

ILLINOIS STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

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APIARY INSPECTION SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Steve Chard, Illinois Department of Agriculture

We hope the winter of 2004-2005 has been kind to your bees. Reports we have received to date around the state indicate that light winterkill has taken place. Hopefully, that is the case with your colonies.

The Department has secured its annual approval from USEPA for the sale and use of Checkmite+[®] Bee Hive Pest Control Strips and Api Life VAR[®] in Illinois for 2005 under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Checkmite is used to control small hive beetle and varroa mite, whereas Api Life VAR is used to control varroa mite only. Beekeepers should be able to readily purchase these products from the appropriate suppliers. Speaking of suppliers, we have learned that Dadant and Sons, Inc. is not offering Api Life VAR for purchase this year. If you are interested in buying Api Life VAR, contact Brushy Mountain Bee Farm, Inc. at 1-800/233-7929 or 336/921-3640. Brushy Mountain is located at 610 Bethany Church Road, Moravian Falls, North Carolina-28654.

The Department has received a number of inquiries recently about whether formic acid, applied in a dispenser or in other forms, can be used legally in Illinois for controlling varroa mites. We have discussed this with USEPA and received their position. At the present time, formic acid is not registered

with the USEPA nor with the Illinois Department of Agriculture to be used as a pesticide to combat varroa mites in honeybee colonies. Therefore, it would be illegal to use formic acid for this purpose in Illinois, regardless of the method that would be used to apply the product. *Use of that compound in this manner would be in violation of federal and state pesticide laws and may result in enforcement action being taken.* So, in spite of what you may have read, formic acid use in honeybee colonies is illegal at this point in time. Please ignore the articles and statements that claim otherwise. If this situation would happen to change from a registration standpoint, the Department will inform the Apiary Industry accordingly.

The interest in formic acid relates to the concern among beekeepers about varroa mite resistance to products currently on the market. That is one of the items that our Apiary Inspectors check for as they work with beekeepers. If you believe you are experiencing resistance problems, please contact your Department Apiary Inspector or me at 217/785-4233. The Department needs to be aware of these cases to help document the need for USEPA to consider registering alternative control products. Thanks for your help with this concern.

All registered beekeepers should have received a notice in November, 2004 to annu-

(Continued on page 3)

Package bees?

Package bees are getting scarce and expensive. Bee suppliers have been sending notes to their customer list with the bad news. The supply of package bees is down because of higher winter losses in some parts of the country. Lapps Bee Supply in Reeseville, Wisconsin—who uses a California source for package bees - have been told that their allocation for 2005 is cut to half that of 2004. One Texas supplier has raised the price of their three-pound packages by \$8.00 per package. Supplies were tight last year. This year appears tighter yet. Beekeepers are well advised to secure their spring supply of bees early.

It has also become more prudent to enhance the wintering of your bees. Controlling varroa mites appears to be an increasingly important part of these efforts. Check the thoughts on drone trapping of varroa in this issue.β

A source of package bees

Nathan Sasse will be traveling to Mississippi in April to purchase package bees. They are light-colored Italian/Cardovan cross bees in three pound packages. Nathan will be taking orders until March 20 and plans to deliver the bees on April 10, 2005 after 7:00am at his home in Chestnut. **Please keep in mind that this date could possibly change!** Nathan lives in the vicinity of the HIBA and is happy to answer questions. All orders should be made through Nathan so that he may plan for the trip. Also, payments in full will be required before he leaves in April. Feel free to call, email or visit his website with any questions you might have. Order forms and directions are available online at <http://www.frontiernet.net/~nasasse>.β

Bee Prices:

Three Pound Packages	\$45.00
Queens	\$12.50

Nathan Sasse
1070 2000th Ave.
Chestnut, IL 62518
(217) 796-3597
nasasse@frontiernet.net

Beemen call it the “swarming fever”

The old “swarm in May,” beloved of ancient beemen, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Modern hives and modern methods, although they have not as yet achieved their main intent of abolishing natural swarming altogether,

A swarm?
What a
Disgrace!

