

The Buzz



December 2023

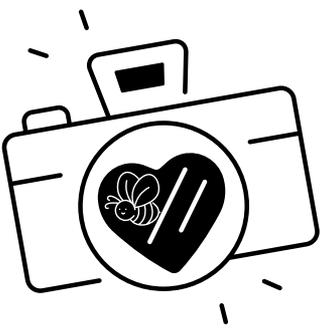
Newsletter of the
Iowa Honey Producers
Association

<https://www.iowahoneyproducers.org/>



Time to Renew your IHPA Membership!

Take a look at the membership expiration date,
and make sure you renew to keep receiving The Buzz
& other great membership perks!
Membership Form on Page 18



See some of the fun had at the IHPA 2023 Annual Conference

Pages 7-12

**and how you might
consider being involved in
the IHPA on
Page 13**



The Buzz

The Buzz is a monthly publication printed by the Iowa Honey Producers Association (IHPA). This is one of the many perks of being a member of the IHPA!



You may opt to receive an electronic version of The Buzz, as a donation to the IHPA. Please contact the editor at:
ihpaeditor@gmail.com

IHPA Officer & Director News

Ramblings from The Russian Bee Guy

President, Jason Foley

Welcome to the December issue of the Buzz and another of my ramblings. At the time of this writing, annual conference has just ended and the last of our bee hauling to CA is happening. OMG that was a fantastic conference from top to bottom! So many speakers, options, the free snacks and coffee till lunch, the free reception Friday night with all those tons of apps, and the organization of it all was outstanding. We'll have one heck of a precedent to beat next year, that's for sure!

The last of our trucks rolled out Wednesday evening just before Thanksgiving. Safe travels girls. This year everything happened without problems. I know, I know, no fun story of wheels popping off loaders with stacks of bees still on the forks, no Andy jumping down from a stack of bees and ripping out the backside of his jeans by catching them on a lid nail, and my knee held up throughout things lol.

Something that comes to mind though, people often times are a little confused on what it takes to have a successful year when pollinating almonds. And by a successful year, I mean one where the beekeeper gets most all of their hives placed into the orchard, they stay in good health, and they come home with a nice fat paycheck and are overflowing with bees ready to get to work collection all that wonderful



Iowa nectar. For us here in Iowa, most everyone sends their bees out to CA or TX in November to sit in holding yards. This allows the bees to basically stay in fall type temps and they maintain their populations. However that means most times that you have to have a bunch of honey in your frames to last the 2 months of mild temps where the bees are active, but not finding anything in the local area. So you want hives that are super heavy with honey and also have fat populations. A hive that doesn't meet the minimum frame count for "population", doesn't get placed into the orchards and you don't earn any rent money. It just costs you the money for trucking and feed. An even more important aspect is mites. If you don't have mites controlled early in the season, your hives can look fine heading out of Iowa, but the disease loads over those next 2 months can cause the populations to crash. And again, that leaves you below the minimum frame count in that hive and it doesn't get rented/placed. If anything, beekeepers who are planning to expand into this trade have to

IHPA Officer & Director News

step-up their game with feeding and treating. You want everything to be super clean, super healthy, and have super food stores. If it doesn't, you'll either break even, or actually end up losing money on the venture. I've seen it time and time again over the years where someone will be on one of these group trucks and they barely have any honey in their combs, or when the state inspector comes around he finds a decent mite load still present. A lump will always form in my throat as I worry on their behalf, especially if it is someone who is 1 or 2 years into trying to send bees. Yes, you can feed those hives out West, but a really light hive might need multiple feedings and that costs money. The mites can also continue to be treated, but having mites at that point is just a really bad sign of how those next 2 months will impact the populations of the hive.

