UGA Bee Lab Launches New Website

Finally, we decided to give our tired, old website a facelift. The address has remained the same but the appearance and how you navigate the site has changed completely. If you have visited the site before you should check it out again. We have updated much of the content along with adding new information. If you have never been to our site before check it out.

www.ent.uga.edu/bees

Another bee friendly website that was launched recently was the Bee Health section on eXtension. The website is a direct response to concerns about quality information being posted on the internet. Users can access eXtension with the same confidence they would contacting their own state extension agent. Information published on the Bee Health website represents a comprehensive summary from scientific authorities across the US.

www.extension.org/pages/BeeHealth_Community_Page
The Biggest Young Harris Institute Ever

This past May the Young Harris Beekeeping Institute was filled to capacity weeks before the event. This is the first time we had to turn people away from the Institute. Maybe it was due to the overwhelming spike in interest over honey bees, or the excellent speaker line-up or maybe the reputation the Institute has gained over the years. Whatever the reason, we were grateful so many people signed up but at the same time disappointed to have to turn people away. If you are interested in attending the Institute next year, we suggest you pre-register early. In the past we have always welcomed walk-ins but we may not be able to accommodate them in the future.

Our guest speakers for 2009 were Maryann Frazier from Penn State and Dr. Greg Hunt from Purdue University. Maryann is an extension apicultural specialist and has been involved in research investigating how pesticides, including in-hive miticides, affect honey bees and other pollinators. Maryann along with her colleagues at Penn State has also been involved in some of the latest research associated with Colony Collapse Disorder.

Dr. Greg Hunt is a professor of Entomology at Purdue University and one of the leading scientists in honey bee genomics and was a member on the team that mapped the honey bee genome. Both were well received and offered their expertise on many different subjects.

Next year promises to be another great show. The institute proper is scheduled for May 14th and 15th with the Master Beekeeping and Honey Judging certificates planned the day prior, May 13th. If you are interested in attending, information about registration and programs will be posted on our website early next spring. Hope to see you there.

Brendan Beyer celebrates passing the Journeyman Exam with Dr. Delaplane. He's the youngest to reach the Journeyman level. Congrats!
Another fine shrimp boil provided by JM and Frieda Sikes

Speakers Bill Owens and Cindy Bee at the Low Country Boil
Guest lecturer, Maryann Frazier, talks about pesticides detected in wax and pollen

Georgia Beekeepers Association Fall Meeting

The Georgia Beekeepers Association’s fall meeting will be September 25\textsuperscript{th} & 26\textsuperscript{th} at the Walker County Civic Center in Rock Spring, Georgia. GBA president, Bob Binnie, has lined up an extraordinary group of speakers.

Dr. Tom Seeley is Professor and Chairman in the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University. He is a world authority on animal behavior, especially the social behavior of honey bees. At home more in the field than the laboratory, his scientific work features observational and experimental investigations of the inner workings of honey bee colonies living under natural conditions. He began keeping and studying bees in 1969. While in high school he brought home his first swarm in a “hastily constructed” hive box. As a college student, he worked each summer in the laboratory of Dr. Roger A.
Morse at Cornell, where he learned the craft of beekeeping and began probing the inner workings of the bee colony. Thoroughly intrigued by the smooth functioning of honey bee colonies, he went on to graduate school at Harvard University where he studied under two ant men (Drs. Bert Hölldobler and Edward O. Wilson) and began his research on bees in earnest.


Dr. Seeley is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he is the recipient of numerous honors for his scientific work including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Alexander von Humboldt Distinguished U.S. Scientist Award, and a Gold Medal from Apimondia for his book *The Wisdom of the Hive*. He is also an entertaining and informative speaker one I wouldn’t want to miss. It has taken years for the GBA to finally host Dr. Seeley, so take advantage of the opportunity.

Other speakers include Dr. Joe Latshaw, founder of the Ohio Queen Breeders and Latshaw apiaries which was established with the distinct emphasis of producing sustainable and productive lines for the beekeeping industry. Dr. Jamie Ellis, a Georgia native and Assistant Professor of Entomology at the University of Florida. Dr. Fred Hossler from East Tennessee State University, who will be showing a microscopic 3D slide show on bee anatomy. Dave Mendes, commercial beekeeper extraordinary and VP of the American Beekeeping Federation along with Doug McGinnis, one of the largest producers of comb honey. And finally balancing out the program is Keith Fielder, Putnum county extension agent, who will be sharing his extensive knowledge on bee plants of Georgia.

