

Summer Picnic

The summer 2008 picnic will be held on Saturday, July 19 at George & Joyce Lyke's Cottage on Oneida Lake. The address is 2175 Lakeshore Drive, Blossvale, NY 13308. ESHPA will serve BBQ chicken, members are requested to bring a dish to pass, beverage of choice, place setting and a lawn chair. A \$5 per person fee will be collected to cover expenses.

The meeting will start at 11AM. Directors are requested to be there by 9AM for a business meeting.

To offset costs there will be a Silent Auction. Please consider donating an item for auction.

Guest speakers will be Ron Phipps of CPNA International, Ltd. on "U.S. & World Honey Markets and Trends" and Paul Cappy, NY State Apiculturist will give the latest from the Apiary Inspection Program.

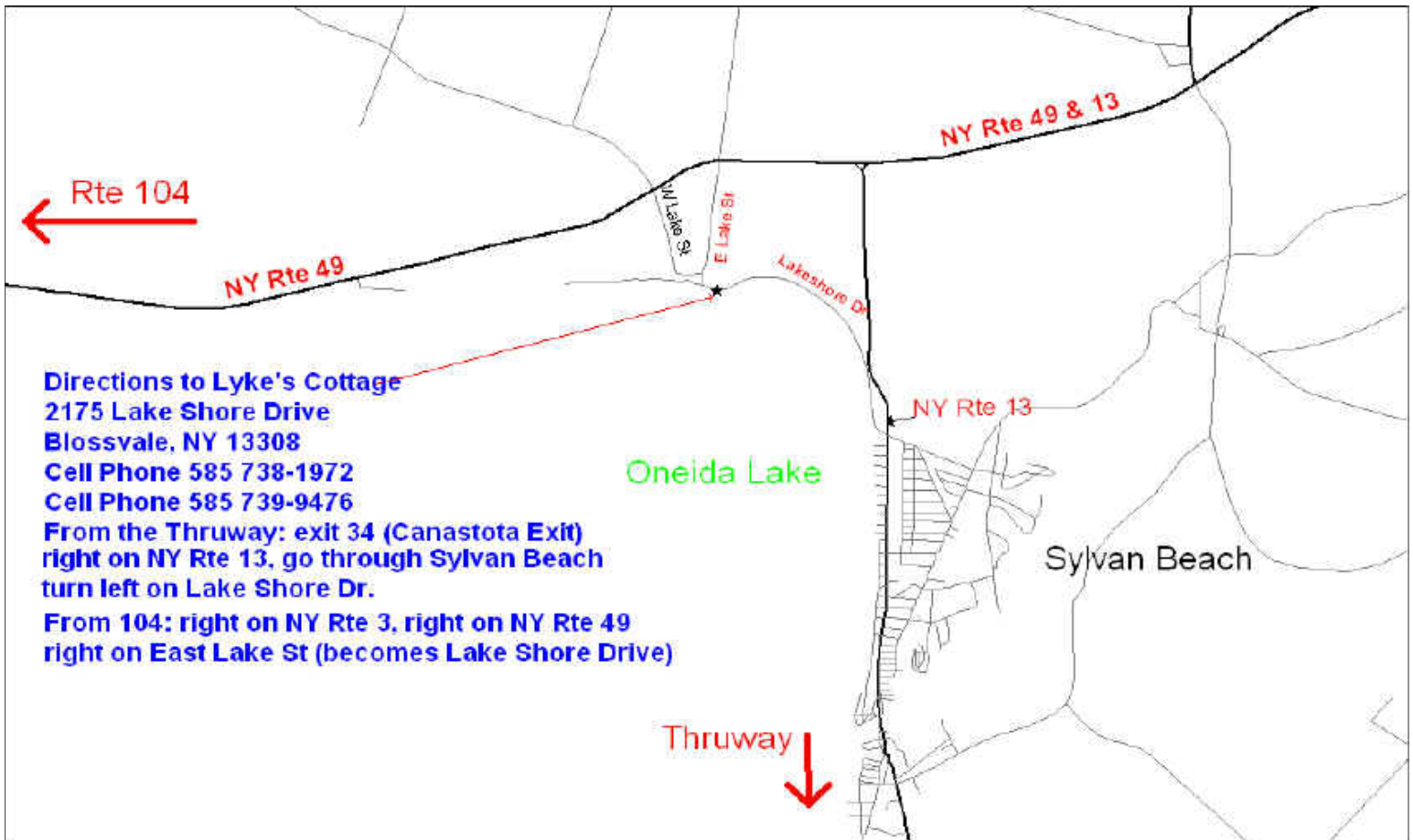
Electronic Copies Anyone?

Editor's Note: It's surprising, almost shocking to realize that each newsletter mailed costs about \$2.50! In today's electronic age, a newsletter can arrive faster, cheaper and in color at no cost whatsoever to ESHPA.

If you are willing to receive your newsletter electronically, please send email to amorris@uamail.albany.edu or let me know at the picnic.

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Bee Culture

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ESHPA at the State Fair!

