IHPA Award Nominations Pg.3

USDA Seeks Comments on Establishing New Honey Packers and Importers Promotion Order Pg.4

Sign up to help at the IHPA State Fair Booth Pg.6

CCD - Articles from a couple of Midwest states Pg.8-9
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., Lynnville, 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 Gordon Powell, IHPA Treasurer, 4012 54th St., Des Moines, IA 50310 Phone: (515) 278-1762.
Dear Honey Producers,

We have had a new development at our house since the last letter I wrote for this publication. We received 7 inches of rain overnight on May 24th and we spent the entire Memorial Day weekend going up and down our basement stairs! We had water come up through our drain in the bathroom. Now I question why we finished the basement. We had to remove the carpet and pad from the main family room, plus all of the "stuff". One thing it has done is made me do some deep cleaning and I can say that two trailer loads of things were thrown away. We have to remove the bottom part of the drywall in two rooms because of mold. I don't think that we will have time to work on getting it back to normal until fall. I am getting accustomed to the new look and the furniture is all on one side of the basement so it looks large again.

Now that we had so much rain, we need rain again. We have missed any of the rain lately and the top soil is extremely dry and the cracks in the ground are very visible. Wouldn't it be nice to just have a "normal" season again.

Beekeeping has become and extremely challenging hobby around here. I went to put supers on some of our strongest colonies a couple weeks ago. I was noticing the great array of flowers blooming and was getting excited about the prospect of honey. As I drove up through the orchard, I wondered why I wasn't seeing any honey bees flying. I got out of the pick up, put on my veil and gloves and then I got a real surprise. Not a single bee was to be found in any of the colonies.

That brings me to the next item. Not all of the information that is being talked about on television newscasts, newspaper and magazine articles and radio information shows is correct. The experts still don't know for sure what is causing the honey bee problems. I get asked at all five of the markets that I go to about the problem with honey bees. Some of the questions concern the cell phone report, some just ask what are we going to do about getting enough honey. I answer with, even though we enjoy honey, the most critical aspect of all of this is the lack of pollination. Most people don't even think about the pollination and the necessary work by honey bees to help provide our food. I am still getting calls for interviews from publications. At least we are getting attention. If you would like information concerning CCD, please go to the Penn State website. They are leading the nation on research for this matter.

We are still needing members, family and friends to help in the Iowa Honey Producers Association sales booth during the Iowa State Fair. Please let me know if you could work a shift or two for us. We need at least 21 people a day for the entire 11 days of the fair. I will be contacting people soon. We have some slots filling up. If you want a specific day or time, let me know soon.

Thanks to some volunteers we should have enough help to renovate the IHPA spot in the Ag building at the fairgrounds. We have had several volunteer to help. If you would like to help, let me know. We are still interested in ideas and suggestions.

I need to get things ready for my Farmers' Market, so I better get going. Have a safe 4th of July holiday and keep our military personnel in your thoughts and prayers. Remember, we have members of the IHPA in the military.

BEE Safe out there.

Sincerely,

Donna Brahms, IHPA President

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**Greetings from the President of the IHPA**

**IHPA Award Nominations**

It is time to think of who should receive one of the Awards that the IHPA presents at the Annual Meeting banquet. Please review the categories and submit your suggestions along with a short letter explaining why you feel that this candidate should receive an award. The categories that we present are as follows:

1. **Pioneer Award** - for having been involved for 50 years or more and 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 or promoting their own product.
5. **Friendship Award** - for being a friend of the association. This could be someone who has displayed at the annual IHPA trade show, a state official who has assisted or encouraged beekeeping, someone outside our industry producing honey.
6. **Youth Award** - for a young person who has shown commendable involvement in such things as helping the state fair, successfully keeping bees for at least one season including wintering, writing, making a float for a parade, speaking, etc.

