



The Buzz

Newsletter of the Iowa Honey Producers Association



February 2007



Time to get those package bee orders placed! Pg. 2

**Welcome Chelsa Bronnenberg!
The 2007 Iowa Honey Queen.
Pg. 4**

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Beekeeping Workshops. Pg. 6



Dates to BEE Remembered:

Feb. 8th and 9th International Mead Festival in Denver, CO
www.meadfest.com

February 11th—NBC at 8pm
The Apprentice TV Show
SueBee Honey will be featured

June 24th-28th, 2007 International Pollination Symposium, ISU/Ames

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

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

Or by mail at the address listed on the front cover.

For Sale: One story hives with lid, bottom and bees. Available starting the end of April. \$87.00 each.

Curtis Barnhart - God's Little Apiary
319-465-3941

FOR SALE: 2 or 3 pound packages of Italian bees with queen picked up in Cedar Rapids or Aurora, Iowa the first part of April. Bees from the Hill-Ward Apiary in California. All orders must be received by Feb. 28.

Contact Douglas Child at
319-634-3682

FOR SALE: Package Bees—We will be selling 2# and 3# packages again this year. There is a choice of either Carniolan or Italian queens for your packages.

3# packages will only be available on the first load. This load normally fills sometime in early March. The second load is already full.

The first load will be here the first week in April: the second; a week to ten days later. Our loads have always been on time but we didn't get everything we ordered on the first load last year. It all depends on the weather conditions in California.

Contact Phil Ebert at 641-527-2639 or ehoney37@netins.net

For Sale: 2# & 3# pkg of Italian Bees with Queen. Expected arrival time is about April 10th.

Book orders before February 28th. Prices should be close to last year. To book order this year full price of package due at booking. Call for price.

Gordon Powell
4012 54th Street
Des Moines, IA 50310
Ph. 515-278-1762

Queens for sale, \$13.00 Available around April 9. Queens are pick up at my home. If you wish to have them shipped there will be a shipping fee. 4 and 5 frame Nuc for sale around May 1, new 2007 Queens, price will be around \$75.00 and \$85.00

Pat Ennis
1040 Union Ave.
Goodell Iowa, 50439
flat_lander@lycos.com

FOR SALE: Clean 4 Gallon Paragon buckets with handles and lids. Originally held corn syrup. 1-10, \$1.50each; 11-49, \$1.25 each; 50+, \$1 each.

Contact Phil Ebert at 641-527-2639 or e-mail ehoney37@netins.net

FOR SALE: Deep boxes and supers for 12 hives with bottom bds and lids. Some of the boxes have combs. Also some miscellaneous equipment. Price negotiable. Older two frame extractor with add on electric motor; will only extract one side of the comb at a time--\$50 Like new 12 frame Dadant radial extractor--\$1000

Contact Ernie Hinkle in Birmingham, IA 319-498-4479

FOR SALE: Two tier single wall stainless steel tank setup with 18" stand. Removable top tank is 24x24x8; bottom tank is 23x36x23(about 60 gallons) Both tanks have lids. Needs bigger outlets before it could be used for honey. Would make a nice set up. \$110 as is. I would consider modifying it to your specs for a fee. Contact Phil Ebert 641-527-2639 or e-mail ehoney37@netins.net

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,

We are ready to start the shortest month of the year, February. Even though it has only twenty-eight days it has numerous holidays. Ground Hog Day predicts the amount of winter left for us to either enjoy or dread. President's Day combines birthdays of United States Presidents, Lincoln and Washington. Don't forget to "Bee" a Valentine. We also have two grandsons with February birthdays. Even though February is short on days, it has lots of opportunities to celebrate. Ash Wednesday is also in February this year. By now you are wondering where this is going. Our honey bees need our attention in February also. Check the weight of the hives. If they are light, feed them. The weather was mild most of the winter, so most likely the honey that was stored has been used up. This is the time of year to lose those colonies. There is no where for the bees themselves to obtain the nourishment that they so desperately need. No pollen or nectar is available yet. Do your colonies a favor and watch them closely. Provide what they can not get for themselves. There are several new pollen products available. A new sucrose syrup, number 75 available also. The honey bees really go for it. Inverted sugar from bakeries is also available. Do some research and select the best feed for your situation. Ask around if you would like references or suggestions.