<http://www.nysfair.org/fair>

The New York State Fair, August 21 through September 1, is upon us again. We need volunteers, there are never too many. So please sign up. Those who work at the ESHPA Booth will receive free admission and parking passes. Especially needed is someone to open up in the morning; this would be a great help! Sign up sheets will be circulated at the summer picnic. Please do your share to promote honey and beekeeping.

We will be selling honey; *YOUR* honey, *YOUR* label, *YOUR* product that people from all over the state will see, taste and use! ESHPA buys from you whatever we sell and gives you back the rest. We will be raising prices and paying more this year. You must have \$1,000,000 product liability insurance and have a copy of certificate on hand at the booth (this is a State Fair rule).

Products to be sold include 1 lb. skeps, 12 oz. bears, creamed honey, comb honey and cut-comb honey. Beeswax and beeswax products, such as hand cream, lip balm, etc. are needed (insurance is also required). Contact me or Earl Villecco (607-693-1571) if you are interested.

I would like to end by thanking everyone who volunteered to work at the booth, and those who packed honey and beeswax. Personally I'd like to thank Leslie, Hans and Joe for our great display shelves, and especially Earl Villecco, my greatest asset! Why? I may have put in 15 days straight the past three years managing the booth, but Earl is in charge of making sure we have honey to sell. No honey, no money! The State Fair is ESHPA's largest revenue generator. We *ALL* should thank Earl!

Respectfully,
Rob Sorrensen
(315-585-6670)

PS: This will be my last year managing the booth. A replacement will be needed. Anyone volunteer to take over?

A Change of Officers

Acting upon a letter of resignation from Lloyd Spear, ESHPA President, submitted to John Tauzel, Farm Bureau, the ESHPA Board of Directors voted to remove Lloyd from office. Ted Elk, First Vice President was appointed president.

Accordingly, the vice presidents moved up in rank. There is currently a vacancy in the 3rd Vice Presidency. If you are willing to serve, please contact a member of the ESHPA Board of Directors.

Empire State Honey Producers Association Officers and Directors

TED ELK, President.
Co. Rt. 18
Theresa, NY 13691
324-6582 (H)

GEORGE LYKE, 1st Vice President
7203 Slocum Rd.
Ontario, NY 14519-9345
(315) 524-9746

GREG KALICIN, 2nd Vice President
273 Randall Rd.
Lisbon, NY 13658
(315) 322-4208

VACANT, 3rd Vice President
Imagine your name
And address here!

HANS JUNGA, Secretary/Treasurer
46527 Co. Rt. 1
Alexandria Bay, NY 13607
(315) 482-6438

**AARON MORRIS,
Newsletter Editor**
PO Box 246
Round Lake, NY 12151-0246
(518) 899-6113

Directors:

JOAN-ANN HOWLAND, Past President	(607) 657-2517
MARK BERNINGHAUSEN (N)	(315) 769-2566
WILLIAM CROWELL (*)	(315) 337-2281
JUDY DOAN (W)	(585) 964-3121
ART GERBER (W)	(716) 599-3795
MIKE GRIGGS (S)	(607) 564-0656
ROBERT SORRENSER, Jr. (S)	(315) 585-6670
MIGEUL VAENTIN (LI)	(631) 588-6102
RICHARD WAKEFIELD (N)	(315) 493-0347

* Director at Large

Yard Registration

Arguably, the most controversial topic at the fall meeting in November, 2007 was the discussion of the law passed that may require registration of apiary locations within New York State. Without a doubt, the biggest objection was the manner in which the law was passed, how little ESHPA was involved, and the surprising nature of how members were informed. Reaction to the law has ranged from casual ("What's the big deal?") to disgruntled ("Well I wouldn't have minded had I been included in the process") to downright indignant (see page 4).

Since last fall, ESHPA officers met with the Patrick Hooker, Commissioner of Agriculture, Robert Mungari, Director of Plant Division, NYS Ag and Markets, Paul Cappy, State Apiculturist, Steve Wilson, Chair, Apicultural Industry Advisory Committee and John Tausel, Associate Director for Regulatory Issues and Legislative Affairs, NYS Farm Bureau. The intent of the meeting was to make the case that discussion amongst the impacted parties was poor at best and there is a need to foster better avenues of communication.

In March, 2008 a letter was sent to New York beekeepers outlining the benefits of "establishing a database of beekeepers, yard locations and the number of colonies at each location for the purpose of conducting more effective and efficient surveys for existing pests and new emerging pests such as CCD. They include:

1. The ability to quantify the industry and to monitor the impact of various "invasive" pests on the state's honeybee resources.
2. The establishment of an improved communication network with beekeepers. This would be of particular benefit to beekeepers that are not subject to inspection in a given season and are not members of a beekeeping club or association.
3. The compilation of more accurate information to facilitate the effective and efficient use of inspection funds and to assist in the determination of where to locate the workforce.
4. The ability to expedite communications with beekeepers regarding inspections and pest information or alerts.

5. The ability to provide a more accurate description of who the "industry" is and how we can better serve it. This information will aid in the identification of research priorities and outreach activities.

