



The Buzz

Newsletter of the Iowa Honey Producers Association



August 2007

The Iowa State Fair is here! Be sure to stop by the IHPA booth in the Ag Building August 9th-19th.

Get your IHPA T-Shirts today! Pg.2

Featured Beekeeper of the Month Melvin Runneberg. Pg.7

MAAREC Frequently Asked Questions sheet on CCD. Pg.8-9





Dates to BEE Remembered:

August 9-19th, 2007 Iowa State Fair, Des Moines, IA

September 23, 2007 9th Annual Honey Fest, Indian Creek Nature Center, Cedar Rapids, IA

November 16th & 17th, 2007 IHPA Annual Meeting, Marshalltown, IA

To add an important date to the list, contact the Buzz by email at thebuzz@abuzzaboutbees.com

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The t-shirts are a bright yellow shirt with brown lettering.

Youth	size (S) (M) (L) <i>circle one</i>	_____ qty. X \$ 8.50	\$ _____
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Shipping is \$3.00 per shirt, or \$5.00 for two shirts.

Shipping TOTAL \$ _____

Make check payable to: **IOWA HONEY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION**
Send form and check to: **J. Gordon Powell, IHPA Treasurer**
4012 54th Street
Des Moines, IA 50310-1815

The Buzz Newsletter Article Submissions and IHPA Memberships

Please send submissions, classified ads, and photos to Alex W. Ebert by email to TheBuzz@ABuzzAboutBees.com or by mail to The Buzz, c/o Phil Ebert, 14808 S. 102nd Ave. E., Lynnville, IA 50153. **The deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month to be included in the following month's newsletter.** The Buzz is a monthly newsletter published by the Iowa Honey Producers Association which is an affiliate of the Iowa State Horticultural Society. IHPA Membership is only \$10 annually. To join IHPA and receive your complimentary member subscription to The Buzz Newsletter, please contact Gordon Powell, IHPA Treasurer, 4012 54th St., Des Moines, IA 50310 Phone : (515) 278-1762

Greetings from the President of the IHPA

Dear Honey Producers,

The weather is another topic of concern in our area. We have friends in southern Missouri that have been getting rain accompanied with flooding everyday for two weeks and wish it would stop. My Dad lives in Oklahoma and they are getting floods. We had excess moisture in May, but now have only had small amounts very sporadically. We really need a good soaking rain. The rest of the country is experiencing drought, wildfires, floods and severe storms. No wonder there is a problem with honey bees. I am NOT saying this is causing the problem, I am saying there are a lot of stress factors for honey bees, just as there are for our human race.

There have been many published articles concerning Colony Collapse Disorder. I just read an editorial in Bee Culture wondering about honey bees developing diabetes due to the use of corn syrup and stress on them. The Pollination Symposium was held in Ames at Iowa State in June. We are fortunate to have a speaker lined up for the Annual Meeting to speak to us on CCD and the results that were discussed at the Symposium. Make plans to attend the Annual Meeting of the IHPA in Marshalltown at the Regency Inn Best Western motel on November 16th and 17th. Maybe we will have some answers. I get several phone calls a week asking about why a beekeeper has no bees in their colonies. I can only guess and give suggestions.

Maury Wills has informed me that the job description for a State Apiarist has been publicized and we are keeping our fingers crossed that the

position will be filled soon. I just hope we don't overwhelm our new State Apiarist with all of the dilemmas facing our industry. A great big Thank You goes out to all who contacted state representatives and senators to accomplish the task of re-instating a State Apiarist and the Apiary bureau with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

If you are working at the IHPA sales booth or entered items for the Apiary contest at the State Fair, you probably noticed the change in appearance of our area in the Agricultural building at the State Fair. A grant provided the funds to renovate the IHPA area, for both the exhibits and the sales area. There was a short time frame to get things done so a few ongoing projects might be in place by the 2008 Iowa State Fair. Thank you also for entering items in the contest and for working in the booth. This is a major undertaking each year. It seems harder to obtain workers to fill all the shifts each year. Thank you to all who take the time to work and to help the IHPA continue to provide the programs that we have been sponsoring for the beekeepers in the state.

The Iowa Honey Producers Association sponsored the Mead contest for home brewers at the Iowa State Fair this year. We are getting the list of competitors to invite them to submit their Mead for a contest at the Annual meeting this fall.

