

North Central Beekeepers, Brainerd, Mn. 56401

April, 2012

Lunch Committee; Terry Patrick and Lyle Fleischer

At this meeting we will be following a different format. The informational presentations will be first followed by the business meeting;

“Pesticides and Pollinators

Scott Lucas, Vice President-North Central Beekeepers Association

It has been well documented in recent years that beekeepers have been experiencing significant losses to colonies. There are a number of explanations offered for this phenomenon, which has been termed “Colony Collapse Disorder,” and the impacts of this phenomenon have the potential to be felt throughout the food industry, as approximately 30 percent of our fruits and vegetables are dependent on pollinators to propagate.

Certain pesticides have been found in high levels in northern Minnesota beehives recently, and those hives have frequently seen complete losses due to premature mortality.

On Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm, Agricultural Chemical Investigators Greg Cremers and Mark Magusson from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will present “How to manage Pesticides and Fertilizers for Beneficial Insects” at the monthly meeting of the North Central Beekeepers Association, which will be held at the Northland Arboretum in Baxter, MN. This event is open to the general public, and all people who use chemicals or fertilizers even casually in their gardens or yards are encouraged to attend.

This presentation will educate both beekeepers and members of the public on how to use these products in a way that can both serve their use while minimizing the impact on beneficial insects, such as bees, that are critical to agricultural production.

For more information, contact Scott Lucas at 218-316-3874.”

An additional view;

Grain crop agriculture is another source of bee culture problems. Corn, soybeans and sunflowers all produce a pollen lacking in essential nutrients for bees. I don't know that anyone thinks that keeping bees around corn is not a problem. Obviously, if 90% of the acreage is corn,

especially "clean farmed" corn, that means there will be little nutrition in either nectar or pollen for bees most of the year, and the pollen will be nutritionally inadequate. Add to that the level of pesticide exposure, and bees in a monoculture is a tough go. Single minded blame for all that is wrong with beekeeping is not just systemic pesticides but also in the developing crops monoculture.

I assume that you all have your bees all unwrapped, checked/treated for mites and nosema. The new packages have been put into their either nuc or super with pollen and syrup and are busy establishing a hive. The next calendar event to take place on the beekeeping calendar is splitting and swarming. If you do some type of splitting or frame manipulation in a timely manner you can reduce swarming to a minimum. However if you don't almost all year old or older colonies will swarm. New packages are not so bound and determined to swarm or at least will wait longer into summer before they reproduce and make a new colony. There are a great many splits that you can make some work for me and not for you and they vary with what you need to do. Are you simply slowing swarming? Replacing winter death loss? Or are you splitting to increase your honey or pollination colony numbers. But remember no matter what split you make they all help reduce your mite populations. This is a valuable tool in the mite wars and is not chemical. A walk away split is very simple and fairly successful. Take a frame of open brood with eggs and larvae in it the bees hanging on it, a frame of sealed brood and bees, a frame of foundation and two frames of honey and pollen place in a nuc box. Set beside the parent colony and walk away. You may want to shake the bees off one more frame into this split. I make these in the evening so the bees are somewhat settled in by morning and more of the forager bees return here with nectar and pollen. Wait 4 or more days and see if you have queen cells if not add a new frame of open brood. A little thing that helps is to take your hive tool and break down the cell wall on 3/4 cells

with fresh larvae. Break the wall down as far as you can without disturbing the larvae. This same split can also be made with a virgin queen, mated queen or ripe queen cell but don't put open brood in, only capped brood, so as they hatch the queen will have more room to lay and nurse bees to take care of the larvae as they develop. The extreme split; is to take an entire 2 deep colony and make 4 equal splits. Use 2 additional deeps and place ½ of each box in the center of a deep and fill the remainder with either drawn comb or if on a flow use foundation. In each box place a ripe queen cell . Place each split on a bottom board and let them be bees. Splits can be moved to other yards or left where they are. Something that may help is to confine the bees to their individual box for 24/36 hours then place a leafy branch over the entrance so the bees have to crawl not fly directly out of the box. Next trip to the bee yard remove the branch. By confining the bees inside they seem to loose where they came from, but watch the temperature, don't cook them . There are as many types of splits as there are beekeepers. Each beekeeper has a method that uses slightly different populations, timing, equipment and philosophy. However, it is important to remember honeybees, adaptable creatures that they are, can live with almost any split that we hand them.

Along with replacing winter losses and increasing your count, splitting also provides some swarm control, interferes with the life cycle of the varoa mite and encourages queen production. It provides an opportunity to rotate onto fresh foundation and provides fresh comb for replacement. And it also provides easy to move units for moving to other yards and for sale.

To save the club a large amount of money and if you would accept this monthly newsletter via. Electronics. Please email me at [burtsbees@brainerd.net](mailto:burtsbees@brainerd.net) and simply say, newsletter YES.

I would like to have started last month!

