



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 17 Number 5 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
July - August 2007

## SEMBA SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC

Date: Sunday afternoon, July 15, 2007

Location: Ed and Ada Nowak's home  
and apiary

Address: 16260 Hubbard Road, Livonia, MI.  
(Hubbard Road is between Farmington Road  
and Merriman Road. The Nowak's home on  
Hubbard is half way between 5 Mile Road and 6  
Mile Road). Phone: 734-422-0508.

1:30 p.m. - Potluck dinner. Please bring a dish  
to pass and your own table service. Coffee and  
lemonade will be provided.

## POLLINATOR CURRICULUM AVAILABLE NOW!

The NAPPC Pollinator Partnership pollinator  
curriculum for children is now available online!  
The direct link for "Nature's Partners: Pollinators,  
Plants and You" is.....

<http://www.napcc.org/curriculum/>

Here is another way to access it: Go to  
<http://www.pollinator.org/> and click on "Useful  
Resources", then look under the heading  
"Education". It is listed as "Nature's Partners: A  
Comprehensive Curriculum, etc." It is also  
available on <http://www.napcc.org/>,  
on the homepage under "Featured News".

~Submitted by Mike Hansen

## WINTER LOSS SURVEY RESULTS

In March 2007 SEMBA members were surveyed  
by e-mail regarding their winter colony losses.

The following is a summary of the survey:

Number of beekeepers responding.....	34
Colonies maintained by respondents.....	283
Colonies lost by respondents.....	119
Percentage of colonies lost.....	43%
Losses by beekeepers wrapping hives.....	36%
Losses by beekeepers not wrapping.....	41%
Losses by beekeepers treating for Varroa....	35%
Losses by beekeepers not treating.....	65%

## COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER (CCD) – A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

By James E. Tew, State Specialist,  
Beekeeping, Ohio State University, Wooster,  
Ohio.

I very nearly don't know what to say about this  
issue. The publicity on this subject has  
exceeded any science supporting a causative  
agent. Giving it a new name and saying that it is  
worse than previous outbreaks have given the  
condition an emergency status that has elicited  
what I have called electronic hysteria. Make no  
mistake; those migratory beekeepers who have  
lost bee colonies are experiencing pain and  
financial distress. They deserve our concern and  
support. Alternatively, our bee colonies in Ohio  
that died from winter starvation are none-the-  
less dead, too. If I combine our winter-kill  
problem with the national issue of CCD, the  
question is begged, "Who would want to keep  
bees?" Therefore, my primary concern for Ohio  
beekeepers is that the negative publicity toward  
beekeeping will make new people fearful about  
becoming beekeepers. As serious as a decline  
in bees is, a more serious condition would be an  
excessive decline in new beekeepers or  
discouraging establishing beekeepers so much  
that they drop out.

Once the spring season is here and we can go  
about our business of recovering, we will  
recover. The 2006 Ohio season will be  
historically recorded as being a bad bee year,  
but strange as it may seem, the CCD episode  
has made me a more thoughtful beekeeper. I  
would suggest that we remember that: bees –  
though they appear to be domesticated – are  
none-the-less wild animals. As wild animals,  
bees are easily stressed as we manage and  
manipulate colonies for our human good.  
Stressing bee colonies with migratory activity  
and general colony manipulation upsets the  
colony's natural resistance to diseases and  
pests making them more vulnerable – not more

resistant – to being overrun by a pathogen outbreak resulting in conditions like that called Colony Collapse Disorder. Chemical treatments are only short-term fixes for any bee disease, and we should always expect side effects from the use of any chemical (hard or soft) in our bee colonies – particularly comb contamination. The configuration of a modern hive and the configuration of a bee yard are designed for human convenience and are not necessarily conducive to natural honey bee biology. Abnormal concentrations of colony numbers and equipment only serve to concentrate and homogenize bee diseases and pests. Most of the time, the best thing a beekeeper can do for a bee colony is leave it alone.

~James Tew

### **USDA REPORT FOR 2006 MICHIGAN HONEY PRODUCTION DOWN**

Michigan honey production for 2006 totaled 3.96 million pounds, down 10 percent from 2005. This estimate included honey from producers with 5 or more colonies. Michigan ranked eleventh in honey production in 2006, down from ninth in 2005. There were 72,000 colonies producing honey, with an average yield per colony of 55 pounds, down 19 percent from 2005.

Michigan honey price averaged \$1.28 cents per pound, up 33 percent from last year. Value of production totaled \$5.07 million, up 19 percent from 2005. Honey stocks were 2.10 million pounds, down 17 percent from 2005.

Nationally, honey production in 2006 from producers with 5 or more colonies totaled 155 million pounds, down 11 percent from 2005. There were 2.39 million colonies producing honey in 2006, down 1 percent from 2005. Yield per colony averaged 64.7 pounds, down 11 percent from the 72.4 pounds in 2005. Colonies which produced honey in more than one State were counted in each State where the honey was produced, therefore yields per colony may be understated. Colonies were not included if honey was not harvested. Producer honey stocks were 60.5 million pounds on December 15, 2006, down 3 percent from a year earlier. Stocks held by producers exclude stocks held under the commodity loan program.