6. The ability to aid in the identification of bees available to meet agricultural pollination demands.

7. An improved potential for early pest identification and rapid response. Pests such as the Africanized honeybee along with other emerging pest threats could be monitored through various high risk pathways, i.e. package bees, queens, nucs, migratory movement. "

Again, some members may agree with these benefits and others may not. Regardless, many have observed that the law has already passed so we beekeepers in New York State might as well make the best of it.

In keeping with the ESHPA motto, *A Statewide Organization to Promote and Protect Interests of New York State Beekeepers* the Officers decided to take an informal poll to determine what exactly is the overall reaction to the passed legislation. To that end there is a postcard included in this newsletter asking you how you feel about the legislation passed in July 2007. This is a very informal poll, but it will be helpful nonetheless in guiding the ESHPA Officers as to how they are to proceed in dealing with this new law. *Please remember to affix a 27¢ stamp when you mail your response, and please respond promptly.* Poll responses will be kept in strict confidence; we are interested in overall numbers, not individual responses. Identifying return addresses are affixed to the postcard to ensure that no one pads the results.

Of course, such a simple poll does not offer much room to add additional comments. If you have further concerns or thoughts regarding this legislation or its implementation, please do not hesitate to contact ESHPA officers or any of the people mentioned in the second paragraph of this article. Additionally, members are reminded that it never hurts to contact your state legislators. Their addresses can be found online at:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/ils/legislature/legis.html>

The Western New York Honey Producers
P.O. Box 873
East Aurora, New York 14052

The Honorable Patrick Hooker
10B Airline Drive
Albany NY 12235

February 13, 2008

Dear Commissioner,

At a board meeting of the Western New York Honey Producers, Inc. earlier this year several members expressed their concern with recent legislation enacted by the state legislature pertaining to mandatory registration of apiaries. In response, our board of directors has been looking into the matter. We've talked with beekeepers all over the state, including members of the board of directors of the Empire State Honey Producers Association. Both organizations, the largest in the state, were unaware of this legislation until 'after the fact'. In communicating with them they informed us of their meeting with you on Friday, February 15th. We convened an emergency meeting of our board and we would like to offer our input. Thank you for affording beekeepers this opportunity to meet with you

Beekeepers, especially commercial beekeepers, cannot survive without the goodwill and generosity of farmers and landowners. Those same generous farmers and landowners though do not want, or deserve, any complications in return for their generosity. Many do not want their property entered into databanks. With freedom of information act on the books confidentiality can be compromised. Also, many are happy to see the beekeeper but do not wish to see 'strangers' on their property. Privacy is rightfully an issue. Some landowners are out of state and some properties belong to corporations. Privacy again becomes an issue, as well as security and liability. A beekeeper who they know or, possibly, do business with is one thing; strangers, understandably, are not welcome.

Fees are another issue of concern. Budgets are tight. Though we are told that fees are not on the table at this time, administrators and legislatures are in a tough position. Revenue growth is slowing or in reverse. Costs are rising. And no one wants to raise taxes to make up for shortfalls. Fees are often sought to relieve the problem.

An evenly enforced inspection program for American Foul Brood disease with a policy of abating any disease found through the burning of diseased colonies can be a help to our industry. There are two inspectors currently responsible for the western portion of the state. Our experiences have been that they do a good job; they recognize diseased colonies, communicate well with beekeepers, and are reasonably punctual with

appointments (the nature of their work can play havoc with a schedule). We feel that our area has good coverage. There is even some overkill as some operations, with little or no history of disease problems, receive multiple inspections annually.

One suggestion for improving efficiency that has come up repeatedly over the years is perhaps starting the inspectors' season earlier. They could inspect more colonies without having to remove honey 'supers' and could also better inspect migratory operations that enter the state early in the season, before they are 'spread' into pollination and honey production locations. OUR ORGANIZATION BELIEVES THAT IT IS CRITICAL THAT ALL BEEKEEPERS AND APIARIES ARE SUBJECT TO THE SAME LEVELS OF INSPECTION AND ARE HELD TO THE SAME STANDARDS.

We are pleased to see the enforcement of ethics rules thereby reducing the likelihood of conflicts of interest.

Changing the inspection programs focus from its 'regulatory function (disease control combined with migratory certification) to a quasi arm of research was, we believe, a serious mistake. IF THE PROGRAM IS TO IMPLEMENT THE LAW AS IT IS NOW WRITTEN WE RECOMMEND DROPPING THE WHOLE PROGRAM. This would not affect the movement of bees. Many states have dropped their inspection programs and this has not prevented the movement of bees into or out of those states. Regulatory agencies permit movement without meaningful inspection, with certification provided usually through the recording of written statements and filing of same at a state office.

The Western New York Honey Producers, Inc. is a proactive organization. We have six meetings planned for 2008, all with educational programs for our members as well as the general public. One meeting is always a beginners workshop with lecture, demonstrations, and hands on (in hive) activities. Pest and disease management is a part of most of our programs. We have over one hundred members and are growing. Our meetings now average over 60 attendees.

Four years ago there was only one queen producer in Western New York. With our training and encouragement there are now at least seven, with several more preparing to do the same. Breeding from stock suited to our area is a big plus for the viability of our areas beekeepers both financially and biologically. One of our members is working with the USDA bee labs in further developing the most mite resistant, winter hardy bees available anywhere. These are used here and shipped nationwide.

