**Rowan County Beekeepers Association**

**Meeting Minutes**

**2/14/2022**

**Location: In Person and ZOOM Facilitated by Rowan County Extension Agency**

Marcel Renn called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed all the members there. Marcel introduced officers for anyone new. There were 31 participants in person and 1 on Zoom.

**Program: Bridget Gross, Apiary Inspector for Area 2 (which includes Rowan) Apiary Inspection Services**

**1. American Foul Brood, detection and eradication and prevention**

**2. Steps used to determine why a colony died**

**3. What services are available to small backyard beekeepers, from our inspectors**

**4. Are there any requirements to register our apiary with the County or State of NC?**

**5. Anything else that would be helpful for us**

Main goal of apiary inspectors is disease and pest control as well as to provide education for beekeepers and the public.

They conduct inspections and provide permits for sales of bees and queens. If you sell more than 10 colonies per year you need a permit for the sales.

They provide a sounding board for beekeepers, answering questions, inspecting colonies, etc.

Bridget showed a NSCBA website which has a link to contact inspectors as well as a link to NC beekeeping laws. Inspectors don’t work for the NCSBA and are not associated with the NCSBA. She referenced the location for accessing the NC state laws related to bees and beekeeping. County and city are required to allow small beekeepers to keep up to 5 bee colonies; however, the law does not cover Home Owner Association (HOA) regulations.

Bridget also showed a page from the Plant industry website which offers some apiary services.

She reviewed the 5 NC regions and the inspectors that cover those regions.

How can small scale beekeepers utilize the state apiary inspectors?:

To request a health inspection

Get a permit when selling more than 10 colonies

Just because

When you suspect American Foul Brood (AFB) (call immediately!)

Help with proper application of treatments

Dead out inspections to determine why colony died

Sometimes appease neighbors related to bee behavior

American Foulbrood – how to recognize and prevent spread. Very contagious and spores can persist in wax and woodenware for up to 40 years. Bacteria rot the larvae – use rope test. Black light can be used to see where larvae have glued themselves to sides of cell walls. AFB is determined by inspections, inspectors will examine surrounding areas, quarantine apiary. Rope test is done by using toothpick or match stick to swirl around in larvae and pull out. AFB will cause the rope to extend several centimeters. There is a fumigation chamber in Raleigh to eradicate AFB from contaminated equipment. Chamber is run only when full so there may not be a quick turnaround time. There is a request form on the apiary inspector website. Recommend requesting fumigation in the fall when woodenware won’t be needed immediately.

When responding to a request for inspection, Bridget will look for:

Healthy, full life cycle of bees

Generally non-aggressive bees (depends on environmental conditions)

Varroa level tests

Food stores

Things out of the ordinary

What went wrong / causes of a deadout

What did you see during your last inspection?

Pesticide spraying

Varroa levels

Varroa treatments

Other pests and diseases

Queen issues

Lack of food stores

Small population?

When did colony die?

Was it a quick die off

Dwindling population

When did you last see colony active

Time of year

Chilled

Consumed all their food

Mite treatments applied?

2 most common issues in hives / causes of deadouts

Varroa and disease issues

Queen issues

Request inspections when there is a suspected pesticide kill – contact inspector and/or pesticide inspector. Survey area, inspect colony, collect samples, call pesticide inspector.

Apiaries are not required to be registered in NC. However, if you wish to register your hives, there are 2 ways to register: Bee Check (voluntary registration that companies / farmers should check before spraying pesticides) Registration of apiary thru NCSDA – costs $10. Mostly associated with aerial application of pesticides

National Honeybee Survey – 10 or more colonies : <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/honey-bees/!ut/p/z1/fYw9D4IwEIZ3fgWLI7mSKOpo1IgfcXGBLs0JVaq1rbQY-fdWgrq53HNv7n0OaBCGQQCZh1_68SFQhQ9xRie0QgkZ5DRh-3i-IpNhvFstFzGZpdP1Nh0n5LAcwaYTf_77w38j642-_gXk4nK_0xnQQivHnw4yNJWwrIvKMSmONdbtgFhkuqnZSReN7ZKR6O8VR-mqASn1jVsnish42KgUlqPlvllpxVt25O_dNvWDt2CuNH8BqCa3pA!!/>

Something new for 2022, NCSDA inspectors are doing a Baseline Africanized Data Survey:

New for 2022

Testing to determine aggressiveness of honey bee colonies. Will develop guidelines for unacceptable aggressiveness.

