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**Editor: Jennifer Berry, Agricultural Research Coordinator**

## **Georgia Beekeepers Association 2008 Spring Meeting A Letter from Bob Binnie, President, Georgia Beekeepers Association**

President?! How did that happen? I told Keith Fielder at the last meeting that he had missed his true calling in life. Anyone that can talk me into running for President should be a used car salesman.

Actually, being President has proven to be very interesting, and I have already learned quite a bit. For instance: I've learned that the president must have an "anytime, unlimited minutes" long distance calling plan. I have also learned that the word "delegation" is a synonym for "self preservation" and that people look to the president for answers whether you know those answers or not. However, it is all completely fine because I know everything. Just ask my wife.

On a more serious note, I have spoken to many beekeepers, and I hear mixed reviews on colony strength and health across the state. Some report heavy losses already as they move into winter, while others say that their bees look great. I am sure that local conditions have an influence on all of this, and I know that the drought has caused problems for many beekeepers. One of the things you will notice about successful beekeepers is their ability to be flexible when the need arises. Whether it be moving bees to better pasture or feeding in the form of protein and carbohydrates, you have to be willing to do whatever it takes. I also believe that education is a crucial part of being an effective beekeeper. Having the latest information on all aspects of beekeeping has to help.

That is one of the reasons why I feel that organizations such as the Georgia Beekeepers Association are so important. The purpose of the founding of the GBA so many years ago was to support, represent and educate beekeepers, large and small, across the state of Georgia. As we move into 2008, these ideas are more important than ever. Early members of the GBA would find some of the current challenges hard to comprehend and beekeeping is definitely not what it used to be. However, beekeepers who are willing to take the time to stay abreast of all the latest information and who can discriminate between what is useful and what is not have a good chance of success.

This is why the GBA meeting should be considered both an opportunity and a priority. Here we have the chance to inform and be informed.

This said, I would like to report that the meeting committee consisting of Jennifer Berry, Wally Batchelor and myself, has been working very hard to put together a solid and informative spring meeting. I have to admit that putting together a meeting date and meeting place, while taking into consideration the schedules of potential speakers, other meetings and events, facility availability and the cost of it all is like putting together a giant jigsaw puzzle. We were not able to accomplish all we wanted, but we came close.

**Here is what we have:**

The 2008 Spring Meeting of the Georgia Beekeepers Association will take place Friday, February 1st and Saturday, February 2nd at the Georgia Wildlife Federation, 11600 Hazelbrand Road, Covington, Georgia.

**Our speakers will be:**

Reg Wilbanks, Wilbanks Apiaries Inc., Claxton, GA.  
David Miksa, Miksa Honey Farms, Groveland, FL.  
Dr. Gordon Wardell, S.A.F.E. Research and Development, LLC, Tucson, AZ.  
Jack Hanel, Western North Carolina Bee Inspector, Asheville, NC.  
Jerry Latner, Dadant and Sons, Inc., High Springs, FL.  
Marsha Elliot, Wildwood Forest Studios, LLC, Alpharetta, GA.  
Brian Higgins, Hometown Honey Inc., Kennesaw, GA.  
Kim Flottum, Editor, Bee Culture Magazine, Medina, OH.  
Greg Rogers, Haw Creek Honey, Asheville, NC.

**About the speakers:**

***Reg Wilbanks***

Reg is a fourth generation beekeeper and is President of Wilbanks Apiaries, Inc., which operates about 6,000 colonies and 15,000 queen mating nucs. They ship package bees and queens around the world. Reg was a 3-term president of the Georgia Beekeepers Association, 3-term president of the American Bee Breeders Association, past president of the American Beekeeping Federation and a present member of its Board of Directors. He is also a current member of the National Honey Board, representing Region 6 (Georgia, Florida and Puerto Rico), and is a recipient of the 1984 Georgia State "Beekeeper of the Year" award. Reg will be sharing slides and information about his outfit and will talk about his breeding philosophy as it relates to the current needs and problems of the beekeeping industry.

