Greetings from the President of the IHPA

Dear Honey Producers:

August is always busy even if we didn’t participate at the Iowa State Fair. Last minute vacations before the kids go back to school, end of summer activities, getting new school supplies and new clothes for those growing children, honey extraction and then add the state fair and you have one busy, usually warm month. The Iowa State Fair promises to be a great time. Honey lemonade is always a hit and the people sampling and purchasing honey products seem endless. Just imagine all of the questions that are answered and some of the myths dispelled while we are working in the IHPA sales booth. It is an interesting time. Good luck to all of the Iowa Honey Producers that enter the fruits of their labors in the Apiary competition. Another added pressure of August!

As you noticed, the July BUZZ had a glitch in the printing process. We have taken steps to add some checks and balances to the process to ensure that we shouldn’t experience another issue with only even pages printed. Maybe it is a wake up call to see if you all were reading your BUZZ. Hope you enjoyed the correct version that was mailed to you.

If you did not attend the Field Day, you missed a “bee-utiful” day. The setting was wonderful, the weather was great, the food was fabulous, and the company of other beekeepers was very enlightening. There are several things that we as beekeepers need to explore and evaluate with the different treatments now available for mites. One of those options was addressed at the Field Day. These types of workshops are a useful tool to keep abreast of the changing methods and necessary steps we need to take to ensure that we have healthy colonies capable of producing the honey that we need or able to get the pollination done that is required of them. Pat and Peggy Ennis did a fantastic job organizing the Field Day. Thanks!!

The IHPA has t-shirts available to the membership. They are the same design and color as the previous shirts. There is more paint on them because the owner of the screen printing business had noticed some of us wearing “faded” shirts at the fair and realized more paint was needed. We must be a bunch of messy people and have to wash our shirts more than the average t-shirt wearer. I wonder if it has anything to do with the sticky product that we work with? We have youth sizes this time. The prices for the shirts are very reasonable. Youth sizes small, medium and large are $8.50. Adult small, medium and large sizes are $9.00. Extra large shirts and double X shirts are $10.00. These shirts are priced at these prices for IHPA members. Non-member prices will be posted at the Iowa State Fair in our booth. We had several requests to purchase them from fair goers. If you need a shirt, they will be available at the fair or contact me, mbrahms@netins.net or (712)774-5878.

It is time for a political advertisement. Regardless of party affiliation, the Iowa Honey Producers Association could be in a good position to get some help from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. As you know, we are going to elect a new Secretary of Agriculture in November. I urge you to visit the websites for both candidates. For your convenience they are: Denise O’Brien.com or Bill Northey.com. I did contact both candidates to ask them to relate their position on the bee-keeping industry in Iowa. I received a reply from Denise O’Brien. This is what she sent me: “I believe that you asked me my position on having a state apiarist. I fully support having a state apiarist. I believe that bees have an economic impact on the crops in Iowa.” I don’t know if Bill Northeay sent anything directly to the BUZZ. I had indicated that information was available on our website for them to investigate. We need to actively campaign to get the best person into the position of Secretary of Agriculture.

Enjoy what is left of the summer season and don’t get overheated working on those honey crops.

Sincerely,
Donna Brahms, IHPA President
New Bee Inspector Hired

Delmar Nelson of Kellogg has been hired as a new bee inspector. For those of you not familiar with the area, Kellogg is located three miles north of I-80 between Newton and Grinnell.

You may contact Delmar at (641) 526-8866 or e-mail him at laserink@pcpartner.net.

Delmar will be spending some time with Bill Eicholdt. Then he will be on his own. We are not totally sure what guidelines he is working under at this point. If you have two hives of bees and live 100 miles from him, you can rest assured that is not going to work. He has to put a productive day together. Get together with some other beekeepers in your area. Give him several places to go. The counties pay the mileage for the inspection trips. When they look at a trip that only inspects a few colonies, they are reluctant to pay the bill.

This is a service for you to take advantage of but people will have to work together to get the most out of it.

IHSA Award Nominations

Just a reminder to everyone, that if they wish to nominate someone for one of the awards that the IHSA offers September 1st is the deadline for the nomination. Nomination letters or requests should be mailed to

Ellie Johnson
4012 54th Street
Des Moines, IA 50310
515-402-2140
or email her at lilshewolf@earthlink.net

1. Pioneer Award- for having been involved for 50 years or more & still active in beekeeping.

2. Distinguished Service Award- for assisting other beekeepers, willing to share information, and/or serving the association.

3. Education Award- teaching beekeeping classes, speaking at service clubs, giving presentations to school children or speaking about beekeeping on radio or T.V.

