



Illinois State Beekeepers Association Bulletin

January/February 2015 Volume 98 Number 1

Letter from the President

Mike Mason

The weather this winter has been mild so far and the bees seem to be doing pretty well for me here in Central Illinois. I did lose two colonies to starvation which I found as I was putting on sugar boards just before the New Year. It appears I was a week or so too late. The remaining colonies already have brood and seem pretty strong so I am also feeding pollen substitute. The bees have had several opportunities to fly as well. While I was cutting hedge posts from a pasture I am reclaiming, a couple weeks ago, the bees were out in force. They appeared to be feeding on sap from fresh cut hedge and also “working” sawdust. Not sure what they were really after but they were definitely attracted to the fresh cut tree stumps. There was something about my John Deere Gator they liked as well? Curious creatures, if I can be anthropomorphic here.

Illinois beekeepers were well represented at the American Bee Federation Conference and Trade Show at the Disneyland Hotel in Southern California. The overall tone of the meeting was a bit disappointing in that the main focus was on “neonic” pesticides and a negative perspective. Pesticides are a problem, but it would be nice to present that problem balanced against the other issues that are every bit as important and problematic. There is so much more to address and a positive approach to how we deal with ALL our challenges would have made for a better meeting. Most research and researchers have been targeting Varroa mite as the primary issue with nutrition, habitat and pesticides coming in as secondary issues that are elevated in impact by Varroa mite. And, miticides tend to be more prevalent in colonies than other pesticides. The 2016 American Bee Federation Meeting will be held in Florida and hopefully there will be a more balanced and positive focus on the challenges we face.

Planning is well under way for our summer meeting on June 27th to be hosted by the Southern Region in Effingham. It is all coming together as I type this note, but it will be conducted a bit differently than in the past. It was proposed that all ISBA affiliates in the Southern Region play a role in hosting the meeting. We discussed this at our Board Meeting and decided this was a good way to get interaction between

affiliates and those collaborative efforts can lead to some great cooperative efforts between groups down the road. The location, caterer, and a several willing and available speakers are being considered to create a good mix of presentations. Once the lineup is pared down, details will be shared.

We are also making plans for the fall meeting in Springfield. We have solicited several speakers and hope to be able to get at least one high profile national speaker. We have high hopes and are confident we will not disappoint.

One last note before I sign off, I would like to highlight an opportunity that beekeepers have in dealing with reclaiming dead-out comb from EFB, Nosema, and other diseases. A company in Indiana has made their services available for the sterilization of bee equipment. Iotron from Columbia City, IN will host “Apiary Day” on March 20th, 2015. For \$5 per box, supers, hive bodies, and other hive parts can be sterilized by Electron Beam Irradiation. As we regionally see some diseases rise and fall, this is a great way to clean up, if your yard has had high winter losses. This and other means of irradiating hives has been practiced on the East Coast for at least a decade. The biggest benefit is that the honey comb itself can be sterilized and reused. Beekeepers out East who routinely do this say that their bees do very well on the sterilized comb, and some study suggests that pesticide residue in wax is rendered less harmful after irradiation. To learn how to prepare your hive equipment for irradiation, and to learn more about Iotron's event, call Aaron Starkey at (260) 212-1722, ext. 302.

Looking forward to a great spring and healthy bees coming out of winter.



APIARY INSPECTION SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Steve Chard, Illinois Department of Agriculture

NEW IDOA DIRECTOR

Most likely, you have already heard the news that Governor Bruce Rauner has named Mr. Philip Nelson as the new Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Director Nelson's first day on the job was January 19. Director Nelson is a farmer that operates a combination grain/livestock farm in LaSalle County and was formerly President (14th) of the Illinois Farm Bureau from 2003 through 2013. During his tenure at IFB, he worked closely with past IDOA Directors Chuck Hartke, Tom Jennings and Bob Flider on numerous agricultural issues. That gives Mr. Nelson a distinct advantage as far as being familiar with IDOA programs. I will brief the Director on the importance of Illinois' Apiary Industry and on the Department's Apiary Inspection Program as soon as possible. Please join us in welcoming Director Nelson to his new post.

ILLINOIS SPECIALTY CROPS, AGRITOURISM AND ORGANIC CONFERENCE

The Department was invited by the Illinois Specialty Growers Association to participate in a session on pollinator protection at their annual conference in early January. I had the opportunity to give a presentation on the importance of honeybees to humankind, Illinois' Apiary Industry, the Department's Apiary Inspection Program and problems plaguing honeybee health. There was great attendance at the session and many questions asked. It's always good to be able to spread the word on the importance of honeybees to other groups.

POLLINATOR PROTECTION

Speaking of pollinator protection, the Department is participating in the development of the USEPA Federal Pollinator Protection Strategy to protect pollinators such as honeybees. The goals of the Strategy are to develop a nationwide pollinator action plan by December 2014, have pollinator protection plans available to growers, pesticide applicators and beekeepers where appropriate for the 2015 growing season and require all applicable pesticide labels to reference pollinator protection plans by the 2016 growing season. This pollinator protection initiative is driven by the issuance of a Presidential action memorandum on June 20, 2014. The Department is currently awaiting guidance from USEPA on when the pollinator protection plans will be made available to growers, pesticide applicators and to beekeepers.

MOVING PERMITS – QUEENS

In response to the request of the Illinois Queen Initiative (IQI) and others, the Department has created a new moving permit policy for transporting queens across county or state lines. This was shared with you in a previous ISBA Bulletin. This policy is intended to facilitate the sale or exchange of queens, queen cells and frames of brood and at the same time, prevent the spread of diseases and pests of the honeybee. The new policy has been approved by the ISBA Officers/Board of Directors and IQI. It became effective January 1, 2015 and is shown below.

The Department will follow the steps below for issuing general moving permits to producers selling/exchanging queens, queen cells and frames of brood:

- Queen Producers will notify their respective Department Apiary Inspector by February of each year that they plan to exchange or sell queens across county or state lines.

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- As soon as the weather is conducive for inspections, queen producers will contact Department Apiary Inspectors to make arrangements for an inspection of the colonies used to produce queens in the spring.

