

2007 4



# Hive Rights

November 2007  
Vol 20 # 4

[www.honeycouncil.ca](http://www.honeycouncil.ca)

Canadian Honey Council



**Inside:**  
**Forging a new direction**  
**Provincial reports**  
**Plants for bees**  
**Apimondia**  
**IPM for hive health**



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Editor..... Heather Clay  
Design and Production ..... Rudy Gelderblom

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# HiveLights

August 2007 Vol 20 #4

Check out "IPM for hive health" for more information on the graphic used for the cover.



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# Canadian Honey Council Activities

Heather Clay, National Coordinator CHC

## Promotion

Pierre, the “Spokesbear” for Canadian honey, continues to travel the countryside making appearance at honey shows.



We have found that it is expensive shipping him to the various events and each of the provincial associations is currently deciding whether to purchase their own Pierre. We expect to have a decision soon and Pierre will be available by contacting your provincial association.

Honey promotion brochures are available in boxes of 900 at a cost of \$225 including postage. Please contact the CHC office if you need these items. For smaller quantities of brochures please contact your provincial association.

Canadian Bee Industry Safety Quality Traceability (C-BISQT)

The CHC is half way through a one year program to develop a good production practices manual for beekeepers. With funding assistance from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada the CHC has formed a CBISQT committee to plan and develop a food safety program for beekeepers.

The committee met in Winnipeg, 16th October to review the recent rewrite of the GPP manual. There are some gaps to be addressed but the committee was comfortable that the bulk of the

development work has been completed. The manual is almost ready for expert review. After completion it will be made available to beekeepers to assist them in preparing their quality assurance program.

## Integrated Pest Management

Following the recent concerns about high colony losses the CHC held a meeting of stakeholders to determine a short term response and a long term plan in the event of future high losses. Dr Jeff Pettis, USDA –ARS lab Beltsville Maryland was our guest speaker and he presented information about the US situation along with compelling advice for the need to monitor hives. Drs Steve Pernal and Rob Currie also advised control of the major honey bee parasites and diseases - varroa mites, tracheal mites, American Foul Brood and nosema. Individually these pests and diseases are manageable but together the effect on hive health is exponential. The CHC has undertaken to produce an IPM pamphlet for beekeepers that clearly

shows steps needed to monitor colonies. This will be available in time for spring treatments.

## Forging a New Direction

It has been clear for some time that the number and intensity of challenges to our industry is increasing. The CHC is too weak in its current position of organizational strength to maintain its past record of achievement in the face of future challenges. With the approval of funding from the Advancing Canadian Agriculture Agri-Food program, the CHC has gained an opportunity to reinvent itself so it can continue to be successful in terms of advancing the Canadian honey bee industry.

The CHC with its knowledge of the honey bee industry and related agencies and groups; committed leadership across the country; willing volunteers and a diverse membership, has many achievements of which to be proud. These include:

- Communicating news, events and bee industry information through the CHC website
- Producing a high quality quarterly magazine for members
- Gaining official approval for use of oxalic acid against varroa mites

- Co-ordinating Emergency Use Registration of Checkmite
- Developing an On Farm Food Safety program for beekeepers
- Co-ordinating the annual Honey Bee Research Symposium
- Representing the bee industry at national level in Ottawa
- Representing the bee industry at international level in USA, Australia and Apimondia

The collective efforts of the National Coordinator, leaders, and others are undermined by instability in funding and over-reliance on a few faithful volunteers for ongoing operation.

It is acknowledged that in order to be effective with government, the CHC needs to lobby. Not only do these weaknesses make it hard for the Council to respond to opportunities (e.g. promoting a premium product) and threats (e.g. dumping by other nations’ producers). They make it impossible for the Council to anticipate emerging issues in a way that would help ensure a prospering Canadian honey bee industry in the global economy.

In addition to serious weaknesses there are grave threats facing the CHC and its members, including:

- Formation of the Canadian Honey

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Producers, a group of commercial beekeepers who feel they are not fairly represented by the CHC, bleeds support from the CHC.

- The ongoing debate over membership and funding is depleting precious energy of the membership.
- Beekeepers are getting older with enterprises too expensive for the next generation, leading to fewer future members.
- Border closure to USA bees with no strategic plan for the future, divides opinion and support.
- Provincial honey commissions are becoming wealthy and more powerful, encouraging independent action and regional dominance.
- Honey is a relatively small commodity (\$200 million annually), with no strong presence of the industry in Ottawa, and little interest in it at the political level.
- Globalization, which opens up markets, simultaneously increases competition.
- Markets are sensitive to "GM" issues and residues in honey could impact exports.
- Diseases and pests are increasing in kind and in consequence.
- Research in vital areas including globalization and disease is needed.

But there are also great opportunities; for example :

- The move to stronger provincial commissions has begun, for example in Alberta, and Saskatchewan, providing an expanded membership potential.
- Membership benefits associated with national Council could be incorporated with participation in provincial associations.
- The National Farm Products Act enables a national levy to be used for promotion, development and research.
- USA beekeepers want Canadian bees, providing an opening for renewal of trade in bees.
- Partnerships with the pollination industry (especially for canola and blueberries) provide marketing and research funding potential.
- Honey production and pollination services have become multi-million dollar agri-businesses,

providing a new interest in the need for a strong national association.

- A window of opportunity is open, with the ACAAF funding program, to revitalize the CHC.

A Summit Meeting of industry leaders was held in Winnipeg to discuss the future direction of the CHC. The participants endorsed twenty principles to establish the foundation for the future organization

The unanimous endorsement of the new direction in Winnipeg, by leaders of our industry is a very positive step. The recommendations will be taken to the provincial association meetings for endorsement. If approved the CHC will be able to move forward in a new direction.

## Forging a New Direction

### Agreement in Principle Reached by Leaders of the Honey Bee Industry

By CHC Future Direction Project Team

At the Québec City Stakeholders Meeting (January 2006), the Canadian Honey Council began to transform ongoing debate into a new direction. It was affirmed that this new direction toward superior promotion of the Canadian honey bee industry, enhanced involvement by the sector, and opportune national policy development could be achieved by building organizational capacity. Supported by the 2006 AGM resolution, an application for federal funding for an ambitious project to reinvent the CHC was prepared. In June 2006 the application was approved by the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) Program.