Apiary inspectors are part of consortium of apiary inspectors all over US and Canada. Meet regularly

Opened to questions:

Someone asked about doing post mortems on dead bees or colonies. Bridget stated that their post mortem is usually done on colonies vs. individual bees to determine how a colony died.

Someone said it was really nice of inspectors to offer assistance with HOA and neighbor relations. Has she seen any pesticide kills? Kills are tracked, but most are due to lawn applications.

Someone asked how many colonies are inspected on average – can easily be hundreds per month. Also wanted to know how many hives people around here keep – smaller scale. If someone has 15 colonies or less, will look at all. If many more then will use a sliding scale to inspect a portion of the total. Hobbyists beekeepers usually have 15 or less.

Another question: Have you seen much AFB? She has seen none in NC yet.

There were no other questions and Bridget provided her contact information: [bridget.gross@ncagr.gov](mailto:bridget.gross@ncagr.gov)

(919) 418-4906

**Secretary Report:** No comments were received on the January minutes. Last month’s minutes were approved.

**Treasurer Report:** Mark Heuser provided the Treasurer’s report. Beginning balance as of 1/1/22: $2489.60. Ending balance as of 1/31/22: $3003.60. 26 paid for local dues and a number of people also paid for state.

Mark Heuser encouraged everyone to pay the local dues at the club and pay the state dues on their website. He also said he would take both sets of dues. The state will email your membership card to you directly.

**Old Business**:

None

**New Business**:

The NCSBA Spring meeting will be held at New Bern, NC Convention Center, March 3-5. Registration is on the NCSBA webpage. There will be a number of keynote speakers as well as breakout workshops.

Cody has added a link on the Rowan County Ag webpage for the Rowan County Beekeepers Association: [Rowan County Beekeeper’s Association | North Carolina Cooperative Extension (ncsu.edu)](https://rowan.ces.ncsu.edu/rowan-county-beekeepers-association/). He asked that members review the webpage and provide feedback and suggestions to him at [cjcraddo@ncsu.edu](mailto:cjcraddo@ncsu.edu).

Tim Coffey of the Salisbury Pride Planning Committee is planning the 2022 festival for [June 25th](https://business.facebook.com/latest/inbox/all?nav_ref=pages_classic_isolated_section_inbox_redirect&asset_id=956665801016695&mailbox_id=&selected_item_id=1090039353) at the Bell Tower Green. He said they are updating mailing list for vendors. If interested, he'd just need a contact name and email to add to the list. No one was interested and/or available to support this event.

Marcel was contacted about supporting the May 14th Earthday Jam – at one of the parks in Salisbury. Holly Hutchins is the contact. No one was interested and/or available to support this event.

Cody Craddock had received a request from St. Johns Lutheran Church, for a beekeeper to provide a presentation at their March 8, lunch and learn, 12-1. Marcel said he would do it.

Marcel asked if anyone present was keeping bees in the 70s. There were only 2 people who had. Queens were only $4.50 or $6.00 at that time. Queens from Mann Lake now cost $45. Packages were $19.00. Prices have gone up since the 70s (as has everything else).

Someone asked where to find the best information about how to start beekeeping. Attend beekeepers meeting, find a mentor.

Someone asked can you manage the flavor of your honey? Only if you plant a large area of specific flowers or move your bees to an area where there is a concentration of specific flowers (ex. Sourwood).

Bryan said to make sure you check your bees for food stores and if light on food, feed, feed, feed. Both pollen and sugar. Even if it’s cold, if you think they are starving, feed them.

Maples are blooming, dead nettles, winter honeysuckle, henbit, melonia, camelias.

Cody handed out a survey on Rowan Co Ag that asked for improvement suggestions.

Bryan said that there are already active swarm cells being found in colonies near Raleigh. There is a swarm capture list on our page on the Rowan County Ag. Webpage.

There were no additional Q&A.

Door prizes were handed out and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Williams, Secretary

**CALENDAR FOR BEEKEEPING IN CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA**

Nancy Ruppert, Apiary Inspector, NCDA & CS nancy.ruppert@ncagr.gov Updated December 2019

This calendar was designed for general beekeeping use in most of central North Carolina. Recommendations are based on average climate/weather conditions, and may vary with significant temperature changes. Those who manage hives for commercial operations may have different needs than those listed below. Details regarding bloom types/dates and pest/disease management are not included here due to space limitations; consult reliable and current resources for this information. This calendar is subject to being updated as new information becomes available. Remember: bees often follow a different calendar than humans do!

January: Add pollen supplements, if needed; check amount and location of honey stores, and feed (2:1 syrup, candy board or fondant) if <3/4 super of stored honey left.