For hotel accommodations check out the GBA website www.gabeekeeping.com

**Michael Young Inducted as Member of the British Empire, MBE**

If you have attended an Eastern Apicultural Society meeting, the Young Harris Bee institute or a number of state beekeeping association meetings in the last five years, then you surely have had the privilege of attending one of Michael Young’s lectures. Michael has introduced to the U.S. an appreciation of honey judging that did not exist here prior to his arrival. He has also introduced encaustic painting, exotic honey recipes, mead making and exciting stories about his world of beekeeping. His humor and good nature have produced a bond between the Northern Ireland and U.S. beekeepers that is invaluable to both. This past March, Michael was inducted as a Member of the British Empire, the MBE. It is a high honor and very deserving indeed. His friends in the US and abroad are extremely proud of Michael and send him our heartfelt congratulations. A close friend of Michaels, Michael Badger, sent along this information about the MBE Award.

The Order of the British Empire recognizes distinguished service to the arts and sciences, public services outside the Civil Service and work with charitable and welfare organizations of all kinds. It was created during the First World War in 1917 by King George V. The King recognized the need for a new award of honor which could be more widely awarded, in recognition of the large numbers of people in the British
Isles and other parts of the Empire who were helping the war effort both as combatants and as civilians on the home front.

For the first time, women were included in an order of chivalry, and it was decided that the Order should also include foreigners who had helped the British war effort. From 1918 onwards there were Military and Civil Divisions, as George V also intended that after the war the Order should be used to reward services to the State in a much wider sense.

Today the Order of the British Empire is the order of chivalry of British democracy. Valuable service is the only criterion for the award, and the Order is now used to reward service in a wide range of useful activities. Citizens from other countries may also receive an honorary award for services rendered to the United Kingdom and its people. There are more than 100,000 living members of the Order throughout the world.

Following is what was written about Michael Young in his local newspaper. A long-standing member and former chairman of Dromore Beekeepers' Association has been awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year Honors List. Hillsborough man, Mr. Michael William Young, sitting chairman of the Institute of Northern Ireland Beekeepers(INI) - an umbrella group for the Province's beekeepers, boasting BBC journalist and Breakfast news presenter Bill Turnbull as its president - was awarded the honor for voluntary service to apiculture (beekeeping) and conservation.

Mr. Young said he was humbled to have received the award and he paid tribute to his friends and family for all their support, also hailing the executive committee of the Institute of Northern Ireland Beekeepers as "the true hero", for all beekeepers and wider public alike. "It is just unreal to have received this highly acclaimed award and I am still lost for words," he said. "I feel honored and humbled to have been given this great accolade." He added, "I am truly blessed and enriched with a bounty of friends and a beautiful family of four lovely daughters, Jodie, Jamie, Jasmin and Rachel Harley, two granddaughters, Sienna and Scarlet and of course, Rae, the Queen bee of the hive, and like any Queen, rules with a silver tongue but always warm and comforting. With all humility I acknowledge the support of my friends and family around me".

Mr. Young said of the INI executive committee that it spent a lot of energy promoting what he called "this man-friendly little beastie", the Honey Bee. "Only when one gets involved with the honey bee," he said, "is it possible to really appreciate the magnitude of the work done for humankind and the planet alike by this insignificant little insect. For centuries milked like cattle, sometimes ruthlessly, for their five invaluable products, honey, beeswax, propolis, royal jelly and pollen, to provide sweetness, light and healing for humankind; to them I bow in homage."

