**Association Newsletter**

# The Buzz

**The Education Hub for Practical Beekeeping**

**http://aikenbeekeepers.org May - July 2011**

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**Meetings will be the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm**

**In the Aiken County Agriculture Building at 1555 Richland Ave. Aiken, SC**

**Please join us!**

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## Presidents Bees-ness Buzz from the Hive

Hello Beekeepers. Hope your ladies are hard at work. To let everyone know, I now have beemail going out. If you have given us your email address and have not received any beemail from me in the last month, please let me know so I can correct your email address or add you to the list. I have had multiple emails come back as their server rejecting my emails. One way to help me with your email addresses is to email me at a10ac_boy@tds.net and to add me to your address book or allowed list.

David McNeely

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*Please*

*Help !!!!!*

We all know, bees are dying off in developed Western countries, putting 90 percent of U.S. crops in peril. Multiple scientific studies now blame one group of agricultural toxins-neonicotinoid pesticides as a major contributor to their rapid demise, and bee populations have recovered in four European countries that have banned these products. But Bayer still sells this deadly poison here in the United States, even though the Environmental Protection Agency has recognized, in a leaked document, that Bayer's "highly toxic" product is a "major risk concern to non-target insect (honey bees)".

aplanes around the crops, a first since 1999. Italy, France, Slovenia and Germany, where Bayer's main manufacturing plant is located have all banned neonicotinoids with good results.
It's up to U.S. citizens (especially beekeepers) to convince the government not to heed the powerful chemical lobby, but to defend the bees and the country's food supply by calling for a national ban now.
Silently, billions of bees are dying off and our entire food chain is in danger. Bees don't just make honey; they are a giant, humble workforce, pollinating 90% of the plants we grow. Multiple scientific studies blame one group of toxic pesticides for their rapid demise, and bee populations have soared in four European countries that have banned these products. But powerful chemical companies are lobbying hard to keep selling this poison. Our best chance to save bees now is to push the US and EU to join the ban their action is critical and will have a ripple effect on the rest of the world. We have no time to lose the debate is raging about what to do. This is not just about saving bees, this is about survival. Let's build a giant global buzz calling for the EU and US to outlaw these killer chemicals and save our bees and our food.

Sign the emergency petition now, and send it on to everyone you know and we'll deliver it to key decision makers.

To sign up go to: https://secure.avaaz.org/en/save_the_bees/?vl

## Beekeeping Chores

**Beekeeping does not work by recipe, and an outline like this is no substitute for knowledge and experience. This section is provided primarily for new beekeepers or beekeepers new to the area and others who may want a synopsis of seasonal activities and expectations.**

### Management Calendar: May - June in the CSRA

Even with a colder than average winter, spring once again sprang into action weeks early with day temperatures actually approaching summer highs. This allowed not only the early varieties to bloom ahead of schedule, but the later ones as well. What does this mean for the bees? A flood of nectar all at once. And what happens as brood nests are compacted with brood and little to no cells are available for this nectar? Swarms!
If you are one of those nutty beekeepers, like myself, and don't enjoy seeing your colonies hanging from the nearest tree limb, then here are a few tricks that may, (not guaranteed) but just may help to keep those girls in the hive. However, once they are in "swarm mode" there's little one can do to prevent them from hitting the trees. One trick to keep a colony from swarming is to go out every six days and cut queen cells.
This is very time consuming, as you have to check every frame thoroughly. If you miss just one, out the door they go. Remember, swarming is the colony's way of reproducing, and it's hard wired into each and every bee. It is also a way for the colony to reduce mite populations and possibly eliminate disease. But as beekeepers we want to keep as many bees in the box in order to produce as much honey as possible.

Another way is to create an artificial swarm by splitting the colony. But you need to do this sooner than later. If the population is booming and there are queen cups being constructed, it is time! You will need a nucleus colony (nuc) or a 10-frame hive, filled with frames along with a jar of 1:1 sugar syrup. From the parent colony remove one frame of open brood, one with sealed brood, one frame of nectar/pollen and the old queen. Gently place these frames into the new hive body. This totals three frames, so you will need to add additional frames (drawn or foundation) to fill in the spaces. In the parent hive, replace the three frames you removed with frames (again drawn or foundation). But remember not to separate the cluster with empty frames. It is still too early weather-wise. If you encounter any queen cells on the frames going with the new split and the old queen, make sure to remove them. If you see

ahead and ordered a mated queen.

Next, it is a good idea to take the nuc a good distance from the parent colony. Most of the bees will stay with the queen and the brood; however, you may lose the older bees once they begin to forage (they will fly back to the original colony). Even though there is a modest nectar flow occurring you still need to feed the new colony at least a quart of 1:1 sugar syrup. It will take them several days to figure out their new coordinates, meanwhile not collecting nectar, but still consuming food.

If you used a nuc box, remember they are still susceptible to swarming if they are not provided with plenty of space. Move them into a 10 frame box sooner than later, and once populations begin to fill the box, add honey supers. However, depending on the quality of the old queen, she may be replaced no matter what you do.
Speaking of honey, May could potentially offer up a bumper crop of nectar, along with a booming population of bees. But once June rolls around the nectar flow begins to taper off, eventually stopping completely. Now you have a box full of bees with little for them to do. But not to fear, there is still nectar to be found, like clover, blackberry and other brambles, tulip poplar and gallberry. Remove entrance reducers if you have not already. Consider

placing swarm traps in the Apiary to help catch swarms. Replace queens due to old age, ugly temperament or bad brood pattern.

