



Alamanca County Beekeepers

February 2018 Newsletter

Monthly Meeting

Thursday, February 15th
Program @ 7:00 * Potluck @ 6:00

Jessica Louque

of

Louque Agricultural Enterprises
& Red Roof Agronomic Services

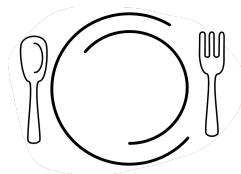
Topic: **Pesticides and Bees**



Many of you remember that Jessica Louque spoke to us in May 2017 about keeping hive records. We took away a lot to think about that night.

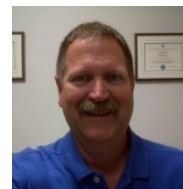
We are pleased that Ms. Louque can join us again, this time talking about what is known about pesticide effects on bees. Be prepared to learn!

Please try to join in on the potluck at 6:00, in anticipation of a fine social time and a lively program.



Message from Ira

Well, we tried to meet in January, but Mother Nature had other plans. I felt it was best to cancel since the auditorium was not available on any of the other dates I looked at for having a makeup meeting.



This month we have Jessica Louque (a local) talking about Pesticide Licenses. You may spray your garden or fruit trees. Your neighbor may be spraying on his/her farm. Being able to understand how these pesticides impact the bees will help us and your ability to speak to your neighbor about what he/she is spraying.

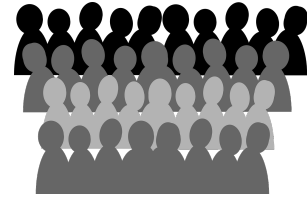
Our beginning Beekeeping Class is going well. We have about 30 folks eager to learn about bees and how to manage them.

We will vote on the updated bylaws at the February meeting. Please read through the updated version Cynthia sent out last month. Look forward to seeing everyone !!

2018 NCSBA Spring Conference

March 1-3 in New Bern

The statewide spring conference will offer so many worthwhile programs and workshops that you will be challenged to choose one over another. Among the speakers will be Marla Spivak -- you recognize her TED talk from the link on our website. Workshop topics lined up so far range from all things varroa mite to federal crop insurance for bee growers to hive-top feeding systems. Stay tuned [here](#), and register [here](#).



Bees in the News

Click on titles to link to articles.

[How snapdragons beckon bees with more than one color](#), Joanna Klein, [nytimes.com](#), 11/17/2017. Scientists discover the role of small RNA in development of yellow accent on magenta snapdragon flower.

[Bees gone wild](#), Daniel Rubinoff, Scientific American, 1/16/2018. The author of this blog post makes the case that feral honey bee colonies are a danger to native bees and the ecosystems that rely on them. "Pollinator advocacy is important, but for too long it has been a missed opportunity to engage a national campaign to reconsider our relationship with the honeybee in North America and move our support to the native bee force."

[Think of honeybees as 'livestock,' not wildlife, argue experts](#), University of Cambridge, [sciencedaily.com](#), 1/25/2018. "Writing in the journal Science, the conservationists argue there is a 'lack of distinction' in public understanding -- fuelled by misguided charity campaigns and media reports -- between an agricultural problem and an urgent biodiversity issue. In fact, they say domesticated honeybees actually contribute to wild bee declines through resource competition and spread of disease, with so-called environmental initiatives promoting honeybee-keeping in cities or, worse, protected areas far from agriculture, only likely to exacerbate the loss of wild pollinators."



[The mystery of vanishing honeybees is still not definitively solved](#), Susan Milius, ScienceNews.com, 1/17/2018. "The sudden disappearances of the previous decade have been dwarfed by other pollinator problems ... Classic CCD may not be much threat these days, but the "four p's" -- poor nutrition, pesticides, pathogens and parasites -- are."



In the Apiary: Spring in North Carolina

by Nancy Ruppert, Apiary Inspector, NCDA&CS

The NCDA & CS apiary inspection season during the winter is less active for outdoor work, much of which involves assessing sickness and death; more on that below. By the time you read this, North Carolina beekeepers will be (or should be!) actively engaged in the busiest season of the beekeeping year: addressing hive nutrition, closely assessing brood quality, preparing more equipment for hive expansion/splits/honey production, and dealing with deadouts. Procrastination during the spring can be very costly, often resulting in loss of honey production, loss of bees and/or good queens, and sometimes complete hive losses.