A teacher of Hospitality at Belfast Metropolitan College and Executive Chef at Malone Golf Club, where
he was surrounded respectively, he said, by terrific students, exceptionally helpful and friendly
colleagues, excellent managers, staff and the best clientele he had ever cooked for. Mr. Young said 2008
had been for him a very fortunate year. "I imagine the students as a colony of bees within the hive; those
students who are similar to the Guard Bees are always on the defensive side and looking for a bit of
confrontation, ready to sting without notice; some students always keep their workstation and themselves
immaculately clean, always dressed to perfection, very much like the House Bees keeping everything in
order. Other students support and look after their peers, making sure that they are well, whilst willing to
put their shoulder to the wheel to assist, no matter the burden, not unlike the Nurse Bees of the colony;
others tirelessly gather all information on the course work to extend their knowledge in becoming a chef,
the Forager Bees, whose job it is to gather the bounty of nectar and pollen for the wellbeing of the
colony".
And finally the drones! “Those lazy drones, always late, the class clowns, but as in the colony of bees, the
drones provide a harmony, creating a spirit within the hive and they can't be done without."

Additionally, Michael has contributed an entire meal of honey recipes to the recently published book The
Honey Handbook, by Kim Flottum. Congratulations Michael!

Florida Adopts the Nation’s First Honey Standard

Press release from the Secretary of Agriculture, Charles Bronson
Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson announced that his
department has instituted the first regulation in the nation - and perhaps the world - prohibiting any
additives, chemicals or adulterants in honey that is produced, processed or sold in Florida. The regulation,
which takes effect July 14, provides the first-ever "Standard of Identity" for honey.

"We want to assure consumers that the product they are buying is pure," Bronson said. "Too often in the
past, honey has been cut with water or sugar, and sometimes even contaminated with insecticides or
antibiotics. In the future, when you're paying for honey in this state, pure honey is what you will get".

State Rep. Alan Hays, of Umatilla, has been a major advocate of the new regulation, which is supported
by Florida's honey industry, joined Bronson at a press conference here today to unveil the new rule. "I am
pleased that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is leading the way for all
America in establishing this standard by which all honey may now be measured," Hays said.
"Commissioner Bronson and the leaders of the honey industry - beekeepers and honey processors - are to
be applauded for their leadership in protecting not only the health of Floridians but also in protecting this
industry which is so vital to the production of food products for all mankind."

Under terms of the new regulation, honey containing anything other than the "natural food product
resulting from the harvest of nectar by honeybees" is considered an adulterated or mislabeled product.
Such products are subject to a "stop sale" order in which a manufacturer, processor or merchant would be
served with an order prohibiting the product's sale. Repeat offenders would face fines of up to $500 per
violation.

Florida is the fourth-leading honey producing state in the country with cash receipts to beekeepers of
more than $15 million in 2008 and an industry that has an economic impact estimated at $40 million a
year. It employs more than 500 Floridians.

As a result of a flood of adulterated honey from overseas into Florida in 2006, a petition was submitted to
the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) later that year by five major honey producers and
processors, asking the federal agency to establish a U.S. standard of identity for honey. Two years later,
the FDA responded that due to other pressing matters, it would be unable to review the petition. At that
point, the industry asked Bronson's department if it would consider developing a standard of identity for
the product, and today's announcement is the culmination of that effort. Bronson noted that despite efforts
in various quarters, international governing bodies have to date been unable to establish an international
definition of or standard of identity for honey, making it likely that Florida's regulation governing honey may be the first of its kind anywhere.

As a side note to this press release I would like to mention that the honey standard would not have been possible without the hard work and persistence of Nancy Gentry, a Florida native and beekeeper. Nancy tirelessly dedicated two years to represent the beekeeping industry, while also arranging for corporations to present justification for revising the Codex standard (a European based intergovernmental model jointly sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)). In the past, the FDA has refused adoption of the Codex standard due to lack of funds for implementation and enforcement. That is why it is important for individual states to adopt independent honey standards. It’s an important step in finally ridding our country of adulterated honey. Plus, Nancy has traveled across the US to convince other states about the importance of adopting a honey standard. Thank you Nancy!

Honey Laundering

By P-I reporter Daniel Lathrop and P-I senior correspondent Andrew Schneider (edited for content)

On April 25, 2009 Mike Ingalls’ business, Pure Foods Inc. located in Sultan, Washington was raided by a dozen agents from Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. "I just sell honey -- what the hell is this all about?" he remembered asking, as he was hustled into a tiny room with his office manager and truck driver.

Three days before the April 25th raid, customs had persuaded a federal judge in Seattle to issue the search warrant. He was suspected of trafficking in counterfeit merchandise -- a honey smuggler.

