

Local Buzz



February 2012

President's Message

Hi everyone: as I write this we're finally getting some rain. Because of the weird weather, almonds are going to bloom early--which works fine for me, because I'm hoping we get an early dry spring. We need the weather to cooperate for nuc making.

Get ready, another year is coming up fast!

Your President, Rob Slay

February 6th Meeting

7 PM at the Grass Valley Veterans Hall. Program: Randy will present on early spring management, feeding, and Nosema ceranae.

Time to Pay Your 2012 Dues, Are You Online?

Help us reduce paper and mailing costs, get your newsletters electronically and we will reduce your family membership fees to \$15.00. I will be collecting dues for the year 2012 at February's meeting. If you are paying in cash, please try to bring the exact change. If you would like to mail your dues, please send your check made out to NCBA or Nevada County Beekeepers Association for either \$20.00 (to receive newsletter through mail) or \$15.00 for email delivery and mail that to me at :

NCBA
c/o Janet Brisson
2093 Dog Bar Road
Grass Valley, CA 95949

Any questions, please feel free to call me at 530-913-2724 or email me at rubes@countryrubes.com

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

January 25, 2012

I've flown frequently over the Sierra Nevada this "winter," and have been concerned about the complete lack of snowpack. But finally, after a month-long drought in December, we are finally getting some winter rains! At the Grass Valley elevation, the bees got a good week of alder bloom before the weather turned cold and wet. The alder pollen is the first floral nutrition of spring, and really kicks our bees into gear. But then the colonies went back into pollen dearth mode due to the change in weather. This is stressful to the colony, as the hungry brood, the rearing of which was stimulated by the alder pollen and warm weather, continue to demand protein, so once the nurse bees consumed the reserves of beebread in the combs, they needed to start drawing from their own body stores in order to produce jelly.

My sons and I are dependent upon renting strong colonies in almonds, and can't afford to allow our colonies to lose their critical momentum of population buildup during these first rounds of broodrearing. So we put on our rain suits, and go out and provide pollen supplement to our bees.



Eric and Ian feeding pollen supplement this week. We carefully avoid crushing bees by using smoke and a pine branch “tickler” to move them off the top bars. It is surprising how many queens are sitting on the top bars in the center of the cluster when we split the hives.

Man, do the bees respond to the pollen supplement! They keep brooding up and stay healthy. Someone incredulously asked me, “What, you feed bees while it’s raining?” My simple reply was, “Bees can feed themselves when the sun is shining.”



Here are Eric and Ian chopping up pollen supplement with an inquisitive audience observing them.

We generally mix our own pollen supplement. Typical off-the-shelf patties run about 11% protein. Ours run about 30%. And we feed a lot! A typical colony gets 2 lbs at a time, as fast as they’ll eat it (about every two weeks during winter). We’ll give a strong colony as much as 4 lbs at a feeding! We make sure that none ever go hungry, so that the colony doesn’t lose momentum.

If there is good flight weather, and the bees are bringing in plenty of natural pollen, then feeding supplement is not necessary. The feeding costs! This winter, we fed nearly \$8000.00 in supplement and syrup, not counting our labor. We wouldn’t do so if it weren’t a good return on investment. For you small-scale beekeepers, if there is good flight weather at least once a week, and you see lots of pollen being brought in, your colonies will generally be OK, so long as they are heavy with stores. I saw something on Lower Colfax road on January 22nd that made me slam on the brakes—a manzanita shrub in full bloom. We jumped out and crushed the blossoms on our tongues—they were full of nectar. This was the only manzanita in bloom for miles around—we checked! The rest of the plants had buds only at the early green stage, nowhere near bloom. This is one reason that I love manzanita as bee forage-- bees can often find manzanita nectar from late January through as late as (last year) late April. No single plant blooms for that long a period, but the great genetic diversity in the population ensures that there is always a plant in bloom somewhere. I’ve recently returned from the national beekeeping conferences. Nothing much new to me, except that researchers are more and more finding that *Nosema ceranae* may be more of a problem than it first appeared. I’m currently in the middle of publishing an extended series on this parasite in the American Bee Journal, and will try to keep up to date with posting them to my website. Here’s a teaser graph from my current article in press:

