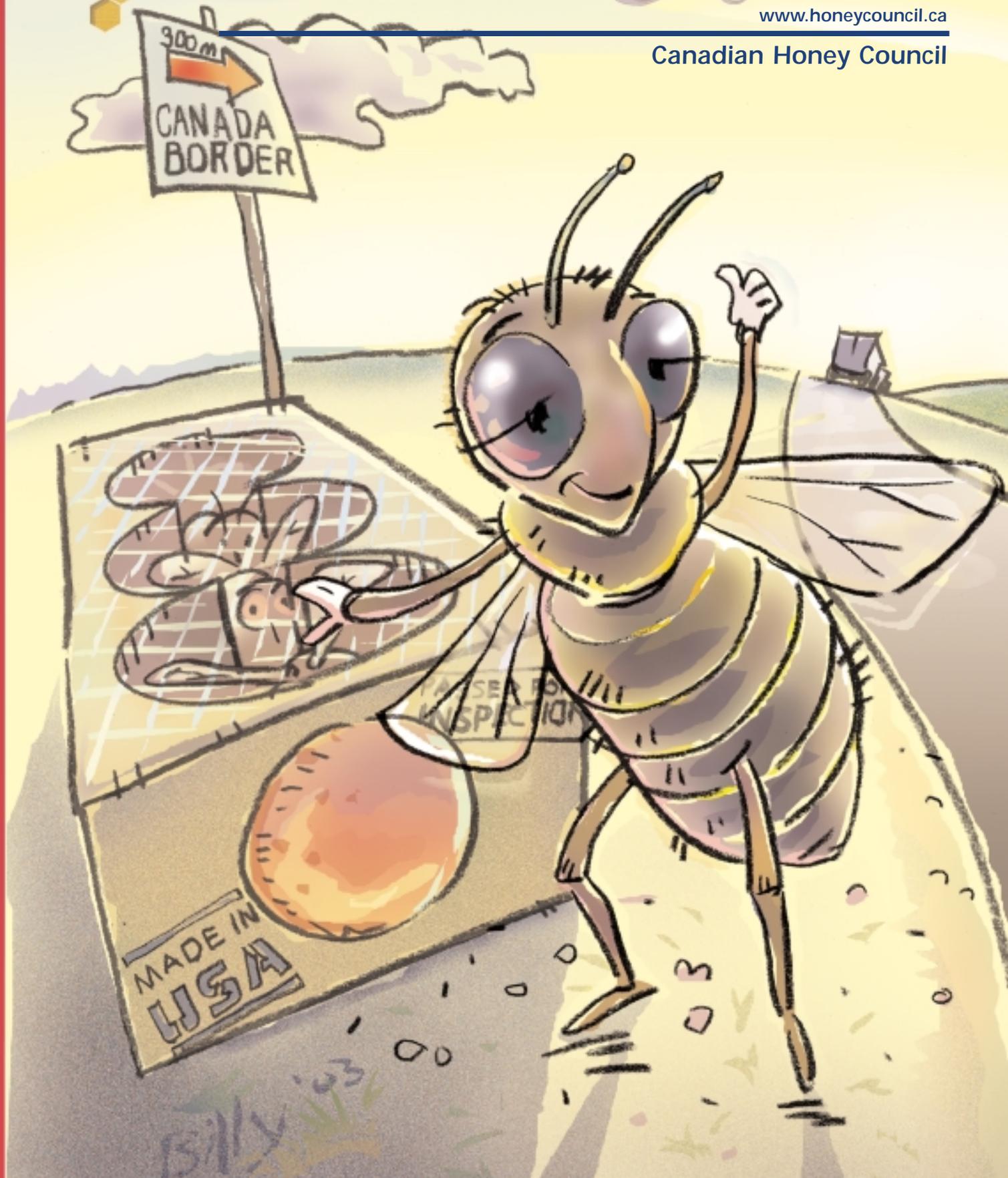




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# CHC Activities

Heather Clay  
National Coordinator CHC

## Oxalic Acid Registration

Oxalic acid is a natural product that when used in the correct dosage kills varroa mites on contact without harming the bees. Oxalic acid is used extensively in Europe for control of mites but it is not registered for use in Canada. It is illegal to use the product until it is officially registered.

The CHC attended a meeting in Ottawa with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) at the end of September to review the requirements for registration. Delegates from the Quebec government, Ontario government and industry presented an overview of the apiculture concerns and the status of current research. Several provincial apiarists participated through teleconference. The PMRA representatives were helpful in providing guidance but they indicated that registration is a lengthy process and they need a great deal of data. It is expected that a consultant would be hired to facilitate the process and the CHC is looking into finding the best way to kick start the process.

Unlike formic acid, oxalic acid does not kill tracheal mites and it is not as effective as other stronger chemicals for varroa treatment. However the CHC supports its use as a tool in an integrated pest management program.

## Canadian On Farm Food Safety

Funding for the COFFS program has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada under the CARD program. This program ends December 31st 2003 and disappears entirely by March 31st 2004. A new Canadian Food Safety and Quality (CFSQ) program has been announced under the recent Agriculture Policy Framework (APF). It will begin once all the provinces have signed the federal agreement. Unfortunately not all



the provinces are anxious to participate in the new APF program. There is no word as to whether there will be funds to continue in the period between the old CARD fund and the new CFSQ program.

Just when you got used to the name COFFS the government is changing the name of the program. Under the new system the program for "on farm food safety" and the "post farm gate program" (CFSAP) will be combined into one. The new name is expected to be the catchy acronym of CFSQ.

## US Queen import meeting

Importation of honeybees from the USA has been banned since 1987 because of various diseases and africanized honey bee concerns. The CHC recognizes that changes have occurred in the disease profile of Canada over the past few years.

Last March the Alberta Beekeepers Association proposed the acceptance of a set of importation protocols that were developed by Dr Medhat Nasr. As a first step the CHC requested technical advice from the import committee of the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA). They worked closely with Medhat in helping to review, clarify and modify the protocol so that a scientifically sound rationale was provided for the importation process. Using these protocols, it was thought that any importation of queens would provide low risk healthy European honey bee stock.

The protocols were distributed to the CHC delegates and they were asked for their provincial association's response. After two weeks of intense discussions and phone communication it was impossible to achieve the unanimous agreement that was required by CFIA for changes to the border regulations.

Although disheartening to those who wanted US queens, a positive aspect to the negotiations was that the provincial associations began talking about the issues of concern and working out some of the apparent problems.

Our discussions with the CFIA and the provincial apiarists continued through the summer. In September the CFIA announced that they planned to make changes to the regulations governing the importation of queen honeybees from mainland USA. They are seeking recommendations from industry for the conditions of importation under the proposed permit system.

CHC has accepted this challenge and has begun to develop a new initiative. We learned several lessons from the last attempt to achieve a consensus. This time a face-to-face meeting will be held with a limited number of participants representing all aspects of industry and government across the country. Facilitators have been hired to ensure that the meeting is structured, focused and science based. All parties will have the same current, accurate information and the facilitators will ensure that the process does not get derailed.

This time round CHC will be able to deliver an industry supported science based protocol that minimizes the risk to our industry. The national strategy for queen imports will allow CFIA to develop simple effective regulations to allow our industry to grow and thrive with safe, clean queens from the USA.

## Beekeepers violate Pest Control Products Act

Two Alberta beekeepers recently received a Notice of Violation of the Pest Control Products Act (see page 19). Apistan strips were found in their bee colonies when the hives were overwintered in southern British Columbia. It is a serious offence to leave Apistan strips in the hive for longer than 42 days. The PMRA issued a notice of violation and the beekeepers did not contest the finding. This is a wake up call for other beekeepers who may not be following the instructions on the label.

The CHC advises beekeepers to be careful with the use of Apistan and use it

strictly according to label instructions. Mites can become resistant to the chemical when they are exposed to low doses for a long period of time.

#### Annual Meeting 2004

The 63 rd annual general meeting will be held in Winnipeg at the Fort Garry Hotel, 26-30 January, 2004. We are holding the meeting in conjunction with the 100 th anniversary of the Manitoba Beekeepers Association. After the business meeting there are two days of research symposium with updates on the latest research and presentations on issues that affect beekeepers. The itinerary and registration form can be found on the CHC website [www.honeycouncil.ca](http://www.honeycouncil.ca). We look forward to seeing you in Winnipeg.

went to double blueberry (pollination) and an extra 3000 were imported to the province. Following the blueberries, approximately 1500 went to canola and 500 went to cranberry pollination.

#### Québec

We are just about to wrap up another season. After digesting all of our winter losses and realizing what bees we had left in spring, the season did not get off to the best start.

Trying to repair the varroa damage some tried using Formic Acid early this spring to get rid of some the mites before Summer. Unfortunately, some beekeepers had very bad experiences with the use of the product. Queen losses were high and some colonies died because they were too weak to benefit from the Formic Acid.

With all the losses of colonies in Québec some beekeepers opted to reduce their



Alain Moyen

production of honey and split colonies to bring back their numbers of hives.

The Québec Fédération of beekeepers then decided to negotiate an aid program to assist in rebuilding the lost colonies. The Provincial Agricultural Minister, Mrs Françoise Gauthier, announced

on 25th September 2003, a package of assistance for beekeepers. The program is laid out in 3 stages:

- 1 Health of the colonies and also serious research to maintain colonies in the future.
- 2 Direct financial aid packages to help beekeepers rebuild their colonies.
- 3 Maximize all the financial services offered to beekeepers. Ex: Crop insurance.