We have a research fund with close to \$30,000.00 and are currently seeking proposals focused on applied bee

research from New York colleges and universities.

With our encouragement and sponsorship and the help of Cornell University another of our members is training to be able to examine samples of bees and to measure the nosema levels in those bees. Aside from providing this valuable service right here in New York State this would also remove some of the burden from the USDA's Beltsville bee lab so that they can focus on their proper function, which is research.

We are working hard to improve the viability of New York States apiaries as well as the farms that depend on healthy bees for pollination.

We are beekeepers but we are also citizens. We appreciate that the state wants to support us but feel that mandatory registration, a year round state apiculturalist,

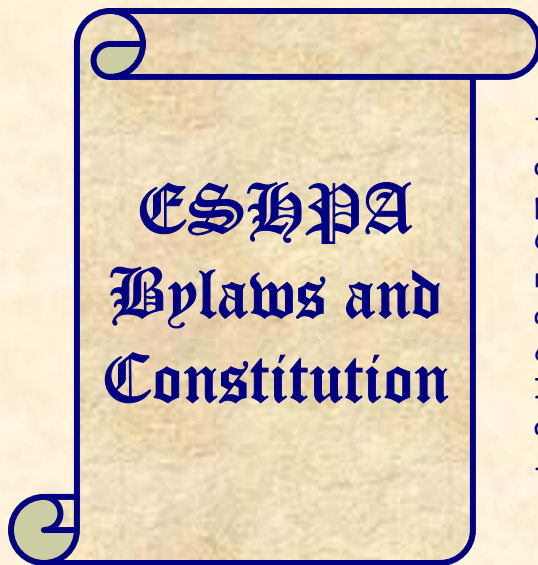
and an increase in the number of inspectors is an extravagance that we cannot afford and that will prove onerous to the very industry that it is intended to help.

After canvassing the state, we are certain that the vast majority of New York beekeepers feel the same.

Sincerely,

The Western New York Honey Producers, Inc.
Bob Brachmann, President
Geri Hens, Vice President
Fred Thompson, Secretary
Lewis Tandy, Treasurer
Ed Patton, George Belzile, Mike Potoczak, Harry
Whitehead, Dave Balonek, Board of Directors

Cc: Empire State Honey Producers Association



The ESHPA bylaws were updated at the fall meeting in 2005. However, the amended bylaws were never published. Furthermore, the unexpected political events in February revealed shortfalls in the ESPHA Bylaws and Constitution showing the document lacking to address the unexpected resignation of an officer. In view of these shortfalls, a committee was appointed to review and recommend changes to the current bylaws and constitution. Committee members include Greg Kalicin and Aaron Morris. If any ESHPA members care to participate in this exercise, please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

The ESHPA bylaws and constitution as amended in December 2005 follow.

Constitution and Bylaws of the Empire State Honey Producers' Association

(Amended 12/1/89, 11/12/99, 12/3/2005)

ARTICLE I: NAME

This Association shall be known as the Empire State Honey Producers' Association.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Association is to promote and protect the interests of New York State beekeepers.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this Association is open to anyone interested in beekeeping. Annual membership dues are \$20.00 (raised from \$15.00 in 1999.) Lifetime memberships are available for a one-time fee of \$300. Only paid up members are eligible to vote on Association business. Spouses must take out a separate membership if they wish to vote.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS AND DUTIES

The officers are as follows: a President, a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Vice-President, and a Secretary-Treasurer. These officers are to be nominated at the Summer Picnic and elected at the Annual Business Meeting.

A. The President will preside over the Board of Directors' meetings as well as the Annual Business Meeting. He or she is responsible for scheduling the Board of Directors' meetings. (As a rule these will include a meeting immediately preceding the Summer Picnic and the Annual Business Meeting, as well as one in the spring of the year.) The President oversees all matter of the Association and may delegate other responsibilities as he or she sees fit. He or she may appoint one Director-at-Large to serve a one year term on the Board of Directors.

B. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Vice Presidents will assist the President in any way he or she requests. In the normal course of events, at the end of a two-year term, the 3rd V.P. will succeed the 2nd V.P., the 2nd V.P. will become the 1st V.P., and the 1st V.P. will become President (subject to the election process). The 1st V.P. will fill in for the President as needed.

C. The Secretary-Treasurer is subject to re-election but may serve indefinitely. He or she is responsible for membership information requests as well as handling all revenues and expenditures of the Association. The Secretary-Treasurer will make available to the membership a financial statement for the previous year at the Annual Business Meeting.

D. Any officer or Director may be removed from office before his or her term is up only by a 2/3 vote of the entire Board of Directors (ten votes) or by a majority vote of the entire membership. The President has the power to fill vacant positions by appointment until such time as the position can be filled by election.

ARTICLE V: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A. The Board of Directors will consist of the President, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-Treasurer, the immediate past President, as well as eight Directors and Newsletter Editor. (The Newsletter Editor is appointed by the Board of Directors and then becomes a voting member of the Board.) Directors will be elected to a three year term (limited to two consecutive terms) and seven will represent the different areas of New York State as follows: two from Western New York (west of the

Genesee River), two from the Southern Tier (south and west of the New York State Thruway) and two from Northern and Eastern New York (north and east of the Thruway), and one from Long Island. The eighth Director is at-large and is to be appointed by the President. Thus the Board will have 15 members and a quorum for a meeting will be eight.