The international honey trade has become increasingly rife with crime and intrigue. In the U.S., where bee colonies are dying off and demand for imported honey is soaring, traders of the thick amber liquid are resorting to elaborate schemes to dodge tariffs and health safeguards in order to dump cheap honey on the market, a five-month Seattle P-I investigation has found. The business is plagued by foreign hucksters and shady importers who rip off conscientious U.S. packers with honey diluted with sugar water or corn syrup -- or worse, tainted with pesticides or antibiotics.

Here are the P-I's findings to date:

- Big shipments of contaminated honey from China are frequently laundered in other countries -- an illegal practice called "transshipping" -- in order to avoid U.S. import fees, protective tariffs or taxes imposed on foreign products that intentionally undercut domestic prices.
- In a series of shipments in the past year, tons of honey produced in China passed through the ports of Tacoma and Long Beach, Calif., after being fraudulently marked as a tariff-free product of Russia.
- Tens of thousands of pounds of honey entering the U.S. each year come from countries that raise few bees and have no record of producing honey for export.
- The government promises intense scrutiny of honey crossing our borders but only a small fraction is inspected, and seizures and arrests remain rare.
The feds haven't adopted a legal definition of honey, making it difficult for enforcement agents to keep bad honey off the shelves. Law enforcement officials say they have no clue of the routes smuggled honey takes while being shipped to the U.S. But honey producers and brokers, here and overseas, say they often warn Immigration and Customs Enforcement about specific incoming tainted shipments which are ignored. Here are two examples from foreign customs officials. Example #1: A shipment of 125 containers holding 1.7 million liters of honey traveled from Shanghai to Singapore and on to Australia. Then the Chinese honey was relabeled as “Australian” and separated into two loads of 200-liter drums and shipped to Los Angeles and Tacoma. The second example is how five containers holding 250 drums of Chinese honey were shipped from China to India then relabeled as “Indian” and sent on to Norfolk, Va., and Jacksonville, Fla. Brokers say it was then shipped to Iowa. Laundered Chinese honey is often shipped from the following 13 countries and then relabeled as coming from that country or territory; Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Russia, Singapore, S. Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. For the Food and Drug Administration, it's all about keeping adulterated and possibly hazardous food off grocery shelves. For years, China has used an animal antibiotic -- chloramphenicol -- to treat diseases ravaging their beehives. The FDA has banned that drug in any food product sold in the U.S.

"We have continuing safety concerns that center on harmful materials being present in some imported honey. It's not something that can be ignored by the FDA," said Martin Stutsman, a senior FDA food-safety officer and the agency's top cop when it comes to adulterated food. "The consumer is cheated and the honest manufacturer trying to sell quality products is undercut and has a hard time competing," he said.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement began closely watching honey shipments eight years ago. That's when the Commerce Department's International Trade Commission bowed to pleas from American honey producers and leveled anti-dumping fees on Argentine and Chinese honey being sold for far less than what domestic producers could charge.

Today, Argentine honey entering this country is taxed an additional 2.2 cents a pound. The tariff on Chinese honey is much stiffer at $1.20 a pound and some say it's expected to increase. Although arrests in such cases remain rare, customs can pursue criminal prosecutions of shippers and importers who launder or falsify the origin of products to avoid paying taxes, duties and other fees. The Pacific Northwest is a prosperous portal for Asian honey traders. In the fiscal year ending Oct. 1, 60 shipments of foreign honey totaling more than 7.5 million pounds arrived at the ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Portland, records show. All but one came from the Far East. Each year, another $42 million worth of honey comes across the Canadian border from Washington state to North Dakota, customs says. Jerry Malmo, border protection's assistant area port director in Seattle, said intercepting illegal foreign shipments is a priority. "We've had many problems with honey in the past," he said, "so we do our best to stay on top of it."

While per capita consumption of honey in America is 1.1 pounds per year, the country produces only about 190 million pounds of the 450 million pounds consumed. And demand keeps rising. Brokers say the retail market hasn't changed much in the last several years, but use of honey as an ingredient in other products has grown. That means more scams, said Elise Gagnon, president of Quebec-based Odem International, one of North America's largest honey importers. "There's more crooks than ever, and it has become a real nasty business out there," said Gagnon, the spokeswoman for an international group formed to fight Chinese honey transshipments. "They gamble and very, very few -- almost none -- get caught. So they keep corrupting the system."