- Once the inspection is completed, the Department Apiary Inspector will send the inspection report to the Department's headquarters no later than the following day.

- Upon receipt of the inspection report, the Department will issue a general moving permit to the queen producer as quickly as possible, but no later than 7 days, on the condition that the colonies do not have a significant disease or pest problem that could harm bees in other apiaries. Unless the Department denies the issuance of a general moving permit, if the queen producer does not receive the general moving permit within 7 days of the inspection, the producer may go forward with moving the queens without the general moving permit.

- The general moving permit will allow the queen producer to move the queens anywhere in Illinois or outside of Illinois.

- The general moving permit is effective for 90 days.

- At least 10 days prior to the expiration of the 90-day period, the Department Apiary Inspector will inspect the original or new colonies and the same process for issuing the general moving permit starts over.

In order for this process to work effectively, queen producers must communicate with the Department's Apiary Inspectors in a cooperative and timely manner.

WE HOPE THIS NEW POLICY WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO THE BEEKEEPING COMMUNITY.

About Your Membership

Steve Petrilli, Membership Director

All memberships expire after December 31 of each year. However it does not mean your membership is inactivated on January 1 if you have not renewed before then.

The ISBA affiliated member associations have until the end of April to submit renewals for their membership. If you belong to an ISBA affiliated bee keeping association, your ISBA membership renewal should be handled through your association. You should not need to do anything other than renew your local association membership fee (of which \$10 gets forwarded to the ISBA for your membership).

If your local association does not collect ISBA dues or if you are a *Member At Large* (an ISBA member only, not a member of an ISBA affiliated association), you can renew your membership directly by mailing your membership renewal fee (check or money order for the amount of \$10 made payable to the Illinois State Beekeepers Association) to the below:

Illinois State Beekeepers Association
P.O. Box 21094
Springfield, IL 62708

Please include the full name, mailing address and email address of the person(s) the membership fee is

being submitted for.

If you are a *Member At Large* and we have a valid email address for you, we will send you a onetime renewal notice in 2015 to ask you to renew within 30 days of the email. If we do not receive a renewal, your membership will be moved to inactive status after the 30 days.

If you are one of the few life time ISBA members, you do not need to do anything; your membership is automatically extended each year.

There will be a reminder note in the March/April 2015 issue of the Bulletin to check the expiration date contained in the address label. If the expiration date shows an expiration date 12/31/2014, the March/April 2015 Bulletin will be the last issue you will receive as your membership will be inactivated until a membership renewal is received.

Why do we ask for your email address?

The ISBA will send periodic emails to members for whom we have a valid and deliverable email address on file. It may be to alert you of a certain issue or event or to advise you to expect a Bulletin in your mailbox soon.

BEE OUR GUEST ~ The American Beekeeping Federation Convention

January 5-10, 2015

by Charles and Karen Nielsen Lorence

Anaheim, California was the destination for about twenty Illinois beekeepers who joined another 850 participants in the 2015 ABF convention center at the Disneyland Hotel. Upon arriving, we all enjoyed low 80s while Illinois was shivering in sub-zero weather. The convention was just as 'hot' as we all...from sideliners to commercial beekeeper...benefitted from the excellent research scientists' and speakers' addresses.

Convention highlights included sixty-plus vendors featuring products from the beekeeping industry to support organizations. An optional tour of the Sioux Bee Honey processing plant in Anaheim was terrific. The Foundation for the Preservation of the Honey Bee luncheon showcased six young researchers attending various universities in the US. They had research on bee behavior and bee diseases. Special Interest Groups (SIG groups) spoke to the honey producers and packers, package bee and queen breeders, commercial beekeepers, and small scale/sideline's interest. We were free to attend any group that interested us with various topics in each group being covered.

ABF president, Tim Tucker, opened the convention with his address on Wednesday morning featuring the need for a lot of research, a lot of money, and a lot of effort. The formula for healthy bees includes safe and pesticide-free forage, diverse forage, an improved arsenal of medication, and help with better genetics for our queens. When bees are healthy, they perform!



Our keynote speaker was Dr. Jim Frazier, Professor Emeritus of Entomology at Penn State. The title of his speech: "Dying Bees: Harbingers of End Times or Opportunity Buzzing". Dr. Frazier was voted the most inspiring speaker of the convention by the attendees at the conclusion of the convention and received the Roger Hoopengartner Award of Excellence. Some of the highlights of his speech included the astounding fact that over six different pesticides are found in the

average pollen sample with some having as many as thirty-seven different pesticides. There were six factors keynoted in his speech elucidating how we are doing:

1. The family farm of yesterday has been replaced by a larger farm and ultimately by a factory farm.
2. Quality in food production is largely ignored.
3. There is a waste disposal problem resulting in drug resistant bacteria.
4. Corporate farms are relegated to 'serf' status.
5. Grains today go to animals, not to people.
6. Chemically-free food should NOT be a luxury.

There IS an alternative model for food production and this is where the beekeeper should shine. It is *organic, local, sustainable, with healthy soil and food*. Dr. Frazier's parting words were "The world I see today is not the world I want to leave to my grandchildren."

A few other interesting topics included using nematodes to control small hive beetle. If you are interested in a chemical-free method of controlling small hive beetles, check out Izzy Hill's instructions for nurturing *Heterohabditus indica* on the internet. Dr. Dewey Caron discussed Africanized bees. "Everything you hear is true" was his admonition. Randy Oliver from California is a monthly writer for ABJ. He talked definitively about what is happening in the bee hive as far as brood development and queen pheromones and how they regulate activity in the hive. His talks were consistently phenomenal with a packed audience. Finally, Dr. Marion Ellis gave an excellent presentation on how to prepare honey for competition. Interestingly enough, he said that Illinois has one of the best state fair honey shows in the nation. He has judged our honey show several times in the past twenty years.

There is a move in the American Beekeeping Federation to host the 2019 Apimondia in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Apimondia is the world's premier beekeeping exhibition. There are six other cities around the world that are also attempting to secure the bid. We have a committee that is doing the groundwork and securing the funding needed. The winner will be announced in August of 2015. This will give the winning city four years to get ready.