However, it's not all doom and gloom for hives that don't get placed. Often times they bounce back during that bloom time. You may be wondering why since it didn't get placed. If they are in CA, most every holding yard is a stone's throw away from an active orchard. Even a crappy 2 framer can end up being a 18 framer by the time she makes it back to Iowa (18 frames of brood and bees). Almond pollen is like miracle grow for bee hives lol. It has some of the most diverse spectrum of amino acids and just triggers something in those bees to lay down massive full frames of brood. This then puts you in a perfect position to make a ton of splits or nucs when you would otherwise still be waiting on your hives to wake up. So even if you stumble a little with your pollination paycheck vs costs, you can still come out ahead in nucs and splits. Heck, I know some guys who will purposely not combine hives and leave some as small populations because they are counting on them pulling through and being heavy fat hives by the time they come back.

So to recap, my best advice is to pull your honey as soon as you can, hopefully by the end of August. Then immediately try to eliminate any mite issues. If you are pulling honey, you can bring mite treatment with you and do one right after the other. While you are putting on that mite treatment, give them a pollen patty. I don't care if the goldenrod is in full bloom, ask any old timer and they'll tell you there's just something magic about feeding a patty or two in the fall. It's like it gives the bees the extra nutrition to overcome their bee colds, or maybe it dilutes the chemical concentrations in the natural pollen they have been bringing in. Simply put, it works wonders. As the goldenrod dries up and you notice the bees aren't bringing in anymore nectar, start really watching your hive weights and start filling feeders on any you think are on the lighter side. Don't honey-

bound them, but just be sure they are getting to where you want them to be by your shipping time. If making sure every possible hive of yours gets rented is your goal, combine your smaller hives in those weeks and days leading up to your ship date. A lot of beeks I know will also give them another pollen patty, possibly some pro-biotics, an oxalic vaporization, and top off their feeders the week before for good measure. It's the beek's last chance to do anything while the bees are at home, so they toss the kitchen sink at the hives lol. If you get your hives mite free, get the diseases and sickness cleaned up in advance, and have them heavy as all get-out, then you have set yourself up for success!



HELP WANTED: The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, (NASDA) working with USDA is hiring FIELD STAFF. Work is part time collection data for the USDA/NASS. A farm background is preferred. Qualifications - a good work ethic, a self-starter, and good communications skills. Starting wage is \$16.31/hr. Mileage allowance is 65.5 cents. Find more info at NASDA.org. For more information call Tony at 515-802-8367



Foley's Russian Bees is an Indianola, Iowa based producer of Primorsky Russian bees & beekeeping equipment. We specialize in Russian mated queens and Russian nucleus hives. We also are a provider of Carniolan packages. When you are in need of bees, we can help!

To place an order, check us out on the web
www.RussianBee.com

You can **laugh** about it now....

Please send your stories to ihpaeditor@gmail.com if you have a beekeeping story you can share and to include in The Buzz.

Maybe it's getting your pants cut on a nail and having your butt cheeks sway to the wind while loading up bees on pallets. Maybe it's dumping all of your sugar syrup on the floor. Whatever it might be, I think we can all appreciate a little chuckle here and there. It'll be a little bit more relatable to others and help them to know we all make mistakes and life is about the memorable moments, not just sitting back and going with the flow all of the time.



If you would like to place an advertisement in The Buzz please send information to:
ihpaeditor@gmail.com



Iowa Honey Royalty



Rachel Vakulich - 2023 Iowa Honey Queen

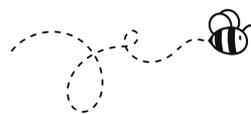
Merry Christmas Iowa Beekeepers,

It was wonderful to see you all at the IHPA Conference. I know that there were a lot of new changes that occurred this year but you were all gracious with the changes. Unfortunately, I was not able to give my farewell speech but it may have been a good thing because I did not get emotional in front of everyone. So you get the opportunity to read my farewell speech.

Last year as I was sitting at the side of the pool at the Gateway Hotel, I could not imagine that I was now the 2023 Iowa Honey Queen and that I was given such an enormous task. Looking at the thought of potentially traveling the entire state seemed so overwhelming. But as time went on, I got to do more presentations, gain more confidence as a speaker, and gave me the boldness to go to anyone and talk about honeybees. If you would have told me last year, I was going to see the former Vice President, governors, politicians, and other important people, I would not have believed you. I gained skills in organization, time management, and being nice in front of many people.

