honey stand and congregated

on a tree limb just above our truck. At noon, when the market was closing, I cut the limb and put the bees in a 5-frame hive box I had in the truck. It was quite a coincidence that the bees landed where we were selling honey.

Was it really a coincidence? One could only wonder what might have drawn the bees to Chucks honey stand.

To the general public swarms are scary. They represent the dangers in nature that cross our life paths. The seasoned beekeeper realizes that swarms are dorsal and offer little danger. Yet to both, swarms are awesome—an amazing glimpse of nature's plan that is only seldom shared with humans. β

Editors note—Being beekeepers we all get swarm calls. It is a great challenge to both our beekeeping skills and insights... and our ingenuity. It is the Olympics of beekeeping. Each situation requires us to adapt to the new situation and capture the bees. If you have a story of a swarm capturing adventure and would like to share it, email it to LKregel@mc.net or send it "snail mail" to the editor—Larry Kregel, 9409 Voss Road, Marengo, IL 60152.

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Please indicate new or renewal subscription when ordering journals.

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Reduced Journal Rates for 2004 (*members only*)

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr
American Bee Journal	17.20	32.75	46.05
Bee Culture	17.00	32.00	N/A
The Speedy Bee	13.25	25.25	34.00

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**Hear Steve Chard's
2004 State of Beekeeping in Illinois
address at the ISBA Fall Meeting
November 13.**