As far as Mr. Ingalls’ seized honey, there have been no criminal charges filed to date.
Honey Bees on the Lawn at the White House

This past April, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack joined First Lady Michelle Obama and a group of 5th graders on the South Lawn of the White House to talk about healthy eating, the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables, and the importance of bees. Days prior to the event it was realized, there was a garden but no bees. Quickly a beekeeper was called in and a hive placed. Take a look at the height the hive stand. There were concerns about the “first dog”, Bo, having access to the hive and possibly being stung. The stand is high enough to secure the survival of the dog and hence the top super can be over 9 feet tall.

Charlie Brandts is the beekeeper responsible for keeping the “White House” bees alive and well. He’s been keeping bees for 3 years now and raises his own queens. His other job for over 20 years has been the White House carpenter. That’s how Charlie knew about the arrival of the new organic garden. He was the one to convince the staff they had to have bees if there was to be a garden. Hopefully, the new residents will behave themselves while the first family tends the garden so they can stay and prosper.

Preliminary Results: A Survey of Honey Bee Colonies Losses in the U.S. Between September 2008 and April 2009

By: Dennis vanEngelsdorp, Jerry Hayes, and Jeff Pettis

The Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA) and USDA-ARS Beltsville Honey Bee Lab conducted a survey between September 2008 and early April 2009 to estimate colony loses across the country. Over 20% of the country’s estimated 2.3 million colonies were surveyed. A total loss of 28.6% of managed honey bee colonies was recorded. This compares to losses of 35.8% and 31.8% recorded respectively in the winters of 2007/2008 and 2006/2007. While a decrease in total losses is encouraging, the rate of loss remains unsustainable as the average operational loss increased from 31% in 2007/2008 to 34.2% in the 2008/2009 winter.

Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is characterized by the complete absence of bees in dead colonies or in apiaries. This survey was not able to differentiate between verifiable cases of CCD and colonies lost as the result of other causes that share the “absence of dead bees” as a symptom. The 26% of operations that reported some of their colonies died without dead bees lost 32% of their colonies, while beekeepers that did not lose any bees with symptoms of CCD lost a total of 26% of their colonies.

Only 15% of all the colonies lost during the 2008/2009 winter died with symptoms of CCD, this compares to a 60% colony loss with CCD-like symptoms in the winter of 2007/2008. While losses from CCD may have decreased in the winter of 2008/2009, losses from other causes remain a significant concern. 58% of all beekeepers reported above normal losses last year, losing a total of 32.8% of their colonies compared to the minority of beekeepers who claimed a normal or below normal loss of 17%.

These findings emphasize the urgent need for research, not only of CCD, but of general honey bee health. A more detailed final report is being prepared for publication at a later date.
Previously Harmless Varroa Species Is Now Killing European Honey Bees

A previously harmless honeybee mite in Papua New Guinea has Australian beekeepers fearing for their future. The mite has undergone a genetic mutation which allows it to infest European honeybees. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization bee pathologist Denis Anderson tells the Australian Broadcasting Corp. the mite is one of a strain of Varroa mites which had never before been able to breed on the European honeybee, and thus had been no threat to horticulture. Now the mutant mites are running rampant through honeybee hives in Papua New Guinea, wiping out up to half of the country’s honey industry.

The mutation is believed to have originated from a single female mite. Anderson says based on experiences in the past, the mites will also be carrying exotic viral diseases. “Those viruses are actually what cause the death to the European honey bee colonies,” he says. Australian Agriculture Minister Tony Burke is meeting Papua New Guinea officials in Brisbane and containment of the mite to prevent them from entering Australia will be on the agenda. Burke tells reporters the government recognizes the importance of rigorous quarantine and biosecurity measures to protect Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. “In November last year we announced an extra $300,000 over two years to continue the sentinel hive program,” he says. “This is an important surveillance program for pests and disease in Australia's honey bee and pollination industries.”

An Asian honeybee eradication campaign is still continuing in Queensland two years after an incursion was found in Cairns. Thus far 28 hives have been destroyed.