4. Promotions Award- for promoting honey and beekeeping, promotions for the state association of promoting their own product.

5. Friendship Award- for being a friend of the association. This could be someone who has displayed at the annual IHSA trade show, a state official who has assisted or encouraged beekeeping, someone outside our industry of producing honey.

6. Youth Award- for a young person who has shown commendable involvement in such things as helping at the state fair, successfully keeping bees for at least one season including wintering, writing, making a float for a parade, speaking, etc.
Is a State Apiarist in Iowa’s Future?

As Secretary of Agriculture I would work to reinstate an Iowa State Apiarist. I know that bees are critical for pollination and they add to the economic well being of the state of Iowa.

— Denise O’Brien
Candidate for Secretary of Ag.

Looking for Bees

We are trying to locate beekeepers in SE NE or SW IA who would be interested in placing hives on our land between Glenwood and Mineola, IA. Years ago we did have hives on our land but those people have long since retired. Can you help?

Leslie Speck
25784 Dobney AV
Glenwood, IA 51534
Phone: 712-526-2064
Email: bldspeck@aol.com

Thanks, Leslie Speck

The Buzz Picture Contest

Remember that “The Buzz” is offering $10 for one picture each month. I know some of you will have good photo opportunities during the summer months. Entertain your fellow beekeepers and make some money at the same time. This offer does not pertain to pictures printed with articles. Submit you photo via e-mail to the Buzz at thebuzz@abuzzaboutbees.com or by post to the address listed on the front cover. Postal submissions should include a self addressed stamped envelope if you want your picture returned.

NHB-Sponsored Mite Control Research Project Completed; More Projects Underway for 2006

Longmont, Colo.—A research project titled “Microbial Control of Varroa with the Fungus Metarhizium Anisopliae” was recently completed, but did not produce any measurable results.

The National Honey Board (NHB) provided funding for the project through its research program. Rosalind James, PhD., at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service in Utah led the project with assistance from Jerry Hayes, Chief-Apiary Inspection section at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and Jerrod Leland, PhD., Southern Insect Management Research Unit, MS.

The project’s objective was to test the viability of the fungus Metarhizium Anisopliae as a control for the Varroa mite. Two field trials were conducted, each one varying the application methods and the season.

None of the experiments gave any measurable level of mite control. Although the fungus Metarhizium Anisopliae is capable of infecting mites in the laboratory at hive temperatures, poor infection rates occurred in the field. The spores survived very poorly in the hive, and may have been a major cause for lack of efficacy.

In 2006, NHB is funding five production research projects to study a variety of colony health issues. Funding for the projects totals $47,190. NHB began funding production research projects in 2004 to help beekeepers maintain colony health, without adversely affecting their ability to produce quality honey. Since 2004, NHB has funded an additional seven such projects with funding totaling $135,877.

NHB conducts research, advertising and promotion programs to help maintain and expand domestic and foreign markets for honey. These programs are funded by an assessment of one cent per pound on domestic and imported honey.

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The Buzz – August

The summer months have almost come and gone; a beekeepers busiest time is just around the corner. Over the past month I was able to attend a few beekeeping functions.

The beekeepers field day, which was held in Madrid, Iowa, was a day-long event that covered several important aspects of beekeeping. Topics of discussion ranged from hive registration to identifying and treating the Varroa Mite to the method of feeding bees using a barrel. Guest speaker, David Vander Dussen, gave an in-depth presentation on mites and mite control. We broke each item down and went over it thoroughly. After eating a delicious potluck meal, attendants headed outside to actually open up the hive and try out some of the skills they had just learned on detecting mite counts such as using powdered sugar and, the favorite, windshield wiper fluid. For all, it was a very beneficial program and I would encourage all to attend it next year.

A small celebration was held at an Ames grocery store called Wheatsfield Grocery to promote local honey products. There were many excited locals visiting the various stations trying to sample all the tasty food, honey being the most popular of course! People asked many questions such as: what affects the flavor of the honey, how do you use comb honey, and even what does it take to be the Iowa Honey Queen – is there a talent part of the competition? For the few hours that I was there, it was very enjoyable; I was able to see many people and chit chat with them over the many uses of honey.

As more events come up, feel free to ask me to join in the fun. I am sure I will see many of you at the Iowa State Fair. So, be sure to stop at the Honey Booth and say “hi,” maybe even help work!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Macken
Iowa Honey Queen

You Just Never Know

Being the wife of a beekeeper you have to be flexible, patient, tolerant and creative. Having a beekeeper husband means that you will have to put up with sticky spills, sticky door knobs, grungy coveralls that will never be as white as when they came out of the package, and fielding his phone calls when he’s “out with his other ladies – the queen bees and their courts”.

