

THE NORFOLK BEE

Norfolk County, Massachusetts • www.norfolkbees.org

Volume 7, Issue 3 March 2008



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Early next month the bee school will finish and the packages we've all ordered will be arriving about the same time.

Anyone who would like to help mentor new beekeepers as they start their new hive please let us know so we can pass your contact information along. Also, anyone who wants to be added to our Swarm List to be contacted in the event that a local swarm opportunity comes our way in the months ahead let us know that too.

We've had a wet winter so we may be lucky and have a good spring flow. I hope your surviving hives are all starting to bring in pollen and that your supers are clean and ready for the new season.

Ed

FROM THE EDITOR

Happy Spring! As I've spent the last couple of months cleaning up and organizing (well, if I'm being honest, *semi-organizing*) my equipment and hive stuff, I've been dreaming of when my new bees would arrive. I've been planning and plotting - should I get Italians again or try some new breed? Should I add a hive? Is that cool-looking tool in the catalog really necessary?

Well, the Italians arrive in a couple of weeks and the Russians just two short weeks after that and it finally feels like spring is going to happen - let's get this bee party started!

Best,
Kate

HOUSEL POSITIONING - WHO KNEW?

At our February meeting, Tim Sullivan did a presentation on HouseL Positioning.

Re-presented here is his presentation on this fascinating yet simple hive management technique.



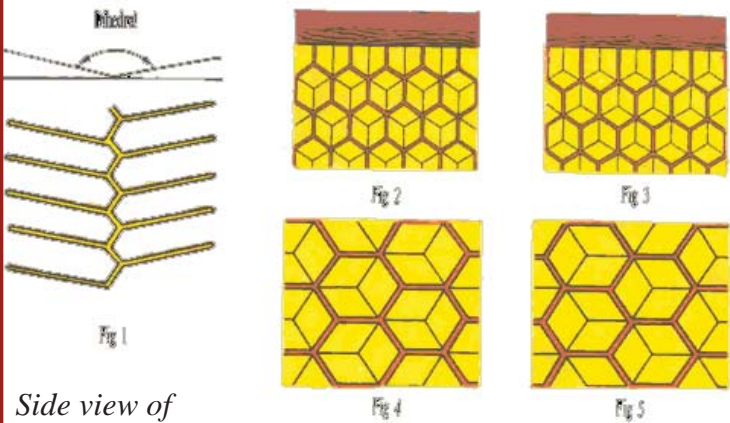
Let's start by taking a close look at some foundation and examining something we probably noticed but paid little attention to:



IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

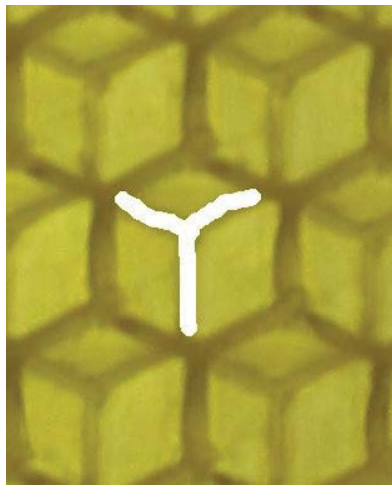
HOUSEL POSITIONING	PAGE 1-3
NCBA ADMINISTRATIVE	PAGE 4
A TASTE OF HONEY	PAGE 5
NCBA MEETING MINUTES	PAGE 6-8
SUGAR SYRUP RECIPE	PAGE 8
ONLINE RESOURCES LIST	PAGE 8
THE BUZZ	PAGE 9

- There is something going on, and
- It has to do with the way cells are drawn out from the midrib:



Side view of foundation

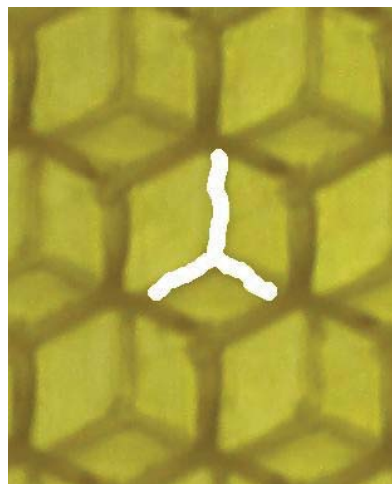
- Notice the cell bottoms
- There is a "y" shape you can see formed by the cell walls of the other side of the foundation
- In this case the "y" is upright



Now let's take that frame of foundation or comb and flip it over as we usually do when inspecting a hive. We hold the top bar ears and rotate the frame until the bottom bar is above the top bar.