The IHPA also sponsored the Cooking with Honey contest during the Iowa State Fair. We have always had a great response and we get the recipes from the contestants to use as we want to. The Queen committee is gathering the past recipes to

possibly create a new honey cookbook using state fair winning recipes.

We have sponsored the Cooking with Honey contest at the Clay County Fair in September for several years. The contest there is growing and the exposure to the use of honey is continuing to be expanded.

If you know of a youth that would like to keep bees, but is not from a beekeeping family, please have them get the information from Mike Brahms concerning the Youth Scholarship Program started by the IHPA. For information access the IHPA website:

ABuzzAboutBees.com
or contact Mike at (712) 774-5878. We sponsored 9 youth this year and hope to have another successful year with new beekeepers in the state.

I better get to work, the gardening, beekeeping and housecleaning never seems to end. Travel safely and enjoy the rest of the summer.

Sincerely,
Donna Brahms, IHPA President



IHPA Award Nominations

It is time to think of who should receive one of the Awards that the IHPA presents at the Annual Meeting banquet. Please review the categories and submit your suggestions along with a short letter explaining why you feel that this candidate should receive an award. The categories that we present are as follows:

1. **Pioneer Award**- for having been involved for 50 years or more and still active in beekeeping.
2. **Distinguished Service Award**- for assisting other beekeepers, willing to share information, and /or serving the association.
3. **Education Award**- teaching beekeeping classes, speaking at service clubs, giving presentations to school children or speaking about beekeeping on radio or T.V.
4. **Promotions Award**- for promoting honey and beekeeping, promotions for the state association or promoting their own product.
5. **Friendship Award**- for being a friend of the association. This could be someone who has displayed at the annual IHPA trade show, a state official who has assisted or encouraged beekeeping, someone outside our industry producing honey.
6. **Youth Award**- for a young person who has shown commendable involvement in such things as helping the state fair, successfully keeping bees for at least one season including wintering, writing, making a float for a parade, speaking, etc.

If you would like to nominate someone, please send the information to me by the deadline of September 1st. :

Donna Brahms
65071 720th Street
Cumberland, IA 50843
(712) 774-5878
mbrahms@netins.net

THE BEEYARD REPORT

Shortly after I sent off the write up for the June Buzz saying there was no honey coming, I found we had a few yards that were bringing it home. At that time, it was limited to the overwintered doubles and the very early splits. It was in areas where the alfalfa had frozen off and they were letting it regenerate. Some of those fields bloomed for over two weeks. The other yards weren't quite there yet. By July 15th, we were seeing a nice flow that had been going on for a couple of weeks. I don't know if I should wish for rain. Hot dry weather is great for

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bees but we are moving into the soybean phase in our area. Soybean flowers will dry up quickly if there is no rain. Maybe the best scenario would be to get a ½" around midnight. That way, the bees wouldn't lose any flying time.

We went almost three weeks without our flatbed. There is a long story that goes with this but I will spare you. In the end, it turned out the turbo housing was cracked into the drilling that carries the oil to lubricate the turbo. This led to a rather stiff repair bill. Still, I was glad I didn't try to work on it myself. I don't have a torch and exhaust stuff just doesn't come apart without heat, especially on older vehicles.

We didn't go back to Schuyler, Ne, for the rest of the honey we bought from Suchan's until July 18th. We started home after loading and hadn't gone 25 miles when we blew out a front tire. We don't carry a spare so this was a bit of a problem. We managed to get the truck off the road and into a farm yard. With the tire flat, the front axle was really close to the ground. Fortunately, I had a stubby jack that just barely got under the suspension. The jack wouldn't go high enough so we had to block the suspension and then block up the jack so we could go up in stages. We had an assortment of bricks and pieces of 2x4's that we were using for blocks. We had to take

up the cleats that were holding the barrels in place on the trailer to get enough blocking. We had called Brian earlier. He arrived about the time we finally got the front wheel in the air. He had an assortment of tires and blocks. None of the tires he brought would fit our truck. We had foreseen this possibility and had driven the inside dual up on a block before we started jacking the

front end. This made it possible to get the outside dual off without having to do any jacking. We took the outside dual and put it on the steer position and singled out the dual. This whole ordeal consumed about four hours before we finally limped into Fremont where we had an unscheduled overnight stop. The following morning, Brian's dad lined us up with the Bauer Built Tire dealer in Fremont. They took care of our tire problem in about 30 minutes. Brian had taken our trailer back to his place so we had to backtrack 45 miles to get it before we were homeward bound. We finished lunch in Blair about 1:00 PM and decided to stop at DeSoto bend and look at the steamship museum. The museum is pretty interesting but there aren't any waterfowl on the reserve this time of year. The tourist type stop

helped to put me in a more positive mood.

