SEMBA NEWS

Volume 20 Number 5 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
July-August 2010

SEMBA SUMMER PICNIC

When: Sunday, July 18, 2010
Where: MSU Tollgate Education Center,
Novi, Michigan
8115 Meadowbrook Road (corner of 12 Mile and Meadowbrook)

1:30 p.m. - Potluck dinner. Please bring a dish to pass, your own table service, and chair. Beverages will be provided.

PROGRAM

3:00 p.m.

~ Update on new Michigan legislation- Dennis Holly

~ i3Detroit and the Maker Faire- Jaime A. Wolfe (see program note)

~ Top Bar hive demonstration- Stellar Apiaries

~Tour of the MSU Tollgate Farm Apiary where 34 SEMBA beekeeping class members have their hives (Bring your veil and gloves)

Program Note

Jaime Wolfe is from i3Detroit (www.i3detroit.com) and is helping O'Reilly Media put on Maker Faire at the Henry Ford in Dearborn, July 31 – August 1, 2010.

Maker Faire is a large-scale festival where people who make things come together to display their items for the public. Only three of these festivals are held throughout the country and this is the first year that one will be held in Detroit.

At the Maker Faire held in San Francisco in May 2010, there was a large presence of farmers, beekeepers, raw foodists and etc. to talk about farming, growing your own food, self-sustenance, and honey production.

USA- WHAT'S BEING DONE TO STUDY HONEY BEE HEALTH

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

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

Daily Green, April 28, 2010

HONEY BEES MONITOR AIR QUALITY AT HAMBURG AIRPORT

The Hamburg Airport has welcomed a group of special environmental detectives to its runways this spring. For the next few months, six hives of honey bees will be stationed along the tarmac to monitor air quality.

An airport spokesperson said on Wednesday that in addition to producing honey, the some 120,000 buzzing bees will also perform what the airport calls "bio monitoring."

Tended by an airport apiarist, they simply go about their normal insect activity, but in the process will reveal a lot about the air quality where hundreds of planes take off and land each day.

The bees gather nectar and pollen from nearby plants exposed to any air pollutants at the runways, and the honey they make subsequently reveals any contaminants to experts.

This will be the 11th year that the colonies have been "monitoring" air quality. The Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel Airport became the first European airport to begin an apiculture project in 1999. Several other German and European airports have since followed their example.

So far past harvests – which yield about 150-kilogrammes of honey - have been clear of contaminants that would be dangerous for human consumption and measured up to food safety standards.

The airport gives the surplus honey away as gifts at special occasions.

The Local Germany's News in English,
May 6, 2010
~Submitted by Ann Leonard

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As the contact person, listed on the sembabees.org Web site, I receive a great number and diversity of questions from beekeepers as well as the general public. The questions most often asked are in regard to (1) our mentoring program and (2) removal of bees from a dwelling. I am asking your assistance in these two areas.

In regard to mentoring, SEMBA has a number of members who serve as mentors, but additional individuals are needed who would be willing to commit to helping new beekeepers. Reading about honey bees and taking classes is the foundation for success of the new beekeeper but having a mentor on hand to offer assistance and support, when needed, is important to the novice. As beekeepers, we should be able to invest some energy in helping others along the beekeeping pathway. Our SEMBA officers are continually being asked for mentor assistance. If you are willing to invest a small amount of time to act as a mentor, contact Roger Sutherland, rsuther@hotmail.com, 734-668-8568.

The second most frequently asked question by the general public (and the most difficult) is in regard to removal of bees from a dwelling. First of all, I urge them to go to the sembabees.org Web site and read the page "Bees in a Wall-What Can Be Done". But more often than not, they want a beekeeper to visit their home for first-hand advice. Typically, they have already contacted an exterminator only to find that very few exterminators will deal with honey bees. Currently, in our organization, there are only two or three individuals who have requested to have their names put on a referral list for bee removal from dwellings. People will pay for consultation service about their problem and for removal so this could be a profitable sideline business for your beekeeping operation. If you are interested in adding your name to the list for referrals or need more information, please contact Roger Sutherland, rsuther@hotmail.com, 734-668-8568.

MICHIGAN HONEY PRODUCTION DOWN 24 PERCENT

Michigan honey production for 2009 totaled 3.96 million pounds, down 24 percent from 2008, according to the USDA's National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS), Michigan Field Office. This estimate included honey from producers with five or more colonies.

Nationally, Michigan ranked ninth in honey production in 2009, down from seventh in 2008. Yields from Michigan's 66,000 colonies producing honey averaged 60 pounds in 2009, compared with 73 pounds the previous year.

Michigan honey price averaged $1.51 per pound, up 7 cents per pound from last year. Value of production totaled $5.98 million, down 20 percent from 2008. Honey stocks were 1.51 million pounds, down 26 percent from 2008.

Farm News, March 30, 2010

VERY DIFFERENT MICROBES ACTING IN CONCERT MAY BE THE ANSWER TO CCD

(From the General Meeting Of Microbiology, San Diego, CA, May 25, 2010)

New research from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) identifies a new potential cause for "Colony Collapse Disorder" in honeybees. A group of pathogens including a fungus and family of viruses may be working together to cause the decline. Scientists report their results today at the 110th General Meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in San Diego."There might be a synergism between two very different pathogens," says Jay Evans of the USDA Agricultural Research Service, a researcher on the study. "When they show up together there is a significant correlation with colony decline."