The American Beekeeping Federation Honey Show is held each year at our convention. This year there were sixty participants and three were from Illinois. They were Jim and Karen Belli, Charles and Karen Lorence, and Gene Killion. Each of the participants received awards in their categories.

Our final banquet took place Saturday night and three state honey queens competed for the American Honey Queen and the American Honey Princess title.

An Illinois Exhibitor at the CSBA Annual Fall Meeting

By Charles Linder

What a monumental task it is to put to words my memories and learnings from attending the California State Beekeepers Meeting - CSBA's 125th Annual Convention. I attended the state meeting as a exhibitor, because I sell shipping packages and feed to suppliers in the package bee industry (www.bee-bus.com).

If you're a beekeeper, the CSBA is as close to nirvana as you can get. Keep in mind this is just a state level meeting, not a national meeting like the honey producers. To that end the number of attendants to the show was just over 350, but what a crowd - really the "Who's Who" in the bee industry.

Start with Dr. Eric Mussen, who headed the meetings, and follow with... literally everyone. Three days of meetings and seminars presented by world renown beekeepers and scientists, interspersed with visits to the vendors, and an exhibition hall full of all the things a beekeeper needs.

A quick rundown: Dr. Mussen, Dr. Tom Seeley, Dr. Lawrence Connor, Kim Flottum, Randy Oliver, and Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp, all gave multiple presentations. Dr. Jeff Pettis, and Dr. Jeff Harris did nice presentations also. If that is not cool enough, the walk around crowd was unreal. From Pat Heitkam, Shannon Wooten, Jerry Hightower, Lenard Pankratz, Buzz Landon, and Bob Brandi round out the light list. Between them, they produce over 100k queens a year, on top of the normal almond pollination.

What was really fun - all these people walked around and talked to everyone and each other like old friends, newbies and pros alike. What is really interesting is how big of a family this group is. There are no secrets or agendas hiding. Pat Heitkam, will stand and talk to you all day about queen raising, and their methods, and this is true of the entire group. Short on queens? Mention it to one person, and in 20 minutes someone you never met will offer to help. These guys even pool packages and hives to meet contracts. Have a question about something with Mann Lake? Jack Thomas and Stuart Volby are right there to answer you. Want something special from Cowen? You can stand and design it and get it on the way.

The CSBA is a bit more than your average state group. They are very active in actually funding research into bees. Several of the presenters were there to show work funded by the CSBA. To that end, the Charity Auction is another big deal event. This year, a first edition of "*ABC, XYZ of Beekeeping*" was auctioned. It brought \$11,000 dollars (!), all of which will go to further research.

As an exhibitor, I didn't get to attend all the presentations, and trust me I wanted to, so I had to pick

and choose. Of special interest to me were Kim Flottum's "Almond Odyssey", discussions on bacteria in bee bread findings, and sperm viability in queens after shipping, as well as the obligatory discussions on mites, and pesticides in the almonds. Kim is as good a presenter as he is an editor, but what was interesting was the take of an Ohio boy in almonds for the first time. For those of us here in the Midwest, you need to understand that almond pollination in February is one of the 8 wonders of the world. Having traveled the world, and being in agriculture all my life, I can tell you that almond pollination is a spectacular event. To listen to Kim's take on it was quite interesting.

Kirk Anderson did some very interesting and ground breaking research on bacteria in bee bread, and despite what we think we have learned, there really is none! Quite a surprise! As expected he showed that bees prefer the fresher bee bread, but that there is no problem with the older bread either.

Fresh research on temperature spikes during shipping of queens (UPS and post office) was shown to have some seriously negative effects on sperm viability. They are still working on what this means and how to manage it. That goes to show the number of details involved for these men and women who breed and ship us our quality queens, be it Shannon Wooten's "Golden Queens", or Big Island Carni's, these guys really take the genetics and quality issues seriously.

Randy Oliver did a couple of discussions on his feed trials and some newer mites test he has been working on and as always, those were very informative for all. (I should mention after a LONG talk with Randy's sons, seems he's a limelight hog. Turns out the boys do all the work and don't do presentations!) There were also some interesting presentations about the upcoming almond season, and some of the new rules to watch for.

My trip out there included several days of meeting one-on-one with some of the producers. One of the things that has impressed me over the last few years, is how "real" these guys are. I stopped by Olivarez's operation, and was advised Ray Olivarez Jr. would be right over. Two great hours talking to one of the leaders in the industry, just like you're a friend. It seems almost without question to be the norm. These guys will take the time to deal with any fool who shows up and acts nice. Ray was kind enough to fill me in on some of the problems with SHB in Hawaii. Trust me, they have more problems than us or even the Florida guys. That tropical island is SHB paradise.

Best Management Practices Guide for Illinois Beekeeping

You may have noticed that the ISBA keeps a Best Management Practices guide on our website. This document serves best to promote methods of "Good Neighbor" beekeeping, or keeping bees safely and sensibly. Now, with help from a group of Illinois beekeepers, we present some additions to the working Best Management Practices guide.

The ISBA, in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Agriculture Apiary Division, initiated this expansion of our current "Best Management Practices Guide for Illinois Beekeeping". Several experienced beekeepers were invited to participate from all areas of the state. A panel of beekeepers worked together to create, review, and revise this guide of research-based methods of beekeeping. This Best Management Practice Guide, created for Illinois beekeepers, by Illinois beekeepers, is not meant to be an "end-all-be-all" guide, but a work in progress, as the world of beekeeping is always changing and evolving.

This first addition is a section on "Spring and Early Summer Management." More sections will be presented in the coming ISBA Bulletins this year, such as "Managing Pests and Diseases" and "Varroa Mites".

Spring and Early Summer Management

Early Spring Build Up

In early spring, honey bee colony build-up is determined by genetics, weather, and strength of colonies. Keys to influencing a strong spring build up are nutrition and placement of empty comb.

