ARKANSAS STATE PLANT BOARD
P. O. BOX 1069
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72203
WWW.PLANTBOARD.ORG/PLANT_APIARY.HTML
Phone – 501-225-1598 Fax – 501-225-3590

Vol. 47, No.1 **APIARY NEWSLETTER** **February 2010**

BEE CONFERENCE

Staff from the Apiary Section was able to attend the 2010 North American Beekeeping Conference in Orlando a few weeks ago. It was a wonderful conference packed full with plenty of interesting talks on bees, beekeeping, and research. It was also packed full with beekeepers and researchers from our Country and beyond.

The Conference was made up of several groups including: American Beekeeping Federation (the Host), Apiary Inspectors of America, America Bee Research Conference, America Association of Professional Apiculturists, Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturist, Canadian Honey Council, National Honey Packers and Dealers, and many more. Speakers came from the industry, the research community, the inspection services, and they came from France, Croatia, India, Canada, Brazil, and America. They covered topics on CCD, Varroa mites, the two Nosemas, raising queens, Africanized Honeybees, efficacy and damages done by chemicals, etc. The schedule was full and often had 3-5 talks going on at the same time. At times you wanted and needed to be in a few places at the same time.

Highlights included the arguments surrounding the damage (or lack thereof) from various chemicals used in the hives and in production farming. Also of interest were; the tests being done on larvae when they are fed by bees who are exposed to agricultural chemicals; the lures being developed to attract Varroa mites and SHBs; the testing of nutrition supplements coming on the market; new diagnosis and remedies for Nosema; new information of the secondary damage done by parasites in the hives; new products to control these parasites, and so on.

One of the most impressive things of the conference was how well Arkansas was represented. Usually Plant Board staff and Arkansas beekeepers attend this meeting. But at this meeting Arkansas was represented by staff from the University of Arkansas, Extension Services, UAPB, and the Plant Board. It is great to see the interest level in Arkansas so high. Not only are there more facilities conducting research in our state, but also that that research is being heard.

Dr. Szalanski, U of A, gave a great presentation on "Molecular Diagnostics of *Nosema ceranea* and *Nosema apis* from Honey Bees in New York" -Szalanski, A.L., J. Whitaker, and P. Cappy. It was wonderful to see research that was conducted in Arkansas presented on such a stage.

Hopefully this interest will continue to grow in our state and more research projects will develop in the future that will match or surpass the fantastic research projects that are currently being conducted in Arkansas. This is definitely a win-win situation for Arkansas Beekeepers.

LEMON LAW MAY NOT APPLY-BEE SMART

Nobody Wants to Buy Small Hive Beetles or Africanized Honey Bees - Bee Smart.

It's that time of year when both new and old beekeepers start thinking about buying bees and queens. Even if you're not buying bees or queens, you know someone who is. More and more people are getting into beekeeping and that's a good thing. We clearly need more bee colonies around to do the pollination needed in agriculture and for the environment in general.

We ask that everyone be cautious when buying bees. Of course you don't want to buy problems. You buy bees and queens to carry the colonies through several seasons and to strengthen the colonies you already have. Bees are not allowed to come into Arkansas from other states without a certificate of health. We cannot regulate the

movement of certain problems without the cooperation of everyone involved. So, it becomes incumbent on the buyer to be cautious and to verify that the bees you're buying have been inspected at their source to meet the requirements to enter our state. Furthermore if you don't have certain problems, you really don't want to bring them in. There are still a few areas of Arkansas where the Small Hive Beetle has yet to be found. Inversely, there are only a few areas of the state where Africanized Honey Bees have been found.

We've heard that some sellers of package bees and queens who are located in known Hive Beetle or Africanized Honey bee areas are telling potential beekeepers, "if you get beetles" or "if your bees get unusually aggressive" we will gladly replace them. What isn't so well understood here is that, once you have beetles, they are in the area and killing and replacing the colony will not kill all the beetles. Likewise, killing or re-queening a colony that has some Africanized Honey Bee genetics does not totally solve the problem. Once the Africanized drones are in the area, the area will most likely become more and more Africanized.

Ask hard questions when buying bees. About beetles; ask if they have them in any of their yards and what they're doing to avoid shipping them. Keep in mind that the beetles are attracted to bees and can easily go through the screens used for queens and packages. About Africanized Honey Bees; ask where the closest ones have been found to their apiary, ask if their queens are open-mated, ask if their inspection service will assure you that you their queens don't have a risk of mating with Africanized drones, and ask how can they assure you that your queens have mated with only European drones.

NEWS FROM THE HILL

Dr. Steinkraus has once again had an article accepted by the American Bee Journal. His article will appear in the March or April issue this year. It is based off of his research and studies on the importance of late winter/early spring flowers for honeybees in Arkansas, and provides suggestions on what plants homeowners and beekeepers should and should not plant to benefit honeybees. The title is "Early Spring Flowers in Northwest Arkansas: The Excellent, the Good, and the Poor". Dr. Steinkraus is hopping to turn this into an Extension Fact Sheet. He is also continuing work on seasonal prevalence of Nosema ceranae in Arkansas with hopes to publish his work soon.

2010 NATIONAL HONEY BEE DAY

National Honeybee Awareness Day has been set for August 21, 2010. To sign up or gain more information on this event you can go to www.nhbad.com. Two requirements must be met.

1) A program must be tailored to educate, promote, and advance beekeeping to the public. (This is not about selling to fellow beekeepers.) And….
2) The event must be FREE to attend, unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise.

Thirty-eight associations from around the Country participated last year (non from Arkansas). If you would like to have your association participate this year I encourage you to visit the website and sign-up. Lets help promote and keep Honeybee Awareness in Arkansas on a high level.