B. In the event of an emergency, the President may poll the other Board members by phone. Any action taken by the President in the name of the Association without an official meeting requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority or ten Directors in favor.

C. The Board may form committees as they see fit to oversee specific activities of the Association.

ARTICLE VI: ENDORSEMENTS

Any use of the "Empire State Honey Producers Association" name is prohibited unless authorized by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Directors at an official Directors meeting or a majority vote of the entire membership.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

The Empire State Honey Producers Association will hold two meetings a year.

A. Summer Picnic: The Summer Picnic will be held the last Saturday in July (unless announced otherwise) at a site to be determined at the preceding Winter Meeting. A meeting of the Board of Directors will be held. A business meeting will be held at which nominations for Officers or Directors will be made (to be voted on at the Winter Meeting).

B. Winter Meeting: The Winter Meeting will be held in November or December at a location to be determined by the Board of Directors. A two-day meeting with an extensive array of speakers as well as a banquet is the norm. An Annual Business Meeting will be held at this time to elect Officers and Directors as well as transact other business of the Association. The Secretary-Treasurer will make a financial report for the previous year available to the membership at this time.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

Bylaws may be amended at the Annual Business Meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present, provided that any such amendment be made available in writing to all members thirty days prior to the vote.

UPDATE on CCD
4-5-2008

Nicholas Calderone
Associate Professor

Dyce Laboratory for Honey Bee Studies
Cornell University



Background

As most of you are aware, the almond growers in California have put strong demand on the US bee industry for pollination, and this has resulted in supply problems. Free markets seem to have provided some respite from the problem. Rising fees for pollination contracts attracted a number of beekeepers who formerly were only honey producers; however, any surplus capacity in the industry may soon be tapped out as demand for colonies for almonds alone is expected to top 2 million by 2012. In addition to market responses, federal regulations covering the importation of honey bees into the contiguous United States were revised; and the new regulations went into effect 22 November 2004 (7 CFR 322). These changes allowed queens and attendant worker bees and packages of bees to be imported from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Subsequently, many thousands of package bees have been imported from Australia, the first importations of bees into the US since The Federal Honey Bee Act of 1922 banned all such imports to protect US bees from exotic pests, parasites, pathogens and predators. There have been limited exceptions to that law, one being the importation of queens from England by Roger Morse in 1989. The new regulations come with a number of stipulations. You can read all the details at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/permits/organism/bees/bee_transit.shtml.

In the fall of 2006, several large beekeepers in Florida began reporting significant losses of bees in Florida. These losses escalated over the winter of 2006/2007; and by the spring of 2007, the problem had affected 24 states (although it is not clear if it was actually present in all 24 states or if it affected beekeepers claiming residence from 24 states). Many of these losses could not be attributed to any known cause; and the name Colony Collapse Disorder, or CCD, was given to bees with this condition. The ever increasing demand for bees by almond growers, the growing

inability of the US bee industry to meet that demand, and the potential effects on the nation's food supply have all helped to bring this situation to the attention of the public.

Large losses are not new to US beekeepers. At least 18 reports of spring-dwindle, fall-dwindle and fall-collapse date as far back as 1869, although the cause or causes of those events were never determined. Such occurrences have become increasingly commonplace since the tracheal mite *Acarapis woodi* and *Varroa destructor* were first detected in the US in 1984 and 1987, respectively. For example, mite-related losses reached catastrophic proportions during the winters of 1995/1996 and 2000/2001 when colony deaths in northern states ranged between 50 and 100% in most beekeeping operations. Despite considerable efforts at both state and federal levels, effective and sustainable controls have not yet been developed for these mites, Pesticide resistance is a major problem that contributes to periodic catastrophic losses on the scale currently being seen. The lack of a comprehensive, industry wide stock improvement plan also plays a major role.

Scope of problem

In order to assess the scope of the current problem, a survey was commissioned by the Apiary Inspectors of America (see Am. Bee Journal, July 2007). Surveys from 384 beekeepers from 13 states were evaluated. Based on those surveys, total losses over the 2006/2007 winter were estimated at 31.8%, with an average loss of 37.8%. Extrapolating those results to the entire US, the authors estimated a total loss of 651,000 - 875,000 of the nation's 2.4 million colonies. This survey provided some good information on overall losses; however, as there is no way at present to accurately establish a cause of death, it is not possible to determine what proportion of the losses were from some known problem, like parasitic mites, and how many were from some new problem - call it CCD. It is likely that parasitic mites played a major role in the current losses; however, the relative importance of mites versus 'something new' is not known. Anecdotally, it appears that 'something new' is playing a major role in the current losses. Reports from several beekeepers during the winter of 2007/2008 indicate that the problem has not abated and that a similar pattern of losses occurred again this winter.

