GLEANINGS IN BEE CULTURE AUG '90

KIDS A.N.D BEES

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Columns

Departments

COVER . . . Four year-old Isis Mariah Skarra-Pergler holds up a new friend, and beekeeping has one more recruit.

photo by Sue Cobey

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Features

INNER·COVER

How can you not fall in love with that adorable, diminutive beekeeper on the cover. If you listen carefully, you can hear her say, "Look mom, this one's my friend!"

It's too bad all kids can't have this opportunity. Too seldom are children eager to explore while still unhampered by the misconceptions and fears so often handed down from adults. Often, long before any chance of self discovery takes place, mom, dad, a relative or teacher makes that singular comment at just the wrong, impressionable moment — "Yuk, bees! Don't touch, they sting! I hate bugs!!" And a lifetime of curiosity, pleasure, and maybe even a livelihood is discouraged or destroyed.

With the guidance of a family member or friend, some children get the support and opportunity to explore nature's best, and worst. But most don't. In fact, each generation has grown farther and farther from its earthbound roots.

But as important as it is to expose children to the world of nature, and beekeeping in particular, this is **not** the age group to recruit new beekeepers from. In fact, I don't think we should be looking at folks much under 20-25.

Before you rush to your phone to 'kindly inform me that I should be tarred, feathered or maybe worse because you think young people are the future of our industry', kindly pause a moment and listen.

There are several requirements needed to get into the hobby or vocation of beekeeping. Money is an important one. Even the cheapest equipment you can buy, along with bees, a suit and the rest, doesn't come cheap. Ten-year olds don't have that kind of money, unless there's an interested adult involved, and then you don't have to recruit them anyway — it's already done.

Strength is important, too. Even a shallow weighs 40 pounds or so when full. Tough work for a twelve-year old. Not to mention extracting. And don't forget lifting cases of jars or 60's. You either have, or will soon have muscles when you start this hobby.

Time is another factor to consider. Time to devote to a hobby that requires equipment preparation; time to visit and maintain colonies; time to harvest and prepare a product; quite a bit of time, actually.

Along with time comes responsibility; and this is probably the most critical aspect of all. When one assumes the mantle of beekeeper, along for the ride comes the unspoken but nonetheless necessary responsibility of both humane and social beekeeping. Bees must be taken care of. If not, they become reservoirs of disease, neighborhood nuisances, swarm producers, and a black eye for those of us who profess to be capable.

I don't know many 14 year olds who have matured to that point. Even my 16 year old seldom sees past tomorrow, let alone next season. And, if it came to spending $20.00 for bees or new clothes, the smart money's on the clothes.

Although there are many, many under-25 beekeepers, my guess is that almost all were guided by a patient and understanding adult — or they grew up in a family business and never had a choice. Few are volunteers and even fewer stick to it very long if they do volunteer early in life.

Nope. I don't think our future's in the young. But rather, the young-at-heart.

The perfect beekeeping recruit is not one of America's youth, but rather an older, wiser and more mature person. One who has the financial resources, time, energy and dedication to seriously undertake the craft.

Don't misunderstand me. Exposing children to, and explaining about, bees, beekeeping and beekeepers is vitally important — to the children and to beekeeping.

But if you're looking for beekeepers, don't start with kids like the beauty on our cover. If you're smart, you'll start with her folks.

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The Right Choice

INNER·COVER

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NEXT MONTH

September is National Honey Month, which is certainly the time for beekeepers to shine. But you need to start now, so you're ready then.

Check out the material the National Honey Board has available, plus anything else you can get together for those Honey-Month promotions, sales, stories or TV spots.

Next month, we have a lot of good ideas on "How to Move Honey". From small scale, high priced local sales to larger, wholesale and retail sales tips.

Specifically, there is a great hobbyist how-to by Pat Radloff. Good with bees and beekeepers, this Ohio honey seller has some great tips if you don't produce tons of honey a year.

But there's more. We followed Buzz Riopelle for a whole day servicing accounts, making cold calls and checking out the competition. This beekeeper could probably sell honey to a sugar factory — and here's how he does it.

R. T. Edwards, our marketing pro, has some more tips on dealing with customers and making the sale — both good advice for those of us who dislike that sort of thing.

And, finally, there's a piece on a totally new marketing concept for honey. This one surprised even us — but it may just work!

Honey Month! Honey Sales! Plus all the regulars right here on the pages of *Bee Culture* — Next Month! □

MAILBOX

■ Not True?

Regarding 118(6):341 "True Story", publishing this oft told fabrication as "fact" clouds your credibility.

The army and the WHO cannot document location or date of (1) rat outbreaks caused by DDT killing cats; (2) worms eating homes because DDT was sprayed; and (3) parachuting cats to kill rats.

I challenge you to document this fable.

P.S. I enjoyed the other articles and am impressed with improvements in recent years.

Roy Barker
4620 N. Calle Altivo
Tucson, AZ 85718

■ Yellow, or Not

I put an "ultrayellow" queen into my queenless hive and was surprised by the variability of the color of the drones she produced. About a third were unmistakably "ultrayellow" but the rest were mostly dark with the thinnest yellow lines between the dark brown areas.

Since drones have only their mother's chromosomes I would have expected their color to be uniform and the same as hers. This matter is obviously not earthshaking but an explanation would advance my understanding of the genetics involved. Anyone have an answer?

There was no chance the dark drones drifted in from another hive. First, there is no other hive near this one and, second, there were no drones in this overwintering queenless hive until the hatching time after introduction of the new queen. Then both colors of new drones appeared in large numbers at the same time.

Dan Hendricks
4245 89th Ave., SE.
Mercer Island, WA 98040-4130

■ Clever Covers

A quick note to congratulate you on the June cover. As one working in the business press, I find myself inundated with "concept" photography covers where the art department and editors sit around and design a cover that will tell (read sell) the story to the reader.

I strongly believe there is nothing like a great action shot to draw the reader into the magazine to read the article. That is what happened when I received your June issue. I'm sure a picture of Princess Di might sell more copies, but that picture grabs every beekeeper!

Your beautiful cover in May of the yard filled with yellow headed earth nails (dandelions) was also great. Though I must admit, it sent my wife scurrying for the lawn spreader and weed and feed!

Clyde E. Witt

Ed. Note: Mr. Witt is a senior editor at Material Handling Engineering, a Penton Publication. He is both a writer and photographer and lectures occasionally on the latter.

■ Cleared!

The article "Bee Spill" in your June '90 issue was a big surprise to me, a participant in that event. I had no knowledge of the article until a beekeeper mentioned it to me. Unfortunately, the article misrepresents me as being there as a state employee. I went there on personal time and transportation, and not at official time or expense.

I mention this so my employers

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MAILBOX

won't think I was acting officially, and so their's won't either.

Shirley Painter
Maryland Dept. of Agriculture

■ One More Time!

During the recent Southern Plant Board meeting held April 17-19, in Little Rock, AR, there was significant discussion over advertisements in *Gleanings in Bee Culture* as well as in *The American Bee Journal* and *The Speedy Bee*. Discussions were centered around beekeepers advertising package bees and queens as being mite-free.

Based on our discussions, it was recommended that we solicit the help of these periodicals in limiting misrepresentation in such advertisements. The twelve Southern Plant Board states respectfully request that you require that a state certificate accompany each advertisement where a mite-free claim is made. This should not place an undue burden on you or your staff and will certainly help the apiary industry.

Although this still would not prevent the movement of mites by less scrupulous beekeepers, it would ensure that a survey with analysis had been conducted and that those beekeepers with certifications were at least found to be mite-free at one point in time.

Gerald King, Chairman
Southern Plant Board

■ ABC and More

I'm afraid my feeble attempts at humor get out of control now and then. I just got my copy of your new and wonderful edition of *ABC and XYZ OF BEE CULTURE* and there, lo! is my picture (p. 424). (Actually, <u>two</u> pictures of me, if a picture of my hand, p. 484, counts.) I never thought I'd see my picture in a book. I quickly looked, under "T" to see whether there might be an article on the great Taylor principle of comb honey production, on which I rest my hopes for fame. No, that somehow got omitted. Maybe someday.

Anyway, there I am, in this picture, at my honey stand, and on the stand a sign, "Maple Sirp". My friend, Art, was producing maple syrup in those days, and I kept some on the stand, along with my honey, so people could see what a bargain honey was in comparison. I spelled it that way thinking people would get a giggle. But no one laughed or said a word about it all summer. I guess they just took me for an ignoramus and were afraid my feelings would be hurt if they mentioned the spelling. So now the thousands of readers of *ABC & XYZ* will think I'm a nitwit, too. Serves me right.

Another time this sort of thing got me into trouble was at a bee meeting years ago. A beekeeper asked me to autograph a book I had just sold him. I told him it would cost him a dollar. I learned a year or so later he thought I meant it, got very mad, and was telling everyone about it! I have no idea who he was, but I hope he is still living and might possibly see this letter.

I console myself in all this with something a wise man once told me. He said that a sense of one's own absurdity is a worthwhile human quality

I hope so.

Richard Taylor
Trumansburg, NY

■ Wrapping It Up

Putting a book in plastic shrink wrap is as useful as putting a coconut in shrink wrap!

Beekeepers work with honey in a minimal way in order to ensure that it lose nothing in the process. Why wrap a book for beekeepers in plastic? None of us want to add anything more than

MAILBOX

necessary to our local landfill.

Nancy E. Bleil
Silver Spring, MD 20904

The Publisher of ABC & XYZ, the 40th Edition, replies:

We chose to protect this book with a shrink-wrap plastic film because of the numerous complaints we received from customers regarding the last edition. Before a sale, these books often sit on a dealers bookshelf or at a warehouse for long periods of time during which they collect dust, dirt, or worse.

If this book sat mostly on book shelves in upscale bookstores like Waldens, B. Dalton or others, we would not have done this. However, we were committed to delivering a book in perfect condition to our customers.

■ Open Letter To You

The National Honey Board was created in 1986 to promote and strengthen the market for honey and honey products. Many successes and much progress has been made since those early days. Advertising and promotion programs are showing excellent results. In 1989, honey consumption increased in the U.S. by a whopping 10%! This increased consumption has caused the prices paid to producers to rise higher than the buy-back price. This success in the market place can be credited to the work and dedication of the NHB.

Recently, there have been changes in the Board as a result of appointments of several new Board members by the Secretary of Agriculture and also changes in staff assignments due to the May 4, 1990, resignation of the Executive Director, Dan Hall. The Executive Committee and the Board have been, and are, handling the changes in an effective and timely manner so that the programs of the NHB continue as planned.

Published reports of dissension between the packer-importer board members and the producer board members are unfounded and not true. Serious, open discussion of difficult issues is routine among Board members. The Board continues to work in a cooperative atmosphere to carry out the mission of the NHB.

Individual Board members continue to represent their member category in discussions to arrive at Board decisions which will best serve the industry. This has been, and will continue to be, one of the strengths in the success of the NHB programs.

We, the undersigned (13 NHB members and 10 alternates who were present at the NHB annual meeting, June 21, 1990), fully support the National Honey Board and its aims and goals.

Bruce Beekman
Harry Rodenberg
Richard Adee
Stephen M. Klein
Binford Weaver
Bill Merritt
Dwight Stoller
Neil J. Miller
William Gamber
Mike Ingalls
Hans J. Boedeker
John Milam
Melissa Hart
E. Randal Johnson
Larry Krause
John R. Miller
Ann Garber
Harry Fulton
Frank Randall
Don M. Shenefield
Shirley Miller
Robert G. Appel
Ron Phipps

■ Hummingbird Feeders

In the July issue of *Gleanings*, J. R. Zier asks in the "Mailbox" section for the name/address of a supplier of bee-proof hummingbird feeders. I suggst looking at the catalog of Duncraft, Penacook, NH 03303

I've purchased from them and found them reliable. They offer several hummingbird feeders, one of which includes bee guard grates over the nectar supply spouts. I have two of them within 50' of my five hives and the bees pay little attention to them. Perhaps this company could help Mr./Mrs. Zier.

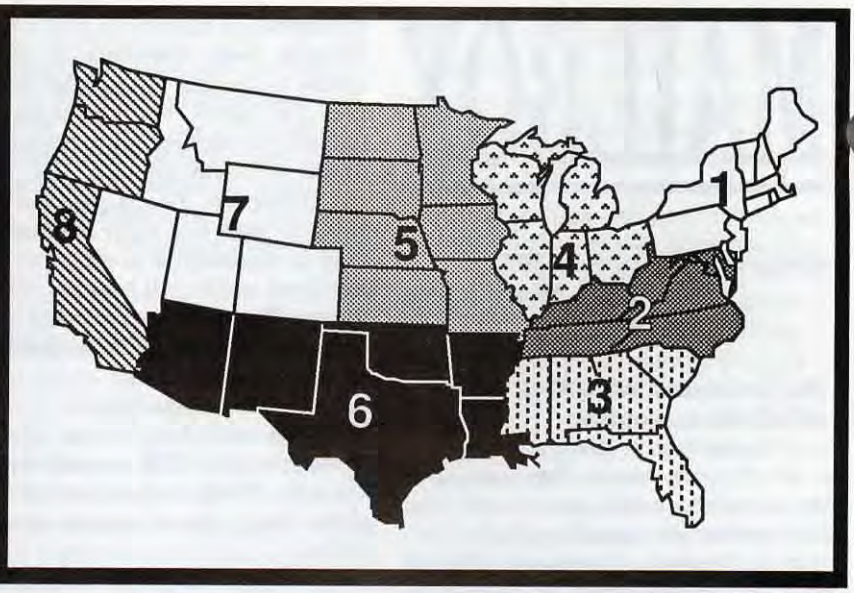
And . Thanks for a *very* helpful journal. I enjoy and learn from every issue.

Ellen Mumma
Cutler, OH

AUGUST
Honey Report

August 1, 1990

REPORT FEATURES SUMMARY: R=Range of all prices; A=Average prices across all regions; LM=Last month's average; and LY=prices one year ago.



	Reporting Regions								Summary		History	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	R	A	LM	LY
Extracted honey sold bulk to Packers orProcessors												
Wholesale Extracted												
60 # Wh.	45.00	47.25	44.00	39.50	40.10	45.00	42.00	43.00	40.00-65.00	45.18	42.22	38.53
60 # Am.	44.00	38.75	42.00	39.00	38.50	41.50	38.00	42.00	34.00-46.00	40.77	38.72	35.52
55 gal. Wh.	.51	.55	.52	.50	.48	.61	.57	.58	.42-.67	.55	.54	.50
55 gal. Am.	.50	.50	.48	.48	.49	.53	.53	.56	.40-.60	.51	.49	.44
Case lots — Wholesale												
1 # 24's	29.80	33.98	31.20	25.37	23.50	25.50	28.75	27.60	20.40-48.00	28.96	27.10	27.14
2 # 12's	28.15	24.85	37.20	24.67	22.25	23.70	27.75	25.95	20.40-37.20	26.44	26.42	25.97
5 # 6's	34.70	27.13	24.60	27.83	21.90	26.50	26.00	27.25	21.90-38.50	27.99	28.28	26.70
Retail Honey Prices												
1/2 #	.97	1.13	1.14	1.50	1.00	.90	1.10	.97	.83-1.39	1.08	1.17	.92
12 oz. Plas.	1.60	1.47	1.35	1.36	1.33	1.27	1.40	1.39	1.10-1.75	1.40	1.48	1.33
1 #	1.73	2.07	1.64	1.67	1.49	1.57	1.65	1.49	1.29-3.50	1.73	1.65	1.54
2 #	3.12	2.82	3.04	3.28	2.86	2.90	3.15	2.75	2.35-4.00	3.00	2.81	2.72
2-1/2 #	3.60	3.47	3.50	3.29	3.50	3.35	3.39	3.29	3.20-3.60	3.45	3.56	3.32
3 #	4.40	4.27	3.49	3.79	3.55	3.77	4.35	3.90	3.50-4.80	4.01	3.97	3.77
4 #	4.90	5.08	4.75	4.69	4.45	4.45	4.95	4.75	4.29-5.20	4.74	4.67	4.63
5 #	7.37	6.10	5.49	6.35	6.08	5.20	6.25	5.95	5.15-7.50	6.15	6.02	5.87
1 # Cr.	2.12	1.00	1.36	1.60	1.55	1.50	1.89	1.49	1.00-2.25	1.60	1.80	1.66
1 # Cb.	2.63	2.05	3.00	2.29	2.98	2.14	2.50	2.35	1.65-3.00	2.34	2.57	2.34
Round Plas.	2.00	2.12	2.00	1.95	1.89	1.20	1.95	1.79	1.20-2.25	1.89	1.93	1.91
Wax (Light)	1.12	1.02	1.10	1.10	1.10	.99	1.07	1.25	.97-1.15	1.07	1.48	.99
Wax (Dark)	1.00	.95	1.00	.95	.99	.88	.95	1.10	.86-1.10	.97	1.45	.89
Poll./Col.	32.50	20.00	–	30.00	26.00	21.50	–	28.00	20.00-35.00	26.25	25.60	25.00

MARKET SHARE

August is a very confusing month when looking at honey prices. Some specialty honeys are coming in and going out at outrageous (by normal standards) prices. Sourwood, citrus and others can be real money makers if you can segregate them from the run of the mill stuff. If you can, take advantage of specialty crops.

