

# BEEKEEPING NEWS

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2010



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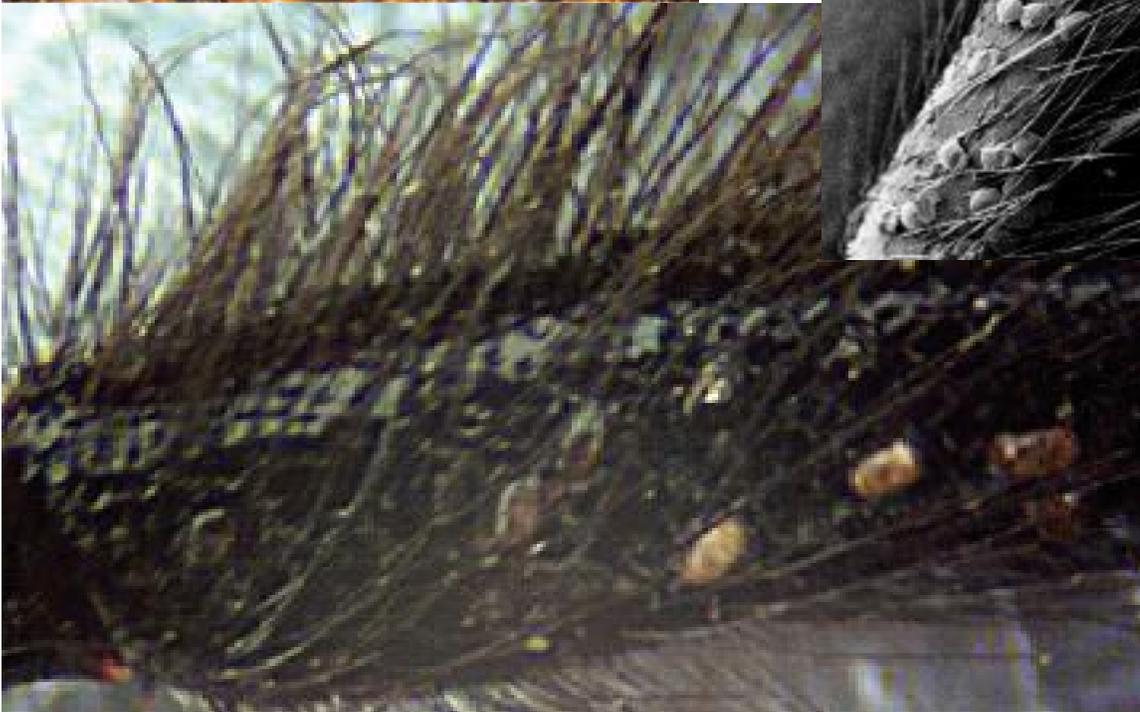
## Meetings & Programs

• **Tuesday, July 13, 6:30 p.m.** (Hamburger & Hot Dog for \$1.00 bring side dishes and desserts)  
Our former President, Kurt Bower, is the featured speaker tonight offering his perceptions and observations with "Overwintering Honey Bees". Like most of us, Kurt has had enough bad experiences to make for a discussion of information we can really use!

• **Tuesday, August 10, 7:00 p.m.** (no meal)  
Steve Forrest, our speaker this evening, is the chief bee at Brushy Mountain Bee Supply in North Wilkesboro. A long time beekeeper and promoter, Steve will bring you up to date on his newest views and products. Always entertaining and informative.

• **Tuesday, September 14, 6:30 p.m.** (covered dish meal)  
Usually the next-to-last note I place in each newsletter is the phone number for Don Hopkins, our Chief State Apiarist and Inspector. Tonight you can talk to him in person. Don will provide the program tonight so bring your beekeeping questions, concerns,..any & all and get answers directly from the boss.

## Articles of Interest



I found a dead honeybee at the end of the summer that on further inspection appeared to have small "scab-like" structures all over its body. The view of a hind leg below shows these structures under low power through a light microscope. On examining them with a Scanning Electron Microscope it is possible that they are Tracheal mites. The body size is right and it is possible they left the body of the bee for a more promising host. These Mites clog the trachea of bees and damage the tracheal walls. This permits a wide range of other bee infections.



