



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 15 Number 4 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
July/August 2005

## Upcoming Events

### Heartland Apiculture Society 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference:

July 7-9, 2005. (See excerpt on page 1 for details)

### MBA Summer Picnic:

Monday, July 25, 2005. (See below for details.)

### Eastern Apiculture Society Conference:

August 1-5, 2005. (See excerpt on page 1 for details)

## Table of Contents:

|   |
|---|
| MBA Summer Picnic                                 |
| Upcoming Beekeeping Conferences                   |
| The Honey Feast                                   |
| We Need Your Help!                                |
| Michigan Honey Production Down – pg 2             |
| Beekeeping News From Friends In England – pg 2    |
| A Beekeeping Report From Virginia – pg 2          |
| Hex Wax – Pg 3                                    |
| Mistakes I Make Or Why I Keep Bees – pg 3         |
| Words of Wisdom for Beekeepers – pg 3             |
| Beekeepers E-mail or Write General Mills – Pg 3-4 |
| Bargain Corner – pg 4                             |

## MBA SUMMER PICNIC

The Michigan Beekeepers' Association (MBA) will hold its summer picnic on July 25, 2005 at the David Anthony Bee Farms in Swartz Creek, Michigan, from noon until ?

MBA will furnish the meat and beverages. Participants should bring a dish to pass, their own table service, and lawn chairs.

The program includes a session on nectar-producing plants (you will be able to order plants), a queen-rearing demonstration, and a tour of David Anthony's honey house.

Directions to David Anthony Bee Farms are as follows:

- Take U.S. 23 or I -75 North toward Flint.
- Exit M -21, Corona Road, Exit 118.
- Go west toward Owosso for 7.2 miles.
- Turn right on Nichols Rd. to 1268 Nichols Rd.

**Editor's Note:** (At the time of publication of this newsletter, no information has been received regarding SEMBA's summer picnic scheduled for July 17<sup>th</sup>.)

## UPCOMING BEEKEEPING CONFERENCES

The Heartland Apicultural Society will host its 4<sup>th</sup> annual conference July 7-9 on the campus of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, IL. For more information, see: [www.heartland.com](http://www.heartland.com)

The Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS) is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This year's EAS conference will be held August 1-5 on the campus of Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. For details see: [www.easternapiculture.org](http://www.easternapiculture.org)

## THE HONEY FEAST

The Honey Feast, a new honey recipes e-mail newsletter, will help you answer the age-old question, "What's for dinner?"

Every three weeks, the National Honey Board (NHB) will send you an entire recipe meal planner, so you can make your own meal from our collection of recipes. The Honey Feast will feature exceptional recipes, all containing honey as an ingredient. We'll also pass along tips on cooking with honey, honey-based cosmetic recipes and information about the latest honey research.

The NHB has been publishing recipes for almost 18 years, and we have over 1,500 delectable recipes in our database, including beverages, salad dressings, appetizers, main courses, side dishes and desserts. Many of our recipes are also award-winning, since they were either developed by professional chefs or won in a NHB contest.

The Honey Feast is absolutely free, so please subscribe at: [www.honey.com](http://www.honey.com)

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

This fall SEMBA will be holding an election of officers and planning for another year of activities. Volunteer assistance from our membership is always welcome, so please consider how you might contribute by becoming a candidate for office, serving on a committee, helping with the annual beekeeping conference, presenting a program or workshop, or assisting with the beekeeping class.

Please consider how you might help and notify the SEMBA secretary, Ann Kerwin. Her address is 17516 Birchcrest, Detroit, MI 4221-2735. Phone: 313-861-5760 or e-mail: [singinmike@aol.com](mailto:singinmike@aol.com)

## MICHIGAN HONEY PRODUCTION DOWN

Michigan honey production for 2004 totaled 4.4 million pounds, down 9 percent from 2003, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Michigan Statistical Office. This estimate included honey from producers with five or more colonies. Michigan ranked eleventh in honey production in 2004, down from ninth in 2003. There were 65,000 colonies producing honey, with an average yield per colony of 67 pounds, down 10 percent from 2003.

Michigan honey price averaged \$1.17 per pound, down 17 percent from last year. Value of production totaled \$5.10 million, down 25 percent from 2003. Honey stocks were 2.44 million pounds, up 41 percent from 2003.

*Michigan Farm News, March 30, 2005, Vol. 82 No.6*

## BEEKEEPING NEWS FROM FRIENDS IN ENGLAND

By now Michigan beekeepers know that our state as well as the rest of the country have experienced great colony losses this past winter. It is common to hear beekeepers say they lost all or most of their honey bees. One beekeeper in the Saginaw area with 1000 hives lost 95% of his colonies. Apparently other countries as well are having similar losses. The following article regarding bee losses in England was published in the Herald Express, Devonshire, England, May 2, 2005:

Devon's beekeepers are predicting a honey shortage this summer followed, probably, by very poor plum, pear and apple harvests, all because of a false spring.