yet tend to bring this extraordinary ebullition of hive-life to its fulfillment later and late in each year. Far from being a virtue, as of old, an early swarm, or indeed any swarm at all, is now accounted a misfortune, even downright disgrace, in scientific beemanship. And yet the bees, though easy to discourage, are hard to teach. In spite of roomy hives and a watchful bee-master ready to give them an unbroken succession of young and fertile queens, and a whole houseful of new furniture at a moment's notice, still the bees go

on playing this mad game of wholesale trauntry, and still the bee-keeper must stand looking hopelessly on from the midst of his elaborate appliance, while his property sings about his ears, or wings away into the upper skies, irrevocable as last year's mill-water.

Bees are
hard to
teach

Beemen call it the swarming fever; and fever it is in very truth. The reasons for it have long ago been crystallized into exact and accepted phrases.β

From The Lore of the Honey-bee by Tickner Edwardes, London, England, 1908.

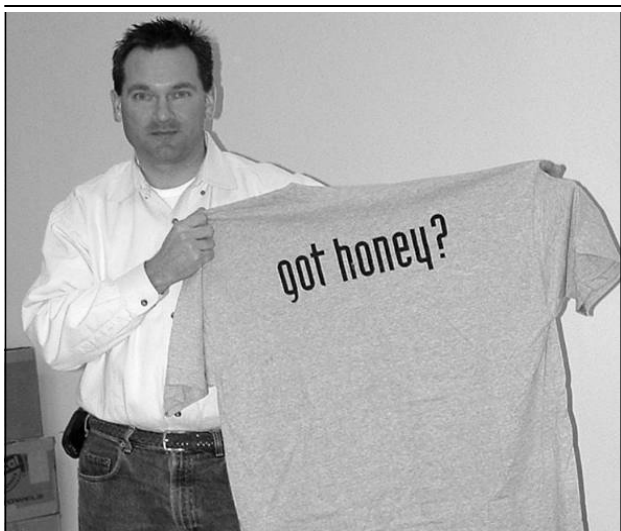
It seems that Edwardes thought swarming would someday become a thing of the past. That was 97 years ago. Have we become too accepting of the swarming fever? Should we *teach* our bees not to swarm?

(Continued from page 1)

ally register their colonies with the Department. If you haven't completed the form, please do so and mail it to the Department as soon as possible.

The possible spread of the small hive beetle continues to be a major concern of the Apiary Industry and the Department. This pest can cause major damage to your colonies. Thus far, the beetle has only been detected in isolated locations in the state, but as we all know, that could change at any given time. If you suspect the beetle in your colonies, please feel free to contact one of the Department's Apiary Inspectors or me. We will investigate immediately. Also, please be on the lookout for the possibility of small hive beetle in package bees this year. A couple of years ago, a beekeeper in Illinois believed that beetles entered his colonies via package bees. In general, please be vigilant in monitoring your colonies for the beetle and report detections to the Department, accordingly.

The Department very much looks forward to working with you this year on effective honey-bee management!β



ISBA director Ken Haller showing off the latest in beekeeper garb. Have you got your shirt? You can get one by contacting Ken at -

627 South Saylor Avenue
Elmhurst, IL 60126

vikinghoneyfarm@attbi.com

Phone: (630) 359-3991

The Varroa and Me

Beekeepers fight foulbrood disease and fend off the skunks and bears. They have to deal with *Nosema apis* and wax moths. But the most vexing of the challenges is undoubtedly the varroa mite. In the decade and a half American beekeepers have been dueling with this pest, it has been two steps forward and one step back. The varroa has caused the "no-chemicals-in-my-hive" beekeepers to reevaluate their long standing values. To ignore the varroa was apicultural suicide. Even with our current tools and insights reports in the current issue of the *American Bee Journal* tell of large losses to mites in California, the source we in the Midwest depend on for many of our package bees and queens.

Screen bottom boards help a bit. Apistan works until resistance develops. Checkmite is vial stuff avoided by many. Formic acid... sorry, right now it is not a legal tool.