For the past year the Project Steering Committee has guided the work and discussion on future roles, membership, budgets and conferences. All members

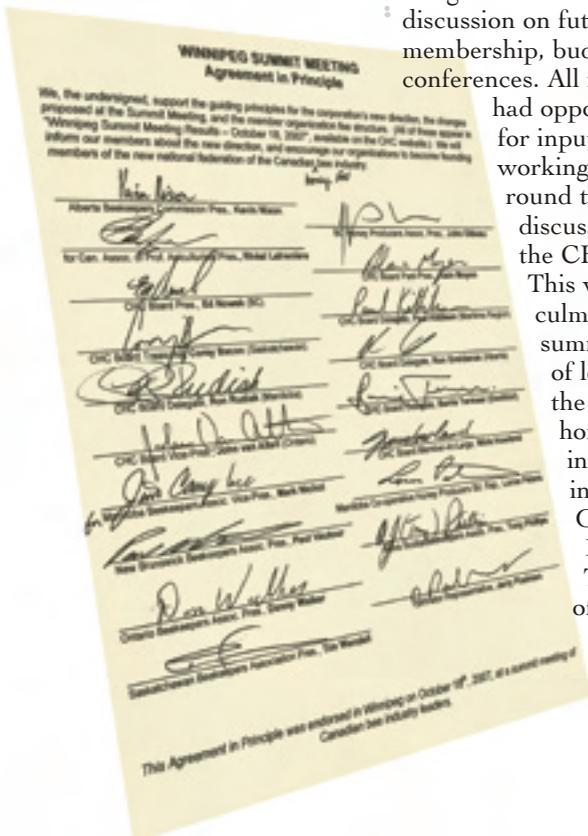
had opportunity for input through working groups, round table discussions and the CHC website. This work culminated in a summit meeting of leaders of the Canadian honey bee industry held in Winnipeg October 17 and 18. The group of twenty

participants included provincial association presidents, CHC directors, as well as a representative from the pollination industry, co-op honey producers and the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA). Their task was to discuss the proposals that have been developed over the past year for the New Direction for the Canadian Honey Council.

The Summit Meeting participants considered, refined and endorsed twenty principles to establish the foundation for the future organization. The group debated and agreed on changes to CHC's roles, national office, membership, board of directors, participation, communication, operating budget and conferences. In addition, they developed a fee structure to ensure adequate, stable funding for our future national organization.

The past year's work has been intense and rewarding. The unanimous endorsement of the new direction in Winnipeg, by leaders of our industry is a very positive step. It brings the CHC much nearer to where it can more effectively promote and support a dynamic and prosperous Canadian honey bee industry; be the definitive unified national voice for the industry and act as the national instrument for achieving a sustainable Canadian honey bee industry in the global economy.

The results of the Winnipeg Summit will be used to guide the preparation of by-laws for the future organization and to develop the schedule of activities for "re-inventing" the CHC. It was suggested that a name change might be in order. This will be examined after the provincial associations review and endorse the plan for the new direction.



Summit meeting participants (left to right)  
 Back row: Tony Phillips, Ron Greidanus, Dan Walker, Alain Moyen, John Van Alten  
 Middle row: Ron Rudiak, Paul Kittilsen, Kevin Nixon, Corey Bacon, Jim Campbell, Barrie Termeer, Rhéal Lafrenière,  
 Front row: Paul Vautour, Tim Wendell, Jerry Poelman, Wink Howland, Heather Clay, John Gibeau, Ed Nowek, Lorne Peters.

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# Kendal the Baker Bee

## A Tale about Heroes and Good Deeds

John A. Hartigan, Rock Publishing, Rockville, Maryland

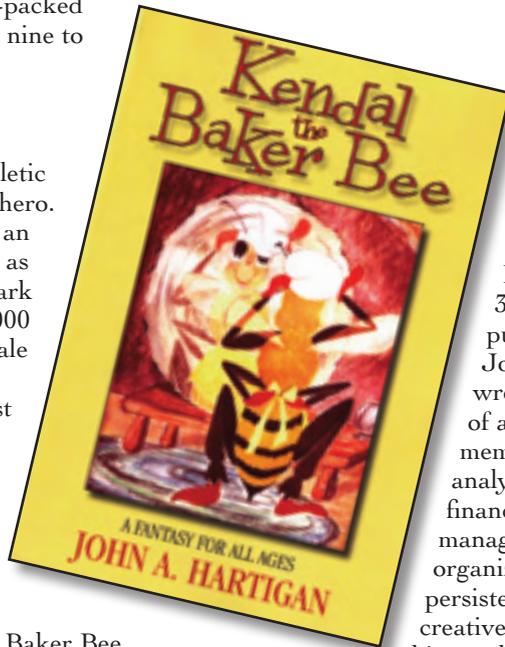
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Kendal the Baker leaves a lasting legacy that proves kindness can melt hard hearts and that giving is more rewarding than receiving. Kendal's story entertains all who dare to dream, whether nine or ninety, or in between.

<http://www.rockpublishing.com/bee>.



htm

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

During his 38 years of public service, John Hartigan wrote thousands of administrative memoranda and analyses involving finance and management of complex organizations. But a persistent passion for creative writing brought him to the pad and

pencil in his spare time. In 1972, he penned the story of a honey bee for his two children. Even today, they can recall vividly the exploits of Kendal and his pal, Greeney the Caterpillar, who made them laugh and cry. Recently Jean, his loving wife of 45 years, suggested he write a book. John never looked back. He dusted off the four-page story of "Kendal the Baker Bee" and wrote a full-blown fantasy adventure. Since retiring as Vice President for Finance and Business at the State University of New York at Albany, John has used his writing skills in behalf of nonprofit organizations. Now he finds fulfillment by working on four new fantasy books. They all reflect his belief that nature's creatures and their fascinating lives help in our quest to find meaning in our lives and in our relationships with each other.



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# Provincial Reports

## Maritimes

Summer 2007 was a memorable one. Pollination season was late starting, two weeks later than last year due to a cold spring in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. New Brunswick pollination season was about on time. The weather during pollination was better than

last year but not by much. For about 50% of the time the bees had hot flying days and for the remaining time they had to wear rain coats. This year the bees returned from pollination

in much better shape. Summer lasted until the end of September, with most areas seeing very little, if any, frost. If the long range forecast is correct, the daytime temperatures are to be in the low to mid twenties for the first week of October. This should help the bees prepare for winter and allow us a good chance at controlling Varroa mites.

It is looking like the honey crop is average or slightly above in the Maritimes this year.

The Maritime Beekeepers annual summer tour was held in Northern New Brunswick this summer

July 20 – 22. It was well organized with both general interest and beekeeping tours, and great guest speakers.

Wishing you all a healthy, happy and productive fall season.

## Quebec

This year, the winter losses were a concern in Québec with an average of 40%. Many beekeepers have lost higher numbers of colonies. Varroa mites seem to be the main cause of the losses, but a variety of other factors may have played a part.