This whole package is about \$1.9 million and there may be more money later for research. It would seem that most beekeepers are satisfied with the program. One of the conditions for participation might be mandatory registrations of beekeepers and colonies.

One thing is for sure, the small fruit producers suffered a shortage of bees. On the positive side a lot of them realized the real importance of pollination.

## Provincial Reports

#### Maritimes

All three Maritime Provinces report similar conditions this past summer season. The weather conditions were wet and humid for the early part of the season — giving a poor honey yield. Late August and September has been incredibly sunny and warm to date producing a good honey flow but most reports indicate that honey production will be slightly below the provincial averages. Swarms were reported in the first week of September and PEI reports that one swarm caught on the second actually produced a honey crop.

All indications are that the bees appear to be relatively healthy this season with only low to moderate Varroa infestations. Nova Scotia has difficulty finding enough mites to test for fluvalinate resistance but indications are that Apistan is still effective. New Brunswick reports similar conditions and the “bee recovery/IPM” project is proceeding with apparent good results. Most beekeepers used formic acid in the spring and will be applying coumaphos this fall.

There were approximately 6400 colonies registered in NB this year and a non-random inspection of 348 of weakest colonies out of 2836 showed no sign of AFB and low levels of other brood diseases

Pollination went relatively well in all three provinces although there was a shortage. In New Brunswick, approximately 5000 colonies were moved to blueberry fields (25%



Paul Vautour

The honey crop is not fully extracted but the signs are that it will be well below average. The good news is, the price is handling out very well at about \$2 to \$2.25 / pound.

Contrary to last fall where at feeding time the colonies were not very strong, this fall the colonies are very strong, so for most of us are thinking we are going into winter with strong healthy hives. Let's hope so!

#### Ontario

The summer in Ontario got off to a wet and slow start with everything two weeks behind schedule. Some areas got too much rain and others not enough. August turned warm and bees did very well on second cut clovers. We should

average about 100 pounds. The wholesale price seems to stay at around \$2 per pound.

September stayed warm and like last year, beekeepers were again reluctant to take the supers off to treat for mites. Our provincial apiarist has been advising everyone to use coumaphos for the next two years. After that, Apistan should work again. Some are using formic acid again in the fall.

Now that the border issue has come up again, let me explain Ontario's position. If we look at the losses last winter in the areas that border us, we see that in the north eastern States they had losses of 30 to 40%, Quebec of 45%, and Ontario of 20%, yet all had the same cold winter. It is obvious that our bee breeding and Tech Transfer Program started by Dr. Medhat Nasr is now paying big dividends. Now what would happen if we started importing U.S. queens? Chances are we might get oxytetracycline resistant AFB and coumaphos resistant mites. That would mean more chemicals in our hives and it would dilute the gene pool that we



Henry Hiemstra

worked so hard to improve for better wintering and increased honey production. Why spoil a good thing?

On the other hand if you are out for a quick profit it is smart to open that border. All you have to do is split a good colony in the spring with a \$20 queen that will produce 100 pounds of honey at \$2 a pound. It's almost like printing money. However, we have to use our heads and think about our long term future.

The O.B.A. convention is in November, shortly after the CHC Kelowna meeting on US queen imports. The decision on US queens will be brought to the OBA and discussed by the membership. It is then up to the members to decide on the long term strategy that they want to pursue for the Ontario industry.

**Manitoba**

The Manitoba Beekeepers Association has appointed Bryan Ash as their new delegate to CHC.



Bryan Ash

Bryan is a partner with his father Floyd and brothers Brent and Grant in a family-operated business in Gilbert Plains, about four hours north of Winnipeg. Starting with 200 bee colonies in 1972, the Ash Apiaries has steadily grown to more than 3,000 colonies.

Their pasteurizing facility processes and packs their own brand of Sunshine Valley liquid and creamed honey. As well they custom pack a wide variety of liquid and creamed food products, including flavoured honey spreads.

The MBA is holding a special meeting 17th November for all registered members. They have been operating without a full board of directors since the overturn of the results of last year's meeting. This special meeting will help put the MBA back on track and allow them to build the organization according to the members wishes.

The CHC is holding its 63rd annual meeting in a joint convention with the Manitoba Beekeepers Association as they celebrate their 100th year, January 28-30, 2004 at the Fort

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Garry Hotel, Winnipeg.

Saskatchewan

The overall crop in SK is in the average range of 175 lb this year. Most of the province experienced an extremely dry summer, but the continual warm weather allowed lots of flight time and in most areas the bees were able to find nectar. As usual, there were some areas that suffered, and some that did extremely well. Those areas that suffered the most appear to be in the western and northwestern portions of the province, where heavy grasshopper infestations added to the toll that was being taken by drought conditions.

Saskatchewan continues to experience a steady spread of mites. While there are still many beekeepers who have not been afflicted, the spread is inevitable, and there are fewer and fewer areas within the province where varroa and tracheal mites do not exist.

The good news is that the mites have not shown resistance and can still be managed with the existing approved chemicals. To date, there have been no reports of resistant AFB. Perhaps Saskatchewan beekeepers, given their long and cold winters, and limited number of brood cycles, will be able to continue treatments with Apistan for some time to come. There is some benefit from our winters, although it can be hard to appreciate at -40 when the wind is blowing.

The work that is being carried on with the Russian queen stock appears to be producing positive results. The stock is, for the most part, proving to possess most of the characteristics that beekeepers seek in their bees. They are gentle, hard working, productive and they winter well. Just how resistant they are to varroa and tracheal is still being examined, but some of the lines certainly appear to show resistance to those pests. Our Saskatchewan beekeepers have continued to show their appreciation of the Russian research project, as begun by Dr. Nasr in Ontario, and have continued to make financial contributions to assist the OBA research. In addition, three Saskatchewan

beekeepers, who have been involved in queen breeding and selection for many years, are also working with the new



Wink Howland

lines and are doing some cross breeding to their own selected stock. One of those breeders, Dr. Albert Robertson, has undertaken his own research project in developing genetic markers for the Russian stock. If successful, and the preliminary work indicates it will be successful, it may become possible to quickly identify the genes required for resistance, and then to breed for those genes. What a tremendous tool that would give us, in the fight against mites.

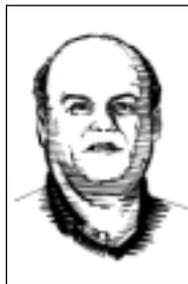
The CFIA, has made it clear that US queens will be imported under permit. Plans to make recommendations on the import protocols are underway by the CHC. As an association, Saskatchewan does not support an open border, although there are individual beekeepers who will welcome the news. Many beekeepers here, have become adept at raising their own stock and working with nucleus colonies to maintain their colony count. The rewards of this work have become obvious to those who have undertaken it. They neither need, nor want, stock from outside Canada. They remember the 20% and 30% winter loss experienced with queens coming from warm climes, and much prefer the 5% to 15% that they are able to achieve with their own selected stock. They have also come to appreciate the positive traits that they have bred into that stock, such as productiveness, winter-ability and gentleness. It would be nice to think that importing an unlimited number of queens into Canada from the US will address all of our problems, but most beekeepers here are extremely skeptical.

The SBA is concerned about the shortage of research dollars and researchers, for our industry. One of the items we will examine at our upcoming business meeting, is how we can address that issue within our membership. We were very pleased when Saskatchewan beekeepers

contributed \$20,000.00 at our convention banquet last year, to support the genetic marker research being done by Dr. Robertson. We would like to continue to underwrite similar projects and we will be looking to our membership for suggestions. Our beekeepers recognize that research is essential to our industry, and perhaps the time is right to approach our membership for donations. Honey prices are excellent and the money should not be tight.

I hope the fall season goes well for you all and that everyone is able to properly feed, medicate and wrap their bees for winter. Wouldn't it be nice, if beekeepers right across this country, realized small winter losses. What an economic boom!

Alberta



Grant Hicks

May and June proved to be good months for bees with good pollen and nectar flows allowing normal colony development. July was a very good month for honey production and August 1 showed many producers sitting at the 100-130 pound range.

Surely August would produce two or three more supers to give us a good crop. Well, August never really warmed up in most areas, and our provincial production will most likely fall very close to average. Southern Alberta did stay hot and as a result some producers are predicting that they will have their biggest crop in many years. Fall feeding is well advanced, but a short hot spell to end September would be most welcome. Varroa mites are hard to find this fall for those beekeepers who used Checkmite last fall. Some producers are going to the extent of not using this product this autumn, rather than rotating with formic acid. It will be terrific news if we can prove that harsh chemicals need only be used on an eighteen to twenty-four month rotation. Should there not be some small trade-off for the seven month winters we endure?

Alberta beekeepers were ecstatic to receive the news that the CFIA is recommending opening the border to the importation of queens with import permits, given an acceptable protocol can be worked out. Albertans recognize that

a national protocol might not meet the needs of beekeepers equally, and will fully support those provinces that feel they may need a protocol supplemental to a national protocol to protect the health of the bees in their province.