Check/repair/replace stored equipment; order wax/woodenware.

Consider single dose of oxalic acid vapor or drizzle early in Jan. to clean up residual varroa in hives.

Order nucs/packages.

Keep learning---beekeeping class, read books/journals, etc.

Combine or insulate smaller (less than 4 frames of bees) hives.

Combine hives where queen has failed, if they’re still alive and haven’t absconded.

Move hives if they’ll need to be relocated this year.

Bees may need help removing dead bodies and/or heavy snow from entrance area.

February: Noticeable pollen flow under way, especially red maple-; brood build-up intensifying.

Minimal if any nectar available---most hives need feeding (1:1 syrup in most cases, unless honey stores very low [i.e., <1/2 super left], or continue candy board/fondant).

Combine hives if needed (see January entries above).

Repair/replace equipment if needed; move hives if needed; keep learning.

During last half of February, consider adding super/hive body of wax foundation to allow bees to draw out more comb for spring. (Feeding or nectar is required for this.)

Replace a few (<4) frames where comb is old or damaged.

Some hives may need testing for Nosema disease, especially if too cold for cleansing flights. Also, late February is not too early to begin/continue varroa mite assessments, especially in southeastern NC.

Call your local cooperative extension office if you want your name on a “swarm-catcher” list.

Make plans to attend the annual NCSBA Spring Meeting in March.

March: NCSBA annual Spring Meeting (usually first weekend in March)---great learning opportunity!

Swarming under way-; implement prevention measures (make splits, remove queen cells, “checker board”, temporarily or permanently remove current mother queen); set up “bait” hives.

Reverse bottom two or three boxes on hive to give queen more room to lay: most hives have moved up above the bottom hive body, leaving it virtually empty. This measure also helps reduce swarming. Caution: be careful not to split up clusters of brood when you do this. Two to three weeks after this reversal, it’s likely that you’ll need to reverse them again. (An alternative to reversal: simply add another hive body or super.)

Assess for pest and/or disease problems (especially varroa mites, American foulbrood, and European foulbrood) and treat if needed. Treatments should be completed by early April to limit risk of contaminating honey.

Check honey stores; feed (1:1 or thinner syrup) if needed.

Look closely at the brood pattern; order new queen if current one failing.

Continue to replace few frames of old/undesirable comb, if needed.

Near end of the month, add at least one honey super; remove entrance reducers; equalize hives.

April: Nectar flow is often heaviest this month: make sure that all medications are out of hive unless required for bees’ survival, be prepared to add new supers every 7-10 days, and remove feeders from all except new or weak hives.

Bees should be very busy; closely examine hives that are not, and trim weeds that may be hindering flight.

Swarming usually heavy---continue prevention/capture measures.

Look closely at brood pattern; replace queen if needed.

Have everything ready to install nucs/packages that you’ve ordered; feed upon installation.

Consider adding queen excluder to prevent brood in honey supers.

May: Nectar flow continues---keep adding supers; get extraction/bottling equipment ready. Consider adding an additional hive entrance (via 5/8” hole or shim) above brood area, for foragers.

Swarming continues---keep up prevention/capture measures.

Replace failing queens.

Start/continue planting warm season annuals for ongoing nectar/pollen supplementation.

Install traps for small hive beetles if needed (i.e., if more than 20 adult beetles seen in hive).

Place two or more bee “watering holes” in apiary, if not already present.

June: Main nectar flow starts to dwindle---fewer supers needed, unless sourwood nearby: if in area of sourwood, consider harvesting available honey before mid-June sourwood flow to ensure more “pure” sourwood crop.

If honey being harvested, put “wet” supers back on hives late in day to limit robbing.

Can start late-season splits during last half of June; feed splits initially, even if there is nectar available

Continue measures to control small hive beetle population.

Check varroa mite levels if not done since February. (www.honeybeehealthcoalition.org)

Keep water for bees constantly available.

Make plans for attending NCSBA Summer Meeting in mid-July.

July: May harvest some (or all) of honey; may continue late-season splits; continue beetle controls; keep water available for bees (see June activities).

Attend NCSBA annual Summer Meeting, if possible (usually mid-July)---great learning opportunity!

Get supers on for cotton honey, if hives near cotton fields.

Replace failing queens; consider replacing any queen that is two years old or older.

Continue varroa mite assessments, and treat if needed/practical.

August: If not in area of significant cotton bloom, harvest remaining desired honey by mid-month to keep bees from eating it.

