

Greetings Beekeepers;

Lunch committee;

Bree Hollister, Mark Neshium, Paul Hardenberg and Adrienne Griffith

Speaker;

Becky, from The Bee Squad to help us understand Varroa Mites

Meeting Site; First Lutheran Church,

Koinonia Room, 424 S. 8th. St. Brainerd, Mn. 56401

Don's recap of February Meeting ; “ Duane Williams gave an excellent account of his experiences with his “Top Bar” hive of bees. He likes to watch the bees at work, and the top bar hive is at a convenient height for that...he's not in it for the money anyway. He noted that one must be careful in handling the delicate combs, which also can not be extracted- one can only produce cut comb honey with this system. He also noted that one needs to keep a sharp knife handy to prevent cross combs and attachment to the sides. As yet, he hasn't been able to winter them over....they may be better suited to the South.

Dr. Lewis Struthers experiences on swarm-catching were also very informative. He puts out bait hives, using two dark frames in the middle and foundation on each side, with lemon grass oil to attract the bees. He says spring and early summer swarms can make honey fast. Bear can be a problem, as can wax moths when the boxes are unoccupied. He hangs his swarm boxes 10-15 feet high, at least a mile away from his own yards, with a lower entrance of just 1 square inch. He then throws a rope over a branch of a tree, ties the rope around the box and pulls it up snug against the tree branch so it doesn't sway. He

prefers that the swarm box not be hanging in the full sun during the hot summer days as this seems to reduce the attractiveness of the box to a potential swarm. Last summer he caught 15 swarms in his swarm boxes- free bees. The broodless period of the new swarm aids in reducing mite infestations, he says.

Feel free to share ideas at NCBA's meetings – we all can learn from each other!"

The following is a quote from Bee-L and Randy Oliver;

When the final paper is published, perhaps they will clarify whether they indeed used "dehydrated oxalic acid" or oxalic acid dihydrate (the more common form, and likely what they meant).

A brief take-home on their findings:

Spraying was effective, but tough on the bees, invasive, and time consuming, so I will discuss it no further.

Dribbling and sublimation were fairly comparable, with some notable differences.

At the 2.25 g dose (medium strength dribble, or typical sublimation dose), the efficacy at mite kill (in colonies completely lacking brood) was exactly the same. However, sublimation appeared to be somewhat more "gentle" to the colony, as evidenced by less bee mortality, and more brood in spring. Indeed, colonies appeared to tolerate a 4.5 g dose by sublimation remarkably well.

Of particular note is that following January treatment, in early May sublimated colonies tended to have more brood (4.9 frames, compared to 3.9) than dribbled colonies. This suggests that sublimation has less of a lasting negative effect upon the colony than does dribbling (likely of greater impact in cold-winter areas with an extended period of dormancy).

Unfortunately, they did not compare a higher-dose dribble to the high dose vaporization. Nor did they take nosema samples, in order to determine the

comparative effect upon nosema by treatment method.

Two other practical aspects are operator safety and the amount of time involved in application. The researchers wore vaporizers, but found that if they loaded the hot vaporizer with OA immediately before shoving it into the hive entrance, and then sealed the entrance with foam, that they were exposed to little escaping vapor. Unfortunately, this entails dropping oxalic crystals onto the hot vaporizer at each hive (a safety consideration).

As far as the amount of time involved in application, it took them 3 minutes per hive for sublimation, 2.5 minutes for dribbling. I do not know why it took so long for them to dribble since it takes me only 10 seconds to dribble a 10-frame colony (I apply at the calibrated rate of 1 second per seam of bees).

My take on their excellent studies is that dribbling or sublimation is both practical methods, each with advantages and disadvantages:

*Dribble is safer to the applicator (and quicker), but a bit harder on the bees. It may be the preferred method in climates with late fall and a short winter, due to its safety to the operator, quickness, and the colonies being able to rapidly recover.

*Sublimation may be the preferred method where winters are colder and longer, and the cluster is broodless for a longer period.

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Randy Oliver

Grass Valley, CA

www.ScientificBeekeeping.com

This meeting is focusing on the varroa mite and hopefully will be an aid to you in protecting your bees.

Have you at least checked your bees this spring? You need to at least know if they survived the winter and how badly infested they are with varroa mites. When and how are you going to treat? With what? Always remember honey is a food and you and yours may be eating it.

Member Ads;

Bee equipment;

Gilbert Frank, Build new or repair old, fix your damaged equipment.

320-241-0549 or 320-292-2452

31979 – 456 th. Ave. Aitkin, Mn. 56431

Package Bees;

2 and 3 pound packages

Contact, Larry Chismar 218-545-2306, Bill Krieger 320-277-3510

Candles;

100% beeswax many sizes and shapes

Paul Hardenberg 320-279-0864

5 Frame nucs;

5 frames, new laying queen, no exchange of equipment

#150.00

Burt Scripture 218-352-9202