Honey 2006 prices increased to 104.2 cents, up 14 percent from 91.8 cents in 2005. Prices are based on retail sales by producers and sales to private processors and cooperatives. State level honey prices reflect the portions of honey sold through retail, co-op, and private channels. Honey prices for each color class are derived by

weighting quantities sold for each marketing channel. Honey prices for 2006 were up from the previous year in all color class totals.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, Michigan Field Office. Vol. 28, No. 3 March 2007.

For a complete report visit [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)

### **RECENT HONEY BEE COLONY DECLINES SUMMARY**

This report examines the recent sharp decline in U.S. honey bee colonies, which scientists are now calling the Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). This phenomenon first became apparent among commercial migratory beekeepers along the East Coast during the last few months of 2006, and has since been reported nationwide. Honey bees are the most economically valuable pollinators of agricultural crops worldwide. Many scientists at universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) frequently assert that bee pollination is involved in about one-third of the U.S. diet, and contributes to the production of a wide range of fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, forage crops, some field crops, and other specialty crops. The monetary value of honey bees as commercial pollinators in the United States is estimated at about \$15 billion annually. Honey bee colony losses are not uncommon. However, current losses seem to differ from past situations in that colony losses are occurring mostly because bees are failing to return to the hive (which is largely uncharacteristic of bee behavior); bee colony losses have been rapid; colony losses are occurring in large numbers; and the reason why these losses are occurring remains still largely unknown.

To date, the potential causes of CCD, as reported by the scientists who are researching this phenomenon, include but may not be limited to: parasites, mites, and disease loads in the bees and brood;

! known/unknown pathogens;

! poor nutrition among adult bees;

! level of stress in adult bees (e.g., transportation and confinement of bees, or other environmental or biological stressors);

! chemical residue/contamination in the wax, food stores and/or bees;

! lack of genetic diversity and lineage of bees;  
and

! a combination of several factors.

On March 29, 2007, the House Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture held a hearing to review the recent honey bee colony

declines reported throughout the United States. Based on information presented to Congress, both by scientists researching recent bee colony declines and by agricultural producers who may be potentially affected by these losses, Congress could consider options for subsequent action in this area. This report will be updated after the House Subcommittee hearing to report additional information from the hearing and possible congressional response to this current situation.

~Submitted by Mike Hansen, Michigan State Apiculturalist.

## **MICHIGAN STATE FAIR, BEES, HONEY AND BEESWAX COMPETITION**

Note! The Agriculture Livestock Premium Book for the Michigan State Fair will not be printed this year. Instead, all premium book information and entry forms can be found on line at: [www.michiganstatefair.com](http://www.michiganstatefair.com) If you do not have access to a computer, please call the State Fair office (313-369-8290) for the section(s) which you require and they will be mailed to you. Entry forms must be postmarked by July 15, 2007 (except where noted) or faxed to 313-369-8293 with credit card.

During the State Fair, August 21-September 3, 2007, SEMBA maintains an educational booth to inform the public about the importance of honey bees. Each year about 35 SEMBA members volunteer several hours of their time to answer questions. If you wish to help maintain the SEMBA educational booth contact SEMBA president, Keith Lazar, 248-626-2483 or E-mail [keithmlazar@hotmail.com](mailto:keithmlazar@hotmail.com)

Now is the time to get your honey, beeswax and observation hive ready for the Michigan State Fair. Exhibit classes and premiums include:

Display of Bees and Queen—(observation hive)  
Premiums: 1st \$45, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$25, 4th \$20.

Display of wood or round section comb honey  
Premiums: 1st \$60, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$40, 4th \$30.

Display of unfiltered white extracted honey  
Premiums: 1st \$50, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$30, 4th \$20.

Display of unfiltered amber extracted honey  
Premiums: 1st \$50, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$30, 4th \$20.

Display of beeswax  
Premiums: 1st \$60, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$40, 4th \$30.

Display of four jars of creamed granulated honey  
Premiums: 1st \$50, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$30, 4th \$20.

Two Langstroth deep-sized frames filled with white honey.  
Premiums: 1st \$30, 2nd \$25, 3rd \$20, 4th \$15.

Two medium or shallow sized frames filled with white honey  
Premiums: 1st \$30, 2nd \$25, 3rd 20, 4th \$15.

Display of cut-comb honey  
Premiums: 1st \$50, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$30, 4th \$20.

Display of chunk honey  
Premiums: 1st \$50, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$30, 4th \$20.

Educational poster: Trophy 1st place; Rosettes 1st to 4<sup>th</sup>.