Let's see what we observe:

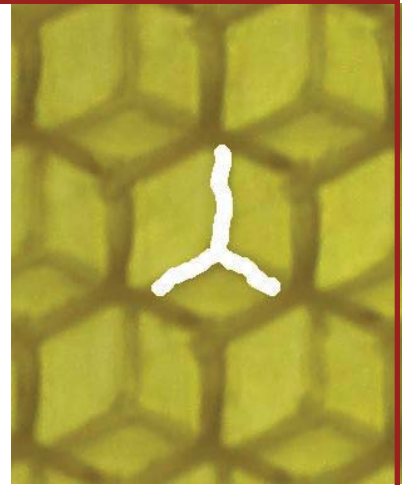
- We get the same view
- (But don't forget - the frame is now upside-down.)



Now what happens if we rotate the frame horizontally

- instead of vertically?
- You probably guessed by now.....

- The "y" is now inverted!
- So each frame has one side of upright "y's" and the other side has inverted "y's"



- I can guarantee an inspection of most hives would show a completely random arrangement of frame orientations

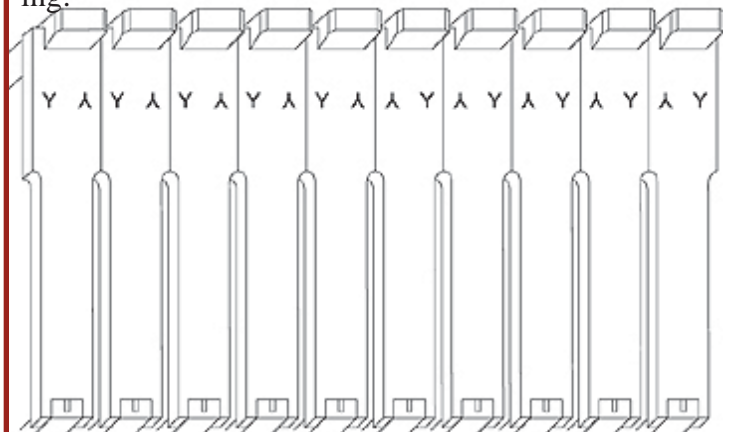
Michael Housel examined many feral hives and found the comb orientation was far from random:

- With the exception of the center comb all combs had the inverted "y's" facing the center!
- All sides with upright "y's" faced away from the center!
- The center frame was unusual in that the "y's" were turned 90 degrees



Graphically it would look like this

While I suppose you could cut up some foundation and insert it so a frame had sideways "y's", the diagram below shows an accepted compromise positioning:



- In the field it would be nice to know at a glance of the top bars which way the “y’s” were oriented

- Some have devised interesting methods of handling the issue:



Yes – that’s quite clear



Better, but I think but I’m thinking of just cutting a small notch with a pocket knife on the edge of the top bar with the upright “y’s”

Proponents of housel positioning have noted the following benefits:

- Reduced incidence of bulging comb:
 - ~ One side of a frame is drawn out so thick that the frame next to it is almost all bare foundation
 - ~ Locks the two frames together
 - ~ Makes clean frame removal difficult
- Reduced incidence of sidewinding:
 - ~ Bees will sometimes start to draw comb with the midrib at a right angle to the face of the foundation

- Much better acceptance of plastic foundation:

- ~ I think Pierco even recommends it in their instructions

- Much less reluctance to move up into empty supers

- Brood much more likely to be centered in the hive:

- New packages build up more quickly

- Queens lay better patterns with less drone brood in the worker comb areas

- There are reports of aggressive hives that were calming down nicely within a couple of days of having their combs rearranged to housel

- I don’t know what effect this would have on a hive but it seems supercedure cells are always drawn on the face of combs with upright “y’s”

What do detractors say about housel positioning?

- It’s all a bunch of hooey and the bees don’t care one way or the other...

Now all we have to do is teach the bees about housel positioning and maybe they’ll stop doing this just to be oppositional!



Question is, how to Housel Position a log hive?!?

(Photo from Ed's medical mission trip to Haiti, where he met some local beekeepers who "keep" bees in logs.)

NORFOLK COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

The Norfolk County Beekeeper's Association (NCBA), is dedicated to apiculture education and promotion of the art and science of beekeeping among beekeepers, agriculture and the general public. This is a "Non-profit" organization, meeting the first Monday of every month, at 7:30 PM (second Monday if the first Monday is a holiday).

