



# The Producers



The newsletter of the Empire State Honey Producers Association

A Statewide Organization to Promote and Protect Interests of New York State Beekeepers

Fall 2009  
Issue No. 88

## Sweet Success at the State Fair

A couple of tons of honey went home with folks at the New York State Fair, and many also went home with more knowledge about honey.

“There’s a lot of questions,” said Rob Sorensen, manager of the Association’s booth at the State Fair for the past four years. “A lot of people don’t even know where honey comes from.”

The booth in the Horticulture Building sells honey products from Association members across the state. It also has an observation hive and information about beekeeping and bees.

“People want to know about getting stung,” Association President Ted Elk said. *(continued on page 2)*



*The State Fair presented a great opportunity for some discussions about ESHPA concerns. Getting together to talk about some of those issues are, from the left, Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine, Greg Kalicin, Mike Griggs, Ted Elk, Joe Rowland and Ag & Markets Commissioner Patrick Hooker.*

## Good Info, Good Friends at '09 Fall Meeting in Nov.

From the metabolic effects of honey to the benefits of genetic diversity within colonies to the seasonal dynamics of nosema disease, the workshops at the ESHPA Fall Meeting promise a big variety of topics.

Speakers are coming from Florida, North Carolina and our own Cornell University. And, as always, the banquet and auction will offer good food, good friends and good times to add to a memorable gathering Friday and Saturday, Nov. 13 and 14, at the Comfort Inn & Suites in North Syracuse.

After Friday morning’s welcome by ESHPA President Ted Elk, workshops will get under way, kicked off by Paul Cappy, New York State apiarist with Ag & Markets, giving an update on apiary inspections and nosema disease.

Workshops will continue all day, with a break for a lunch buffet. The ESHPA business meeting will be Friday afternoon, and the banquet and auction will be that night.

Saturday’s schedule starts with a workshop on honey for diabetes and quality of sleep by Dr. Ron Fessenden, co-chairman of the Committee for the Promotion of Honey & Health. *(continued on page 2)*



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## Sweet Success

(continued from page 1)

Sorensen said gross sales were up a bit this year. Honey products that top the popularity list are cut-comb honey and cream honey. Sorensen said about 120 sections of cut-comb honey was sold, along with about 1,000 pounds of liquid honey.

“We probably could have sold close to another 100 cut-comb sections,” he said.

One of the highlights for volunteer workers were visits to the booth by Gov. Paterson and Ag & Markets Commissioner Patrick Hooker.

Sorensen said about eight people work in the booth each day of the Fair. A total of about 50 different Association members volunteered their time.

“We have good participation by members,” he said.

Elk said he’s hoping to see the Association someday apply for grant funding to “bring the booth from the ’50s into the 21st century.” The booth needs better presentation and more storage would be good, he said.

## '09 Fall Meeting

(continued from page 1)

The Fall Meeting will end around noon on Saturday. To review the full agenda, go the ESHPA website at [www.eshpa.org](http://www.eshpa.org) and look under “Events.”

You must contact the Comfort Inn by Tuesday, Oct. 27, to receive the group

room rate. When you make your reservation, mention that you are with “the beekeepers” for the group rate of \$94.

The hotel phone number is (315) 457-4000. The address is 6701 Buckley Road, North Syracuse.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you’ll find a registration form – as well as a membership application.

## Not to be Missed at Fall Meeting:

### Insurance Program

After the official end of the meeting, a representative from the New York State Farm Services Agency will give an add-on talk about the agency’s new insurance program for loan deferred payments and the new insurance program for bees.

### Beekeeping Vendors

At press time, two vendors planning to be at the fall meeting. Betterbee will be selling beekeeping supplies and Wixson Honey of Dundee, NY, will be selling jars. Orders placed reasonably ahead of time with Betterbee and Wixson may be picked up at the meeting, pending stocking and room on their trucks. Contact them no later than Nov. 9 with your orders. This is a good opportunity to save shipping charges!

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## Meeting at State Fair Productive

Fellow Producers,

The biggest issue facing the Association today is the legislation for mandatory registration. After our meeting during the State Fair with Commissioner Hooker and Sen. Aubertine, I think there's going to be some movement, but I'm not sure it's going to be to everyone's liking. We'll know more after another meeting sometime in October.



The meeting at the State Fair was real productive, and we talked about other issues, too.

Gov. Paterson also came to the honey booth at the State Fair, and this might have been the first time a governor stopped by. I wasn't there when he visited, but I think it's great. Hopefully this will put a spark in the back of his mind that honeybees represent several million dollars worth of spin-offs: to the apple growers, to the vine crops, to the stone fruit people.