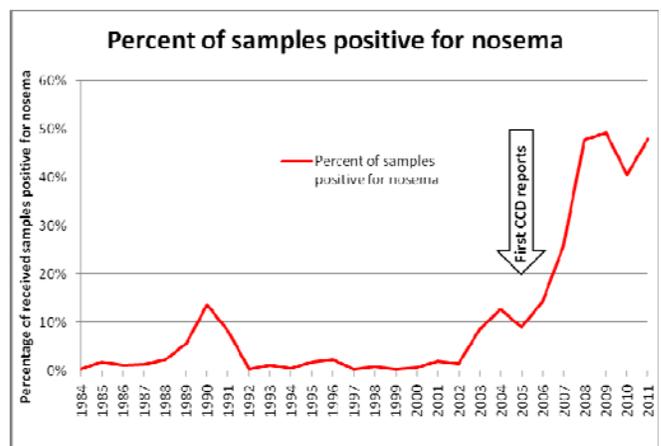


Figure 3. Plot of nosema prevalence in samples received by the USDA Bee Disease Diagnostic Lab. Keep in mind that this data is not from random sampling, but rather from samples sent by beekeepers to the lab, which biases the sampling toward apiaries that are having problems. However, the current high prevalence of infection is supported by recent nationwide sampling. My appreciation to Bart Smith for his help with the data.

Bee Symposium in Sebastopol March 10

The Beekind store in Sebastopol announces its sixth annual Bee Symposium on Saturday, March 10th in Sebastopol, plus an introduction to beekeeping Class in San Francisco on Saturday, February 18th! The symposium will be held at the Sebastopol Veteran's Hall, and the theme is 'the importance of small scale beekeeping'. Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door. For more information on the symposium and the class, see www.beekind.com

From the Librarian...

New Book : Honey Bee Democracy by Tom Seeley, Cornell University Department Head Neurobiology Princeton University Press, 2010, 230 pages

This book is Dr. Tom Seeley's investigation into collective intelligence or, swarm intelligence (SI): the solving of cognitive problems by a group of individuals who pool their knowledge and process it through social interactions. He has spent the last 30 years examining this phenomenon in the honeybee and his book, "The Honey Bee Democracy", is based on his conclusions about how the bees use collective intelligence to choose a new home for the swarm.

The numerous observations, trials, postulations, color plates, illustrations, graphs, charts, summarizing diagrams, 23 pages of notes etc. leave no doubt; in this work, we are in the rigorous world of a scientist, yet one that has retained a sense of wonder and curiosity and an obvious love and respect for his subject(s).

This is a fascinating book for beekeepers, giving answers to many of those observed, but puzzling doings in the hive; and a great deal to think about as SI pertains to human interactions.

Four pages of detailed acknowledgements could, perhaps, be a testament to Dr. Seeley's "human" SI.

My only question about this book is why it costs only \$20.00 and an earlier book, "The Wisdom of the Hive", on how a honey bee colony solves the problem of allocating its foragers to gather food efficiently, is \$85.00; I would purchase the second one for the library in a New York minute if it were but half the price.

Don't be put off by the technical aspect, this is a very good read.

Emergency Winter Rations and Moisture Control

By Janet Brisson

The article that I included in January's Buzz talked about making a mountain of hard sugar in your hives. I tried it and although the bees are eating it like crazy, it's a mess, stuck to the top bars where I cannot dust with powdered sugar like I've done once a month during the winter months. Luckily, we've had very low mite counts this fall, so I'm not too worried. After our next period of good weather, I'll chip the hardened sugar off and save it for sugar water.

Family Farmers Sue Monsanto

(Submitted by Karla Hanson) On January 31, family farmers will take part in the first phase of a court case filed to protect farmers from genetic trespass by Monsanto's GMO seed, which contaminates organic and non-GMO farmer's crops and opens them up to abusive lawsuits. In the past two decades, Monsanto's seed monopoly has grown so powerful that they control the genetics of nearly 90% of five major commodity crops including corn, soybeans, cotton, canola and sugar beets. In many cases farmers are forced to stop growing certain organic and conventional crops to avoid genetic contamination and potential lawsuits. Between 1997 and 2010, Monsanto admits to filing 144 lawsuits against America's family farmers, while settling another 700 out of court for undisclosed amounts. Due to these aggressive lawsuits, Monsanto has created an atmosphere of fear in rural America and driven dozens of farmers into bankruptcy. Farmers need your voice today. Please spread the word today.

http://action.fooddemocracynow.org/sig/n/farmersvs_monsanto/?referring_

Extractor Loan Program

I am working on getting ideas and information on how we can get the association's extractor loan program up and running again, if you have an interest in taking advantage of the program or an idea about the set up, please contact me at swoolman@saber.net or 265-6318. The amount of interest will determine if we can go forward. Best Regards...Tynowyn Slattery

Recipe of the Month

We have had a number of requests to continue the recipes in the Buzz, so members, please submit your favorite honey flavored recipe to lesliegault@yahoo.com

This one is from the Canadian Honey Council, submitted by Janet Brisson, who writes “I like this recipe because you don’t need canned milk. I like to make it into a custard and pour it into 1 cup glass canning jars, put in a pan of water in the oven and bake 350 until done. Then put a canning lid with screw on. The lids will stick on. You still need to put them in the fridge, but they will last weeks.”

