Views wanted on honeybee venom

Thursday 2 July 2009

A New Zealand company has applied to the Food Standards Agency for approval to market the venom from the honeybee as a novel food ingredient. A novel food is a food or food ingredient that does not have a significant history of consumption within the European Union before 15 May 1997.

The venom is extracted from the honeybee (Apis mellifera) by using a milking apparatus procedure. The venom is then dried and added to honey. The company, Nelson Honey and Marketing (New Zealand) Ltd, states that the venom may help to alleviate symptoms of arthritis.

Honey containing venom has been on the New Zealand market since 1996, but it is considered novel in the European Union.

Before any new food product can be introduced on the European market it must be rigorously assessed for safety. In the UK, the assessment of novel foods is carried out by an independent committee of scientists appointed by the Food Standards Agency, the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP).

SUMMER FRUIT SALAD & HONEY SOUR CREAM
Printed from COOKS.COM

Mix 1 cup of dairy sour cream, 2 tablespoons honey and 2 tablespoons orange or grapefruit juice. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour.

1/2 c. strawberry halves or 1 c. whole raspberries
1/2 c. seedless grapes, cut into halves
2 med. peaches or nectarines, sliced
2 sm. bananas, sliced
Lettuce cups

Prepare honey-sour cream dressing. Mix all fruit. Spoon fruit mixture into lettuce cups and if desired, garnish with mint leaves. Serve with honey sour cream dressing.

The Buzz Newsletter Article Submissions and IHPA Memberships

Please send submissions, classified ads, and photos to Alex W. Ebert by email to TheBuzz@ABuzzAboutBees.com or by mail to The Buzz, c/o Phil Ebert, 14808 S. 102nd Ave. E., Lynnnville, IA 50153. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month to be included in the following month’s newsletter. The Buzz is a monthly newsletter published by the Iowa Honey Producers Association which is an affiliate of the Iowa State Horticultural Society. IHPA Membership is only $10 annually. To join IHPA and receive your complimentary member subscription to The Buzz Newsletter, please contact Melanie Bower, IHPA Treasurer, 207 S.E. Diehl, Des Moines, IA 50315, Phone: (515) 287-6542
Dear Honey Producers,

Our household is in a complete upheaval. We just moved into our new home and are working feverishly to get caught up on orchard/garden/bee work for our new business. We just purchased an orchard about 20 miles from our Cumberland home and farm. Mike and I moved to Griswold and Steve, our middle son, and his two children are moving into our Cumberland home.

Our new address is:

Mike and Donna Brahms
3 Bee Farms
14922 535th Street
Griswold, IA 51535
(712) 778-4255 home
(712) 778-4256 orchard line
mbrahms@netins.net

The old telephone number will remain the same and Steve will answer it and give us messages until everyone can get accustomed to our new number. My cell phone number will also remain the same.

Steve is working with us doing the outside jobs such as orchard spraying, beekeeping, gardening, mowing, pruning, etc. He also does two of the farmers’ markets so we now attend 7 a week. That will probably change this fall and next season. Our goal is to bring people to us at the orchard.

We still need volunteers to work at the IHPA sales booth at the Iowa State Fair. We don’t have any of the days completely filled yet, so I will be calling people to fill in the schedule. Please consider working at the State Fair if at all possible. This is the main fundraiser of the IHPA and the money earned is used for all of the programs that the IHPA sponsors each year. We will send you tickets to get into the fairgrounds on the day that you work.

I sure hope that your honey bees are finding more nectar than ours. It seems that each day has some rain, wind or is cool. Lots of sweet clover is blooming, but the honey bees just aren’t doing as well as we had hoped. Some hives are doing great, others not. The same problem has arisen with gardening; too cool, too wet and not enough sunshine. We have gardens in two locations. Some things look better in one than the other. One thing that is thriving is weeds. We have a wonderful crop of weeds.