Feeding Bees:

February and March is a typical time for a colony to starve, often only two or three weeks from the year's first nectar flow. Stimulating early brood rearing at the right time increases the number of early nurse bees that can care for the expanding brood nest in late March and early April. Protein supplement patties provide a boost to a hive's brood rearing as does feeding sugar syrup. Different ratios of sugar to water can boost different behaviors. A thin 1:2 syrup stimulates brood rearing, though bees also need honey to feed the brood with this syrup. 1:1 sugar syrup encourages bees to build comb. Providing this in tandem with the first tree blooms of the season, such as maple, willow and elm, proves successful, especially when rainy or cool weather keeps bees from foraging. Continue to feed until the main nectar flow is underway.

Reversing Hive Bodies:

Once the season shifts into warmer spring temperatures, and bees have begun foraging, the beekeeper can reverse the hive bodies to start the season with bees in the bottom box, allowing the queen to move upward to lay eggs. Care must be taken not to break up the brood nest until nighttime temperatures are steadily above the low 40s, and then only when the population of workers has grown enough to cover the span of brood. Breaking up the brood nest with too large of a gap in the middle can damage or destroy the cluster if temperatures dip back into cold/wintery weather. The cluster still needs to keep the whole brood

nest warm, and be able to reach depleted food stores in the hive. Reverse hive bodies with caution.

Water Source:

As temperatures rise, provide a water source for the bees if one is not already nearby. Water is essential for brood rearing as well as regulating the temperature of the hive.

Managing Hives During Swarm Season

Swarm Prevention:

From April through June, beekeepers need to monitor hives every 7 - 10 days to make sure the brood area doesn't become congested with nectar and brood. Once nighttime temperatures are holding steady in the 50s, an empty frame of drawn comb can be placed in between two frames full of larvae and eggs to give the queen more space to lay eggs.

Be on the lookout for swarm cells. A quick means of finding swarm cells is to tip the upper hive body back and look at the bottom of the frames, especially the center 6-8 frames. If preparing to swarm, the bees will usually construct at least some cells that are visible near the bottom of the frames. Queen cells that are capped call for drastic measures, such as making a split, unless the swarm has already departed, evidenced by the absence of eggs or young larva. If your bees have already swarmed, don't cut out the queen cells, but allow them to raise their new queen. Keep a regular watch on the brood nest over the next few weeks, watching for signs of a well mated queen and a solid brood pattern.

Though some beekeepers monitor hives weekly, looking for and removing queen cells, a hive can still swarm despite these efforts. The benefit of swarming is that the hive can successfully re-queen itself, and the hive gets a break in their brood production, helping to knock down Varroa mite levels.

Hive Expansion:

Pay attention to what flowers and trees are blooming for a clue about the strength of the honey flow, then consider how your hive should expand. You may add a third deep, or add honey supers. When redbud trees begin to bloom, it is a good time to put the first honey super on. Another may be added when the first honey super is 80% filled, and as different nectar plants come into bloom.

It is easy to get the bees to draw out foundation during the peak weeks of the honey flow. Foundation added to a hive after the main flow, i.e. after clover has been blooming for a couple of weeks, often times will not be drawn out. When the bees stop building wax, a super of untouched foundation should be removed and stored for next year.

Splitting Hives:

Hives that are particularly strong are good candidates for splitting into nucleus colonies or lending frames of healthy brood to weaker, slower hives. Often times the removal of 2-4 brood frames with additional bees from a large colony will discourage the swarming instinct and still allow for a good honey crop from the original hive. If a split is made into a nuc, it is best for the beekeeper to introduce a new queen within a few days, or to include a viable queen cell in the nuc. This colony will require a steady supply of sugar syrup to build up in size to survive the winter. Some nucs will consume high volumes of sugar syrup, even during the honey flow. It is best to continue to feed these hives until they have grown full size and saved sufficient winter stores.

Catching and Keeping a Swarm

Many Illinois beekeepers are ready to catch swarms as early as April, and keep swarm-catching equipment loaded in their car, such as hive components, ladders, duct tape, and a screen to cover the hive entrance. Having a white sheet to cover the ground beneath the swarm keeps bees from getting lost in the grass, and guides them easily into the hive entrance. A 5 gallon bucket on the end of a pole can dislodge swarms from higher in trees. Bee brushes and bee vacuums are handy for swarms that are wrapped around posts or the sides of buildings.

Steps can be taken to encourage bees to stay in their new home. Swarms that leave were usually convinced away by the scout bees that were searching for the perfect home while the beekeeper was hiving the swarm. Relocating the swarm by a mile or more is

good insurance that they will stay. Placing a queen excluder on the top and bottom of the box for several days to keep the queen from leaving the box also helps. In addition, adding a frame of open brood will anchor any swarm. Keeping the new hive out of full sun until the swarm begins raising its own brood is common practice.

Swarms need constant feeding in order to create new comb and rear brood. Be ready for these colonies to expand as you help them reach a winter-ready state. Resist the urge to rob honey from these hives.

Maximizing Honey Production

Strength of worker force, laying and storage space inside the hive, and apiary location are the critical components to reach a maximum honey crop. The ultimate influence is forage. Apiaries should be established near nectar producing plants and trees. Knowing the progression of the season, and even pinpointing the very day that the major nectar flow starts in your area helps a beekeeper manage for a honey harvest. Many beekeepers use a specific peak bloom as their marker for that day, such as when the dandelion bloom peaks, or apple blossoms. The first honey super should be in place on that day. For the rest of the honey flow, pay attention to what forage sources are in bloom. Visit your hives often, and be ready to add empty supers, or frames with foundation.

Preparing a Hive for a Honey Flow

An abundance of foragers are what is needed prior to and during a large or sustained nectar flow. In order to be prepared to capture a given nectar flow, the beekeeper can count back 40 days prior to the flow. If you have determined that a major nectar flow begins on or near May 10th, then queens should be laying heavily by April 1st or earlier. This is easier to achieve if hives had plenty of food reserves going into winter. Given that the hive overwintered well, and came into spring strong, the late March and early April stimulation and management provides the large number of foragers needed for the nectar flow beginning on May 10th. For high honey yields, swarming needs to be controlled because numerous studies have shown that this decreases honey production.