**June** – Begin to take off frames of capped honey and replace with empty frames/foundation. Place bees escape prior to removing entire supers. Hot, dry summers can be stressful on bees. The beekeeper can help by providing water in entrance feeders. If robbing gets started in an apiary it is important to tape shut all gaps and cracks that permit foreign bees to harass a colony.

Fire ants may get aggressive in drought conditions, and the beekeeper can respond with mound treatments of Amdro™ or similar fire ant baits. In areas with small hive beetles now is a good time to treat soil surrounding hives with the nematodes, *Steinernema riobrave* and *Heterorhabditis indica*, available from organic gardening catalogs.

**July -** The nectar flow will continue this month. You may find your bees festooning (a group of bees hanging onto each other in a cluster) along the side or out front of the hive. Some say they are cooling themselves. Add more supers as needed.

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Georgia Bee Newsletter is another great resource from the University of Georgia. It is full of information and articles from around the globe. The Georgia Bee Letter is a periodic newsletter bringing you the latest news on apiculture at the University of Georgia and beyond.

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With all the upsetting news flooding our airwaves these days, I thought some uplifting

honey production in 2010 increased by 20% from the previous year (which was actually an all time low of 140 million pounds). Individual colony numbers were up 166,000 in 2010. The United States imported 252 million pounds of honey, which was a 41 million pound increase from 2009. Plus we exported 30.4 million pounds in 2010, compared to 29 million the year prior. Stockpiled honey still sitting in beekeeper's warehouses is at 45.3 million pounds, an increase of 8 million pounds over the year. Now lets calculate the per capita consumption of honey.

Honey In Honey Out-Imports 252 million lbs, Exports 30.4 million lbs

US production 176 million lbs, Stockpiled 45.3 million lbs, Honey on loan 4.1 million lbs

Taking the amount of honey in minus honey out (469.1-75.7) which equals 393.4 million pounds of honey consumed in the US during 2010. Now divide that number by the US population 308.7 million people, which gives the per capita consumption, which is 1.27 pounds, or 20.4 ounces per person for the year. In the past 25 years that number has not increased or decreased more than an ounce or two. Which doesn't seem like much. but to top things off, 54% of the honey consumed in this country is imported. Maybe not the best ending news, but at least it started out good.

Subscribe to Malcolm Sanford's Apis Newsletter for a comprehensive listing of beekeeping events around the country and around the globe, check out Bee Culture's Global Beekeeping Calendar

**If you don't subscribe to Malcolm's Newsletter you should. It is full of cutting edge information.**

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Editor Flottum waxes on the fact that so much news about honey bees is gloomy due to the fact that so few answers seem to be forthcoming from the research community. Most are from private initiatives like nutrition management, mite control and even Russian bees. I have a different take: A lot of those private companies are based on ideas out of the research community. The piece of good news he focuses on is that Bee Culture is expanding its circulation due to an increased number of beekeepers. You will now be able to see it in many places that have survived the downturn beyond Tractor Supply, like Borders and Barnes and Nobel. Look for it.

Catch the Buzz confirms what we've always had a nagging suspicion about; pesticides also affect people. In Spain it seems that human samples analyzed had "at least one pesticide in considerable concentrations, and the average number of pesticides detected was 11, ranging between four and 17. Some 62% of the participants had residues of 10 to 14 different pesticides in their blood. The study found a strong correlation between exposure to vinclozolin and malformation rates in spermatozoa. Although no evidence was found on the potential effect of vinclozolin on humans, further experimental tests should be conducted for verification."

TECA@fao.org: "The bees are on this planet for the last 100 million years. Since the last decade, in several places of the world, the beekeepers are facing an abnormal yearly bee colony mortality rate. First they must correct a possible wrong management in their own apiaries (artificial food, too much migration, no adapted queens to the local biotope, too heavy veterinary drugs to fight varroa, contaminated wax foundations, etc.). Then they must be transparent and give complete data to their associations. They must communicate their problem to the politicians, the farmers and the general public through the media. Finally, they must encourage everybody to use the forks as a tool to change the agriculture policy, by asking the supermarkets to provide more organic foods!"

The National Honey Board has announced funding eight production studies in 2011: ""We're pleased we received more proposals this year," Walker said. "We want to put this money to good use, and do it responsibly." See more at http://www.honey.com/ There's another suggestion that the research bill for honey bees should also be footed by honey users and growers. As a beginning, a piece of legislation is in the works to create a California Apiary Research Commission". We'll hear more about this in the future.

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**Please send any comments or suggestions for the website to:**
**Jon Hill - Webmaster aikenbeekeeper@gmail.com**

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**Hey!!!! Does anyone want to help with articles, photos, fun facts, etc. for the newsletter?**
**You can e-mail your contribution to Deborah Sasser**
**dsasser3@comcast.net**

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What did the bee say to the flower?

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Answer . . . Hello Honey!

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*Please don't forget to sign the petition and send it to your friends and get them to sign and send to their friends… we must help get this toxic poison banned in the United States to save our tiny pollinators and save our food!!! Thanks, Deborah Sasser*

**Sign the emergency petition and help save our bees and our food.**
**Secure.Avaaz.org/en/save_the_bees_usa/?vl**

Have a wonderful Spring!