The 2007 honey production season was poor in Québec. Weather conditions during the spring blueberry pollination season affected the honey crop. There was a stretch of hot weather with no rain and consequently very little honey was produced. In other areas, the weather in June was good and raised hopes for a promising crop. However cold and rainy conditions through the rest of summer lowered the honey crop to a disappointing level.

As a result of low honey price concerns, the Quebec Federation is working to implement a Joint marketing plan (plan conjoint) associated with

a honey certification called Miel 100% Québec. The Québec Federation is working on the promotion of Québec honey, developing beekeeping research and financing projects. It seems that consumers are ready to embrace local products and we expect to continue development of this project for the next year.



John van Alten

reported a couple of supers being produced in 10 days. So I would say, that given the conditions, and with most beekeepers trying to bring their colony numbers back up, Ontario has a below average crop, but as usual we are optimistic about next year.

Once again, a large number of colonies were transported to New Brunswick and

Quebec for blueberry and cranberry pollination. These colonies always require special attention when they return to Ontario. I think the stress of the trip and the conditions of the areas where they are placed should be looked at to find ways to develop our management options. It is quite disheartening to have bees return in poor condition, and if there is something that we could be doing to improve this situation, I'm sure that beekeepers and growers alike would support this.

## Ontario

Ontario has had a very interesting season to say the least with crop reports that vary from very poor, to best ever. Generally dry to drought conditions in most of the province. Up until the end of August, it looked very bleak for our honey crop, but a bit of rain and warm weather in September seems to have improved the outcome. Some beekeepers have

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Some of the Special Beekeepers funds that the Ontario government announced earlier this spring have started to be sent out to help beekeepers and researchers. It seems that when there is some funding to be had, beekeepers tend to take a second look at their actual losses that they report. It is a good way to get beekeepers to register their hives.

Also the \$600,000 that was announced for research and promotion has been allocated. The University of Guelph under the able direction of Dr. Guzman, and the OBA tech transfer program will receive funding as well as a portion to be used for Ontario honey promotion projects.

Our annual meeting will be held in Cornwall this November 16 and 17. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please check out [www.ontariobee.com](http://www.ontariobee.com) for details and registration forms.

This may be my last report as Ontario delegate. I would like to say that it has been a very good experience to have represented our province for these last few years. It has allowed me to begin to realize and appreciate how diverse our beekeeping community is across the country. I am

optimistic about the future of beekeeping in Canada, and feel that the new direction of Honey Council should allow the CHC to effectively represent the beekeeping industry. Please support this new initiative.

### Manitoba Report

As in other parts of Canada, many Manitoba beekeepers started the season with a much smaller than expected number of overwintered colonies this spring. For many of these producers who lost large numbers of colonies, honey production was also adversely affected because early plant nectar production occurred as the replacement colonies were still developing. Reports of honey production range from the long term provincial average (175 lbs) to slightly less than 100 lbs per colony.

With farm operating costs steadily increasing and a lagging demand for our higher quality Canadian produced honey it has become difficult for many producers to meet their financial obligations. Many packers and processors prefer to deal in imported honey which is being produced at a fraction of the cost of producing honey in Canada. Here, in Canada, we have high production and safety standards and

pay fair wages to our workers.

The Manitoba Beekeepers' honey show took place this year at the Forks close to the centre of downtown Winnipeg. The Forks location is at the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers and was used for hundreds of years by the Aboriginal tribes of North America as a meeting place. The three day honey show, staffed by members of the Red River Apiarists' Association and Manitoba Agriculture



Ron Rudiak

(MAFRI), was located indoors, in a centre court area with a high volume of traffic. Many people stopped to ask questions and look at the colorful displays which included a two frame observation

hive stocked with young active bees and a queen. The theme for the show this year was "Enjoy Manitoba Honey - the Honey Less Travelled". The honey tasting display where passers-by could sample several varieties of locally produced honey and, as well, a squeeze container of imported honey was very popular. Most participants disliked the strong flavor and aroma of the "unnamed" imported honey. Selling customers an inferior flavored honey will frequently make them switch to an alternate sweetener.

Another feature was the "Colors of Manitoba" display of liquid honey in 500 gram glass jars, each from a different location within the Province. A large printed map of Manitoba was close by with many

► pg 10



Manitoba Beekeepers displayed local honey at their recent honey show.

areas highlighted to show where the honey on display had originated. The display of competition honey and prize ribbons was also a popular attraction. For those who wanted to take home a container or two of flavourful Manitoba honey, three vendors were on hand each with attractive displays of many varieties of local honey and honey spreads for sale.

Cooking with honey is becoming increasingly popular. A modern, portable kitchen was set up close to the honey displays to demonstrate the versatility of honey in food preparation. Two RRAA members, Charles Polcyn and John Russell kept their audiences entertained as

they demonstrated their cooking skills.

### Saskatchewan

As I reported in the last Hivelights issue, seeding of the canola crop was broken several times because of the wet weather. This had beekeepers optimistic that we would see an extended honey throughout the summer into late August and potentially a huge bumper crop like we saw last summer. Unfortunately, for the Saskatchewan beekeepers, this optimism was "cooked", along with the Canola crop and our hopes for a repeat bumper crop. Many parts of Saskatchewan saw the wet spring followed by

an extreme extended period of heat in the mid 30's with humidex levels as high as the mid 40's. There are reports that some areas had canola fields blooms for as short as 10 – 14 days. However, there were pockets that saw some thundershowers during this heat, which helped extend the bloom slightly. August saw our weather pattern turn from extreme heat to cold and wet. This weather did not allow much flight time for the bees to forage on the remaining blooms of canola and wildflowers and did not allow an August alfalfa



Corey Bacon

and wildflower honey flow in most regions. While July was on pace to be the hottest July on record since they became keeping records, August was the complete opposite and was on pace to be the coldest August on record since they began keeping records. The Saskatchewan honey crop is definitely expected to be short compared to last years 250+ provincial average.

Just as the winter loses in Saskatchewan this past year were sporadic, even within the same the regions. The honey crop is proving to be the same. There are some beekeepers

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that reported good crops while others experienced poor crops in the same region. Expectations are that Saskatchewan will fall short of our long-term average honey yield and early reports indicate that the crop will be around the 135 – 150 lb/colony range. A lot of honey moved in Saskatchewan in late June with the price topping \$1.00/lb. The expectations in early summer that the price of honey would head towards the \$1.20 did not materialize. Currently, the price of honey being offered to beekeepers is in the \$0.90 - \$0.95/lb range. With the shorter crop, many beekeepers will be holding onto their honey until we see a positive upward trend in the honey market price. The price is frustrating for many beekeepers, as the short North American crop should have realized the expectations of an increase to honey prices. However, the large gain our dollar has posted has not been friendly to our commodity and is a large factor the price has not moved.

