

# Lake Cumberland Beekeepers Association

**Newsletter  
September 2016**

## **Message from David Gilbert, LCBA President**

Summer is almost over which means preparation for winter management should be in everyone's thoughts for beekeeping. Hopefully everyone has treated, or is treating for the varroa mite problem before going into winter. As I have said before good management practices result in good pay-offs for your honey bees.

Lindsey New, with our local Farm Service Agency, has sent out a notice of a November 21 deadline for applying for NAP assistance for local honey producers who may incur losses in 2017 under federal guidelines. I will have this information available at our September meeting next Monday evening.\*

Please try and make our September meeting in

which the membership will be voting for all 2017 officers of the LCBA. I'm sure we will have good input and excellent candidates for the continued success and growth of the association and its mission in our region.

Yours in beekeeping,

**David Gilbert, President**

\*A copy of the FSA news release appears on page 4. *Editor*

**Single dose packages of the varroa mite treatment Apiguard will again be offered for sale at the September meeting at a substantial saving to LCBA members.**

## **Next LCBA meeting will be held on Monday September 19, 2016**

**Winter Hive Management** is the topic for discussion at the September LCBA meeting.

Pat Rizenbergs will present a training session on getting the bees ready for winter. Pat will discuss the amount of honey a colony of bees needs to get through the winter, how to weigh the hives to judge the amount of stores, and when to feed the bees. Her talk will also cover fondant production, hive ventilation and other matters.

Other LCBA members will be providing input and sharing their experiences. This is an excellent

opportunity to learn from your fellow beekeepers!

**6pm:** Doors open for general discussion and advice on bees and beekeeping

**6.30pm:** LCBA business meeting

**7pm: Winter Hive Management.**

**Meeting venue:** Pulaski County Extension Service Office. LCBA meetings are free and open to the public.

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## August 2016 LCBA meeting report

### Fall management presentation by Laura Rogers, Small Farm Area Agent at Kentucky State University

Laura Rogers began her presentation by reminding us that the goldenrod are flowering, a 'heads-up' that fall is here and winter is just around the corner! This is an important time for beekeepers, as they need to insure that their bees are in good health, the queen has a good laying pattern, pests such as wax moths, small hive beetles and varroa mites are kept to a minimum, and the bees are storing enough honey to get them through the winter.

In days gone by, beekeepers used to take honey supers off their hives when the goldenrod bloomed. It was believed that the honey was not fit for human consumption because the goldenrod nectar made the honey smell bad and also caused it to crystallize quickly. Research now shows that the strange smell of late season honey is actually a result of the bees collecting ragweed pollen, and the easy crystallization is due to the composition of fall aster nectar. In either case, the honey is perfectly good for humans and bees alike! The smell of the honey soon dissipates, and crystallization is easily corrected by warming the honey jar in some hot water.

Laura noted that records show local bees had not produced as much honey this year as anticipated, possibly due to heavy rains which washed out the nectar from tulip poplar and black locust blooms. This means that beekeepers should start checking their hives for honey stores now, as fall feeding may be necessary to help the bees build up sufficient stores for the winter. Laura said that she checks the weight of her hive boxes every time she inspects the bees, so that she has a good idea of what a 'full' box of stores feels like, and can assess when stores are low.

Laura explained that a colony of bees would need about 60-70 pounds of honey per hive to get through the winter. If a hive is deemed to be short of supplies, beekeepers should start feeding a 1:1 solution of sugar water now, increasing this to a 2:1 sugar:water syrup during the winter. She recommends using only 100% cane or 100% beet sugar.

As far as harvesting honey was concerned, Laura said that she always waits until a frame is fully capped over before harvesting it. If a few cells have not been capped, she gently shakes the frame over a tray to capture any nectar that may fall out: drops of nectar on the tray indicate too high a moisture content; no nectar droplets on the tray is a good sign that the honey is properly cured and ready to harvest.

Laura discussed the use of pollen patties, and warned that these may attract small hive beetles. She recommended only using a very small piece of pollen patty at a time, so the patty did not sit for too long in the hive.