***David Miksa***

As with many beekeepers, David has a history about which many of us know little. He worked with bees with his father as a young boy, eventually learning grafting and queen rearing techniques at Cornell University in 1961. He worked for the Bee Management Division of the USDA Lab in Madison, Wisconsin for six years where he was involved in early studies of nosema and treatment with fumagillin. He built up his own commercial outfit while working there, and after spending time migrating with the bees between Wisconsin and Florida, he eventually settled in Groveland, Florida to establish what is now a substantial queen rearing business. David has many connections in both commercial beekeeping and research and has a reputation for being an intelligent and insightful speaker. Some of what he will speak about is the CCD issue and how it relates to nutrition, breeding and hive management.

***Gordon I. Wardell, Ph.D.***

Dr. Gordon Wardell has over 30 years experience as a professional apiculturist. He holds a Ph.D. in Entomology with emphasis in Apiculture and Pest Management from Michigan State University. After graduation, he worked for 12 years in Asia and Southeast Asia helping improve beekeeping methodologies and honey industry standardization. His experience stretched from Nepal to Fiji, with most of his time spent in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. In 1988, Gordon joined the faculty of the University of Maryland as the State Extension Apiculturist. During this time he also acted as a consultant to the U.S. Department of State and the Agency for International Development in matters of international

apiculture development. He moved to Arizona in 1996 where he founded S.A.F.E. Research and Development, LLC in Tucson, AZ. SAFE specializes in products for the honey bee industry. Their most recent achievement is the development and release of "MegaBee™ The Tucson Bee Diet." SAFE also cooperates with the USDA-ARS under a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement at the Carl Hayden Bee Research Center in Tucson, AZ. Under this agreement, SAFE investigates areas of honeybee nutrition, diseases, parasites and Africanized Honey Bees. Dr. Wardell will speak to us about bee nutrition and other nutrition related issues.

***Jack Hanel***

Jack has been involved in beekeeping since he was 12 years old. He spent time working for a commercial outfit that migrated between Mississippi and South Dakota, and he has been a bee inspector for 19 years. What makes Jack unusual among bee inspectors is the amount of time he spends attending meetings and speaking for beekeeping associations.

He will be sharing a slide presentation and speaking about diseases and parasites.

***Jerry Latner***

Jerry is a lifetime beekeeper that most of us simply know as "the guy who knows more about anything than anybody" when it comes to beekeeping. Besides beekeeping he has been involved in the manufacturing and sales of beekeeping equipment for years and is a longtime Dadant and Sons branch manager in High Springs, FL. Jerry will be speaking to us about the latest research on sugar types, the pros and cons of each, and the latest news on pricing and availability.

***Marsha Elliot***

Marsha owns and operates Wildwood Forest Studios, which is a web design firm offering website development, graphic design, and database integration. She has been in business since 1999 and has clients across the country including Carl and Virginia Webb, Fred Rossman and myself. If you want to know more about websites, this is your chance to get all your questions answered.

***Brian Higgins***

Brian has been a North Georgia beekeeper for 15 years. The two things that make Brian stand out are: the fact that he averages over 100 speaking engagements about bees and beekeeping a year, and the fact that he retails honey at as many as five farmers markets a week in the summer. Brian will talk about how to speak to children all the way from daycare ages to high school as well as how to speak with non-beekeeping adults. He will also share his strategy and techniques for selling honey both wholesale and retail.

***Kim Flottum***

Kim is the editor for Bee Culture magazine and spends quite a bit of time attending meetings and conventions, investigating the latest research, and learning all he can about what is going on in the beekeeping community. Fresh from the conventions in California, he will be sharing what he learned there and will talk about the latest developments in beekeeping from 2007, including CCD.

***Greg Rogers***

Greg has been a beekeeper for 25 years and makes a fair living with just 325 colonies. As a commercial beekeeper, he pollinates, collects and sells pollen, and produces and sells honey, including Sourwood, Tulip Poplar, Wildflower and others. Greg will be speaking to us on two subjects: "How to raise your own queens," and "How to collect, clean, and sell pollen."