I've got some tips for February (some of these were borrowed from *The Bee Buzzer*, NE Kansas Beekeepers' Association, Thanks, Joli!)

As the seed and plant catalogs

arrive, dream about next year's honey crop and the bee garden you've wanted to start.

Plan to keep better bee records for 2007.

Read at least one beekeeping book, old or new, this month.

Repair your beekeeping equipment.

Order new equipment that you need.

Renew your membership to the IHPA.

Join a local beekeeping club.

Submit a photo for *THE BUZZ*.

Order queens for Spring shipment.

Order package bees for Spring shipment.

Consider writing an article for *THE BUZZ*.

Subscribe to a beekeeping magazine.

Sort through your equipment to see if you have any extra items lying around. The Central Iowa Beekeepers are having their annual auction in Des Moines at Harry Hunter's place on Saturday April 21st. Consignments are due by March 24. Contact Margaret Hala for information, (641) 752-2981 or mhala@marshallnet.com.

The IHPA is your organization. We always invite members to join in the decision making by becoming mem-

bers of the different committees within the association. Please volunteer to help make this organization even greater. We welcome new ideas and suggestions. Contact a board member or officer if you wish to help. A list of committees and the chairs for that committee will be listed in another article for your convenience. "Bee a Sweetheart" this month. Send in an article, photo, recipe or an idea to *THE BUZZ*.

Sincerely,

Donna Brahms, IHPA President

Cookie Pizza

½ cup Iowa Honey

¼ cup packed brown sugar

½ cup shortening

1 egg

1 tsp. Vanilla

1 ½ cups flour

½ tsp. salt

1 cup peanut butter chips

½ cup semisweet chocolate chips

½ cup chopped nuts

Heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 12-inch round deep-dish pizza pan or a 9X13-inch baking pan. Mix the first 7 ingredients until well blended. Stir in peanut butter chips, chocolate chips and nuts. Dough will be sticky. Spread dough in prepared pan to within ½ inch of edges. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown. Serve as is, or frost and decorate, or drizzle with Chocolate Drizzle (below).

Chocolate Drizzle

¼ cup semisweet chocolate chips

1 ½ tsp. Shortening

Microwave the two ingredients for about one minute. Mix well until Chips are melted.

Submitted by Donna Brahms

Please Welcome the Iowa Honey Queen for 2007 Chelsa Bronnenberg!

[January]

Greeting's Iowa Beekeepers!

My name is Chelsa Bronnenberg. I was crowned at the annual IHPA meeting held in Marshalltown. I had a great weekend, and I hope all of you did as well. I would like to give a brief background about myself.

I am Currently attending Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo, with a major in nursing. I graduated in December with my LPN, and am taking classes to be a Registered Nurse. I then plan to transfer to the University of Iowa to continue my education to receive my Bachelor's degree in Nursing.

I have been around beekeeping my entire life. My family owns Spring Valley Honey Farms, and we are now in our 23rd year of business. I have helped my family extract, bottle honey, and have also enjoyed helping my mom make beauty products from honey and beeswax. I have helped promote honey at farmer's markets, craft sales, and at the Iowa State Fair.

I am excited and feel honored to represent Iowa as I continue to learn a lot from others, and also teach people what I know. I look forward to meeting all of you through out the year and years to come.

If you need to contact me, or would like to have me help you at any event please contact me. My address is 2216 Merner Avenue Apartment 2 Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613, or by phone at (515)210-1027. My

email is Chizel2004@aol.com. I wish all of you a Happy New Year.

Chelsa Bronnenberg
2007 Iowa Honey Queen

[February]

Hello Iowa Beekeepers!