The meetings are held at the Norfolk Agricultural High School (Media Center Cafeteria) in Walpole, MA. Meetings in June-August will be held at members' bee yards as announced.

2008-2009 NCBA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Ed Karle
169 Seekonk Street
Norfolk, MA 02056
(508) 541-6324
ewkarle@yahoo.com

VICE PRESIDENT / TREASURER

Tony Lulek
35 Dalton Road
Holliston, MA 01746
(508) 893-7970
tlulek@gallery223.com

RECORDING SECRETARY

Lesky Lescoe
174 Beach Street
Foxboro, MA 02035
(508) 543-0610
lesky@comcast.net

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Kate Notman
136 East Street
Sharon, MA 02067
(781) 201-9556
kate@notman.com

BEE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Howard Crawford
360 West Central
Franklin, MA 02038
(508) 528-9117

BEE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Tim Sullivan
101 Sherman Road
Dedham, MA 02026
(781) 326-2834

FAIR COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Position is open.

LIBRARIAN

Susan Osgood
8 Hoper Blvd.
Bellingham, MA 02019
(508) 966-3952
susann_osgood@hotmail.com

SWAP N' SELL N' WANTED CLASSIFIEDS

Here's a column where you can sell, swap, or give away just about anything. If you are a paid member, advertising is free for as many issues as you wish. If you are not a member, the cost is \$8.00/ad/issue (so, it pays to become a member for just \$15!)



SUGAR

ANDY RESEKA HAS 80 LB. BOXES OF SUGAR FOR SALE FOR \$24. PLEASE CONTACT HIM DIRECTLY AT: (508) 429-6872

RAFFLE & SNACK TABLES

We greatly appreciate all items brought in for the club raffle table. Please keep supporting this important club fund-raiser. This month's door prize will be a surprise, but sure to be great!

If we could have some extra help with treats for the meeting, it would be appreciated. Please contact Susan Simmons at susanhsims@hotmail.com if you can contribute.

FAIR COMMITTEE CHAIR NEEDED

Our club is looking for a member who would like to chair the Fair Committee. We have several members eager to be on the Committee, we just need a Chair.

If you are interested, please speak to Tony or Ed at the next meeting.

MEETING DISCUSSIONS

Since it has become part of our regular meetings to have a discussion about current beekeeping procedures and questions & answer sessions, we will be posting a writing of this on the web. As detailed notes are too lengthy to incorporate into the newsletter, we will list a. outline of what was discussed so that people can reference them when they go to the web.

LIST OF MEETING DISCUSSIONS

JANUARY 2008

1. WINTER CARE AND FEEDING
2. SMALL-CELL PRESENTATION

FEBRUARY 2008

1. BEE PACKAGES
2. HOUSEL POSITIONING
3. MASTER BEEKEEPER

MARCH 2008

1. BEE SCHOOL UPDATE
2. LIBRARY UPDATE
3. REBRANDING UPDATE
4. ANDY RESEKA BEEKEEPING MEETING MEETING UPDATE
5. MA BEEKEEPERS SPRING MEETING
6. ED KARLE'S MEDICAL MISSION TO HAITI - BEES IN LOGS!

A TASTE OF HONEY



FOR PEOPLE



SOUP'S ON!

To finish off the last winter vegetables, these hearty soups will warm you up after a cold March afternoon spent outside getting your hives ready for spring!

BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

2 Tb. butter
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 carrots, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
1 potato, peeled and diced
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced
3 cans (14.5 oz. each) chicken broth
1/2 cup honey
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

In large pot, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in onions and garlic. Cook and stir until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in carrots, celery, potatoes, squash, chicken broth, honey and thyme. Bring mixture to boil; reduce heat and simmer 30 to 45 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

Remove from heat and cool slightly.

Transfer mixture to blender or food processor; process until smooth. Return pureed soup to pot. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Heat until hot and serve.

CURRIED HONEY SWEET POTATO SOUP

Makes 4 - 6 servings

Ingredients

1 Tb. olive oil
1 onion, diced
4 medium-sized cloves garlic, peeled
6 cups (48 oz.) chicken or vegetable stock
1 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
1 medium russet potato, peeled and cut into chunks
2 tsp. salt
6 Tb. honey, divided
1 medium red bell pepper, seeded and diced
2 to 3 tsp. curry powder
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro, optional

Directions

Heat oil over medium-high heat in a soup pot. Add onion and sauté until translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute. Add stock, potatoes and salt. Cover and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.