UC Small Farm Program

## Starting a Small Beekeeping Operation

*Eric C. Mussen, Extension Apiculturist,  
UC Davis*

The number of US beekeepers has declined steadily since World War II, partly because land development has eliminated many flowering plants from which bees collect nectar to make honey. However, nearly 100,000 people in the US still keep bees for fun or profit.

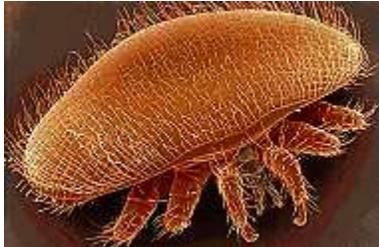
Beekeepers enjoy being their own bosses--deciding what to do and when to do it, being responsible for their own successes or failures. Beekeepers are adept at, and spend a significant amount of time in, assembling and repairing hives, frames, and other equipment. They enjoy the natural world and appreciate the contribution their bees make in increasing plants and benefiting the animals that use the plants for food and shelter.

## Bee 'foot and mouth' on Australia's doorstep

Posted Wed May 26, 2010 7:24pm AEST

**Tasmanian beekeepers will be told at their annual conference in Launceston on Friday that the foot-and-mouth disease of their industry is on Australia's doorstep.**

They will consider a push for a national bee research institute to ward off a major bee parasite, the varroa mite.



Wildlife biologist Dr Graham Hall has told the Country Hour the bee industry has never faced a bigger challenge.

"The foot-and-mouth of the bee world is this thing called the varroa mite, and the varroa mite is in every honey-producing country of the world, except Australia," Dr Hall said.

"Australia is encircled by varroa mite. It's in New Zealand, it's in Papua New Guinea, it's in Indonesia, so in all of our closest neighbours the foot-and-mouth of the bee world is present."

Dr Hall says the industry is concerned that Australia is at high risk of a major bee disease incursion.

He says beekeepers will discover that Australia is unprepared.

"There are many countries of the world who have active research programs on bees, for example Germany has eight bee research institutes, New Zealand I think has about three.

"Australia has none. And yet we're talking about bees being involved in food production in Australia that's worth between four and six billion dollars a year."

## Beekeeping buzz grows as bees continue dying -

2010-06-04

The bad news is that America's beekeepers lost about 34 percent of their hives last winter to disease, starvation and Colony Collapse Disorder.

That's compared to a 29 percent national loss rate the year before.

The good news is that Virginia beekeepers lost only about 30 percent of their hives last winter. And the buzz about beekeeping continues to grow, according to State Apiarist Keith Tignor with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

## Africanized bees expanding in the Beehive state

**Agriculture » Inspectors have detected nearly 100 hives, mostly along southern tier.**

By Dawn House

The Salt Lake Tribune Updated: 04/26/2010 07:19:05 PM MDT

Three Africanized honeybees, are shown in this Dec. 16, 1998, file photo. The Utah Department of Agriculture says Africanized honey bees have been found in Washington and Kane counties in southern Utah. (Rober Csaillas / Associated Press file photo)

State inspectors have found nearly 100 colonies of Africanized bees in Washington, Iron and Kane counties since January 2009, when the aggressive insects were first detected in Utah.

Colonies, initially spotted in the St. George area, have also been found in Cedar City, Parowan, LaVerkin, Beryl, Modena and Kolob, said Larry Lewis, spokesman for the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food.

To determine the extent of the migration, inspectors are continuing to monitor the three southern Utah counties. And, they're setting up traps in Kane, Garfield, Beaver, Grand and San Juan counties.

...The only known attack on a Utahn occurred last August in the Iron County town of Beryl. The man, who unwittingly disturbed a hive inside an old tractor, was taken to the hospital and released the same day.

It's impossible to distinguish Africanized bees from their gentler European cousins without genetic testing, Lewis said. But Africanized bees are more aggressive in attacks, and they can pursue a victim for a quarter mile or more.