The Association's Fall Meeting is coming up Nov. 13 and 14 in North Syracuse. We need as many people at our meeting as possible, and we ask all the local bee clubs to encourage your members to come to the meeting, if only for Saturday.

We need to hear ideas and input from everyone: the sideliners, the hobbyists, the commercial producers. The Empire State Honey Producers Association represents the interests and needs of all New York beekeepers and without everyone's input, we can't do that fairly.

I thank Joan Howland for her work in getting the speakers and making the meeting agenda possible. I also want to thank George Like, who passed away a year ago, and Greg Kalicin for their help in keeping things focused. They have been a terrific help to me.

Among the speakers Joan has worked so hard to bring to the fall meeting is Jerry Hayes, chief apiary inspector for the state of Florida. I think he'll talk about the trials and tribulations of beekeeping in Florida, including the diseases and other challenges that are spinning beekeeping there.

My most favorite part of the fall meeting is the banquet and silent and live auctions. Members help keep the Association going by bringing in auction items that in the past have included great artwork and great wine. We truly appreciate this support.

I know there will be lots of lively discussion about a lot of different topics throughout the weekend. We just have to remember that we all may not agree on the policies of the state of New York or of the Empire State Honey Producers. Let us disagree, but let us not be disagreeable.

*Ted Elk, ESHPA President*

## Watkins Glen Firm Assists with Newsletter

This issue of the ESHPA newsletter was produced by Ghostwriters Communications of Watkins Glen, NY, and Rutland, VT. The agency's staffers were the writers and designers and supervised the newsletter's distribution.

Ghostwriters was founded in 1994 by Mary Jeanne Packer, who opened an office at 124 E. Fourth St., Watkins Glen, in 2005.

Ghostwriters works with clients throughout New York and New England, providing an array of offerings including association management services, as well as nature tourism consulting. While large organizations can create their own support staffs of public relations people, graphic artists and designers, event planners and the like, Ghostwriters fills all of those needs for smaller operations, Packer said.

The firm's client list includes the New York State Maple Producers Association, NY Farms, Friends of the Catharine Valley Trail, the Vermont Woodlands Association and the Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association.

Packer is in discussion with the ESHPA board about providing additional services for the Association, including grant writing and legislative affairs.

## Hooker 'Receptive' to Registration Complaints

Empire State Honey Producers Association representatives who met with state officials to discuss the controversial mandatory apiary registration regulations believe progress was made.

"We seemed to get more headway this time. Commissioner Hooker seemed much more receptive. It was a very positive meeting," said Greg Kalicin, ESHPA 1st vice president, who was among those at the gathering during the State Fair.

Honey producers want the regulations to be repealed for a variety of reasons, including skepticism about guaranteed confidentiality of proprietary information and being disregarded in critical decision-making that led to the Ag & Markets law amendments in July 2007.

"This has been our toughest issue," said Association President Ted Elk, who also was at the meeting with Ag & Markets Commissioner Patrick Hooker; Sen. Darrel Aubertine of Cape Vincent, Jefferson County, and chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee; Sarah Blood of the Senate staff; Bill Ketzer, special assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs for Ag & Markets; and Association members Joe Rowland, Mike Griggs and Kalicin.

Elk said progress was made and the producers got some reassurances that there will be some changes.

"I think we have maybe won a war, but maybe haven't won the battle," he added, however.

Kalicin, a "sideliner" with 75 colonies, said the 80-20 statistic is key to arguments against the mandatory registration.

"Eighty percent of beekeepers are hobbyists with 20 percent of the bees. Twenty percent are commercial beekeepers with 80 percent of the bees. This law really impacted them severely," he said.

At the Association's Summer Picnic, a resolution was passed stating that the ESHPA is not in favor of the mandatory registration but does support the apiary inspection program, Elk said.

"Everybody has complied with it because they're law-abiding. They'll work with the law, but if they see it is not working, will work to change it," Elk said.

Elk said Rowland is discussing with Aubertine how the law should be re-written and what amendments will be necessary.

Kalicin and Elk said this will be discussed at the Fall Meeting Nov. 13 and 14 in North Syracuse.



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## 2009 Summer General Meeting DRAFT Minutes

**Date and Time:** Saturday, July 25, 2009 - 11:00 a.m.

**Place:** Gregory and Deborah Kalicin's House, Lisbon, NY

President Ted Elk called the meeting to order.

Joe Rowland distributed the resolution presented to the Board at the Spring Directors Meeting, and was read to the general membership by Aaron Morris.