**Alberta**

Alberta beekeepers spent this season making up colony strength and numbers. The cost for many was lower than average production. Those who were fortunate enough to have good spring survival enjoyed above average crop. Overall the crop will be probably



Ron Greidanus

average.

**British Columbia**

Crop reports are coming in indicating an average to slightly above average honey crop in many interior regions of B.C. A notable exception was the Fraser Valley, Lower Mainland and areas of the Kootenays where half the normal crop has been reported. A distinct shortage of blueberry, blackberry and cranberry blossom honey is noted, while the fireweed honey flow did not materialize. Bulk honey prices remain low at under \$1.00 with specialty honey at about \$1.25 per pound. Retail prices are in the range of a low of \$6.99 per kg. with honey as a commodity to a high of 13.95 in choice retail & farm market locations that promote the health benefits of honey and provide an educational experience about honeybees and their value to society

Our province still maintains restrictions on the movement of bees onto Vancouver Island, despite objections from many fellow beekeepers. This appears to limit access to bees for pollination requirements on the lower mainland and access to milder winter conditions and fireweed flows



Ed Nowek

on the Island. Whether this restriction can remain indefinitely remains debatable.

Much emphasis is being placed on preparation of colonies for winter this year following the pockets of severe losses in certain areas and the concerns over CCD and excessive winter losses across the continent. This emphasis is being made in summer requeening of colonies, diligent mite monitoring, nutrition level maintenance and controls for nosema, AFB, varroa and tracheal mite infestations.

There is expected to be additional demand for honeybee colonies in the ever growing and thriving high bush blueberry crops and cranberry fields for the spring and summer of 2008. Please contact the BCMAL to obtain further information and to apply for the BC Bee Act Permit. Email: Paul.

vanWestendorp@gov.bc.ca

B.C. beekeepers held their AGM in Dawson Creek in the beautiful Peace River country October 26 & 27. It was well attended with expert speakers on the role of bee nutrition, disease resistance, nosema and other factors that

might affect colony collapse disorder.

**BeeMaid - Press Release**

Bill Bygarski, Chairman of Bee Maid Honey Limited is pleased to announce the continuation of apicultural research funding by Bee Maid Honey.

Bee Maid will consider project proposals in any area of apiculture or pollination research. Preference will be given to the area of honey, and the production of pure quality honey in the Canadian beekeeping industry.

Proposals for projects are to be submitted to Bee Maid Honey by December 3, 2007. Projects are expected to be completed within one year of funding, although renewal applications will be considered.



Barrie Termeer

Bee Maid Honey Ltd. is the marketing arm of the Manitoba Cooperative Honey Producers Limited and the Alberta Honey Producers Co-operative Limited.

Honey produced by beekeepers in western Canada is processed and packaged at Bee Maid's Winnipeg, MB and Spruce Grove, AB plants. BeeMaid Honey is North America's largest single source honey marketer, proudly packing 100% pure Canadian honey.

For further information and to receive an application for research, please contact:

# Plants for Bees

## Bramble berries

Douglas Clay, Research Scientist, Calgary AB

**Common Name:** Brambles  
(Raspberry,  
Blackberry,  
Salmonberry,  
Thimbleberry)

**Scientific Name:** *Rubus* spp.

**Native Range:** The brambles belong to the family Rosaceae. Depending on the authority, the *Rubus* are considered to have 400 or more species and thousands of cultivars. The taxonomy is quite difficult and extremely variable due to the high degree of hybridization between related species. In Canada the most common of the brambles are red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus* L. {European} or *Rubus strigosus* Michx. {North American}), black raspberry (*Rubus occidentalis* L. {European}), and blackberry (*Rubus canadensis* L.). More locally distributed are the thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus* Nutt.) and salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis* Pursh) found along the west coast.

The raspberry was first cultivated in England in the 1500's. In many countries, they grow year round and have become pests in warmer climates. Brambles are kept in check by winter in Canada although there are areas on the west coast where it is considered a noxious weed.

**Canadian Distribution:** The Canadian sub-group of the genus *Rubus* spp. has about 32 species. Many native 'wild' species occur across Canada, however, most cultivated brambles, and thus those requiring pollination or supporting honey production are limited to those mentioned above. Even in Canada brambles can be a nuisance in regions of good soils, adequate water, and a mild climate.

Species of blackberry, red raspberry, and black raspberry are all indigenous to Canada. The black raspberry is native to eastern North America only. The blackberry is common

from Ontario to Atlantic Canada while the raspberry is more widely distributed across the country. Canada produces 3% of the world's supply of raspberries.

The berries have been collected for food since earliest times. They contain large amounts of vitamins A, B, and C as well as sugars and organic acids. Leaves were often dried and used as herbal teas and medicines. Many of the common names used by the public including 'Boysenberry', 'Loganberry', and 'Youngberry' are actually hybrids of blackberry and red-raspberry.

**Description:** The distinction between blackberries and raspberries revolves around fruit characteristics. All bramble fruits are aggregate fruits, meaning they are formed by the aggregation of several smaller fruits, called drupelets. The drupelets are all attached to a structure called the receptacle, which is the fibrous central core of the flower. In raspberries, the receptacle remains with the plant when fruit are picked, creating the hollow appearance of the harvested fruit. In blackberries, the drupelets remain attached to the receptacle, which comes off with the fruit when picked. A second distinction is that raspberry drupelets are hairy and adhere to one-another, whereas blackberry drupelets are hairless and smooth.

Brambles tend to be erect or semi-erect generally thorny shrubs. The plants are perennial composed of biennial canes that overlap in age. The individual canes grow vegetatively for the first year (called primocanes), initiate flower buds late in the first summer, fruit the following summer (then called floricanes) and subsequently die. The leaves are palmately compound with 3 to 5 leaflets with the middle one being the largest; the edges are serrated.

The flowers are white to pink about 2 to 3 cm in diameter. Blackberry flowers usually have larger petals

Top: Thimbleberry, *Rubus parviflorus* blossom

Bottom: Black raspberry *Rubus occidentalis* blossom



than raspberries. Erect blackberries often have flowers found in clusters of 10 to 20 flowers while trailing blackberries have clusters of 1 to 10 blossoms. There are 60 to 100 stamen; each can develop into a drupelet comprising the final 'fruit'. Although most cultivars can be self pollinated, they are attractive to honey bees and the fruit set is significantly improved with pollination. Flowering in the west occurs between May and June while in the east it may not be until June or July. Fruit development takes 30 to 50 days for raspberries and 40 to 70 days for blackberries.

