

The Local Buzz

January 2017



President's Message, Jerry Van Heeringen



While vacationing in New Orleans recently, we went on a swamp tour that took us on the Pearl River around Honey Island. Honey Island got its name from the honey that was collected there from the tupelo trees growing on the island. Early beekeepers would gather the honey from hives in hollow trees. These days since there are still no roads going into the swamp beekeepers bring their colonies in by boat in the spring when the tupelo trees are in bloom.

You can see from the way I'm dressed we were there in winter so there are no leaves making it hard to see but I'm pointing to a tupelo tree growing in the water where the swamp meets the river. Tupelo trees have a short blooming season from late April to May and produce the only honey that does not crystallize.

January 2nd Meeting – 7:00 PM

January's program will be John Miller talking about various and sundry items in the beekeeping industry including the Bee Audacious event, Almond Board Research Conference, and indoor wintering. John is a 4th generation beekeeper who lives in Newcastle, and if you haven't heard him speak before you are in for a treat.

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

We've now passed the Winter Solstice, and are beginning a new solar-dominated cycle of nature. Some of you may have noticed the unusually early flowering of some plants—I'm not sure why, as this autumn did not seem especially warm. The main thing to be excited about is the amount of precipitation we've gotten this fall. If the trend continues, it will allow for the recharge of our aquifers, and perhaps a "normal" honey flow.

Our bees are finally shutting down brood rearing after their fall feeding of pollen sub (often only necessary if you're going to almond pollination). We're giving each hive a dribble of oxalic acid to clean up the remaining varroa mites, thus giving the colonies a fresh start in the spring.

I've been developing my mite model, and it is now nearly ready for release. One huge thing that it points out is the very strong impact of the length of time that colonies are rearing brood during the season. For example, the overall seasonal increase of the mite population in Sussex, England is around 40x, meaning that if your colony started with 10 mites on Jan 1, it would contain 400 mites the next January, and 16,000 mites the next January. For colonies under such circumstances, a single oxalic dribble each winter would be enough to keep mites under control indefinitely.

In Grass Valley, the situation is very different. Our colonies, which back in the day used to all go broodless in November, now may not go broodless at all. And if we have good flight weather in January, they will build up rapidly on the alder pollen. Whenever there is brood present in a hive, the mite population can increase over a longer period of time, with dire consequences. Starting with the same 10 mites, a strong California colony,

managed for brood rearing from early January through November, can see its mite population increase *in a single season* to a peak of 9000 mites in November!

Of interest is that those of you who don't help your bees with supplemental feeding, may hinder varroa increase, since your colonies will cut back on the amount of brood (read that "varroa food") that they rear. During our drought, unfed colonies often go broodless during spring and late summer pollen dearths—this stops mite increase.

I've gotten requests for queens from my promising mite-resistant queen line. Unfortunately, we are not in the queen sale business. So here's the deal that I think I'll make for hobbyists who want to be part of the solution to the varroa problem. If you want to help in queen selection, I will provide you with free queen cells. What I will ask in return is that you have queenless nucs set up to receive those cells, and that you will then allow the emerging virgin queens to mate with the drones in your area. You will then on Day 19 after making up your nucs, check for success at mating (see whether you have a laying queen), and then give the nuc an oxalic dribble on that day (to take the mite count to near zero).

I will then expect you to take an alcohol wash mite count the first week of July. If the colony is maintaining a mite count of below 4, then don't treat, and continue to take monthly mite washes to see whether it can maintain a low count (never exceeding 9 in fall). If at any monitoring, the mite counts get higher, then take that colony out of the breeding program and treat to control varroa before the colony collapses.

Any untreated colony that looks good in spring may then qualify as a breeder queen, from which I will ask you to bring me a frame of emerging larvae for grafting. By us all working together, perhaps we can solve the varroa problem once and for all!

Volunteer Opportunity – Fair Booth Coordinator

Our club has recently created a new volunteer position. The title is "Fair Booth Coordinator". This person should be available before the fair to oversee the cleaning and prep of the booth and during the five days of the fair to make sure the booth stays stocked with supplies such as honey, tasting spoons, literature etc. After the fair everything in the booth needs to be properly and safely stored. Randy Oliver will guide you through the process. Interested persons please contact Jerry Van Heeringen at (530) 913-5709

Minutes from Last Meeting

From Jack Meeks, Secretary

No minutes to report. Last meeting was the Christmas Party.

Treating for Varroa

Submitted by Brion Dunbar

I have been busily checking colonies and treating for varroa with oxalic acid dribble. I have some leftover if anyone needs some I'm happy to bring to the meeting. Email me at briond@aja.com

Goodies Sign-up

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

Please let me know if you can bring a treat for any of the coming meetings.

We only need a couple of folks each month, so pick a month and let me know. Contact Karla Hanson, queenbeez@att.net

Raffle Prizes

We always need more contributions to the monthly raffle! Almost everyone loves having more plants. Be creative. For every item you bring, you receive a free raffle ticket. The raffle helps with the club's expenses. Thanks!

From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery

Library books are checked out for 1 month, if you want to extend it for a second month just call or e-mail.

Remember...If you can't make meetings to return books, you can always mail them to:

Tynowyn Slattery 20493 Rome Road Nevada City, CA 95959 swoolman@saber.net 530-265-6318

From the Librarian...an internet resource for your consideration.