Nectar dearth in most areas; may need to feed carbohydrates (1:2 sugar:water, or honey water)

Pest control is critical this month: hive beetle populations are peaking, varroa mites are nearing their peak populations, some factors increase risk of damage from wax moth larvae, and yellow jackets/ hornets tend to be plentiful.

Careful assessment of queen performance---this month is usually last chance to replace queens until the following spring.

Can still make late-season splits early in August if using mated queens.

Keep water available for bees constantly.

Be prepared for ”badly behaving bees”: because nectar flow is so scarce, bees may become more defensive and more likely to rob other hives; install robbing screens or entrance reducers (but be aware of need for ventilation), and keep hive inspections as brief as possible.

Completing honey harvest + decrease in queen’s egg-laying = extra empty supers of drawn comb; store them using method that prevents damage from wax moth larvae (freezing, keeping open to light/ventilation, using paradichlorobenzene [PDB] crystals).

September: Continue measures for pest control. Varroa control should be completed by end of month!!

May feed thin (1:1 or more diluted) sugar syrup for 2-3 weeks to stimulate queen laying---builds up winter population---but by last week of September, begin feeding thicker (2:1) syrup for winter stores, although thicker syrup may not be necessary if >3 supers of honey left on hive and/or heavy fall nectar flow.

Consider assessment for Nosema parasites.

Combine colonies later in the month if weak and/or have failing queens.

Should have brood in bottom box; if not, may need to rearrange things.

October: Assess for varroa mites via sugar roll or alcohol wash. Varroa levels need to be below threshold by mid-October, as winter bees are developing and can be permanently damaged by varroa.

Remove all queen excluders, if present.

Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens.

Feed thick syrup, if needed, for winter food stores.

Limit frequency of inspections after mid-October: bees are sealing cracks with propolis, and waste lots of time/energy if they have to keep replacing it.

Add entrance reducers near end of month to keep mice out.

Drones being expelled in most hives.

Plant (October through December) herbaceous perennials, shrubs and trees for future nectar/pollen sources.

November: Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens.

Ensure adequate ventilation near top of hive.

Feed thick syrup, candy boards or fondant if needed, for winter stores.

Provide weights (brick, rock, concrete block, etc.) for tops of hives to limit wind-induced toplessness.

Plant trees for future nectar/pollen sources (tulip poplar, maple, sourwood, etc.).

Consider closing off screened bottom board to improve heat insulation.

Bee caught up before Thanksgiving, so you can enjoy food, family, football, Black Friday, etc.!

December: Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens.

Feed thick syrup, candy board or fondant if needed (i.e., if not more than one super of honey stored up).

Consider insulating smaller hives (those with 4 or fewer frames of bees).

Consider single dose of oxalic acid late in Dec. (while hive is likely broodless) to clean up residual varroa.

Sell honey to Christmas gift shoppers.

Year-end review/assessment of apiary success/challenges.

Leave bees alone, if possible. (Take a break---you probably need it by now!)

As of APRIL 2021

EXTRACTOR EQUIPMENT LIST FOR USE BY RCBA MEMBERS

(YOU MUST BE A CURRENT MEMBER OF RCBA TO USE THE EXTRACTOR.)

Please fill out the Sign-Out sheet with date, your name, and phone number.

1. Randy Elium is managing the extractor and accessories
   1. Phone: 704-213-2661
   2. Address: 2085 Lake Rd, Salisbury, NC 28146
2. The list of extracting equipment includes the following (15 items):
   1. Maxant 9-frame Electric Extractor s/n VO851A0015
   2. Extractor wood floor bracket (keeps it from vibrating)
   3. Hot knife
   4. 2 Capping scratchers
   5. Stainless steel strainers (sieves)—2 parts. Smaller sieve has straight sides and fits inside the larger bowl-shaped sieve. The larger sieve has side arms that adjust to hold sieve over top of a bucket
   6. Collection Bucket (5 gallon bucket with honey gate)
   7. Capping bar (yellow rectangular device to fit over top of bucket and support frame as caps cut off)
   8. bracket for supporting a tipped bucket to drain into another bucket or container
   9. lubricant for the extractor axel—needs to be food-grade
   10. Refractometer
   11. Capping vault (5 parts):
       1. Bottom box with honey gate
       2. Top box with separate metal grid to catch cappings
       3. Wooden support with nail to balance frames on while uncapping
       4. lid

All small accessories are inside the gray capping vault box labelled “RCBA”

Extractor Instructions and diagram are included, in a small plastic bag.

1. Please thoroughly clean all equipment when finished extracting and return all equipment to Randy Elium.