The IHPA board decided to give two talks each day of the Iowa State Fair in the Animal Learning Center. We hope to reach a lot of interested people with the story of bees and beekeeping. We learned last year of the interest and follow-up questions by the fairgoers concerning beekeeping. We hope to reach even more interested people this year. Iowa State Apiarist, Andy Joseph, is putting together a power point program for us to use as the basis of the talk.

I don’t know about you, but I sure have received lots of calls about swarms of honey bees. I try to direct the callers to beekeepers close to them, but sometimes I just have to rely on the directory. I don’t know if beekeepers are interested in swarms or not. Andy has expressed the same concern to me about who to contact about swarms. If you do not want to be contacted, please let us know.

Our farmers’ market customers and wholesale customers have been keeping us busy. Honey is selling really well. We are thankful for that. We should have summer apples in a few weeks for sale. We are working on our retail sales area to spruce it up. I just booked a group for October.

Hope everyone is ready for school to start. Our granddaughter, JoAnn is anxious to start first grade. Grandson, Jack, is starting preschool also. Summer goes by all too quickly.

Come enjoy the festivities at the Iowa State Fair with us in the IHPA honey sales booth. Join in the fun and fellowship for a good cause. Bee Cool this summer.

Sincerely,

Donna Brahms, IHPA President
About the Entrance Reducer

With all the tips and suggestions made and distributed individually as well as in some newsletters there has been none as to how and when to use the smallest of items, the entrance reducer. The entrance reducer serves a duel purpose. On is to keep predators from entering the hive and the other is to assist the bees in keeping the warmth within the hive. If there is a colony present with few bees the reducer may prevent robbing.

Just remember that the bees require a temperature of 95 degrees in the brood area to hatch the eggs and develop the larvae.

SO, the entrance reducer should be placed in the entrance in October at or soon after all the surplus honey is removed. It should remain in place until the main honey flow starts which is about June 1st in Iowa. It may be the middle of May in Kansas and Missouri. Why restrict the entrance so long? I mentioned earlier to retain the heat of the colony. Normally colonies wintered in two brood chambers will start the early brood rearing in the upper chamber because that is easier for the bees to keep warm. There will likely be space there for the bees to produce a half dozen combs of brood. By keeping the entrance reducer in place the bees will gradually migrate toward the lower brood chamber as needed. By mid May there will be brood nearly all the way to the bottom bars of the frames in the lower chamber.

In the 1950s and 1960s we would sometimes reverse the two brood chambers in hopes the bees would work the former lower one soon. If that is done too early, as some beekeepers did, it would slow the development of the colony because it required that more bees stay home to keep the brood warm.

In the 60s we just kept the entrance reducer in place until June 1st and found that reversing of brood chambers was no longer necessary. It made on less operation necessary and seemed better for the bees.

The lower brood chamber can be well established if in early April just eliminate the bottom brood chamber for a while and when the single is really crowded return the 2nd chamber.

So, the entrance reducer is a very important piece of equipment so use it to the advantage of the bees as well as yourself.

I prefer an entrance reducer I make over that which is provided by the equipment producers. It’s easy to make. I cut out of regular 1” lumber, a piece 14 ½ “ long, 1 ½ “ wide, and cut a notch in the flat side 3/8ths x 1 ½ “. Then saw another piece 3/8ths thick and 14 ½ “ long and nail on top of the other on one side. That keeps the reducer in place and can be reversed to close the entrance if need be.

To make the best use of the reducer and to benefit the bees the most it needs to be in the entrance more of the year than out. Give it a try. One time in mid May I inspected 400 colonies in Clinton County and the keeper had removed the entrance reducer early and left the middle entrance in place also and the bees had jammed the upper chamber and nearly all swarmed. A beekeeper came into my office in late March and said he had been out to his 1000 colonies and removed the reducers and I asked why? He said, “to keep them from swarming”. He may have, but he also kept them from building good colonies.

Seeing is believing.
Glen Stanley

FOSSIL SHOWS FIRST ALL-AMERICAN HONEY-BEE

North America once had its own Apis species instead of today’s imports
By Susan Milius
www.sciencenews.org August 2009

Telltale wingA 14-million-year-old fossil from Nevada shows the somewhat jumbled parts of a honeybee, recognizable by its distinctive pattern of wing veins (arrow) and other features shared by modern relatives. M. S. Engel/Proc. Cal. Acad. Sci.