British Columbia

The honey flow on the Island (Republic of Vancouver Island) was not very good at lower altitudes, however, at the higher altitudes not quite as good as last year but as a long time beekeeper says "It is the second best year in all my years of beekeeping". The area north of Campbell River had a good amount of rain and south of that it is hot and dry. This area is looking at eighty pounds a hive due to hot dry weather, as are most interior locations. There are some bright spots. Ernie from the Peace River of B.C. said his crop is looking good, lots of moisture and a good flow.

The other night, while watching the news, there was a blurb about a fire in Union Bay. Nothing special, but when they showed the pictures it wasn't Union Bay it was an area where we have around 250 hives. Luckily the fire was about a mile from away but the smoke was thick. I can't help but wonder how the people in the interior are made out. Some were close to the Thompson River fire near Kamloops but had no damage. I hope that the other beekeepers were as fortunate.

I don't have very good news about the Russian bee stock that came from Ontario. The shipment was rerouted to Osoyoos because Vancouver Island was a quarantine zone. Unfortunately a bear got into the apiary, killed one hive, left two with drone layers and the fourth superseded the queen. You can say shit happens or maybe Murphy's Law kicked in but either way it was not what we expected. I will ponder whether or not to try next year

The BCHPA is holding their annual meeting in Kelowna at the end of October. At the same time the CHC

delegates and the presidents of the provincial associations will meet to see if they can work out an agreement on the recommendations for the importation of queens from the Continental U.S. We should have something to take to the provincial membership across the county and get an agreement in place for the next bee season. This attempt will definitely challenge the pocket book of the delegates but it is for the good of the industry.

The annual fair circuit is well under way and this year. The Coombs fair was the first and Flying Dutchman took the Grand Champion award for education and display. This was due to the great posters we had explaining all about bees and hive products. We are fortunate to have a lady by the name of Arlene Watts who was able to make these posters. The B.C. fairs people just loved them and



Stan Reist

you could stand back and read them from 15 feet. The next fair was the Nanaimo V.I.E.X. (under the Nanaimo Div of the BCHPA with a club label on the honey.) We were the feature attraction. at "The Place to Bee 2003" and were given the little red barn to fill up. This was done very nicely from honey sales, equipment displays and frame making demonstrations.

The honey prices are holding fairly good \$4.50 to \$6.00 for a 500 gram jar and \$7.00 to \$10.00 for a 1 kg jar. One thing that we did get a lot of comment on at the fairs was; "How can it be number one Canadian honey when it says product of the Argentine on the back of the label in really small print?" We did our best to explain that this is a grade stamp only and bears no relation to the country of origin and that CFIA is aware of the problem but government works slowly.

BeeMaid

Once again the honey season is coming to a close for another year. While it is still too early to make a definitive assessment of the total honey crop, preliminary indications are that the yield is average or

below average across all of the prairie area. Several factors contributed to this turn of events. They include:

- ▷ cool weather in late spring which slowed hive buildup,
- ▷ continuing drought in many parts of western Canada,
- ▷ higher than average temperatures during the critical nectar flow of late June and the month of July, especially in the canola belt
- ▷ grasshoppers.

The cool and windy weather of late May and early June slowed colony activity. Dandelion and carragana flows were later than usual, forcing some beekeepers to use supplemental feeding. Canola and alfalfa did not begin major blooming until past the middle of June.

When canola did begin blooming the weather switched from being cooler than normal to hotter than normal. Rains were spotty with some areas receiving adequate amounts, but most areas were below average. This type of weather tends to shorten the bloom period of canola. In regions where lots of canola has been seeded over an extended period of time, the staggered bloom of different fields tends to cancel out the overall shortened bloom of individual fields, but it still takes a toll.

But the biggest single factor affecting honey production across most of western



John Pedersen

Canada was the grasshoppers. They were a problem in the whole region from June to late September. The grasshoppers not only damaged the flower heads of the alfalfa but the continual spraying by farmers trying to control the insects led to some serious bee losses.

With all of the problems beekeepers faced this past season it is pleasant to contemplate a good price for this years honey crop. Indications are that prices should be similar to last year.

On behalf of the BeeMaid board and staff I want to wish all beekeepers a long and open fall so that all the beekeeping chores get done before winter sets in.

## Importation of Honeybee Queens from Continental US

Dr. Sarah Kahn, BVSc, MSc  
Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer and  
Director Animal Health and  
Production Division

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is proposing to amend the current regulation that prohibits the importation of honeybees from the continental United States. The amendment will allow the importation of honeybee queens and their attendants from the continental U.S. Packaged bees will continue to be prohibited from importation.

This action is being undertaken after CFIA was advised of major shortages of available queens in many provinces during the spring of 2003 and was requested to review Canada's import policies for honeybees. The risk assessment on the importation of U.S. bees also determined that the import of honeybee queens poses a lesser disease risk than packaged bees.

The proposed amendment will not result in the uncontrolled entry of honeybee queens into Canada. The existing provisions of the Health of Animal Regulations require importation to occur with the use of an import permit. The conditions of the import permit will be further developed with industry and other stakeholders

If there are comments or concerns at this time, I would ask that they be forwarded to Dr. Samira Belaïssaoui, Staff Veterinarian, at [belaïssaouis@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:belaïssaouis@inspection.gc.ca) or by facsimile to (613) 228-6630. I would also remind Canadian Stakeholders that they will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment following its publication in the Canada Gazette I.

## Non Standard Glass Containers

Two test market authorizations for non standard glass containers used in the honey industry in Canada were granted April 24, 2001 as per the provisions of Section 31 of the Honey Regulations.

1. SIZE OF CONTAINER: 250 ml (330 gram) and 500 ml (660 gram)
2. TYPE OF CONTAINER: Glass

The period granted for the test market expired on April 25, 2003 and honey currently being marketed in these sizes is not in compliance with the Honey Regulations.

If beekeepers wish to pursue the regulation of these 2 non standard sized containers following analysis of the data from the test market that was granted, please contact John McCool at 221-7031 or Fax 613-221-7296.

## Importation de reines de la zone continentale des É.-U.

Dre Sarah Kahn, B.Sc.V., M.Sc.  
Adjointe du vétérinaire en chef et directrice  
Division de la santé des animaux et de l'élevage

L'Agence canadienne d'inspection des Aliments (ACIA) propose de modifier la réglementation actuelle qui interdit l'importation de reines de la zone continentale des États-Unis. La modification permettra d'importer des reines et leurs suivantes de la zone continentale des É.-U. L'interdiction d'importer des abeilles en paquets demeurera en vigueur.

Cette mesure est prise en raison de l'information que l'ACIA a eue relative une importante pénurie de reines disponibles dans plusieurs provinces au cours du printemps 2003 et qu'elle a été chargée de revoir les politiques d'importation du Canada relatives aux abeilles mellifères. L'évaluation du risque lié à l'importation d'abeilles des États-Unis a également déterminé que l'importation de reines représentait un risque de maladie inférieur à celui que représente les abeilles en paquets.

La modification proposée n'entraînera pas l'entrée libre de reines au Canada. Les dispositions existantes du Règlement sur la santé des animaux exige que l'importation s'effectue en utilisant un permis d'importation. Les conditions du

permis d'importation seront élaborées en collaboration avec l'industrie et les autres intervenants.

Veillez transmettre ceci aux apiculteurs provinciaux et aux associations industrielles régionales. Pour tout commentaire ou toute préoccupation, veuillez communiquer avec Dre Samira Belaïssaoui, Médecin vétérinaire en chef, à [belaïssaouis@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:belaïssaouis@inspection.gc.ca) ou par télécopieur au (613) 228-6630. J'aimerais également rappeler aux intervenants canadiens qu'ils auront l'occasion de formuler leurs commentaires sur la modification proposée lors de sa parution dans la Gazette du Canada I.



# Queen Importation from Continental USA: Canada at a Crossroads

By Heather Clay, National Coordinator, CHC

The border with the continental USA has been closed to the movement of bees into Canada for phyto-sanitary (health) reasons since 1985 in eastern Canada and 1987 in western Canada. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the federal agency responsible for cross border movement of agricultural commodities. If the Canadian apiculture industry wishes to have importation regulations modified or extended, a presentation must be made to CFIA with whom the ultimate decision rests.

The CFIA recently issued an announcement that they intend to allow the importation of queens from continental USA. This importation will only be under specific import permit conditions. They requested that industry develop recommendations for a national strategy for conditions of import. CHC accepted this challenge and has begun to develop a new initiative. We have learned several lessons from the last attempt to achieve a consensus on the importation issue. A face-to-face meeting will be held with a limited number participants representing each of the provincial beekeeper associations and provincial governments. Facilitators have been hired to ensure that the meeting is structured, impartial, focused and science based. All parties will have the same current, accurate information and the facilitators will ensure that the process does not get side tracked to issues beyond the terms of reference. This meeting is planned for Kelowna, BC in late October.

Canada is not alone in attaching conditions to an import permit (see Table 1). The CHC is looking at the various options and will deliver an industry derived, science based protocol that minimises the risk to our industry. Our objective is to develop a national strategy for queen imports to Canada that will allow the CFIA to develop simple effective regulations which will assist the growth of our industry through safe, clean queens from the USA.