...Officials say Africanized insects should not be called killer bees. They've been linked to 14 fatalities in the U.S. since about 1990. By comparison, there are about 200 deaths each year from motorists colliding with deer.

## Getting Started in Beekeeping

One knowledgeable beekeeper is needed for every 500 to 1,000 colonies. Without some experience and lots of sage advice, taking care of a commercial beekeeping operation would be overwhelming. Experienced beekeepers are full of advice.



## What's Being Done to Study Honey Bee Health?

Several studies are underway to help better understand what's wrong with bees. Here's an overview.

April 27, 2010 at 10:37am by Kim Flottum

The bee season is already going strong in the western and southern parts of the U.S., with almond and other crop pollination already at full speed, along with thousands and thousands of honey bee queens being produced for beekeepers in all parts of the U.S. and even the world, and package bees being, well, packaged and sent all over too. Honey crops are already being made in some parts of the southeast, especially Florida (Tupelo, Ulee's golden crop is being made right now) and in the delta areas of the south... especially Mississippi.

For those of us in the central and northern areas of the country, the earliest blossoms have come and gone... the willows and maples are good examples, but the dandelions are in their first flush and that means it's finally beekeeping season.

The Apiary Inspectors Of America took their annual spring survey just a bit ago to determine winter colony loss, and it is expected to be higher than last year, and maybe even higher than the worst year's results of 35%. (The results are to be released... sometime. I wonder if Vegas takes bets on the number every year... that might be something to check into.) Colony Collapse Disorder showed its ugly head this past winter for sure. It's just time to wait and see how much damage it did... again.

And the USDA's Honey Bee Health project gets going again full speed, now that colonies are back on the road and getting clobbered with all manner of things not normal for a honey bee hive to have to live through.

Did you know that the USDA maintains four permanent labs charged with studying the honey bee? There's one near DC in Beltsville, Maryland. Another in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and one in Weslaco, Texas, which is at the southern-most tip of southern Texas. The other one is in Tucson, Arizona. Each of these labs conducts research more or less specialized to the skills of the scientists at each lab. There are, of course, some skills that overlap each lab, but some of the scientists are quite specialized, while others are kind of generalists. It all works out.

When Congress decided to fund colony collapse disorder research, they certainly included this in-house set of specialists, and charged them with an AreaWide Project to Improve Honey Bee Health. Specifically, they set these goals:

- to increase colony strength for pollination of almonds and subsequent crops;
- to demonstrate that resistant bee stocks reduce operating costs and increase survivorship;
- to demonstrate improved parasitic mite control with proper timing of application;
- to improve the content and delivery methods for carbohydrate and protein diets;
- to improve the integrated use of controls for pests and diseases including non-chemical beekeeping methodology.

To accomplish these goals, the Baton Rouge lab is focusing on bee stock improvement and evaluations and improving early spring buildup using genetic selection and colony size. They are looking closely at two USDA developed honeybee stocks... the Russian honey bees, and the Varroa sensitive hygiene trait (VSH) bees. The scientists at Beltsville are improving queen longevity, improving Nosema controls, investigating the antibiotic Tylosin, improving non-chemical Varroa limiters such as plastic drone comb and screen bottom boards, and identifying and mitigating stressors associated with migratory beekeeping.

The Tucson lab is looking at both carbohydrate and protein nutrient supplements focusing on a relatively new product called Megabee, and the miticidal properties of a naturally occurring hive product called 2-heptanone. Meanwhile, the Weslaco lab is working on improved management techniques for varroa including the miticide Hivastan, along with new controls for Nosema, stock improvements with Africanized bees, and mitigating stress associated with migratory beekeeping.

Tying all this together is an ongoing study of several migratory operations and at the same time, another group of researchers is studying a number of operations that are non-migratory.

The [research on pesticides](#) we reported on last time came from research at the University project mentioned earlier, and below. But both are summarized at the web site below.

This is the second year of this multi-year study, and results are already being made known. You can find out just about anything you want about this project, or the sister University project we talked about earlier at [www.extension.org/Bee\\_Health\\_Community\\_Page](http://www.extension.org/Bee_Health_Community_Page).

