

ARKANSAS APIARY NEWSLETTER

State Plant Board - Apiary Section

#1 Natural Resources Drive

Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

Telephone: 501/225-1598

apiary@aspb.ar.gov

Vol. 44, No. 1

Winter '06/'07

Beekeeping Classes are Scheduled

Beekeeping classes are offered every year in various parts of the state as requests are made. The classes cover all aspects of beginning and intermediate beekeeping concepts. Stress is given to getting started in beekeeping, honey production, swarm control, disease and pest recognition and remedies. Textbooks are offered for sale at a great discount as are extensive notes from the audiovisual program. Other than that, there are no charges for the actual classes. The State Plant Board along with the Extension Service and regional beekeeping associations help to make these classes possible in order to improve beekeeper's skills, the state's beekeeping industry, and to encourage new beekeepers. Pre-registration is not required for these classes as registrations will be handled at the beginning of the classes.

Northwest Arkansas

The Arkansas State Plant Board along with the Northwest Arkansas Beekeeper's Association will be giving a beekeeping class late this winter. The classes will be held in the classrooms of the Pauline Whitaker Equine Center on Garland Ave (Hwy 112) at the corner of Knapp St. This class will be in four parts running from 6 to 9pm on Monday, February 26 and continuing for the first 3 Mondays of March at the same times. The association offers snacks and drinks for a break and drawings for everything from hive tools to hives and bees.

Central Arkansas

The Arkansas State Plant Board along with the Faulkner County Cooperative Extension Service and the Ozark Foothills Beekeeper's Association will be offering a beekeeping class late this winter. The classes will be held in Conway at the County Cooperative Extension facilities at 110 South Amity Rd., Suite 200. This class will be in four parts running from 6 to 9pm on Tuesday, February 27 and continuing for the first 3 Tuesdays of March at the same times. The association offers snacks and drinks.

Notice to Migratory Beekeepers

Arkansas Beekeepers who are planning to go to California for pollination contracts need to let us know your plans. We need to know when you're going, how many colonies you're taking and, as soon as you know, when your bees are returning to Arkansas. You should also be aware that both California and specific counties in California have regulations that will affect you and your bees. As you know, some areas of California have known Africanized Honeybee infestations. For that reason we are also going to need to know where in California your bees will be sitting.

Even if you are not going to be in a known infested area, you should be aware that, to a large part, California has pretty much discontinued its survey program. Also it should be noted that bees from other infested areas may be pollinating near yours. Therefore, on return to Arkansas, we need to be made aware of arrival dates so our crews can be prepared to do field tests for potential Africanization (FABIS).

The Season in Arkansas

In most of the state it was reported that colonies put up heavy stores for the winter. But, we've had a unusually warm "off" season. Counter-intuitively, a warm winter often causes increased honey consumption by wintering colonies. Therefore it is suggested that you check the weight of your bees stores before your bees run low. If your bees needed feeding long before the first nectar flows, heavy syrup is recommended. Heavy syrup does not stimulate brood rearing as much as light syrup does and approximately 70% of it is stored. Two parts of sugar for one part of water by weight or volume makes heavy syrup. Conversely, light syrup causes the bees and queen to act more like there's a nectar flow and stimulates egg laying and less storage. Egg laying too early can hasten starvation if stores are low. A thin syrup, approximately 1 part sugar to 1 part water, should be used if you need to build up the colony's brood production. This is often done in early spring or when making new colonies with packages or nucs.

Apiary Law Update

The State Plant Board has approved the recommendation of the Apiary Committee and will be bringing the new law to the State Legislature for their consideration. As earlier explained, the law is vague and the specifics will be hammered out in regulations. Regulations cannot be considered before the new Apiary Law is approved by the lawmakers.

Part of the reason the new laws are more general is because they needed to address "diseases and pests" in such a way that they include new and not yet acquired problems. Besides the laws being more general there are a few new items that are addressed in the new laws. This includes the Plant Board's right to instigate a Master Beekeeper Program that will both improve the skills of beekeepers while allowing those who qualify to have special privileges in the regulations. Also the Plant Board, under the new law, may instigate a "Voluntary Inspection Program" whereas qualified regional association can get inspections from local voluntary inspectors. Also the Plant Board is afforded the right to use a penalty matrix as a means to encourage compliance with the apiary laws and regulations. The new law also allows for reasonable fees. The Plant Board is forming an Apiary Advisory Committee made up of representative beekeepers to give input in the regulations and other matters.

The Apicultural Events Up-Coming

As this newsletter comes out, national beekeeping meetings are happening in the west and the south. We are looking forward to sharing news from these meetings. It should be noted that Florida is reporting several bee losses from unconfirmed reasons while Europe is being hit hard by a different form of Nosema previously know to only bother *Apis cerana*.

One of the Nation's Largest Beekeepers is Fined

Adee Honey Farm paid a settlement payment of \$14,000 to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for illegal use of pesticides in bee colonies to control Varroa mites and for making false statements to the MDA inspectors. State and Federal laws require that pesticides labels be specifically followed. Any deviation is an offense.

Don't Forget to Consult the Apiary Web Page

Our webpage holds lots of information, past and present newsletters, links to other beekeeping pages and much more. Check it out at www.plantboard.org. From there, go to Plant Industries and in Plant Industries you will find Apiary.