The Iowa State fair really stretched me. 9 days of smiling through the nice and not so nice weather, waving to all the kids doing spontaneous interviews, and even restocking all the whiskey, double age rum, and Dutch Clover honey every few hours can do a lot to a person. I do not know how Heidi and Connie do it. Speaking to all the politicians at Iowa Honey Bee Day was another skill that I learned. Being the mistress of ceremonies greatly increased my public speaking abilities as well as learning about how to run an event. These memories are some of the things that I will cherish. The friendships and connections that the position has granted me will last a lifetime. I want to thank you all for all the support that you have given me. Without you, I am just a pretty girl instead of being an ambassador for Iowa Beekeepers. I want to thank my family, Connie, the IHPA board, and Britta for being the people to work with. The former Iowa Honey Queens, Abigail Kelly and Allison Hager, thank you for answering all my questions and for being so supportive. Britta, you have a wonderful year ahead of you and I am so excited for you. For the last time I bid you all farewell as the 2023 Iowa Honey Queen.

Rachel Vakulich
2023 Iowa Honey Queen





From the Honey House



*Written by: Andy the Bee Guy
(Andy Hemken)*

A collection of information from those with direct, personal knowledge about beekeeping

Transitioning in Beekeeping

I'm writing this on Thanksgiving morning, thinking about how thankful I am for the opportunity my family and I have to be beekeepers. Whether you are a hobbyist, sideline or commercial beekeeper, it is the opportunity to keep and manage honeybees. I am thankful for the harvest of honey this year, the friends that we have, and for all of the activities involved with beekeeping. My beekeeping mentor Cliff taught me that the beehives should be ready for winter by Thanksgiving here in the upper Midwest. For us, it is a transition time.

The honeybees have been put to bed for the winter, fed sugar syrup and given a candy board each for an emergency food supply. I've made a few extra boards for hive checks in late February/March, in case I need to swap some out. Dead out hive equipment has been collected from the field, and post mortems conducted to figure out where I've gone wrong.

Taking advantage of the last of the warm weather, frames are cleaned, sorted, and put together for next season's replacement packages and nucs. Old and damaged frames are culled and go into the burn pile. Extra four-way clip pallets are being cleaned up and rehabbed, and hive covers are scraped to recover extra wax for candles.

As winter is upon us, indoor tasks are being planned. Reloading comb supers with new foundation, building frames, repairing and painting boxes, making mead and other workshop activities are being set up. I will be catching up on my beekeeping reading, and doing some more relaxing. I'm thinking about building some new observation hives over winter, trying to improve on my previous designs, and maybe making some extras to sell. I also have some other non-bee-related workshop projects to plan for.

There is also some winter preparation for farm markets in the spring, stocking up on containers and other supplies that we might need. I am truly thankful for our home, family and friends, and the things that I have, and the opportunities to keep and manage our honey bees. I hope that this finds you all in good health.

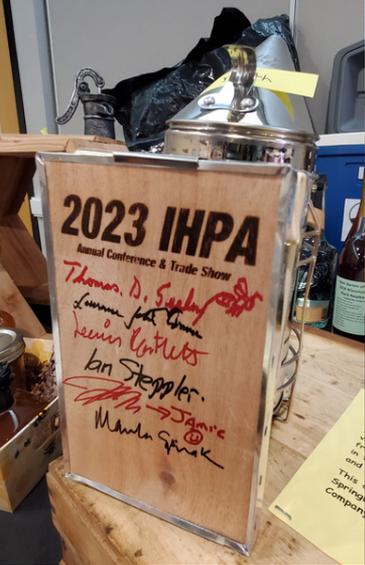
Andy Hemken, Bee Guy
andy@hemkenhoney.com

That's a wrap! 2023 IHPA Annual Conference

- 374 Attendees
- Attendees from multiple states & countries
- Beekeepers with 51 years of experience!
- Youngest attendee was four months old!
- 45 sessions
- 24 Youth Scholarship Students + Families in attendance
- 20 breakout session speakers
- Five Keynote speakers
- Two Cat Jumpsuits
- ONE GREAT Weekend! & 1 Thankful Event Committee!