Region 1

Prices steady to increasing, dramatically in some areas but nominal in most. Spring swarms were late and light and early flows poor. Late flows good if rains hold back.

Region 2

Prices steady but some specialty honeys doing extremely well with high demand and correspondingly high prices. Early and mid-summer rains slowed or stopped some flows. Good soil moisture should help late flows.

Region 3

Sales increasing a little over time and prices doing o.k. too. Weather doing some flip flops but pretty good for the most part.

Region 4

Sales slowing a bit for seasonal warm weather but prices increasing. Spotty production in northern areas; central areas so wet that everything is late. Maybe soybeans will produce.

Region 5

Sales seasonably slower but prices steady and promise to be better. Generally conditions look good for a good year. Most crops doing well. Adequate moisture and lots of sun seem to be just right.

Region 6

Sales seasonably slow but prices steady. New crop promises to bring an increase in prices. Crop looks good in most areas, especially for main (clover, etc.) crops.

Region 7

Sales steady to normal, prices increasing too. A good combination. Weather has helped most crops and a good crop is expected.

Region 8

Sales good and improving—and prices steady. Northern areas had lots of rain and soil moisture excellent. Warm weather has helped summer flow, too. Southern areas warm, warm, warm. Some crops doing well but rain needed.

GUEST EDITORIAL

L. EDWIN RYBAK

The $30,000 cough drop — Chapter II

An award goes to the bearer of good tidings.

Discoveries are, frequently, the careful analysis of a subject under consideration and study; or, sometimes, the harmonious conjunction of an event already in progress and an alert mind.

Doctors do not develop the medicines they prescribe, neither do the pharmaceutical companies prescribe their medications to the individual patients.

After development and exhaustive tests, the approved medication is put on the market. Then, sometimes, somewhere an astute observer notices a *side effect*. With the dedication of an incurable experimenter he takes advantage of his own or someone else's observation, and analysis of the overlooked factors and side effects, and puts it to good use.

One year ago, in the August 1989 issue of *Bee Culture*, Dr. Richard Taylor wrote about what could become the government's $30,000.00 cough drop.

Dr. Taylor related the experience of Mr. William Draper, a Pennsylvania beekeeper who uses mentholated cough drops to combat tracheal mites. He told it like it is, and left it to the individual beekeeper to be the doctor, observer, researcher; and carry out the experiment in their own apiary. He was the active news reporter — the bearer of potentially good tidings. He gets the award.

Did anyone else try the prescription? I did, and I'm very pleased with the results.

In what must be the supreme irony, during the winter of 1988-1989 I lost two (25%) of my colonies, after having spent a number of years in developing a simple yet highly effective wrapping system. During the winters when my colonies were wrapped, I did not lose any.

Nationwide, estimates of losses for that same winter vary from 10,000 to upwards of 50,000 colonies. Figures for the spring of 1990 paint an even grimmer picture. In some instances the percentages become staggering.

The two colonies I lost were of medium strength, and when examined in the spring they were in the midst of plenty of honey. The typical symptoms of mites. They certainly did not starve, nor die of exposure. All other colonies survived nicely, including two smaller ones. All had been given the same protection. Mites? It might be. There was no evidence of any disease.

But where did the mites come from? I've been raising my own queens since 1984; always selecting from the best.

I accepted my loss and went on. But I couldn't help wondering if the cause was mites, which, as yet, are not supposed to be in this area.

Then I read Richard Taylor's article.

I made a mental note of the information, and bided my time until the end of the season. What's to lose, a dollar or two against the possibility of much to gain?

At the local drug store I looked through the available supply of cough drops with menthol, settling for "Halls, Mentho-lyptus, ice blue, cough suppressant tablets." I chose those because they contain the most menthol: 12.0 mg per tablet. There are thirty tablets in a package.

Late October each colony was given five tablets. Six weeks later, a confirming peek showed the cough drops gone in all but two of the hives, and the tablets in those greatly diminished. Each colony was given four more. Overdose? Perhaps. But for 36¢ per colony, the cost of treatment is much less than replacement.

In addition to the menthol, these cough drops contain eucalyptus, for whatever effect might accrue from this. I dropped the tablets onto the frames through the hole in the inner cover. The vapor action permeates the hive. The entrance was already restricted for wintering and within a minute the bees were licking the tablets.

Who determined that you need 50 grams of menthol per hive? Perhaps in late summer with a wide open entrance, the vapor dispersed and ventilated out of the hive. The menthol treatment is not normally administered during the heat of summer, and the nectar collection season.

As any good doctor will tell you, the ideal dosage is to use enough to be effective, yet the minimum that will do the job.

At the mid-winter inspection, during a warm spell in January 1990, all my colonies appeared healthy and to be doing well. In early April, all colonies had survived in great shape and were building nicely.

After a number of years with no losses, was the loss of two colonies in 1988-89 merely an anomaly or the result of mites "not yet in the area"? Were the cough drops given in autumn of 1989 the reason for another successful wintering? Were they the cure for whatever? It is my policy not to argue with success. Nor even to criticize.

This fall I shall repeat approximately what I did in 1989, with respect to both timing and dosage. Then check them in six to eight weeks and give them another three or four cough drops. This should get them safely through another winter, as I have no interest in subjecting even a single colony to any further possible loss. The original dos-

age and treatment were experimental; I had no idea of how effective the cough drops might be. I'm still not certain but now I do have a better idea of their effect. I'll continue to experiment.

It is not practicable to run a conclusive test on my few colonies, because the controls may not have mites and those to which cough drops are given might be the mite infested ones or they may not. Also, I experienced a loss one time only, an experience I don't want to repeat. And yet, I just might try a 50/50 split of control and treated colonies for a couple of years.

Anyone who has experienced considerable and consistent losses the past few winters might wish to treat all their colonies, and observe the results. No losses, or a greatly reduced rate of loss after several bad years, would be a more conclusive test, and more accurately reflect the possibilities in using such a simple, inexpensive yet highly effective treatment.

If enough beekeepers report on their results we may find that this is an economical and easy way to fight mites. This is the observation and practical application of a beneficial side effect mentioned earlier.

My statement of the particular brand of cough drops is not an endorsement or recommendation. I have merely stated what I selected from among those available, and how and why that choice was made. And, how I used what I'd selected, and the results I obtained.

In any event, at least for the next few years, I'll drop the editor a line each spring and report on how my colonies have wintered. □

RESEARCH REVIEW

DR. ROGER A. MORSE

Cornell University • Ithaca, NY 14853

"Two new tools for beekeepers."

Great Stuff®

We are often called upon for advice on how to remove honey bee nests from the sides of buildings. It is not uncommon for honey bees to nest in the walls or under the roof of a house, barn or shed. The natural home of a honey bee colony is a dry cavity of moderate size in a hollow tree or cave. Thus, the enclosed space between the studs in a wall may be an attractive nesting site. It is very difficult to remove the bees alive from such a nest cavity though with patience it can be done. It is much easier, and usually more practical, to kill the bees with an insecticide, clean out the nest and to stuff the area with insulation so that the site cannot be used again.

When I am asked about removing bees from buildings, I first like to point out that I have known of nests that have existed for many years without being a nuisance to anyone. This is especially true when the entrance is well above the heads of those who walk in the vicinity. So long as the bees are alive they will keep the site clean and protected against pests.

Honey bees like to nest where bees have lived before. I have seen scout bees, those looking for a new home, active around old nest sites. Only a few years ago I watched several scouts investigate a hole in the side of the house where I live and where the nest had been removed more than 20 years earlier. An old nest, because of the residual wax and propolis, continues to have an attractive odor for many years. I have found that one of the most difficult problems in coping with nests in the side of a building is to plug the old nest cavity and entrance hole well enough that a new swarm cannot enter and make a nest.

This is one way to get rid of honey bee pests

Recently, one of our pest control operators who specializes in removing honey bee and wasp nests in urban areas, told me about the virtues of Great Stuff®, the trade name of a canned foam sealant. The sealant, which is under pressure, may be purchased in a can that stands about eight and one-half inches tall and about two and one-half inches in diameter. The can, with its nozzle, is designed more to fill cracks and crevices than to fill a cavity, but it works well in this regard, too. I've used three cans now and am very satisfied with the way in which it seals honey bee nest entrance holes. The sealant becomes hard and clings firmly to a wood surface after about an hour. The volume of foam in the can I purchased is not too great. We emptied a whole can into a standard Langstroth super and found it filled only about one quarter of the super. The data we have collected on the size of honey bee nest cavities in walls indicates that the average nest occupies about the same volume as a standard full-depth super. Locally, a can of Great Stuff® costs $6.45. At that rate, it would cost $30 to $40 to fill the average honey bee nest cavity with foam, which is obviously too much. However, one can will do an excellent job of filling the entrance hole and cracks in a wooden wall where another swarm might gain entry. The remaining space can be filled with ordinary insulation. I was told by one building supply company that large cans of foam sealant are available from wholesale lumber supply houses at a much reduced rate but I cannot find any such where I live.

I have a four page paper entitled "Removing Colonies of Honey Bees from Buildings" which outlines some of the methods and problems involved. I would be glad to send a copy to anyone who would care to write for it. It should be remembered that anyone who removes a wasp or honey bee nest from a

cavity in a building, *and uses an insecticide*, is automatically a pest control operator. In all states, so far as I am aware, that means such a person must be certified by the state in the use of insecticides. In our area, most pest control operators do not care to deal with honey bees and wasps and, in fact, they are usually afraid to do so and often do not have the necessary knowledge to do a good job. A few beekeepers have specialized in this business and have found it can be lucrative. Some beekeepers have been reluctant to charge a fee for removing nests from buildings but I have pointed out that this is a specialized business and it takes years to acquire the practical knowledge that is necessary.

A New Plant Hardiness Zone Map

After 25 years, the U. S. National Arboretum has updated the 48" by 48" Plant Hardiness Zone Map. While one usually sees this taped to the walls of nurseries and those who ship plants, I am aware that many beekeepers use the map to decide where to seek new apiaries and to determine why some may not yield as well as others.

(Above). and this is another.

(Left) USDA Plant Hardiness Map.

The map, which includes Canada and Mexico for the first time, has 11 color-coded zones based on 10°F differences in average annual minimum temperatures. Data from about 14,500 weather stations were used to make this new map; this is more than twice the number of stations used earlier and should serve to make the map more accurate. Copies are available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325. The price is $6.50. □

KERR'S HONEY

Marketing Strategies

MARSHALL DUNHAM

"Oregon is known for producing the largest selection of varietal honeys in the United States," says Dave Kerr. "Raspberry, vetch, fireweed, blackberry, snowberry, alfalfa and five varieties of clover (red, white, crimson, arrowleaf and sweet) are just a few of the fine table grade honeys grown in Oregon. Other varieties include buckwheat, radish, carrot, holly, mint and onion honey. We have such a wide variety because Oregon is the main producer of seed crops in the United States.

"We have found that it is financially undesirable to sell honey to a packer," says Dave. "There is no way a beekeeper who produces a few hundred drums of honey a year can compete with the big outfits like Sioux Bee or Silverbow. The idea is you don't even want to compete with them. Those big outfits have to sell a blend that will always taste the same every time a jar is pulled off the shelf.

"What we sell is specialty honey. We promote the fact that our honey is local, produced and packed right here in Oregon. We sell fine flavored, top quality varietal honeys, packed according to the floral source. We consider ourselves to be like the producers of fine wines. Some years are vintage years where we get a really good bloom and distinctive flavors. Raspberry is our finest honey, followed by fireweed, vetch, clover and wild berries. We also produce poison oak honey which sells well in health food stores because many people believe it helps protect them from poison oak.

"We sell everything from honey bears to drums. Small containers and Christmas gift packs are sold through stores, roadside stands and supermarkets. We sell buckets to restaurants, breweries and wineries. We sell drums mainly to bakeries and other beekeepers. In fact, some of our best honey customers are other beekeepers who have more of a demand for their products than they can fill.

"We are getting more into mail-order with our gift packs because mail-order is a high profit, low labor way to go. Every gift pack should include a re-order form so people who enjoy the products will know where to get more.

"We are also finding an extremely high demand for a fine grade creamed honey. Crystalizing honey requires a well-controlled environment but it is definitely worth the extra effort involved in production.

"All of our honey is put on commodity loan. We put it on immediate buy-back because we bottle our own honey.

"We should have had a buy-back program twenty years ago. I'd like to see a 'demand buy-back' or a one cent a pound incentive for an immediate buy-back and a one cent a pound surcharge for turning it over to the government. The only thing I don't like about the buy-back price is that it is too close to the market price and it acts more like a price ceiling than a price support. Right now, the buy-back price is about 40 cents a pound and it is awfully hard to get 41 cents. A better method would be to set the loan price at $1.00 a pound and the buy-back at $.80, or the loan at $.20 and the buy-back at $.01. Then we would see a truer market price for honey established.

"We believe in advertising — it pays in dollars and cents. We spend in excess of our (Honey Board) assess-

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A good marketing strategy starts in the field, making sure the supers harvested don't have brood, are clean, and contain a product you are proud of.

Our next step is to segregate honey types. We sell locally produced specialty products, not a consumer blend. Good work in the field makes easier work in the extracting room, produces a better product, and makes more money.

Keeping those specialty honeys seperate is important when they get back home, too.

Once our product has been extracted, cleaned and bottled, delivering it to the customer is the last step. Our field truck doubles as a delivery truck. Covering the cases or 60's is important in keeping them clean.

ment each year to promote our honey products. But advertising only pays when you are creating a demand for a specific, named product.

"If you do not promote your own honey and if you feel that promotion should be done, the National Honey Board has a good promotion program and I don't want to talk anybody out of sponsoring it if that's what they want.

"However, as a honey producer, I doubt that the National Honey Board will ever increase the **wholesale** price of honey that the producer receives. It is possible that they will increase the retail price and the demand for honey, but there is too much imported honey that will flow into the United States to meet any increased demand that might be created. Already, United States beekeepers do not produce enough honey to meet the United States demand, so we have to import honey. Why I should generically promote increased demand for a product that I cannot produce enough of has not been explained to my satisfaction by the National Honey Board.

"I have asked the National Honey Board when they expect this advertisement program to repay the producer for their investment in dollars and cents. The question has always been evaded and we, as producers, have never gotten an answer.

"If a producer averages 100 drums a year, he will have put about $2,500 into the National Honey Board already in the last four years. For that money, he could have developed his own advertising program. The wholesale price of honey will have to go up $.08 in the next four years to break even on that investment. I'm a businessman and I cannot see where I am going to get $.08 more a pound in the next four years. For the last three years, the wholesale price has been going down while the retail price is going up. Why is this happening if the promotional campaign is working?