Symptoms

The reason behind our inability to fully grasp the scope of the problem is four-fold, at least. First, there is no clearly established set of symptoms that distinguish CCD from other honey bee maladies. Second, no one has been tracking large numbers of colonies over long periods of time to determine the relationship between colony health and the presence or absence of various problems and management practices. Third, infection with parasitic mites can result in a wide range in the rates at which colonies die-off, making the use of this symptom problematic. Fourth, when bees are lost over the winter, there is often no evidence to examine in the form of samples of bees and brood from the previous fall. Attempts to establish a cause of death are necessarily speculative. Systematic efforts to fill these information gaps are now underway.

So far, a tentative list of symptoms of CCD include: 1) a rapid loss of the adult worker bee population (although the actual rate of loss is not given, and rapid losses are also seen with parasitic mites); 2) large amounts of apparently healthy brood remaining in the hives AND an absence of significant levels of mites or disease in the remaining brood and bees (this seems to be the most robust symptom that distinguishes CCD from parasitic mite syndrome which leaves few bees but varying amounts of brood exhibiting a number of serious pathologies); and 4) few dead bees around the hive (although this does not distinguish it all that well from mite damage). Other symptoms, such as bees not robbing out colonies after the collapse, have not proven to be reliable indicators of CCD and could be the result of a secondary infestation with small hive beetle or variation in local nectar flow patterns. For now, a diagnosis of CCD is essentially one of exclusion of other possible causes.

Causes of CCD

A number of possible causes for CCD have been suggested: 1) pesticides, especially the neo-nicotinoids, a relatively new class of pesticides gaining widespread use throughout the country; 2) an exotic species of nosema (*Nosema ceranae*, originally a parasite on the eastern honey bee *Apis cerana*); 3) pollen from GMO plants; 4) nutritional deficits resulting from too much time spent in large monocultures; 5) beekeeper management practices; and 5) some combination of the aforementioned. Please note that cell phones are not on

the list. To date, there are no definitive results that convincingly implicate any one of these possible causes. Interestingly, large losses have been experienced in several places around the world over the past few years.

Two studies have been published that address CCD. The first was an article in *Science* in which an association of CCD with the Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV) was reported. IAPV was found in about 84% of the colonies classified as CCD colonies, but in under 5% of colonies classified as non-CCD colonies. Initially, this led to speculation that IAPV was introduced with package bees recently imported from Australia; and that led to calls to close the borders. Subsequently, research conducted at the USDA-ARS Bee Research Lab in Beltsville, MD on archived bee samples found that IAPV has actually been in the US since at least 2002, well before Australian packages were imported. To complicate matters further, there may be more than one strain of IAPV; and virulence may vary among strains. However, as the actual distribution of IAPV throughout the country prior to 2006 is not known, it is still not possible to exclude IAPV as a cause or contributor to CCD.

The association of CCD with *N. ceranae* was not as strong. *N. ceranae* was found in 100% of CCD colonies, but also in 80.9% of non-CCD colonies. A recent study by the ARS Bee Research Lab has found *N. ceranae* present in archived samples from each of the 12 states for which samples were available, some dating as far back as 1996. The *Science* study found that the best predictor of CCD was the simultaneous presence of IAPV, *N. ceranae*, *N. apis* and Kashmir bee virus (100% predictive). Again, while it does not appear that *N. ceranae* is a sole cause of CCD, a possible role in the disorder is not completely eliminated. Even though a definitive answer was not forthcoming, the study demonstrated a powerful new method for identifying unknown pathogens, whether they are affecting honey bees, livestock, crop plants or people.

Meanwhile, Spanish researchers reported that they have been able to duplicate the symptoms they were observing in Europe by infecting colonies with *N. ceranae*. The evidence was pretty convincing; however, the symptoms they reported being associated with their losses (initially called Bee Depopulation Syndrome or BDS) include a lack of brood in colonies after the worker population has disappeared, which stands in

contrast to what is reported in the US with CCD (although this difference could be a seasonal phenomenon). Therefore, it is not clear if the condition affecting the bees in Europe is the same as that affecting the bees in North America. The Spanish group did report that they were able to control the problem with fumigilin, but they were not specific on exactly which brand they were using.

Summary

So, as of April 2008, no definitive cause for CCD has been established. My take on this is as follows. CCD seems to be a real and serious problem, although the exact extent and distribution throughout the industry is not yet known. At present, the cause remains unknown, and that makes it impossible to develop a cure. Clearly, both the extent and cause of the

problem need to be determined. To determine the cause of CCD will require researchers to track a large number of colonies for one or two years (with frequent sampling and assessments of colony health). With a little luck, they will be tracking some colonies that stay healthy and some that eventually come down with CCD. The USDA-ARS Bee Research Lab in Beltsville, MD is conducting such a study at this time.

As serious as CCD appears to be, it needs to be kept in perspective. If CCD were cured tomorrow, the bee industry would still be facing the same serious problems that it had with parasitic mites before CCD came on the scene. We are long way from being out of the woods.

I will post updates to this on my website at masterbeekeeper.org.

Beekeepers buzzing with relief; The bees are back!

By TIFFANY MAYER

Charlie Parker has a good feeling this spring.

Better, by far, than the one the Beamsville beekeeper had a year ago when he discovered only 30 per cent of his 6,000 hives survived the winter.