If you would like to nominate someone, please send the information to me by the deadline of September 1st.:

Donna Brahms
65071 720th Street
Cumberland, IA  50843
(712) 774-5878
mbrahms@netins.net
I can't believe we are buying honey. I was sold down far enough that I didn't have much cushion left, so I picked up a few barrels from Curt Bronnenberg. Shortly after this, I got a couple of good orders for honey in buckets. If there are buyers out there, I want to be a seller. I went looking for more honey. By chance, I got hooked up with Brian Suchan. Larry Draper had seen his honey and told me it was super good. I was looking for eight barrels in the beginning. After hearing Larry's endorsement, I decided to take 30. I can only haul 15, but I had a trip to Nebraska coming up anyway. I thought I was only looking a $125 trip cost to pick up the extra load. On the way out, we begin to lose a lot of oil but it was nothing compared to what we lost on the way home. We had to put in a gallon of oil every 50 miles. It's spewing out of the back of the engine where the turbo mounts. I don't know what's going to cost yet.

I have a big milestone in July. I turn 65. I remember when that seemed pretty old. Some days, I can feel my body telling me that it's not what it used to be. My head, I'm still a young man. As I age, time seems to accelerate. Perhaps that is because I don't have as much left as I used to. While I don't like to think about the end, it's necessary to plan for it. I don't want to leave a mess at the end. At the same time, I have to keep looking ahead. As long as the wheels in my head keep turning, I can stay young.

I have heard a couple of disturbing stories about package bees crashing after they took off well initially. I have no explanation for this. Ours still look good.

Adam harvested his first queens on June 11th. They looked really good and were laying well. He has everything from the first graft sold. As we move through the summer, we are going to hit cycles where the queens won't sell and the mating nucs will be getting too large. At that point, we will start moving brood into full sized boxes and start new colonies that we will take into winter. Having full sized frames in our mating nucs ties up a lot of equipment and a lot of bees but it gives us the flexibility to do what we want to do. We'll continue maintain a full compliment of mating nucs into the fall (about120). Any that have queens remaining unsold will be wintered. Last winter our nuc wintering project was a total failure but we're planning to take another shot at it.

Adam is going to attend Marla Spivak's queen rearing course in July. He already knows the mechanics but this should expose him to some new ideas. Marla lives in the real world and works on real world problems. This isn't always true of university people.

There is still plenty of time to make a crop but I get increasingly nervous the later it goes into the summer. Once I get that first box filled, I know I'm going to make expenses. Then I relax a little. I hope everyone has a successful summer.

Submitted by Phil Ebert

**Colony Collapse Disorder**

Wednesday June 27 all three state inspectors Bill, Boyd, and Delmar attended the 9th International Pollination Symposium at ISU in Ames.

We attended the session on Colony Collapse Disorder. There were 4 speakers with different areas of expertise. Researchers from many countries have been researching many possible causes of CCD, Pesticides, Mites, Reduced forage, New pathogens and Stress from increased movement of bees for pollination.

We will need everyone's help inspectors will be collecting data about colony losses. I will pass along more info next month when I have more time to check it all out.

Submitted by Delmar Nelson

**USDA Seeks Comments on Establishing New Honey Packers and Importers Promotion Order**

WASHINGTON, June 1, 2007 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that it is seeking comments on a proposal for a new national Honey Packers and Importers Research, Promotion, Consumer Education and Industry Information Order.

“The proposed national research and promotion program would replace the existing Honey Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Order, and the Department is recommending a ref-
erendum be conducted, prior to the implementation of the proposed order, to ascertain if the persons covered and assessed favor it,” said Lloyd C. Day, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), a marketing and regulatory programs agency.

The program would be administered by a 10-member board and its alternates responsible for carrying out activities intended to strengthen the position of the honey industry in the marketplace, and developing, maintaining and expanding domestic and foreign markets for honey and honey products. The national coordinated generic program would be financed by a mandatory assessment of $0.01 per pound on honey and honey products paid by first handlers and importers that handle or import at least 250,000 pounds of the commodity annually.