Queen Excluders and Top Entrances

Queen excluders can help keep brood out of honey comb. There are very specific times to use the queen excluder. The best time to use a queen excluder is

during the peak weeks of the honey flow. Some bees may not cross through a queen excluder, and a super of foundation can sit empty and neglected through the honey flow. You can entice the bees to come through the excluder by spraying new frames with a light sugar syrup or by putting a syrup feeder above the super of new frames until the bees start to lay down wax on the new frames.

Strong hives can benefit from an extra entrance above the queen excluder, helping foragers focus their efforts on delivering honey directly to supers. Whether or not a queen excluder is used, drilling entrance holes in supers or adding shims under supers gives foragers easy access to the honey stores, and can reap larger honey yields. Though some beekeepers leave this top entrance open all summer, providing ventilation, a top entrance can be hard for a hive to defend against robber bees during the dearth, and should be reduced or closed to prevent robbing.

Harvesting Honey

Once frames of honey are capped, they are ready for extraction. If the honey flow is still underway after honey harvest, replacing those same open, wet frames immediately after robbing seems to entice the bees to refill the frames. However, if the honey flow is over, replacing the wet frames on a hive can start bees robbing. The use of entrance reducers, and closing up any cracks that bees are using as entrances will help a hive defend against the robbing of wet supers.

Monitoring for and Preventing Pests, Diseases, and Queen Problems

Although common practice had shown that many honey bee diseases can “clear up” and resolve themselves during the honey flow, in recent years, it is not uncommon to find hives suffering from European Foulbrood, Nosema, and various viruses, even during the honey flow.

Monitoring for pests and diseases begins outside the hive. Observe what bees are bringing into the hive, as well as out of the hive. A healthy, queen-right hive should have steady traffic of foragers returning with pollen. If a hive has noticeably fewer bees making trips to and from the entrance than other hives in your apiary, or if problems are observed such as bees not

flying, K-wings, deformed wings, bees stumbling around, etc. this is cause for a deeper inspection. If bees are carrying out brood, dead or sick bees, and debris, this is also abnormal activity.

Inside the hive, check half of the frames in the brood nest, even if it appears to be a strong, healthy colony. Small, weak, and suspect colonies should get all brood frames inspected. All stages of brood should be visible; eggs, glistening white larvae of various sizes, curled up in a c-shape at the back of the cell, capped brood with tan to brown cappings without imperfections such as holes chewed in caps, sunken or broken caps, etc. Look for a “shotgun” pattern of empty cells - this is a good indicator of a problem, such as a poor queen laying, Foulbrood, or Varroa mite infestation.

Worker brood turns over every 21 days, which is a good time frame to use in monitoring brood for diseases. With time and experience, beekeepers develop a sense of when something isn't right with a colony even before entering it. Anytime you get that feeling that "normal activity isn't going on," go ahead and give the hive a thorough exam. The same sense of "everything is ok" will allow experienced beekeepers to reduce the number of inspections.

Keeping a “yard book” is one way to stay on schedule and allow for pertinent notes. Another method is to keep a couple of sharpie markers and some white duct tape with your beekeeping equipment to write short notes about each colony and stick on top of the outer cover, under a brick or weight.

Thanks to the Illinois beekeepers, both anonymous and listed here, for cooperating to create this original collection of "Best Management Practices for Illinois ~ Spring and Early Summer Management".

Ted Bradford
Steve Chard
Terry Combs
Dennis Inboden
Susan Kivikko
Charles Linder
Scott Martin
Steve Petrilli
Arvin Pierce
Eleanor Schumacher
Jim Wellwood
Dan Wright

Waxing Philosophical ~ the Beekeeping Puzzle

"Biggest Bee Fails"

Question: "What is your biggest bee yard mistake?" ~ Larry Kregel, Marengo, IL

Answer 1: Forgetting to zip my veil!!! Make sure all your smoker ashes are out or you could burn all your hives and truck and farmers hay field, heard of it being done. Just a few. I could write a book.

~ Davey Hackenburg, Lewisburg, PA ~ 7 votes

Answer 2: My biggest mistake is ongoing. I think that I will never learn that smoking is a necessity, even if I am going to replace just a few frames. Thinking that I can be in and out before the girls notice my intrusion had me receiving 11 stings in the ARMPIT.

~ Chuck Schwend, Marine, IL ~ 6 votes

Answer 3: 1. In my first season, listening to an old timer about why smoke is not needed to work the bees. My hives ended up on seek and destroy missions, my mom, dad and the cats were stung 30 yards away from where the hives were, even on the opposite side of the house. I was attacked by field bees loaded with pollen from the field. Needless to say my smoker has been at my side ever since.

2. Turning top bar frame horizontal. (only did this once)

3. Beekeeping in my tee-shirt and pressing against a hot smoker. I guess I know how a branded cow feels now."

~ David Bergman, Grayslake, IL ~ 4 votes

Answer 4: Mouse guards? I don't need no stinking mouse guards. Well, I definitely needed them last winter as my hives played host to many a mouse family. However, did I learn? Still have a few unprotected hives again this winter, so I guess I didn't.

~ Larry Quicksall, Effingham, IL ~ 5 votes

Answer 5: My biggest mistake is of the recurring type; it is "thinking" rather than "doing." My mistake is "thinking" that a particular action - or inaction - will work this time, when it has proven a failed practice over and over in the past. My rationale (which immediately besmirches the root word "rational" for it to be tied to my failures) is that the actual failure of the particular practice was a product of variables - sometimes unseen, unknown variables - that were

beyond my control, BUT, that will be either different or non-existent this time.

I know...the definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results...but I am depending on a more favorable hand to be dealt by the "variable" dealer. SO, the solution that will be the fix for this issue; NEVER expect the best, or even fair, conditions or circumstances. ALWAYS perform colony management as if the absolute worst case scenario will be the 'norm.'

There is a saying in my locale that a person should "prepare for the worst while hoping for the best." Somehow I find myself at some point during each beekeeping season choosing to ignore this adage. I do not always ignore the advice, but when I am short of time, or feeling especially brilliant (which is almost always quickly disproven) I fall more easily into the trap of "thinking."

~ Kent Williams, Wingo, KY ~ 5 votes

Answer 6: I keep bees on a small hill, next to a flood plain, next to the Diversion Channel in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. It's on the West side of I-55. The Diversion Channel cuts under a narrow overpass about a half-mile away where it eventually empties into the Mississippi River.