Read more: <http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/blogs/bees/colony-collapse-disorder-research-0427#ixzz0qqvFbkRA>

## ●●●Development News

### Pittsburgh beekeepers create nation's first community apiary in Homewood

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2010

Pittsburgh is now home to the U.S.'s first community apiary -- a community garden of sorts, but instead of herbs and veggies being grown, it's bees being kept.

The apiary hosted a ribbon cutting on Friday at its new site on a strip of long-vacant, blighted land along the East Busway and across the street from local microbrewer. Beekeeping nonprofit was granted a free, five-year lease from the URA and the Mayor's office, says co-founder Meredith Meyer Grelli.

"This is going to be a great site for beekeepers and also a great place for the community," says Meyer Grelli. "We wanted to come up with a site that inspires creative reuse of the urban land with an eye toward the environment."

Meyer Grelli says other apiaries around the country are oriented more to demonstration, but Burgh Bees' cooperative apiary is an entirely new model for the U.S. The apiary hosts five hives exclusively for teaching new beekeepers, and also offers space to newly trained beekeepers to keep hives of their own. It also hosts a pollinator garden that is maintained by community volunteers, including residents and students. The apiary itself is funded with donations from individuals and foundations, and by sales from honey.....

Burgh Bees has about 400 members, and in the last two years, has trained about 110 Pittsburghers in beekeeping.

## Honey Update:May 2010

The 2009 U.S. honey crop was the poorest U.S. honey crop in recorded history. The 144 million pound crop was down 12% from the 2008 crop, and down 28% from the 200 million average crop levels of 10 years ago. Over the last 5 years, the U.S. honey crop has averaged 156 million pounds.

Some of the reasons for the poor 2009 U. S. crop are listed below:

- Weather – Drought conditions in the West, and very cool, wet weather in the upper Mid-West
- Reduced forage area – Much of the prime forage area for bees has been turned into farm land for cash crops or developed for commercial or residential use.
- Fewer bees – Colony Collapse Disorder and increased pesticide use in what was once bee forage areas has reduced bee colony numbers.....

Concerns that China is dumping contaminated honey into the U.S. market, often laundered through third countries to avoid stiff anti-dumping tariffs, was raised in Congress today before a commission tasked with reviewing the 10-year-old deal to give the communist nation permanent normal trade relations (PNTR).

"Even our honey industry is under siege from imports of Chinese-origin honey," said Senator Chuck Schumer of New York. "Ongoing schemes by Chinese exporters to circumvent U.S. anti-dumping, food labeling and food safety laws, threaten the continued health of the U.S. honey industry and by extension the health of agricultural industries."



Schumer said that China is guilty of violating anti-dumping laws, is running honey through several other countries then into the United States to avoid tariffs, and is even shipping honey contaminated with antibiotics.

"It's just an indication of what China is doing to flaunt our laws," the Democrat told the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. The commission is tasked with monitoring and reporting on the successes and failures of the 2000 preferred trade status former President Clinton and the Senate granted to China amid claims it would open China's doors to American businesses.

Schumer and three other senators -- Ohio Democrat Sherrod Brown, Michigan Democrat Debbie Stabenow and South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham -- all blasted the 2000 deal as hollow and one that has instead robbed over 2 million jobs and led to the closure

## USA- MODIFICATION OF THE CALIFORNIA FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL CODE , RELATING TO BEES



Wednesday, 09 June 2010 14:46 Written by

Analia Manriquez

This bill AB1912 would create the California Apiary Research Commission in state government with a prescribed membership, and would specify the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the commission. The commission would be authorized to conduct research and education programs relating to honeybees and the beekeeping industry. The bill would authorize the commission to levy an assessment, as provided, on bee producers, as defined, and would authorize the expenditure of those funds for purposes of implementing and administering the bill's provisions, thereby making an appropriation. editor's note...taxes too!



## Distribution and/or Use of Amitraz for Control of Varroa Mites is Illegal

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) would like to remind beekeepers and pesticide dealers that the distribution and/or use of pesticides containing Amitraz (such as Taktic) for control of Varroa mites in honey bee colonies is illegal.