You never know where you're going to end up, late at night, following links on the internet. I don't remember how I got there but, I have been very glad I ended up on Chris Austin's blog, "Mavin's note book.com". She has been an independent contractor for the Water Education Foundation of Sacramento for 5 years and has created, "the most comprehensive daily synthesis of news stories and blogs on California water."

You could (and, perhaps, should if you care about our water issues in California) spend a lot of time going through it all, but I was very pleased to find an article by, Dr. Robert Lackey, a professor of fisheries science at Oregon State University who, in 2008, retired after 27 years with the Environmental Protection Agency's national research laboratory in Corvallis where he served as Deputy Director and Associate Director for Science, among other senior science and leadership jobs

Dr. Lackey's examples come from his experiences in his official capacity and his article was directed to his students but, I find them useful every time I come across the science/policy interface. He gives 7 ways to assess the bias of scientifically presented information, which I have included below for those who don't have the time to check it out. Very useful. Best Regards to everyone for a prosperous and safe New Year. Tynowyn

"These days, scientists in environmental science, natural resources, ecology, conservation biology, water resource management, and similar disciplines are often not trusted by the public and decision-makers to present policy-neutral science.

One reason is that scientists advocating personal or organizational positions on ecological and environmental policy issues has become widely tolerated as acceptable professional behavior and is even encouraged by a segment of the scientific community, and as a result, the scientific enterprise is collectively slipping into a morass that risks marginalizing the contribution of science to public policy

Public confidence that scientific information is technically accurate, policy relevant, and politically unbiased is central to informed resolution of policy and regulatory issues that are often contentious, divisive, and litigious."

Dr. Lackey warns that "...scientists should watch for the often subtle creep of normative science (i.e., information that appears to be policy neutral, but contains an embedded preference for a particular policy or class of policies). Failing to do so risks marginalizing the essential role that science and scientists ought to play in informing decisions on important public policy questions,"

1. Policy making is about picking winners and losers. "That's just a fact of life, and therefore since management implements policies, you should expect management to be similarly contentious. There are always winners and losers, and my experience is the losers are never entirely happy about being political losers."

2. It is clashing policy preferences or values and not science that are typically at the core of policy debates. "People have different values, and science really can't do anything about that. Those values are there, they are

not based on science, they are based on other kinds of things, and so science really can't contribute to resolving that."

3. In a democracy, the values, that is the policy preferences of scientists are no more important than the values of others. "It's always important to recognize that we do live in a democracy versus a technocracy. Scientists are experts in their scientific field of knowledge, but when you step outside of that and get into value debates, which is really at the core of policy, the values of scientists are no more important or valuable in a democracy than the values of anyone else."

4. Policy advocates will routinely wrap themselves and their pitches in science, and this okay. "The job of an advocate is to solve the policy preferences of himself or the organization, and they'll use whatever technique works. So they'll use and misuse science, and that's perfectly ok. It's not good science practice, but they are advocates trying to pitch their policy preference, and they wrap their preference in science as this will tend to sell better with the public, and this is perfectly fine."

5. Policy advocates, both individual and groups, will oftentimes hide policy preferences in what appears to be policy-neutral science. "It's normative science, and a good advocate can make science that's advocacy science look just like regular science, and if you're effective in your advocacy, the average reader will never pick up on it."

6. For a scientist, whether it's intentional or not, using normative science is stealth policy advocacy. "The reason it's stealth is because the average reader doesn't even realize that you're subtly pitching a policy preference. And so you can't hide behind the view that it was an innocent mistake. Whether it was innocent or not, you are in fact slipping into policy advocacy."

7. Sticking to policy neutral science or traditional science does not preclude playing a useful role in policy, management, or efficacy. "I'm not of the view is to stay in your laboratory and periodically publish peer-reviewed literature, and maybe somebody out there might find your article and might find it useful. I think that especially if you are a publicly funded scientist, you ought to play in policy management advocacy, but play the role of the scientist and don't get coopted into becoming a policy advocate."



In the Christmas Spirit.
Submitted by Diane Benton

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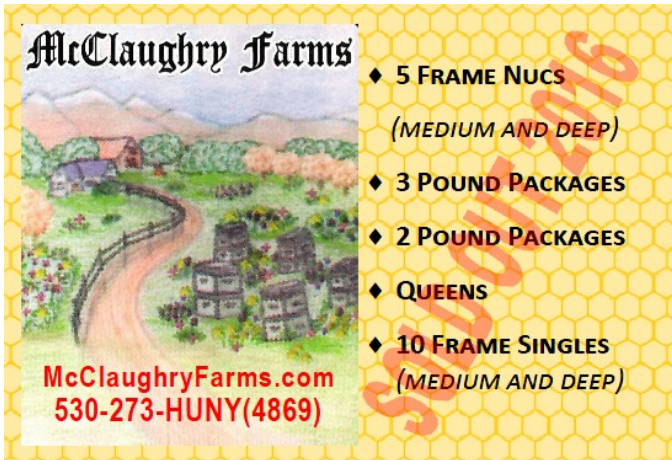
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The Nevada County Beekeepers Association is dedicated to apiculture education and promotion of the art and science of beekeeping among beekeepers, agriculturists, and the general public. This is a "not for profit" organization. Donations are welcomed.

Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran's Memorial Building at 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley. All visitors are welcome. Use the back entrance.

The newsletter is published monthly as a service to the membership. Articles, recipes, commentary, and news items are welcomed and encouraged. Contributions should be received by the 20th of the Month to be included into the next issue. Submit to garyg@newpress.com

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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