In these hot days of summer, when the bees are supposed to be out collecting nectar, you just never know how your day will be interrupted by those darn bees. It could be the UPS driver stopping you on the street to order honey, or the postal carrier with a package of queens and lots of questions, or that phone call from some panicked person saying “Help! There’s a swarm in my tree. Get it out!”

Well, we’ve just had an interesting week at our house. Arriving home on July 4 from a long weekend with family, we checked the answering machine to find a call just 3 hours old about a swarm in a tree 10 miles away. After checking with the caller to find out the swarm was still there, Tim loaded equipment while I grabbed the camera. The swarm was nice & tight on a branch about 10 feet off the ground, relatively easy to hive up and take home. End of story? Not quite.

Two days later as I was preparing to cook lunch, there was that phone call again, “Help! There’s a swarm in my lilac bush!” Now your beekeeper husband is never home for these calls, so you get all the pertinent info and promise he’ll call when he gets home. Since this swarm is only 8 blocks from your home, you run over to take a picture (State Fair time is close, you know). This particular swarm chose a very hot day and sat in a bush about 10’ up, in the yard next to a church where a funeral is to be held, and the caller is the sister-in-law of the man who had the swarm on the 4th. Being a concerned, creative wife, you decide to try to experiment and see if you can hive the bees … without getting stung, of course. So go home, find a bottom board, hive body, frames with drawn comb (good luck as hubby has all the good stuff in the apiaries), find a lid and a wide saw horse. Recruit your teenage son to help as he will have creative ideas, too. Then take some old honey along to put in the hive or on the combs and set it all up close to the bush with the swarm. Within 2 minutes you should have some bees investigating. Now you can go home and wait for your husband who may laugh at your attempt.

When hubby finally got home and went to check out the swarm, he admitted what I had done probably kept the bees there in the bush so he could hive them properly. After a few more pictures and answering neighbors questions while he hives the bees, I returned home to prepare the evening meal.
A few minutes later the phone rings with another “Help! There are bees swarming in a tree”. Now this time it’s just 2 blocks from home, and only 1 block from the farmers market being held right then. And again, hubby isn’t home. Not having cell phones, you take a chance and head for the closest apiary, just out side of town. Good luck, he’s there and comes right back to take care of this swarm.

This swarm choose to sit in a small Hawthorn tree about 5’ off of the ground. After studying the situation, he sets up his hive body under the swarm and attempts to drop them in. Since many bees still cling to the branches, he tries to shake them down. This creates a huge cloud of orange pollen off the tree. But very soon, all the bees are walking down the branch and into the hive. So he’s sure he’s go the queen. Being the dutiful picture taking wife, I got to answer questions from the larger crowd that gathered to watch. Interesting, he hived a swarm at this same house a few years ago, but then it was just under the roof … a large, old 2 story home. This years swarm was much easier to get.

Why did we have 2 swarms in town the same day? Who knows. But if you are the wife of a beekeeper, when you are the wife of a beekeeper, when you think we have enough bees for this to go on but I better quit before I wear out my welcome. I hope to see a lot of you at the fair. You just never know…

Submitted by Melissa Laughlin

THE BEEYARD REPORT

The hardware store in Lynnville is closing at the end of the month. It’s as much a victim of the shrinking farm population as the rise of Wal-Mart. It’s a familiar story in most small towns. People work away from home and do their shopping in other places when they get off work. We all vote with our dollars on who we want to stay open. When you vote, you need to ask yourself “Does this business help my community? Are they around to contribute to the school yearbook or the after prom party?” Dollars spent on main street stay at home. But very soon, all the bees are walking down the branch and into the hive. So he’s sure he’s go the queen. Being the dutiful picture taking wife, I got to answer questions from the larger crowd that gathered to watch. Interesting, he hived a swarm at this same house a few years ago, but then it was just under the roof … a large, old 2 story home. This years swarm was much easier to get.

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Our early honey flow was spotty. The yards in the timber were the best. They caught both black locust and basswood. The bloom in other areas was good but there was very little yield. I checked two yards of 20 colonies each during the first week of July. They had two boxes of honey between them. Then, a massive flow started. Most of our yards plugged within a couple of weeks. Alex and Adam made the first pull on the 11th. We started extracting the next day. It has been a struggle to get the supers emptied and back on the hives. We are working on barrel #37 right now.