Did any of you make New Year's resolutions? I did, but as we all know how they always turn out, right? We never get them completely accomplished, or maybe

focus is being the "Queen!" I hope all of you have something planned for me to help you with throughout this year.

My adventures are only beginning and I can't wait to see what is in store for all of us! I wish all of you the best of luck with all of you future plans.

Sincerely,
Chelsa Bronnenberg
2007 Iowa Honey Queen

Beeyard Report

I returned from the AHPA Convention in Phoenix to find that winter had arrived. Getting home turned into a bit of an adventure. The airport in Dallas/Ft Worth iced up. That's the hub for American Airlines. It messed up their whole system. I felt fortunate to get home when I did even if it was without my luggage.

Usually, I hope the bees get a flying day every month. This winter, we had one every week until the middle of December. I moved my nucs up beside my steel building around Christmas time. After I returned from Phoenix, I put them inside in the unheated portion of the building. They are alive but I still don't give them much chance to survive.

I am often amazed at how long incorrect ideas can persist in my brain. For 25 years I have thought that virgin queens were only fertile for a few days. At the meeting, I learned they can mate successfully for up to two weeks. They can still mate after that but the chances of them being well mated decrease markedly. I also didn't realize how much sperm a queen rejects. She may reject up

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never even started. My goal for myself, and all of you is to finish all the of the things that we have been wanting to do.

I am so excited that my year as a Queen has officially started. My family was asked to have a booth at the Home and Patio Show, at the State Fairgrounds. What a great opportunity for me to start out promoting beekeeping. I plan to do some demonstrations, and answer any questions that people may have that weekend.

My school schedule is really going to allow me to get more involved this year as a Queen. I am only part time this semester, and then will have the summer off! I will be working occasionally, but my main

to 80% of the sperm from a particular drone but she will keep some of the sperm from every drone she mates with and mix it in her spermatheca. This ensures diversity.

Package bees are the next project. This seems to get a little bigger every year but it comes before everything else gets started. I've got a few winter projects. There are stacks of boxes to repair, vehicles to work on and general planning that needs to happen. Not too bad for the most part. The next 30 days should be pretty relaxing.

For those of you that have read "Following the Bloom", I met Crystal Card in Phoenix. She and Andy are divorced now but are still partners in a 15,000 colony operation.

Remember, spring is just around the corner.

Submitted by Phil Ebert

Drawing Winner

By filling out an evaluation at the Annual Meeting, you were qualified for a drawing to receive free registration for the 2007 Meeting. The evaluations are very helpful for the committee that plans the IHPA events. The information contained in the evaluations lets us know what you, the membership, desires and lets us plan accordingly. Some of the suggestions are not possible, and you will see why in a series of articles that will be in THE BUZZ this year. The name of the lucky person to receive the free 2007 registration fee is Ron Wehr. Congratulations Ron.

Submitted by Donna Brahms

Siouxland Flower, Lawn and Garden Show

The Siouxland Flower, Lawn and Garden Show will be held on Friday, March 23 and Saturday, March 24, 2007, at the Bluffs Area Family Center in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa. Educational sessions, how-to demonstrations, and exhibits are all part of this new, one-of-a-kind event in northwest Iowa.

Exhibits will include tried-and-proven as well as new and innovative products and services that make flower, lawn, and garden care easier and more enjoyable. Exhibitors are also permitted to sell or take orders for horticultural products and services during the show. Booth spaces are very affordable. A few spaces are still available but they are going fast.

"The planning committee is really excited about the quality of the exhibits and topics," said Sherry McGill, Woodbury County Extension Education Director. "One of our featured speakers, garden writer Jan Riggenschach, will present Confessions of a Compulsive Planter." Other well-known speakers include Jamie Beyer, Dawn Chapman, Dr. Eldon Everhart, Kelly Feehan, Harlan Hamernik, Dr. Cindy Hanes, Jane and Jack Hogue, John Kluser, Kelly Norris, Don Poggensee, Jan Riggenschach, Dr. Steven Rodie, James Romer, Gary Whittenbaugh, Megan Will, and Kathleen Ziemer. Multiple presentations will be running concurrently on both days.