Puree mixture in batches, put soup back over low heat and add 5 Tablespoons of the honey, bell pepper, curry powder, pepper and ginger. Bring to a simmer, taste and adjust seasonings.

Microwave remaining 1 Tablespoon honey for 5 seconds on High. Serve soup drizzled with a little warm honey and sprinkled with chopped cilantro, if desired. Serves 4 to 6.

Both soups are terrific served with a dollop of yogurt or sour cream on top.

*Both recipes from the National Honey Board web site:
<http://www.honey.com/consumers/recipes/recipes.asp>*

MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 3, 2008 MEETING

The meeting started at 7:55 with 63 members in attendance, five of them bee school students. (We will try hard to start the April meeting at 7:30pm by having the member name tickets out by 7:15pm and table raffle tickets sales beginning shortly after.)

Next Meeting: Monday, April 7

Board members present: Ed Karle, Tony Lulek, Kate Notman, Sue Osgood, Sue Simmons, Lesky Lescoe.

Door prize: The door prize was a Bee School Club Hive now at Howard Crawford's Akinback Farm. The hive was won by Sandy Crawford who was almost as delighted as Howard with the prize.

Raffle items included a triangle escape board, buckets, a dozen one pound honey jars with lids, a cute honey dipper with a bee on top, a honey pot & dipper, club hat, assorted bottles of juices. The raffle amount raised was \$115 and we took in \$145 in dues.

Refreshments included home made Italian anise cookies.

During the meeting we discussed:

1. Tony presented the financial report and stated that we have a total of 41 students this year breaking last year's record.

2. Ed donated a new book to the library – Bee Sex Essentials. Sue will be carding anyone who wishes to check it out.

3. There are still some outstanding library items. Some have been out for a year so they may be hard to find but please check around home and return any you find.

4. Re-branding: Kate & Tony have come up with two basic designs for the club logo and sent paperwork around showing a couple versions of each one. Comments are encouraged. Please visit the web site to see the designs and submit comments.

5. Andy recently attended a beekeepers meeting in California that was attended by keepers from around the country. CCD is still a major problem; some commercial keepers are seeing 50% or more loss already with several suspect causes. There is now a Farm Bill in Congress and funds (\$50M over 5 years) are available to be used for agricultural research but various agricultural groups are competing for the these funds. Please call/write/E-mail

your representatives and let them know that research into CCD is crucial to the economy and you want them to fight for some of the funds to be appropriated to the beekeepers and CCD research – if the bees die we'll have to start importing vegetables and fruit driving costs up. Tony will be putting a link up on the web site to help you identify who your congressmen and senators are. I believe the House bill is HR 1709 and the Senate version is S 1694.

6. Andy also discussed issues of pricing and how China is importing cheap honey making it hard for U.S. beekeepers to compete; other problems of commercial beekeeping were discussed including new chemical treatments.

7. The MA Beekeepers Association spring meeting is March 29 in Topsfield. They will have several good speakers. Admission is \$10 but bee school students are admitted free.

8. During the break Ed invited everyone to sample honey he had brought back from his Medical Missionary trip to Haiti. It has a distinctive taste. In addition to working with the medical group, Ed found time to spend with local beekeepers. After the break, Ed showed pictures of, and discussed beekeeping in Haiti.

Meeting ended at 9:25.

Some Additional Notes from our President, Ed Karle:

The Bee School has 41 students and counting, the largest in our association history. As in the past they come from all the towns in Norfolk County as well as some outside Norfolk and one from RI. We have individuals, couples and families. The sessions are presented by Tim Sullivan and Howard Crawford and we've also had lively help from the following members: Ed Karle, Lesky Lesco, Paula Lesco, Tony Lulek, Avery Osgood, Susan Osgood, Don Sharpe and Matthew Smith. Anyone that wants to assist with an upcoming class (see the class agenda topics on the Bee School link on the web site) please contact Tim Sullivan. Also, any member that wants to attend a class for a refresher is welcome to do so.

The NCBA Board met in February about improving minutes recording and association documents, finances, new door-prize process, ordering plastic name tags for all members that want them, the Aggie school relationship (including the 2008 Scholarship to a graduate of \$500, summer internship possibilities and more formalized support for the schools hives by our organization), monthly meeting topics, re-branding project and the still open state position of Bee Inspector for Norfolk County, fair committee and state activities. More will be shared at the April meeting.