I also keep pretty meticulous notes from each year. When the water on the Mississippi River starts rising, I call tell you with great confidence if I'm in peril, or if I'm safe.

Flood stage is 32 feet for us, and I've seen the water get close to the base of this hill at a crest of 46 feet. The record for 1993's great flood was 48.49 feet, but I didn't have bees on this particular farm at that time.

In 2009, with heavy rains in Iowa swelling the Mississippi River, the crest was predicted at 42 feet. I considered myself safe, even with more rain in our area predicted.

My landlord, an 80-something year old farmer who's seen as many good years as bad, pulled in the driveway at the house. He cast a worried glance upward to threatening skies and said, "The river's on the rise. 'Spose we better move them hives? I'll even help ya."

I calmly said, "No need. I have historic data that tells me I'm safe. And besides, I hate moving bees."

He drew his hand across his stubbled chin contemplating a nice way of telling me I was wrong, but said, "Okay, then. Sounds like you know what you're doin.

The Buzz About Town

| |
|--|
| BIG RIVERS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Dave Feltes ~ Morrison, IL Phone: 815.772.3413 dfeltes@thewisp.net |
| CENTRAL EASTERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Joan Jach ~ Champaign, IL jjjach@gmail.com |
| COOK-DUPAGE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Thad Smith ~ Chicago, IL Phone: 312.833.4205 smittyd1@hotmail.com |
| CROSSROADS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION David Dhom ~ Newton, IL Phone: 618.562.8503 davidandlisadhom@gmail.com |
| FOX VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Kim Luppino ~ St. Charles, IL Phone: 630.584.6419 foxvalleybeekeepers@gmail.com |
| HEART OF ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Mark Kilty ~ East Peoria, IL Phone: 309.699.7018 midwestcarpet@prodigy.net |
| HISTORIC PULLMAN DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Edie McDonald ~ Chicago, IL Phone: 773.259.1295 vilmaebell@gmail.com |
| ILLIANA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Dan Wright ~ Kansas, IL Phone: 217.232.5354 dwrightkbc@mchsi.com |
| ILLINOIS VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Warren Norris ~ Ottawa, IL Phone: 815.228.3330 stateboyw@hotmail.com |
| ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY BEEKEEPING CLUB Dr. Carl Wenning ~ Normal, IL Phone: 309.830.4085 cjwennin@ilstu.edu |
| KANKAKEE RIVER VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION John Bailey ~ Bourbonnais, IL bailey9263@gmail.com |
| KASKASKIA COUNTRY BEEKEEPERS CONSORTIUM Eleanor Schumacher ~ Pocahontas, IL Phone: 510.285.7879 bubblebubb@gmail.com |

Another Fact-Packed Series of Beekeeping Classes
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Schedule of Courses:

- Feb. 28, 2015 Basic Beginners
- Mar. 7, 2015 Basic Beginners
- Mar. 21, 2015 Basic Beginners
- April 11, 2015 Basic Beginners
- April 25, 2015 Basic Beginners
- May 16, 2015 Advanced Course
- May 30, 2015 Queen Rearing
- June 11, 2015 Basic Beginners
- June 12-14, 2015 Bee Institute

February 21 - March 14, 2015

The **Will County Beekeepers Association** will hold a
Comprehensive Beekeeping Course on four
consecutive Saturdays. Each class is 9am until
2pm with a break for lunch. \$80 per person, \$60 for
Will Bees or Farm Bureau members. Classes are held
at the **Will County Farm Bureau**
100 Manhattan Rd, Joliet, IL 60433
Full details and online registration at
www.willbees.org

St. Clair Beekeepers Association is hosting their
2015 Beginner Beekeepers Class on Saturday,
March 21, 2015 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Madison
County Farm Bureau, 900 Hillsboro Street,
Edwardsville, IL, 62025.

Fees are \$45 per person, \$60 per couple, and \$20 for
minors (18 & under) and students (over the age of 18
attending school). Included in the Fees are a morning
snack and lunch. Coffee and tea will be served.

Heart of Illinois Beekeepers Association is offering a
Beginning Beekeeping Class on Saturday,
February 21, 2015 at the United Presbyterian Church
Fellowship Hall in Peoria..

Time: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Address: 2400 W. Northmoor Road, Peoria, IL

How: Register online, if registering by mail send your check or money order
to our HIBA treasurer,

Mr. Dale Martin, 10401 N. Maher Rd. Brimfield, IL 61517

How Much: Cost is \$50.00 for non-members and \$30.00 for members. If
you would like to bring a spouse or a child (age appropriate please) add an
additional \$10.00 to cover the cost of lunch.

**Please see our Summary of Events page on our ISBA website - even MORE
classes are listed there! <http://www.ilsba.com/summary-of-events.html>**

| |
|---|
| LAKE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION David Bergman ~ Grayslake, IL bergda@ipc.org www.lakecobeekeepers.com |
| LINCOLN LAND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Steve Petrilli ~ Springfield, IL Phone: 217.638.7891 s.petrilli@comcast.net |
| LITTLE EGYPT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Beverly Tanner ~ Fairfield, IL Phone: 618.842.6016 ffpro2@frontier.com |
| MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Guy Spoonmore ~ Quincy, IL Phone: 217.653.9804 gespoon79@hotmail.com |
| NORTHERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Corky Schnadt ~ Hainesville, IL corkyhilary@sbcglobal.net |
| ST. CLAIR BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Vickie Piel ~ Edwardsville, IL Phone: 618.978.4369 beesgr8@att.net |
| SOUTHERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Rose Leedle ~ Mulkeytown, IL Phone: 618.724.2786 r.leedle@hotmail.com |
| TRI COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Tim Lindley ~ Greenville, IL Phone: 618.780.3772 timlhoney2@yahoo.com |
| WABASH VALLEY POLLINATORS CLUB Greg Hevron ~ Robinson, IL hevrong@frtci.net |
| WESTERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Rick Camp ~ Roseville, IL Phone: 309.255.2195 campgroveorchard@winco.net |
| WILL COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Darien Kruss ~ Joliet, IL Phone: 630.557.6233 info@willbees.org |

**Affiliate Associations:
Publicize your bee
events here!**

Contact

Eleanor Schumacher
with your club news at
bubblebubb@gmail.com.
List news and events on the
ISBA website as well by
sending the information to
the ISBA webmaster,
Steve Petrilli,
s.petrilli@comcast.net.