Now if you are beginning to think that this a lot of stuff to cram into one meeting, you are right. This will be a full two-day meeting and we recommend that everyone plan on attending the entire meeting as most speakers will speak on one day and not the other. Some of the most important issues in beekeeping today such as genetics, breeding, nutrition, diseases, viruses, parasites, and the potential for having a bee that

can survive it all will be touched upon by people who are very successful at what they do. This meeting should have something for everyone, and whether you have one colony or 10,000, you should come away with plenty of ideas and information that can help make you a better and more effective beekeeper. On top of all that, we will have our traditional "Low Country Boil" for lunch on Friday, and Keith Fielder and Robert Brewer will oversee a full-scale outdoor barbecue (I am told they know how to do this), complete with entertainment on Friday night. Remember: it's February, so bring a warm coat. I hope to see you all at the meeting, and in the meantime, I sincerely wish you all a great holiday season and a prosperous, happy and healthy new year.

**Directions to the meeting:**

Approximately 30 miles east of Atlanta on Interstate 20, take exit 93 to the north.

Go approximately one block, turn right (east) onto Hazelbrand Rd. Georgia Wildlife Federation is 1½ miles on the right. Hotel information is located on our website: [www.gabeekeeping.com](http://www.gabeekeeping.com)

## **University of Georgia Bee Lab Says Goodbye to Two Graduate Students**

This past weekend, Amanda Ellis and Eleanor Spicer graduated from the University of Georgia. Amanda Ellis with her PhD and Eleanor with her masters degree. Amanda moved this past summer to Gainesville, Florida where she is currently employed as a honey bee scientist with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service, Bureau of Plant & Apiary Inspection. Her research consisted of investigating the impacts of nest invaders on honey bee foraging ecology and pollinating efficacy. Eleanor also moved back home to North Carolina this summer. She will start her doctorate program this spring at North Carolina State in the department of Entomology. Her thesis title is the "Efficacy of Honey bees and Native Bees as Pollen Vectors for Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*) and Some Ecologic Predictors of Pollinator Abundance".

We enjoyed having both of them as students in our lab. We wish them success and happiness in their future adventures.



**Eleanor Spicer**



**Amanda Ellis Graduation Photo**

## **The Latest on CCD as Presented at the Entomological Society of America Meeting in San Diego**

Last week a number of entomologists gathered in San Diego for the 55<sup>th</sup> annual ESA meeting which featured a colony collapse disorder symposium. Diana Cox-Foster, Jeff Pettis, Dennis VanEngelsdorp, Marla Spivak, Maryann Frazier and Steve Sheppard were among those who attended and presented at the meeting. The idea of the symposium was to highlight the possibilities behind CCD, and to introduce the scientists who are tackling this problem first hand. In addition to the possible causes of CCD, the myths and mysteries of CCD was also discussed, as well as possible ways to combat the phenomenon. During Dennis VanEngelsdorp's presentation he gave a brilliant commentary about one of the myths floating around, "if you give cell phones to honey bees, the only ones they'll pollinate are the Blackberries..."

Editor, Kim Flottum, of BeeCulture magazine was in attendance and took pages of notes during the symposium. In his words, here is a brief synopsis from those notes.

Marla Spivak elegantly stated that we shouldn't be able to keep bees. There's just too many things going wrong – varroa is affecting all manner of honey bee health issues, poor pollen is becoming more common, pesticides, especially the new neonics are everywhere and anywhere you look, and the economics of beekeeping in general, essentially, suck (my term, not hers). To support this she read a laundry list of things going on...mites, contaminated wax comb, reduced forage, poor nutrition, pesticides, poor return on honey, increased acreage of pollination-needing crops, increased dollars for pollination contracts, lots of moving .... stir and add just one more thing and....poof.

She added one glimmer of hope though, and it was worth the trip. One of the things that has been discovered with the study of the honey bee genome is that honey bees have fewer than half of the genes other insects have for fighting off diseases and pests...those immune genes you keep hearing about. But honey bees have propolis. And propolis fights off pests and diseases...maybe that's why bees are the way they are, gene-wise. So...looking at propolis a little closer, Marla and other scientists are finding that this magic substance has considerable capacity to fight off problems...honey bee problems and human problems. More is on the way, for both propolis and immune genes we're told.

Three new techniques to study CCD emerged at this meeting though, which is why I wanted to listen. The first, discussed by May Berenbaum from Illinois, found that if you looked at a particular set of genes only, you could easily see that these genes were expressed very differently in bees that were healthy, bees that were failing, and bees that had the symptoms of CCD. It was pretty clear. Good diagnostic, but tough for beekeepers.

