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2012 Spring Issue



the Queen City BUZZZZZZ

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A Glance at the SBA AGM

The Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association (SBA) held their 2011 Conference and Tradeshow in Saskatoon on November 30 to December 2.

It was 3 information-packed days. As a first time SBA Conference attendee by mid-morning on day 1 I was left wondering why it took me so long to attend. This is great!

From the SBA, I learnt we have a new Canadian Food Inspection Agency Inspector by the name of Howard Willems. That SBA received funding from CAAP (Canadian Agriculture Adaptation Program) for a 3 year project to "address resistant Varroa mites, high winter mortality, and the

questionable efficacy of alternative disease control treatments and techniques in SK climates." Congratulations, SBA!

Joe Edwards of Agricultural Marketing Programs Act (AMPA) spoke of the Advance Payments Program (APP) where cash advances can be received for market and sale of honey products and provided some of the highlights of the program.

Gerry Moyen spoke on Bear Fences and insurance pertaining to bear damage (percentage and dollars covered).

Geoff Wilson, our Provincial Apiculturist,

spoke on many topics such as summer and winter stats. For example, SK experienced 22% winter mortality in 2010. Geoff repeats to "know your mite levels before going into winter". Geoff said SK had about 20,000 nucs going into winter last year and [he boasts] with that we can take a 25% winter loss "without missing a bee"!

Geoff mentioned that the surveys that you are asked to fill in are important as the results help to develop programs. As well there were some labeling issues with the samples being sent to the labs. See the Winter 2011 copy of BeeLines for more information.

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Agribition 2012

2011 marked the 25th Anniversary for the Agri-Ed Showcase at the Canadian Western Agribition. RDBC has participated 24 of those 25 years – hats off to all the volunteers and organizers over all these years! This is a huge accomplishment!

This year the Showcase was moved into a new arena which the RDBC booth shared with the First Nations Pavilion. There were 4,000 registered students again this year. With the new location came our extended hours that we had mentioned at last

year's AGM. We had some challenges making sure the booth was properly staffed. Using this as our learning year we can accurately prepare for next year.

We also had a SBA display and appearances from Pierre the Bear to round it all out.

The Trade Show Booth saw good attendance and was decked out in bright yellow and black. Word is getting out about the honey at our booth and we are being looked for left and right. Not only do we

promote buying local honey but people love it!

Our volunteers wore our club t-shirts so they were easily identifiable and many were given the moniker of "Bee Babes". We also sold t-shirts at the booth and sold quite a few – don't worry, there are some left if you didn't get one yet!

All in all it was another successful year. A big thank-you to the SBA and SBDC for the funding that made our participation at CWA possible!



Saskatchewan Beekeepers' Development Commission (SBDC)

www.saskbeekeepers.com

The SBDC is a major sponsor of our Agribition Booth every year!

Calendars are \$4
Call Conrad @ 306.535.9520
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the SBDC



SBDC Calendars

Pollination: Seasons of Beekeeping (pictured above)

Saskatchewan Beekeepers' Development Commission

Produced by Dr. F. Barry Brown, SBDC President
bar2bee@yahoo.com

The objective of this calendar is to shine a light on the importance of the honeybee as a pollinator, increase awareness of beekeeping in general, and in particular, the sudden global decline of the honeybee population.

Vanishing bee population is a global concern that threatens the delicate balance of our food supply. Awareness of the plight of the honeybee is increasing at all levels, and solutions to the problems facing the industry will require the joint effort of the beekeeper, farmer,

Roles and Responsibilities

The Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission (SBDC) was established in March 2006 and began collecting levies on April 1, 2006. The purpose of the SBDC is to collect a refundable levy from beekeepers to fund research and development intended to research new market opportunities, improve production, decrease input costs, increased demand and create an overall better product.

Membership

To be considered a registered beekeeper, one

must have paid a refunded levy to the SBDC in the previous year. As a registered beekeeper with the SBDC, there are benefits including voting privileges, eligibility to run as a director, access to research and a strong industry voice to fight for issues important to beekeepers.