Beginning in October 2006 some beekeepers began reporting losses of 30-90 percent of their hives. Although colony losses are not unexpected during winter weather, the magnitude of loss suffered by some beekeepers was highly unusual. “Domesticated honey bees face numerous pests and pathogens, tempting hypotheses that colony collapses arise from exposure to new or resurgent pathogens,” says Evans.

To better understand the cause of these collapses, in early 2007 Evans and his colleagues collected bees from both healthy and declining colonies across the country but primarily from California and Florida where most of the commercial pollination activity takes place. They have screened these samples and similar samples from each year since then for both known and novel pathogens. They found a slightly higher incidence of a fungal pathogen known as *Nosema ceranae* in sick colonies, but it was not statistically significant until they began pairing it with other pathogens.

“Levels of the fungus were slightly higher in sick colonies, but the presence of that fungus and 2 or 3 RNA viruses from the family Dicistroviridae is a pretty strong predictor of collapse,” says Evans. Nosema are transferred between bees via the fecal-oral route. When a bee initially ingests the microbes and they get to the mid-gut, they harpoon themselves into the gut wall and live inside the epithelial cells there. Evans believes that the slightly higher numbers of the fungus somehow compromise the gut wall and allow the viruses to overwhelm the bees. In colonies with higher Nosema numbers they found virus levels to be 2-3 times greater than healthy colonies.
While this is a working theory and they are still in the discovery phase looking for new pathogens, Evans and his colleagues are also actively looking for a way to boost bee defenses against Nosema.

~Catch the Buzz, May 25, 2010

“A way to protect against Nosema might be the key for now,” says Evans.

CAN BEES BE TRAINED TO PREVENT PLANTS DISEASES?

Dr. Andrew Sutherland, a researcher with the UC Davis Plant Pathology Department is training honey bees to detect plant disease in agricultural crops. Bees have excellent chemosensors on their antennae, so they’re able to detect organic molecules. Using Ivan Pavlov’s method of ‘classical conditioning’, Sutherland is teaching bees to associate infected plants with a sugar reward.

ApiNews, May 26, 2010

USA- BEGINS NATIONAL SURVEY OF HONEY BEE PESTS AND DISEASES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the beginning of a 13-state survey of honey bee pests and diseases conducted cooperatively by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Pennsylvania State University (PSU). The survey will help USDA scientists to determine the prevalence of parasites and disease-causing microorganisms that may be contributing to the decline of honey bee colonies nationwide.
The voluntary survey includes 350 apiaries across 13 states and will last through the end of the year. APHIS developed the survey protocol jointly with ARS and PSU and allocated $550,000, provided by Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill, for the survey. Survey kits have been mailed to state apiary specialists, who will collect samples of bees and debris from the apiaries in their states. ARS and PSU scientists will test the samples for specific pests and pathogens. APHIS is particularly interested to know whether foreign mites of the genus Tropilaelaps have entered the United States.
The survey will take place in Alabama, California, Georgia, Indiana, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Washington.
Once all the samples have been analyzed, APHIS will summarize the results and post the summary on its Web site.

For more information about the survey, please visit the APHIS Web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/honey_bees/survey.shtml.

~ApiNews, June 7, 2010

Note that the bumble has a yellow stripe on the abdomen. Carpenter bees are black in that area.

USA- SLAMS CHINA ON THE "HONEY LAUNDERING" IN A CONGRESS COMMISSION

Concerns that China is dumping contaminated honey into the U.S. market, often laundered through third countries to avoid stiff anti-dumping tariffs, was raised in Congress today before a commission tasked with reviewing the 10-year-old deal to give the communist nation permanent normal trade relations (PNTR).
"Even our honey industry is under siege from imports of Chinese-origin honey," said Senator Chuck Schumer of New York. "Ongoing schemes by Chinese exporters to circumvent U.S. anti-dumping, food labeling and food safety laws, threaten the continued health of the U.S. honey industry and by extension, the health of our agricultural industries."
Schumer said that China is guilty of violating anti-dumping laws, is running honey through several other countries then into the United States to avoid tariffs, and is even shipping honey contaminated with antibiotics.

SEMBA Bargain Corner

For Sale:

~ Honey Sticks: 10 cents each . Contact Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568, rsuthr@hotmail.com
~ Four-frame nucs and honey in 5 gallon buckets. Call David Kriesch, 810-395-2037.
~ Bee colony for sale. Call Mazin at 313-999-3180. Price negotiable.
~Supers for your big crop and 5 gallon pails to put it in--all for half of new. Call Al Bzenko, 248-651-0928.
~Screened bottom boards with trays. Call Tom Stafford, 734-277-1555, email: staffo57@msu.edu.
~Custom -made bee jackets made to your size. Contact Don Schram, 248-310-8205, don.schram@gmail.com .

~ Location available for placement of bees. Peer Road north of 10 mile in South Lyon area. Contact Milton, 248-437- 2323.
~ Location needed for locating two colonies in the Macomb/ Oakland area. Call James Russell, 248-229-1070.

The Family International, a Missionary organization operating in Metro-Detroit, is looking for regular, annual, or quarterly donation of honey. We have missionaries who will pick up and deliver donations personally and we would also be able to provide a tax deductible receipt. If you would like to contact us or would like any more information our email address is fmlymissions@aol.com and the phone number is 248-935-7352.

Services:

Honey bee removal service: Don Schram, 248-310-8205.
Honey bee removal service: Tom Stafford, 734-277-1555.

Note: Ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad contact Roger Sutherland, rsuther@hotmail.com.

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

SEMBA Membership
5488 Warren Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9425

Affiliate Chapters

Oakland Beekeepers' Club

Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club