Second, Diana Cox-Foster has found that indeed, Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus has been introduced into the U.S. at least twice. The original paper published in Science indicated that there was probably a close association between IAPV and CCD, and that the IAPV came in with the Aussie bees. Later work by USDA found that IAPV has been around since at least 2002, long before Aussie bees arrived. Not so, said Cox-Foster, who, after digging deeper has found that there are at least two strains of IAPV in the U.S., and that neither are similar to the original described in Israel. One strain was found associated with eastern bees, one strain associated with western bees, mostly from Australia.

A third technique is a machine available from the Army – an Integrated Virus Detection System. To simplify, honey bees are prepared in water, the solution poured into the machine and in less than a half hour out comes a chart with peaks that show the presence of virus particles. Known viruses have known peaks, but unknown viruses can be identified later...but you will know they are there.

### **A Synopsis of the Research Conducted at the UGA Bee Lab**

This past year has been a busy one at the bee lab. Along with expanding our queen breeding operation we were also engaged in several other research projects. Our two graduate students wrapped up their research

with Amanda examining the effects of nest invaders in honeybee colonies on pollination efficacy while Eleanor explored floral competition and its effects on pollination. We concluded our small and conventional cell comparison study with results not favoring small cell for reducing mite infestation levels (paper in review). The lab executed a small hive beetle IPM project in coordination with the University of Florida and Clemson University. The aim of this study is to first develop a user-friendly estimator of the SHB economic threshold of 300 beetles per hive. The next objective is to determine the efficacy of hygienic queens, adult beetle traps and predatory nematodes, either singly or in interaction, at maintaining colony SHB populations below the economic threshold of 300 beetles. Finally we started a toxicity study which will examine the effects of currently labeled miticides on honey bee colony health and performance. This research was made possible because of funds donated by the Georgia Beekeepers Association. At this point we are awaiting the outcome of other grants submitted in hopes of expanding the project.

### **The Possibility of Australian Bees Being Banned is No Longer**

Since the discovery of IAPV in Australian bees, beekeepers have been nervous about the continual importation of Aussie bees into the US. Even the US Department of Agriculture got involved once it was suggested that the cause of CCD may be linked to Australian bees. However, just recently the USDA has stated that they will not ban the imports of Australian bees. At this point, researchers from USDA have failed to find any thread that links the culprit that is killing US colonies to Australian bees. Karen Eggert who works for the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service was quoted saying: "We facilitate fair, science-based trade, and need confirmatory information to make any restrictions with other countries on trading commodities...and, due to the lack of evidence, we're not going to make any regulatory changes at this time."

### **Nosema Found in Every Colony Sampled in Ontario from Bee Culture's "Catch the Buzz"**

Researchers have found a parasite in every Ontario bee sample they analyzed in part of an effort to prevent a recurrence of the disaster that wiped out a third of the province's honeybee colonies last winter. The Ontario Beekeepers' Association experts collected about 446 bee samples from 25 keepers and every one contained *Nosema apis*, a single-celled protozoan that affects the bees' digestive systems. More than half of the samples had a more aggressive strain called *Nosema ceranae*, the association said in a release Tuesday.

But that wasn't the only problem. "The bees were already under stress from a high incidence of varroa mites as well as the environment. Due to a wet fall, the bees were not able to gather enough pollen to use as a protein source for raising young bees in the spring," said Alison Skinner, an association expert. Ernesto Guzman, a University of Guelph environmental biology professor, said recently that the varroa mite and *Nosema ceranae* may have caused last winter's high mortality. "It may be one of the main factors in Ontario's colony loss," Guzman said in a release in October, "but because it's so new, the prevalence of this parasite in the province and how it affects colony mortality have never been studied."

*Nosema ceranae* was discovered in Ontario in May, but has been blamed for large colony losses in Europe. The Maritimes have also seen an unusually high number of bee deaths recently and an entomologist said in May that *Nosema ceranae* might have contributed. At the time, Agriculture Canada's leading bee scientist, Steve Pernal, said he thought unusual weather conditions were more likely to blame.