Numerous topics will be covered in presentations, hand-outs, how-to demonstrations, workshops, and by vendors and Master Gardeners. Some of the topics include native perennials, herbs, perennials for shade, house plants, ornamental grasses, shrubs, iris, coneflowers, dahlias, conifers, conifer companions, groundcovers, aggressive plants, rain gardens, water gardening, butterfly gardening, gardening with children, wildlife, photography, lawn care, conserving water, landscape problem-solving, basic landscape design, sustainable landscape design, home greenhouses, and edible landscapes.

Demonstrations will include topics related to container gardening, vegetable gardening, transplanting, and ponds. This "family-friendly" event will also include workshops and activities for children.

Admission is only \$4. Food and refreshments are available during the show. Parking is free.

The planning committee for this event includes representatives from Iowa State University Extension, University of Nebraska Extension, horticulture businesses, and Master Gardeners.

For more information on attending, volunteering, being a commercial vendor, or displaying as a nonprofit organization, please contact Woodbury County Extension at 712-276-2157 or visit www.extension.iastate.edu/woodbury

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension

2007 Beginning Beekeeping Workshops Everything You Need to Know to Get Started in Apiculture

2007 Beginning Beekeeping Work- shops

Beginning Beekeeping Workshops have been scheduled for 2007 at the following sites:

Feb. 3 – Scottsbluff 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Feb. 17 – ARDC near Mead 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

April 7 – ARDC near Mead 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Registration fee for the Scottsbluff and Mead workshops is \$20 per person or \$20 per family plus \$8 for each family member accompanying the registered participant. Registration includes refreshments, lunch, and a workbook for new beekeepers. Preregistration is required for both workshops. The April Workshop is a hands-on session for participants in both the Scottsbluff and Ithaca workshops. Registration is not required for the April session. The April session will be a day to meet other beekeepers and share a potluck meal. Those attending will experience opening and examining honey bee colonies with guidance from members of the Nebraska Beekeepers Association. If you have questions about the workshops or need further information, contact:

Marion Ellis at (402) 472-8696 or MELLIS3@unl.edu.

Send Scottsbluff Registrations to:
Pat Martin

Panhandle Research and Extension
Center
512 E. 35th Street

Scottsbluff, NE 69361
Email: pmartin2@unl.edu
Phone: (308) 632-1230
Make check payable to: University of
Nebraska

Send Ithaca Registrations to:
Keith Glewen, Extension Educator
1071 County Road G
Room B, UNL Extension
Agricultural Research & Development
Center
Ithaca, NE 68033-2234
Email: Kglewen1@unl.edu
Phone: (402) 624-8030
Make check payable to: University of
Nebraska

Master Beekeeping Program

The University of Nebraska offers a Master Beekeeping Program that provides advanced beekeeping training for experienced beekeepers. Participants attend a 3-day workshop in June at the Agricultural Research and Development Center where they receive detailed instruction in the biology and management of honey bees. Training includes both classroom and hands-on sessions. Beekeepers should have at least one year of experience managing honey bees before registering for this workshop. Due to the program leader being on sabbatical leave in 2007, the next workshop will be offered in June of 2008. Registration for the workshop is \$100 and includes five meals, refreshments, a cap, and a workbook.

Send Master Beekeeping Program Inquiries to:

Dr. Marion Ellis
Department of Entomology
202 Plant Industry Bldg.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68583-0816
Email: MELLIS3@unl.edu
Phone: (402) 472-8696
Make check payable to: University of
Nebraska

Location of Meeting Sites
Scottsbluff Classroom Workshop
Panhandle Research and Extension
Center
4502 I Street

Scottsbluff, NE 69361

ARDC near Mead Classroom Work- shop

Agricultural Research and Develop-
ment Center
Headquarters Building
University of Nebraska
Ithaca, Nebraska 68033-2234