Another tip was to make sure that the hive boxes were in good condition, and to replace old or damaged boxes as necessary. The bees will seal up all the cracks between boxes with propolis, but to help them out Laura often uses duct tape to seal the gaps between boxes.

Mice will be looking for somewhere to nest for the winter, and beehives are a favorite place. Install mouseguards in the fall, to prevent the mice from getting into the hives.

Laura was asked about winter hive protection and insulation. She discussed ways of shielding the hives from winter winds, but her most important advice was to have hives tilted slightly forwards so that rain could run off the outer cover and safely away from the bees. Also, snow accumulations should be removed from the hive entrances. Ventilation is important, too, because the warm air inside the hive will condense on the inner cover and moisture will drip down onto the bees, chilling and killing them. To prevent this, inner covers should have ventilation gaps so that moisture does not accumulate—even something as simple as placing very small twigs between the inner and outer covers would be sufficient.

Critters can be a big problem during the winter. Skunks may scratch at the hive entrance to induce the guard bees to emerge from the hive, and the skunk will eat these bees. A solution is to place hives on blocks several inches above ground level, so that the skunks' bellies are exposed to the stinging bees. Rows of spikes, such as those used to secure fitted carpeting, could be placed on the ground in front of the hives to deter skunks from standing there.

Bears are reported in our area every year, and a bear will rip a hive to pieces. Laura suggested strapping the hive boxes together, so that at least if a bear does visit, it will not be able to get the hive apart easily. Having a working electric fence is possibly the best option, though Laura pointed out that even this may not stop a determined bear.

Treating for the fungal disease Nosema was discussed. Fumagillin antibiotic is the recommended treatment, but new research indicates that this treatment may no longer be as effective. The disease is spread by spores in the air, and will be more of a problem in a cool, wet spring season.

It is, of course, essential to treat all hives for varroa mite. Many treatments were available and effective if applied as per the instructions. Laura recommended changing varroa mite treatments to prevent mites from becoming resistant to any one treatment. A hive weakened by varroa mites will be more susceptible to other hive pests, such as wax moth.

Laura's closing reminder to all of us beekeepers: Spring beekeeping begins NOW.

## LCBA outreach

### Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery Outdoor Eco Adventure Day

On Friday, October 21, 2016, Wolf Creek Fish Hatcheries are running their annual Outdoor Eco Adventure Day for all of the Russell County 4th graders. The event starts at 8.45am and ends at 2pm (both times Central).

LCBA has been invited to head up one of the 9 stations for the day. This will be a busy and fun event, and a wonderful opportunity to interact with these young people and to pass along some of our knowledge about bees.

**Teaching is the best way to learn!** If you are interested in assisting with the LCBA exhibit for all or part of the day, contact David Gilbert, LCBA President, or email us at lakecumberlandbeekeepers.com.

Listed below are some of the stations that Wolf Creek are planning for the event:

Corps of Engineers—Water safety—I like cool hand Luke

United Trappers of KY—Traditions and wildlife management

Mammoth Cave—Karst/geology

KY Division of Air Quality

KY Division of Water

KY Division of Waste Management

Archery

**Lake Cumberland Beekeepers**—Wonderful pollinators

STEM—Solar Power/Sustainability—Lindsey Wilson College.

## Bee news from Casey County

### August/September bee report

Our bees have been busy this month, collecting pollen and nectar from a wide variety of flowers. In the fields and along the wood edges the bees have been observed visiting purple iron weed, lilac-colored mist flower, white boneset, yellow partridge pea, as well as chicory, lespedeza and perilla. The second show of golden rod is starting and the bees are making the most of this bounty.

The pollen collected from some of these flowers can be distinguished by color: the ironweed, boneset and mist flower all produce a creamy white pollen; the partridge peas a bright yellow, while goldenrod pollen is more orange-yellow.