Imidacloprid Still Being Investigated for Possible CCD Connection

The following information was submitted by the National Honey Bee Advisory Board to the EPA concerning the registration of imidacloprid, a systemic pesticide produced by Bayer Chemical Company. This information first appeared on the web submitted by Bee Culture’s Catch the Buzz, an online news source geared for beekeepers. It has been edited because of length but the information has not been changed or altered.

The NHBAB consists of beekeepers from both the American Honey Producers Association, AHPA, and the American Beekeepers Federation, ABF, which represents most of the nation’s commercial beekeepers. This past year the above groups and representatives from Bayer met to discuss concerns surrounding this compound along with research that needs to be conducted. Time will tell if increased regulation, or more precise, research improves the situation. EPA now must act on these and other comments regarding this compound.

Beekeepers from around the United States, and around the world, have had persistent problems associated with the use of the systemic pesticide, imidacloprid. Since the first uses of imidacloprid in France in 1994 on sunflowers beekeepers reported problems. Soon the condition was given a name in France: “mad bee disease”. Problems reported by beekeepers, combined with mounting independent scientific data, caused the French Minister of Agriculture to suspend the use of imidacloprid on sunflowers in January of 1999. In February 2004, France extended the suspension to include uses on corn. At the same time they further broadened the ban on systemic insecticides to include the chemical fipronil.

In Europe the debate continues. Important data from toxicity studies is being produced. Conclusions from this data vary. The chemical manufacturers continue to maintain that the systemic compound imidacloprid
is safe for use around honeybees, native pollinators, birds, and does not pose an unreasonable risk to the environment. Reports from the field, however, are telling a different story. The recent dramatic increase in use of imidacloprid on a greatly expanded list of cropland, rangeland, forest, residential, and recreational (golf courses and parks), has greatly increased exposure of pollinators to contaminated nectar and pollen expressed from flowering crops and weeds.

Imidacloprid is only one of six product formulations in the broader class of “systemic neonicotinoids”. Although only imidacloprid is currently ‘up’ for public comment, all six of these products in this class are of concern to beekeepers. Much attention has been given to the seed treatments such as Gaucho, a trade name for a formulation of imidacloprid.

Recent data from Penn State on crabapple trees, although unpublished and not yet replicated, is extremely concerning. Two controls and two treated trees were used in the experiment. After three weeks no imidacloprid was detected. However, the next spring pollen samples from pollen sacs and anthers detected imidacloprid and 2 principal degradants (5- hydroxoe and olefin) at combined levels of over 900 ppb. In nectaries the combined number was 1,450 ppb. Although further research is required for this study to be properly concluded, the initial data raises questions about how imidacloprid is stored and translocated in woody plants, like fruit trees.

Farmers, pesticide applicators, and beekeepers all look to the EPA to provide guidance on safe and unsafe ways to apply these economic poisons. We will quote the public comment of Roger Haldenby (Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. tracking number 808bfe56, February 23, 2009) on imidacloprid: “There are reports of imidacloprid toxicity to bees, birds, earthworms, and some fresh water crustaceans. The impact of imidacloprid on these organisms can be mitigated by proper application of the insecticide in accordance with label instructions”.

Systemic pesticides, like imidacloprid, work on a different principal. The chemical is taken up into the plant tissue, and is carried throughout the plant. Active chemicals are moved throughout the plant including the nectar and pollen of the treated crop plant, or inadvertently a treated weed. When the unwanted pest comes along and nibbles on the plant tissue it is exposed to the pesticide and dies. But this chemical is also being transmitted to the nectar and pollen of the plant. Not only does imidacloprid move through the treated plant to the nectar and pollen but the chemical remains persistent in the soil for several years. Hence, it can be taken up by subsequent plants and weeds then expressed in their pollen and nectar. There are no protective means that can be employed to protect the pollinator who gathers the poisoned nectar or pollen. The EPA does not have “safe label” instructions for imidacloprid.

In an advertisement for Premise 200SC, an imidacloprid product for termite control, Bayer states: “Premise 200SC interferes with (the) instinctive social behavior (of termites), contributing to the termites’ demise. Low doses of Premise 200 SC disorientate the termites and cause them to cease their natural grooming behavior. Grooming is important for termites to protect them against pathogenic soil fungi. When termites stop grooming, the naturally occurring fungi in the soil attacks and kills termites. Premise 200SC makes fungi 10,000 times more dangerous to termites. Nature assists Premis in giving unsurpassed control” (Bayer Premise SC Brochure).