Amitraz (Taktic) is registered for distribution in Washington, and is labeled for use on cattle and swine only. Amitraz is not labeled for use on honey bees, and there are no tolerances for residues of Amitraz in honey or honeycomb. Honey or honeycomb that is found to be contaminated with residues of Amitraz is subject to regulatory action by the US Food & Drug Administration and by the WSDA.

Additionally, it is a violation of Federal and State pesticide law to distribute and/or use Amitraz (Taktic) for control of Varroa mites in honey bee colonies.

Violations are subject to a civil penalty of up to \$7,500 and/or a license suspension.

If you have any questions regarding the distribution and/or use of Amitraz for control of Varroa mites in honey bee colonies you may contact:

- WSDA Registration Services Program at (360) 902-2030

- WSDA Compliance Program (toll-free) at (877) 301-4555

AGR PUB 630-293 (Rev. 01/20/2010)

Do you need this publication in an alternate format? Contact the WSDA Receptionist at (360) 902-1976 or TTY Relay (800) 833-6388.

**Beekeeping Question:** One topic I wish to address in my editor's spot concerns responding to swarm calls. You might say, "What problem? There's just not enough of them!" My question is.. when you do get calls have you ever arrived to find that you are the second or third beekeeper to show up?



I received two calls this season. After loading up I checked back with each caller and learned that other beekeepers had also been called. Combat swarm patrol is not my choice (like fishing from a pier in October). We run the risk that the bees will have gone by the time we get there anyway or may be hornets, june bugs, etc. My point is, should we try to establish professional (Rules of Engagement)?? to guide our conduct & save bother and time. What do you think?

- Don Hopkins, State Inspector: (336) 376-8250
- Guilford County Beekeepers Association web site [www.guilfordbeekeepers.org](http://www.guilfordbeekeepers.org)
- North Carolina State Beekeepers Association [www.ncbeekeepers.org](http://www.ncbeekeepers.org)



### Guilford County Beekeepers Association

A LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Norman Faircloth, editor ([nfaircloth@northstate.net](mailto:nfaircloth@northstate.net))

## ABJ Extra: Microbial Team May Be Culprit in Colony Collapse Disorder

SAN DIEGO, CA – May 25, 2010 -- New research from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has identified a new potential cause for "Colony Collapse Disorder" in honey bees. A group of pathogens including a fungus and family of viruses may be working together to cause the decline. Scientists reported their results yesterday at the 110th General Meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in San Diego.

"There might be a synergism between two very different pathogens," says Jay Evans of the USDA Agricultural Research Service, a researcher on the study. "When they show up together there is a significant correlation with colony decline."

Beginning in October 2006, some beekeepers began reporting losses of 30-90 percent of their hives. Although colony losses are not unexpected during winter weather, the magnitude of loss suffered by some beekeepers was highly unusual.

"Domesticated honey bees face numerous pests and pathogens, tempting hypotheses that colony collapses arise from exposure to new or resurgent pathogens," says Evans.

To better understand the cause of these collapses, in early 2007 Evans and his colleagues collected bees from both healthy and declining colonies across the country, but primarily from California and Florida where most of the commercial pollination activity takes place. They have screened these samples and similar samples from each year since then for both known and novel pathogens.

They found a slightly higher incidence of a fungal pathogen known as *Nosema ceranae* in sick colonies, but it was not statistically significant until they began pairing it with other pathogens.

"Levels of the fungus were slightly higher in sick colonies, but the presence of that fungus and 2 or 3 RNA viruses from the family Dicistroviridae is a pretty strong predictor of collapse," says Evans.

...While this is a working theory and they are still in the discovery phase looking for new pathogens, Evans and his colleagues are also actively looking for a way to boost bee defenses against *Nosema*...(<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/asm-live>).



Note to Members: There are so many good articles available that I did have to force myself to finally stop. With only one newsletter per quarter you don't have to read it all at once. Feel free to contact me with experiences you have with your bees which you would agree to share with other members. *Norman*