Honey Pumpkin Pie

- 2 eggs
- ½ cup honey
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp ginger
- 1-1/2 cup prepared pumpkin
- ¾ cup hot milk
- 1 tpb butter

Beat eggs just until yolks and whites are well blended. Gradually beat in honey. Add cinnamon, salt, nutmeg and ginger. Stir in pumpkin. Add milk with butter melted in. Pour into pie shell and bake 450 degrees F for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 305 degrees F and continue baking for 20-25 minutes or until filling is firm.

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MAIL ORDERS RECEIVE QUICK SERVICE

Register, Register, and Register!

All beekeepers must register their apiary locations in Nevada County. This is to your advantage, since you will be notified of pesticide spraying. It is also to the advantage of beekeepers in general, since registration gives us a political voice. A registration form is attached in the following two pages; please fill out both and return them directly to the farm advisor at 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley (same building where meetings are held, office is upstairs.) or bring to the meeting. There is no cost if you have fewer than 10 colonies. Registration is due now for 2012.

January Minutes

2012 monthly meeting topics were arranged by club officers Rob Slay, Randy Oliver, Jeremiah Farrell, Larry Merritt, Karla Hansen, Debra Morawski and Jack Meeks, before the meeting. President Rob Slay opened with Q&A. According to Randy, bees have good resistance to viruses

FINANCE: Janet Brisson: Nov Start \$4103.07; Inc \$154; Exp 181.69 end 4075.38.

December Start \$4075.38; Exp \$142.63; Dec EndBal \$3932.75.

PROGRAM: Randy Oliver's trip to Israel. His photos included ancient design beehives, ancient design buildings and civilian life in a small crowded land. Jack Meeks, sec

PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION

I hereby request to be notified before pesticide applications as provided in Section 29101 the California Food and Agriculture Code and Title 3 California Code of Regulation Section 6652.

I am available for notification during the two-hour time period from _____ to _____ Monday through Friday by collect call to the following telephone numbers(s): _____

I understand that if I fail to submit my request for pesticide notification to the Agricultural Commissioner **IN WRITING** within the 72-hour period before relocating, I may not be entitled to recover damages for any injury from pest control operations. I also will not recover damages if I fail to properly post an identification sign at my apiaries or am not available for notification at the hours I have designated above. I understand that this "REQUEST FOR NOTIFICATION" will expire December 31.

OR

I do not wish to be notified of pesticide applications on nearby sites.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____
Beekeeper

DATE RECEIVED: _____ SIGNATURE: _____
Agricultural Commissioner/Representative

APIARY LOCATIONS as of January 1st
(Please attach map for each location)

No. of Colonies	Legal Description (Required)				Location Description <small>Address, GPS coordinates, location information such as crossroads, landmarks, canals, ranch names, etc.</small>	Map Attached
	1/4 Section	Section	Township	Range		
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES
						<input type="checkbox"/> YES

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____
Beekeeper



**COUNTY OF NEVADA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER**

255 South Auburn Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945
Mail: 950 MAIDU AVENUE NEVADA CITY, CA 95959-8617
(530) 273-2648 FAX (530) 273-1713 <http://mynevadacounty.com>

Steven L. DeCamp
Community Development Agency Director

Jeffrey Pylman
Agricultural Commissioner

**2012 APIARY REGISTRATION
REQUEST FOR PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION**

NAME: _____ PHONE: (____) _____

DBA: _____ CELL PHONE: (____) _____

STREET
ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

REQUIRED HIVE MARKINGS: _____

Please check, if your address has changed.

Please check and return, if you no longer have bees in the County.

Bees sold to: _____
(Name, Address, City, State and Phone number)

Please check, if you are a hobbyist beekeeper (less than 10 hives) in the County.

___ \$10 registration fee due ___ Fee waived, just register your hives.

Please check, if you are no longer in the beekeeping business.

Bees sold to: _____

Please check, if we may include you in our honeybee swarm pick up referral list.

Cities where you can pick up swarms: _____

LIST APIARY LOCATIONS ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM

California Food and Agricultural Code Section 29040 requires that you register your colonies January 1 of each year. If your colonies arrive after January 31 through December 31, Section 29042 requires that you register your colonies moved into the state within 30 days. A completed registration form and \$10 fee are required before your bees can be registered and the Request for Pesticide Notification can be honored. **Current apiary location information must be provided to our office each year.** Please complete, sign, and date this registration form and send it to the address listed along with your \$10 check made payable to Nevada County Department of Agriculture. Your canceled check is your receipt. Do not send cash.