Major incidents have been reported by beekeepers linked to imidacloprid. EPA is aware that their incident reporting database of pesticide effects on honeybees is not working. At the December 2, 2008 meeting between US EPA Office of Pesticide Programs and Beekeepers, the beekeepers explained how the incident reporting system, which utilizes state departments of agriculture and chemical manufacturing companies, is not reporting beekeeper field incidents with pesticides. The beekeepers at the meeting presented a wall chart showing all incidents reported to EPA and then detailed how their own personal incidents, as well as incidents of colleagues were not there. Providing a mechanism for reporting bee incidents was one of the eight “action items” listed as coming out of that meeting.
The largest incident involved seven beekeepers in North Dakota and Minnesota with seed treatment on canola with Gaucho, a product formulation of Imidacloprid. The seven beekeepers initiated legal action against Bayer Crop Science in Federal Court. There were private laboratory tests performed on the beekeepers’ wax comb and honey. ADPEN analyzed the material for imidacloprid, carbofuran, dichlofenvos and coumaphos. They found residues of imidacloprid in all of the samples. The levels of imidacloprid found ranged from 22 to 671 ppb. “These levels are much higher than the LD50 and are certainly killing honeybees and causing sub lethal effects”, (Mayer sworn and notarized DOC dated 12th January 2007).

The US EPA used to do pesticide screening in honeybees, plus do their own pesticide toxicity tests as well, but today industry directs and funds the critical toxicity studies to determine product safety. The studies are shown to EPA for registration purposes, and then filed away as “proprietary information” far from the scrutiny of the public eye. Enforcement actions are not taken by EPA, instead these critically important functions are delegated to individual state departments of agriculture, under an arrangement ironically called a “primacy agreement.”

The problems faced by the beekeeping industry are not limited to one single chemical compound. They are in fact linked to a pervasive regulatory failure. When the EPA was first set up, it was in response to environmental challenges of an unprecedented nature. At that time the country was using 200,000,000 pounds of active ingredient chemical pesticides. Today that number is over 5,000,000,000 pounds of active ingredient. Simply put, the country is drowning in chemicals. These very “economic poisons” are doing their job too well, and because of the deregulation process we are faced with a perfect storm today capable of destroying our countries pollinator base which will carry with it agricultural and environmental catastrophe.

The beekeeping committee attending this meeting then stated that due to the vitally important nature of pollinators they recommend that imidacloprid be removed from use in the United States.

**Management Calendar: July – September in Georgia**

This past weekend we headed north in anticipation of finding towering colonies packed with sourwood honey only to find a lonely few supers filled. At least we made some honey, but looking back at what we had go through for these measly few supers, I wonder if it was worth our time? As you know, during the warm months of summer, colonies must be moved at night not only to insure their survival (overheating) but also that the last forager makes it home so not to be left behind. Moving colonies at night, with little to no preparation, can be a nightmare. What am I saying; it can be a nightmare no matter how many preparations are in place. I guess I need to look at the bright side. We did make some of the best honey produced in the world and drew out numerous frames. And who am I kidding, we barely did any work really. I believe the credit belongs to the ones hauling in the gold, the bees themselves.

Preliminary reports point to a lower than usual sourwood season. Again it seems to be location, location, location. Some areas did marginally well while others didn’t produce a drop. Every year we scratch our heads and wonder why this wasn’t the year. The moisture was in place because of the heavy soaking.
spring rains. There was minimal wind and little to no storms during the peak of the flow. So why wasn’t there an above average sourwood flow?

2009 offered a minimal spring flow as well across the state. South Georgia is one of the largest producers of cut comb honey. This is due to the intense Gallberry flow during the spring months and the light color of the honey. This year very little cut comb was produced. The rains, which we hoped would relieve the drought, persisted in our region. Right as the blooms began to open and the nectar was about to flow, clouds moved in and the sun disappeared for weeks. Days it wasn’t raining the winds were chilly and strong, keeping the bees tucked inside.