The proposed rule will be published in the June 4, 2007, Federal register, along with a proposed rule on the procedures to be used in the referendum to determine if the program will go into effect. Comments on both rules must be received by Aug. 3, 2007. Comments should be mailed in triplicate to the Research and Promotion Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, Stop 0244, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-0244; by phone (888) 720-9917; fax (202) 205-2800; or e-mail to: www.regulations.gov

Copies of the proposed rule and any comments that are received maybe requested from the same address above or viewed at: www.ams.usda.gov/fv/rpdocketlist.htm or www.regulations.gov

AMS encourages all eligible individuals to participate in its committee and board activities. It is USDA’s policy that membership on industry-governed boards and committees accurately reflect the diversity of individuals served by the programs.

#
Dear Honey Producers:

We hope you will be able to help the Iowa Honey Producers Association with honey and lemonade sales at the 2007 Iowa State Fair. Dates of this year’s fair are August 9th through the 19th. Please bring any other helpers with you who may be interested in working. Children who are ten years of age and older enjoy assisting and are welcome.

We will send passes which provide free entry to the State Fair to all who assist with honey and lemonade sales.

Days, dates and times for which help is needed are listed at the bottom of this letter. Please return the work schedule, call or e-mail, if you prefer, indicating the dates and times you will help. Also, if possible, please list a first or second choice of dates and times you can be available to help with sales. Please state the names of all those coming with you who will be helping with State Fair sales.

I already have dates filling up. Thanks to those who have asked for a specific date at this early time. Remember that we need approximately 21 people per day to fill the necessary shifts. The building is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. for each of the 11 days that the Iowa State Fair runs. This is the main money making project of the Iowa Honey Producers Association. Please help us maintain our money to provide the necessary programs of the association.

Hope to see you at the Iowa State Fair!

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65071 720th Street
Cumberland, IA 50843-8125
(712) 774-5878-H or (712) 250-4304-C
E-mail: mbrahms@netins.net

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| Telephone: ________________________________________ | 6:00-9:00 ____________ | 6:00-9:00 ____________ |

We always have a “Honey Of A Time” working at the Iowa State Fair!
Featured Beekeeper
of the Month

This month our featured beekeeper is Brantly Beal. He is from Mt. Sterling, Iowa, is 15 years old, and is one of the three beginning beekeepers sponsored by the Southeast Iowa Beekeepers. He spoke at our annual meeting this past March and is a friendly, likable and energetic beekeeper. The Southeast Iowa Beekeepers are proud to have Brantly in the group and thank Vern Ramsey for being an excellent mentor. Keep up the good work. Here is Brantly’s letter.

Hello, my name is Brantly Beall and I am glad to be in a league with all of you knowledgeable beekeepers. Thank you for allowing me to speak and to be a part of your family.

If somebody had told me when I was younger that I was going to be a beekeeper I would have told you that you were crazy, but thanks to Max Dirks, my FFA advisor, Vernie Ramsey, an old but intelligent friend of mine, and the Southeast Iowa Beekeepers, I love beekeeping. I used to only think of bees as mean little devils that stung people for the fun of it, but now, thanks to Max and Vernie, I have a new found respect for bees.

I got started beekeeping through the FFA. Max had talked to Vernie about beekeeping at the Iowa State FFA Convention 2 years ago and Max thought he might have a few students interested in beekeeping. So we had a meeting for those interested and among the few to attend was Thadd Roush and me, Brantly Beall. We were excited to say the least. We had seen this kind of thing on TV before, but never did we think it would be this much fun or that I would learn this much.

I have learned that bees sting only when threatened and once they do sting they die soon after. Let the bees smell smoke and that will calm them down. I have also learned that the hive is run completely by women, and the men get kicked out. Much like in real life, the women are in charge.

One thing that really surprised me about bee behavior was the ability to organize and cooperate with no arguments. There are thousands of bees in one hive and all work for their entire lifecycle. Bees have also developed their own special language. Bees communicate through pheromones not actual words but smells.

Most of all I have learned a sense of responsibility. Bees require many check-ups a month. I can’t just leave them alone and expect them to live. I have to assume that they can’t live without my intervention.