We sold all of our queens the first three weeks that we had them. Then we hit a cycle that mated poorly. We are just now coming out of that. We had to turn down some orders. Adam went to the queen rearing class that Marla Spivak runs at the University of Minnesota. He had the basics down pretty well already, but he wanted to see how she was set up. He thought the class was well worth the time and expense. He took in a Saint Paul Saints game with some of the university people while he was up there. The Saints are an independent baseball team. They scrounge up players wherever they can. Sometimes they get ex major leaguers who still want to play. I thought about when I was a kid. The Giants had a team in Minneapolis and the Dodgers had one in Saint Paul. That was in the old American Association. Willie Mays spent time in Minneapolis around 1950.

Our comb honey system is constantly evolving. It has evolved so much, I'm not sure we have a system left. Adam announced he was doing it this year without queen excluders. My thought was, "That will never work." I have since found that it does. I have also found other people that do it that way. We aren't using it, but Kelley actually makes what they call 7-11 foundation for this purpose. I've looked at their catalog for years and never noticed it. It has an "in between" cell size that the queen doesn't like to lay in. We've pulled about 12 boxes of cut comb so far. We have another 60 out in the yards. I don't know how many will get filled up.

The state fair is only three weeks away. I hope to see a lot of you there.

Submitted by Phil Ebert

A Word From The Iowa Honey Queen

Hello Beekeepers!

On July 4th I was able to ride in the parade in my hometown. After the parade my family set up a stand and sold honey, pollen, hand and body products, and a variety of other goods. I was able to answer several questions about CCD. It was nice to talk to people in my hometown about beekeeping and honeybees, and give them a little insight on what my duty as a honey queen.

On July 14th, I will be promoting honey for Phil Ebert at Wheatsfield Grocery in Ames. At the end of July I will be riding in another parade in Early, Iowa, and also talking to kindergarten-sixth graders at a preschool in Fort Madison, Iowa. I plan to talk about the basics of beekeeping, and I have prepared myself for a lot of questions. I am always amazed at the questions the young children come up with.

I have come up with my own brochures to hand out to people, until I am provided the brochures from the Iowa Honey Producers. I found it is a lot easier to explain to people what I do, and provide people with recipes when they are buying honey at my promotions.

Remember, I am here to help all of the Iowa Honey Producers. If you may need me for an event you are planning, please contact me at (515)210-1027 or by email at Chizel2004@aol.com.

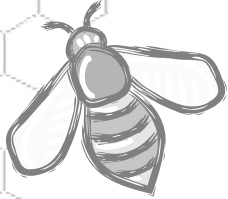
Sincerely,

Chelsa Bronnenberg
2007 Iowa Honey Queen



This unique swarm picture was submitted by Ron Wehr. The swarm was picked up in the Wellman area and looks very much like a cross. Thanks for the great picture Ron!

9th Annual Honey Fest 2007



Indian Creek Nature Center
Sunday, September 23
1:00 to 4:00 PM



Honey is one sweet reason to appreciate bees!
Come learn about their even greater importance —
pollination. Find out the health status of bees locally and
across the nation by visiting our bee education
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Featured Beekeeper of the Month

This month our featured beekeeper is Melvin Runneberg. Melvin and his wife, Dorothy, live in Laurens, Iowa and began beekeeping in 1975 when their son, David, wanted to get bees for 4-H. David apprenticed with several experienced beekeepers and he and Melvin acquired 13 colonies from an older beekeeper that died. Of course the project grew and when David was a senior they had 47 colonies. After David entered college Melvin continued the business. He says the size of the business varies but he has kept it hobby size of about 10 colonies each year.

Melvin sells mostly extracted honey and some comb honey from his home, through the local grocery store, and through the Palo Alto County Nature Center where he volunteers. Melvin says it's relaxing to watch the bees it's satisfying and a good retirement entertainment. He enjoys sharing bee stories and the honey and has mentored several oth-



Melvin had an excellent crop in 2006 yielding an average of 145lbs. per colony.

ers in beekeeping.

About future plans Melvin says, "At 82 years of age, I may quit pretty soon." Melvin is a member of the Northwest Iowa Beekeepers Association. The group consists of about 25 families and meets 5 times a year with no set schedule. Their current chairman is Jeff Triplett of

Sutherland, Iowa. They have speakers and participate in the Clay County Fair booth selling honey products from members, display two observation hives, and share knowledge.