Resolution by the Empire State Honey Producers Association (ESHPA) regarding 2007 amendments to the NYS Agricultural and Markets Law (chapter 249, section 173, bill # A7543A) in relation to beekeeper surveys and mandatory apiary registration (7/18/07 enactment).

Whereas, surveys and actions by various N.Y. beekeeping organizations indicate a significant number of the state's beekeepers including a clear majority of commercial operators oppose mandatory registration of apiary locations, and

Whereas, enactment of said amendments without sufficient public comment or any prior consultation with ESHPA has seriously damaged the credibility of and support for the apiary inspection program, and

Whereas, the rationale for the implementation of said amendments, as put forward by the State Apiculturist in a letter (3/7/08) to N.Y. beekeepers, is speculative, unsubstantiated, and otherwise specious, particularly in the context of the current and likely future capacity of the apiary inspection program,

Therefore, be it resolved that ESHPA 1) supports the repeal of said amendments, and 2) urges the Commissioner of Agriculture to suspend implementation of the amendments immediately.

A vote of 23 in favor, and 7 not in favor was made by the membership on the resolution.

Those planning on selling honey at the State Fair were reminded of the liability insurance requirement. Containers must be 12 or 16 ounce plastic bottles.

Ted Elk thanked Aaron Morris for continuing on as editor of the newsletter. The position is available to any interested member.

A request was made by the general membership to be aware, and have a vote in any contribution amounts to be made for charity or beekeeping organizations.

A move to adjourn was made by Aaron Morris. It was seconded by Earl Villecco and was carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hans Junga - Secretary/Treasurer

## 2009 Summer Board Meeting Draft Minutes

**Date and Time:** Saturday, July 25, 2009 - 9:15 a.m.

**Place:** Gregory and Deborah Kalicin's House, Lisbon, NY

President Ted Elk called the meeting to order. Minutes of the Spring Board meeting, and Treasurer's Report were presented by Hans Junga.

Also present were Greg and Debs Kalicin, Mike Griggs, Aaron Morris, Joan Howland, Mark Berninghausen, Rich and Amy Wakefield, and Joe Rowland.

The first motion to accept the spring meeting minutes was made by Greg, seconded by Rich and was carried.

Mike presented report of survey results sent to NYS local bee club/organizations regarding the establishment of a database of beekeepers, yard locations, and number of colonies. 82% responses were from hobbyists. Since the commercial beekeeper's response was not as great, the results of the survey were determined inconclusive at this time.

Joe presented the board with an amended version of the resolution discussed at the spring meeting. The specific bill number to the NYS Ag & Mkts Law was added. Also added were "Yes" and "No" response areas for voting members to check off. Wording was deleted concerning the presentation to the general membership. The second motion to distribute the revised resolution to ESHPA membership was made by Joan, seconded by Aaron and was carried.

The third motion was made by Mike to propose that notification and discussion of an apiary inspection is to be required, not just done as a courtesy. The motion was seconded by Greg and passed by majority vote. A recommendation to AIAC by ESHPA was agreed upon to facilitate this motion.

ESHPA was not able to receive grant money for the state fair display this year. Greg and Ted plan to meet with fair officials in September with architectural/design plans for display improvements to prepare for next year's grant proposal.

Joan announced that the speakers have been scheduled for the fall meeting. They are Ron Fessenden, Jerry Hayes, David Tarpy, Nick Calderone and Paul Cappy. Joan is in the process of the fall meeting agenda scheduling.

The fourth motion to adjourn at 10:30 a.m. was made by Mark, seconded by Joan and was passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hans Junga - Secretary/Treasurer

# Empire State Honey Producers Association

## Fall 2009 Meeting Registration

November 13-14, 2009

Comfort Inn & Suites \*

6701 Buckley Road, North Syracuse, New York, (315) 457-4000

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's First/Last Name (only if attending) \_\_\_\_\_

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Checks or Money Orders should be made  
payable to ESPHA

### Pre-Registration

Member (& spouse) \$40.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Member (& spouse) \$45.00 \_\_\_\_\_

### Registration at Meeting

Member (& spouse) \$45.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Member (& spouse) \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_

2009 Dues \$20.00 \_\_\_\_\_

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### Hot Italian Luncheon

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Banquet Buffet \_\_\_\_\_

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Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-registration should be mailed

**no later than October 31** to:

ESPHA

C/o Hans Junga

46527 County Rte 1,

Alex Bay, NY 13607

You CAN get  
there from here!