Nutritional needs are heavy for beehives in our area during late winter/early spring, as population growth demands large quantities of both protein (pollen/pollen substitute) and carbohydrates (stored honey or feeding, as most areas don't have much nectar until mid-March or later). Foragers should be bringing in heavy loads of pollen from multiple sources. Even hives that started 2018 with plentiful honey stores *might* need carbohydrate supplements during the late winter if the hives are full of healthy adult bees and brood. *Keep in mind that consistent nutritional supplements can significantly increase hive populations quickly by early spring, which also leads to risks for swarming! Swarm management is important during spring; visit your local beekeeping club meeting for helpful tips.*

Brood assessments during late winter and spring should include both quantity and quality of brood. By mid-March, most North Carolina beehives should be well-established in brood-rearing, with multiple frames of full brood patterns. Those that have little or no brood should be closely examined for the root cause—are they queenless, or has she failed? Did they swarm? Do they have pest or disease issues?

The *quality* of the brood basically refers to the health of the developing baby bees (eggs, larvae, pupae): are they heavy with varroa mites and/or viral illnesses such as sacbrood or parasitic mite syndrome? Are the larvae weak and yellowed, like in European foulbrood (EFB) bacterial disease? Are the capped brood cells torn open and malodorous, like can occur with American foulbrood (AFB) bacterial disease? Or do you have frames full of healthy larvae/capped brood? Problems

with brood health can have a serious impact on the overall hive and should always be addressed in a timely manner. Consult reliable resources for more details on/photos of brood health.

"Problems with brood health can have a serious impact on the overall hive and should always be addressed in a timely manner."

Healthy apiaries are ready for splits and swarms by or before late March in most of NC, and waiting until last minute to obtain/prepare boxes and frames is a recipe for disaster! Many spring swarms are healthy with productive queens, so even if your hives aren't swarming, you might want to be ready to capture someone else's swarm. Bees also can be very busy making/storing honey during the spring, sometimes a full super per week, so have multiple supers ready by mid-April.

By early spring, most hive deadouts have been removed from the apiary. Inspecting a hive that died out or left (absconded, as in ALL of the bees leaving home) is almost as important as inspecting your living bees, because learning about *why* the bees died or left is extremely valuable. Do not let pride keep you from consulting an experienced local beekeeper or your apiary inspector when you notice hive death or other apiary problems! Early notification and response is key to any hive "necropsy", as fresh evidence left behind gives much more information than three months of decay and freezing. Also, timely examination and action on dead or weak hives sometimes protects other hives from sickness or death.

Last but not least, keep learning in bee schools, field days, meetings and workshops. Happy Beekeeping!

North Carolina 4-H Beekeeping Essay Opportunity

2018 Beekeeping Essay Topic:
What's So Super About the Super
Organism in the Honey Bee?



If there is a 4-H'er in your life, please share this announcement with her or him.

“The honey bee continues to be on everyone’s mind. From beekeepers to scientists to the public, the honey bee is a great super organism. What does this mean to you, to your community and to the world? Put on your thinking caps and GO! (please do not reference Albert Einstein in your work).”

For more details : <http://www.growforit.org/programs/detail/beekeeping-essay>

Sponsored by [Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc.](#)



Red maples are in bloom, as evidenced by these honey bees in the Leisters' apiary.



Officers for 2018

President : Ira Poston
Vice President : Mike Ross
Recording Secretary : Sheyenne Michelizzi
Treasurer : Zivon Price
Program Chair : Caitlin Vatikiotis-Bateson
One-year Director : Randy Stinson
Two-year Director : Paul Jollay
Three-year Director : Chuck Couch

Appointments

Webmaster : Geoff Leister
Newsletter : Cynthia Pierce

Calendar

NCSBA 2018 Spring Conference
March 1-3, New Bern, NC

Eastern Apiculture Society's
Summer Conference August 13-17,
Hampton, VA