North America did too have a native honeybee.

A roughly 14-million-year-old fossil unearthed in Nevada preserves what’s clearly a member of the honeybee, or *Apis* genus, says Michael Engel of the University of Kansas in Lawrence. The Americas have plenty of other kinds of bees, but all previously known honeybees come from Asia and Europe. Even the *Apis mellifera* honeybee that has pollinated crops and made honey across the Americas for several centuries arrived with European colonists some 400 years ago.

“This rewrites the history of honeybee evolution,” Engel says, turning over the long-held view of Europe and Asia as the native land of all honeybees.

The newly discovered bee, found squashed and preserved in shale, no longer exists as a living species, Engel says. To a specialist’s eye, it looks closest to another extinct honeybee, *A. armbrusteri*, known from Germany.

Engel and his colleagues christen the new North American honeybee *Apis nearctica* in the current, May 7, issue of Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences.

“It is indeed a big find,” says David Grimaldi of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.
Although honeybee resin is known to have a strong immune system, lessens the need for each individual bee to activate their immune systems after such a short exposure. Therefore the bees did not have to activate their immune systems as much," said Simone.

"Our finding that propolis in the nest allows bees to invest less in their immune systems after such a short exposure was surprising. Resins in the hive have been thought of as a potential benefit to a honey bee colony, but this has never been tested directly."

Using resins to help sterilise the colony can be thought of as a type of "social immunity" said the researchers.

And it may partly explain why bees and other social insects, such as ants, collect resins to build their nests in the first place.

"Honeybees can use wax, which they produce themselves, to do all the things that they use resin for in the nest. So it is interesting to think about why they might go and collect resins," said Simone.

"Especially since resins, being sticky, are hard to manipulate and take a lot of energy for individual bees to gather in very small quantities."

There is also some evidence that some mammals and birds coat themselves in naturally-occurring plant resin in a bid to reduce infestations with parasites.

Story from BBC NEWS: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_8152000/8152574.stm
Honeybees Warn of Risky Flowers
Matt Walker
Editor, Earth News

Honeybees warn each other to steer clear of dangerous flowers where they might get killed by lurking predators.

Scientists made the discovery by placing dead bees upon flowers and then watching how newly arriving bees react to the danger.

Not only do the bees avoid the flowers, they then communicate the threat when they return to the hive via their well known waggle dance.

The discovery is published in the journal Animal Behaviour.

The honeybee waggle dance is a surprisingly sophisticated mode of communication.

When foraging bees return to the hive, they waggle their bodies in a complex dance first deciphered by biologists more than 40 years ago.

The angle and direction of the forager bees' waggle dance conveys how far and in what direction other more naive bees need to fly to reach flowers that will provide plentiful sources of food.

Honeybees are also more likely to waggle and dance when returning from food sources containing high concentrations of sucrose.

But now scientists Kevin Abbott and Reuven Dukas of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada have found that honeybees use the waggle dance to do more than just encourage others in their colony to visit bountiful flowers.

Avoiding danger
They trained honeybees to visit two artificial flowers containing the same amount and concentration of food.

They left one flower untouched, making it a "safe" food source for the bees. On the other flower, they placed the bodies of two dead bees, so they were visible to arriving insects, but would not interfere with their foraging.

They then recorded whether and how the bees performed a waggle dance on their return to other members of the hive colony.

On average, bees returning from safe flowers performed 20 to 30 times more waggle runs that bees returning from dangerous flowers.

That shows that the bees recognise that certain flowers carry a higher risk of being killed or eaten by predators, such as crab spiders or other spider species that ambush visiting bees.

What's more, they factor this risk into their waggle dances, tempering them to steer their colony mates away from flowers that might be dangerous.