(...and a partridge in a pear tree)





Youth Scholarship Recipients 2023-2024

2023



Student: **Owen Carlton**
Mentor: **Jim Berkley**



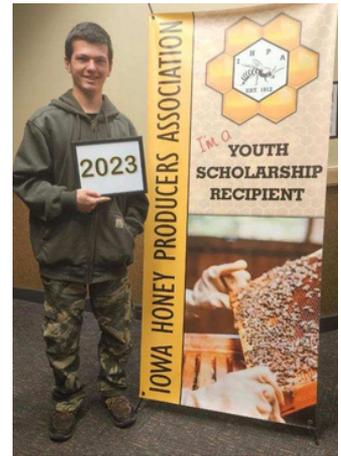
Student: **Abe Manley**
Mentor: **Mike & Julie Sander**



Student: **Ben Gravert**
Mentor: **Kevin Brunning**



Student: **Meriden McDaniel**
Mentor: **Mike Swett**



Student: **Jason Mitchell**
Mentor: **Dr. Cynthia Knight**



Student: **Anna Stafford**
Mentor: **Arvin Foell**



Student: **Levi Stafford**
Mentor: **Arvin Foell**



Student: **Harper Wilson**
Mentor: **Neal & Dianne Rinehart**

Youth Scholarship Recipients 2023-2024

Mentors play an important part of the scholarship program. If you are interested and able to help with the students in following areas please reach out to Stephanie Meyers at sonshinefarmsia@gmail.com or 641-691-5036:

2024

Traer, Monroe, Urbandale, Sumner.

Thank you so much in advance for your willingness to invest in a future beekeeper!



Student: **Jonah Arndt**



Student: **Evelyn Barrett**



Student: **Olivia Arndt**



Student: **Joseph Gonzalez**



Student: **Benjamin Gustoff**



Student: **Noah Jansen**



Student: **Caleb Hill**



Student: **Cater Knupp**



Student: **Beth McCoy**

Youth Scholarship Recipients 2023-2024

2024

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Traer, Monroe, Urbandale, Sumner.

Thank you so much in advance for your willingness to invest in a future beekeeper!



Student: **Augustine O'Hagan**

A special *thank you* to our donors listed on the next page!

If you want to be added to our list of mentors, or if you'd like to help the Youth Scholarship Program in any way please contact Stephanie!!



Student: **Claire Neilbergall**



Student: **Daniel Powers**



Student: **Bailey Szurley**



Student: **Addyson Wehrman**



Student: **Cameron Szurley**



Student: **Isaac Williams**

Thank you

to the 2023 Youth Scholarship
Program Donors



PREMIER
BEE PRODUCTS



MANN LAKE

Bee Culture

The Magazine of American Beekeeping



LAPPE'S
BEE SUPPLY

Neal & Diane Rinehart
Iowa Valley Continuing Ed
Family of David McColley
Former Red Rock Beekeepers
EMH Honey Bees, LLC
Tim & Sherry Kimrey
Arvin Foell
P&P Honey



From the Editor

Kelsey Wigans, IHPA Editor

Iowa Conservation Education Coalition Teacher of the Year 2022

Humboldt County Conservation Teacher of the Year 2022

iowafamilygardeningblog@gmail.com



Wow! The 2023 IHPA Annual Conference was a blast! I had so much fun connecting with several with you, and I pray you had a good time too!

I've had such a wonderful time with the IHPA, and like I mentioned in the previous newsletter, I'm just saying, "see you later" for now while I get things really ramped up with the preschool I started, my homesteading classes, and overall just spending more time with my family.

I'm so proud of the team of people it took to put on a wonderful conference, and cannot thank you all enough for your effort. I'm looking forward to seeing other people step up into leadership roles, and for the association to take off! Super excited for all of you, and to see what's in store!