## **NEW BOOKLET AVAILABLE**

A revision of the 2005 booklet entitled *Starting and Keeping Bees in Michigan-Information and Suggestions for the Beginning Beekeeper* has been published. Included in this 2007 edition is information about the cost of getting started, the cost of continuing as a beekeeper and beekeeping as a source of income. Booklets can be ordered online at [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org) or by calling Roger Sutherland at 734-668-8568.

## **SEND US YOUR VIDEO**

Over the past two years, SEMBA has been developing a video entitled "How I Got Started in Beekeeping". Individual SEMBA members have been interviewed and videotaped at meetings while others have sent in videos from their homes.

A combined copy of the videos and a DVD version will be made available to members at a low cost.

If you would like to be included in this project, please make a 3-5 minute video of yourself telling how you got started in beekeeping and include any other information you think would be of interest to the membership.

Videos should be sent to Roger Sutherland, 5488 Warren Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-942

## **SUMMER BEEKEEPING CONFERENCES**

July 12-14, 2007, Heartland Apicultural Society (HAS), Kentucky State University, Frankfort, KY.  
August 6-10, 2007, Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS), University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

## Bee-eating Asian hornets visit Europe, decide to stay – source Physorg.com

Meet the Asian hornet, alias *Vespa velutina*, an uninvited guest from China who has colonized an entire region in southwestern France since arriving in a shipment of Bonsai pottery in late 2004, and could be poised to spread its noisy little wings over a large swath of southern Europe. Its expansion on French soil has been "amazing," said amateur entomologist Jean Haxaire, the first to identify the invasive species. Spotted in the inland department of Lot-et-Garonne in November 2005, "the Asian hornet is already in the Les Landes," he said, referring to Europe's largest forest, which runs along southern France's Atlantic coast. One observer counted no less than 85 nests along a 60-kilometer (35-mile) stretch of road.

A smaller, distant cousin of western Europe's only native species of hornet, the *Vespa crabo*, the Asian variety's native habitat stretches from northern India through Bhutan and parts of China. "In light of the number of nests spotted (in France) this winter, the species has not only acclimatized very well but has tremendously multiplied," concurred Claire Villemant, a specialist on hymenoptera -- the order of insects that includes bees, wasps, and ants -- at France's Museum of Natural History.

Asian hornets are a reddish brown with a single yellow strip down their back. Workers measure two to two-and-a-half centimetres (up to one inch) long, while the queens lording over the nest are a bit longer. While they make a lot of noise, there are not particularly aggressive or dangerous for human beings. Hornets flee people. If you are having a picnic, a hornet will never fly around you," said Villemant, eager to avoid the kind of mass panic that struck the United States after the arrival some years ago of another invasive species, the African "killer bee." Nor is it true, insisted Villemant, that three hornet stings can prove fatal. The risk of an allergic shock is exactly the same as for a bee or a wasp. But if *Vespa velutina* is no killer bee, it is a bee killer, and that is very bad news for France's already beleaguered apiculture industry, whose production of honey has plummeted by nearly a third in 10 years. Whereas European hornets feed mainly on caterpillars and other agricultural pests, the Asian species has a taste for social insects. Haxaire said he had seen Asian hornets, on the lookout near a beehive, pounce on a helpless bee and devour it live. It could be present "in half of France" by next year, and could well cross the border into Spain. ~ Courtesy, Tom Lisk

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

**For Sale:** Fritz stainless steel extractor, 4 or 8 frames, on legs, hand crank, like new, including 2 knives; 15 boxes (approx.), 10 w/frames, \$675.00. E-mail: [mystars90@yahoo.com](mailto:mystars90@yahoo.com) or cell phone: 989-975-2900.

500 covers; 400 inner covers; 300 bottom boards; 200 double hive stands. **Contact Ruth Dunlap**, 3663 Skinner Hwy., Manitou Beach, Michigan. Phone: 517-547-3487 or e-mail at [rlm\\_dunlap@yahoo.com](mailto:rlm_dunlap@yahoo.com)

350 - 10 frame deep supers, some with wax foundation, some with plastic foundation, bottom boards Please contact Doug Burke @ 248- 889-1917 - (Highland Michigan)

6 5/8 med supers, no frames. Deep hive bodies, no frames, good shape. Complete extracting outfit: Kelley SS 33 frame extractor, with motor, power uncapper; Capping tank. 80 gal SS double boiler tank with stand. Kelley honey pump w/motor. Dick Gerathy 313-533-2617, or [djbkeeper@msn.com](mailto:djbkeeper@msn.com) (Also needs wax and honey.)

**Wanted:** Beekeeper to maintain colonies at the E.L. Johnson Nature Center. Call Dan Badgley at the Nature Center – 248-341-6487. You share the honey with the Nature Center.

Small motorized extractor. Call Jim Armstrong at 248 473 4187

Southeastern Michigan  
Beekeepers' Association  
Organized April 1, 1934

SEMBA Membership  
5488 Warren Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9425

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club