"Next year will be the fifth year of the National Honey Board and weproducers will vote on whether or not to continue the program. Before I vote to continue it, the National Honey Board will have to show me that it is a profitable investment, in dollars and cents, for a producer." □

Meet The Press

THE NATIONAL HONEY BOARD

Working with the media can be a rewarding and positive experience. It can gain attention to your business, your association or to honey or honey bees in general. But good interviews, and good stories, don't just happen. They are the result of a lot of effort. Usually the person being interviewed has the most to gain from a favorable article, and the most to lose from a bad one.

The National Honey Board has put together a Media Kit (see page 473) that will help you prepare for a 'Media Encounter'

As a beekeeper, you have undoubtedly served as a media contact at one time or another.

As a media contact person, you have the responsibility of passing information about the beekeeping and honey industry through the media and eventually to the public.

Every media contact is an opportunity to influence what is said about the beekeeping/honey industry.

The following are tips prepared by Mary Humann of the National Honey Board.

Contacting the Media.

Every community has newspapers, local television and radio stations which are sources for publicity.

After you have established which media outlets are available to you, you will need to contact the right person at each publication or station. At a large newspaper, this could be the business, news, food or farm editor. At a smaller newspaper, it may be the Editor-in-Chief. At a television station, it will be the assignment editor, producer or person responsible for "booking" guests.

There are many opportunities to meet with media representatives:

- Set up a person-to-person meeting.
- Invite reporters to a local beekeeper's meeting or event.
- Promote yourself for a media interview to discuss your state's beekeeping industry.
- Inform the media of your speaking engagements at schools and civic events.

An Effective Spokesperson: Advance Preparation.

Whenever you conduct a media interview, whether with

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BRUCE HAINES

When preparing for an interview, it pays to know your subject inside-out and the National Honey Board's article and Media Kit certainly go a long way in that direction. But one big questions is, "What does this reporter want, anyway?"

We've enlisted the aid of several reporters and a few editors to try and give you a feel for this side of a story. No one reporter will react the way Bruce does, nor will any single subject be handled this way. But, we hope, it will give you an idea of why reporters and editors do the things they do.

"Go get a story about bees. You know, those 'killers' that are going to devastate children, livestock and family pets. And find out what you can about them living right here, in Center City."

"O.K., Boss. I don't know much about bees, but I'll sure find out."

I am a reporter, I have a family, a home, car, and all the concerns that go with them, plus bills, and bills, and . . . just like you.

But my job's probably a bit different from yours because the product I produce to earn a living can't be felt or touched, but it affects a great many consumers. Make no mistake about it — I perform a service for which I am paid — it's the way I make a living and it is competitive. I have to have the best angle on a story in order to sell it. If I don't produce something my editor wants — I don't keep my job very long, so I work hard to produce exactly what he is looking for.

Every time I get an assignment which I know nothing about, I remember a quote from a 1920's book I read, parts of which inspired me to become a reporter — "The three builders of circulation are **Sordid, Sensational** and **Sex.** Since Sex probably won't fit into a bee story, and because Sordid isn't how I would describe the homelife of insects, I keep Sensational in mind.

When I start on a story, I usually bounce the topic off coworkers to find out what they think about it. The first response was, "Huh?"

"Killer bees," I said, "What do you think about killer bees?"

"When are they supposed to get here?" one said, as if expecting them to arrive by Amtrack.

When I casually questioned neighbors and friends about 'Africanized bees', there was no response. It appears these bees are not hot news and no one is much interested, other

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than relating horror stories about how a friend or relative got stung.

It became clear that people are mostly concerned with only the here and now — the bee that stings them now is the problem — not what might be coming. Apparently, even with all the previous press coverage about 'killer bees', the general population isn't paying much attention — relying on the old "It can't happen to me" philosophy. I began to wonder what all the fuss was about and why my editor wants something written about a topic with such little interest.

At this point I asked my editor what kind of art he has planned for the story. Art is any illustration, photograph, line drawing or graph. I hope his ideas will re-inspire me.

"Take any picture that you think is appropriate," he says. "Maybe run a chart on bee stings currently recorded and project what will be the difference when those 'killers' get here," he said.He sure loves that word *killer*.

So, it's back to the basics. There must be an association of some kind that can tell me something useful about bees. I would like to find a local group first, then move on to bigger things.

The local beekeeper's group is a quiet bunch — very concerned about technique and merchandising on a small level. Their concerns are just as immediate as the general population and they haven't given much thought to what will happen when the 'Africanized bee' gets friendly with their relatives in the States. That is, other that the 'bad press' bees get. But they send me off with a bag of honey candy and I will have fond thoughts of them, as I wonder if they even know what's going on in the next state, let alone Mexico. Of course, we're not in Texas, so the immediacy of the problem isn't the same — yet.

I know that there has been both sensational and well done stories about these bees, but I keep wondering why people in my part of the world aren't concerned. Maybe I'm the one to alert them. I may have to get a horse and ride through town yelling, "The bees are coming, the bees are coming!"

I knew that the County Extension Service should know something about bees, so I head over to the office to locate the "bug man" and ply him with questions — wondering if Clark Kent ever had days like this.

Bingo! It'll happen every time — government folks have a wealth of resources, and their public relations skills are honed to perfection. I receive such a sweet report that I know something has to be wrong. I am convinced that any time the government, in any form, tells you everything is going to be all right, it's time to prepare for an emergency. Am I a cynic? You bet. I've covered enough local scandals in village councils to know that when someone smiles all the time — something is up.

I use the resources he gives me even though they're couched in an avalanche of bug terms. I learned that Florida will eventually be filled with these 'killer' bees. I have visions of retirees dropping dead when they go to pick that first orange on arriving in Florida. And, I can see college students at beaches in the spring running for their lives, not because of **jaws** in the water, but because of 'killer' bees on land in pursuit of sweet smelling sun screens and lotions. It doesn't seem important that bees are vital to agriculture or that they make the most important ingredient in my favorite cold remedy.

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Putting it Together

Nearly everyone subscribes to a newspaper, yet few people know how one is put together, and by whom. Most folks don't care, until a reporter asks for their help in a story, and perhaps the end product is not what was expected.

Most large papers are divided into editorial, advertising, circulation and management. The editorial department is in charge of getting the news, writing the news, selecting the news, processing the news copy, and displaying the news. What you say to a reporter may be misconstrued at any point in this process.

The paper's structure, if it is a large circulation daily will look something like below.

With the advent of computers and the revitalization of smaller community papers, many jobs are done by one person. A small weekly may have a publisher (who is usually not in the office), an editor, a staff writer, and a number of correspondents (people who report on one locality or topic only). It is fairly easy to speak directly with the editor on a small circulation paper, whereas on a large paper, you may want to speak to the night editor, day editor, photo editor, feature editor, or managing editor.

A story relating to bees could be handled in a number of departments, depending on the focus of the story. It could be a feature story, agricultural news, club news (on your association), health (stings), business (marketing bee products) or the home section (honey recipes). It could also be hard news — a currently breaking story about something that is important now. □

News Release

The _____ Beekeeper's Association reminds you that September is National Honey Month which is a great time to try a NEW honey flavor!

The color and flavor of honeys differ, depending on the nectar source (the blossoms) visited by the honey bees. The color ranges from nearly colorless to dark brown, and the flavor varies from delectably mild to distinctively bold, depending on where the honey bees buzzed.

In fact, there are more than 300 unique types of honey available, each originating from a different floral source. As a general rule, the light colored honey is milder and the dark colored honey is stronger.

Honey is produced in every state, but depending on location of floral source, certain types of honey are produced in only a few regions. Honey is also produced in most countries around the world.

Here is a look at some of the most common honeys and their floral sources:

Acacia honey is a pale yellow honey with an exquisite, delicate taste. China is the major source for acacia honey. It is also produced in California.

Alfalfa honey, produced extensively throughout Canada and the United States, is light in color with a pleasingly mild flavor and aroma.

Basswood honey is often characterized by its distinctive "biting" flavor. Basswood honey is generally water white in color and strong in flavor.

Buckwheat honey is a dark, full-bodied honey. The production of buckwheat and, therefore, buckwheat honey, has declined in the United States. It is still produced, however, in Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin as well as in eastern Canada.

Clover honey has a pleasing, mild taste. Clovers have contributed more to honey production in the United States than any other group of plants. White clover, Alsike clover and the white and yellow sweet clovers are most important for honey production. Depending on the location and type of source clover, clover honey varies in color from water white to light amber to amber.

Eucalyptus honey comes from one of the larger plant genera, containing over 500 distinct species and many hybrids. As may be expected with a diverse group of plants, eucalyptus honey varies greatly in color and flavor but tends to be a stronger flavored honey. Eucalyptus is the major source of honey in Australia.

Fireweed honey is light in color and comes from a perennial herb that affords wonderful bee pasture in the northern and pacific states and Canada. Fireweed grows in the open woods, reaching a height of 3 to 5 feet and spikes of attractive pinkish flowers.

Orange Blossom honey, often a combination of citrus sources, is usually light in color and mild in flavor with a fresh scent and light taste reminiscent of the blossom. Orange blossom honey is produced in Florida, southern California and southern Texas.

Sourwood honey's source is a small to medium-size tree that is common in the southern part of the Appalachian mountains from West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania to northern Georgia. The honey is light in color and heavy bodied with a fine mild flavor.

Tulip Poplar or tulip tree honey is dark amber in color. The flavor, however, is not as strong as one would expect of a dark honey. Tulip poplar honey is produced from southern New England west to southern Michigan and south to the Gulf states east of the Mississippi.

Tupelo honey is a premium honey produced in the southeastern United States. It is heavy bodied and high in levulose. It is usually light in color with a mild, distinctive taste.

Cooking with Honey

When cooking with honey, select a strongly flavored honey for spreads and other recipes where a distinct honey flavor is desired. Select mildly flavored honeys for use when delicate flavors prevail.

Honey Blends

While different types of honey are available, most honey, especially honey supplied in bulk, is blended to create a unique and consistent taste and color.

To learn more about available types of honey in your area, contact a local beekeeper, honey packer or distributor. And this year, try a special-flavored honey.

HAINES . . . Cont. from Page 469

Logic gives way to emotion for a moment (bad for a reporter to do, but I am human, after all). How many times have I been stung when walking barefoot? How many times has my dog been stung while trying to snap a bee? Stings from bees take time and trouble out of a perfect summer day. And I think of my neighbor who has to carry a sting kit with her to avoid expiring from a sting.

Then I remember that horror flick, "Attack of the Killer Bees". All I recall is a blackening sky with buzzing noises and bodies laying all over city streets. I never stopped to wonder why bees were

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HAINES . . . Cont. from page 471

in a city where there was probably little to attract them in the way of forage. But if that's what I remember, other people must have those images, also.

In this frame of mind, I contacted other experts university professors, extension specialists, and association presidents. These are all people who should know what's going on outside of their own backyards. The information they send me is for the most part, vague. Everyone has a plan for dealing with the Africanized bees, but few plans are explained in detail. Double talk abounds and I feel someone doesn't want me to understand something. Too much avoidance is causing me to become even more curious.

Readers of the publication I write for don't want vague generalities and a discussion of plans that involve a host of governmental agencies. Sure, someone feels better if you tell them the department of Health and Human Services will take action on the killer bee problem. The name alone brings a feeling of well being — thinking that someone is interested in each reader's health and assuring that there will be human services out there to help. It's a lot more interesting though, if I can tell the reader how not to get stung in the first place.

Since I can't find out positive, practical information about the problem, I will surely use what I can of the possible consequences of having a hive of killer bees next door to you.

I discovered that 100 deaths per year occur in Venezuela due to killer bees but it has been reduced to 20 deaths a year because of a public education program. Still, 20 deaths per year is significant when I remind the reader that he could be one of the 20 who may have missed the public education. The fact that this number *isn't* compared to pre-killer bee deaths didn't occur to me, though — certainly an oversight because the editor had even mentioned it.

The experts I talked to tell me that the killer bee is not really a killer — it is simply defensive because of its original environment. It had to be nasty to compete for life in a jungle. I asked if it will become more docile when it moves to the States, since most of our jungles are concrete. Wait a minute — isn't that where the bees in the movie went first?

When I got back to my local beekeepers, armed with all the 'approved' information I asked more pertinent questions and discovered they still weren't bubbling over with opinions on the killer bee. Why am I educating beekeepers on a topic they should know something about? Good grief — this is their field, and I'm telling them what the government agencies told me. They still don't see it as a threat. Getting local quotes on the topic will be as hard as photographing a single bee — and I don't look forward to that!

I make a stop at the local general practitioner and ask him about bee stings. I can get the whole process in plain language — cause, effect, treatment as it relates to the regular bee, and project how that would be if it were a killer bee sting. The doctor is most helpful, and he has nothing to hide. He won't commit to an extended projection and outcome of killer bee stings from information on regular bee stings, that is, not if I use his name. He doesn't want to look unusual in the medical community by talking about killer bees that aren't even here yet. I promise I will not reveal my sources. I love using that line. It conjures up court trials, martyrdom, jail cells and my name in journalism books everywhere.

How's that for sensationalism?

After locking myself away for a week, living with all the acquired information, and deciding on a picture, the real work begins. Because I have a deadline, I will not be able to sort through everything I have gathered. News people are taught to write for speed and my training is on a newspaper. Editors do not accept excuses or delays at deadline. I spend some time letting all the information settle in my mind and allow the more pertinent facts to rise.

Would a beekeeper do this if these were killer bees?

The picture I have chosen is one of a beekeeper with a bee beard — every beekeeper has seen one and may have posed for one, and a lot of other people in the general population have gasped at it. What will be different is that my cutline (the information that goes under a picture) will be, "Would a beekeeper do this if these were killer bees?" By now the word "Africanized" is not in my vocabulary. These are bees that kill who happen to come from Africa.

When I'm done, I don't have a 'favorable' attitude towards these intruders. This comes from the basically negative reports I received from the experts. Negative, even though they tend toward the average. Remember, people don't want to read about 'average' It's sex, sordid or sensationalism that sells.

The most striking thing about collecting information on this story is that most, but not all agencies seemed to "excuse" what they are doing about the killer bees. If someone who knew what they were talking about simply explained what was happening — I could deal with that, but half explanations, followed by excuses, make me question what is being said.

Nevertheless, the story gets written. The editor is pleased, if not ecstatic because the story is only semi-sensa-

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a newspaper, radio or television reporter, you should be prepared:

- Gather information. Know your subject.
- Prepare a press kit with general fact sheets about your state's beekeeping industry, your background, honey's use, etc.
- Confirm the time and date of meeting or interview. Know about the person you will be meeting and about the publication or program.
- Prepare and study the messages you want to communicate.
- Anticipate key questions. Prepare answers.
- Practice. Have your family and friends interview you on the subject.

Media Do's.

The following guidelines will help you to establish a positive working relationship with the media in your area:

- **Help reporters** by providing timely, accurate and newsworthy information about the beekeeping and honey industry.
- **Tell the Truth.** Truth bolsters credibility and builds a reporter's trust and confidence in you.
- **Expect to be quoted.** Never assume that anything is "off the record". Even when you speak casually with a reporter, expect that your words will be quoted.
- **Be careful with facts, names and figures.** If the information you provide is inaccurate, the reporter looks bad. This also destroys your credibility as an industry source.
- **Remember your message.**
- **If you don't know the answer, refer the reporter to someone who does.** Do not feel that you have to answer every question. You do not need to be an expert on Africanized bees. If possible, however, forward the reporter to the appropriate source or follow up later with more information.
- **Know a reporter's deadlines** and honor them.
- **Be professional** in dress and attitude.
- **Relax.** Be yourself.

Media Dont's.

Avoid the following when working with the media:

- **Avoid Jargon.** Use terms that will be understood by everyone, not just members of the beekeeping and agricultural community.
- **Do not be evasive or say "No Comment".** It is acceptable, however, to say that you do not know or cannot disclose information.
- **Do not complain about minor errors.** Minor errors will occur in articles. Usually, they do not deserve your efforts for a retraction or clarification.
- **Do not complain if your story is not used** or you are not quoted in a story for which you were not interviewed.
- **Do not call a reporter on deadline.**
- **Never insult "The Media".**

How the Honey Board Can Help.