How the Commission Works

The SBDC is funded by an annual levy of \$0.50 per colony in production including, beekeepers with 100 or more colonies in production must remit the levy to the SBDC by May 31 of each year. In

addition to the levy, these beekeepers are required to pay a \$25 registration fee on an annual basis. Beekeepers with less than 100 colonies in production are not required to remit the levy or registration fee. However, they may choose to participate in the SBDC by paying the levy and fee at their option. The levy rate is determined by an order of the commission. From the levy raised, the agency performs research and development activities that are intended to reduce beekeepers' costs of production, increase production or develop new markets.



scientist and government. The honeybee decline is directly affecting honey production and pollination and thereby affecting our livelihood and the food supply.

The SBDC Board is attacking the problem on several fronts. Practical and applied research into problems affecting our Saskatchewan situation is in the forefront.

The worldwide decline of honeybee populations cannot be attributed to a single "smoking gun". The general consensus from available research is that multiple factors are associated with the decline. Factors such as varroa mites, wintering, nosema, viruses, nutrition,

pesticides, and weather are in the forefront of issues causing the death of our honeybees. The current project "Saskatchewan

Beekeepers Adapting Technology to Meet their Needs: Hive Health, Colony Mortality and Productivity" is making significant progress in coping with the problems that face the industry. Past and present CAAP funding has played a major role in progress made to this point.

General public awareness of the problems facing beekeepers is key to maintaining interest and support for our industry. The recent CAAP grant of \$370,000 and the

associated media exposure has highlighted the seriousness of the decline in honey production and pollination in Saskatchewan.

This calendar "Pollination: Seasons of Beekeeping" was designed to inform and educate our public. The SBDC Board approved the printing and distribution of the calendar to members of the Saskatchewan Beekeepers' Development Commission on the basis of one calendar for each 100 hives. Extra copies will be available at cost (\$4) until the printing lot is exhausted.

Thank you for your support of our industry.



President's Report

So far we've had a pretty temperate winter. I wonder sometimes when the weather is above 0 how many of our bees venture out and don't come back...deceived by the splash of warmth on the hive.

It's been an eventful last couple of months. At one time I thought beekeepers hibernated for the winter...

Agribition was another great turn out. Thank you to Colette and Michelle again for taking care of the Agri-Ed Showcase and Tradeshow Booths, and thank you to all of the volunteers that gave their time as well. Pierre the Bear showed up again and the kids, as always, loved him (thanks to Justin for jumping in Pierre- we'll work on getting him cooler for next year!). The Agri-Ed was in a different location this year and we had more space which was great. I haven't heard about sales from the Tradeshow booth, other than the club tees - sounds like we've sold several dozen. I know I've sold several myself.

Speaking of t-shirts - we still have lots left and we'll be selling them at the AGM in March. These tees help the club support members like yourself, which in turn helps our bees. So come buy one or two and let people know. We still have all sizes. It's a great cause and a great way to promote the club. (pictures of the t-shirts on the right)

I recently became the Secretary Treasurer for

the SBA and SBDC late last fall and have been busy with those duties since then. Both Annual General Meetings for the 2 organizations are coming up in March by the way. The SBA conference in Nov/Dec was a big success (I thank everyone that helped out for that). Linda was there to represent the club and will be presenting her findings at our AGM. There is a lot going on with these 2 organizations so check out the website often (saskbeekeepers.com). We'll be launching a new spanky clean version of the site soon this spring as well.

Looks like my term on the executive will be up as of this AGM. I will not be running again but will be there to support the club as I can. A total of 2 positions will be up this year. Daphne, Jeff and Linda will still be present. If you are interested or may know of people that would be great as an Executive please bring your nominations and votes to the AGM. I'll be training someone on how to update the website as well. We're looking for people that will be actively involved. This is a chance to make decisions and participate in bee related stuff for the club and the industry. It's quite fun actually, and again, it's another good cause - we keepers are a strange eclectic bunch with creative ideas and big hearts. We love our bees and want to keep them healthy and support them. Being a club director is

perfect for getting involved. You should give it a go.

I wanted to make a mention of and thank Angela Fuller for taking care of renting the extractor last year. Looks like the club made some money on that as well. We'll be using the proceeds to pay the "little wonder" off.