Researchers Look for Honeybee Killer

Posted August 6, 2009
http://www.spokesman.com
KEVIN GRAMAN,
The Spokesman-Review

SPOKANE, Wash.—Washington State
University researchers on the trail of a mysterious honeybee killer have narrowed the list of contributors to two—a microscopic pathogen and pesticides.

"We are getting closer to understanding the possible causes of colony collapse disorder," WSU professor of entomology Steve Sheppard said of the malady that has decimated bee colonies nationwide since it emerged about three years ago.

CCD leaves colonies bereft of adult bees, yet there are no dead bees to be found near the hives. Often queens remain in the hives along with immature bees called brood. But not even raiders from rival bee colonies will touch the honey and pollen that remain in the defenseless hive.

In the winter of 2007-08, the disorder wiped out about 80 percent of Western Washington bee colonies, said Eric Olson, who keeps the state's largest bee population.

That winter Olson, owner of Olson Honey in Yakima, lost 4,000 colonies, nearly a third of his total. Last year he lost 3,000 more to CCD, costing his business nearly $750,000.

"We're buying bees like crazy," said Olson. "But we're just treading water."

The threat to the honeybee population could have a profound effect on agriculture. Although other species are capable of pollination, none do so as efficiently as the honeybee. About a third of what we eat comes from crops pollinated by honeybees, according to the Agriculture Research Service. Bee pollination is particularly important to specialty crops like almonds, berries, tree fruit and many vegetables.

Yet as the demand for honeybees grows, the number of U.S. bee colonies has declined from 3.5 million in 2008 to 2.4 million today. As a result, beekeepers are transporting their bees farther and farther to do the work.

"In Washington state, about 75 percent of tree fruit pollination is done by out-of-state beekeepers," Olson said. The 66-year-old said his is one of only about 10 commercial operations left in the state. "Twenty years ago, you didn't see an out-of-state beekeeper up here."

Olson was so concerned about the threat that in 2008 his family raised nearly $350,000 to help establish WSU's diagnostic laboratory to collect information on honeybee health.

The investment already has begun to bear fruit with Sheppard's announcement last week that he and his team have made inroads in the struggle against CCD.

"One of the first things we looked at was the pesticide levels in the wax of older honeycombs," Sheppard said. Many of the combs of colonies affected by CCD contained significant residues of insecticides, herbicides, miticides and fungicides.

Judy Wu, a WSU graduate student studying the effects of these chemicals on bees, found that adults raised in contaminated hives had significantly reduced longevity.

Sheppard said beekeepers could combat the effects of chemical contamination by changing honeycombs more frequently.

Meanwhile, another graduate student, Matthew Smart, surveyed bee colonies from California and the Pacific Northwest for a pathogen known as nosema ceranae, which undermines a bee's ability to process food.

Smart found the pathogen, which was first described in 2007, to be widespread.

Olson said the nosema ceranae is a resilient foe. After treating his hives with a mega-dose of the antibiotic fumagillin, the pathogen levels actually increased.

"We're throwing antibiotics on them not knowing whether it's doing any good," Olson said.

He hopes the WSU lab, which received state funding for another entomologist in the past legislative session, soon will provide a practical solution to CCD—"real-time information that can help beekeepers make smarter decisions."

"I hope it tells us what's going on," Olson said. "I'm sick and tired of guessing."
The Beeyard Report

It has been a bum summer for bees. We averaged an inch of rain per day prior to June 22. June 23 started well but we couldn't make it through two days without rain. Then we hit five days without rain but temps remained low. This trend has persisted through July. I needed a jacket on the fourth of July. The 16th was my birthday. The temp was 70 degrees. Some yards have a fair crop but, overall, it's not very good. A number of the comb honey colonies have swarmed. A colony full of bees without much to do is going to wind up hanging in a tree somewhere. It's turning into a replay of 2008. Lot's of bloom but very little honey. We had some honey come in during June but July has been a bust. There is still time but I'm losing optimism.