The National Honey Board's staff and agencies deal with the media on a daily basis. If a reporter asks for information you do not have or requests photographs or recipes, the National Honey Board can help. Simply take down all the pertinent questions or requests and/or forward them to the National Honey Board's Office.

Prepare For Honey Month.

Promote September as Honey Month! The National Honey Board has a packet to help. It includes photography, industry facts, bee trivia and more. The packet includes tips for local honey promotions at schools, malls and suggestions for contacting the local media. For a packet, write to: The National Honey Board, 421 21st Street, Suit 203, Longmont, CO 80501-1421. (303) 776-2337, FAX: (303) 776-1177.

HAINES . . . Cont. from page 472

tional. And I will get paid. That's my bottom line — a product that is good enough to keep my job. I learned something in the process, too. I certainly will never look at bees in exactly the same way again, nor, I hope, will my readers. Every bee, to me, especially after the killers arrive in my state (if they do, which no one knows for sure), will be a threat to me and mine.

Have I produced a thought process in my readers that will turn them against *any* type of bee? Probably. Do you want to blame me for doing this? I only wrote a summary of the information that was available in the time I was allowed. It took a lot of digging, but I have limited resources, and an editor who wants Pulitzer Prize writing at manimum wage. Whoops, there I go, explanations followed by excuses. Been around those public relations people too long. □

A Most Remarkable Machine

ROGER A. MORSE

The Dakota Gunness Uncapper has taken an existing technology and turned it into an art.

There is no question that the Dakota Gunness Uncapper® is a major breakthrough insofar as honey extracting is concerned. Several beekeepers have told me that they can uncap much more than twice as much honey with the Gunness Uncapper than they can with any other machine in the same period of time. It is necessary to have four, five or six large (50 frame or more) extractors to use the Gunness most efficiently. One beekeeper, using three men, extracted over 80 barrels of honey in a ten hour day using this uncapper. One man fed combs into the uncapper and two men filled the extractors and removed the empty combs. I have seen very few combs that have been damaged or broken by this uncapper and this is certainly no more of a problem than with any other machine on the market.

However, a number of beekeepers have commented that when dealing with the very small cappings particles made by the Gunness uncapper, their filters become full more often and must be watched. These small cappings may bring some air with them, which like all honeys, must be removed.

The basic idea of uncapping combs of honey with chains, flails, wire brushes, and blades that grind up the cappings is not new. We believe the first such uncapper was designed by W. L. Hodgson of Jarvis, Ontario, Canada in the late 1920's. Hodgson's machine used several circular saw blades placed on a rotating shaft at an angle so that they wobbled and each blade cut over about an inch of comb surface as it rotated and the combs of honey to be uncapped moved between the two shafts with the saw blades. Later, in the 1940's, the flail type extractors designed by the Coggshalls and then built in large numbers by the Bogenschutz Brothers and others, had the same problems with fine cappings and air in the honey that needed clarification.

The clarification problem has been handled successfully by many beekeepers in a number of ways; however, the basic theme has always been the same. The important fact is that to clarify honey it must be warmed and the cappings given time to move upward where they form a crust over the surface.

The uncapping blades, chains or knives of different types, run at different speeds, will make a difference as regards the size of the pieces of the cappings in the honey. However, this is not the most important consideration.

Hot Rooms

It's clear that no matter what uncapping and extracting process is used, it is important that the supers of combs that have been removed from colonies be placed in a warm room, usually

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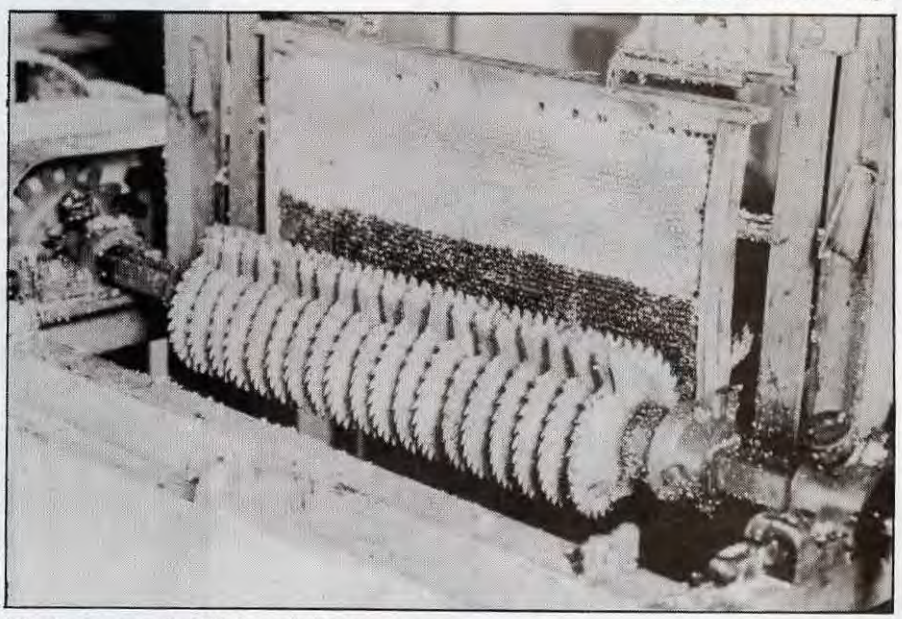


The business end of Hodgson's first uncapper.

How it Works

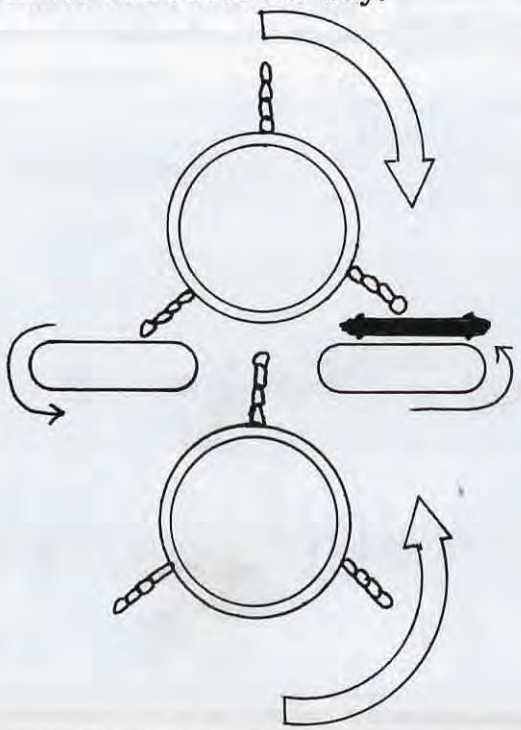
The principle of a chain or flail uncapper is quite simple.

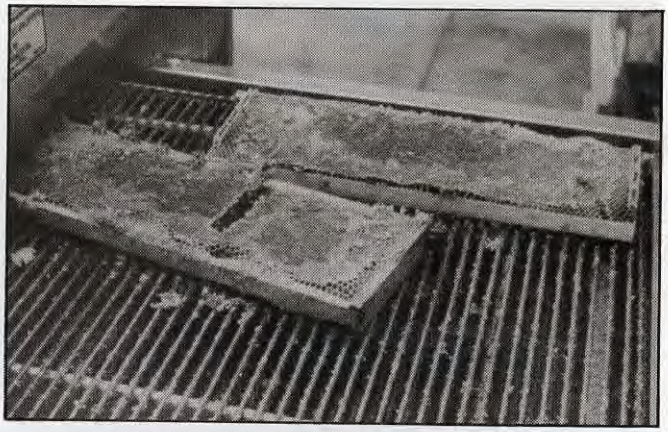
A cylinder, attached to an electric motor, has one or more sets of chain links attached. When the motor is engaged, the cylinder spins, the chains 'strike' the cappings on the comb moving by and the cappings are removed.

Some flail uncappers have only one cylinder. The frame must be turned so both sides are exposed to the rotating chains and uncapped.

Other models have the frame move through the two cylinders up and down, uncapping both sides, but the frame enters and exits at the same place. This works as fast as frames can be inserted and removed, and frames are not damaged.

The Dakota Gunness machine lets two conveyor belts do the work, which are run by an independent motor. This means that frames are loaded on the 'in' belt, the frame moves between the two 'flails', is uncapped, and then carried out by the other 'out' belt. Cappings fall beneath and out of the way.





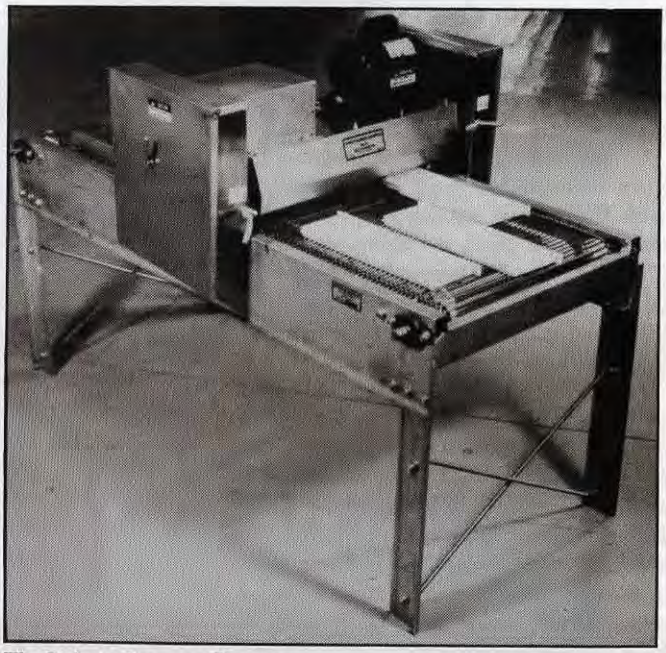
An untouched frame is loaded on the moving belt which carries it through the two sets of flailing chains.

called a hot room, before they are uncapped and extracted. Hot rooms have been designed in a number of ways. There is usually some method of moving the warm air through the stacks of supers. Some beekeepers use their hot rooms to lower the moisture content of their honey while it is still in the comb by driving warm, dry air through the supers. One may reduce the moisture content of honey by about one percent in 24 hours by blowing warm air through the stacks of supers that are filled with honey. This is true even when the honey is capped.

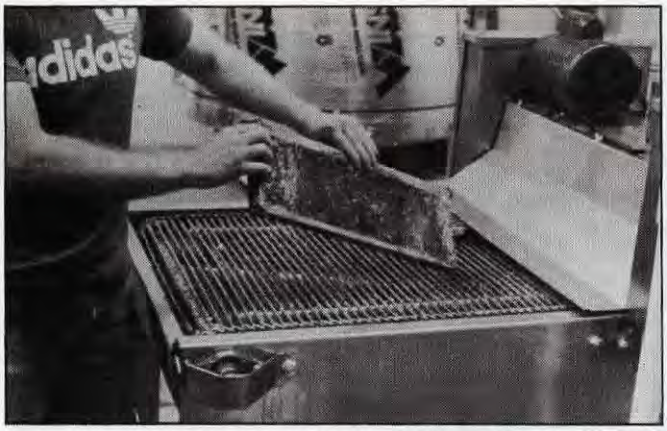
The proper temperature for a hot room is about 85°F. Not only are the cappings cut more easily at this temperature but, more importantly, the honey flows freely from the combs in the extractor. Even in the warmer parts of the country hot rooms have proven to be valuable.

Cappings

Many beekeepers who use both power and hand uncappers use a Brand Melter to liquify the cappings above the



The Dakota Gunness Uncapper.



The undamaged and uncapped frame exits the machine ready for the extractor.

honey. Presumably, Brand Melters keep the melted beeswax and honey separate. However, in fact, they seldom do so, and I cannot recommend using Brand Melters when the remaining honey is to be used for a consumer product. No matter how carefully they are used they darken the honey that passes through them about by 15 points on the Pfund scale. (A Pfund grader has a range of 0 to 140 points with 0 being water white and the higher figures representing dark honey. The graders are described fully by Fell. Dark honey is damaged even more by a Brand Melter because it contains much more protienacious material that burns easily. However, beekeepers continue to use Brand Melters because they are so easy to use and at the end of the day there are no cappings to fuss with. But even beekeepers who use Brand Melters must remove the fine cappings from the honey that runs from an extractor when a Gunness uncapper is used.

There are a variety of ways of drying cappings regardless of how they are cut from a frame but admittedly no one of these is easy or best. Whirl or spin drys are used by only a few beekeepers because it is not easy to remove the dried cappings from them. One method that has been popular with some beekeepers uses large, wired-bottomed bins that are filled with cappings and placed in a room held at 110 to 130°F for 24 hours where the honey drips from the cappings into a pan below the bin. A small number of beekeepers who live in remote locations allow the bees to rob the cappings dry. Cappings robbed by bees may be shoveled like sawdust and handling them in this manner has much appeal. However, bees that are robbing around a honey house can be a nuisance and certainly one needs an isolated location to handle the cappings in this manner.

Settle Down

To settle the cappings from the honey it should be heated to about 95 to 100°F and then allowed to flow slowly through a series of baffle tanks. The honey can be heated by allowing it to flow over a water-heated, tilted pan with zig zag cleats that force the honey back and forth over the pan's surface, or by pumping the honey through water-heated coils or tubing. Under no circumstances should steam or direct electric heat come into contact with metal containers in which honey is being heated. If this is done the honey in immediate contact with the metal on the opposite side will be burned and darkened. The baffle tanks should be in a separate room where the temperature is kept at abut 95°F. The honey must not be forced to flow through the baffle tanks too rapidly. The number of baffle tanks needed depends on the quantity of honey that is being settled. Both the time and number of tanks needed can be determined only through testing and making observations on the clarity of the honey. If one has not had success clarifying honey uncapped by a Bogenschutz, or other flail type uncapper, the amount of baffling space must obviously be increased to meet the demands placed on the extracting system by the Dakota Gunness Uncapper. □

For More Information . . .

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— *Honey houses, equipment and methods.* American Bee Journal 103: 473-9. 1953.

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Odin's Mead

ANNE L. SIMKO

Wayne Thygesen hasn't gotten around to drawing up a marketing plan for his mead yet. The first two bottlings of Odin's Mead are sold out, and he's busy preparing to put up another 500 gallons.

The Meadery of Greenwich is the first farm winery in Washington County, NY, an area better known for its dairy farms. It released its first bottling in October of 1989. When the tasting room opened, 200 people were on hand to sample the honey wine, and "199 of them loved it", Thygesen said. "We were surprised at how it took off. The month of December was just amazing."

Thygesen and his partner Bob Stevens advertised the opening in local newspapers and in Albany and Glens Falls, the nearest cities. Advertising since then has been by word of mouth. Repeat business from people who bought or received bottles as Christmas presents "kept us flat out" in January and February, Thygesen said. The business also benefitted from feature stories in the Albany Times *Union* and the Glenn Falls *Post-Star*.

Thygesen lives in Schuylerville, not far from the racetrack town of Saratoga Springs. A pharmacist by trade, he's been a brewing enthusiast since the age of 13, when he made his first batch of wine. A friend in a Viking recreation group introduced him to mead. "I fell in love with it," Thygesen recalled.

He began experimenting with the honey-based brew, and gave samples to friends for their comments. Odin's Mead is "what the majority of people liked," he said.

In his search for a supply of honey, Thygesen met Bob Stevens, owner of Better Bee Inc., a beekeeper's supply house in Greenwich, who maintains about 500 hives. Stevens had honey and a collection of small buildings on the Better Bee property, a former horse farm. The basis for a partnership was there. Thygesen and Stevens calculated that if mead captured just 5% of the state's wine market, it would use the equivalent of the state's entire honey crop.

They applied for, and received, a $20,000 grant from the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, to develop a commercial meadery. Technical assistance came from Roger Morse, a mead expert at Cornell University, and his graduate students who researched mead-making literature.