Country	Approved Exporters	QueenBees	Package Bees	Disease Concerns	Comments
Canada <sup>1)</sup>	Hawaii	Yes	No	AFB, SHB, EFB, AHB, Tropilaelops, varroa and tracheal mites	Import Permit, health certificate
	Australia, New Zealand	Yes	Yes	AFB, SHB, EFB, AHB, Tropilaelops, varroa and tracheal mites	Import Permit, health certificate and environmental assessment
USA <sup>2)</sup> (continental)	Canada	Yes	Yes	All diseases and pests	Imports from countries other than Canada only by USDA under permit for research
Australia <sup>3)</sup>	21 countries including Canada	Yes	No	AFB, EFB, Tropilaelops, external acarasis, varroa and tracheal mites, Braula lice	Only by permit to government quarantine facility - queens are destroyed after grafting is completed
UK <sup>4)</sup>	Australia, Hawaii, New Zealand (South Island)	Yes	No	AFB, SHB, Varroa mites	Licence & health certificate required
	EU Inter-community	Yes	Yes	AFB	EU Health certificate required
European Union <sup>5)</sup>	EU inter-community	Yes	Yes	AFB	EU Health certificate required
	OIE* member countries	Yes	No	AFB, SHB, Tropilaelaps	Health certificate required

**Table 1**

AHB =Africanized Honey Bee,

AFB = American Foul Brood

SHB =Small Hive Beetle

EFB = European Foul Brood

\* Office Internationale des Epizooties (OIE)

Information gathered from:

- 1) Canada Health of Animals Act and Regulations [www.laws.justice.gc.ca](http://www.laws.justice.gc.ca)
- 2) Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, Import Conditions Database [www.aqis.gov.au](http://www.aqis.gov.au)
- 3) US Honey Bee Regulations, <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi>
- 4) UK and EU bee Legislation [www.csl.gov.uk/science/organ/envirom/bee/legis/legis.cfm](http://www.csl.gov.uk/science/organ/envirom/bee/legis/legis.cfm)
- 5) Commission of the European Communities 2000/462/EC (under appeal 25 July 2003 SANCO/10399/2003 Rev.5)

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*The book, Bad Beekeeping, by Ron Miksha, describes his experiences of producing honey in southern Saskatchewan and raising queens in Florida. Over the next few issues, Hive Lights will feature a series of excerpts from Ron's book.*

# Bad Beekeeping

by Ron Miksha,

My first night back in Saskatchewan, in April 1978, I slept on the floor of a cold, empty shack. As the sun hit

the narrow window, I rolled over and up to my feet. I was 23 — it didn't take long to shake off the tight muscles in my legs and back, to pull on my boots, and to dash out to my truck.

The first beeyard I had unwrapped had been good. The bees had enough honey, only a few hives had poor queens, and just three hives out of thirty had died during the winter. Colonies of bees may

die if they have a disease; if their collective community runs out of honey; if the queen is laying eggs that become drones; if skunks or bears visit the colony; if the hive is ripped open by the wind and exposed to cold and snow. None of my hives seemed to have any diseases. The winter insulation boxes had stayed on the hives, protecting them from the wind and cold. Most of the hives in the apiary behind the caragana hedge still had twenty or thirty pounds of honey. And now the bees were gathering fresh nectar from the willows along the river bank. I had other yards to inspect.

With six apiaries in the irrigated alfalfa flats west of Val Marie, I wanted to begin

my day with the beeyard farthest from home. A gravel trail twisted past sparse ranch houses, hay fields, and cattle pastures. The April air was crisp. I drove with the window of the six-wheeled Ford rolled down, my left elbow pointing at the bright sun. Fresh odours - from blue-gray sage, dry grass, cow pastures - filled the truck cab. A long brown trail of dust followed my truck to the first apiary, at the PFRA headquarters.

In Val Marie, one of the driest communities in Canada, PFRA folks in blue trucks patrolled the irrigation canals and ditches, men on backhoes and graders trenched and leveled fields, PFRA cowboys herded ranchers' cattle on the community pastures. To me, it

## EPA Registers new class of insecticide: Sucrose Octanoate esters

Steve Sheppard, Washington State University, Pullman, WA

AVA Chemical Ventures, L.L.C. ("AVA") has received EPA registration (#70950) for the active ingredient Sucrose Octanoate Esters, a biochemical insecticide/miticide manufactured from sugar and vegetable oil-derived fatty acids. This is the first active ingredient to be registered within the new class of sugar ester chemistry the company is developing. AVA expects to register additional sugar ester active ingredients. Sugar ester insecticides kill rapidly; do not harm major beneficial insects; and break down in the environment to their constituent sugars and fatty acids.

Sucrose Octanoate Esters kill either by rapid suffocation or by removing the insects' protective coating, causing them to desiccate. Because of the contact mode of action, it has a relatively short residual. Primary target applications are mites, aphids, whiteflies and other soft-bodied insects on fruit and vegetable

crops and ornamentals. The EPA registration includes an exemption from tolerance for all food crops. Labels have been approved for foliar spray on outdoor plants; varroa mite control on honey bees; and sciarid fly control in mushroom growing media.

The Sucrose Octanoate Esters active ingredient is synthesized from agricultural raw materials that are both edible and renewable. Its origins can be traced to the early 1990s, when scientists at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture discovered that sugar esters occurring naturally in the leaf hairs of wild tobacco acted as natural insecticides. It was not possible to extract the naturally-occurring sugar esters in sufficient quantity to be commercially viable. AVA overcame this problem by developing viable sugar ester synthesis processes based on sugars and vegetable oil fatty acids.

AVA holds patents covering the manufacture and insecticidal use of sugar esters, including U.S. patent # 6,419,941, "Polyol Ester Insecticides and Method of Synthesis," issued July 16, 2002. Additional patents on pesticide applications for sugar esters are anticipated. Foreign patent applications are also in process.

AVA plans to have the Sucrose Octanoate Esters and follow-on sugar ester pesticides manufactured by Applied Power Concepts, Inc. (APC) in Anaheim, CA. APC has been AVA's long-time technology development partner and has pioneered the development of patented "zero discharge" chemical manufacturing processes, including those used to manufacture AVA's sugar ester pesticide products.

AVA does not plan to develop its own marketing/field development organization and is presently interviewing candidate collaborators for both the U.S. and foreign markets.

<http://apis.wsu.edu/apinotes.html>

seemed like a big and complicated industry. In reality, it probably employed only a dozen people who helped irrigate ten thousand acres of sweet clover and alfalfa and shepherded three thousand beef cattle in the government summer pastures.

My hives sat behind small white wooden PFRA buildings. Although I had not been driving for long, I felt the need to stretch and shake myself when I stepped out of the truck.

I must have been yawning for a long time. I still had not lit my smoker nor put on my white coveralls. The PFRA manager's blue half-ton approached.

"Frank?" the man asked before I looked up.

"No, I'm Ron."

"Oh, yea... I heard you'd be the beekeeper this year." Tracy offered his hand. He had an interested, curious expression. "Can I watch you for a while?"

I didn't want an audience. I preferred that people wait until I was ready to show off. I had no idea what the bees would look like. The unexpected was exciting to me, but it was not something I wanted to share. What if all the bees were dead? What if I opened a hive and mice or snakes or something really strange came slithering out? Would the whole town know about it within an hour?

"Sure," I said, "Put this on." I handed him a bee veil.

"How does it work?"

I guessed Tracy had never helped anyone with bees before. I stated the obvious. "Put the helmet on your head. Pull the veil down tight, the strings go around your waist." I pushed the pith helmet firmly into his short hair. He stretched the strings, the veil fit snugly on his shoulders. His face was protected from the bees.

"Keep your hands in your pockets, the bees won't bother you that way," I said. With hands in pockets, the bees do not have exposed skin to attack, should they become angry. But more important, the spectator stays quiet. In the past, I had friends watch me working bees and the folks would become nervous. Before long, their hands would be batting the bees that were casually examining them. Soon the flaying arms would attract more bees and the bees would go from curious investigation to aggressive irritation. Hands in pockets. Safer for everyone.

I lifted the black cardboard winter cover off the first hive, exposing the white beehive boxes. I used my hive tool to dislodge the cover. A pungent sweet-sour odour wafted up into our faces. Masses of wet, mouldy, dead bees were visible between the frames. Not a single live bee crawled forth.

continued on pg. 12

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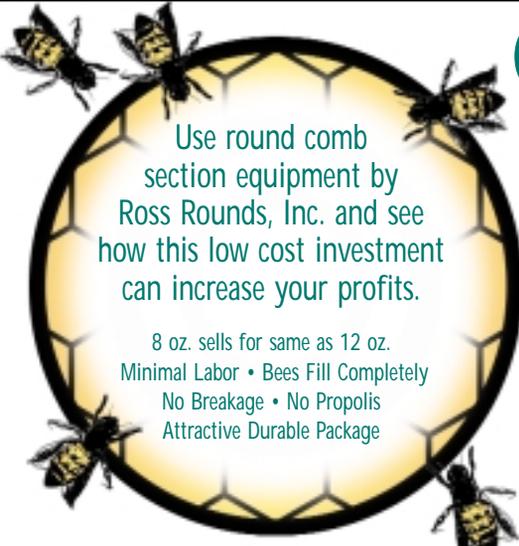
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Continued from page 11

"Something's wrong with this hive," Tracy said.

"Yea," I said, "The bees are dead."

"Why? This normal?"

"I hope it's not normal," I said. I could see why the bees had died.

