

FCBA NEWS

Franklin County Beekeepers Association

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July 2020 Volume 3 - Issue 6

About our upcoming meetings:

Club Upcoming Events

Fall Newbee Workshop

July 16, 6:30 pm – 4038 Shatzer St Chambersburg

Fall Club Meeting

August 6, 6:30pm – 771 Mt. Cydonia Rd, Fayetteville

Both meetings will be held outdoors and abide by state COVID-19 mandates. Please bring/wear a face covering.

Fall Newbee Workshop –

PennState meeting rooms are still unavailable, so this meeting will be held at David Leduc's residence. We will follow state guidance on distancing and personal protection, No food is promised. Address is: **4038 Shatzer St, Chambersburg (off Hade Road west of Chambersburg; NOT Shatzer Road near the Burger King).**

Fall Club Meeting – Will be held at Townsend Apiary, 771 Mt. Cydonia Rd, Fayetteville.

Again, we will follow state guidance on distancing and personal protection.

During this Fall club meeting we will be voting on the new bylaws that were proposed at the Banquet last year.

July in the Apiary

Swarm worries are less prominent this month, though you'll need to be on the lookout for robbing as the summer dearth approaches. Your main focus in July will be honey harvesting, though.

) Watch for robbing. Reduce entrances on weaker colonies, especially if you suspect they are diseased. Marauders from healthy colonies can bring diseases back with the booty.

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As the nectar flow continues, add, remove and extract honey supers as needed. If you've got extra supers on hand, swap on a fresh box as soon as you remove a full one. Otherwise, extract quickly and get an empty super back on the hive.

-) Consolidate your honey supers as July progresses. Rearrange frames if necessary. Your goal is to minimize unprocessed nectar on the frames at harvest time. When you are ready to extract, give frames with uncapped cells a shake while holding them parallel to the ground. If nectar comes out, the frames are too wet to include in the harvest.

Continue to monitor your varroa levels, though don't use chemical treatments on the hive as long as honey supers are on. The entrance reducer can also come out as long as there's a good nectar flow, which should extend through part of this month.

-) Plan your mite treatment. Monitor mite levels throughout the month so you know whether or not you need to treat. If numbers exceed threshold, don't wait until August to deal with the problem. Many colonies have been lost to *Varroa* by mid-August in the past. Even if your numbers are low enough to wait, finish treatments no later than August 15 so that your winter bees are raised with minimal exposure to mites and mite-borne disease.

The queen's laying will start to decline slightly from the booming levels of spring, but you should still see ample brood and eggs in your brood nest during inspections. The hive will be

bustling, but try to spot the queen if you can.

-) Resolve queen problems. Queens are generally not available after the first week of August. It's best to make colonies queenright now so they have time to collect themselves for winter. Recombine hives if necessary, but only if colonies are not diseased.

On hot, humid evenings, you might see large clusters of bees on the outside the hive. This so-called 'bearding' is not necessarily cause for alarm – think of it as the bee-equivalent of what we would call 'porch sitting' on a hot summer night. It's a clue you may need to provide better ventilation for your hive, though. Make sure you're getting good airflow through the screened bottom board, add another super to relieve congestion or prop open your outer cover with a couple of pennies or a small piece of wood to provide additional ventilation

-) Minimize heat stress. Provide plenty of ventilation for warm, moist air to leave the hive. Make sure the bees have a water source. If possible, give your colony afternoon shade during hot days.

Assist swarmed colonies if necessary. In terms of summer population, colonies are weakest five to six weeks after they have swarmed. Reduce entrances, confirm the new queen is laying well, and combine swarmed colonies with other colonies if necessary. Be ready to feed swarmed colonies in August if they are light on stores.

) What you do in July will have a measurable impact on your colony's chance of winter survival. Bees raised after this month must endure the long, wet winter and still be strong enough to raise a new generation early next spring. July is your opportunity to create ideal conditions for development of healthy winter bees!

Once you've harvested some honey, here's one final task for July: Mix 1/3 cup of honey and a little fresh mint into a pitcher of your favorite ice tea. Set out a lawn chair near your hive, pour a tall glass and enjoy watching your bees at work.

Below find samplings from the July PSBA newsletter. If you are not yet a PSBA member think about joining. Check out the Pennsylvania Beekeeper website for more info.
<http://www.pastatebeekeepers.org/>

What's New

“Penn State has begun another research project assessing the differences between 5 different types of queens – the specifics of each type of queen will not be disclosed, but each beekeeper that is involved will be getting 20 queens (4 of each type) and will be collecting data on them throughout the year to assess how well each one does. Stay

tuned for updates from Penn State as the study progresses and data comes in (probably next spring at the earliest).”

2021 Farm Show Rule Updates

Each year, the Farm Show exhibiting rules are updated and changes made to create a fair competition and clarify areas that come into question. Farm Show Apiary Department chair-persons Charlie Vorisek and Thomas Butzler compare notes, thoughts and meet with the Farm Show administrators in late March. At this meeting we collaborate on problems, solutions and how to make the show interesting for the general public.

These changes are often in answer to exhibitor or spectator concerns. First change for 2021, is ALL entries must be done online prior to entry-day. Exhibits may no longer be entered onsite, on Thursday before the show. Deadline for 2021 entries is 6:00PM, Wednesday, Jan 7, 2021.

“Exhibits may be dated or stamped by judges”. Therefore, we plan to ink-stamp all entries, where practical. It is intended to be placed discreetly and not to deface the product. With regard to County and Individual.

At times the judges are forced to disqualify exhibits because they failed to meet all the rules of entry. To do otherwise is unfair to the exhibitor that closely followed the rules.

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Mead rules will only allow “one standard 1x2.6” mailing label adhered to the bottle”. “The type of honey (and fruit) must be noted” on the label. No additional labels or larger labels are permitted.

Rule #8. “Comb honey, extracted honey, crystallized and creamed extracted honey, and chunk honey are all judged on their appearance for market. Therefore, legal labels must be attached including the words: honey, name, address, and net weight.” This rule has not changed. Use of labels is a point of debate. Labels give the Farm Show exhibits connection to the public, as they like to see who the winners are and where they are from. The Farm Show administrators want to see labels. Previously, the labels have been factored in judging, but not clear points on the scorecard. Labels will carry 5 points on the scorecard in 2021.

Hope to see you all at the upcoming meetings!

Club President Message

So much has transpired yet little has changed and there seems to be no clear guidance from our various areas of government on this COVID-19 thing. Currently, we cannot get into the meeting rooms at the Extension Office and I know we all want to meet. The board has decided to forgo the Ice Cream Social this year because of the restrictions. Like the meme on Facebook says “I’m going to put a few pumpkins on the porch, hang the

Christmas lights, eat some turkey & call it a year”. Seriously, the current plans are to hold the scheduled meetings, but perhaps not at the advertised location due to restrictions.

I have been answering a few calls for mentorship and the “shouldn’t my bees...” communications have diminished so perhaps things are getting back to normal. I try to keep an eye on Facebook, especially the FCBA page.

FCBA is now associated with the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association.

The meeting on Aug 6 is the first official general meeting since the bylaw revisions were proposed so there will be a vote on accepting the revisions at that meeting.

If anyone has suggestions on “meetings” or would like to request something “special” (or different), please feel free to contact any board member so we can discuss it.

Stay safe.