Market research was limited to choosing a theme for the product. Vikings proved to be more popular than Elizabethans, giving Thygesen an opportunity to draw on his Norwegian heritage. The labels, designed by two local artists, show the god Odin in his eagle form bringing mead to a Valkyrie.

The Meadery's farm winery license requires it to use New York state honey. Half of the wildflower honey used in Odin's Mead is from Better Bee's hives and half was purchased from other beekeepers. "We ended up with a better than usual crop last year," Thygesen said. "There wasn't that much available last fall but we were able to get it."

The mead-making process is simple, Thygesen said. Honey and water are boiled together, to kill wild yeast and bacteria. Brewer's yeast is added and the mixture is given several months to ferment. It is then aged and finally bottled. Thygesen uses no grape juice or sulfites, although he does add some nutrients for the yeast. He prefers a champagne yeast because it produces a denser sediment. A four-inch layer of sediment on the bottom of the fermentation vat can trap up to 50 gallons of mead, Thygesen said. A filter can recover some of that but would cost

$3,000.00, he said.

Odin's Mead receives a two-month fermentation at 68 to 70°F. Higher temperatures would shorten the time, but Thygesen believes the lower temperature makes a better flavor. The mead spends at least another 12 months in a 60°F cellar, aging in 50-gallon oak casks.

When it's ready to bottle, Thygesen runs the mead through a sterile filtration system to remove any remaining yeast cells. An Italian bottling machine fills four bottles at a time. With three or four people working a 500-gallon run can be put up in two days, Thygesen said. His little boy, Tellef, helps out by sticking on the labels.

The Meadery bought most of its equipment used. The six fermentation vats are bulk tanks for milk, obtained from local dairy farms that went out of business. Some of the oak casks are veterans of Thygesen's first efforts, with Norse runes on the barrelheads. Other casks came from a Kentucky distillery.

Adapting and reconditioning older equipment meant a substantial savings in start-up costs. "We don't owe anyone a penny," Thygesen said. "We don't have to charge an arm and a leg for a bottle."

Used equipment can have its drawbacks. The Kentucky casks tend to leak and are prey to oak borers. The borers' pinholes can be plugged with a toothpick; bigger gaps must be caulked with fiberglass. The Meadery recently invested in a set of new casks from Canada.

The biggest equipment headache has been the heat exchanger, which heats and cools the honey-water mixture. The engineers

who designed the system said that it would reach a boil in six hours but so far it hasn't hit 200 degrees after 18 hours, Thygesen said. He and Stevens have sent some test batches to the state agricultural experiment station in Geneva to see if a dairy-type pasteurizer will work.

Odin's Mead comes in slightly sweet and slightly dry versions. Thygesen is experimenting with fruit syrups, raisins, and currents for flavored varieties, similar to what the Elizabethans enjoyed. However, those are one to two years away from market. First, "we're getting the problems out of the system for the regular mead," he said.

The Meadery has taken over the bee supply sales room at Better Bee and Thygesen and Stevens plan to build more storage and tank space this summer. They recently hired a full-time worker who does "everything I've been doing for the the past three years," Thygesen said: running the equipment, plugging the leaks, overseeing the cellar, bottling, and helping with the bees in season.

The goal is to increase production to 6,000 gallons a year. "There are quite a few ways we can market it," Thygesen said. The Meadery is on Route 29 just outside the village of Greenwich, on the main route between Saratoga Springs and the resort town of Manchester, VT. Advertising through the state "I Love New York" program may increase walk-in trade from summer and foliage-season tourists, but skiers seem to drive by too fast, he said

Another possibility is to sell through Renaissance fairs in the region and a handful of local liquor stores stock Odin's Mead.

"We haven't pursued distributors yet because they usually want a couple of thousand cases," Thygesen said. That's a goal we're striving for, though. □

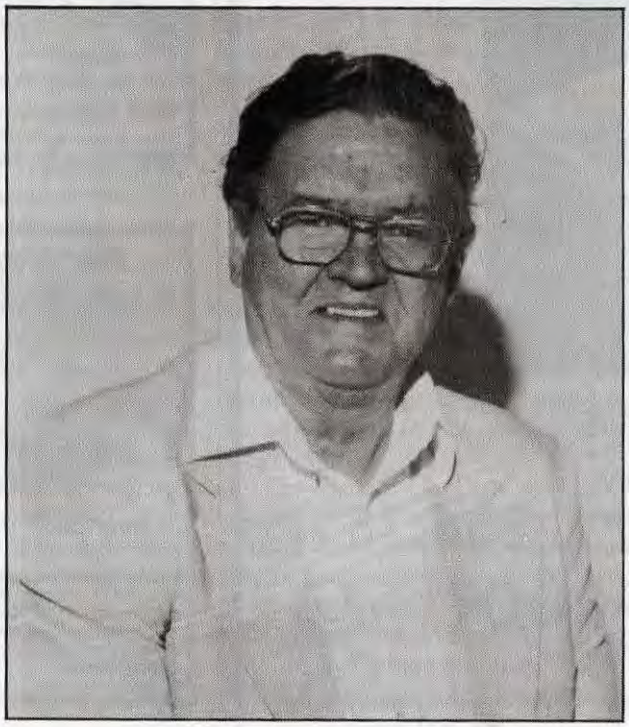
America's Propolis King

JOHN IANNUZZI

Several years ago, the ensuing advertisement appeared in the Classified Section of *Bee Culture*:

> *Propolis U.S.A., Route 8, Hayward, WI is* ***again buying*** — send 10-20# sample of hive-scrapings. Will pay at least $2.00/lb. plus postage or UPS. (715) 634-4264.

Later, the following was added: "and up to $5.00/lb. or more for washed." Still later, the $5.00 was changed to $6.00. Note the "again buying" because occasionally, another ad (out of the clear blue) would announce the reverse! In their advertisements toady, "Propolis U.S.A." is now linked with "Beehive Botanicals" and the man behind both is Warren Alfred Ogren from Hayward, WI. This is the same man who sold his first 10 pounds abroad, for $80.00 (yes, eighty) **a pound**. This is his story.



Warren A. Ogren, America's Propolis King

A Backward Look

Actually his first infrequent advertisements appeared in the early 1970's. Then, collection was geared to his ability to dispose of and process the material, which has a shelf life of only two years. After that it is not as potent, unless it has been kept frozen. This, as he says, led to the on-again, off-again nature of his advertisements for many years. Actually, it all started even earlier when a bee entrepreneur in England tardily paid him that magnificent sum of $800.00, but with a fly in the ointment.

The Britisher would delay payment until he had resold the product. Not willing to wait that long again, Ogren found a buyer in Denmark who would purchase his American collections. He recalled one early shipment of $60,000.00, followed by others of decreasing magnitude, until his Scandinavian contact unfortunately went bankrupt.

At about the same time, is was rumored that the Japanese were paying up to $250.00 per pound for high quality propolis which Mr. Ogren pronounces as "PROH-poh-lis", the European preference.

Ogren continued to run his alternating but sporadic notices in the bee publications, with the idea of doing business for himself. However, when this advertisement caught the eye of Charles Mraz, he doubted publicly that anyone could collect propolis with any degree of purity "at such a low price" He noted that he had heard of "ridiculously high prices of several dollars per gram (1/30th of an ounce)"

Innovative beekeepers have long entertained thoughts of the commercial prospects of propolis collection. Writing more

than three-quarters of a century ago, C. C. Miller noted: "It would be a nice thing to clean propolis out of all hives every spring, because I am in a region for profitable propolis production, if it ever comes to be a staple article of commerce"

Now there was finally a man to implement profitability to Dr. Miller's pipe dream. Turning his ads off and on had always intrigued me, then I bumped into their intriguing author at a flea market in Nagoya, Japan where we were attending the XXXth International Congress of Apimondia, in 1985. Later I had discussions with him at his display booth in the conference center, operated in conjunction with Joe Parkhill, the Arkansas "honeyologist", and author of the *Wonderful World of Bee Pollen*. Like Parkhill pushing pollen, Ogren was promoting his first love, that substance which Langstroth called "beeglue", another considered "the most mysterious hive element" while still others called it **horrible scriptu**, "a damn nuisance"

Background

Born in International Falls, MN, October 25, 1923 to a Scandinavian family of five boys and three girls, he was "always interested in bees from childhood", according to his own admission. He was originally infected by some Finnish beekeepers, however, it was not until 1970 that he acquired the first three colonies to populate a recently purchased 160-acre homestead. This number inched up to 18 by 1984 when he harvested 2,100 pounds of honey. With beehive numbers now reduced because of his flourishing propolis business, honey production fell to 450 pounds by 1989.

Disposing of his surplus was never a problem: daily home consumption and making 30 gallons of Chaucer's favorite beverage — mead — each year, along with road-sign selling, were the standard techniques. Today he incorporates most of it into his own commercial products.

A regular reader of beekeeping journals, the father of four was employed for almost three decades by the U. S. Post Office — first as a clerk, then as assistant and later as Hayward's postmaster for 11 years — before his retirement. Tiny Hayward is the county seat, situated about 60 miles south and east of Duluth, MN, a major port on Lake Superior.

Beehive Botanicals

Since his retirement in 1979, Ogren now devotes full time to Beehive Botanicals Inc., as president and CEO, assisted by his oldest daughter Linda Graham, executive vice president, current spark plug, product innovator and public-relations expert. Incorporated in 1978 as **Bee Farmasee**, the firm features a price list of 28 items, in three classes: First, Body Care — apart from shampoos and conditioners, one finds toothpaste, dermacream and lip balm, all made with propolis; Second, Supplements — featuring propolis, pollen, and royal jelly capsules; and third, Specialty items — such as propolis chewing gum, propolis tinctures in strengths of 10%, 50% and 60% and honey royale — a combination of royal jelly and the founder's own Wisconsin honey. The suggested retail prices for these range from a low of $1.15 for 10 pieces of the chewing gum to a high of $13.95 for 12 ounces of the pollen granules.

And business is growing at the rate of 15% a year, with 50% of his 1989 sales occurring overseas. Best seller? His two-ounce Propolis Derma Cream (suggested retail $5.75 or $41.40 per case of 12, wholesale), noted for its "soothing and healing" qualities.

Still Looking

In order to keep his enterprise flourishing, the hobby beekeeper now turned capitalist needs a steady supply of beeglue — but it is not forthcoming. And his daughter wrote recently, "We still have a hard time getting all the propolis we need" To keep his walk-in freezers full of purified, processed, pulverized propolis, he even has resorted to buying the sticky stuff from Canada in truckload lots — although he is not hesitant to pay $6, plus freight, to hobby beekeepers for just a single pound of high quality propolis. One method to collect this material is to use a device called the BellBoard, available from Wm. Roland Bell Jr., 6901 Robinhood Lane, Ft. Worth, TX 76112. Ogren continues to advertise but no longer sporadically and you can find his ads in almost any bee journal every month.

And, as they say, that is the story of Warren Ogren, alias Mr. Propolis, USA. A Wisconsin resident and the largest manufacturer of commercial propolis preparations in the country, who started from scratch less than two decades ago.

Yes, you too can make money from beeglue — commercial, sideline or hobby beekeeper — if you take the time to scrape for this Hayward business, who now pays a *minimum* of a dollar per pound plus shipping, for even the yuckiest you can find. □

For more information on propolis collection or propolis products, contact Beehive Botanicals at 1-715-634-4274.

Beauty and the Bees

B. A. STRINGER

Small shrubs which bloom profusely in mid to late summer, Abelia bushes are attractive late sources of nectar and pollen for honey bees. In Oregon, they are used as a reliable garden shrub as well as an extensively planted species in highway landscaping.

There are about 30 species of Abelia, native to Asia, China and Mexico. One of the most useful species for landscaping is Glossy Abelia, *Abelia grandiflora*, which is hardy to about Zone 6, or 10-20°F. This plant is deciduous in the northern part of its range, and semi-evergreen in milder areas. Although it may freeze to the ground at 0°F, it will usually resprout from the hardy roots.

Abelia grows in a graceful, arching form to about 6-8' in height, and makes an attractive screen, shrub border or visual barrier. If space is limited, the plants may be pruned into dense hedges at the expense of the open lacey growth.

Profuse displays of pinkish-lilac flowers appear on the current season's growth in mid summer, and bloom continues from June through October, or until frost. One particularly spectacular cultivar of Glossy Abelia is "Edward Goucher"

This plant was developed from a clone selected from a cross between Glossy Abelia (itself a hybrid) and another Abelia of Chinese origin. In Abelia "Edward Goucher", the loose terminal flower clusters are twice the size of the parent plants' and are very attractive to honey bees for both nectar and pollen. The orange throat of each flower acts as a guide for foraging bees.

The bell-shaped flowers are surrounded by copper-colored bracts which remain after the flower falls. When the plant is grown in full sun, a bronzed tint appears in the leaves, complementing the coppery flower bracts. These colors add interest to the plant even when it is not in bloom. In a shady place, the leaves will be dark green, without the highlighting colors. As temperatures drop in fall, the foliage becomes more bronzed.

Abelia is a hardy, low maintenance shrub which grows well with full sun and limited water. Shade and excess water contribute to rank, leggy growth and increased susceptibility to frost damage.

To preserve its open, airy shape, prune by cutting back entire old stems to the ground. New growth will sprout from the base in elegant arches. If you grow Abelia as a hedge, prune out old twiggy growth selectively, rather than shearing. This practice encourages constant replacement with new flowering wood.

Abelia is easily grown in a variety of soils and situations as long as it has good drainage. It is rarely propagated from seed as much of the seeds from hybrid parentage are not viable. Cuttings will grow quickly when treated with root-promoting substances. In summer, leafy cuttings can be grown under glass, and in autumn or spring cuttings of ripe wood root readily.

Abelia is part of the Caprifoliaceae, or Honeysuckle Family. The plant was named for Dr. Clarke Abel (1780-1826) who accompanied Lord Amherst as a botanist on his trip to Peking in 1816-17. Much of Dr. Abel's plant collection was lost by shipwreck on the way back to Kew, England. Dr. Abel died in India while serving as personal physician to Lord Amherst, who was by then Governor-General.

Whether grown in its naturally open arching form or clipped into a formal hedge, Abelia can combine functional landscaping with valuable bee forage. □

INDIRECT Advertising

RICHARD T. EDWARDS

One of the greatest things about a beekeeping business is the fact that your enterprise is very unique. The demand for fresh honey — especially locally produced honey — is always high, if you know how to tap that demand.

Perhaps the biggest problem you have is a function of management known as public relations.

When you've produced a crop of honey your primary goal is to let the public (read customers) know you have this fine product for sale. The way you do this is by advertising. Generally, this is through newspaper ads or maybe radio. Seldom do you have enough money to buy TV time. And you shouldn't have to. The bottom line to all of this is that you have to *pay* for advertising which means that you have to take current cash and bet it on a few ads so that you'll see an increase in your cash flow *post haste*. In advertising, this is known as short term consumer response.

But what if you are a small business that doesn't have all that much cash to flow into advertising? Is there any way you can advertise?

Certainly, and it's called *indirect advertising*. Direct advertising by way of comparison, is designed to inform your consumers about your honey or other products you have available. The sale intent is to see a short term response to those advertising dollars.

Indirect advertising, on the other hand, differs in many ways. First, the objective is to establish a long term relationship with your consumer base — which are all those people out there interested in buying fresh honey from you.

The best way to reach most of them is through television. But if you advertise directly you need a lot of cash to get their attention. That's where indirect advertising comes in — to help you get some television air time. Here's how you do it.

First of all, indirect advertising is free. Second, you want to provide favorable information for the public. This is hard to do with direct advertising because ad spot time runs too short to really do you any kind of educating.

The information involves showing consumers how honey is made, what makes your honey different from that of the large commercial operations and the overall importance of your profession to consumers, their families and perhaps even their lifestyle.

This all boils down to one thing: informing the public of the value of honey bees, beekeepers and the significance of your profession.