Andy Reseska gave a wonderful presentation of information from the Apiary Advisory meeting with the American Farm Bureau he went to recently.

A) CCD reports for 2008 so far are not good. The start of the beekeeping season for the US is the almond pollination in northern CA where 500K acres of almond tree are pollinated by 1 million hives (that's roughly half of all the bee hives in the US) over a two week bloom period. The biggest US operations are all reporting large losses again this year.

B) Farm Bills now before the US Senate and US House of Representatives include appropriation requests for research money. All members are advised to contact their representatives in Washington to support this portion of the legislation which is now in committee to reconcile the two bills into one joint farm Bill.

C) More research is being done on treatments for hive pests. Formic acid, the active ingredient in Check-Mite and many other mite treatments has been found to be more effective in concentration of around 50% than at higher concentrations where the vapor molecules apparently absorb an extra oxygen atom and with this extra weight are more likely to gravitate down and out of the hive. 50% concentrations appear to linger longer and therefore give better treatment results. Another treatment approved in Canada and Europe is Oxalic Acid which requires careful handling and is usable only in the bloodless times in a hive because it will permeate and kill any brood. This is not yet FDA approved but is in use on an experimental basis by some beekeeping operations in the US and "organic" programs endorse it and Formic acid treatments because in a very diluted concentrate they are found in hives naturally.

More at the next Monthly meeting.

The special meeting topic was presented by Ed Karle who just returned from a medical mission trip to Dame Marie, Haiti, where he met and worked with local beekeepers. Ed was able to meet beekeepers in several local villages and saw that they used hollowed logs about a meter long as hives. Only one site had classic Langstroth hive parts and these were not in use and had not been for years. The logs were completely open at one end and covered with a wood plug or palm leaf warp at the other. The bees seen were very docile, could be touched like ants and looking at the entrances and comb inside the logs did not stir the bees up and make them defensive. Ed thinks this is because bees in this area of Haiti are rarely handled or bothered. They knew about AFB's but said there were none in that area of Haiti which was luck for Ed. Their primary pollen and nectar sources are mango and eucalyptus.

One type of bees are "Cake Bees" that form large hives that are in the open. Apparently any attempt to hive these bees which are very docile fails and they merely swarm within days. The local people wait for the bees to leave the hive on their own or to swarm and have a small colony that can be smoked away before the cut the comb down.

The greatest threat to the hived bees are caterpillars that take up residence in a hive, if this happens the bees will leave. To prevent this the beekeepers mount the log hives on wire table frames about a half meter tall and place the four legs in shallow tin cans with oil. The management of bees essentially starts with an empty log hive and a chunk of honey comb as bait. With luck a swarm of bees will make the log a home and the beekeeper waits and watches as the bees build out the comb until the comb is near or at the entrance. Then they take the log and place it vertically above a smoky fire to drive the bees away. This results in a log hive empty of bees and allows the sting-free harvesting of honey. The problem is the bees are gone, the honey and comb have a strong smoke flavor and the beekeeper must start over with an empty log hive.

Ed explained some of the techniques used by beekeepers in Massachusetts for managing hives. There was strong interest in learning about US beekeeping techniques and continuing a dialog with any US beekeepers.

continued on pg. 8

continued from pg. 7

Ed made some drawings of log hives with the top 20% cut to be a removable door for inspections and honey comb removal which he expects the local carpenters have probably already begun to work on. He also left some drawings of top-bar hives that the local groups were interested in trying to build. More detailed plans will be sent soon. Ed left the gear he brought with him there and will be sending more supplies shortly.



2008 Bee School Students building club hives

ONLINE RESOURCES

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF A LIST OF ONLINE RESOURCES. PLEASE EMAIL KATE IF YOU HAVE ANY GOOD ONES TO ADD.