I would like to thank Vernie Ramsey for all of the knowledge he has shared with us and for the guidance he has give us. I would also like to thank all of those who donated equipment, for without the Southeast Iowa Beekeepers this project would be near impossible. I am proud to be a member of the Southeast Iowa Beekeepers.

Thank you all, I am looking forward to another fun year with all of you.

Brantly Beall

Submitted by Ron Wehr

Tyler Roush, Brantly Beall, and Thadd Roush at the Wehr Honey Farm.
Colony collapse disorder not a problem for beekeeper

Published Friday, July 6, 2007 1:03:30 PM Central Time
By ERIC HJERSTEDT SHARP
Globe Staff Writer

IRONWOOD TOWNSHIP -- Beekeeper Amy Van Ooyen has been raising bees for about 33 years.

Although the recent colony collapse disorder hasn't really affected her hives, she does have her own ideas as to why it is an issue for beekeepers in the lower peninsula, southern Wisconsin and elsewhere around the country.

"It is a problem," Van Ooyen said. "But not really around here yet."

One of less than a handful of beekeepers in Gogebic County, Van Ooyen has gone from more than 50 hives to just five. She keeps one hive near her home in Ironwood Township, just off Lake Road on the way to Little Girl's Point. She still finds it enjoyable, and has learned quite a bit about the art and science of beekeeping, having helped more than 10 people get a start in the honey business.

"I'm a hobbyist," she said. "When I had 50 hives, I was what they called a 'sideliner.' There are people around the country, that have between 3,000-8,000 hives, and rent them out to pollinate fields, and these people do it for a living."

These are the people with the colony collapse disorder problem, she said. Two types of mites can weaken the bees, requiring the hives to be medicated. Pesticides, severe winters, and improper management techniques all contribute to the issues which weaken the bees immune systems. Whether or not these factors -- or a combination of some or all of them -- contribute to the mysterious disappearance of bees is still not completely known.

Van Ooyen believes mites are the main reason for the disorder, particularly the varroa mite. She says some bee suppliers have started inserting a chemical strip with the packets of bees. This non-toxic strip guards against the mites, at least in this area, and seems to be keeping away the attacks of the mites, she said.

Cold weather does impact the bees in the U.P, and bee keepers often have to get a new swarm of bees to replace the ones that don't make it over the winter. The mites attack the bees, then die and can be found on the bottom of the hive, she said. So far, only bees from Australian suppliers are free of the mites.

But scientists are not sure if is only the mites that cause the disorder. Van Ooyen said none of the beekeepers in Gogebic County have the thousands of hives that many do in the warmer climates, such as Georgia, Tennessee or California. Those beekeepers travel many miles with their hives, sometimes in semi-trucks, and rent the hives to farmers for pollination purposes.

Van Ooyen started the hobby several years after she and her late husband Claude moved to lower Michigan from Holland. She also remembers her father also kept bees when she was a little girl.

She anticipates the honey "flow" will begin next week, somewhat early this year. Then in September, with the fall flowers, another honey harvest takes place.

"The bees start making honey again in anticipation of the cold weather," Van Ooyen said. "They produce about 120 pounds of honey per hive. Downstate, they only produce about 70 pounds per hive."

The bees need about 100 pounds of their honey over the winter. She thinks the bees up here may be producing more because of the cold winters. When she decided to reduce her number of hives, she sold the extra hives and bees to Lynn Austin of North Bessemer, whom she had introduced to bee keeping several years ago.

"He's done real well," she said. "The health food store and the grocery store in Ironwood both sell his honey on the shelf."

There is also a beekeeper in Bruce Crossing who has a large number of hives, and makes a living at it, she added. She also said he teaches other people how to keep bees and harvest honey.

"A lot of people start up, but very few continue on with it," Van Ooyen said. "You have to have a knack for it."

This article was originally published in the Daily Globe [Ironwood, MI] at http://www.ironwooddailyglobe.com/0706bees.htm

Costly mystery: Disappearing bee colonies cut into $15 billion value to crops

By ARLENE MANNLEIN - H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR - Colony Collapse Disorder - the literal disappearance of millions of honeybees - is ripe for speculation because "it's such an amazing occurrence," said Gene Robinson.