**Ecology:** The brambles tend to be pioneer species of disturbed sites, often found along trails and roadsides. They prefer open sunny areas or light woody areas with partial shade. Brambles are adaptable to soils ranging from sandy to clays with good drainage. They are somewhat limited in pH tolerance preferring slightly acid soil from 5 to 7. The roots are generally shallow although some more deeply rooted blackberries are drought tolerant. Raspberries can tolerate cooler temperatures than blackberries and the *R. strigosus* is more tolerant of cold than *R. occidentalis*.

#### Methods of Reproduction and Spread:

The *Rubus* spp. spread vegetatively by suckering and often whenever a cane or branch touches the ground it will root and begin a new plant. Brambles are so easily propagated that they can become invasive. Root cuttings (10 to 15 cm in length planted 4 to 8 cm deep) are often used commercially.

#### Honey/Pollen Potential:

Many of the brambles are exceptional nectar

producers with attractive pollen production as well. Raspberry produces a mild-flavoured light-coloured honey. After logging or fire, when brambles become one of the first successional plants, it is often raspberry which is of greatest interest to bees. Raspberries can produce + 13 mg of rich nectar/flower. In recently deforested areas the honey yield from raspberry is from 22.5 to 45 kg/colony.

Blackberry is not as sought after by honey bees as the raspberry and often produces 'a smoky-coloured honey of inferior quality' although some report 'a white to extra-light amber [honey] ... [with] a pleasant flavour. The importance

of blackberry as a honey producer is highly variable and is different from location to location, thus the different opinions of honey quality.

The main importance of the *Rubus* spp. to honey bees maybe as a source of spring stimulus before the summer clover flow. Nectar secretion starts just prior to the unfolding of the petals. Raspberries can remain in bloom for 1 to 3 weeks, blackberries can be longer. This results in plants having fruit in various stages of ripeness over an extended period.

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Gabe Gilbert, held a bake sale to raise money for bee research.



Adrienne Clay, Jasper, AB

The Canadian Bee Research Fund and the beekeeping community owe a big thank-you a young conservationist from New York. Earlier this year, twelve year old Gabe Gilbert and his friend Julia spent four weeks collecting donations from family and friends. They held a community bake sale that ultimately raised \$200 USD towards their "Save the bees" fund. Gabe chose to send the money as a donation to the Canadian Bee Research Fund to assist with honeybee research. After reading about the worldwide decline of honeybees he wanted to help. Canadian friends told him about the problem afflicting the beekeeping industry in Canada and the USA and how devastating the problem has become. Each year Gabe and his friends choose a different global cause to support. Previous endeavors have raised funds for Congolese mountain gorillas, dolphins and Australian dingoes. Recent poaching of the mountain gorillas in the Virunga Wildlife Reserve has prompted Gabe to renew his interest in the African mountain gorilla cause but he has not ruled out bee research support in the future.

# Apimondia 2007 Melbourne Australia

Heather Clay, National Coordinator, CHC, Calgary

**APIMONDIA** is the international federation of beekeepers associations representing over 120 countries with full and associate members. Canada is a member organization. Every two years Apimondia holds a congress and this year it was convened in Melbourne, Australia. In 2009 it will be in Montpellier France and in 2011 it will be in Argentina.

Melbourne is the capital of Victoria, aptly named the "Garden City" of Australia, September 9-14, 2007. The trade show and congress events occupied two floors of the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention centre, which is in the heart of Melbourne on the banks of the Yarra River.

Many beekeepers arrived early to take in the pre conference tour from Sydney to Melbourne, to learn about the Australian system of quarantine, bee breeding and research. Others enjoyed some sightseeing and shopping. Although the turnout of northern hemisphere commercial beekeepers was low because the meeting time fell in peak season, there were hundreds of international beekeepers, researchers, extension apiarists, educators and industry suppliers. Retailers of hive equipment exhibited the latest in technology for the honey house. Researchers in apiculture presented the current information in the world of honey bee science. The research symposium ranged from aspects of beekeeping in developing countries to highly technical presentations on bee biology.

Apimondia is an opportunity for importers and exporters of honey bees and hive products to come together. This meeting was no exception.

Canadians, Viola and Aubrey Goulding from Paradise, Newfoundland traveled to Melbourne to exhibit their bee natural products. They produce a range of environmentally friendly products, including candles, body care treatments and handmade bee jewellery (made from bread and glue and coated with resin). Everything they make is from natural products- even their pet paw cream for dogs that have developed winter

time cracks in their paws. They sold most of the product that they brought to the trade show but saved some to barter on their trip home through Thailand. (for more information visit [www.beenatural.ca](http://www.beenatural.ca))

## New Ideas in Hive Technology

Beekeepers are inventive and some of the best ideas were displayed at Apimondia.

Two types of round hives were on display. An Australian idea for production using a round plastic pipe with a solar powered fan was interesting. The hive can easily be cleaned in the field and the inventor speculates that one day he would like to have an insert through the centre that can be rotated to uncap the frames in situ. A drain on the bottom of the hive would harvest the honey. Imagine harvesting honey directly in the field.

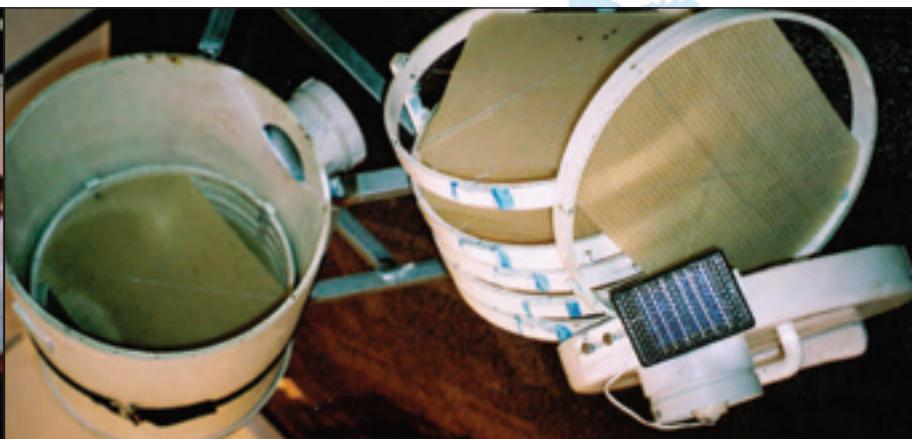
A variation on the round hive is the rotating hive from Anivet of Hungary. It has taken off successfully from its introduction at the Dublin Apimondia congress. Testimonials and research suggest that the varroa mite reproduction is disrupted by rotating the hive 60 degrees every 6 hours. More information [www.anivet.hu](http://www.anivet.hu).