With this in mind, your next step is to actually define a dozen or so subjects dealing with honey bees and beekeeping or honey which will appeal to both the media and consumers. With a little work you can come up with one solid topic for each month of the year.

Once done, the objective is to get your local media's attention. One good place to start is to find out who the editor is for your local newspaper(s) as well as who are the best contacts at a local radio and television station.

Compose a letter to each including your business card and state simply and concisely in the letter your beliefs that the occupation of being a beekeeper is unique and you have several subject areas which might be of interest to them.

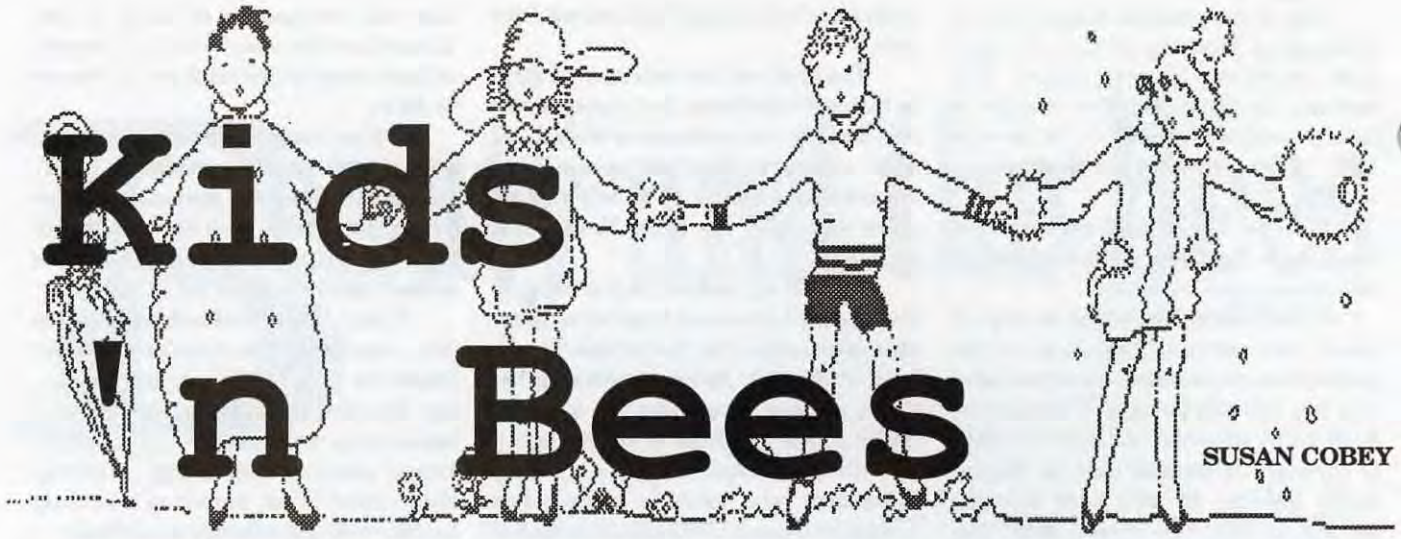
If they don't immediately jump on your wagon (and they probably won't), collect the necessary material for your first subject then give them all a call and talk to them about the specific subject you've worked on.

Now, if this word *subject* troubles you, remember the average consumer knows very, very little about beekeeping. Knowing this, almost any aspect of beekeeping will work — pollination, honey plants, harvesting, bottling, observation hives, removing bees from houses — the list is almost endless.

Simply pick a facet of beekeeping and relate the material so the average consumer will understand (and appreciate) what you are talking about.

Emphasize the fact that you are in the beekeeping business, right? Wrong! That's the kiss of death when working with the press. Rather emphasize the subject you've chosen and show how the consumer (reader, watcher) will know more about bees, honey and beekeeping — and be better off by knowing this information. Remember, the consumer MUST get something out of his time investment.

What you get from all of this is a more educated consumer base, appreciative of what you do, and a long term relationship with both them and the local media. You do this for free, of course, only your time is involved. But you're going to be buying more equipment after you put this program in motion. □



Kids 'n Bees

SUSAN COBEY

Kids amaze me. With uninhibited questions and probing curiosity they jump into new adventures with excitement, lacking the caution that experience teaches. Their eagerness to learn something new and explore unfamiliar territories is easily encouraged and can be used as an educational tool.

Surprised at the request of some visiting friends to take their four year old daughter, Isis Mariah Skarra-Pergler, into a beehive, I hesitated. My apprehension of mixing kids and bees for fear of the emotional as well as the physical reaction of a bee sting could arouse in a small child quickly disappeared, however. Isis seemed prepared for the experience, demanding a continuation of the bee stories her parents had told. With excitement in her eyes, she quickly captured my heart with her love of the outdoors, her insatiable curiosity for the diversity of living creatures and interest in their well-being.

I flashed to my own childhood, wrought with discouragements that little girls shouldn't play in the mud looking for lizards and catching tadpoles. My mother still keeps a letter from my kindergarten teacher requesting that "Susan please not bring any more tent caterpillars to school" I frequently spent my block-long walk to school looking for interesting creatures for "Show and Tell" I was now being given the opportunity to encourage and pass this love on to the captive audience of a little girl with parental approval.

We dressed Isis in a veil and explained that if a bee stung, it would hurt and we would need to remove the stinger quickly. She did not seem concerned, her attention focused on watching returning pollen foragers at the entrance. Confident that the newly established breeder queen colony we chose to examine would be both gentle and accustomed to the frequent disturbance of human activity, I lit a smoker.

We opened the colony while I explained that a puff of smoke was like a knock on the door to let the bees know we were coming for a visit. Pulling a frame of bees out, I pointed to the brood and newly emerging fuzzy "baby" bees. The plump queen with her blue numbered tag chose a clean cell to deposit an egg, surrounded by her court of worker bees. Discovering how the bees arranged their nest, Isis looked for the honey and pollen. She pointed out a large drone as I described the differences between drones, workers and queens. I handed her the drone which she eagerly picked up, knowing now it had no stinger. She proudly displayed this to her father, standing nearby.

Demonstrating and teaching children the importance and value of bees benefits our beekeeping industry. I am constantly reminded that beekeeping is invisible to most of the general public. With the introduction of the African bee, beekeeping will be brought into the limelight. It will be up to beekeepers to quiet whatever fears the public perceives, real or imagined. What more effective way to do this than teach the children? Their natural curiosity is easily aroused and the subject of bees is captivating. Taking the time to introduce youngsters to the world of honey bees, to give presentations to local schools, and to see that bees are a part of county fairs and 4-H projects is personally rewarding, fun, and educational. It is something you can do, too! □

Showing Isis the brood as fuzzy new bees emerge and the queen chooses a clean cell to deposit an egg.

BEE TALK

RICHARD TAYLOR

9374 Route 89, Trumansburg, NY 14886

"How BIG is big enough?"

Beekeepers often remark that no two years are the same, and that has already been shown to be true again this year. What is different this year is that as of June 18th, I have not seen, or received any report of, a single stray swarm. In previous years I have always seen or heard of several by now. And I've been keeping an eye out for them, too, as I always do at this time of year. Part of the reason, I'm sure, is that I have kept open brood nests in my own colonies. That is, I took two or three combs of brood and bees out of my strongest colonies last month, used them, along with new queens, to revive the ones I'd lost to tracheal mites, replacing the combs of brood with empty combs from the mite-killed colonies. But I did this only once. Apparently that was enough. Even in my home yard, where all but one of the colonies came through the winter good and strong, I haven't found a single swarm. The lesson to be learned, once again, is that if the queen has plenty of room to lay eggs, then the bees are not likely to swarm, no matter how populous the hive.

But I've something else I want to talk about this time. I want to talk about hive size. How big should a beehive be?

This was thought to be one of the most basic questions underlying successful beekeeping about a hundred years ago, when modern apiculture was just becoming established. It was even thought that successful beekeeping depended upon having just the right tool, so two questions tended to dominate discussions of beekeeping: What is the best hive? And what is the best queen? New races and strains of queens were constantly being discovered and hopes were ignited that this one or that one was going to revolutionize beekeeping. Similarly for beehives, as one beekeeper after another proclaimed his new hive principle and raced to get it patented. Hive innovators tended to divide into two camps, the small-hive advocates vs. the large-hive advocates. Mr. A. I. Root put a damper on this, to some extent, by his mass production of a standard, ten-frame Langstroth hive, which, I believe, was priced at one dollar. But still the controversy persisted. Eventually the small-hive proponents lost out, more or less, though I can remember when some comb honey beekeepers swore by the small eight-frame hive, no longer manufactured. Until fairly recently you could buy big twelve-frame hives with oversize frames, but I don't think any company makes them anymore. When I visited Brother Adam's apiaries in Devonshire, England, about fifteen years ago, I found him using these big hives but I couldn't help wondering why. It was early spring, and each hive contained only a half dozen combs, a small cluster of bees and very little in the way of honey stores. The remaining combs were to be added later, when extensive feeding of sugar syrup would commence. That struck me as about the worst approach to beekeeping I had ever seen.

In this country, the standard ten-frame hive has become virtually universal. I don't think any other size is manufactured any more. But still the question can be asked, of course, whether a colony of bees should be housed in one of these, or two; that is, whether you should use a one-story hive, two-story hive, or something in between.

In a way that is like asking what is the best size truck. It all depends on what you want to use it for. Most commercial beekeepers, at least in the colder latitudes, use two-story hives. This is so that the bees will have plenty of room for ample winter stores. That's the size I used when I was producing extracted honey on a commercial scale. But I sometimes wondered about it. In the spring I sometimes found the bottom stories virtually empty, and it seemed to me like space wasted. I thought that, with plenty of winter stores, they would have done just as well in a smaller hive — a full-depth hive body plus a shallow super, for example.

And, of course, another important consideration is this, that it doesn't make much difference how big a beehive is if you come along in the fall and harvest virtually all the honey that's there, leaving the bees only barely enough to get through the winter. And that's what often happens. The beekeeper harvests the supers, autumn honey and all, very little is left down below for the bees, they barely get through the winter, and then the beekeeper has to feed them several gallons of expensive sugar syrup to build them back up. And that, to my mind, is very poor management.

And that brings us to the central point I want to make, which is, that what matters is not so much how big a hive is, but rather, how it is managed, that is, what you do with it.

Continued on Page 489

QUESTIONS? ANSWERS!

Richard Taylor

Excluder Exercise

Q. I cannot get the bees to go through the queen excluder and fill the supers with honey. Is there a way to teach the bees to do this?

Charlie Allen
Sparta, TN

A. It is certainly true that bees are sometimes slow to begin storing honey in supers over a queen excluder, but the reason is not, as many suppose, that the bees object to the excluder or that they do not like to squeeze between the wires. An excluder, by confining the queen below, also confines the brood nest to the combs underneath it. And bees begin honey storage just above the brood nest, working up from there, with the result that honey does not get stored in the supers until the available area around the brood nest has been filled. Most commercial beekeepers do not use excluders. They let the bees expand their brood nest up into the extracting supers and then, by the time the honey is harvested, the brood in the supers has hatched and been replaced by honey. An excluder is, however, no inhibition to honey storage in a good honey flow, if properly used.

Leftovers

Q. What can you do with partially filled round section supers at the end of the season?

Name Withheld

A. Any sections that are half filled can be saved for home use. They should not, under any circumstances, be sold, unless at half price or less to someone who knows that they are seconds or rejects. Supers containing honey but having no section sufficiently filled even for home use, can be stacked out near the bees in late summer or early fall, for the bees to lick dry. The rings can then be cleaned out and reused. There is no point in trying to extract honey from partially filled sections; it is not worth the trouble. Any sections that the bees have licked dry which are still pure white and clean can be put in fresh supers as bait sections — but do not use darkened or stained sections for this purpose. If supers are set out for the bees to lick dry, this must be done in late summer or fall, not in spring, as the bees will simply ignore them then.

ABF Level

Q. What is considered a low infection of American foul brood, or in other words, what level is treatable?

John E. Palmer
Newmarket, NH

A. The only treatment for an actual case of American foul brood is, in my opinion, to burn the colony. Terramyacin should be used only for prevention — not treatment.

The 'Real Thing'

Q. I have 13 colonies of bees near an amusement park and have noticed large numbers of bees in the garbage cans there, apparently sipping up discarded soft drinks. Is there any danger of my bees spreading disease through my honey?

Utah Beekeeper

A. I have sometimes noticed bees sipping moisture from strange places, but no, I think there is zero chance of this creating any kind of health hazard for people.

Home!

Q. Why do earwigs gather beneath hive covers?

Charles Brand
Beltsville, MD

A. Many insect species, among them ants, wood roaches and earwigs, are attracted to the space on an inner cover simply because it is warm, snug and dry. These three species, at least, are not drawn there by the presence of honey. A roll of tar paper, left in an apiary (or elsewhere) loosely rolled, is likely to have many hundreds of earwigs when picked up.

Mixed-Up

Q. What test can I use to determine whether my honey has been poisoned by mountain laurel, which is common here?

Sarah Dilworth
East Boothbay, ME

A. Beekeepers who live in mountain laurel areas tell me that this honey is rarely a problem, because small amounts of it mingled with honey from other sources have no detectable effect and that one would need to consume a considerable quantity all at once before being adversely affected (a situation that has never been properly documented - Ed).

{Questions are welcomed. Address Dr. Richard Taylor, 9374 Rt. 89, Trumansburg, NY 14886 and enclose a stamped envelope for a prompt response. No phone calls, please.}

BEE TALK . . . Cont. from Page 487

Since I produce only comb honey, I use small hives, that is, hives consisting of a full-depth hive body and a shallow super. It doesn't matter which is on top: some of my hives have the shallow story on top, and the rest have it on the bottom. But what is important here is not how big the hive is, but how much honey is in it in the fall. I make sure it is a lot. That way the colonies, or at least those that don't get mites, come through good and strong and I don't have to feed them any sugar syrup. And that, to my mind, is the key to honey production — STRONG COLONIES fall, winter and spring. If you're spending the early part of the season building up weak colonies, then you are missing out on some important honey flows.

But what got me wondering about hive size this year was this: I started a new apiary last year, getting it up to eight colonies, using splits and stray swarms. Six of these went through the winter in just one story, that is, a single full-depth hive body. I had gotten a pretty good crop from them the first year, and had just not gotten around to adding the second half-story. Well, those small hives wintered just as well as the others, and got off to just as good a start this spring. They had been left with all the fall honey, and went into winter good and heavy, in spite of their small size. So now I'm wondering whether, for comb honey production, that single-story hive might not be big enough, *provided*, of course, the bees are allowed to keep the entire fall flow for winter stores. I'm not sure of the answer, but I intend to leave the single-story colonies as they are again this year, as a test, and compare them again next year. The question of hive size is, I think, still an important one, but one that cannot be answered independently of how the bees are managed. □

Questions and comments are welcomed. Use Trumansburg address, above, and enclose a stamped envelope for a prompt response.

INNER . . . Cont. from Page 452.

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I'm a strong advocate of fall requeening and though we often publish features of spring replacement, I don't practice what I preach. In fact, I can't figure out why anybody would, because the advantages of a late summer coup are almost too numerous to mention. But I'll try anyway.

If you raise your own queens, you'll be able to raise a hundred, or a thousand, and pick the absolute best you can find. After all, there is plenty of food, good weather, lots of nurse bees, plenty of pollen and lots of attention. There's also lots of drones, and if you've a mind, you can saturate your mating area with your choice of suitors and help the progeny along.

If you buy queens (either locally or from the south or west) by now you've had a chance to find out about a particular supplier — either from experience or friends. You'll already know if they raise good, clean stock and how the service is. They, too, have had all the advantages of summer raising, so the quality is at least as good as their early spring stock and probably better. And, by now, prices are reduced to the point where you can afford twice as many as this spring, all probably good stock, and you can afford to pick the best.

Adding a fresh, healthy queen will ensure a good supply of vigorous, young stock going into fall and winter, which makes for a strong unit next spring for pollination or honey production.