Hundreds of bee colonies have been lost throughout the country since Christmas because of a combination of freak weather and the Varroa mite which stimulates the spread of bee viruses and creates a weakness in usually healthy beehives.

Glyn Davies is national president of the Beekeepers' Association and he has lost four of the 35 hives he keeps on his land at Ashburton. Most other beekeepers have been hit just as badly.

He said, "The Devon Beekeepers' Association has been carrying out a sample survey of about a quarter of its members. We have about two-thirds of the results in and the losses are variable but seem to be averaging about 28 percent of the colonies that were alive at the start of the winter. The Varroa mite is increasingly difficult to control. Beekeepers are having to learn new systems of control and there are an increasing number of demonstrations and courses run by local experts and supported by the Defra bee inspectors.

"It is an additional serious threat which the Government has stated that by 2008 the numbers of bee inspectors across the country will be reduced by half."

Mr. Davies said the unusually mild weather at the start of winter, which lulled the bees into a false sense of security, is likely to have serious consequences.

"This spring has been difficult for bees throughout the United Kingdom," he said. "The bees began to breed early in January which was exceptionally warm but this was followed by six weeks of cold northerly winds which interrupted the breeding and left them short of food. This has contributed to the demise of the bee population.

The bees thought it was spring and started raising families. The youngsters ate up most of the food and when the cold weather arrived they just starved. There were dead bees all over the place.

"Bees are needed in April to pollinate the plums, pears, apples, blackthorn and gooseberries. There could be a serious shortage of these fruits this year for human consumption and wild fruits for the birds and wildlife later in the year.

"It is also likely that there will be a shortage of spring honey this year because of the shortage of bees to take advantage of the dandelions, sycamore flowers, rape seed and fruit blossom which, in April and May, produce so much nectar."

There is, however, some good news for the bee world. Mr. Davies says there is now a "huge demand" for local honey and many young people want to learn the craft.

"This is very encouraging," he said. "In addition the national membership of the British Beekeepers' Association has increased by almost a thousand in three years."

## A BEEKEEPING REPORT FROM VIRGINIA

During a recent stay in central Virginia, Roger and Mary Sutherland visited Mark Bennett, manager of Dadant and Sons in Lynchburg, VA. (Many of you will remember Mark because he was the Dadant manager in Potterville, Michigan for 16 years.) Mark still has some Michigan connections since he owns the building that formerly housed the Dadant dealership in Potterville.

In Shipman, Virginia, the Sutherlands visited Glenn Clayton and his wife Joan who run a commercial beekeeping operation as well as a shitake mushroom farm. In addition to honey production, Glen's bees are rented to local pumpkin and fruit orchards for pollination. He also raises queens for local purchase. One shady area of their Hungry Hill Farm has stacks of oak logs piled about 4 feet high. These logs are inoculated with spores of the shitake mushrooms. They sell not only the mushrooms but also the inoculated logs to others interested in raising their own mushrooms.

According to Glenn Clayton and other Virginia beekeepers, losses were extremely high throughout the state. Reported losses of 60% - 70% are

common. Glen said, "The winter weather in Virginia was not severe so I do not think that it was responsible for our losses." He went on to say that Dr. Rick Fell, the apicultural specialist at Virginia Technical University thinks the losses country-wide are the result of the Varroa mite and the build up of chemicals in beeswax affecting queens and drones. Poorly mated queens result in weakened hives.  
~ Roger Sutherland

### HEX WAX

The precise, hexagonal cells of honey bee combs may conjure up visions of bees busily measuring lengths and angles. But a group of entomologists led by Christian W.W. Pirk of the University of Wurzburg in Germany recently duplicated the bees' efforts and found that the process is direct and simple. Wax melts when heated. When wax cylinders are packed together as tightly as possible and then heated, the interstices fill up spontaneously and the cylinders become six-sided. In the case of the honey combs, the worker bees secrete small flakes of wax and probably surround themselves with the flakes to make the cylinders. Their own metabolism then raises the temperature to 104 degrees Fahrenheit, enough to melt the cylinders into hexagonal tubes. The bees' final touch is to add silk, which prevents the combs from melting further.