Remembering Udell Meyer

With sympathy for the Meyer family, and great sadness, the ISBA fondly remembers Udell Meyer, who passed away on December 26th, 2014 at the age of 84. A Veteran who served in the Korean Conflict for nearly two years, Udell worked as a plumber for 45 years. Udell married Norma Meyer in 1959, not long after he started keeping honey bees. After 20 years of beekeeping, Udell became one of the Illinois State Apiary Inspectors.

Udell served as Treasurer of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association for years. He is an essential piece of Illinois beekeeping history, and beekeepers throughout the state will miss him dearly.

The ISBA Bulletin ran an article about Udell in 2012 which included a few of the memories and experiences that Udell had of his work as an Illinois Apiary Inspector. In his honor, we will run another memory of his that was previously unpublished, told by Udell in his words.

“I got a call from Gene Killion. He told me to go to the weigh station near O' Fallon. He said there was an overweight truck of bees stopped there and they wouldn't let them go.

“I went up there. They had the truck parked right in the middle of the station, blocking all the traffic. So I talked them into moving to the back of the weigh station. There were bees flying all around. They had netting, but the netting was about 4 foot from covering the whole load.

“We started jabbering back and forth, and I was trying to get this truck on the road. There was a lot of hemming and hawwing around. So I finally called the Department of Transportation up in Springfield about what the situation was here. I said “You've got to get us a permit – we've got to get these bees moving! What's gonna happen is, you're gonna have bees all over.”

It was in the fall of the year. The bees were moving from South Dakota, heading to Florida for the winter on a semi truck. It was an old man and his two daughters.

The one daughter was the driver. But while she was waiting at the weigh station, she got sick, and the state police took her to the hospital in Belleville. Now they had no driver for the truck because she was in the hospital.

I called the Department of Transportation again about noon time – they said “There's nobody here now – they're all out to lunch.” So we had to wait for them to come back. When they did, we got the moving permit to the state boundary, to go to Kentucky. I said “You'd better hurry up and get these bees on the move” because the ground was covered with dead bees and everything. Then we had to see about getting the truck driver out of the hospital, so I called the hospital, and they said, “yeah, she can go.” They'd fixed her up with some medication. So the state trooper had to go to Belleville and take her out of the hospital and bring her back.

At this point I was standing around, talking to the Weigh Master and the Secretary of State guy. The amusing part of it was, there was a state trooper there too – a red-headed guy. He didn't have his cap on or anything. And the Department of Transportation guys blamed him for holding it all up. They said “I wish them bees would sting that guy all over his head.” But finally, when we had the daughter back from the hospital, the Secretary of State guys were all looking at the scales, and said “Well, it's over weight, but we'll let it go.”

But the beekeepers didn't let it go. They filed for a loss of all of their bees, the year's honey crop, and next year's honey crop too.”



American Bee Federation 2015 Conference, Continued

Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Texas had queens that vied for the honor. Pennsylvania's queen became the first alternate. Second runner up from Texas, Hayden Wolf, became the American Honey Princess. Iowa's Gabrielle (Belle) Hemesath became the American Honey Queen. They will serve the beekeeping industry for the next year, traveling many states promoting the honey industry, the importance of honey bees in our lives and in our food production, and giving demonstrations to groups.



About Your Membership, continued

We do not sell, give away or rent your membership information to any vendor who wants to sell you a product, service or idea. If a vendor approaches the ISBA with such a request, we advise them to provide the information and we will distribute the information about the product, service or idea to the membership.

The email system utilized to send emails to membership, does not allow duplicate email addresses. If there are multiple ISBA members with the same email address, only one will receive the email. This can be resolved by providing a unique email address for each person.

I am not getting a Bulletin mailed directly to me.

If you have never received a Bulletin or if it stopped arriving at your mail box, it could be due to one of the following:

1. You moved and did not file a change of address with the Post Office, nor have you notified the ISBA or your local ISBA affiliated association of the new address.

2. You have not provided a mailing address to the ISBA or to your local ISBA affiliated association.

3. You have requested a printed copy of the bulletin not be mailed to you. If you have done so in the past, you can resume receiving a printed copy by notifying the Membership Director you would like to resume receiving a printed copy.

I have never received an email from the ISBA or no longer receive them.

If you have not received or not longer receive an email from the ISBA, it may be due to one of the following:

1. The email address on file for you is invalid (not deliverable).
2. You changed your email address since joining the ISBA or your local ISBA affiliated association and did not provide the new email address.
3. We do not have an email address on file for you.
4. The email may be going to your junk or spam email folder. You need to identify the illinois.state.beekeepers@gmail.com address as a safe email address (not junk or spam).

This information can also be found on the ISBA website at:

www.ilsba.com/membership-info--faq.html

If you have a question or a problem regarding your membership, please send an email to illinois.state.beekeepers@gmail.com or you can use the "Contact Form" tab on this website.

Hopefully any questions you had concerning your membership have been answered. If you have a question or a problem regarding your membership, please contact me (Steve Petrilli). My contact information is elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin and also on the ISBA website (www.ilsba.com).

Iotron's "Apiary Day" ~ E-beam Sterilization Event on March 20, 2014

Iotron Industries is offering "Apiary Day" in an effort to help combat local area diseases. This event provides an ideal way to sterilize used equipment and comb left vacant after a winter loss.

On March 20th, 2015, Iotron is waving its minimum processing charges and will process supers (with or without frames), frames, brood comb, and other items that you would like sterilized and rid free from Nosema spores, viruses, European Foulbrood, wax moth eggs, etc. for \$5 per garbage bag item.

Transport your equipment to Iotron Industries, 4394 East Park 30 Drive, Columbia City, IN for sterilization and provide a clean environment to raise a healthy hive. Call Aaron Starkey at (260) 212-1722 with questions.