It was damp in this low-lying beeyard. But there was another problem, more apparent. Without honey, bees die. The entire wintered colony - twenty thousand bees - starves. It is a democratic end to a social structure that shares food until all of it is gone. There are no remote enclaves of tough, superior bees fighting other bees for scarce food and watching their weaker sisters starve. The honeybee can only survive as a society, individuals perish. As their stores dwindle, each bee gets less and less to eat, until all the honey is gone. Then, within a few hours, all the bees die together. Aristotle wrote about this. The Spartans modeled their government on these principles. Centuries later, Marcus Aurelius told us, "What's good for the swarm is good for the bee." I was smelling the result of communal starvation. Perhaps the next hive would show communal prosperity.

The next hive was also dead.

"Uh-oh!" said my new friend.

"Well, there are still twenty more hives to open," I said.

A few more dead hives; others were alive. By now, Tracy needed to head off to the irrigation ditches. "Stop by for lunch," he said pointing up the hill towards his white government house. "Twelve sharp."

When I finished cleaning the beeyard and loading the dirty boxes of the dead colonies on the flatbed truck, I tied down the cardboard wintering cases. I counted hives. Eleven out of twenty-two were alive. All the colonies that were left had bees bringing in big wads of brown pollen from nearby flowers. It was April, the alfalfa and clovers would not bloom until July. I could be optimistic, there was time to expect the remaining colonies to build up huge populations of bees and make a big honey crop.

The sun was warm. It was almost ten. I had time to unwrap and clean another apiary before stopping at the PF guy's house for lunch. The next beeyard, six kilometres east of the first, was inside a pasture. I stopped the truck on the road and unhitched the gate.

Ranchers' gates were usually made of barbed wire and a couple of wooden posts. One of the posts latched to the fence. The latch itself may be a simple rope, but typically it was a wire hook that snugly holds the gate post to the fence post. Some ranchers kept loose, sloppy latches. On those, I could quickly unhook the rope or slip the gate post out of the wire loop. But other ranchers took great pride in the tautness of their gates. The gate at the trail to the Legault beeyard was constructed by a rancher of enormous pride. To get the gate open, I threw all of my hundred sixty pounds against the gate post. My muscles trembled as I squeezed the gate post closer to the fence post and worked the wire hook up.

By the time I opened the gate, I had an audience. Black cows, Aberdeen, had politely made a broad semi-circle around the inside of the fence. Gate open, they let me drive in. The cows thought about leaving, going through the open gate, out to the road. I quickly jumped from the truck and, long moments later, had tightly secured the gate. My disciples were no longer watching me. Their interest had gone to my truck. Long, fat tongues touched and tasted the drips of honey on my wooden truck deck. I chased the big, dumb, harmless animals away. I was unaware that they were already seasoned connoisseurs of honey.

The cows stayed by the fence. My old Ford bounced across the pasture to my beeyard. Here were forty-two hives. Half a dozen had been knocked over. Broken combs were scattered about. As if wrecked by some big, dumb animals. Cow tracks and cow paddies filled the spaces between the hives. I had never seen or heard of cow damage in a beeyard. But here it was. Big woolly tufts of animal hair hung on the broken hives. The cattle had been scratching off their

winter coats, rubbing against posts, barb wire, and beehives. My hives had been pushed over by itchy bovines. Their curiosity aroused, they began to taste the honey in the frames they'd broken.

This was not the only animal damage in the Legault apiary.

There were small piles of dead bees in front of a few hives. The dead bees were wadded and matted together. The same hives with the bee carcasses had clumps of soil and grass ripped up at the entrances. Skunks. A skunk prowls at night, scratching the ground in front of the insect nest to alarm the residents. As the bugs crawl out of the hive to investigate, the skunk laps up the hapless invertebrates with its long, agile tongue. In a few evenings, most of the adults in the colony have been eaten. The hive can become so weak that it never recovers. With the cow and skunk damage and two hives dead from starvation, the Legault apiary had only thirty hives left. They would grow, I thought, and make a huge crop of honey.

Despite the enormous potential, I felt neither optimistic nor enthusiastic as I studied the mouldy dead bees and the hives kicked over by cows. Surrounding the beeyard, the grass was still brown. From where I stood, I could see no trees. Not one. Just some scruffy wolf willow near the river and sage near the hives. I had only been in southern Saskatchewan for two days; already I missed the trees. The green grass of the east. Two thousand miles from my five brothers, my four sisters. Sleeping on the floor in a cold, mouldy house; a house in a tiny village with two hundred strangers. But I still felt I had arrived where I belonged. I was a Saskatchewan beekeeper.

You can read more about Ron's experiences and see more of his book, *Bad Beekeeping*, by going to the web site [www.badbeekeeping.com](http://www.badbeekeeping.com).

# Plants for bees — Canola



Common Name: Canola

Related species: black mustard (*B. nigra* L),  
bird rape (*B. rapa* L),  
wild mustard (*B. arvensis* L)

Scientific Name: *Brassica napus* L

Native Range:

Current varieties of canola have been bred from the original rapeseed plants (*Brassica rapa*) that was brought to Canada in 1936 from Poland. In Canada it was originally grown for industrial lubricants and was not grown in quantity until after World War II. Canola (*B. rapa* and *B. napus*) is now cultivated across Canada and the northern USA mainly for edible oils. Canola has become endemic to most regions of Canada. See Canadian distribution.

Canadian Distribution:

*B. napus* is cultivated throughout southern Canada. *Brassica nigra* was formerly widely cultivated but is now considered a weed in many jurisdictions; it is now commonly found in waste spaces and cultivated fields from Newfoundland west to Ontario and in BC. *B. rapa* is found in the same regions as *B. nigra* and in the cooler northern

Douglas Clay, Research Scientist, Calgary

zones including the NWT and Yukon. New varieties of *Brassica juncea* are being selected for heat tolerance, which will allow the distribution range of the canola crop to expand to warmer zones.

Description:

Canola was named (Canadian Oilseed Crushers Association) in 1974 after a University of Manitoba plant breeder, Dr. Baldur Stefansson, developed a “double-low” variety of rape (*B. napus*) that was given the world-trademarked name. It is a member of the mustard family, which comprises 38 species worldwide. Several species of this family are very attractive to bees and produce a mild, white honey.

They generally have yellow flowers with long racemes and, depending on conditions, grow from 0.3 to 1.2 m tall. This difference in height is influenced by soil type and moisture availability. *B. nigra* can grow to over 2 m in height.

The roots resemble a small turnip, thus the common name, wild turnip or wild rutabaga, used in some regions. The lower leaves are lobed, often up to 30 cm long; the upper leaves are small, non-

continued on pg. 16

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# ...Not like the good old days

Margriet Dogterom, Crop Pollination Consultants, Coquitlam, BC

**T**HIS FALL, IN SUNNY COASTAL BRITISH COLUMBIA, NOT ALL backyard gardeners will be pleased with their fruit harvest. A friend asked me to look at her fruit crop!

The handful of apples was all I was shown. It was a sorry sight indeed. Even the shape of the fruit was odd. Eva had learned that I had a PhD in pollination with the speciality of being able to determine whether poor fruit production is caused by the lack of bees or not. I asked her if this was the first year that she had so little fruit. Eva told me that prior to about five years ago, she had so much fruit, she had difficulty finding people to take all the fruit. Now, she wonders if she will ever have those volumes of fruit again.

More and more back yard gardeners are complaining about the lack of fruit, deformed fruit, and just not enough fruit. A common statement I have heard is "Not like in the good old days". What is going on that is so different than in the good old days? A common thread is that the 'good old days' for fruit production was within the last ten years.

Harvesting fruit from trees is an annual tradition for many home gardeners. Apples, pears, plums, cherries, peaches and apricots are fruit enjoyed by us all. But this tradition has been severely disrupted by the arrival of varroa and tracheal mites. These mites have destroyed wild honey bee colonies and have devastated managed honey bee colonies in NA over the last 10 years. The spread and arrival of these mites have a time frame of their own and so the effect of these mites are felt at different times in various regions of the country. Recently, on September 26, 2003, it was announced that in Quebec no less than

50% of the honey bee colonies were destroyed by mite infestations. This leaves a large gap for other pollinators to fill.

When the mite arrives, all wild honey bee colonies die-off. This leaves a large gap for other pollinators to fill. No one knew, how in the past, fruit trees were mostly pollinated by wild honey bees and our fruit production depended on them being around. . Because mites are now prevalent in North American honey bees, location is everything. If a fruit tree is quite a distance from a managed honey bee colony few fruit will be produced. But honeybee colonies cannot be brought into every backyard garden with fruit trees. Are there other bee species that can be used to pollinate fruit trees in the home garden?

Yes, there is -the Mason Bee. The Mason Bee is a perfect gardener's bee. I have worked with Mason bees over the past ten years and have found them extremely adaptable to the backyard. In addition Mason bees exist all over NA, and simply by providing them with housing, increases their numbers.

I set-up a wholesale and mail-order business in early 1999 with the Trade Mark- Beediverse Products that supplies garden stores and individual gardeners with Mason Bee houses and the know-how - in the form of a guide book- Pollination with Mason bees. This book was self-published and has been very well received by its readers. Five thousand copies were in the first printing run, and less than 1000 remain after 18 months. A second printing will be needed quite soon. Distribution to bookstores and



libraries is done by two separate distributors, and Beediverse covers other type of stores, such as garden stores.