And to plant the seed for the late spring, we'll need a location for the field day 2012 - give it a thought, we'd love to see your setup. There's always something new to learn in beekeeping and it's neat to see how people keep their bees. I adopted some hives in the fall, and noticed that they were setup a little different than my own.

The numbers from CAPA are out - looks like Canada's bee losses last year were big. I hope yours aren't part of those stats. I've also been reading up on new pests that have emerged. Hopefully Saskatchewan is too cold for them all, or perhaps they'll stay away long enough for us to be proactive with them. Beetles, and flies and mites oh my. Mites are already here, I know, but we're all working on that.

I guess I'll plug Dr. Albert Robertson's Saskatraz project next. Albert's work is getting funding for this and he and his team are doing a great job. Check his website out...

<http://www.saskatraz.com/>

The club is always looking for more beekeepers, whether they have 30 years or no years experience. If you know of past members or potentially new members, pass along our contact information and website.

See you at the AGM. Bring your ideas and your stories. I hope your hives come through father winter in good shape. Some things to start thinking about if you haven't already is to start testing/treating for Varroa and Nosema. Organic or otherwise, you should start thinking about it whether you have these things or not.



Conrad



For Beekeeping Supplies and Honey Containers in the Regina Area

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Buzzing Connections

The **American Bee Journal** was established in 1861 by Samuel Wagner and has been published continuously since that time, except for a brief period during the Civil War. The Journal has the honor of being the oldest English language beekeeping publication in the world. Today, Dadant and Sons has the privilege of publishing the American

Bee Journal for subscribers throughout the world. Readership is concentrated among hobby and commercial beekeepers, bee supply dealers, queen breeders, package-bee shippers, honey packers, and entomologists. This publication on bees has been helping beekeepers for almost 150 years. Scores of interesting and

informative articles to make beekeeping more fun and profitable. Monthly crop and market information, practical information, scientific and experimental reports, industry news, and display and classified ads. A staff with many years of experience to research and answer questions.

It is a monthly publication that contains, on average, 100 pages per issue.

Movie News - Vanishing of the Bees

Imagine half a million adults skipping town and leaving their children behind. Picture an opened suitcase filled with bundles of cash at a bus stop and yet no robber wants to snatch it. The apiary science mystery known as 'Colony Collapse Disorder' displays these very symptoms. Not only do the bees abandon their hive, but the queen and the brood as well. Unnatural. Unheard of. Even the predators that

usually raid the hive for honey stay far away. At first, this occurrence sounds like an urban legend or an exaggerated tale. Except it's not. The situation is both dire and all too real. Bees are disappearing all over the planet and no one knows why.

Vanishing of the Bees follows commercial beekeepers David Hackenberg and Dave Mendes as they strive to keep their bees healthy and fulfill pollination contracts across the U.S. The film explores the struggles they face as the two friends plead their case on Capital Hill and travel across the Pacific Ocean in the quest to protect their honeybees.

Since this nearly year-long investigation first began, thousands of beekeepers around the globe have come out of the bee yard (previously criticized for

following bad beekeeping practices) and admitted to the same problem, some report losses of more than 90 percent of their colonies. And there are no dead bees to be found. It is estimated that CCD has resulted in the death of more than one quarter of the 2.4 million bee colonies in at least 35 states across America.

Filed across the US, Europe, Australia and Asia, this documentary examines the alarming disappearance of honeybees and the greater meaning it holds about the relationship between mankind and mother earth. As scientists puzzle over the cause, organic beekeepers indicate alternative reasons for this tragic loss.

"If you like eating, see this film"

<http://www.vanishingbees.com/synopsis/>

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A Glance at the SBA AGM Cont'd

Graham Parsons [Saskoberia] spoke on Varroa mites and the results of the different treatments administered.

Graham will be attending the Regina and District BeeClub AGM. Come out and hear all about it!!

There was Dr. Albert Robertson who provided us with a Saskatraz update. He thinks synthetics are harming the bees – they can't see or smell the mites. Come out to the AGM to hear about Dr. Albert Robertson's research. Information can be found at www.saskatraz.com

Among the many topics that Cory Bacon, Canadian Honey Council (CHC) talked about he mentioned there's a Commercial Beekeeping course being offered at Fairview College in Alberta. B-talk is online and CHC applied for funding to cover the cost of publishing HiveLights magazine. And any of you that have been

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waiting to attend the Apimondia Symposium, it's in Quebec this year November 16-17, 2012.