The Ontario Beekeepers' Association has given Guzman nearly \$278,000 to investigate the parasite. Meanwhile, the association's tech transfer team is promoting the only known treatment for Nosema, a drug called Fumagilin B that can kill Nosema spores. The prognosis is good, the association said. Almost

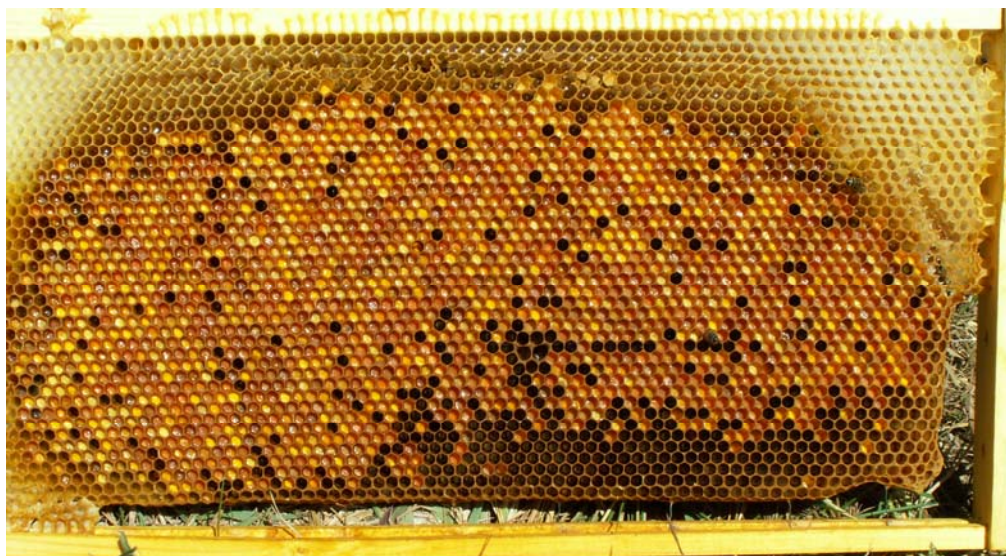
27,000 of the 76,000 hives in Ontario were killed last year, and many of the remaining colonies were badly weakened.

### Management Calendar: December – February in Georgia

As I am writing this issue the weather channel has forecasted record breaking high temperatures again this week. Next week, however they are predicting temperatures to be back to normal in the 50° range. Looks like another roller-coaster ride of high and low temperatures this winter. This not only confuses the plant life but our bees as well. Walking the apiary this week the bees are extremely active. And why wouldn't they be, it's 77° outside. Yet, there isn't any tasty nectar or pollen for them to collect. Because of all this activity honey stores are probably dwindling at a faster rate than if the temperatures were more "wintery". Plus, during colony inspections we have seen a good amount of milk brood, but very little pollen. Due to the severe drought the south experienced this year, it may be a good idea to feed colonies pollen patties earlier than later.



The below photo is what you want to find in your colonies. Solid frames of pollen are needed for brood rearing.



Not only is pollen in short supply but honey stores may be as well. Don't forget, one of the main causes of winter losses is starvation. I know, I sound like a broken record, however there are always those few new beekeepers who haven't heard about the importance of ample food supplies. If colonies are light, mix a heavy 2:1 (sugar:water) syrup solution and feed them with internal division board feeders, inverted plastic pails, buckets or gallon zip-loc baggies atop the cluster



Do not rely on Boardman entrance feeders in cold weather since the bees are unable to leave the cluster in order to feed.

Avoid feeding your colonies poor quality feed like brown sugar, "mystery" feed, re-melted candy, pancake syrup, molasses, fermented honey and corn syrup with industrial food additives. These contain indigestible components that can have unknown and negative dietary consequences on bees. It can also cause dysentery. Stick to pure table sugar or high fructose corn syrup (HFCS).

Fortunately in the south we frequently have warm days with temperatures reaching into 60's and 70's. This is perfect for mid-winter inspections. If you come across a colony that is too weak, combine it with a stronger one. Small clusters rarely survive the winter, even in Georgia where the winters are mild.

Hive protection is another consideration. During times of colder weather, mice love the warm accommodations provided by honey bee colonies. To keep out these unwanted intruders, it is suggested to use an entrance reducer or mouse guard. Usually guards made of metal provide the best protection since mice can not chew through them. These entrance reducers also provide protection from cold drafts.