ARDC near Mead Hands-On Work- shop

Agricultural Research and Develop-
ment Center
Apiculture Laboratory
University of Nebraska
Mead, Nebraska 68033-2234

Directions to the University of Ne- braska Panhandle Research and Ex- tension Center

4502 I Street
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
308- 632-1230
<http://www.panhandle.unl.edu>

Directions to ARDC Christenson Research and Education Building

<http://ardc.unl.edu/direct.htm>
FROM OMAHA: Take Dodge Street west on Hwy. 275, turn south on Hwy. 275 until it winds into Hwy. 92. Travel west on Hwy. 92 to Mead. (Taking L Street out of Omaha is also Hwy. 92) A green *Univ. of Nebraska Agricultural R & D Center* sign is located just east of the main turn into Mead. Turn south (left) onto Road 10 and travel 6 miles to the stop sign. You will approach a stop sign and a directory sign. Turn west (right) on Hwy. 66 (formerly Hwy. 63) and travel ¾ mile to the August N. Christenson Research and Education Building. The building is located on the south side of Hwy. 66 between County Roads 10 and 11. **Please park in the west parking lot.** Time considerations: approximately 40 minutes from west Omaha.

FROM LINCOLN: Take Hwy. 77 north out of Lincoln towards Wahoo. Just north of the unincorporated community of Swedeburg (and 4 miles south of Wahoo), you will approach a green *Univ. of Nebraska Agricultural R*

& D Center sign, a Hwy. 66/77 sign, and a Wahoo/ Ashland/ Ithaca sign. Turn east (right) onto Hwy. 66 (formerly Hwy. 63) and travel 6 1/4 miles east. The August N. Christenson Research and Education Building is located on Hwy. 66 on the south (right) side of the road. The building is situated behind a hill and is difficult to see from the highway. **Please park in the west parking lot.** Time considerations: approximately 40 minutes from Cornhusker Hwy. and Hwy. 77. **Directions to Apiculture Laboratory** From the ARDC Christenson Research and Education Building, take Road 10 north and follow the signs directing you to the turfgrass research area. The Apiculture Lab is adjacent to the turfgrass research plots. There is a sign that says "Apiculture Laboratory" located in front of the building.

Reasons to Keep Honey Bees

The honey from each hive is a unique blend of the floral resources that surround an apiary, and honey is a delightful source of floral flavors. Many crops grown in orchards, gardens, and on farms benefit from bee pollination. Keeping bees will raise your understanding of the natural world and the interrelatedness of all living things. Beekeeping with a young person can be especially rewarding. Last, but not least, it is impossible to be surrounded by thousands of bees busily going about their work and think about your troubles. Honey bees have fascinated mankind throughout history. They will fascinate you too if you let them.



In the News

Sue Cobey, originator of the New World Carniolan line, is moving from Ohio State University to the University of California at Davis. I don't know everything behind this move but Eric Mussen is approaching retirement and that chair is endowed. There is a movement among some of the California Beekeepers to increase the size of the endowment. Apparently, university support for a bee program has been lagging in recent years. The hope is that increased funds will accelerate the program. I was a little surprised that Roger Hoopingarner (Michigan State) and Jerry Bromenshank (University of Montana) thought it was a poor idea to entrust funds to the university. They favored placement of funds for specific projects. At any rate, we wish Sue well in her new undertaking.

The class scheduled for DMACC in Ankeny was cancelled. We only had three people sign up for it. Marshalltown is slated to start Jan 24th if we get enough enrollment. Ron Wehr and Vern Ramsey have a class in Washington due to start Feb 6th. Contact Kirkwood College for this one. 319-653-4655 Pat Randol is holding a class at the Winterset Library beginning Feb 28th. Contact Pat at 515-210-7745 Something is going to happen in the Spencer area but I am not totally sure what it is yet.

Lee Heine has graciously agreed to donate the bees for all of the participants in the Youth Mentoring Program. Lee was on the interviewing committee. We were really impressed with all of the candidates. There was some discussion as to whether we had the financial capability to accept all of the candidates. At this point, Lee offered to donate the bees. That really sealed the deal. Lee comes to represent the Honey Board but he puts a lot more into it than he has to. It adds a lot to our meeting. Thanks Lee!!!!