Mr. Scott Ingledew of Serecon Consulting spoke about Farm Level Biosecurity Standards for the Bee Industry. Find more here : www.beebiosecurity.ca

Dr. Rob Currie of the Entomology Dept of the U of M came out and gave a great talk about the "Economic Threshold for Varroa". His slides include how to determine the

percentage of varroa infestation in your hive and charts the economic threshold in early-late spring vs. early-late fall. See the following for more information <http://www.capabees.com/main/files/pdf/varroathreshold.pdf>

Elise Gagnon – True Source Honey. www.truesourcehoney.com is all about the ethical sourcing of honey. It is where companies

purchasing honey. And honey beekeepers could provide traceability information to can be traced back to the beekeeper. Check out their web site and Facebook page where information such as 13,000 drums of Chinese Honey seized, or 900 containers were seized/3 arrested.

And lastly Randy Oliver of www.scientificbeekeeping.com. If there was a Randy Oliver Fan Club I think I would become a member. He is very passionate about his work with honey bees - you couldn't help but get caught up in his enthusiasm. Randy spoke of Varroa mites and of the many types of viruses coexisting at the same time in the same hive and how, together, can cause collapses at an alarming rate.

When testing for Nosema, because of the number of false negatives you can encounter, Randy doesn't go by spore count alone but counts the number of affected bees

instead. See "The Nosema Twins – Part 3 Sampling" at <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/the-nosema-twins-part-3-sampling/>.

He spoke of the effect of miticides on the hive and low sperm counts in queens (<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/the-learning-curve-part-4-the-synthetic-mitocides>) How sick bees "may intentionally abandon the hive, in a process termed "altruistic self removal".

He also talked about the 7 steps to bee health – including good nutrition, recognize disease, parasite monitoring, minimize pesticide exposure and to have lots of good young queens!!

On the Trade Show side, there was representation by Tony Lalonde Sales, BeeMaid, Cowen Manufacturing, just to name a few. I think I'm going to try out one of the Cappings Punches that BeeMaid had on display.

I can't wait for next year's SBA conference.



Linda

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Geoff's Corner

Have questions and need information about beekeeping in Saskatchewan?

Do you want to become a registered Beekeeper in our Province?


Contact Saskatchewan's Provincial Apiarist:


Geoff Wilson (306.953.2304)

Email: geoff.wilson@gov.sk.ca



Honey Today

 Wholesale Honey was averaged at \$3.94/lb during January 2012.

 Retail Honey was averaged at \$5.26/lb during January 2012.

Statistics taken from the National Honey Board



About Our Club...

The Regina and District Bee Club has been active in the City of Regina for over fifty years as a cooperative for ordering honey bees and as a network for education and information on beekeeping.

It is a priority to inform members about current issues in the beekeeping industry to ensure that a proactive role is taken with all industry issues such as bee diseases, mites and pesticides.

The Regina and District Bee Club participates in the Agri-Ed Show Case at Canadian Western Agribition. The focus is to educate children from Grades 4-6 about agriculture and food. Club members volunteer their time to speak about the

bees and beekeeping to well in excess of 10,000 visitors each year.

The Regina and District Bee Club in partnership with the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association profile the bee keeping industry as a whole in the Trade Show area in order to:

- Promote and sell products of the hive;
- Inform visitors about the industry and its role in the Saskatchewan economy; and
- Develop a relationship with other Saskatchewan agriculture producers.

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Business Card \$10.00

1/4 pg \$25.00

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1/2 pg \$45.00

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Our next Newsletter will be early May. Deadline for submissions is April 27, 2012.

Membership Benefits:

- A cooperative for ordering bees;
- At the annual meeting, guest speakers are invited to give presentations on current issues;
- Communication of industry issues to enable members to have a voice in provincial decision making;
- Hold "Field Days" to enable members to learn about beekeeping best practice methods; and
- Information and support system for fellow beekeepers.