Once February arrives, don't forget to re-check colonies for honey stores and a viable queen. Colonies are gearing up for the upcoming nectar flow with increasing populations, therefore supplies will be dwindling.

This is also a good time of the year to do repairs, build new equipment and order queens and packages for next spring.

# The UGA Bee Lab Wishes You a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



## **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](mailto: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

GBL can be received electronically by emailing your request to [jbee@uga.edu](mailto:jbee@uga.edu)

### Regular Meetings

Bartow Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm, second Tuesday	Agriculture Services Building, Cartersville (320 West Cherokee Ave)
Chattahoochee Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm bimonthly, second Monday	Oxbow Meadows Nature Center, Columbus
Cherokee Beekeepers Club	7:00 pm third Thursday	Cherokee County Justice Building, Canton
Coastal Area Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm second Monday	Southbridge Tennis Complex, Savannah
Coweta Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm second Monday	Coweta Fairgrounds Conference Center
East Central Georgia Bee Club	7:00 pm fourth Monday, (bi-monthly)	Burke Co. Office Park Complex
Eastern Piedmont Beekeepers Association	7:30 pm first Monday	Bishop Community Center, Bishop
Forsyth Beekeepers Club	6:30 pm third Monday	Forsyth County Library, Cumming
Heart of Georgia Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm second Monday	GA Farm Bureau, 1620 Bass Rd., Macon
Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm second Wednesday	Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta
Mountain Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm first Tuesday	Mountain Regional Library, Young Harris
Northeast Mountain Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm second Thursday	Northeast Georgia Regional Library, Clarksville
Northwest Georgia Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm second Monday, Jan - June & Sept	Walker County Agric. Center, Rock Spring
Southeast Georgia Beekeepers Association	7:00 pm fourth Tuesday, Aug-March	Wacona School Building, Waycross
Southwest Georgia Beekeepers Association	7:30 pm last Tuesday, even months	Swords Apiaries, Moultrie
Tara Beekeepers Assn (Clayton Co. area)	7:30 pm third Monday	Reynolds Nature Preservation

### Beekeeping Subscriptions

<i>American Bee Journal</i> , Hamilton, Illinois 62341	(217) 847-3324
<i>Bee Culture</i> , 623 W. Liberty Street, Medina, Ohio 44256	(330) 725-6677
<i>The Speedy Bee</i> , P.O. Box 998, Jesup, Georgia 31598-0998	(912) 427-4018

### Resource People for Georgia Beekeeping

Bartow Beekeepers Association Bill Posey (770) 386-3311 <a href="mailto:billbeefarm@yahoo.com">billbeefarm@yahoo.com</a>	Georgia Dept. of Agriculture Barry Smith, Manager Apiary Program P.O. Box 114 Tifton, GA 31793 (912) 386-3464 <a href="mailto:bsmith@agr.state.ga.us">bsmith@agr.state.ga.us</a>	Tara Beekeepers Association Gary Cooke, President (770) 507-4661 <a href="mailto:Lcooke77@aol.com">Lcooke77@aol.com</a>
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Cherokee Bee Club Randy Tudor, President (706) 692-9224 <a href="mailto:rtudor@att.net">rtudor@att.net</a>	Mountain Beekeepers Association Larry Sams, President 158 Needlemore Drive Hayesville, NC	University of Georgia Jennifer Berry Apicultural Research Coordinator 1221 Hog Mountain Rd. Watkinsville, GA 30677 (706) 769-1736 <a href="mailto:jbee@uga.edu">jbee@uga.edu</a>
Coastal Empire Beekeepers Association Greg Stewart, President 124 St. Ives Way Savannah, GA 31419 (912) 232-6734 <a href="mailto:greg_stewart@mhsml.gulfaero.cm">greg_stewart@mhsml.gulfaero.cm</a>	Northeast Mountain Beekeepers Assoc. John Haaseth, President (706) 865-1085	University of Georgia Keith S. Delaplane Professor of Entomology University of Georgia Athens, GA 30602 (706) 542-2816 <a href="mailto:ksd@uga.edu">ksd@uga.edu</a>
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Forsyth County Beekeepers Earl Gandy (770) 363-4123 <a href="mailto:eggand@bellsouth.net">eggand@bellsouth.net</a>		