Those bees that did last the cold season were weakened by an intestinal parasite and dead by April, putting his hive losses at 90 per cent.

"It's certainly a humbling experience. You blame yourself and wonder what the heck you did wrong," Parker said.

But with some serious TLC during this past winter, ensuring his hives he spent last year rebuilding were well-fed and treated with the necessary medications, Parker's bees are back.

"We think that helped. I've got good hives this spring," Parker told his audience of fellow beekeepers and scientists at a beehive decline symposium at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre Friday.

So, too, it seems do most Ontario beekeepers that scrambled to revive hives after their bees mysteriously dropped like flies in the winter of 2007.

In Ontario, 28,000 of 76,000 hives were lost, with Niagara being one of the hardest hit areas.

Provincial apiarist Doug McRory said this year, though, bee losses "aren't great."

However, he couldn't say that bee deaths have gotten back to normal levels. Typically, beekeepers lose 15 per cent of their bees over winter. One hive is home to about 60,000 worker bees.

"It's a little bit early yet. What happens the next two to three weeks can affect things," he said, adding that's when weak bees that made it through the winter will die off.

The massive hive losses last year left scientists' brows furrowed. They're still scratching their heads about the cause of the carnage, but a little less these days.

Ernesto Guzman, a biologist at the University of Guelph researching the phenomenon, told the crowd it's not colony collapse disorder, the arbitrary moniker given to the unexplained loss of bees in the U.S. over the past two years.

In those cases, there were no corpses. But there were plenty to be found in hives here, Guzman said.

"What's the problem in Canada? We don't know," he said.

Guzman has narrowed the suspects to mites and intestinal parasites, among others. He will have a better sense of the killer next month when he examines his test hives.

The cost of the bee deaths to agriculture in Ontario was \$54 million, Guzman noted. That's nearly one-third of the total value of crops directly associated with honeybee pollination.

With honey prices below the cost of production, beekeepers rely on pollination to be their money-maker. Agriculture Canada pegs pollination as a \$1-billion-a-year business nationally - 10 times the value of honey produced.

Parker, who rents his hives to local fruit producers to pollinate their crops, spent \$321,000 rebuilding his business, Charlie Bee Honey, which he runs with his son, Mike.

As a result, his job description, he noted, has changed from beekeeper and honey producer.

"Before, the focus used to be on a good honey crop but the whole focus has changed," Parker said.

"As my son said, we've become vets. We're just trying to keep our bees alive."

Two Arrested in Plot to Import Tainted Chinese Honey

Tuesday May 27, 8:51 pm ET

By Mike Robinson, AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) -- Two executives of a German-based company have been arrested on federal charges of conspiring to import honey from China contaminated with an illegal antibiotic, authorities said Tuesday.

Prosecutors issued a statement saying the honey was falsely labeled as coming from countries including Russia and Ukraine to avoid paying antidumping duties slapped on Chinese honey. It also contained an antibiotic that is not approved for use in food-producing animals, including bees.

A search of the Chicago offices of Hamburg-based Alfred L. Wolff GmbH showed that a shipment of honey was sold to a company in Texas even though it was found to have contained the antibiotic, authorities said.

Stefanie Giesselbach, 30, the national sales manager for the company's Chicago office, was arrested at O'Hare International Airport on Friday night as she prepared to board a flight to Germany, prosecutors said. Magnus von Buddenbrock, 32, the general manager of the Chicago office, was arrested after dropping Giesselbach at the airport.

"We have reviewed the complaint," defense attorney James Montana said. "Mr. von Buddenbrock is completely innocent of the charges and we intend to defend this case vigorously."

Giesselbach's attorney James Marcus said he had not yet seen the complaint and would not be able to comment on it immediately.

The conspiracy charges carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. A bond hearing has been scheduled for Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Martin Ashman.

Antidumping duties are applied to offset allegedly unfair trade practices by the country where the products originated. The Commerce Department applied such duties to Chinese honey effective last July.

Prosecutors said that in February federal agents took samples from nine containers of honey with a total value of \$300,000 that were marked as having come from Russia -- to which antidumping duties don't apply.

Tests showed three of the nine were from China, prosecutors said.

Tests also showed 57 metric tons marked "Light Amber Polish Honey" that the company had arranged to sell may also have come from China.

The two defendants also claimed that another honey shipment that came from China was actually produced in Ukraine, prosecutors said.

A confidential informant told prosecutors that it was well known among some company executives, including one of the defendants, that shipments of honey contaminated by the antibiotic were being imported.

CATCH THE BUZZ

Australia's Government actually worries about honey bees

From Alan Harman

An Australian parliamentary committee says the country's food security could be compromised if the future of the honey bee and pollination industry is not supported and called for A\$50 million (US\$47.03 million) a year to be provided to the newly formed Pollination Australia for research into biosecurity threats and the future of the industry.

The call came as the Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources released its report, "More Than Honey: the future of the Australian honeybee and pollination industries," after an inquiry that began in March last year.

Committee chairman Dick Adams of the ruling Labor Party says protecting the industry from biosecurity threats and preparing it for the future is a significant undertaking.

"The committee believes there is greater scope still for the promotion of research extension and training for the Australian honey bee industry and related industries," he says.