APIARY CONDITIONS AND CHORES -WATCH THE FOOD SUPPLY

Seems like nearly every other call we've had since the beginning of the year basically asked, "are my bees going to freeze?" January was a cold and wet month. Some parts of the state approached the zero degree mark on the thermometer and then there was snow and ice with depths approaching twelve inches.

The answer is simple; bees don't freeze in temperatures like we've had as long as they have accessible and good food. In fact, bees just tighten up their clusters and vibrate more to create heat. The vibrations take energy and that energy comes from honey. If they were to run out of energy food, they can get too cold and freeze.

Now we're into February and in Arkansas that often means some warm days. While those days are important for bees to be able to get out and do their "cleansing" thing, it also carries with it some dangers. Some of the earliest blooms should be opening on those days and beekeepers are amazed every year that they see pollen coming in on the legs of foragers. Red Maple is one of the earliest sources of pollen. When pollen comes in it becomes a signal that the

queen can start laying eggs. Pollen is actually consumed by the young nurse bees from which they make royal jelly. Royal jelly is the high protein food that's fed to young larvae to help them through the development stages. This is all good.

But, as is often the case, in Arkansas this seems to be a false Spring. Another cold snap often happens in late February or the first half of March. The bees can re-cluster to make it through that cold snap but if they've made a bunch of brood, they've been feeding their stored supplies to those larvae. Often bees in Arkansas will starve at the end of the "false Spring".

Beekeepers must be on their toes in late Winter and early Spring as the supplies vanish quickly during this period. If it's early and your bees need food, it needs to be fed near the cluster so that they don't have to break away to get supplies. Also, when it's early you might want to feed a heavy feed, two parts sugar to one part water, so as to not stimulate brood rearing too early. Once the cold snaps art past, a stimulant feed of one part sugar to one part water will supplement any pollen coming in to boost brood production.

INSPECTORS CORNER

Another year has passed and we are all looking forward to our 2010 Beekeeping year.

2009 turned out to be a less than desirable year for honey production. Several beekeepers reported less than half of their normal honey crop. Rainy weather was blamed for this situation.

Several beekeepers had problems with SHB. We are all learning together that SHB can be a problem for our hives, as well as for us as beekeepers. There are several good traps on the market that help control the SHB. Beekeepers need to monitor their hives to make sure the SHB does not take their hives down.

A few beekeepers have had some problems with Nosema in 2009. If you are having problems with loses you can send a sample of bees (approximately 50-750 to our office to be sent off for examination.

I encourage all beekeepers to join a beekeepers association/club. Together we can encourage each other with our knowledge of beekeeping, experiences, and fellowship. The association meeting dates and times are listed on our website: www.plantboard.org/plant_apiary.html

NEW BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

The newly-formed Southeast Arkansas Beekeepers Association invites beekeepers in Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Drew, Union, and surrounding counties to join them each month for a friendly social gathering and to discuss issues related to honey bees and beekeeping. The group is open to hobbyists, commercial beekeepers, and non-beekeepers alike. Meetings will be held at the Crossett Public Library (1700 South Main Street, Crossett, AR), at 7:00 pm on the first Monday of each month. For more information, contact Jerry Freeman (870-853-2412) or Cleve Summerland (870-364-8574).

BEGINNING BEEKEEPING CLASS

The Southeast Arkansas Beekeepers Association is sponsoring a one-day beekeeping class. The class will meet on February 27, 2010, at the Crossett Public Library (1700 South Main Street, Crossett, AR), 9:30 am - 3:30 pm (lunch break noon - 1:00 pm, on your own).

The class is free and open to the public. No prior registration is required.

The course will be taught by Jon Zawislak, Apiculture Specialist with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, and will cover:

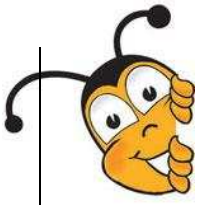
- Introduction to honey bee biology and behaviors
- The essential parts of a bee hive, tools and equipment
- How to get started with honey bees
- Bee hive pests and honey bee diseases

For more information, contact the Southeast Arkansas Beekeepers Association:
Jerry Freeman, 870-853-2412,
jfreeman1944@yahoo.com
Cleve Summerland, 870-364-8574,
tcsummerland@windstream.net

AWARD WINNING RESEARCH

The following students at the Department of Entomology, University of Arkansas, advised by Allen Szalanski won awards for research presentations at the 2010 annual meeting of the Entomological Society of America in Indianapolis. This is an annual meeting of over 3000 entomologists from across the world. **Justin Whitaker**: First place poster presentation, insect-plant interactions section "Distribution and molecular detection of *Nosema ceranae* in US honey bees".

Roxane Magnus: Second Place poster presentation, insect-plant interactions section "Genetic variation in honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) from central and southern United States." Copies of their presentations can be found at (http://comp.uark.edu/~aszalan/Site/Blog/Blog.html).



SWARM LIST

Swarm season is approaching. So it is time to update our list. If you would like to be added to the swarm list, you will need to contact the office. We will compile a new list annually. This will help those interested in catching swarms, as well as the public. Also, the swarm list will be added to our website and updated as needed. Please call our office @ 501-225-1598 or you can email Dana.Jones@aspb.ar.gov .

Please remember that it is a violation of Pest Control Law to remove bees from a structure for a fee without a license. If you are interested in obtaining a license please contact Scott Derrick in our Pest Control Section.

THE ARKANSAS APIARY NEWSLETTER - published by the Apiary Section of the Arkansas State Plant Board. Sent free to citizens on request.

Apiary Section
Arkansas State Plant Board
P. O. Box 1069
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203
Phone 501-225-1598

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORT STANDARD
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Little Rock, AR 72201
PERMIT #903