Melvin says he gets frequent calls from younger beekeepers with questions about puzzling situations. He shares ordering package bees and saves transportation by having a point of pick up and delivery. He has sold cappings to candle making members and sent quantities of honey sticks from member Jeannie Rust of Webb to Iraq. The sticks are packaged in bundles of 50. The army fellows like them because they can carry sticks in their pockets and squeeze honey on crackers, peanut butter, and oatmeal.

Thanks for your story Melvin. The honey stick idea is a good one.

Submitted by Ron Wehr



Melvin with two colonies from 2006. These colonies produced nearly 200lbs. of honey each!

FAQ's Colony Collapse Disorder

This Frequently Asked Questions is posted on the Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium website:
www.ento.psu.edu/MAAREC/index.html

The MAAREC is part of the entomology department at Penn State University. Their website states:

The focus of MAAREC research has been on the identification of alternatives to chemical controls and promotion of less reliance on chemical pesticides for mite control.

With the increased attention to CCD, MAAREC has also directed its research in this area. This FAQ and their website can serve as another source of information into the state of CCD.

What is CCD? Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is the name that has been given to the latest, and what seems to be the most serious, die-off of honey bee colonies across the country. It is characterized by, sudden colony death with a lack of adult bees in/in front of the dead-outs. Honey and bee bread are usually present and there is often evidence of recent brood rearing. In some cases, the queen and a small number of survivor bees may be present in the brood nest. It is also characterized by delayed robbing and slower than normal invasion by common pests such as wax moth and small hive beetles.

What causes CCD? Although there is much attention being given to this situation, it is not yet clear what is causing the die-off. From two intensive surveys of many of the beekeepers involved, some potential causes have been eliminated (see below) and others have been identified as important to investigate (see below). However, at this point it does seem likely that a number of factors may be involved.

Who is being impacted? As of February 2007, many of the beekeepers

reporting heavy losses associated with CCD are large commercial migratory beekeepers, some of who have lost 50-90% of their colonies. Surviving colonies are often so weak that they are not viable pollinating or honey producing units. Losses have been reported in migratory operations wintering in CA, FL, OK and TX. However, late in February some larger non-migratory beekeepers, particularly from the mid-Atlantic region and the Pacific Northeast have reported significant losses of >50%.

When was it first discovered and how long has it been going on?

The first "report" of CCD was made in mid-November 2006 by a Pennsylvania beekeeper overwintering in Florida. Soon after the initial report, other migratory beekeepers reported heavy losses of colonies under similar circumstances. In subsequent conversations with beekeepers from across the country, it appears that a number of large beekeepers have been discovering higher than normal losses compared to the past few years (although heavy overwintering losses were reported in 2003-2004 for many northern beekeepers). These losses may or may not be related to CCD, but it is likely that there may be some relationship.

Is honey from CCD colonies safe to eat? To date there is no evidence that CCD affects honey. The impact of CCD appears to be limited to adult bees.

The beekeeping industry has experienced heavy losses of colonies in the past. Is this something new?

Symptoms similar to CCD have been described in the past, and heavy losses have been documented. The condition has received many different names over the years including autumn collapse, May disease, spring dwindle, disappearing disease, and fall dwindle disease. Whether or not the current die-off is being caused by the same factors that caused heavy losses

in the past or if new factors are involved is not yet clear.

Why is it called Colony Collapse Disorder rather than disappearing or spring/fall dwindling/disease?

References to the season are inappropriate as there are increasing reports that the condition manifests itself throughout the year. "Dwindle" implies a gradual decline of colony population whereas we are seeing a rapid collapse. While the actual rate of adult bee loss in populations have not been recorded, it is clear that otherwise strong colonies can quickly lose their entire workforce in a matter of a few weeks or even a few days. "Disappearing" has been used to refer to a host of other conditions that do not necessarily share the same symptoms as those presently being described. The term "disease" is commonly associated with a pathogenic agent. While the definition of disease does have a broader meaning (i.e. coronary disease), until (or if) such an agent is found the use of the word "disease" would be misleading. Should a biological or other agent(s) be isolated as the cause, the name of this condition will likely be reconsidered.