ONLINE RESOURCES

YOUTUBE.COM - GREAT BEEKEEPING VIDEOS

BEESOURCE.COM

BEEMASTER.COM

WIKIPEDIA.COM

GOBEEKEEPING.COM

HONEY.COM

NHB.COM

BEEKEEPING.COM

ABFNET.ORG

ONLINE BEE EQUIPMENT SELLERS

DADANT.COM

MANLAKETD.COM

BRUSHYMOUNTAINBEEFARM.COM

BETTERBEE.COM

HONEYSUPERCELL.COM

MAGAZINES:

BEE CULTURE (ROOT PUBLICATIONS)

BEECULTURE.COM

AMERICAN BEE JOURNAL (DADANT)

DADANT.COM/JOURNAL

FOR THE BEES

1:1 SPRING SUGAR SYRUP

1. Boil ½ gallon water, remove from stove
2. Dissolve 5 lbs. sugar in it, stirring constantly until it is all dissolved
3. Once cooled, add fumagilin as per label (only do this with the first batch of the season) – dissolve first in a little syrup, then add to water mixture (for nosema)
4. Add a couple of tablespoons of cider vinegar to mix to prevent it going bad
5. Store unused in fridge
6. Use ¼" sticks under pail feeder
7. You can also feed using a "baggie feeder". Fill a zip-lock bag about 2/3 full with syrup and lay it in top of the inner cover (leaving as much of the hole clear as possible) inside a shim or box. Cut a slit or two in the bag parallel to the hive entrance so the syrup just oozes out (not so much it gushes out). Make sure it doesn't go down into the nest!



See <http://www.beesource.com/eob/baggie.htm>

NCBA

2008 MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

APRIL 7, MAY 5, JUNE SOCIAL TBA

APRIL MEETING AGENDA:

DOOR PRIZE

ASSOCIATION UPDATES

- FINANCES - TONY

- LIBRARY ITEMS - SUSAN

- BEE SCHOOL - TIM

- BOARD MEETINGS SUMMARY - LESKY

- PACKAGES DELIVERY

BREAK AND TABLE RAFFLE

MEETING SPECIAL TOPIC - POLLINATION PLANTS

MONTHLY Q&A

CURRENT PERIODICAL ARTICLES - ED & TONY

THE BUZZ

MARYANN FRAZIER AT WCBA

On Sunday, March 9, Ed Karle attended the Worcester County Beekeepers Association meeting to hear their special guest speaker, MaryAnn Frazier of Penn State University who is one of the nation's leading authorities on CCD.

Following are Ed's Summary notes from her CCD presentation:

A CCD loss is most commonly characterized by a hive almost empty of mature bees and several frames of capped brood. Before the collapse the ratio of bees to brood is 1:2 or as high as 1:3 which is the reverse of a normal healthy hive with 2 adult bees to each cell of brood. Post-CCD hives are not robbed and not inhabited by mites or other pests; they avoid CCD hives. The 2008 forecast incidents of CCD in western states looks like about 36%. In 2007 it was 30%.

CCD researchers are looking at three areas: 1) Pathogens (nosema, nosema ceranae, mites, IAPV, etc.); 2) pesticides (bug and plant); and 3) environment. The focus is on the decline of honey bee health. Testing honey is now also part of the research to see if there are affects on the nations honey food supplies. Details and presentation are at the Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research & Extension Consortium <http://maarec.psu.edu/> more at our April meeting Q&A.

Summary notes from her Bee Colony Nutrition and the Implications:

From the MAAREC research for wintering a NE hive needs: 1) 60 pounds of honey; 2) 3-5 frames of pollen (500 square inches); and 3) a healthy queen. Beekeepers need to stay on top of their hive health in the winter and early spring (that's NOW, repeat NOW) to make sure the colonies don't starve. MaryAnn recommends a pollen substitute now to promote brood rearing. All bee supply companies have pollen substitutes in various forms. One that looks particularly promising is MEGABEE the "Tucson Bee Diet" available in patties or dried. Some meeting members suggested the substitute should be added to hives as patties on the top bars and others suggested using the dry powder left on a raised platform outside the hive (to discourage vermin and other pests) to allow the bees to go and get it themselves as they might (some said will) reject the delivered patties as invasive. IMPORTANT: Another risk with patties is that small hive beetles really thrive on pollen substitutes.

Regards, -Ed

(to hear a recording of MaryAnn's talk, visit: <http://www.beeuntoothers.com> .)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

April 25-26 - Organic Beekeeping Workshop:

Principles and Practices with Ross Conrad, Chris Harp, and Mac Mead, at the Pfeiffer Center, in Chestnut Ridge, NY.

For more information, see:<http://www.pfeiffercenter.org/> or call 845-352-5020, ext. 20.

**THIS ISSUE OF
THE NORFOLK BEE
IS DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF**

AL GINGRAS

**LONGTIME NCBA MEMBER
MENTOR
BEEKEEPER**

From: Kate Notman
136 East St.
Sharon, MA 02067

TO: