

CCBA Minutes – 1-25-16 – Karen Lineberger

CCBA new president, Sarah Mellon, opened the January 25, 2016 meeting at 6:30 p.m. with a financial report from treasurer, Judy Gibson. Judy was able to secure a new checking account for the Association with BB&T for the \$3,722.67 in the CCBA treasury. In other old business, tee shirts are still available for sale, but a new design for the new year may be considered in the future.

Reggie Endsley reported that the short course bee school will be held January 30 and February 6, with help from Wes Voight. Additional volunteers would be appreciated to pass out literature and help with lunch. Welcome to the many new faces in the crowd, hope to see you Saturday.

Steve Gibson reported that bee packages and queens are available this year from Old Dutch Farm Apiary in Newton, NC. \$96. for bee packages with unmarked queen and \$100. for marked queen packages. Queens are available from \$25. - \$29. He made a motion that CCBA purchase 3 marked queens for the observation hive at the fair. Another motion was made to modify the safety glass in the hive for around \$100. Both motions were voted on and approved. Steve also reported that Randy Oliver had acknowledged the Association in the Scientific Beekeeping Journal for the \$100. donation that was made.

The February meeting will feature a Sherwin Williams paint representative. The March meeting will share photography tips . April and May will be field meetings, which will probably be held on Saturday afternoons to better accommodate member work schedules. Contact Steve Gibson if you have ideas for other CCBA meetings.

As the CC Fair is a major community outreach, as well as a fundraiser, it was decided to appoint Judy Gantt Chairwoman for an activity committee to cover the many aspects of the fair endeavor.

Another important outreach program is the uptown farmer's market, which has a new Power of Produce program—"POP". This is a nationwide program to help children take ownership of their food choices. We would like to be proactive in our participation this year so we can choose our date, and will consider this at the next meeting. Thanks to Wes Voight who will provide brochures.

An excellent program on bee topics problematic to this area was presented by state apiary inspector Lewis Cauble. He can be reached at 838-230-4544 or LewisCauble@ncagr.gov. He recommended a good resource, A Field Guide to Honey

Bees and Their Maladies, which can be downloaded off the internet. He has identified three problems that contribute most to colony failure in this area: queen issues, nutrition or lack of food sources, and varroa mites.

Queen events that cause changes include swarming, supersedure, or killing the queen accidentally. Learning the biology and timing of bees is the best way to prevent problems. The worker bee is an egg for 3 days, larvae for 6 days, and a capped pupa for 12 days before emerging as an adult. Monitoring is crucial, so look for swarm cells along the lower edges of frames and supersedure cells in the center of the frame. If finding this early, don't add a queen, better chances come from combining brood frames onto a queen right colony with newspaper between. Finding multiple eggs in cells means workers are laying and the queen is failing, which produces only drones. Drone brood and scattered brood pattern indicate a failing queen. Swarm cells along the edges of frames indicate the queen has stopped laying eggs in preparation for swarming. If this happens, and the hive is queenless, watch the cells to see if they make a queen. A queen cell contains an egg and royal jelly, while a queen cup is an empty cell that has an open end. Once the queen hatches, she needs to mate within 2 weeks of hatching. Eggs are laid soon after, and should be capped by day 9. Combine frames of brood and eggs from another colony if necessary. Inspect every 2 weeks after late February to make sure you are not running out of room, which would require adding more supers or making a split. If new to beekeeping, he recommends having 2 colonies or having a friend or mentor available for help. A queen timeline calendar is available on line. Lewis Cauble wants to be available for CCBA field meetings when these procedures are demonstrated, and he will even come to your home if necessary.

The second topic was nutrition or feeding, which should begin once a package is installed in the hive. Also, feed bees sugar water when they are drawing comb, so more energy can be directed to brood production. Feed if the hive feels light or during a dirth in July. The queen will stop laying eggs if nutrition is not available. Do not overfeed, however, as hives can become honey bound. Pollen patties are good to promote brood, but there is no substitute for natural pollen.

The third topic and number one killer of honey bees, the varroa mite was the final topic. The European eastern honey bee was the original host of the varroa. They were found in Russia in 1952, Japan in 1958, Germany in 1977, the U.S. in 1987, and North Carolina in 1990. They are present in all packages installed by beekeepers. They carry up to 24 viruses, creating the Varroa Virus Complex. They cannot be prevented, only controlled. A good document available from the Honey Bee Health Coalition is

Tools For Varroa Management. The sugar shake is one such tool to monitor levels of varroa. Use a wide mouth jar with markings. One ounce is about 80 bees and if you have 3 mites per 100 bees, one needs to treat the hive. Formerly, the acceptable level was 5 mites per 100 bees. Varroa like the drone brood best because of the longer 24 day time from egg to adult, giving them longer on the pupa. Varroa can result in underweight bees who forage earlier with decreased navigation skills. A major sign is deformed wings on bees.

Treatments for varroa were listed and discussed but the goal is decreased use of chemical and more IPM or integrated pest management. If treating, consider Mite Away quick strips, Apiguard with thymol or Api-life Var. Brushy Mountain has oxalic acid, which creates a vapor that knocks mites off adult bees. Be sure to monitor after treating, and remove treatment when instructed on the label. Be careful to treat only when the temperatures are suitable, as many are temperature sensitive. Use proper personal protective equipment when using chemicals and read chemical labels.

Integrated pest management is a multifaceted approach including monitoring acceptable pest levels, biological, mechanical, and physical controls. A genetic measure would be to choose hygienic species such as Russian that are less susceptible to varroa and viruses. Natural varroa remedies include trapping drones, making splits, etc. If not managing mites, there will be no beekeeping, but bee buying. A hive is compromised if there are more than 3 mites per 100 bees.

Again, contact state apiary inspector, Lewis Cauble by phone at 838-230-4544 or E-mail LewisCauble@ncagr.gov

Members say a prayer for Ken and Ann White, as Ken will have a shoulder replacement February 10.

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