A big provider of bright yellow pollen is ragweed. Yes, I know this is the plant everyone likes to hate, but when you see the bees covered in ragweed pollen, you get to think that perhaps this weed is not all bad! Ragweed produces separate male and female flowers, much in the way that corn does. Most of the ragweed flower inflorescence is covered in pollen-producing male flowers, while the small inconspicuous female flowers are situated at the base of the inflorescence. Pollen falls readily from the male flowers, and we've had fun observing the bees collecting this: all it takes is for the bee to run up and down the inflorescence to become covered in pollen; a quick brush off in midair to collect



*Collecting pollen from ragweed is quick and easy*

the pollen and stuff it into the pollen baskets, and the bee is off to visit the next inflorescence. Food collection should always be this easy!

By observing the color of the pollen brought into the hives, it is possible to get some indication of which flowers the bees have been collecting pollen from. We can never really tell, however, whether the bees are collecting nectar as well as pollen. The only way to check on this is to inspect the hives and feel the weight of the

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Visit the LCBA website for reports and photos of LCBA outreach events,  
[www.lakecumberlandbeekeepers.com](http://www.lakecumberlandbeekeepers.com)

## September report from the FSA

### Somerset FSA Service Center Reminds Kentucky Honey Producers of November NAP Deadline for 2017 Honey Crop

The Somerset FSA Service Center urges Pulaski and McCreary County honey producers wanting to obtain 2017 coverage through the Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) to do so before the closing date of November 20, 2016. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields/grazing loss, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to normal disasters. NAP is an easy and encouraged means for our producers to practice risk management with eligible crops as natural disasters can directly affect profitability and recovery of agricultural operations.

There are criteria producers must meet in order to be eligible to receive NAP coverage and benefits. Some critical eligibility requirements will be briefed throughout the following, but interested producers are encouraged to call and/or visit their local FSA Service Center in order to gain more knowledge concerning this program.

In order to meet eligibility requirements for NAP, crops must be noninsurable, commercially produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available. In the event of a natural disaster, NAP covers the amount of loss greater than 50 percent of the expected production based on the approved yield and reported acreage. For a complete list of eligible NAP crops for Pulaski and/or McCreary County please contact FSA.

Eligible producers can apply for coverage using the CCC -471 Application for Coverage form. Producers must file the application and service fee by November 20, 2016 for Honey. Other deadlines apply to other crops. Limited resource, beginning farmers, and socially disadvantaged producers will receive a fee waiver, and their coverage will be free. Contact the office to inquire about considerations qualifying you to be any of these three producer types.

In addition to the Application for Coverage, producers must complete the FSA-578 form in order to accurately

report the number of colonies present in the operation. Colonies located in other counties and producing from various floral types, but owned by the producer and serving as a component to the overall honey production, do count as part of the total production to be reported to the FSA office when completing CCC-576 Report of Production.

To follow up with this brief newsletter and to gain a more complete understanding of NAP coverage for honey production, please contact your local FSA Office before November 20, 2016 deadline for 2017 coverage. We will explain to you stipulations concerning ineligible causes of loss as well as how eligible loss is calculated in addition to how county expected yields are calculated. It is our pleasure to assist you in any way we can so that your honey production can thrive. Do not pass up this opportunity to insure your operation with a disaster safety net.

For more information regarding the FSA mission and programs made available to you, feel free to visit the FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ky>. To sign up for state and county newsletters, updates, and press releases through the GovDelivery electronic news service, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe> or contact us here in the local FSA office for assistance.

For more information about FSA and its conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation), or contact your local FSA county office at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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### Bee news from Casey County (cont.)

boxes. Our main concern now is that the bees will be able to collect sufficient stores to get them through the winter.

Bees are opportunists when it comes to seeking out something sweet. They are quick to take advantage of any sugary liquid, including that contained in hummingbird feeders. Sugar water from the leaking hummingbird feeder (pictured at right) was quickly exploited by our bees. We changed the feeder to one that was less bee-accessible, but bees have good memories and they continued to visit the area for the next 3 or 4 days, just in case.

- Hilary Forsyth