Beediverse Products- a Div of Crop Pollination Consultants Ltd. has the following Mission Statement. "Our mission is to introduce people to the fun and rewards of having Mason bees, enrich every garden with Mason bees and provide information on how to successfully care for Mason Bees."

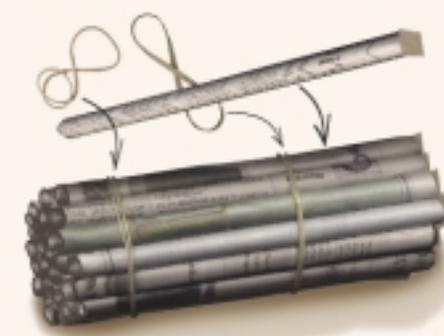
Placing a Mason Bee house is just like setting out a bird box. Simply, obtain a house for Mason bees, set it out and Mason bees will find it. They will nest, reproduce and pollinate your fruit trees. Of course, setting out more than one nest increases the chance of a female bee finding the nest. The nest is best placed in the sun and out of wind and rain. An east (preferred) or south-facing wall of your house or shed works the best. A sunny location works the best because it helps the bees become active, pollinate and increase in number.

Although my initial introduction to bees was through -the taste of honey and honey bee biology, my interests have broadened to include Mason bees. Unlike honey bees, that are social, Mason bees are solitary. The difference is that the female Mason bee emerges from her winter tunnel in the early spring, is mated and goes about the business of producing more young Mason bees for the following year- by herself; thus, the term solitary.

Mason bees are friendly bees. They are about the size of a worker honey bee. They are black and iridescent blue to green when observed in the sun. Mason bees look a little like blue-bottle flies, but flies do not have long antennae and are not usually seen on flowers.

Mason bees nest in small structures that protect the nesting trays- like the leafcutter bee nest, and pollinate the flowers in early spring- great for apple pollination. Managing these critters is lots of fun especially when routed pieces of wood are used. When these pieces of wood are stacked nesting cavities are created. In the fall, you can see how many bees have been produced. These bees can be cooled in the spring to slow emergence- and can be released later in the spring to pollinate other flowers such as raspberries in June.

Each year we learn new tricks to make it easier for gardeners to be successful with Mason bees. Using routed trays was a significant breakthrough. This nesting system allows the Mason bee cocoons and the nest to be cleaned annually. Under moist, coastal conditions populations of Mason bees increase each year through year 3 and year 4. However, while the Mason bee population is building up the parasitic mites and other parasitic wasps are not far behind. This is



## Newspaper straws as housing for blue orchard bees

Joe Sadowski, Burnaby BC

This system is very effective and inexpensive to make. Ardent "do-it-yourself" gardeners can make these straws with minimal skills using everyday materials found around most homes.

### Materials

- Newspaper
- Cardboard (cereal or other box)
- Glue stick
- White glue

### Tools

- Scissors or sharp knife
- 5/16" wooden dowel 9 - 10" long

Dr. Dogterom recommends that the finished tubes should be about 6 - 8 inches in length. Therefore, select a newspaper that is approximately 12 to 16 inches in height (one double page sheet will yield four tubes). Carefully cut the sheet in half on the centerfold line. Then fold and cut the two halves to yield four pieces approximately 6 - 8 inches wide and the width of the page. Wind one sheet on the dowel tightly keeping the edges lined up. The loose end is then coated with the glue stick and pressed down to hold in place. Twist gently to remove tube from the dowel. With practice it is possible to roll 20 to 30 tubes an hour (while watching TV).

When a number of tubes have been rolled they are ready to be capped. To seal the end of a tube a square piece of cardboard is attached as follows. Make a three-eighths inch grid on the cardboard and cut to produce the three-eighths inch square end pieces (the bees are reluctant to use the tubes if they are not sealed). To attach the end caps put a few drops of white glue in a bottle cap. Take a tube and lightly dip it in the cap to form a thin ring of glue - then touch it down on a small square of cardboard. Press this on firmly with your finger and set aside to dry.

The completed tubes may be bundled in groups of 30 to 40, wrapped in scrap foam insulation, carpet underfelt or newspaper and inserted in some protective housing. One can be quite creative in doing this, however, keep in mind that the primary objective is to provide protection from the elements and other threats as well as ease of mounting in a suitable place. Wood is recommended due to its ready availability, insulating qualities, ease of working with and aesthetic possibilities. The completed bee house should then be placed on an east or south facing wall preferably under a roof overhang and close to a box containing the sanitized cocoons. This should be done by February or early March at the latest.

not a big problem because homeowners with a few fruit trees don't need more than 300-500 Mason bees. But it remains a problem if Mason bees are needed in the millions for pollinating fruit trees and highbush blueberries on a commercial scale. Scaling up for these numbers will be a quest for the future, but as for now, we have the technology and know-how of how to keep Mason bees with success.

Dr. Margriet Dogterom can be reached at 1- 800-794-2144 and her web site is www.Beediverse.com. The web site has a 'Message Board' for questions and comments on wild bees as well as information on the guide book *Pollination with Mason Bees*. Dogterom, 2002, Beediverse Publishing.

## Help for beekeepers: Quebec announces \$1.9-million program to Industry devastated by parasite mite

September 26, 2003  
The Gazette (Montreal) B3  
Kevin Dougherty

The Quebec agriculture department was cited as announcing a \$1.9-million program yesterday to help Quebec beekeepers whose hives have been devastated this year by the parasite mite *Varroa destructor*.

In announcing the program, Agriculture Minister Francoise Gauthier was cited as saying that Quebec's 200 beekeepers have 37,000 hives, and *Varroa destructor* has wiped out "no less than 50 per cent" of them this year.

Denis Pellerin, of the beekeepers association, was cited as saying the damage is even worse in terms of honey production. For 2003, honey production in Quebec is between one-third and one-quarter of the usual amount.

lobed and pointed. The stem can be smooth in some species and covered in course hairs in others.

Many species of *Brassica spp.* have been identified as reportable weeds in various jurisdictions and should not be planted in those areas. They rarely produce more nectar than the 'non weed' species and may cause economic harm to your land and/or your neighbor's crops.

### Ecology

Canola is in the mustard family (*Brassica spp.*) but through plant breeding, the sharp taste of the glucosinolates (sulphur compounds) have been removed from the oil.

Canola is grown in vast acreages and is susceptible to many diseases making pest management of the canola crop of paramount interest to beekeepers.

*B. napus* and *B. nigra* are more drought tolerant than *B. rapa*. *B. nigra* is most tolerant of compacted and/or stony soils.

Canola has sticky pollen grains that result in the bees being very effective pollinators. The result is twofold with the expected cross-pollination with other plants and in addition, the pollen loosened by the bees results in significant wind blown pollination.

Depending on the climate, canola flowers bloom for about 3 weeks between May and October. Individual flowers last about two days. The timing can be altered by climate and soil fertility. *B. arvensis*, the wild mustard, blooms early in spring. Varieties of *B. rapa* will

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between 8.5 and 10 days and each generation hatches between 18.5 and 20 days. This acceleration of the brood means that only one male varoa mite can hatch in worker cells.

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mature two to three weeks earlier than *B. napus*, which flowers from June to August. *B. nigra* flowers later, from July to October.

#### Canadian Habitat:

Originally introduced from Eurasia, canola is a cool season crop. It requires good moisture taking between 95 and 110 days to reach maturity. It grows best in the loamy grey to black soil zones of western Canada. Although canola prefers calcareous (alkaline) soils, it can grow from coastal lowlands to montane regions up to 3000 m.

#### Methods of Reproduction and Spread:

Canola is an annual, or in some cases biennial, that has bisexual flowers and is capable of self-fertilization. Insect pollination can increase the seed production by up to 30% depending on species and local conditions.

Although not considered a wind pollinated plant, canola pollen can be loosened by the foraging bees and other insects leading to distant field cross-pollination. This can be an issue for non-GM canola farmers and those trying to raise an organic crop.

#### Honey/Pollen Potential:

Nectar of *Brassica spp.* has one of the highest sugar contents at 51.5%; *B. napus* ranges from 26 to 84%. The protein content of the pollen is ranked in the excellent category.

*B. rapa* has twice the flowers of *B. napus* although it does not produce as much honey because the nectar is less available due to the flower structure. The extra flowers do result in *B. rapa* producing more pollen per field. The potential for honey production from *B. napus* is

high (100 to 500 kg/ha) with the yield per colony reported up to 8 kg/day. *B. rapa* reportedly produces 50 to 100 kg/ha.

*B. nigra* has a highly variable honey flow, the cause of which is unknown. A possible explanation might be as an adaptive technique to local drought; being self fertile, the flowers may only produce nectar to improve seed production in years with above average moisture.

The honey from *Brassica spp.* can be so thin that it may ferment in the comb and can granulate quickly.

In many years canola is the main source of honey in the prairie provinces. By selecting several species and/or varieties, an extended blooming period can be achieved.

With many commercial cultivars being used for honey, the beekeeper should be aware of possible concerns with GM canola and possible perceived marketing issues for the honey crop. Some cultivars have blossoms that are too long to allow the bees to easily reach the nectar (especially true of *B. rapa*).

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## Administrative Monetary Penalties Bulletin

Ilze Rupners, Regional Manager PMRA,  
New Westminster, BC

Aldergrove, BC - A Notice of Violation Warning relating to the use of a control product inconsistent with the label directions was issued to two honey producers. The warning was administered under the authority of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) Act, which provides a system of administrative penalties and warnings for violations of several acts, including the Pest Control Products Act (PCPA).