How do I know if a colony has CCD? Colonies impacted by CCD have the following characteristics:

- The complete absence of adult bees in the hive, (in some cases the queen and a small number of survivor bees are present in the brood nest) with no or little build-up of dead bees in the hive or at the hive entrances.
- The presence of capped brood.
- The presence of food stores, both honey and bee bread, which is not immediately robbed by other bees. Invasion of common hive pests such as wax moth and small hive beetle is noticeably delayed in dead-out equipment left in the field.

What are the early signs of CCD? In cases where the colony appears to be actively collapsing:

- There is an insufficient workforce to maintain the brood that is present.
- The workforce seems to be made up of young adult bees.
- The queen is present, appears healthy and is usually still laying eggs.
- The cluster is reluctant to consume feed provided by the beekeeper, such as sugar syrup and protein supplement.
- Foraging populations are greatly reduced/non-existent.

What should a beekeeper do if he or she has CCD? See the CCD information on recommendation (separate document).

What can I do to reduce the likelihood of getting CCD?

- Keep colonies strong by practicing best management practices.
- Don't stack dead or weak colonies on strong colonies.
- Feed colonies fumigillin in the spring.

Is it safe to reuse the equipment from colonies that have been lost during the winter? If it can be determined that bees starved or died due to other reasons associated with typical winter loss, it does appear safe to reuse equipment, including honey stores and pollen, but caution is advised and equipment probably needs to be aired thoroughly. Also you should seriously consider replacing old comb with new foundation on a regular basis. However if your colonies died from what appears to be CCD (see description above), reusing equipment is not advised since we do not yet know the cause of this condition. Members of the CCD working group have initiated experiments that will look at various comb sterilization techniques for suggestions in the future.

Who is working on this problem?

A group of researchers, apiculture extension specialists and government officials from a number of different institutions across the country have come together to work on this prob-

lem and share information with beekeeper and the public. This group is called the CCD Working Group. For a complete list of the institutions and individuals involved please visit the CCD page on the Website: MAAREC.org.

What has been eliminated as a potential cause of CCD? These results are based on in-depth interviews with beekeepers impacted by CCD and surveys of beekeepers responding to our request for information. While these items have been removed from our list of "causes" they may increase the risk of developing CCD. For instance, wearing wet clothes will not give you a cold, but it does increase your chances of catching a cold.

Feeding: The practice of feeding was common to most of the beekeepers interviewed and surveyed who experienced CCD. Some feed HFCS, others sucrose however, some did not feed. Most beekeepers interviewed did not feed protein but some used pre-made protein supplement.

Chemical use: While most used antibiotics, the type, frequency of application, and method varied. Most beekeepers had applied a miticide treatment during 2006. The products used and method of application varied.

Use of bees: Some beekeepers reported that their bees were used primarily for the production of honey, while others received most of their income from pollination contracts. Some produced honey and used their colonies for pollination.

Queen Source: All beekeepers purchased at least some queens throughout the year. Some beekeeper reared the majority of their own cells, but most bought either mated queens or queen cells. Queens were bought from at least 5 different states (Florida, California, Texas, Georgia, Hawaii) and 2 foreign countries (Canada and Australia).

What potential causes of CCD is the Working Group investigating?

The current research priorities under investigation by various members of the CCD working group, as well as other cooperators include, but is not limited to:

- Chemical residue/contamination in the wax, food stores and bees
- Known and unknown pathogens in the bees and brood
- Parasite load in the bees and brood
- Nutritional fitness of the adult bees
- Level of stress in adult bees as indicated by stress induced proteins
- Lack of genetic diversity and lineage of bees

For a more complete description of the research priorities, please visit CCD page found on the MAAREC.org website.

What are examples of topics that the CCD working group is not currently investigating? GMO crops: Some GMO crops, specifically Bt Corn have been suggested as a potential cause of CCD. While this possibility has not been ruled out, CCD symptoms do not fit what would be expected in Bt affected organisms. For this reason GMO crops are not a "top" priority at the moment.

Radiation transmitted by cell towers: The distribution of both affected and non-affected CCD apiaries does not make this a likely cause. Also cell phone service is not available in some areas where affected commercial apiaries are located in the west. For this reason, it is currently not a top priority.

What can beekeepers/beekeeper groups do to help with discovering the cause of CCD?

- Please fill out an online survey at: www.beesurvey.com
- Consider giving to one of the foundations collecting monies to help fund research in these activities.



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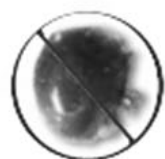
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The Buzz Newsletter

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Des Moines Backyard Beekeepers

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National Honey Board

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