

# The Local Buzz

November 2018



## President's Message, Jerry Van Heeringen



October is almost gone but with these daytime temperatures in the mid 70's it's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is less than four weeks away. According to the ten day weather forecast these mild days are going to stretch right into November. Just as many of us enjoy "supplemental feeding" throughout the holidays our bees may want some as well. Unfortunately when the days turn colder they may not move out of the cluster to take it. Right now is a great time to check the weight of your colonies and feed if needed.

November is not just the start of the holiday season but its also when we elect officers for the coming year. Amy Husted has been vice president for two years now and has done a great job but will be unable to continue next year. I'm hoping someone will step up and fill that position. I'm sure there must be someone who has always wanted to be president. If that's you then just let me or one of the board members know or ask someone to nominate you. We should all be thankful to have a place to gather once a month with like minded people to discuss beekeeping and have our questions answered. The best way to show that you are thankful would be to volunteer for one of these positions. You don't have to commit for two or three years just do it for one and give someone else a chance to show how thankful they are. Its not difficult and you have the entire board for support, in fact we really all work together.

## November 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting – 7:00 PM

This months speaker will be Russell Heitkam, of Heitkams Honey Bees in Orland, CA. He will be talking about mite control challenges and options, almond pollination opportunities, Project APIs M seeds for bees program, among other subjects. Heitkams sells over 100,000 queens a year, and brokers over 15,000 colonies for almond pollination. There will be no dinner before the meeting.

## Bee Bits

Submitted by Randy Oliver

With our cooler weather and shortening days, some of our local flora are producing food for the bees, allowing them to produce critical brood prior to winter. The bees are taking advantage of the favorable weather to forage.

Unfortunately, something else is also occurring—the drifting of mites from highly-infested hives into some of your hives. I'm in the middle of a detailed and expensive, but fascinating field experiment to learn more about that mite drift. Thanks to Brion and Alice Dunbar, Sandy Honigsberg, Anna Mudd, and Brooke Molina for helping to glue some 6000 painted steel discs to the backs of bees in colonies that I'm intentionally allowing to collapse from varroa/DWV. Briefly, we're using magnetic entrance capture traps to recover the tags, as well as using stickyboards to quantify the amount of mite immigration into surrounding hives.

The experiment is about half completed at this time. So far, our findings are of considerable interest.

- We've confirmed that some hives in the same yard tend to suffer from far more mite immigration than others
- A number of bees have drifted to hives in yards a half- and a full mile distant
- So far, it appears that there may be relatively more drift to distant hives than to hives that are nearby
- A hive at this time of year can pick up ~10 mites per day, day after day, from other hives

The above findings may help to explain the late-season spike in mite counts that many of us observe in our hives. We're collecting a ton of data, and hope to shed light on exactly how this happens.

That said, our Ag Commissioner, Chris de Nijs and ranch owner Laura Barhydt are working with me to create a bee ordinance for Nevada County to prevent the overstocking of hives in the County. Our fear is that a single irresponsible commercial beekeeper, by placing a thousand hives with syrup cans next to either Grass Valley or Nevada City, could easily ruin any chance of any local beekeeper making a honey crop. That would be a perfect example of Dr. Garrett Hardin's "The Tragedy of the Commons"

(<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/sci/162/3859/1243.full.pdf>).

I want to thank those beekeepers who attended the Ag Advisory Commission meeting in September—their attendance and support of the measure made a big impression! We will want an even greater show of support when we present the final version to the Board of Supervisors later this year (we hope to get the ordinance in place by spring). I will send out a copy of the proposed ordinance to all members in advance, and the time and place of the meeting. Since we'd like to have unanimous support for the ordinance, we solicit comments during the drafting process.

Hive management tips: ideally, your colonies at this time will be nearly free of mites, with plenty of healthy sealed brood, and heavy with honey for the winter. They should be out of cold or damp air pockets, and if possible be exposed to morning sun.

## In The Yard

**Submitted by Brion Dunbar**

I have a plant in my back yard that is a wonderful source of late summer pollen and nectar for bees. It is member of the sage family, *Salvia ugniosa* (picture with blue flowers). Its an unfortunate name, as I think it is very beautiful. The bees do too, as we see honey bees, carpenter bees, and bumblebees, and the plant is loaded with flowers. This plant has been blooming since July, and is still going strong. It is a shrub that is about 3 feet tall and 5 feet wide. It does well in mix of sun and shade, and likes wet areas. I tried to start a bunch of cuttings 3 weeks ago but have not had any success to date. I will try again in the spring and bring some starts in to give away. Many sunflowers also bloom very late in the summer, and are great sources of nutrition for our bees.



There was an interesting study of honey bee clusters published in Nature last month: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41567-018-0262-1>. The swarms were exposed to rhythmic side to side motion; much like you or I would do in an earthquake the swarm flattens out. What is interesting about this is that in order to accomplish this, many of the individual bees have to move to an area of increased stress, thereby sacrificing their own individual exposure for the good of the super organism. A video is shown here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLc8e2NNCopVtu2zhRBenAvEE2av81fHZa&v=jswSJznyvDI>



## **Minutes ~ last meeting**

**Submitted by Jack Meeks**

President Jerry Van Heeringen opened with Q&A

Finance Janet Brisson > Sept Start \$5655.44; Inc \$43.00; Exp \$0; Sept End \$5698.44

### **PROGRAM**

Dr. Elina Nino, Director CoOpExtension UC Davis Apiculture described the California Pollination Consortium and Bee Lab members including Dr. Eric Mussen. She described several research projects involving pollinators; bees, hummingbirds, butterflies and moths.