We peaked out at 635 colonies. It will be downhill from there. We will build a few colonies from our queen yard but numbers will decrease as we move into fall. The demand for queens has been brisk. Adam had a virgin get loose in one of his cell builders. That really put us behind. Dan Dixon loaned us a VSH queen to graft from. Adam has grafted one lot of cells from her and I think he intends to do another one. He has also sold some cells. We have never done that before.

Water came up in the pit again after a 2" gully washer. After that, Alex and I spent a day getting the tile around the addition hooked up and installing gutters.

We had big trees go down in two of our yards. One of them leveled six hives. The one in the other yard fell across the lids. It didn't knock anything down but it took a lot of work before the boys could get the lids off.

One of my projects has been to get the extracting line set up in the new addition. Our Cowen uncapper had some bad bushings. I managed to ruin one of the master links when I took the chain apart. I found out you can't get master links for hollow pin chain just anywhere. I had to order them. I have also been going to restaurant sales looking for stainless steel tables. I finally hit a sale in Montezuma where they went cheap. We are gradually getting the things we need.

Honey sales have been great. As I write this we have only four barrels of honey left in the warehouse. We'll have to start extracting the first week of August whether the supers are full or not.

Respectfully,
Melanie Bower
Treasurer, IHPA

The Barn Swallows in the nest above the back door are nearly full grown. They will be gone soon. That's about it for now. I hope to see a lot of you at the fair.

Submitted by Phil Ebert

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Income Statement for The Iowa Honey Producers Association
For The Year Ending September 30, 2008

The income statement for the year ending September 2008 is listed below. The books were reviewed by the financial committee of the IHPA. The 501C5 has been sent to the IRS and status is pending. The 990 was sent to the IRS in February.

IOWA HONEY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION
INCOME STATEMENT
YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

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<td>Membership Dues</td>
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<td>Annual Meeting</td>
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<td>T-Shirt/Cookbooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misc. Income</td>
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<td>Sales</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cost of Goods Sold</strong></td>
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<td>Mailing</td>
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<td>State Fair</td>
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<td>Queen Program</td>
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<td>Annual Meeting</td>
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<td>Misc. Expenses</td>
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<td><strong>Net Income/(Loss)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$918.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respectfully,
Melanie Bower
Treasurer, IHPA

---

8
Your ONE and ONLY “in hive” Small Hive Beetle Treatment!

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DC-800 CheckMite+™ 100 pack $150.00
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- Use a ground drench in addition to CheckMite+™
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- Remove strips after 42-45 days

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- Keep strong healthy hives by treating for disease and mites when appropriate.
- Feed syrup and pollen substitute to keep your hives strong when natural sources are not available.
- Use CheckMite+™ and GardStar® at the first sign of infestation.

TIP: To attract the beetles, spread a small amount of Bee-Pro® patty down the center of the square then attach the strip on either side of the patty

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- Treatment is most effective when brood rearing is lowest
- Treat all infested colonies within the yard
- Use 1 strip for every 5 frames of bees
- Remove strips after 42-45 days

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10-99 ........... $27.50
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• Through thousands of treatments efficacy rates ranged from 85% to 95% with an overall average of 93%.
• It respects both the hive products and the consumer.
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• Resistance is controlled and unlikely to occur with Apiguard.
• Ease of use: 2 x 50gm treatment trays per hive, with an interval of 14 days, in summer just after the honey flow.
• Best results occur when bees are active and maximum daily temperatures are between 60°F and 105°F.

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Place the dosing tray or pad centrally on the top of the brood frames gel side up. Be sure to allow at least 1/4” of spacing between the top of the tray and the cover using spacer boards or empty supers as needed. Apply the second dose 14 days after the first. Screened bottom boards should be closed while Apiguard is being applied.

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# The Buzz Newsletter

**Iowa Honey Producers Association**  
207 S.E. Diehl  
Des Moines, IA 50315

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## ISSUE 8 – August 2009

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**Southwest Iowa Honey Producers**

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### Additional Links and Emails

**IDALS website**  
www.agriculture.state.ia.us

**National Honey Board**  
www.honey.com

**American Beekeeping Federation website**  
www.ABFnet.org