There is a new mite control soon to be on the market. It's from the same company that gave us Apistan. The new product is called Hivastan. It is a pyrozoal. It's a metabolic inhibitor that kills by contact. It currently has other uses in the food industry. It is applied as a patty spread on wax paper for 4 weeks. The patty contains honey to improve bee activity. The honey has been irradiated to kill foul brood spores. Product will be available in 3 gallon buckets (25#). That will treat 50 colonies. Material is to be spread thinly on wax paper and applied between the brood boxes. It will leave some residue. Data will be available on this. Trials were conducted within a temp range of 60 to 100 degrees. Nebraska has already submitted a request to the EA to use this product.

Last month I noted that I had seen what appeared to be pollen coming in during the month of November. Ivan Rickers sent me a note that he had seen the same thing. He had also observed a very short dandelion with two flower heads that was blooming in November long after we had a hard freeze. There really was pollen in November. This may explain why there was so much brood late in the year.

Submitted by Phil Ebert

**Midwest Beekeeping
Symposium ~ June 9, 2007**
SAVE THE DATE

The Illinois State Beekeepers Association is proud to announce its upcoming Beekeeping Symposium. This full day meeting will feature:

- Keynote Presentations
- General Sessions
- Breakout Sessions
- A "Beginner's Track" of Sessions
- Beekeeping Supply Vendors
- A Provided Lunch

Please save the date and look for further details to be released in early 2007. Please also refer to the Illinois State Beekeepers Association website for the latest information www.isba.us

The Symposium will be located at the McHenry County College (MCC) Conference Center, in Crystal Lake, IL. For a campus map and driving directions, you may visit here: www.mchenry.edu/Maps

The 2007 Midwest Beekeeping Symposium is sponsored by:

Illinois State Beekeepers Association

Stateline Beekeepers Association

Lake County Beekeepers Association

Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association

Cook-DuPage Beekeepers Association

McHenry County College

Questions can be directed to ISBA President, Ken Haller via e-mail at: vikinghoneyfarm@comcast.net



Featured Beekeeper of the Month

This month our featured beekeepers are Mark and Mary Million. They live in Earlham, Iowa. They started keeping bees for fun as a hobby in the spring of 2002. At this point the size of their operation is 4 colonies. They use the honey themselves and give honey for gifts. Occasionally they sell the honey and candles. In the future they may expand their colonies because more people are asking for honey. Mary is interested in candles and hosted a honey-candle party featuring all beeswax to see if local interest is there.

Mark and Mary like watching and caring for their bees. They enjoy watching the bees forage and challenge of keeping the colonies alive over the winter.

The Millions have an interesting beekeeping group. They helped two other couples get started in beekeeping. Now the three couples help each other out caring for the bees, medicating colonies and harvesting honey.

In the Iowa Honey Producers Association, Mark and Mary are members and have worked at the State Fair booth for the last three years. They also attend the State meeting in Marshalltown.



Mark and Mary will tell you that educating others is a very important part of beekeeping. Three times last year Mark went to remove bees and all three turned out to be wasps. We've all been there!

Thanks for sharing your interesting story about beekeeping.

Submitted by
Ron Wehr



Mary about to install a new package of bees into the hive.

AHPA Meeting

There were a lot of speakers on bee breeding. There were a couple of programs that I didn't know about—Steve Sheppard at Washington State and Keith Delaplane at U of Georgia. Marla Spivak, Sue Cobey and Tom Rinderer all spoke on what was going on with their programs there was also a Danish beekeeper reporting on their program. One factor being looked at is olfactory sensitivity. The thinking is that non hygienic bees have lower sensitivity, hence don't uncap defective brood quickly enough. SMR bees are now designated VSH (Varroa Sensitive Hygiene). This is age dependent and involves detecting a stress pheromone that is being released. Since we have the honey bee genome it may be possible to use a DNA marker to breed for this. Roger Hoopingartner though it would take about \$7,000,000 to carry out any kind of breeding using DNA markers.