The fall 2009 meeting will be held on November 13 & 14 at the Comfort Inn & Suites 6701, Buckley Road North Syracuse, New York. Please contact the Comfort Inn @ **315 457-4000** for your room reservations and mention that you are with the "**Beekeepers**" to get the group rate of \$94.00. It is important that you make your reservations prior to October 31 to receive the group rate.

## The Spectator: Boon or Boondoggle? The New Bee Law - Part II *By Joe Rowland*

**W**hy do so many beekeepers oppose the 2007 amendments to the bee law? In 2008, Ag & Markets sent out a letter listing seven alleged benefits of the new law. They are condensed into four here.

### 1. Better quantification and monitoring of the state's honeybee resource.

Hive numbers vary seasonally. Quantifying the industry requires a focused effort over a short time frame. Ag & Markets data seep in gradually rendering it of little value. A census is conducted annually by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). NASS estimated NY hives as of December 2008 at about 50,000, which is sufficient for most purposes. If the state wants to monitor the condition of NY colonies, they may survey from apiaries already on their list. Hive condition outside the list is roughly equal to that within. This is true because most large unregistered apiaries belong to partially registered beekeepers. Large registered apiaries are similar to unregistered ones owned by the same beekeeper since they are maintained and equipment is circulated under the same management system. There are numerous unregistered hobbyists, but their apiaries have comparatively few hives. Benefit doubtful.

### 2. Improved communication between Ag & Markets and beekeepers.

The state list includes the owners of the vast majority of colonies in NY. Also, the recent registration drive by Ag & Markets has registered 300 new hobbyists, however many will remain unregistered since it's hard to identify them unless they are involved with a NY beekeeping group. Some hobbyists quit their clubs because of repeated club visits by inspection personnel. Many commercial beekeepers are irritated by the expanded scope of the program. Consequently, cooperation with Ag & Markets has declined.

I no longer discuss inspection with hobbyists. Previously I persuaded many to register voluntarily. Alienation is a poor strategy for improved communication. Benefit doubtful.

### 3. Improved identification of research/extension priorities including "rapid response" to emerging threats.

The existing database is sufficient to respond to industry needs and threats. Most threats have arrived within loads of hives from southern states. Migratory hives are needed for commercial pollination and will continue to pour into NY each spring, regardless of any perceived threat. Consider Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). If Ag & Markets had its new law fully implemented, would they have responded differently to the situation? Probably not. Benefit doubtful.

### 4. Identify bees available for commercial pollination requirements.

I think the usual channels of commerce will continue to provide enough colonies for pollination without state intervention. In the midst of the CCD panic, almond growers got the bees they required. Benefit doubtful.

Most opposition to the new amendments comes from commercial and sideline beekeepers. A 2008 ESHPA survey indicated 68% were opposed to the law. Larger beekeepers view the new reporting requirements as a nuisance with no value. Many see the inspection program as yet another bureaucracy puffing itself up to justify continued funding. Pinpointing locations is sometimes difficult when beekeepers have 30 or more apiaries. Most landlord/tenant agreements are done on location with a handshake, a case of honey and few questions asked. Some landowners don't want inspectors on their property. It's OK if the state inspects a few apiaries to check disease status, but Ag & Markets

doesn't need access to every apiary. State records show higher rates of AFB in hobbyist hives than in commercial ones. Inspectors should concentrate on hobbyists and spot-check commercial operations.

Beekeepers worry that somebody will move into their territory. One may control apiary locations, but the bees forage across thousands of acres. Beekeepers develop extensive knowledge of production potential in their territory. It is proprietary, and beeyard privacy is worthy of protection since apiaries are highly mobile. Inspectors are seen as potential competitors since they are or have been beekeepers. Personally, I know at least six current commercial beekeepers in NY who once worked as bee inspectors. Excess apiary density reduces honey production per colony and increases disease transmission between apiaries.

Fees may develop due to increased surveillance authorized under the new law. A majority of states with mandatory registration also have fees. Ag & Markets calls fees a non-issue, possibly because they won't be the ones paying them.

Ag & Markets has been actively marketing the law since its enactment in 2007. They should have sold the goods before the legislative process began. They have done a disservice to themselves and our industry by not doing so. They had all the authority they needed under the old law. The new law is unpopular and of slight value. It should be repealed.

For the record, my 20 (+/-) apiaries have always been registered and updated voluntarily at Ag & Markets' request. In 30 years, inspectors discovered one mild case of AFB, which I promptly burned. They still come around almost every year. Is this necessary? Efficient? Beneficial? Doubtful.





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# EMPIRE STATE Honey Producers Association

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