We miss having Anthony to run the extractor. All we had to do was show up in the morning and load whatever empty boxes we needed. Now, we have to extract before we can load. Adam usually shows up around 6:30 in the morning and starts extracting. I get up and do chores. I join him around 9:30. We work together until Alex gets the truck loaded. They go to pull honey around noon and are usually home by six or seven in the evening. I run the extractor through the afternoon and into the night. Some nights, when I am done extracting, I set a rack on top of the uncapper tray and cut out comb honey sections. We can pack them up first thing in the morning and not have space tied up while waiting for them to drain.

We are generating a lot more wax this year. Last year, we were able to pull about half our honey before it was capped. You give up a little on the moisture content but it saves a lot of uncapping. One or two strokes with the cappings scratcher and the frame is ready to extract. This year almost everything is capped and we get several blocks of wax every day.

We have a big screen that we put in the doorway where the rollup door is. The bees that come home with the supers collect there. Usually, there aren’t too many. Given the necessity for speed, we have accumulated more than normal. There were probably five of six pounds of bees hanging along the door frame. We have a hive right outside the door but they wouldn’t go in it. Alex put a queen in a package cage and set it near the cluster. About half of them crawled right into the cage. We had wanted to do a video on package installation in the spring but didn’t have any packages left. Now, voila, we had the July package and a huge one at that. We put them in a box of foundation and gave them a bucket of syrup. I think we have enough bees for this to work.

A guy on one of the chat pages had an extractor for sale. It was a strange brand so I went to his “My Space” page where he had a picture of it. I checked out his documents while I was there and what did I find but the Ebert Honey Co Online Catalog and the Buzz Newsletter. How about that?

I’m really full of it this month. I could go on but I better quit before I wear out my welcome. I hope to see a lot of you at the fair.

Submitted by Phil Ebert
A GREAT SUMMER FIELD DAY!!
July 8th
Iowa 4-H center
Madrid Iowa

Before I get into this too much, I would like to thank everyone who, in some way or another, helped with the field day. Getting the meat, preparing the pot luck table, at the registration table, and all the bee helpers. I couldn’t do this without the helping volunteers. And of course, all who took the time to come to the summer field day. YOU are the reason for the field day. I know summer can be a very busy time, so THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CAME. And a big thanks to our guest speaker, David Vander Dussen.

If you are like me, you have the varroa mite in your hives. Some hives have more than others, you hear of hives crashing because of the varroa mite, or maybe you have had some crash yourself. I treat for the varroa mite. I know some do not. This I feel, is a personal decision as to whether or not to treat. But to make that decision, one should be educated with all the information to make a sound decision for his personal bee operation. This is my personal option; the varroa mite is the largest killer of honey bee hives. That is why I choose to have guest speaker, David Vander Dussen from mite-away II come to our field day to speak to us about the varroa mite.

We first learned about the life cycle of the honey bee with the worker taking 21 days to emerge from an egg and a drone taking 24 days to emerge from an egg.

We found out that the varroa mite is a parasite with a life cycle of 80 to 100 days.
days. On a worker bee larva the varroa mite will lay 4-5 eggs, the first egg being a male. And on a drone bee larva the varroa mite will lay 5-6 eggs, the first egg also being a male. After the bee emerges the mite will take 3-5 days to recharge by eating before going into another cell. So in a mite’s lifetime it can reproduce 10 - 14 times. Since the mite goes in cell just before it is capped, you can see the mite’s life cycle is 10 – 13 days to produce 4-6 mites each cycle. This all ties in with IPM (Intergrated Pest Management).

The 4 keys to IPM are: 1 – IDENTIFY 2 – MONITOR 3 – THRESHOLD 4 - PRODUCT.

1 – Identify: Do you have a mite problem? We did this at the field day by breaking up into 4 groups, doing 3 hands on methods with 8 bee hives. The 3 methods we did are: sticky board, ether roll and powder sugar roll. David also showed us a new method by using windshield washing fluid (the blue cleaner). I liked this method the best. Very easy and inexpensive to do!! Ask someone else who was at the field day their opinion of this method!!

2 - After identifying, you need to monitor your mite population. You need to know your mite population in % of the hive population.

3 – Threshold: how many mites can you have before you need to treat, or is it too late and your bees are going to crash.

4 – Product; if you should decide to treat for mites, your considerations for your product choice should include: easy for the bee keeper to use; safe for both humans and bees; as effective as possible; no residue in honey or bees wax; cost per hive; and number of treatments needed.

Through this field day, I felt I learned more about mite detection and treatment, enjoyed the fellowship of other beekeepers (I got to talk about bees all day, life is good!), and enjoyed a great pot luck with delious home made ice cream! I enjoyed speaker David Vander Dussen. He was very personable with a good sense of humor. Whether or not you use David’s product; mite-away II, (www.miteaway.com) is up to you, but I think I’m going to give it a try.