In January 2003, a Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) investigation determined that during the winter of 2002 the two companies wintering honey bees in BC. were found to contain

Apistan Anti-Varroa Mite Strips Reg. No. 23023 for a period of time that exceeded that on the label. The label states, 'remove strips after 42 day treatment period'. It is an offence of the PCPA to use a control product inconsistent with label directions.

The use of a control product inconsistent with label directions constitutes a "very serious" violation and merits a warning under the AMPs Regulations. A Notice of Violation with Warning was issued to the companies. They did not contest the findings nor the warning and are therefore deemed to have committed the offence.

AMPs is an enforcement tool which can be used to issue warnings or impose monetary penalties (similar to court imposed fines) through an administrative process rather than pursuing formal prosecution under the PCPA.

As part of its ongoing effort to increase awareness of PMRA's role in encouraging compliance with the PCPA, the PMRA issues Bulletins to local media when it is deemed that a violation has been committed.

For further information contact Health Canada;

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency  
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# Union Nationale de l'Apiculture Française

Jean-Marie Sirvins,  
Le président de l'Union Nationale de l'Apiculture Française,

**A**u terme de son travail d'expertise sur la mortalité des abeilles en France, le Comité Scientifique et Technique, mis en place au ministère de l'Agriculture, a rendu le 18 septembre 2003 son rapport final sur "l'Imidaclopride/Gaucho" utilisé en enrobage de semences.

Très claires, les conclusions valident les analyses de résidus d'imidaclopride dans les végétaux traités.

Le Comité Scientifique et Technique conclut que ces résultats "sont en accord avec les observations de terrain rapportées par de nombreux apiculteurs en zone de grande culture (maïs, tournesol), concernant la mortalité des butineuses, leur disparition, leurs troubles comportementaux et certaines mortalités d'hiver".

La nouvelle confirmation officielle d'une présence du neurotoxique dans les végétaux traités, en corrélation directe avec la décimation du cheptel apicole français, rend plus inacceptable que jamais le maintien du produit sur le marché. Cette confirmation intervient opportunément au moment même où plusieurs instructions pénales, ouvertes à Paris et en Midi-Pyrénées, mettent gravement en cause les contrôles opérés par l'administration et la légitimité des homologations délivrées.

Le Comité Scientifique et Technique entreprend le 19 septembre, ses travaux sur le Fipronil/Régent également mis en cause dans ces instructions pénales et commercialisé depuis 1995 sur une simple autorisation provisoire.

L'Union Nationale de l'Apiculture Française déplore que les travaux de recherches effectués par les organismes scientifiques officiels, CNRS, INRA, etc... aient été délibérément rejetés par le ministère de l'Agriculture lors de leur parution depuis plusieurs années.

Ce manque de réaction délibéré a entraîné la destruction supplémentaire de

centaines de milliers de colonies d'abeilles, au préjudice de dizaines de milliers d'apiculteurs français et au préjudice de l'environnement.

Aujourd'hui, la décision de retrait s'impose inéluctablement. La filière apicole l'exige sans délai.

L'affaire dite "du gaucho", qui dure depuis plus de 7 ans, a coûté aux contribuables quatre millions d'euros de financement de recherches post-homologation, a entraîné la ruine de beaucoup d'entreprises d'apiculture et des

préjudices considérables pour tous les apiculteurs. Elle met en évidence les carences intolérables du service des homologations des produits phytosanitaires en France.

Cette situation extrêmement préoccupante pour la santé publique comme pour la défense de l'environnement, ne peut perdurer. Les Pouvoirs Publics doivent prendre des décisions immédiates pour établir un climat de confiance et la transparence nécessaire.

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## Contamination De L'eau Souterraine Par Les Pesticides Et Les Nitrates Dans Les Régions En Culture De Pommes De Terre

### RÉSUMÉ

Au Québec, la culture de la pomme de terre est pratiquée sur plus de 19 097 hectares. Cette culture s'effectue généralement sur des sols sableux et, dans ce type de sol, l'infiltration rapide des eaux de pluie rend la nappe d'eau particulièrement vulnérable à la contamination par les intrants agricoles.

Les échantillonnages effectués par le Ministère dans les années 1980 et au début des années 1990 dans des puits individuels situés près de champs où l'on cultive la pomme de terre avaient montré des concentrations élevées de nitrates et de certains pesticides, notamment des insecticides aldicarbe et carbofuran, ainsi que la présence de l'herbicide métribuzine. Depuis, plusieurs nouveaux pesticides sont apparus sur le marché et sont maintenant utilisés de façon courante pour la culture de la pomme de terre (notamment l'imidaclopride).

Les résultats obtenus en 1999, 2000 et 2001 dans différentes régions où l'on cultive la pomme de terre indiquent les éléments suivants :

- des pesticides sont détectés dans 49 % des puits échantillonnés;
- l'insecticide imidaclopride (ADMIRE) est détecté dans 35 % des puits échantillonnés. Depuis les programmes d'échantillonnage antérieurs, on assiste à un transfert d'une contamination de l'eau souterraine par l'insecticide aldicarbe (TEMIK) à une contamination par l'imidaclopride;
- l'herbicide métribuzine (LEXONE, SENCOR) est détecté dans 33 % des puits échantillonnés. L'herbicide métribuzine était présent dans l'eau souterraine au début des années 1990 et il est encore présent à une fréquence et à des concentrations similaires;
- la contamination de l'eau souterraine par les pesticides existe dans la plupart des régions où l'on cultive la

pomme de terre, mais les régions les plus touchées sont celles de Portneuf et de Lanaudière;

- 42 % des puits échantillonnés montrent la présence de nitrates en concentrations qui excèdent la norme de 10 mg/l N-NO<sub>3</sub> pour l'eau potable;
- la contamination bactériologique est observée dans 27 % des puits échantillonnés; 16 % des puits échantillonnés montrent la présence de coliformes fécaux alors que l'eau potable ne devrait jamais en contenir;
- il n'existe pas de norme concernant l'eau potable pour l'imidaclopride, mais pour la métribuzine et les autres pesticides les concentrations mesurées sont faibles et respectent les normes ou valeurs de référence recommandées pour l'eau potable. Toutefois, bon nombre de puits montrent la présence simultanée de plusieurs pesticides (2 à 4), souvent conjuguée avec des concentrations de nitrates supérieures à la norme.

## Contamination of groundwater by pesticides and nitrates in potato cultivation areas.

### ABSTRACT

In Quebec, potato farming extends over an area of more than 19, 097 hectares.

This type of farming takes place mostly in sandy soils, which rapidly drains rainwater making the water-table particularly vulnerable to contamination by agricultural runoffs.

Study samples carried out by the Ministry of Environment during the 1980's and early 1990's in individual well sites near potato fields showed elevated levels of nitrate and certain pesticide concentrations, most notably the insecticides aldicarbe and carbofuran, as well as the presence of the herbicide metribuzine. Since then, more new

pesticides have appeared on the market and are now commonly used in potato cultivation (especially imidaclopride).

Results obtained from 1999, 2000 and 2001 from various regions of potato cultivation indicated these chemicals:

- Σ Pesticides were detected in 49% of wells sampled;
- Σ Imidaclopride insecticide (ADMIRE) was found in 35% of sampled wells. Since earlier sampling programs data shows the change in contamination of groundwater from the aldicarbe insecticide (TEMIK) to a contamination by imidaclopride;
- Σ Metribuzine herbicide (LEXONE, SENCORE) was detected in 33% of the wells sampled. Metribuzine has been present in groundwater since the beginning of the 1990's and is still present at similar frequency concentrations.
- Σ Contamination of the groundwater from pesticide exists, for the most part, in potato cultivating regions, but the regions the most affected are around Portneuf and Lanaudiere;
- Σ 42% of the tested well sites showed concentrations of nitrates in excess of the normal 10mg/l N-NO<sub>3</sub> in potable water;
- Σ bacterial contamination was observed in 27% of the tested wells; 16% of the wells sampled showed the presence of fecal coliform bacteria, which potable water should never contain;
- Σ there exists no "normal" levels of concentration for imidaclopride in potable water, however for metribuzine and other pesticides the measured concentrations were weak and within the normal recommended reference values for potable water. Most of the time, high numbers of wells show the simultaneous presence of many pesticides (2 to 4), often in conjunction with nitrate concentrations higher than normal.

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## National Union of French Apiculture

Jean-Marie SIRVINS

President of the National Union of French Apiculture.

After their expert inquiry into the mortality of honeybees in France, the Science and Technology Committee appointed by the minister of Agriculture, delivered the final report on "Imidaclopride/Gaucho" seed treatment on September 18th, 2003.

The conclusions are very clear, they validate the analyses of residues of Imidaclopride in the treated plants.

The Science and Technology Committee concludes that these results "are in agreement with ground observations reported by many bee-keepers in areas of extensive agriculture (corn, sunflower), concerning the mortality of pollinating insects, their disappearance, their behavioral disorders and winter mortality rates".

The new official confirmation of a presence of a neurotoxin in treated plants, in direct correlation with the decimation of French apicultural livestock, makes keeping the product on the market even more unacceptable than ever.

This confirmation intervenes opportunely, even at a time when several criminal investigations are underway in Paris and in the Middle -Pyrenees, placing serious blame on the tests run by the administration and the legitimacy of the regulations.