The Happy Keeper designer, Jean Pierre Le Pabic has developed a different type of bottom board insert to counteract varroa mites. The design incorporates round plastic tubes spaced to allow mites to fall through but too slippery for them to crawl back. A bigger advantage over a metal screen is that the open area below the colony is reduced, allowing ventilation but not cooling. (For more information [www.apiculture.com/happykeeper/](http://www.apiculture.com/happykeeper/))

Aubrey and Viola Goulding display bee natural products



Designer of the Happy Keeper



A new invention of a round hive with solar powered fan

### Tracking and tracing

Food quality and traceability is an issue for honey producers and packers. Several companies provided information about purchasing in house chemical analysis equipment. Apitrack from Argentina ([www.apitrack.com](http://www.apitrack.com)) displayed their well developed computer system for traceability of honey from field to jar. A potential buyer of honey can go online and see a map showing where the honey originated.

### Marketing

There were hundreds of ideas for marketing products of the hive. An Indian company had an interesting honey stick that was made of honey that had been processed to a toffee like consistency. It was wonderful in the warm Australian climate but became rock hard in the Canadian cold weather. An Australian company displayed their Maya Sunny Honey comb art in a bottle. The bottles are placed in the hive and the comb is built in the bottle. Each bottle is displayed upside down with a wooden base. The process is time consuming so the producer needs at least \$25 per bottle for a return on investment.

### Promotion

Australia, like Canada, has problems with lost cost honey in their marketplace. Companies packing 100% Australian honey have taken the initiative to promote their product with eye catching promotions. On the field trip for beekeepers, Beechworth Honey displayed their 18 wheeler truck with sign -100% Australian Always and another, Warral honey, - 5 generations of quality apiary production.

These promotion ideas help build consumer confidence in local honey and brand recognition.

### Hive Equipment

New Zealand showcased some well designed honey processing equipment. Engineer and beekeeper Peter Boutleje demonstrated his top of the line extracting and packing equipment. His inventive ideas for challenging problems in extraction are well worth the extra pennies for high quality made in New Zealand stainless steel equipment. More information at [www. http://www.boutlejeproducts.co.nz](http://www.boutlejeproducts.co.nz).

Bee Tech also from New Zealand highlighted their compact Honeysucker double basket extractor for high volume throughput. Managed by high spec electronic controller it allows a faster turn around and extracts more honey in a shorter time

than the competition. More information at [www.beetch.co.nz](http://www.beetch.co.nz)

### Research

The research symposium had three concurrent lecture sessions so there was something for everyone. To this busy agenda, Apimondia organizers added an extra session on Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). The meeting brought together top



names working on the condition such as Dr Jeff Pettis, USDA-ARS lab Beltsville Maryland who presented new information about Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV). The media had latched onto the news that Australian packages were found to be carrying the virus. It was gloves off for the Aussies. Dr Denis Anderson a well known Australian researcher, CSIRO Canberra, who was the first to identify the difference between *Varroa jacobsoni* and its evil twin *Varroa destructor*, was not impressed by the new diagnosis of IAPV. He was alarmed about the suggestion that CCD started in 2004 when Australia started exporting packages to the USA. If that is so why is there no CCD in Australia? He suggests that it smacks of politics, not good science. TV crew from the PBS series Nature filmed the CCD presentations and interviewed researchers for the documentary "Silence of the Bees". For local listing visit [www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/bees](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/bees)

After all the presentations the only thing that was abundantly clear is that we really have no definitive answer for the high losses in 2007. As author Shelley Gare in the Weekend Australian 15 September, stated "Whether it is a plague killing our bees, varroa mites or just our toxic 21st century ways, it's hard not to conclude that what is really killing our honey bees is neglect and indifference. And lack of respect."

py Keeper with an anti varroa board

Anivet's rotating hive for varroa control



Maya Sunny Honey with honeycomb sculptures in a glass jar

Paradise Honey from Finland makes a sturdy lightweight styrofoam hive including a screened bottom board for varroa control



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For more information on registration, hotel reservations and meeting agenda,  
please visit the Canadian Honey Council Website: [www.honeycouncil.ca](http://www.honeycouncil.ca)

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DECEMBER 15, 2007



# 67<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & CONVENTION of the CANADIAN HONEY COUNCIL and CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL APICULTURISTS Carriage House Inn, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA January 23 – 26, 2008

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Wednesday	January 23th
Registration and Trade show	2 - 5 pm
CHC Directors' Business Mtg	8 am - 5 pm
CAPA Business Mtg	8 am - 5 pm
Open Joint Mtg CAPA/CHC	7:30 pm - 10 pm
Government Reports	

Thursday	January 24th
Provincial Presidents Breakfast Mtg	7 - 9 am
CAPA members Breakfast Mtg	7 - 9 am
Registration	8:30 - 5 pm
Trade show	9 - 5 pm
CHC AGM (All welcome)	9:30 - 5 pm
Industry & provincial reports	
Canadian honey situation	
Resolutions and elections	
Meet & Greet	7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Friday	January 25th
Registration	8:30 - noon
Trade Show	all day
Research Symposium	8:30 - 5 pm
Hive health	
Pollination	
Markets and Promotion	
Banquet at Ranchman's	6:00 - 10:00 pm

Saturday	January 27th
Speakers TBA	9:00 - noon
Queen Breeders	
Pollination	
Field Trip	1-5 pm
Agritourism tour to High River	
Chinook Honey	
Greidanus Honey	
Medivet Pharmaceuticals	



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# Canadian Bee Research Fund Call for Proposals

Rob Currie, Chair Canadian Bee Research Fund committee

The directors of the Canadian Bee Research Fund (CBRF) invite the submission of proposals for the 2008 competition. Grants will be considered in any area of apiculture or pollination research but preference will be given to subjects identified by the Canadian beekeeping industry as high priority.

The CBRF was established to counteract the problems caused by severe reductions in federal and provincial funding for honey bee research. It is a joint project of the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists and the Canadian Honey Council. It is now in its 10th year of operation.

Grants have been awarded annually for research considered important for the survival and prosperity of the Canadian beekeeping industry. Donations received for the fund are invested in a long-term endowment account and the interest generated is used to support bee research through the awarding of annual grants.

The projects that received funding for the current year are:

“Management of Honeybee Diseases Using Lysozyme.”

Dr. Steve Pernal, Agriculture Agri-Food Canada, \$5,000

“Integrating Chemical Control and Host Resistance to Increase Treatment Thresholds for Varroa destructor.”