"When winter kill occurs (in a bee colony), there is a slow dwindling of the population," said Robinson, the G. William Arends professor of integrative biology at the University of Illinois. "If there is a death in the colony, you see the dead bees present.

"One of the symptoms of Colony Collapse Disorder is there are no bees," he said. "Something has put them over the edge."
The death of honeybees in such large numbers is a concern for all parts of agriculture because of the bees' role in the pollination process.

Pollination is responsible $15 billion in added crop value, particularly for specialty crops such as almonds, various nuts, berries, fruits and vegetables, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service. "The nature of much of our agriculture in the United States is such that a large number of honeybee colonies are needed for a short period of time," Robinson said.

Almond production alone, Robinson said, uses more than half the managed colonies.

The bee industry is facing difficulty meeting pollination demand in almonds, according to the Agricultural Research Service; yet, Robinson said, almond acreage is increasing.

"(Honeybees) very directly influence the food supply," said Ken Haller, president of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association.

"On one hand, we as a society should not be panic-stricken (about Colony Collapse Disorder), but we should be very vigilant and concerned towards the well-being of honeybees," Haller said. That's the way, he added, the association leadership is looking at Colony Collapse Disorder, not only from the aspect of the financial well-being of its members but to the members' ultimate consumers, the fruit and vegetable eating public.

First reported in late fall, Colony Collapse Disorder now is recorded across the country.

"We have no confirmed cases of Colony Collapse Disorder entering Illinois," said Steve Chard, apiary inspection supervisor with the Illinois Department of Agriculture. "We've reached that conclusion through our regular inspections of our colonies."

While inspectors have investigated reports in Illinois of what might have been the disorder, said Chard, what has been found are the more typical kinds of problems and diseases beekeepers experience.

However, a National Honey Bee Loss Survey, reported by Bee Alert Technology Inc., includes Illinois as one of 35 states with Colony Collapse Disorder loss as of June 1. Responses to the survey, according to Jerry Bromenshenk, president and chief operating officer of Bee Alert, are voluntary and can remain anonymous.

And, said Bromenshenk, that anonymity may account for the reporting difference, since some beekeepers may choose not to report losses to the state for business reasons. The June statistics, he continued, are based upon more than 600 responses, and include some physical inspections of colonies.

A similar kind of honeybee die-off has happened at least eight times in the past, said Phil Nixon, University of Illinois Extension entomologist.

One event happened in the 1960s to beekeepers in Louisiana and Texas, said Bromenshenk, and another hit a larger area in 1975.

"Each decade seems to have a 'disappearing' disappearing disease," he added.

"The challenge is, 'What is it?' " Haller said.

Several factors have been suspected, Robinson said, and the cause could be a combination of them.

Those suspected causes, according to the Agricultural Research Service, range from pesticides to viruses to bacteria and fungi and even stress associated with the movement of bees for long distances for pollination. That doesn't include the speculation about cell phone towers - not on the research agenda, Robinson said - nor even a sort of "Bee Rapture."

The answer is being sought by the Colony Collapse Disorder Working Group, which includes Penn State University, the Agricultural Research Service Beltsville (Md.) Bee Laboratory and the University of Illinois. Robinson, who spearheaded efforts to sequence the honeybee genome; and May Berenbaum, professor and head of the Department of Entomology at the University of Illinois, are among the researchers.

Having the honeybee genome sequenced means there may be new tools available to solve this problem, Robinson said. In particular, a gene chip has been designed to monitor the activities of all genes in the genome.

"With that chip, we can look for abnormal patterns of gene activity," Robinson said.

The diagnostic tools available with Robinson's work and the virus testing also available are among the biggest differences between this current disappearing event and any in the past, added Bromenshenk.

Arlene Mannlein can be reached at amannlein@herald-review.com or at 421-6976.

This article was originally published in the Herald & Review [Decatur, IL] at http://www.herald-review.com/articles/2007/07/08/news/local_news/1024842.txt

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