

Ashe County Beekeeping Association (ACBA)  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
July 10, 2014

1. Welcome - Harry Galer

- a. Introduction of new people - Natalie Wilson, Philip and Julie McAbee.
- b. Everyone is here to learn about beekeeping and enjoy camaraderie.
- c. Sponsorships on our ACBA website – we need to contract with vendors...please help to identify interested sponsors.
- d. Hives – Micah has a map in the back to show the location of your hives for the Agriculture Center...please check it out.
- e. We have a panel tonight for our program...last month Dr. Hershner spoke about first aid and provided a wealth of excellent information. See minutes from the last meeting to review.
- f. Other panelists: James Wilkes - Hive Tracks, international and Randy Baldwin - long time keeper.

2. Website - Doug Ehrhardt showcased the site at last month's meeting and will briefly revisit tonight.

3. Treasurer's Report - Fowler not here tonight. Balance \$1451.47 (includes + \$300 for Honey Hole and - \$600 payment to Ric

4. 24 in attendance

5. Panel - Randy Baldwin (B), Greg Hershner (H) and James Wilkes (W)...the following summary is from notes taken during the panel's discussion. The abbreviated names are shown below to accompany the speakers comments.

H – has been a beekeeper since '99/15 years. Has been engaged in various applications... hobbyist, sideliners, candle making and value added honey products.

B – has been around 15 years. Made a lot of mistakes, but has learned by the messing up the ways in which I can help others.

- a. Lot of hives this past winter.
- b. Attended a class this morning and Dr. Ambrose spent 4 hours lecturing about everything but what was on the test.
- c. When somebody says something, think of your bees.
- d. Pesticide spraying after 2 in the PM, nectar not there, bees back in the hives. My bees are out until well around dark. Spray around 4 or 5 and there may be some harm done. Look at your own bees and determine what is best. Cold doesn't kill, but wind will kill.

W – part of what I do is Faith Mountain Farm in Creston.

- a. About 100 hives.
- b. Started in 2000. Familiar and around bees most of life.
- c. About 3 years ago, children invested in growth of the operation.

- d. Winter before last, 80-90% loss. Costs a lot to replace. Packages, nucs, splits, buying queens.
- e. Mistakes, but made lots of honey.
- f. Move bees...in sourwood tree areas now.
- g. Sell at farmers' markets - Ashe and Wilkes. Sell to vendors.
- h. Hivetracks.com is free...sign on to help with your record keeping. Instrument hives...electronic hive scales. Farming and beekeeping to make money.
- i. Professor at ASU. Research partnership with USDA...beeinformed.org. Best management practices to keep bees alive over the winter.

Comment: Dearth (fewer flowers) is coming up...feeding bees when flowers are not available.

B - any clover? As long as clover, then don't worry.

H - goal? Assume they have surplus they have stored. In two weeks, yellow stuff starts to bloom. Easy way out, don't try to be too scientific.

Comment: Swarms? Smaller swarms, then continue to feed. Is that OK?

B - always feed swarms and nucs for a while.

Comment: Some hives are lazy...even feeding, some don't produce as well as others. Is that a trait of a weak hive? Weak queen?

W - all of the above.

Comment: Open up in June/July, some are not very productive.

B - queen? brood? larvae?

Comment: Replace a queen?

W - Can't go wrong replacing a queen.

Comment: Requeen?

W - spotty brood...concern with virus?

Comment: Nuc from Honey Hole...can't find queen. Last time checked, couldn't find single larvae or egg. Super is filled with honey.

H - workers will produce honey until they die. Should always have a queen.

W - Yes, need a queen.

Comment: Another older hive...not well defined frames...put a medium super on the top to enable honey production.

H - want a deep on top. Old days, keepers used to just put sticks and allow bees to form comb as they chose.

Comment: Put brood box on top and put supers below...smoke to drive them down.

Comment: Make a lid with a triangle screen with 3 exit points. If box has hole in it anywhere, bees can enter and rob a hive.

B - any drawn comb, put a few in the bottom of a hive body and catch queen below and then put on queen excluder. Then nurse bees can hatch out and tend to new bees above and after no new bees, nurse bees will move to bottom where queen is now laying.

B - virgin queen will fly across the frame and trying to get on the back of a frame. Older queens are bigger and slower.

B - put a queen in a hive and the bees won't accept her, get a queen cell...put in a split, they hatch...later, no eggs and larvae. Got another queen cell from Wilkes and keep it around high 90 degrees. Put queen cell in split and a few weeks later it had hatched.

B - missing a queen, when you open they are acting crazy and are loud. When a queen is present, they calm down.

Comment: In a week hive, take frame from another hive with eggs and move to the week hive. Must make sure original queen is dead.

B - most buy queen cells vs. queen. Get a cooler and get an incubator to transport. Queen cells only \$8-10 while queen is \$25 +

Comment: If you requeen, beekeeper reported that when she takes out an old queen, closes hive for 7-10 days before introducing new queen.

B - when the sun is out, the foragers are out and not around to attack. Nurse bees are tending the brood. On splits, best time is when it is cloudy...get foragers and nurse bees even though the foragers have an attitude.

B - when feeding, using a front feeder - put 5 frames in the middle - draw out 1, 3 and 4, put feeder on one side to have them draw out and then move to the other side to draw there.

H - coolest thing about being a beekeeper, you get 200 answers to every question. Observe stuff if you have the time.

Comment: My one hive, queen has moved up...only one frame drawn out. Is in the super.

W - leave alone.

H - I'd switch.

B - Go in and see if something in it...wax moth, hive beetles, mouse?

Comment: Wax in a fresh comb should draw a queen...maybe there is something on the frames.

H - put lemongrass oil on her brood frames.

B - to keep a swarm, put honey bee healthy and add to sugar water and mist the frames.

Comment: If you give them extra room too early, they will move up.

Comment: Old hives, let them be...switching around seems to be a lot of work...there is really no need.

H - take super where she is laying on the bottom...put the others on top.

Comment: haven't fed in some time...lots of them drown.

Comment: bees will fly at 42 degrees. Not only pesticides killing the bees, a lot of things will kill the bees. When the bees are gone, we're all done for.

Comment: Serious problem with tree fields.

Comment: Bees in a tree field. we spray roundup but it doesn't kill clover and bees are around. There are good tree farmers and bad tree farmers. Have hummingbird feeders, and the bees come to the openings.

H - what are your bees telling you? They need water. Everything they do is telling you something and you need to figure out what they need.

B - bottom board - screen or other - if there is a lot of capping on the board, then they are eating their storage.

Comment: what do you do to keep mites down...how do you check. Only a problem until August.

W - I treat.

B - Need to check 1st week of August.

H - take pesticide applicator course to use coumaphos, I'm not going to sell that honey. Need to check in August to know what you're dealing with.

W - program with grant. Participate in a sampling program. Each month take a sample from 8 hives - mites/100 bees and then get a report each month. Then have a mite load during the course of the season. Treat from chemical to powdered sugar. If you don't deal with varroa, then you will have a problem. If bees are strong and you knock down the varroa population, the bees will be OK. If bee population draws down and mite population goes up, they won't survive. Break the cycle by requeening or splitting the hive...break the brood cycle.

Comment: frames to stimulate drones...freeze? Too labor intensive.

W - treat formic - not apivar - quick strips...can kill queen and affects the brood. Leave off hive initially to weaken before placing in hive.

B - used last year on two hive and it wiped out the mite population. Had some VSH next to it and they weren't affected. Two strips in the brood chamber and got an excellent kill of varroa. The honey, however, can only remain for the bees.