If you're treating for tracheal mites, and you probably should be, the break in the brood cycle right after introduction is a good time to add menthol (after your honey is off, of course) if your weather permits. Otherwise, feed later with a shortening and sugar extender patty.

To make the patty, use about a 1:2.5 ratio of shortening:sugar by weight. Use powdered sugar, mix well in a blender and you'll have a nice, stiff, frosting-like product. Put a saucer size mass on wax paper, put on the top bars, paper side down, and let them clean it up — presto — cleaner, if not perfectly clean bees. Knocking mite populations down in the fall as much as possible reduces the speed and size of build-up next spring — it's good insurance.

WOODPILE

Look carefully when you're next outside. Look at corners and edges and out-of-the-way places. Notice what's going on. See how Nature's initiative has invaded all the empty places. There are no bare spots now, no hard edges on the rock wall or new fence posts.

This is summer's cover-up and like its winter carpet counterpart, it softens and smooths even the sharpest lines. The world's rough edges can hide for a bit, quietly beneath a canopy of a million shades of green in a billion leafy shapes and sizes.

This spring, the Ohio Estate's woodpile, located out behind the garage, was in it's typical much-used mess. Split chunks and chips, bark slabs and whole logs — all together in a random and unordered pile.

But priorities being what they are, the wood pile renovation never got to the top of the list. Through garden time, the holiday fourth, rains and heat and all the rest — all through the summer it remained, unchanged.

But yesterday as I walked by that neglected pile of winter heat, it didn't cry out. Guilt didn't grab me as I passed by — and I noticed that.

First glance, then a second look, told why. My woodpile wasn't a woodpile anymore.

Today, it is a tapestry of wild grape vines, weaving all through and over and under one whole side. Another corner is a spurt of thistle bloom and next to that and across the whole of the pile is loosestrife, pushing through and up and around and complementing the thistle — an explosion of lavender neatly covers and hides and draws your eyes from the disarray below.

Along all the edges, lawn grass gone mad screens the worst of the mess, covering the chain saw chips and guarding the creatures who now live and play in this floral high-rise. The long, grassy leaves do well as camouflage for the woodpile and it's inhabitants. All the edges are covered, all the messes are gone, for now.

My woodpile is attractive today, at least to me. It's hidden — behind and beneath a soft and purple haze.

Kim Flottum

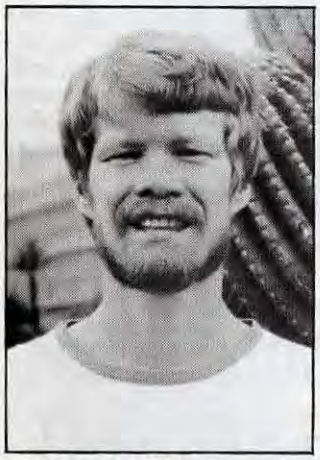
GLEANINGS GLOBE

AUGUST, 1990 ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS

USDA Efforts Pay Off

BAIT HIVE INVENTORS HONORED

Bee researchers Justin O. Schmidt and Steven C. Thoenes have been selected by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) for one of five awards for SIGNIFICANT contributions in the area of Technology Transfer. The Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1986 makes it possible for scientists at federal laboratories to work with the private sector in the development and testing of new products. Recognition of this honor was given at a special ARS Awards Ceremony in Beltsville, MD in June.



JUSTIN SCHMIDT

Few scientists have seen the results of their research used immediately by the industry the way the Schmidt-Thoenes swarm traps are being used. Designed and tested by Dr. Justin O. Schmidt and Steven C. Thoenes of the USDA Carl Hayden Bee Research Center at Tucson; literally thousands of these traps have already been used, especially in Mexico for monitoring the advancing front of the Africanized bee. (The Mexico-Texas border soon will have a string of them from Matamoros to Nuevo Laredo, a distance of about 300 miles.)

The Schmidt-Thoenes swarm trap is built of wood pulp made from recycled newspaper and has been tested by its inventors in Arizona, California and Costa Rica. When the proper combination of size, placement, and pheromone lure was present, this swarm trap out-trapped all its competitors. These traps have all the qualities hoped for — inexpensive, readily available, termite-proof, thermally insulating, relatively strong, and dark inside. Having a rough surface and brown color, they are also difficult to see in the canopy of a tree and therefore are missed by would-be vandals and/or thieves.

The work of Schmidt and Thoenes has been properly documented in scientific publications of the Entomological Society of America, but additionally they have reached members of the beekeeping community by their presentations at the American Bee Research Conference and the Western Apicultural Society and by comprehensive popular reports in the *American Bee Journal* and *Gleanings in Bee Culture*.

At the present time, the swarm trap is available commercially in the original "pot" style and in a new box style that accommodates Langstroth-depth frames with comb or foundation. The dealer, Scentry Inc., Buckeye, AZ, has regional dealers in Mississippi, Virginia, Maine, New York and Texas.

Merger Okay'd

MANITOBA UNITES

The Manitoba beekeepers have voted to merge their association with the Manitoba Honey Producers' Marketing Board.

The new entity will come under the honey producers' marketing board regulations of the Natural Products Marketing Act. This will give the merged body the right to introduce some form of industry based check offs to fund beekeeping activities. This money will be used to pay for research, compensation for losses and promotion of the industry.

Final approval of the restructuring is to be given at this year's Manitoba Beekeepers' Association annual meeting.

Lusby's Lower the Boom

BEE PAYMENTS SOUGHT

Due to the magnificent efforts of two individuals, the long overdue "Bee Indemnity Payment Program" payments may be forthcoming. Ed and Dee Lusby of Arizona, acting on behalf of the Arizona Beekeepers Association and all beekeepers nationwide, are conducting a letter writing campaign to persuade Congress to appropriate funds to pay overdue unpaid B.I.P.P. claims for years 1979 and 1980.

Dee Lusby, using many of her skills acquired in the military, has a certain talent for cutting through the red tape and runaround. Lusby has learned that there is $3.5 million owed to beekeepers nationally and the debt is still carried on the government books. Lusby is urging all beekeepers to write their senators and congressmen requesting payment of these old claims. Lusby says, "An effort at this point by the beekeepers could make a great difference"

Richard Adee, President of The American Honey Producers Ass'n., agrees that it is time to push the B.I.P.P. Adee states, "I believe the time is right to bring this to a successful conclusion"

WAS MEET IN AUGUST IN CA.

The 1990 Annual Conference of the Western Apicultural Society will be held on the "Cal Poly" campus, San Luis Obispo, CA, Tuesday, August 14 through Friday, August 17.

A short course covering Spring Management, Dealing with Surplus Bees, Rearing Queens, Inducing and Dealing with Honey Crops, and Fall Management will be presented free to registered participants on the afternoon of August 14th.

Program speakers include: Mike Burgett, Africanized Honey Bees in Belize; Evan Sugden, Preparing for AHB's in Texas; Lynn Royce, Hymenopteran Micro-features; Adrian Wenner, Life After Bees on Santa Cruz Island; Rob Page, Laying Workers in Honey Bee

MIKE BURGETT

Colonies; Brian Sheriff, British Beekeeping; Margriet Wyborn, Mass Storage of Queens Over

NORM GARY

ROB PAGE

Winter; Mark Winston, Essence of Royalty Queen Pheromone; Bill Chaney, Pesticides and Bees; Joe Stone, Boys' Camp Beekeeping; Jolie Winer, Birds in the Bee Yard; Norm Gary, Learning to Live with "Killer" Bees; and Ann Harman, Apitherapy, the Good Side of Bee Stings.

Workshops on topics including candle making, analyzing bees for tracheal mites, controlling tracheal mites, and high speed extraction of uncapped honey combs will round out the program.

Registration materials must be received by: Housing and Conference Services, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407 (805) 756-1586 before July 13th to avoid an additional $15 "late fee" The registration fees for the four day conference will vary with the options selected, but should be in the range of $132-$181 per attendee. Self-contained campers are allowed on campus for $15 a day.

Registration materials are available from Eric Mussen, Entomology Extension, U. C. Davis, Davis, CA 95616. Ph. (916) 752-0470.

"I am one of those who desire to wash the flag, not burn it."
Norman Thomas

EEP Both Good and Bad

EXPORTS PROGRAM

What popular government program displaces U.S. commercial exports, transfers more benefits to foreigners than to U.S. farmers, and continues to antagonize some of our natural allies in trade negotiations? In case you haven't guessed, it's the Export Enhancement Program (EEP), according to Robert L. Paarlberg, with the Harvard Center for International Affairs and Wellesley College.

"The popularity of the EEP is hard to deny, but on reflection, it is also hard to explain, writes Paarlberg in a recent issue of CHOICES. Some of the EEP's most likely allies are actually its biggest critics and vice versa.

"Farm groups like EEP even though it is a subsidy mostly to foreigners and to agribusiness. Meanwhile, foreigners and some in agribusiness are among the EEP's chief critics."

Paarlberg points out how some of the arguments in support of EEP are actually based on "misconceptions" For example, one argument that's commonly delivered in support of EEP is that the program has boosted U.S. exports. But Paarlberg points to studies that indicate the EEP's contribution is actually minimal.

In fact, Paarlberg contends that EEP hasn't added much to foreign sales because "nine out of ten EEP bonus bushels simply displace sales that would have been made anyway.

"Instead of the EEP, it should be called the EDP," for export **displacement** program, contends Paarlberg.

Some supporters of the EEP argue that any trade gain under this program is worth it, because the program essentially "costs us nothing" "To say that it costs the government nothing to give away commodities that it 'already owns' is an argument that insults our common sense," says Paarlberg. "It is a bit like saying it would cost the government nothing to give away Yellowstone Park, or that it would cost me nothing to give away my house and car."

If perception is more important than reality, the architects of EEP are likely to continue defending the program and reaping political benefits as long as the perception can be maintained, says Paarlberg. But he warns that "the politics of perception, however, can quickly turn sour."

U.S. Government stocks in 1990 will be tight enough, at least in food grains, to make possible a sudden change in market conditions, and if so, a suddenly adverse political perception of the EEP, cautions Paarlberg.

"If a new encounter with bad weather pushes food prices sharply upward, or perhaps curtails the availability of surplus foodgrains for famine relief, then the happy perception that has until now been cultivated — that EEP is responsible for higher exports, higher farm prices, and surplus stock reductions — could well become a politically unhappy perception and a major embarrassment for some of today's supporters of EEP."

Guelph Program Started

TRACHEAL MITE RESISTANCE SOUGHT

The University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, has begun a program designed to find strains of bees resistant to tracheal mite.

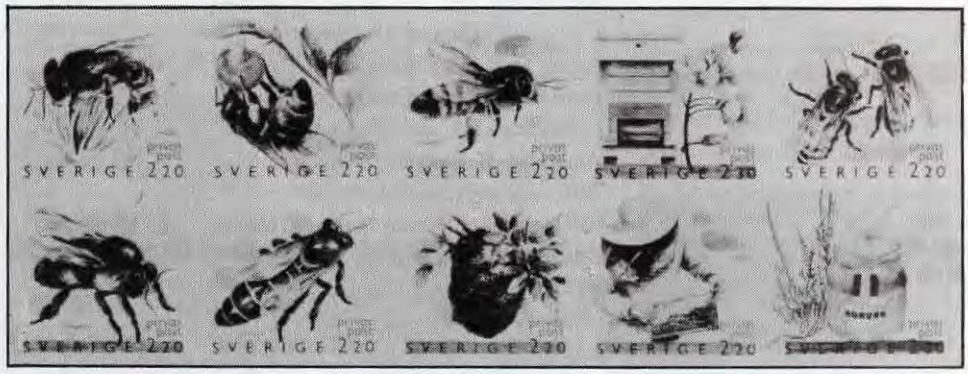
Researchers will breed the more resistant strains with the long-term goal of eventually making them available to Canadian beekeepers.

Meantime, the spread of the tracheal mites continues to concern Canadian beekeepers. In Ontario, an area of 200 square miles stretching north from Niagara Falls has been placed under quarantine after tracheal mites

Continued on Next Page

Stamps in the News

Several new stamps depicting bees and beekeeping recently have been released. From Cyprus, on 10-16-89, there were four full color stamps showing bees. The 3¢ stamp shows uncapped brood and bees on a comb, the 10¢ a worker collecting pollen from a rock rose, the 15¢ a worker foraging on lemon blossom and the 18¢ has a queen surrounded by her court.



Background information on these stamps is well documented (W Castle, Bee Craft, Dec. 1989 p 367-9).

The Cyprus Study Circle, a world-wide organization of philatelists has some members who are also beekeepers. It publishes a periodical, *The Cyprus Circular Post*, in which were shown two illustrations of envelopes, one mailed to Frank Benton in Austria from Cyprus, and one from Mrs. Benton in Medina, OH to Mr. Benton in Cyprus in 1882. On the latter was a printed inscription from The A. I. Root Company:

". . . manufacturer and dealer in every description of supplies and tools for apiculture".

Frank Benton (1852-1919), inventor of the Benton Queen cage, was working for the Dept. of Entomology for the USDA at the time, looking for a good race of bees and working in apiaries both in Cyprus and in Austria.

It was this investigation by the Study Circle to pressure the postal authorities to issue bee stamps to honor the "Winged Queen of Cyprus, Queen of the most beautiful and energetic honey gatherers known"

Another 1989 release was the set of four color bee stamps from Russia in 5, 10, 20 and 35 K. They show a worker, a worker on a flower, a modern hive with bees on some pink fruit flowers and the queen, respectively.

A more recent release of stamps comes from Sweden, with 10 stamps. Designed by I. Axelsson, the multicolor offset in booklets of 20 are discount stamps, good only for mail sent within Sweden or to other Scandinavian countries. They show: bee foraging, bee on blueberry flower, worker bee with a pollen load, worker-drone-queen with a honeycomb background, a swarm, a beekeeper holding a frame and a jar of heather honey.

If you are interested in collecting stamps with honey bees, other bees or beekeeping motifs, contact Ar Gwenan, an international newsletter devoted exclusively to this topic. Write: *Ar Gwenan*, P. O. Box 240, Litchfield, OH 44253.

Tracheal, Contd.

were found there last year. This spring some 1,100 hives were destroyed.

In British Columbia, mites have been found for the first time in the lush Okanagan Valley. Alberta has found mite infestation south of Calgary. Manitoba has found mites in two locations, one of them at a new location north of Brandon.

Manitoba beekeepers have been advised to keep their apiaries a minimum of five miles north of the North Dakota border. Beekeepers who find swarms in this "no-go" area are being advised to capture and destroy them immediately.

The Manitoba Beekeeper's Association has asked that tracheal mite detections be treated in the same was as last year — allowing the colonies to operate under quarantine until the end of production season.

Meantime, apiarists in Saskatchewan expect mites will be found in several areas since they were found in 22 beekeeping operations last year and only about half of these were depopulated.

In the east, the Prince Edward Island government has passed legislation barring the import of bees from anywhere except New Zealand.

Loan Program May Change, Too

HONEY BOARD, LOANS DEBATED

The 1991 referendum to determine the continuation of the National Honey Board should include a question on the assessment refunds, the House Agriculture Committee has decided.

As the committee "marked up" provisions for the 1990 Farm Bill, it included a list of amendments to the Honey Research,

TROY FORE, ABF Sec. reports

Promotion and Consumer Information Act, the enabling legislation of the Honey Board.

The committee is proposing that the 1991 referendum ballot have two questions. *The producers and importers would be asked to determine whether the Honey Program program should be renewed for an additional five years. They would walso determine if the refunds should be ended.* The National Honey Packers and Dealers Association is supporting the amendment to allow the vote on refunds.

A variety of other "housekeeping" amendments to the law were included in the proposal approved by the House committee. These include some refinements and "fixes" for problems which surfaced since the Board began collecting assessments in February 1987.

The House and Senate agriculture committees have completed work on their respective versions of the 1990 Farm Bill and are preparing their proposals for floor debate.