If you have any other thought on this I’d “bee” happy to hear them.

THANK YOU AND BEE HAPPY!
PAT ENNIS

Royalty was on hand during the field day, (left to right) Teresa Jurchen 2006 American Honey Princess, Diane Jurchen 2006 Southwest Iowa Honey Queen, and Elizabeth Macken 2006 Iowa Honey Queen.
How Much Time Do You Have?

The following is an excerpt from a synopsis of a talk David Vander Dussen gave at the AHPA meeting in Houston, TX this past January. It was submitted originally by Lyle Johnston and printed in The Honey Producer newsletter.

With unselected stock, the varroa mites double every 22.4 days, approximately every three weeks. An otherwise health, strong colony can function with up to 3,000 varroa.

Since eradication of the varroa mites is impossible, when you treat what you are buying is time between treatments. The efficacy of the treatment determines how much time you have bought, as shown in the chart below.

At a 3,000 varroa treatment threshold, if a treatment has a 97% efficacy, you have bought 3.75 months between treatments. If a treatment has a 87% efficacy, you have bought 2.5 months between treatments.

Hard chemical treatments such as synthetic pyrethroids (e.g. fluvalinate) and organophosphates (e.g. coumaphos) are failing. The options are Mite-Away II single application formic acid pad (MAII), ApiLife Var, and now ApiGaurd. Oxalic acid is being studied as well, as a possible treatment during broodless periods.

The formation and application method of MAII is what makes it effective (93.5%, +- 5%). Not all formic application methods are effective. The gel based formulation, now off the market, had a 70% efficacy (Mites of the Honey Bee, Dadant & Sons Inc 2001, page 190).

FYI not included in the talk: Other products assessed by Stanghellini and Raybold for varroa treatment, fall 2003, in New Jersey. Published in the American Bee Journal, June 2004, Vol. 144, No.6

Single deep colonies:
- Apistan: 95%
- Sucroide: n/a
- Oxalic acid: 93%
- ApiLife Var: 69%
- MiteGone: 66%

Put these results on the chart and see how much time you are buying. Take home message: pay attention to the efficacy of the products you're using. 1) Is what you are using working? And 2) are you buying the time you need to prevent major colony losses?

Total cost for MAII for the year would be $8.37, and its’ single application formulation is easily worked into the beekeeping cycle. MAII works when there is brood in the hives. No residue issues. Resistance to formic acid is not expected. Considering how hard it has been to keep bees alive and get the almond pollination dollars MAII is the best return for the money.
While not every varroa infestation will follow a worse case scenario, a beekeeper needs to be aware how quickly the situation can change. This underscores the need for identification and careful monitoring in order to make an informed decision about treatment.

**Honey ‘n’ Fruit Drink**

When peaches are in season, this drink will quench your thirst. 1 ripe peach, peeled, pitted and quartered 1/2 c. (125 ml) unsweetened pineapple juice 2 tbsp. (30 ml) honey 1 container (8 oz. or 227 g) plain yogurt

Assemble citrus juicer. Juice oranges into glass measure (about 3/4 cup or 200 ml). Assemble blender. Put orange juice and remaining ingredients into blender container. Cover and process at liquefy until smooth. Serve in glasses filled with crushed ice. 6 servings.

Recipe from cooks.com

**Banana Honey Drink**

1 banana
1/2 c. milk (skim or whole)
3 tbsp. wheat germ
1 tsp. honey
1 tsp. vanilla or strawberry flavoring

Blend in blender until banana has dissolved. Yields 2 servings. Note: This is a quick energy-builder and very nourishing.

Recipe from cooks.com

David Vander Dussen demonstrates how to perform an alcohol wash during this years field day. Powdered sugar and ether rolls are additional ways that a beekeeper can get a varroa mite count.
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Apiguard has a Section 3 general registration in the United States. Check with your nearest Dadant branch for updates on Apiguard registration in your state. We will also post state registrations on our website: www.dadant.com

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Central Iowa Beekeepers
Contact: Arvin Foell
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Des Moines Backyard Beekeepers
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East Central Iowa Beekeepers
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North Iowa Bee Club
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Contact: Louise Johnson
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Northwest Beekeepers Association
Contact: Jeanne Rust
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Southeast Iowa Beekeepers
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Additional Links and Emails
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IDALS website
www.agriculture.state.ia.us

National Honey Board
www.NHB.org

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American Beekeeping Federation website
www.ABFnet.org