We need a multi trait selection system. A suite of traits are required for Varroa control-VSH, grooming and hygienic behavior. One of the concerns of bee breeders is maintaining a wide range of germ plasm. It is now possible to extract sperm from drones and store it in a tube for shipping just like you do for your favorite bull semen. There are around 900,000 queens produced for sale in the US but some alleles are being lost. California queens are gaining alleles but queens from the Southeast seem to be losing. I always wonder how they figure this stuff out. The introduction of the Russian line was credited for introducing new alleles into the California queens. When I was reading through my notes on the way home it occurred to me that Russians queens were originally produced in the Southeast and Charlie Harper is producing Russian breeder queens down there.

Another idea I have heard over and over again is that inseminated queens don't last as long as naturally mated ones. Sue Cobey has tracked hers. In her experience they are just as good.

I've no direct experience with this but it probably gets back to who is doing the inseminating and whether or not they are working against a deadline. A naturally mated queen that has coupled with good drones has from three to seven million sperm. This typically comes from six to twelve drones. An inseminated queen will have from three to five million sperm.

Drones are fragile and are a good indicator of colony health. If the colony is stressed, drone production falls off immediately. If you are banking them to extract semen they can only be stored for a day or two. Drones require pollen to produce good quantities of sperm. There is great variability in the quantity of sperm that individual drones produce. Some work has been done on storing drone semen in liquid nitrogen (crytopreservation). In the course of this work, they found that drone semen can easily be stored in a tube at room temperature for a week. This means that drones can be milked for semen and that it can be sent around the country to be used in various breeding programs.

It's thought inseminated queens may develop pheromones slower. Egg laying can be delayed for up to 36 days. Naturally mated queens will start laying eggs within two to three days. During the premating period, the PH of the spermatheca changes. After mating, adequate brood nest temperatures are required to facilitate sperm migration. The queens need to have young bees around them. Tiny mating nucs and cold temps are not a good combination. In an area that has 200 to 300 colonies, drone congregation area may have up to 20,000 drones if the colonies are at full strength.

Martin Braunstein had an interesting talk on the beekeeping situation in Argentina and world honey production. Martin is an Argentine queen breeder. He usually has an ad in the Bee Journal for Malka queens. Per capita honey consumption in Argentina is only about 4 oz. That means that 95% of Argentine

honey is exported. 300,000 of those brown drums leave Argentine ports every year. Four of their major exporters are paying no duty what so ever. From 1997 to 2000, the number of Argentine colonies doubled and reached 4,000,000. There is another 2,000,000 on the way. Honey production has tripled since 1982. Increased soybean production is displacing some beekeepers but they still have other areas of the country to move to. On top of this, Brazil has huge beekeeping potential. It's thought they could support 12,000,000 colonies.

If you look at honey production world wide, it is, for the most part, a third world occupation. Look at the average numbers—China, 300,000,000#; US, 200,000,000#; Argentina, 150,000,000#; Mexico, 100,000,000#; Ukraine, 100,000,000#. Total imports into the US in 2006 were around 275,000,000#. Argentine production in 2006 turned out to be 40,000,000 to 45,000,000# more than anyone anticipated and the Canadian crop was 15,000,000# larger than normal. When you couple this with the fact that the Chinese never really stopped shipping, it is easy to see why honey prices are on the decline once again.

Argentine beekeepers aren't real happy. They are not making much money. They are required to put their honey in new drums. The government takes 10% of the FOB price as tax. A few years ago they had 600% inflation. When the government ran out of money, they just took the funds from some of the banks. If I was in that situation, I don't know how I could survive.

These meetings are fun and informative but it is really hard to write them up. A wide range of things are covered. I hope I captured the heart of part of it.

Submitted by Phil Ebert

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The Buzz Newsletter

Iowa Honey Producers Association
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