One idea that has been floating around and lauded by some is the drone brood foundation. For years beekeepers have cussed at the drone brood as they cut it from their hives. Now it might be that we thank the drone brood for their contribution to our cause—they trap mites.

Does ISBA have someone who has experience in this? Someone who would like to write about their experiences for others to benefit from. The May issue of the Bulletin is waiting for such a person or persons. Please contact the editor.β

The Heartland Apicultural Society 2005 Convention

Don't Miss it!

The Fourth HAS Convention 2005 comes to Illinois, July 7-9. It is a big event close to home. Keep up on the latest by visiting the HAS web site at
www.heartlandbees.com.

Notes from the American Beekeeping Federation Convention—January 2005

Charles D. Lorence

I recently attended the 62nd annual American Beekeeping Federation Convention held January 12-15, 2005 in Reno, Nevada. The meeting was held at the John Ascuaga's Golden Nugget Casino Resort.

I was asked by Troy Fore, the executive director of ABF, to put on an early-bird presentation of our recent trip to South Africa. The slide show and talk was given Tuesday evening for those people who arrived early for the convention. There were about fifty people present.

On Wednesday morning at 6:30 a.m. I attended the delegates' assembly and breakfast. Each state was represented by one to four delegates, depending on the state's total membership in ABF. I represented Illinois. We normally have two delegates, but Ron Fischer was unable to attend this year's meeting due to work conflicts.

Opening ceremonies were held at 9:00 a.m. and there were 275-300 people in attendance. Several interesting speakers gave talks about the current fair trade policies on the honey market worldwide. This was followed by the introduction of the 2005 honey queen candidates that represented six states (Indiana, Idaho, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin). The honey queen from Texas was eventually crowned as the 2005 American Honey Queen and the Wisconsin honey queen was runner-up and will serve as the 2005 Honey Princess.

The rest of the convention was broken up into special interest groups which were: Commercial Beekeepers, Package Bees and Queen Breeders, Honey Producers-Packers, and Hobbyist/Sideliner Beekeepers. I attended the Hobbyist/Sideliner meeting. Presentations in this group were Fall management, Healing with Honey, and A look at Four Honey Extracting Operations.

Other highlights of the convention were a panel of bee researchers and scientists who presented programs entitled Developments in Mite Control and The Development of Monitoring and Control Programs of the Small Hive Beetle.

In the talk, The Latest Developments in Mite Control we learned about Mite Away II, a

formic acid gel pack which kills both varroa and tracheal mites. This product has been developed in Canada and is currently being used there. The manufacturer will be seeking EPA approval of this product in the U.S. in February 2005. Another chemical control was oxalic acid that has been used experimentally for mite control. This chemical does not need EPA approval because it is a natural product found in fruits, vegetables, and honey.

In the talk, The Development of monitoring and Control programs of the Small Hive Beetle, the scientists discussed how they would monitor by examining beehives that are being moved into pollination contracts, treated with Guard Star around honey houses, and encouraging beekeepers to extract their supers quickly after the removal of the honey crop.

The National Honey Board represented by Lee Heine, Chairperson, gave a brief overview of the goals of the marketing and research for 2005.

A group of state apiary inspectors presented a program on what is happening in their states regarding beehive inspections. The state apiary inspectors represented the states of Kentucky, Florida, North Dakota, and California.

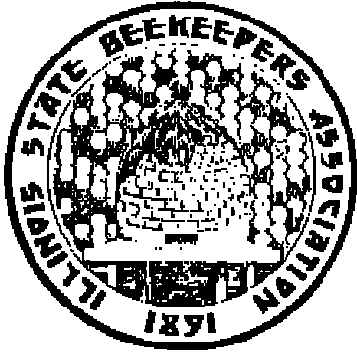
Another highlight of the convention was the annual tradeshow. Forty beekeeping vendors representing everything from pollen to honey extractors and many other innovation in beekeeping equipment were also in attendance.

On Saturday, the last day of the convention, several workshops were presented. I was responsible for one of the workshops. The topic I covered was: "Beeing a Good Neighbor" which explored the opportunities and difficulties in keeping bees in an urban and suburban neighborhood.