If you'd like to follow along my journey - I just entered "The Greatest Baker Competition" and would appreciate your votes from November 27th - December 7th AND MORE rounds, if I make it!

Fingers crossed! If I win, I would meet Buddy Valastro, be featured in a magazine, and win \$10,000. My business partner, Marla Ramaekers, and I would immediately put that money towards putting together a certified kitchen to be able to make several products, but also to be able to teach homesteading classes out of. While it's been fun to hold classes at the Farmers' Market, or in Marla's kitchen, or outdoor canning shed...a more...permanent location would be ideal AND allow us to be wheelchair accessible.

If you'd like to vote please log in once a day and vote for me at:

<https://greatestbaker.com/2023/kelsey-wigans>

Follow me on socials at:
The Iowa Family
Gardening Homestead.

xoxo - Kelsey



I'd also like to take a moment to introduce you to our new IHPA *The Buzz* Editor,
Sara Sleyster

Sara is a freelance writer for *That Digital Rush* and is a news reporter for the *Indianola Independent Advocate*.

You are still welcome and encouraged to send stories to ihpaeditor@gmail.com

IHPA is on the hunt!

The IHPA is looking for a **Summer Field Day Chair!**

If interested, or if you have questions, please contact President, Jason Foley, at russianbeeguy@gmail.com



Foley's
Russian Bees



Pre order your queens, packages, and nucs for the 2024 season! We begin taking orders on all our Russian products starting January 1st at 10am via our website www.russianbee.com. Carniolan packages are available to order just as soon as pricing for the year has been set (typically January 15th).

Russian Nucs \$190.00

Russian Queens \$35.00

AFB Vaccinated Russian Queens \$55.00

Russian package bees with Russian mated queen
3lb \$140.00 (*no cage deposit*).

Carniolan package bees with Carniolan mated queen
\$6.50 cage deposit
3lb TBA
2lb TBA

Full hive kits \$255.00

Includes 2 deeps, 2 mediums, all the wax coated frames to fill out the hive, 1 gallon frame feeder, bottom board, entrance reducer, inner cover, and telescoping top cover

Mini hive kits \$175.00

Includes 2 deeps, all the wax coated frames to fill out the hive, 1 gallon frame feeder, bottom board, entrance reducer, inner cover, and telescoping top cover.

We carry many other bee related items in our farm store - come out for a visit some time!



THE HOLTON HOMESTEAD



Elkhart, Iowa

5 frame nucs
2023 Queen
At least 3 Frames
of brood & 2 frames
of food
Grown & monitored
for 3 to 4 weeks to
prove queen quality.
Pick up is in May -
dates to be
determined.

\$190

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- Honeycomb Cases
- Spout, Snap Cap & Flat Lids

...AND MORE!



**ABOUT OUR
CONTAINER LINE**

Ebert Honey offers competitive pricing on a full lineup of professional honey packaging supplies, featuring over 20 container and bottle styles. We welcome orders of any size!

We proudly offer high quality products paired with friendly, local customer service.



**ABOUT YOUR
CONTAINER ORDER**

Choose local pick up or convenient shipping. Our streamlined website makes ordering and shipping fast and easy!

Pick up is arranged ahead of time and is available at both of our locations. We ship via USPS, FedEx, or Speedee Delivery.

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Lynnville, Iowa 50153**

**1090 Highway 1 North
Mount Vernon, Iowa 52314**



IHPA Officers & Directors

All contact information can be found online at:
<https://www.iowahoneyproducers.org/officers-directors-now>

Voting Members

President	Jason Foley	russianbeeguy@gmail.com
Vice President	Sara Todd	ihpa.vp@gmail.com
Secretary	Heidi Love	ihpasecretary@gmail.com
Treasurer	Lisa Montgomery	ihpatreasurer@gmail.com
Historian	Abigail Kelly	joyabigable@hotmail.com
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District 2	H.R. Cook	stagemaster35@gmail.com
District 3	Riley Finer	
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District 6	Marlene Boernsen	(712) 320-1907
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State Apiarist	Andrew Joseph	andrew.joseph@iowaagriculture.gov