Dr. Rob Currie, University of Manitoba, \$6,000

“Evaluation of Varroa and Tracheal Mite Tolerance in Selected Honeybee Lines and Attempted Correlation of Tolerance with DNA Markers”

Albert J Robertson, Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association, \$6,500

“Canadian Therapeutic Honey TM Development of production process”

Dr. Katrina Brudzynski, Brock University, \$7,500

Reports of these current projects will be given at the annual research symposium in Calgary AB, 25-26 January.

Applications for this round of grants should be sent to Dr Rob Currie, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2. The deadline for submission is November 30, 2007. Application details can be found on the CHC website [www.honeycouncil.ca](http://www.honeycouncil.ca)



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## What's in a Name

The debate over the spelling of the word/s "honey bee" has been an ongoing topic of discussion. Is the correct spelling honey bee, honey-bee or honeybee? Some Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA) members decided to weigh in on the argument in a recent online discussion.

Rhéal Lafrenière, Provincial Apiculturist, Manitoba asked the question:

"At the CHC "Forging a New Direction" Summit Meeting, the discussion of changing the name of council to reflect that it is moving toward becoming a federation of associations, created a small debate as to the correct spelling for the term "honey bee" (i.e. honey bee vs honeybee).

The argument that I have used to defend the spelling as "honey bee" is that taxonomically the honey bee belong to the Family: Apidae (common name: bees) and therefore should have the word "bee" as a stand alone word in its name to signify that it is a bee. For example, dragonfly is not a "fly" and therefore cannot be spelled "dragon fly". Both the Entomological Society of Canada (ESC) and Entomological Society of America (ESA) recognize the common name of *A. mellifera* as "honey bee" and make no reference to the spelling honeybee. Even the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Australia make reference to the common name of *A. mellifera* as honey bee. My spellchecker always wants me to spell it "honeybee".

Those who took taxonomy at University generally agreed that it should be two words:

"When I took insect taxonomy, I was told that the correct spelling is "honey bee" (two words). Honey is an adjective to describe the bee. For example, the house fly is spelled "house fly" (two words), since it is a true fly. Insects that are not true flies (dragonfly, butterfly) are spelled with one word."

Chris Maund

Heather Clay, National Coordinator CHC

Integrated Pest Management Specialist (Entomologist) and Provincial Apiarist  
Crop Development Branch

NB Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture

Some grammarians are more inclusive:

"In North America we generally write "honey bee" as others have noted. However, in grad school, Dr. George Byers informed me that, grammatically, that is incorrect. He claimed that it should be "honey-bee" because both words are nouns. When using "honey" as an adjective, it requires a hyphen.

But the situation is probably even more complex. My book "Words into Type" explains it this way. "The hyphen is used to join words to form compound words." "The preferred form depends primarily upon the stage of evolution the compound is in: it begins as an open compound, increasing usage sees it hyphenated, and eventually, when we no longer analyze it into its elements, it becomes solid, as 'blackberry, postman, newspaper.' The present trend is to eliminate hyphens and write a compound solid as soon as popular usage indicates it will become a permanent compound.

In other words, it would evolve from "honey bee" to "honey-bee" to "honeybee."

But then on the next page, we get to

"Two nouns of equal value": "Use a hyphen between two nouns used together the indicate that the person or thing referred to partakes of the character of both nouns." Examples: secretary-treasurer, dinner-dance, city-state. I believe that this applies to our honey-bee.

Having said this, no one writes it this way in North America, for reasons I do not understand. It seems from what I just looked up that both "honeybee" and honey-bee" are more correct than "honey bee". But if "honey bee" looks and sounds OK, it is OK!"

Gard Otis

Professor Environmental Biology  
University of Guelph

The last word belongs to Steve Pernal who suggests that the CHC use the two word designation:

"I would encourage the use of "honey bee" based on the ESC/ESA common names lists and the taxonomic reasoning you have given. The honeybee is more commonly used in Europe than North America. Common names do vary among different parts of the world. I would suggest that "honey bee" would reflect the accepted common name in North America and that CHC should use this spelling."

Stephen F. Pernal, Ph.D.

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# IPM for Hive Health

Heather Clay  
National Coordinator, CHC

Many Canadian beekeepers suffered high colony losses in spring. The Canadian Honey Council (CHC) convened a meeting in Winnipeg in June, with industry stakeholders to work out short term and long term strategies in the event of continuing high losses. From this meeting a 23 point plan emerged and one important priority was the need for clear communication on an integrated pest management (IPM) plan that incorporates monitoring and timely treatment of honey bee diseases for beekeepers.

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### Monitoring is key to a good IPM plan.

Dr Rob Currie University of Manitoba

“ I cannot overemphasize the importance of not only controlling parasites and disease in the bee colony but also checking that the treatment worked. Varroa mites are a problem on their own. Combined with the presence of tracheal mites, the effect is



*Draft for equence from IPM poster*



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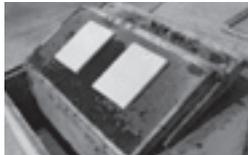
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# Beekeepers stung by high colony losses

## Industry struggles with low prices, bee mortality

By Laura Severs - Business Edge, Calgary  
Published: 07/27/2007 - Vol. 7, No. 15

**B**ees are dropping like flies as Canadian beekeepers struggle to find out what's causing a collapse in their \$1.2-billion industry.

Losses across the country are piling up and beekeepers are facing tough times, industry officials say, especially in an economy where honey is selling at prices below actual production costs.

While early indications point to unusual weather patterns and disease, there is no one common link to the high levels of bee mortality. In some cases, colonies weathered the winter in one area while a neighbouring beekeeper was hit hard.

"We haven't seen such high losses before across the country," says Heather Clay, national co-ordinator for the Calgary-based Canadian Honey Council (CHC). "We've seen it in pockets, but nothing on this scale."

Overall, the national average of overwintering mortality has almost doubled over last year to 29 per cent, with Ontario registering 28,379 dead colonies (or 37 per cent); Saskatchewan at 24,000 (24); Manitoba at 22,950 (27) and British Columbia at 11,308 (23).

Secondary illness proving fatal for colonies

The colonies appear to suffer first from a primary malady, such as poor nutrition, unusually cold weather, mite infestation,

bacteria or other non-life-threatening illness, says John Gibeau, president of the British Columbia Honey Producers Association.

Then the colony dies from a secondary illness that attacks during the weakened state.

"That secondary illness has not yet been discovered, and may be a simple pathogen, such as a new virus," says Gibeau.

The one bright spot is that colony collapse disorder (CCD), prevalent in the United States, where a sudden large-scale die-off of adult bees occurs, is unlikely to be a cause for concern in Canada. CCD has yet to be diagnosed in Canada, says Gibeau.