The Science and Technology Committee as of September 19th, undertakes its investigation into Fipronil, which was marketed since 1995 and is blamed in these criminal investigations on a provisional authorization.



## ITINERARY

### Monday January 26th:

CHC Directors' Business Meeting .....(8:30am - 5:00pm)  
CAPA Business Meeting .....(8:30am - 5:00pm).

### Tuesday January 27th

CHC Directors' Business Meeting .....(8:30am - 3:00pm)  
CAPA Business Meeting .....(8:30am - 3:00pm)  
Registration .....(1:00pm - 5:00pm)  
Trade Show Registration .....(7:00pm - 9:00pm)  
Prov./Fed./Committee Reports .....(7:30pm - 9:30pm)

### Wednesday January 28th

Trade Show Registration .....(8:30am - 5:00pm)  
CHC General Business Meeting.....(9:00am - 5:00pm)  
Trade Show Reception - MBA Centennial Celebration .....(7:00pm - 10:00pm)

### Thursday January 29th

Trade Show  
Research Symposium - IPM in Beekeeping .....(9:00am-5:00pm)  
Fundraiser Banquet - Roast/Awards Ceremony & Auction .....(6:30pm - 9:30pm)

### Friday January 30th

Trade Show  
Research Symposium - Trade & Marketing.....(9:00am-5:00pm)

Updates: - Information pertaining to Research Symposium presentations and itinerary will be posted on the Internet: Canadian - Honey Council [www.honeycouncil.ca](http://www.honeycouncil.ca) & Manitoba Beekeepers' Association - [www.manitobabee.org](http://www.manitobabee.org)

## ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION

The historical Fort Garry hotel in downtown Winnipeg is the perfect venue to host this year's Canadian Honey Council, Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists and Manitoba Beekeepers' Association Joint Convention. In addition to providing first class meeting facilities and accommodations, this 90 year old hotel is the perfect backdrop to celebrate the Manitoba Beekeepers' Associations 100th year as a beekeeper organization.

In honour of this historical meeting, The Fort Garry hotel has greatly reduced the guestroom rates for all participants attending this convention. Please refer to The Group Code MBBEE when making reservations to receive the special discount rate. Rooms will be held until December 27, 2003, after which time room availability is not guaranteed.

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The National Union of French Apiculture is deeply concerned that the research tasks carried out by the official scientific organizations, CNRS, INRA, etc... have been deliberately rejected by the minister of Agriculture at the time of their publication and for several years following.

This deliberate lack of response led to the extermination of hundreds of thousands of bee colonies, damage to tens of thousands of French bee-keepers and destruction of the environment.

Today, the decision for withdrawal is imperative. The apicultural community requires it without delay.

The "Gaucho" matter, which has lasted for more than 7 years, cost taxpayers four million Euros in financing the post-approval research, involved the ruin of many bee-keeping enterprises and considerable damages to all bee-keepers. It highlights the intolerable shortcomings of the approval process of pesticide products in France.

This extremely alarming situation for public health and safety as well as the protection of the environment, cannot be endured. The authorities must make immediate decisions to establish transparency and a climate of confidence.

# Field Conservation Management of Native Leafcutting and Mason Osmia Bees

Fact Sheet No. 301 UMCE No. 2420

by C. S. Stubbs, Assistant Scientist; F. A. Drummond, Associate Professor; and D. E. Yarborough, Extension Blueberry Specialist. University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469. (March 2000)

## Description and Biology

In Maine, the megachilids important in pollinating blueberry all belong to the genus *Osmia*. Throughout the wild blueberry growing regions of Maine, nine different species of *Osmia* that pollinate wild blueberry have been reared from wooden nesting blocks. Seven species, including *Osmia atriventris*, are leafcutting species, which cap their nests with masticated (thoroughly chewed) plant material. The other two *Osmia* species use mud to cap their nests and hence are known as mason bees.

The species found in Maine generally are some shade of metallic blue. The only exception is *Osmia inermis*, which is a nonmetallic black. In Maine the species range in size from 1/4 to 2/3 inch (7 to

16 mm). Figure 3 shows several species of *Osmia* bees. *Osmia* over-winter as dormant adults. Beginning in

and more northern inland growing areas, emergence and mating may continue until late May. In general, the adult

masticated plant material or mud. It takes from 11 to 20 trips to blueberry flowers to complete one cell. A single female may lay as many as 32 to 35 eggs. Eggs hatch into larvae which feed on the nectar-pollen provision in their cell. They then go through a nonfeeding pupal stage and by mid-fall have developed into dormant adults, which will then emerge the following spring.

Parasites, predators, and disease can reduce the number of adults emerging the following season. For example, adult female parasitic *Sapyga* (sa pi jah') wasps may enter uncapped nests and lay their eggs, which develop faster than *Osmia*. The wasp larvae kill the developing bees.

## Plants to Encourage Along Blueberry Field Borders

Encouraging the growth of certain plants along your field borders will conserve and enhance *Osmia* populations.

Because some *Osmia* emerge a bit earlier than blueberry bloom and some live longer than blueberry bloom, the bees will need additional sources of nectar and pollen in order to achieve good reproduction. Females also need young, tender deciduous leaves for nest construction. Our research has found that the plants listed in Table 1, when found along field border, will increase *Osmia* numbers in your field

| Before and during blueberry bloom   |                 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Common name</b>                  | <b>Genus</b>    |
| birch                               | <i>Betula</i>   |
| maple                               | <i>Acer</i>     |
| oak                                 | <i>Quercus</i>  |
| poplar, aspen                       | <i>Populus</i>  |
| willow                              | <i>Salix</i>    |
| During and/or after blueberry bloom |                 |
| <b>Common name</b>                  | <b>Genus</b>    |
| aster                               | <i>Aster</i>    |
| cherry                              | <i>Prunus</i>   |
| dogwood, bunchberry                 | <i>Cornus</i>   |
| honeysuckle                         | <i>Lonicera</i> |
| sheep laurel, lambkill              | <i>Kalmia</i>   |

Table 1. Recommended forage plants for enhancing populations of *Osmia* spp

late April they begin to emerge from their nest sites.

Males typically emerge before females and are smaller than females. Mating occurs from early to mid-May. In coastal

pollinating season of these bees occurs at the same time as blueberry bloom.

Female bees will begin nest construction several days after mating. Often their over-wintering site of emergence is reused.

When females collect nectar and pollen from wild blueberry flowers for provisioning their nests, they pollinate the crop. Males contribute slightly to pollination when they visit flowers for nectar, but males do not collect pollen or assist in nest construction.

Female *Osmia* lay a single egg on a nectar-pollen loaf-shaped provision, then seal the cell with a thin partition of

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## Researcher Retires

Don Nelson has retired from his research position with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. For the next few months he will be visiting Beaverlodge Research Station to sort out files, reprints and other documentation left behind by other apiculture scientists that were at Beaverlodge over the years. Don says he would be pleased to keep in touch with his colleagues and friends. Dr. Stephen Pernal, who has been on site for two years, will be responsible for the apiculture program at Beaverlodge and will continue with on going programs, correspondence and representing Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in the area of apiculture research.

## Canadian Bee Research Fund Call For Proposals

The directors of the Canadian Bee Research Fund invite calls for proposals for the 2004 competition. Grants will be considered in any area of apiculture or pollination research, but preference will be given for subjects identified by the Canadian beekeeping industry as high priority.

The Canadian Bee Research Fund (CBRF) is now in its sixth year of operation, and has awarded grants for research considered important for the survival and prosperity of the Canadian beekeeping industry. The projects awarded funding for 2003 were:

- Pernal, S., D.Nelson, A.Melathopoulos, K.Manninen & D.Noot.** "Management of oxytetracycline resistant AFB disease in honeybees" \$9,000
- Currie, R.** "Environmental and chemical control of varroa in indoor wintering facilities" \$9,000
- Scott Dupree, C.** "Evaluation of new insecticides and alternative strategies for effective control of insect pests of sweet corn with minimal impact on foraging honeybees" \$4,000
- Otis, G. and H. Mattila** "Evaluating the effects of fall and spring pollen supplements on honey bee colonies and individual worker bees" \$3,000.

The CBRF was established to counteract the problems caused by severe reductions in federal and provincial funding for honeybee research. The Fund has been set up as a long-term endowment to support bee research, with interest generated available for annual grants.

Applications for this round of grants should be sent to Dr Rob Currie, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg MB R3T 2N2. The deadline for submission of proposals is 30 November 2003. Application details can be found on the CHC Website [www.honeycouncil.ca](http://www.honeycouncil.ca)

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## MENDING FENCES

Stan Reist

A lady came over to our exhibit at the Nanaimo fair where there was an old extractor on display. She said that it brought back memories of when she was young woman keeping bees near Montreal, Quebec. She extracted honey to get her spending money as well as the family honey supply. One day when she was not at home her neighbour phoned. The neighbour complained to the lady's mother about the bees that were flying into her summer kitchen. The neighbour was making jams and jellies and the bees were all over her kitchen. What could be done about this! Mother apologized and said that when her daughter got home that she would tell her to walk the fence to see where the bees got out and fix the hole. The neighbour was greatly relieved and hung up. It was a great story and we all laughed heartily at the idea of mending the fence to keep the bees at home.



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Peter Mewett, Stirling, 613-395-3225

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