Program Leaders & Committee Chairs

Legislative Rep	HR Cook	See above
Youth Scholarship	Stephanie Meyers	sonshinefarmsia@gmail.com
Annual Conference Coordinator	HR Cook, <i>Sara Todd</i>	See above
Summer Field Day Coordinator	open	n/a
Webmaster	Jason Foley	See above
State Fair Manager	Heidi Love	See above
ISU Representative	Randall Cass	randall@iastate.edu
State Fair Float Committee	Julie Swett	funcity@aol.com
Fundraising Committee	Katie Flynn	kjflinn319@gmail.com
IHPA Queen Program	Connie Bronnenberg	cbronny823@aol.com
Editor	Sara Sleyster	sarasleyster@gmail.com
Bee Camp	Andy Joseph	See above
State Fair Bid Committee Chair	Kris Silvers	ksitin.silvers@gmail.com
Scholarship Chair	Roy Kraft	See above
Advertising Committee	<i>Jason Foley</i>	See above
Bee Ambassador	Tyler Holton	See above

If you would like to become more involved in the IHPA, we could certainly use your help!!!

Please email ihpa1912@gmail.com



Iowa Honey Producers Association Annual Membership Form 2024

Our membership year runs from January 1 through December 31.
The expiration date will be above your mailing address on "The Buzz"
One copy of "The Buzz" will be sent per household address

Please print legibly.

Primary Member (First and Last Name) _____ \$30.00 \$ _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Additional Members (Please list first and last names separated by commas) _____ \$5 each

Name(s): _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Additional Years of Membership

Primary-Additional Years of Membership (\$30/person/year)	# of years _____	\$30/year	\$ _____
Additional Member(s)-Additional Years of Membership (\$5/person/year)	# of years _____	\$5/year	\$ _____

Donations

Fairbooth Renovation Fund - Funds to be used for improvements	\$ _____
General Fund - Funds to be used for day to day expenses	\$ _____
Queen Fund - Funds to be used to help the Queen in her travels	\$ _____
Youth Program - Funds to be used to provide students with needed supplies	\$ _____
Memorial Scholarship -Funds to be used to provide scholarship to students	\$ _____
Sub-total	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Please mark this box if you would like your information to be left out of the IHPA Directory

I would like to be contacted about ideas I have for the IHPA, and to learn more about serving on committees

YES NO

I would like to be a Mentor for the Youth Scholarship Program

YES NO

If you would like to pay via credit/debit card, please send an e-mail with your registration form to: ihpatreasurer@gmail.com
to receive a link to pay online via credit/debit card

Please make checks payable to: **Iowa Honey Producers Association or IHPA**

For Mailed Payments (check or cash) Lisa Montgomery, 2543 170th St Livermore, IA 50558

For Office Use: Pmt Rcvd _____ Check # _____ Amount _____

IHPA Checklist



Renew IHPA Membership

Many membership expire 12/31/2023
bit.ly/ihpamembership2024



Register Apiary Site(s)

beecheck.org/signup#beekeeper



Honey Bee Day (HBD)

Mark your calendar and plan to join
other IHPA members at HBD
March 27, 2024



Lend a Hand

Check out the different ways to be
involved in the IHPA!

- Summer Field Day Coordinator
- Iowa State Fair
- Have an idea? Share it!

The Buzz Newsletter

Iowa Honey Producers Association
c/o Editor, Kelsey Wigans
1255 Virginia Avenue
Renwick, IA 50577



The Buzz is a monthly newsletter published by the Iowa Honey Producers Association which is an affiliate of the Iowa State Horticultural Society



Deadline for submissions to The Buzz is always the 10th of the month at 11:59 p.m. the month prior to when you would like to see information published.

If writing an article for The Buzz, submissions must be 800 words or less. Pictures are encouraged!

Deadline to submit information for the December Edition of The Buzz

Friday, December 10th at 11:59 p.m.

Please submit materials to: ihpaeditor@gmail.com



**Time to Renew
your IHPA
Membership!**