If you were some of the lucky few that actually made honey this year, then good job. Here at the lab, the flow was below normal but we still averaged about two supers per hive. That left very little to extract which means we will be feeding as usual. Actually, we’ve already started. Some of our stronger colonies are slimming down rapidly, so the buckets are being filled. If colonies are short on supplies feed a 1:1 sugar solution. Average colonies in our region need at least 35-40 lbs to survive the winter. But first, the colony has to get through summer and fall.

Our mite loads were minimal this year. This may be due to the powder sugar applications we applied during the late winter months while the colonies were broodless. It is a good idea to monitor mite populations in your colonies. They are increasing rapidly and can cause a colony to collapse very quickly. Actually, summer inspections are always a good idea. Check to see how well the queen is performing. Is there plenty of honey stored, are there signs of disease, beetles, or mites? Is there an ample supply of pollen, does the colony need more or less room? Is there a water source nearby, too many weeds growing around the entrance, old rotting equipment, old combs or proper ventilation? We sometimes forget about our colonies this time of year, but issues may be brewing, so check sooner than later.

One problem we see occasionally, after a colony is re-queened, is that the virgin will move up through the queen excluder and then become trapped in the honey supers once she begins laying eggs. The bottom box becomes void of brood and usually filled with pollen, and the super frames are removed of honey to allow space for the queen to lay. Make sure to check the honey supers if you can’t find a queen in the lower brood box, even with a queen excluder. It is a good idea to move her back downstairs so she can have the opportunity to produce more brood.

One thing to keep in mind while making summer inspections is robbing. While the colony is open, it is vulnerable to robber bees from other colonies. During a time of nectar dearth, like the one we are experiencing now, colonies will search out weaker or less guarded colonies and rob their honey supplies. Once robbing starts in an apiary, it is almost impossible to stop; therefore, precautionary measures should be taken. While working colonies bring extra lids and cover the supers you are not working at the time. While your colony is wide open, don’t stand around talking on the cell phone, watching the clouds, or chatting with your neighbor. Get in and out. Go in with a purpose, work quickly but carefully. If you dribble honey on the outside of the colony, wipe it off. Don’t leave pieces of comb on the ground. Take them with you. Don’t leave frames of any kind leaning up against a colony. Basically don’t leave anything near a colony that will attract bees. Weaker colonies are especially vulnerable to robbing. Entrances should be reduced and all gaps and cracks taped to discourage foreign bees from entering.

If you’re a new beekeeper, don’t be overwhelmed, just attentive. Bees are much like having a pet (yet catching a frisbee may be a challenge for them). You need to tend to them, make sure their fed, watered, protected and loved. You’ll figure it out, but in the meantime, join a group, find a mentor, read, and get lots of hands on experience.

Electronic Delivery of Georgia Bee Letter

If you would like to receive Georgia Bee Letter via email, send me your address at jbee@uga.edu. Please put in a reference in the subject line that you are requesting the GBL. If you have sent me your address and not received GBL, please send it again. We sometimes experience computer viruses on campus. Also, notify me if there are changes to your club meeting times or contact persons.
How to Get Georgia Bee Letter

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Regular Meetings

Bartow Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm, second Tuesday
Chattahoochee Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm bimonthly, second Monday
Cherokee Beekeepers Club 7:00 pm third Thursday
Coastal Empire Beekeepers Association 6:30 pm second Monday
Coweta Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm second Monday, (bi-monthly)
East Central Georgia Bee Club 7:00 pm fourth Monday.
Eastern Piedmont Beekeepers Association 7:30 pm first Monday
Forsyth Beekeepers Club 6:30 pm fourth Thursday
Heart of Georgia Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm second Tuesday
Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm second Wednesday
Mountain Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm first Tuesday
Northeast Mountain Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm second Thursday
Northwest Georgia Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm second Monday, Jan - June & Sept
Southeast Georgia Beekeepers Association 7:00 pm fourth Tuesday, Aug-March
Southwest Georgia Beekeepers Association 7:30 pm last Tuesday, even months
Tara Beekeepers Assn (Clayton Co. area) 7:30 pm third Monday

Beekeeping Subscriptions

Bee Culture, 623 W. Liberty Street, Medina, Ohio 44256 (330) 725-6677
The Speedy Bee, P.O. Box 998, Jesup, Georgia 31598-0998 (912) 427-4018

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