New Brunswick has been hardest hit by bee colony losses over winter, losing 59 per cent this past winter - the average for overwintering losses of bee colonies in Canada is just 15 per cent - or 4,990 dead bee colonies. In Alberta, home to the largest number of bee colonies in the country, the percentage is lower at 31 per cent, but it registered the highest actual number of dead bee colonies at 77,500 during the same period.

To deal with the situation, the CHC has developed a 23-point action plan.

Clay says the plan calls for:

- ▶ Improved monitoring of bee colonies.
- ▶ The establishment of a national bee lab for testing and research.
- ▶ Lobbying the federal

government for at least one additional national apiculture research position with full technical support.

- ▶ Expanding provincial inspection programs to include both fall and spring.
- ▶ Assistance/disaster relief programs for beekeepers at both the provincial and federal levels.
- ▶ A comprehensive professional development program for beekeepers that would consist of courses in business and livestock management, accreditation, and good practices recognition.

One of the first moves will be an information brochure for beekeepers on the monitoring and treatment of pests and parasites. "Right now we need to get the information out and make sure that all beekeepers get the same information," says Clay.

Clay adds that more research at the federal level is vital, and the CHC is lobbying for a pollination ecologist position - honeybees are vital to the canola seed production industry - and for more research dollars. "We were lobbying before (the bee colony losses) and are lobbying harder now," she says.

In Ontario and New Brunswick, provincial governments have stepped in with financial assistance for the hard-hit sector.

Ontario has set up the \$2.4-

million Special Beekeepers Fund to provide direct compensation to beekeepers who suffered higher than normal hive losses this past winter. The province is adding an additional \$600,000 for research, technology transfer and the promotion of Ontario honey.

The Ontario Beekeepers Association calls the funds a good start, especially for beekeepers in the Niagara and the Haldimand-Norfolk areas - just west of the Niagara - that were some of the hardest hit by hive losses.

"I think it's fantastic that they (the province of Ontario) kicked in their \$3 million, which will help out a lot," says Danny Walker, president of the Ontario Beekeepers Association.

"But there's still some guys who could still use some help - some of these guys will spend as much as they can to get back on their feet. An equal match from the federal government is well-warranted for us and the (beekeepers in the) other provinces as well."

Producers Faced with Falling Wholesale Prices

Walker says he sold honey this winter for a third of what he got in 2002, the best year for prices due to a world honey shortage.

"The wholesale price was around \$2 a pound then, now it's 75 cents a pound," says Walker. "(Today) it costs us \$1.25 to produce a pound of honey that we only get 75 cents for."

New Brunswick has announced \$100,000 as a first step to help beekeepers rebuild their colonies.

However, no additional funding has been set aside in Alberta, and that concerns Kevin Nixon, president of the Alberta

Beekeepers Commission (ABC).

"We are seeing extremely high losses," says Nixon. "We've had two years in a row of low honey prices and beekeepers being hit with a huge loss. We can't just call up a supplier in April and say, '30 per cent of my bees are dead and can we get new bees?' "We can only get new bees from New Zealand and Australia, and those usually have to be ordered in January to receive them by springtime."

With about 240,000 hives - or 40 per cent of Canada's bee colonies - and the largest honey production, as well as the largest pollination sector in Canada for canola, Alberta remains on the sidelines, says Nixon.

"Everything that has taken place so far has gone very slowly. They (the province) don't seem to have any major concerns about it," says Nixon.

Paul Laflamme, head of the pest management branch of Alberta Agriculture and Food, says the province is still analysing results from a provincial survey about overwintering losses.

"One of the oddities that we saw was that we could have a large producer with two yards, one would be devastated with an 80-per-cent loss, the other would be fine with normal losses of about 10 per cent," he says.

"That really threw a monkey wrench in trying to find out what the problem was. We're speculating the long winter we had - it came early and stayed late - plus a cool wet spring made it more difficult for the bees to recover from the long winter."

Laflamme hopes to have all the data analysed and a report by August, but adds he does not know of any

new funding in the works.

He notes beekeepers can turn to existing compensation provided by the Canada Alberta Income Stabilization Program and the Alberta Financial Services Corp. But Nixon says such programs are inadequate for beekeepers who have been hit with high colony losses.

Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association president Tim Wendell says losses in the province varied this year with some beekeepers losing 80 per cent of their colonies and others just 10 per cent.

"It looks like it was a resistant mite, something that happens after a time if you're using a specific mite treatment," he says. "It's my experience that when you have winter losses, it generally points to some form of management issue - mites grow resistant very rapidly."

But while Wendell is concerned about colony loss, he says there's an even bigger issue - cheap imported honey that is sold in this country under the Canada No. 1 brand, which is a grade name and doesn't reflect the honey's origins.

"That Canada No. 1 honey may not have any Canadian honey in it," he says.

But the CHC's Clay says there is good news on this particular front after years of lobbying for change.

"The current (federal) government is working with us on getting the changes," she says, adding in the future, the Canada No. 1 honey brand will only be used on 100-per-cent Canadian honey.

(Laura Severs can be reached at [laura@businessedge.ca](mailto:laura@businessedge.ca))



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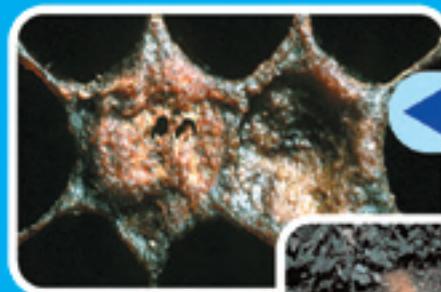


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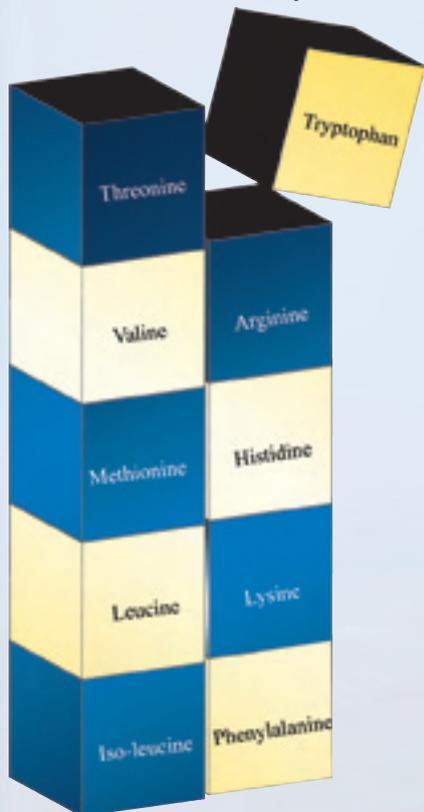
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