The banquet concluded the day on Saturday evening. In closing, I felt the convention was greatly successful. I learned a lot of new information and some of the latest technologies in beekeeping. I thank the Illinois State Beekeepers Association's executive board for their continued support of the American Beekeeping Federation.β

Illinois State Beekeepers Association

Benefits of Membership



What does your ISBA membership mean to you? Are you getting the “bang for your buck” that ISBA offers? Here’s a quick review of what your membership is all about:

- **Networking:** You are among 600 other beekeepers in ISBA, many with decades of beekeeping experience. These members act as a resource when problems arise. Since the ISBA works closely with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), you are also kept abreast of state agricultural news that may impact your beekeeping activities.
- **Meetings:** Two Association meetings each year offer the opportunity to learn from leading researchers and apiculturists, all while renewing old friendships and discussing local, state, and national news with your peers.
- **ISBA Bulletin:** Members receive a newsletter every two months that features original articles, monthly columns, notices of coming events, and minutes of ISBA annual meeting.
- **ISBA Website:** We maintain a website to disseminate information among members, stimulate interest in beekeeping and provide an information resource for the experienced and beginner alike. Visit us at www.isba.us
- **Heartland Apiculture Society:** The ISBA is a charter member of the Heartland Apiculture Society (HAS), a regional conference of eight State Beekeeping Associations in the U.S. heartland. Each year, HAS calls together leading research scientists, apiculturists and expert beekeepers to conduct educational lectures and workshop sessions where you can learn the latest bee research results and techniques to advance the art of beekeeping. Visit HAS at www.heartlandbees.com
- **American Beekeeping Federation:** The ISBA maintains affiliate membership with the American Beekeeping Federation (ABF), a nationwide beekeeping organization. The ABF is on the forefront of representing U.S. beekeepers at the national level and maintains a number of research grants and programs. Each year the ISBA sends two delegates to the ABF convention to represent Illinois beekeepers. The delegates then report their convention observations to the ISBA membership via the ISBA Bulletin. Contact ABF on their web site www.abfnet.org/.
- **Illinois Specialty Growers Association:** The ISBA maintains affiliate membership in the Illinois Specialty Growers Association (ISGA). As ISGA members, we have also joined the Illinois Vegetable Growers and Illinois Herb Growers Associations. Through these affiliations, beekeepers can easily expand their knowledge of specialty crops and build relationships with growers who may need pollination services. Contact ISGA at www.specialtygrowers.org/.
- **Liability Insurance:** As an ISBA member, you are covered by a substantial liability policy while attending all ISBA meetings and the regular meetings and events of your local association affiliated with ISBA. As an individual, you can also be covered at any event at which you represent your local Association or ISBA by contacting the insurance representative for ISBA and applying for a Certificate of Insurance to cover the event.
- **Collaboration Opportunities:** ISBA members are provided many opportunities to improve Illinois Beekeeping by educating others about the importance of honeybees and their keepers. The ISBA is well represented at the Illinois State Fair and, through its affiliates, at many county and local fairs. Volunteers are always needed at fairs, to set up exhibits, speak to school groups and represent ISBA at universities and agricultural expositions. Your contributions are limited only by your imagination.β

Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association is open to all persons interested in bees and beekeeping. Beekeepers are urged to join through their local associations. Dues for 2004 are \$6 for the calendar year January 1 through December 31 only. Dues include a subscription to this newsletter, the ISBA Bulletin. Beekeeping journals are available at about 25% discount to members as listed below; rates are subject to change without prior notice. Make checks payable to: Illinois State Beekeepers Association and mail to: Rita Taylor, Secretary, 4274 Taylor Homestead Road Pleasant Plains, IL 62677-4024

Please indicate new or renewal subscription when ordering journals.

Address Changes: Send old and new address six weeks prior to date of change when practical to the association secretary.

Reduced Journal Rates for 2004 (*members only*)

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr
American Bee Journal	17.20	32.75	46.05
Bee Culture	17.00	32.00	N/A
The Speedy Bee	13.25	25.25	34.00

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