A continuation of the current honey loan price support program has been approved by both committees, but, according to the American Beekeeping Federation, the honey program may face stiff opposition during the floor debate in both chambers. Also, all farm programs are likely to be reviewed against budgetary constraints and will probably see reductions in support rates or lower payment/loan limitations.

There is a difference in the support levels approved by the two committees for the five crop years of the 1990 Farm Bill, 1991-1995:

- The Senate Agriculture Committee has approved a honey price support rate equal to the 1989-crop level, 56.86 cents. This is the rate determined by the 1985 Farm Bill, without regard to the 1/2-cent reduction imposed by the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987.
- The House Agriculture Committee approved the continuation of the program at the lower, 1990-crop level of 53.77 cents. In contrast to the Senate, the House took the 1/4-cent reduction from the 1987 Budget Act.

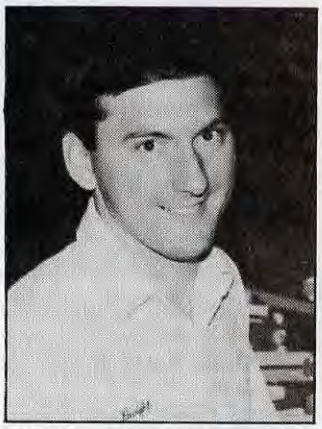
If the adopted rates stand through the floor debates in each chamber, the difference in the rates will have to be reconciled in a conference committee.

Floor debate is likely to commence soon after Congress returns on July 10. And, keep in mind, that by this time fuller impact of the S & L bailouts will be known and the budget deficit will have even more attention by the legislators.

One Year Term

STOLLER NAMED CHAIRMAN NHB

Dwight Stoller was named Chairman of the National Honey Board at the Boards' annual meeting held in June in Vail, Colorado. Stoller replaces Harry Rodenberg as the board's chairman. He will hold this position for the next year, when his term expires.



DWIGHT STOLLER

Bill Gamber was also named vice chairperson, Steve Klein was named Sec-Treas. and John Milam and Binford Weaver were named executive committee members.

New Executive Committee Chairs include Bruce Beekman, Industry Relations; Richard Adee, Advertising and Information; Hans Boedeker, Product Research and Development; John Miller, International Mkt. development.

Stoller said he was happy to be chosen as chairman and was excited to be working with his present crew.

The National Honey Board will hold their next meeting Oct. 4, 5 and 6 in Minneapolis, MN. They will be interviewing select candidates for Executive Director, filling Dan Hall's recently vacated position. They are also investigating the possibility of hiring a full time Export Director.

Guess What!!!

NEW HONEY PRODUCT

Canadian beekeepers believe they have come up with the greatest invention since sliced bread — sliced honey.

Although details are still top secret, the invention — the result of work involving the Ontario agricultural ministry, the Ontario Beekeepers Association and the University of Guelph researchers has a fudge-like consistency and its secret ingredient is ground nut flour.

Chris Ostrovski, the University of Guelph's manager of innovation services, says the new product leaves no mess and can be cut into cubes for sweetening tea or coffee or moulded into cups to hold fruit or other deserts.

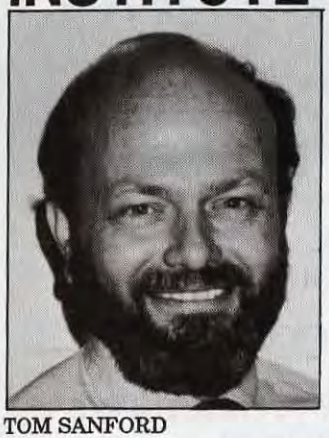
Ostrovski, contacted by *Gleanings*, declined top go into further details of sliced honey. He said the research team is awaiting word on its application for a patent on the process before divulging the process.

But the breakthrough is considered important by Canadian apiarists — important enough to become a major factor in marketing the millions of pounds of surplus honey produced annually in Canada.

Our News Department is always on the lookout for information or stories relating to honey bees, beekeepers or beekeeping. If you or your association has a story that should have exposure, contact the Globe Editor at 1-800-289-7668.

Camping & Bees

FLORIDA INSTITUTE



TOM SANFORD

A successful beekeeper must be a manager. This means managing not only the insects themselves, but also the subsequent processing and marketing of the products derived from their colony. The beekeeper uses principles of biology, chemistry, meteorology and other disciplines to make effective decisions in all aspects of the operation. The Beekeepers' Institute's goal is to provide the best possible training to make critical management decisions. This gathering also constitutes an informal forum for mutual discussion about problems confronting anyone actively keeping bees or in the process of deciding to do so. Both beginning and experienced beekeepers, therefore, can profit from the Institute.

Like many aspects of modern life, Florida beekeeping is becoming more complex. In recent years, two parasitic mites have been introduced with which every beekeeper must now contend. The expected arrival of the African bee will also provide challenges to beekeeping in the years ahead. Mite detection and critical new information concerning African honey bees top the agenda at this year's Institute. Discussions will be enhanced by time for hands-on activities with live bees. Those planning to be actively involved in live-bee demonstrations should bring a bee veil and be prepared to sign a waiver of liability.

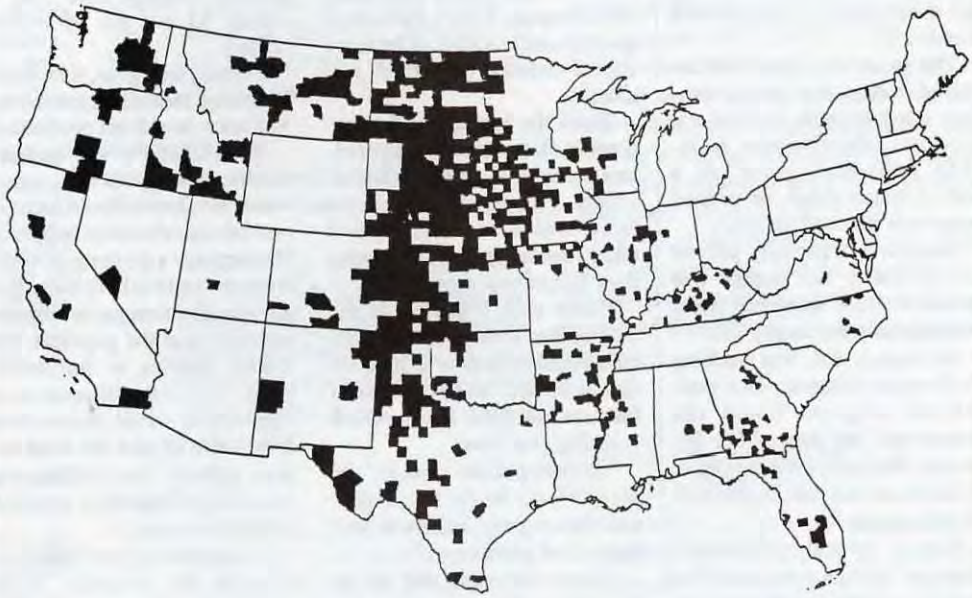
Farming-Dependent Counties Decreasing

Over the years, a trend has existed toward more nonagricultural employment and less agricultural employment in rural counties. Decades ago, the rural economy was dominated by farming. Currently, most rural areas depend on nonfarm industries — 9 out of 10 rural workers are employed in nonfarm industries. Since the 1950s, the number of counties dependent on farming as an economic base has continued to decline. As defined by the ERS, farming-dependent counties are those where farming contributes at least **20%** of the county's labor and proprietor income. The maps illustrate this declining trend. In 1950, about 2,000 out of 3,069 counties were farming dependent, and by the mid-1980s this number had declined to 516.

In the early 1980s, 514 counties were farming-dependent and 540 counties were farming-important, where farming contributed 10 to 19% of the county's labor and proprietor income. The remaining 2,015 counties are not farming-dependent or farming-important counties, because farming contributed less than 10% of the county's labor and proprietor income.

Farming Dependent Counties in 1950.

Average of Farming Dependent Counties in 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985 and 1986.



SOURCE: USDA

Look Sharp

HOT HONEY BEE STAMPS

As a result of suspected improper handling of waste by a paper recycler, imperforate, untagged, intaglio-missing Honeybee stamps temporarily made their way into public hands.

Error Honey bee coil stamps legitimately released through the Bureau of Engraving and Printing could never show up in vertical pairs.

On Jan. 16, 1989, a supervisor at a Southern Maryland post office facility referred postal inspectors to covers bearing what appeared at first to be imperforate Honey bee stamps with the intaglio portion omitted.

The covers shown to the inspectors were rejected by automatic facer-canceler equipment at the post office because the stamps on them were untagged.

The ensuing investigation by postal inspectors yielded a portion of a printing web containing nearly 1 million 25¢ stamps, or about $250,000 worth of postage, if used.

The recovery of the partially printed stamps was made Feb. 3, 1989, by external crimes inspectors from a women's restroom at a Maryland paper recycling firm. The stamps had been in the facility since June or July 1988, before the Sept. 2 release of the stamps.

Three individuals were found to be primarily responsible for the distribution of the printer's waste.

The paper recycling firm involved had, at that time, a two-year contract with the General Services Administration to recycle government paper. As a part of that contract, no printed paper was to leave the BEP.

Somehow, a partially printed roll of Honey bee stamps was mixed with the unprinted paper that regularly leaves the BEP.

An inmate who was working for the paper company on a work release program found the stamps and hid them. After his release from jail, the man began to distribute and use the partially printed stamps.

First, a quantity of several thousand stamps torn from the web were given to a corrections officer. Others were given to the man's former cellmate.

These individuals, as well as employees of the recycling firm, began using the partially printed stamps on mail. One individual was thought to have used more than 400 of what the postal inspectors referred to as "non-genuine stamps"

Postal inspectors recovered about 250 pieces of mail bearing the partially printed bee stamps, but the remainder, more than 150 pieces of mail, were never found. None are known in collector hands.

No charges were filed against any of the individuals. It was found that no actual theft of government property took place since the stamps involved were waste paper.

At least one of the individuals involved, however, was ordered to reimburse the USPS for postage revenue lost by the use of partially unprinted stamps. That amount, about $56, was paid.

Reprinted from
Linn's Stamp News

Good for the Environment, Too

Erosion Control Profitable

On much of the land being enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the federal government is spending far more than necessary to control soil erosion.

That's the analysis of the program by Jim Sinner, an agricultural economist at Cornell University, who says it's time to put less emphasis on land retirement and to encourage cropping practices that reduce erosion.

Sinner says that 75% of the 100 million acres eligible for the CRP could be farmed at or below the "tolerable" soil loss level if farmers adopted less erosive cropping practices.

"Adopting these change," he says, "would be far less expensive than paying farmers to take land out of production."

Sinner points out that across the United States, erosion can often be reduced for less than $1 per ton by changing cropping practices. That compares with a national average CRP cost of almost $3 per ton of erosion control.

Further, he argues, it is critical to change farming practices, not just retire land from production.

The Cornell agricultural economist suggests that conservation programs should focus on cost per ton of erosion reduction. He proposes a program in which farmers would submit bids offering specific changes in cropping practices and the payment they would require to implement them. The U.S. Department of Agriculture would accept those bids which offered the most erosion control per dollar, and would sign long-term contracts with the farmers.

If this strategy were followed, he says, the program "would achieve the same conservation benefits at less cost to taxpayers and would have less economic impact on rural communities."

The new program would consider land retirement along with many other possible soil conservation practices, comparing all bids based on cost per ton. It would also achieve other objectives of the current CRP including improvement in water quality.

Sinner's article details other options of his proposed conservation plan, such as geographic "bidding pools" where higher rates are paid if environmental benefits of erosion control are greater than in other areas. Other options would be for states to offer a bonus to encourage enrollment in areas where environmental concerns are more serious, or a federal bonus to reduce production of a surplus crop.

The CRP, mandated by the Food Security Act of 1985, is one of the largest efforts ever launched to reduce the effects of agriculture on the environment. To date, farmers have enrolled 33.9 million acres, or 8% of all U.S. cropland, at an estimated cost to the federal government of $2 billion per year.

Display Index

Ralph's Law

Richard Dalby

BOTTOM·BOARD

Has this ever happened to you?

You don your armor some hot afternoon and head for the apiary to do battle with your winged legions. Once there you light your trusty smoker and with a flourish you pry loose the lid. The bees are there to greet you, lances at the ready.

No problem. You're not about to let a few bees intimidate you. You deftly shove the smoker in their faces, work the bellows with great aplomb AND NOTHING HAPPENS! Your smoker, which was belching great clouds of smoke minutes before, has inexplicably gone out. You replace the hive lid with all due haste and retreat from the apiary, certain your bees are laughing at you.

No doubt you feel foolish, but none of this is really your fault. You've just been victimized by Ralph's Law. It's a law I formulated some years ago to explain all my gaffes as a beekeeper. Stated simply, Ralph's Law says that "Whatever a beekeeper least expects to happen — will happen. Sooner or later"

Ralph's Law applies to all beekeepers. From the beginner with one hive to the commercial beekeeper with years of experience. For example, a tale I heard told of a man with thousands of hives. He was skimming one of his large settling tanks one day when somehow he slipped and fell headfirst into a few thousand gallons of honey. Fortunately, so the story goes, he was able to extricate himself with no damage done to anything but his pride.

And who among us hasn't had the sticky experience of allowing a honey container to overflow all over the floor? Anyone who hasn't done that at least once hardly deserves to be known as a beekeeper. And, yes, this sort of thing happens to the big boys, too. I've heard of them accidentally overfilling a huge settling tank. With a correspondingly huge cleanup job on their hands. Ralph's Law applies indiscriminately.

And what about problems with queens? Ralph's Law operates in this area of beekeeping, too. Who hasn't had unforseen difficulties with queen introduction? I know I have. Even after reading and following all the instructions. The ones that said to remove the little cork from the candy end of the queen cage. Thus allowing the bees to eat through the candy into the cage, releasing the queen.

Here's what happened. I removed the cork, per instructions. Then I placed the queen cage in the appropriate queenless hive positioning the cage between two frames. Screen exposed. Candy end down. Then I went back to the city for a week. When I returned to my apiary, I carried with me a vision of that caged queen now roaming free. Going busily about her queenly duties.

What a surprise to discover that my queen was still confined to her little shipping cage. The bees had eaten no more than a quarter of the way through the queen cage candy. The candy had dried out and become approximately as hard as concrete. Ralph's Law had struck again. I learned later that I should have taken a nail and make a small hole all the way through the queen cage candy. Then the bees could have eaten their way through the candy before it dried out.

My experience with bait hives also illustrates Ralph's Law. There is a magical allure to the concept of a bait hive. You set out two or three empty hives and, when you check them a few days later, you find them full of bees. New bees. Free bees. What true beekeeper isn't moved by this notion? But it doesn't work. At least it doesn't work the way it's supposed to work.

Let me explain. Several years ago I got serious about bait hives. It was swarming time and I had visions of luring in some free bees. So I put out some bait hives. Had them fixed up real nice, too. New paint. Good lids and bottom boards. The sort of hives, I thought, I'd like to move into if I were an errant bee. I even considered putting a VACANCY sign on the front of those hives.

I needn't have bothered. My bait hives sat empty for weeks. As near as I could tell, bees paid absolutely no attention to them. Finally I moved them back to the honey house. So much for bait hives. But at the back of my apiary sat a couple old hives filled with nothing but a few empty frames. Not even any wax in the frames. Those hives looked pretty sorry to me. Paint peeling, lids askew. The low-rent district.

Funny thing, though. When I went to move those two hives into the honey house, I found them both full of bees. Not just bees but a lot of new comb full of honey and brood. I was flabbergasted. To think that a swarm would pass up my beautiful bait hives to take up residence in a slum district. I was delighted, of course, to have the new bees. Just perplexed by their strange housing preferences. But now I understand. Ralph's Law supplies the explanation.

And here's something to remember and take consolation from. There is an equivalent of Ralph's Law in any pursuit you might name. So it's not just beekeepers who are destined to screw up from time to time. Take gardening, for example. It's a wonderful pastime and a lot of fun. But you have to watch out for those nematodes. □