"With this in view, the committee has recommended that the Australian government commit \$50 million per annum in pursuit of biosecurity measures and research in support of the Australian honey bee industry and pollination dependent industries; and that the Australian government use this money to establish a national center

for honey bee and pollination industry research, training and extension."

Deputy chairman Alby Schultza member of the opposition Liberal Party, says the industry is very important to Australia's wider agricultural sector and must be supported.

"Taking into account all plant-based industries and wool, meat and dairy production it is estimated honey bees contribute directly to between A\$4 billion and A\$6 billion worth of agricultural production," she tells the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Adams says the industry faces biosecurity threats and a shortage of access to native forests for honey production.

"The committee has made a number of recommendations which, if implemented will provide resource security for the honeybee industry and pollination dependant industries into the future," he says.

Explaining the request for the A\$50 million, Adams says the importance of honeybees can not be overstated.

"It might be an exaggeration to say 'no bees, no food', but the food security and economic welfare of the entire community depend on a considerable degree on the humble honey bee," he says.

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Eva Crane

Pivotal figure in the world of beekeeping for more than 50 years

Eva Crane, who has died aged 95, was, for half a century, a towering figure in the world of apiculture, her appetite for the subject whetted by a wedding present of a box containing a colony of bees. She abandoned the field of nuclear physics, travelled the world to share her beekeeping knowledge and was founder, and for 35 years director, of the International Bee Research Association (IBRA).

Eva was the younger daughter of Thomas and Rose Widdowson. Her elder sister, Elsie May, went on as Dr Widdowson (obituary, June 22 2000) to become world famous for her work on nutrition and diet. Eva grew up in Dulwich, south London, and was not a particularly strong child, suffering frequent bouts of illness. She was educated at Sydenham school in Kent and won a scholarship to read mathematics at King's College London. She completed her degree in two years, then took an MSc in quantum mechanics, and received her PhD in nuclear physics from London University in 1938.

In 1941 she was appointed to a lectureship in physics at Sheffield University. To this post she brought acute powers of observation, a wide-ranging curiosity and an incisive and penetrating line in questioning. A career in the rapidly developing world of nuclear physics seemed assured.

However, in July 1942 she married James Alfred Crane, then serving on convoy duty with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. One of the wedding presents was bees, the purpose of which was to provide honey at a time of sugar shortages. Eva's curiosity was aroused, and she set about finding out all she could about these fascinating insects, starting with an immediate subscription to *Bee World*. She then became a member of the British Beekeepers Association and soon took over as secretary of its research committee. In 1949 she founded the Bee Research Association, an international body in outlook and membership from the beginning, though it did not add the word international to its title until 1976 when it became the IBRA.

In the same year Eva became editor of *Bee World*, a journal that she saw as the "international link between beekeeping science and practice". She expanded its pages to include abstracts of all that was published worldwide on bees and bee science, provided it was "accurate and worthy of inclusion" – her standards were high. Soon, the large



number of abstracts needed its own publication, *Apicultural Abstracts*, that continued until 2005 and still forms the basis of one of the most comprehensive databases of bee-related information in the world with more than 60,000 entries.

By 1960, Eva felt there was a wealth of new bee research that needed to be disseminated. In 1962 she founded the *Journal of Apicultural Research* that became, and remains, the premier English-language vehicle for the publication of apicultural research. The information provided made possible the careers of many bee scientists working in countries which were then cut off from access to mainstream publications.

Between 1950 and 1990, Eva's pursuit of all things related to bees took her to more than 60 countries and resulted in a number of discoveries. These, along with her ability to put together clues and then report her findings lucidly, have made her work – more than 180 publications in all – inspirational. *A Book of Honey* (1980) and the *Archaeology of Beekeeping* (1983) reflected her strong interests in nutrition and the ancient past of beekeeping. She retired from the IBRA in 1984 to concentrate on two seminal tomes, *Bees and Beekeeping – Science, Practice and World Resources* (1991), and the *World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting* (1999).

Everywhere she went she sampled the life of local people, sometimes in the remotest areas of the world. She went to share her beekeeping knowledge and teach governments, NGOs and farmers, recording these travels in *Making a Beeline* (2003). Typically, she always claimed to have learned much more than she taught. She acquired a huge collection of beekeeping artefacts that, combined with other materials, constitute the IBRA historical collection. Some 2,000 items have now been digitally photographed and recorded while the actual items will be in an international museum, being established in Belgium.

In 1985 Eva was awarded an honorary doctorate from Ohio State University and was made an OBE in 1986, an award that many felt underrated her achievement.

Eva's life was devoted to building the IBRA into a world centre of expertise. Based in her own front room until 1966, the association eventually found offices in Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire, and since 1985 has been based in Cardiff. She also established the Eva Crane Trust, which aims to advance the science of apiculture. An Eva Crane memorial fund is to be established by the IBRA.

Her husband died in 1978.
Richard Jones

Ethel Eva Crane, beekeeper, physicist and writer, born June 12 1912; died September 6 2007

Crane forsook nuclear physics for beekeeping after she was given a box of bees as a wedding present Photograph: IBRA



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