*Source: Honey bee combs: Construction through a liquid equilibrium process? Naturwissenschaften 91:350- 53, July 2004. Reprinted in Natural History, October 2004.*

### MISTAKES I MAKE OR WHY I KEEP BEES

Mistakes I make or why I keep bees. I picked up a "better way" wax melter from a fellow beekeeper. While showing me how it worked, it quit. Took out circuit breakers faster than we could trip them. Dead short! Just a simple circuit, off on switch, light, thermostat and heating unit. Time was running short, so we put it into my truck and I took it home. With a little work it is working just fine. So why the story? Well, I loaded 42 show frames in the unit to clean them up. These were old combs and yes there was some A.F.B. Set the temperature at 180, came back some 12/13 hours later. What a big mistake! You cannot handle frames at F. 180 without gloves. What was left on the frames came off easy with a heavy knife. The frames are now a dark brown from the heat. A few more hours and/or degree's of heat and I would now need a new honey house/garage. Having some 10 supers of cold honey why not heat it up in the melter. With a little rearranging I put in 56 frames. Set the temperature to 100 degrees - after all the hive is what 94/96 degrees? I think this is mistake 3 or 4. A friend and I took off for dinner, came back some 3 hours later. 'O' yes I did put a pail under the drain. Ever notice how long it takes to fill until the last 2" then how fast the next 4" go. As for the 54 frames they are now one heck of a mess in the melter. Where are the honey pales when you need them? Mr. Murphy has put them away and is now helping me. I would give the melter back to my friend except I cant move it into the truck and he wants it as chin or cleaner when I got it. 'O' yes Mr. Honey house

inspector please don't come around for a long, long time.

~ Bill Sirr

### WORDS OF WISDOM FOR BEEKEEPERS

If you must choose between two evils, choose the one that you have never tried before.

Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.

Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.

A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel good.

Don't worry about what people think: They don't do it very often.

Don't cry because it is over; smile because it happened.

Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Never put both feet in your mouth at one time because then you don't have a leg to stand on.

Always keep your words soft and sweet, in case you have to eat them.

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

*Source: The West Virginia Register-Herald  
John Blankenship, Reporter*

### BEEKEEPERS, E-MAIL OR WRITE GENERAL MILLS

The following letter regarding 'Honey Butter Popcorn' was sent to the editor of *Bee Culture* magazine by Bob Rauch of Higginsville, MO:

"I thought you might be interested in this package showing the dripping honey dipper and 'Honey Butter' name on this product containing no honey.

I am a sideliner with about 120 hives in West Central Missouri. I sell my honey in grocery stores and orchard markets in a four-county area. I enjoy your magazine very much and think you do a good job."  
~ Bob Rauch

*Bee Culture* Editor's Note: After receiving Mr. Rauch's note we went onto Betty Crocker's website [www.bettycrocker.com](http://www.bettycrocker.com) and sent them an e-mail

questioning the use of the word honey when, indeed , there is no honey in this product. After a couple of weeks, they finally responded and here is what the e-mail said:

"Thank you for contacting the General Mills Consumer Services with your inquiry. We would like to be able to answer all the questions we receive; however, the information you have requested is proprietary."

*Bee Culture* encourages each of our readers to visit e website and challenge General Mills on this issue.

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

#### **Free:**

- Empty medium-depth supers and hive bodies. **Call Rick Katterman, (248)-669-9354.**

#### **For Sale:**

- New deep and medium supers, frames, bottom boards, inner/outer covers, new 1 and 5 gal. buckets with lids. **Call Keith Lazar, H (248) 626-2483, P (248)815-5522.**
- New deeps, shallows, frames, bottom boards, covers, all hive parts. **Call Robert Hollis, H. (810) 798-8084, cell (810) 338-1523**
- Limited number of Michigan-raised confirmed Italian and Carniolan laying queens. **Call Paul Mazur (810) 686-9882** for prices and details.
- For Sale: Honey in 60 lb. pails. **Contact Donna Laws, 248-698-6908.**
- SEMBA caps and Tiara comb-honey dishes. Available at meetings. **Call 734-668-8568 to order.**

#### **Services:**

- Honey bee removal service. **Call Jeff Brown, (734) 422-0269.**

#### **Wanted:**

- Wanted: Power extractor and de-capper. **Contact Bill Andre, by phone (248) 651-0522 or by e-mail, [Wandre225836@comcast.net](mailto:Wandre225836@comcast.net).**
- Wanted: location for 10 colony placements, Oakland County desired. **Call Jim Armstrong at (248)473-4187.**
- "Expanding apiary; wants used hive bodies, supers, frames and an uncapping machine. **Call Don Ragan (313) 822-6193 or email [don@windmillhillfarm.com](mailto:don@windmillhillfarm.com).**"

Note: ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, contact Susanne at [souxsieq2@msn.com](mailto:souxsieq2@msn.com), or phone 248-476-4991 or Roger Sutherland [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com).

Southeastern Michigan  
Beekeepers' Association  
*Organized April 1, 1934*

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club



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