Before transporting, equipment must be double bagged in garbage bags, and as always, a valid and current Moving Permit must be obtained from the Illinois Department of Agriculture Apiary Section before moving comb and used equipment across state lines. Please contact your Illinois Apiary Inspector for a Moving Permit Inspection.

Illiana Beekeepers Association Presents "Beekeeping Class for Beginners"

Illiana Beekeepers Association sponsors a **Beekeeping Class for Beginners on March 7th, 2015 from 9 am to 4 pm**. The class will be held at the Clark County Cooperative Extension Building, 15493 N. State Hwy 1, Marshall, IL

Lunch will be provided by Marathon Oil Company and Wabash Valley Pollinators Club. Pre-registration and a \$25 fee per person are required before February 20th. For more information, contact Dan Wright at (217) 948-5353, Larry Waller at (217) 826-5124, or Dennis Inboden at (618) 562-9258.

An Illinois Exhibitor at a CSBA Meeting, continued

For those of you who have never been, the Sacramento Valley is a really cool place when it comes to AG production. The area itself is about 50 miles wide and 300 miles long, they grow a lot of rice, some corn and beans, and more nut and fruit trees than you can imagine. Every tree is perfectly pruned. No fence rows or weeds, just miles and miles of trees. All the crops are flood irrigated, which means each field is laser leveled. For those of us here in the Midwest, it's almost too much to even imagine. Every week (sometimes twice) each of these fields is flooded to a depth of at least 1 inch. The water comes from the Oroville reservoir which is fed from the Rockies. Imagine this, if it never rained in downstate Illinois and all the water came from Lake Michigan. Quite the feat! With 30% of the US rice and 95% of the world's almonds, it's a wonder they have room for other crops, but you will see everything, from the biggest persimmons I have ever seen, to huge alfalfa production to support the dairy farms. Heading back for my flight, I was 10 miles out of L.A., with sagebrush desert on the east side of the road, and irrigated cotton on the west side.

As far as big takeaways from the meeting and my trip, I will pick three. First off, these guys have one

heck of a meeting, going all out to make it worth the trip and the club dues – it's world class. Second, I was so impressed with the camaraderie of the West Coast group and the goal they all share of quality bees, queens, pollination and honey production. The third and biggest takeaway of all: what bit players we are as beekeepers. Let me explain. I went by one of Bret Adee's holding yards. 20,000 hives in one field. It was one of several large yards I visited and yet, in the scheme of things, the bees were a tiny, tiny portion of CA valley AG. The biggest beekeepers in the world - all super friendly and down to earth. I think it's because they also see the same thing – that we are just a small portion of AG, and every one of them relies on the goodwill of the landowners for a place to park their bees. All of these guys see and experience more problems with sprays and pesticides than us here in the Midwest, and yet they all see and understand the landowners position, and accept we have to work together. I heard not one conversation in the week about banning pesticides or sprays, just constructive conversations about how to manage problems. If you ever get a chance, add your name to the list of members of the CSBA, and get out to a meeting.

Bee Fails, Continued

But if you change your mind, I'll help ya."

Two nights later, we received 13 inches of rain just to the west of Cape Girardeau. The water rolled down those hills, roared down the Diversion Channel and bottlenecked at the overpass, backing up and completely flooding my bee yard on top of the little hill. I lost ten hives of bees, and only reclaimed about half of my silt-laden deeps and supers.

The river, as the overpass metered out the deluge, only crested at 46 feet, a level at which I could historically confirm, "No problem. I'm safe." The flood water dallied for ten days, drowning all vegetation, so even if I still had hives in this yard, forage was non-existent.

Sometimes the voice of experience is more wise than historical data.

~ Grant Gillard, Jackson, MO ~ **8 votes**

Answer 7: I know we've had people (always willing) come out to help us take our honey off wearing FLIP FLOPS!!!

~ Karen Lorence, Aurora, IL ~ **5 votes**

Answer 8: Standing in the back of the truck, holding the ladder, while Scott Martin cuts a limb with a swarm on it....

Ladder shifts, Scott jumps, (but does not fall), limb drops, entire swarm lands on top of my head.

(I was not wearing a suit).....

was not pretty.

~ Jesse C. Will, Vergennes, IL ~ **9 votes**

Answer 9: When I started keeping bees I was very intimidated about how to remove all of those stinging insects from MY capped honey. So I placed one of those Bee Escape Screen Boards (triangle down the way it is supposed to go) under my 2 precious honey supers and removed all other escapes. It was a really hot week. When I checked back a few days later, all of the honey was gone and the dead bees were a few inches thick. I tell myself that they engorged themselves with honey and were too fat to get out of the little escape paths. The first ones plugged up the escape and the rest were trapped. The heat kept building and they decided to take the honey with them to bee heaven. Nowadays I use a leaf blower to remove the bees. It works pretty well!

~ Nancy Gambrel, St. Charles, IL ~ **5 votes**

Answer 10: My biggest mistake was ordering queens from southern Texas!!! Because after 1 month, you never know what you're in for.

~ Ted Bradford, Casey, IL ~ **8 votes**

Next Month's Question: What do you watch for to help you decide when to add the first honey super?

~ Gail Newsome, Colbyville, IL



Illinois State Beekeepers Association
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Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association is open to all persons interested in bees and beekeeping. Beekeepers are urged to join through their local Associations or individually if no local Associations are available. Dues are \$10 for the calendar year January 1 through December 31 only. Dues include a subscription to this newsletter, the ISBA Bulletin. Beekeeping journals are available to ISBA members at about 25% discount. Mention membership in ISBA when sending your subscription payment to the publishers. Rates are subject to change without prior notice.

Make checks for membership payable to: Illinois State Beekeepers Association and mail to: Illinois State Beekeepers Association, Membership, P.O. Box 21094, Springfield, IL 62708.

Address Changes: Send old and new address six weeks prior to date of change when practical to the Association Secretary. At large members can send the changes to the ISBA Membership Director via email.

Reduced Journal Rates for 2014 (members only)

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| American Bee Journal | 21.00 | 39.75 | 56.25 |



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