Diverse sources of pollen seem to improve colony health and production. California almond production depends on two million bee colonies. Wildflower and mustard pollen gives best results, Bees have preference for red and yellow.

## **Apiary Laws**

**Submitted by Janet Brisson**

Luci Wilson, our Agricultural Biologist for Nevada County, sent me an email including this article about California starting to seriously enforce apiary laws

<https://www.westernfarmpress.com/insects/new-california-law-aims-protect-pollinators>

Luci said it should be noted that maintaining unregistered hives is currently an infraction under state law, the amendment is changing the violation from an infraction to a misdemeanor.

### **From Luci Wilson, our Agricultural Biologist for Nevada County**

County ordinance waives the Registration Fee for hobbyist beekeepers in Nevada County. A hobbyist beekeeper is defined as having less than 10 hives in the apiary. If you have 10 or more hives, a \$10 registration fee is required with the registration form. Registration may be submitted electronically via PDF form, and fees paid online. We encourage bee keepers to send GPS coordinates of their hive locations for improved accuracy when we load these sensitive sites to pesticide permitting mapping program.

It is important to note that under FAC 29041, the information included in an apiary registration is protected from the California Public Records Act, and must remain confidential within the department.

Assembly Bill 2468 will amend Sections of the Food and Ag Code in the following ways:

Phase One goes into effect on January 1, 2019 \*Make it unlawful to maintain an apiary that is not registered;  
\*Require notification to destination county's agricultural commissioner of movement within 72 hours of relocation;

Phase Two, in effect January 1, 2020

\*County Agricultural Commissioner may assess administrative civil penalties for violation of the provisions regulating bee management, specifically (1) Annual Registration of Bee Keeper, (2) Branding of Bee Hives with required contact information, and (3) Notification of relocation of hives within 72 hours.

Phase two allows for these laws to be enforced in a more meaningful way.

The changes to state law were made through cooperative efforts with the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA), California Association of Pest Control Advisers (CAPCA), California Almond Board, California State Beekeepers Association (CSBA), California Department of Food and Ag (CDFA), and California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), and includes a new tracking and management database that called Bee Where.

Bee Where is currently in development, with a pilot phase scheduled for launch in 2019, with a full roll out to the public in 2020. The website and app are currently being developed. The app will allow beekeepers to register, customize pesticide notification information, for Pest Control Advisers to check the number of hives that are registered within a mile of the proposed pesticide application, and to report unmarked hives. Other goals of the Bee Where program include improved neonic tracking and impact, and improve investigation into bee kills.

Currently it is very difficult to enforce any of the apiary laws. Existing law makes it an infraction for any person failing to comply with the specifications, with a limit of \$500 penalty for each day that the violation continues. Phase two will additionally allow an administrative civil penalty for violation of certain requirements regulating the registration and identification of apiaries and the relocation of bee colonies, pursuant to a prescribed hearing and appeals process.

The full text of the update may be found at [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov) and searching for AB 2468.

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I just checked and if you keep your bees at your residence, you do not have to brand your hives or put up a sign.

To register your hives:

1. [Download the registration](#) form and mail in with or without your check.
2. Or register on line at <https://www.mynevadacounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/20122/Apiary-Reg-form>
3. Or go to [mynevadacounty.com](http://mynevadacounty.com) and put Apiary into the search bar to find the registration form. You can fill it in online and email it to [agdept@co.nevada.ca.us](mailto:agdept@co.nevada.ca.us) .  
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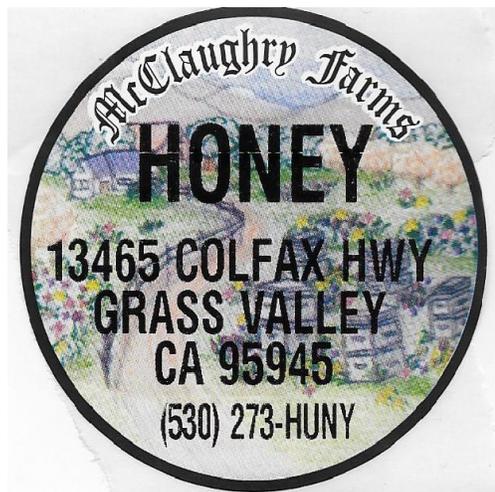
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**YOUR AD  
HERE**

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](mailto:garyg@newpress.com)

Advertising space (3” by 2”) in this newsletter is usually available and need not be bee-related. Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members. Please email Janet Brisson at [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com)



**Nevada County Beekeepers Association**  
[www.nevadacountybeekeepers.org](http://www.nevadacountybeekeepers.org)



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All area codes are 530 unless noted otherwise.

November 5th Meeting 7:00PM

Russell Heitkam about mite control challenges and options, almond pollination opportunities