

Presentation for:
Madison County Beekeepers Association
2-22-16

Spring Buildup and Honey Flow Preparation

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Hale's Honey

- Kevin and Kim Hale, owners
- www.haleshoney.com
- Located in Menifee County KY
- Currently have 73 Hives
- Winter losses: Average around 10% yearly
- Honey production for 2015
 - #118 hive average
- Create about 120 Nucs each year
- Raise about 200 quality queens each year
- Bees are Italian, Russian, Carniolans

Beekeeping Calendar

August-December

Treatment for Mites
Re-queen (keep young queens)
Winter Preparation
Develop Strong Colonies

January-February

Survival Months
Top Insulation
Candy Boards / Sugar Cakes
Protein Patties

March-April

Rapid Spring Buildup
Bees and Queen Evaluation
Hive Re-arrangement
Hive Reversal

May-July

Prevent Swarming
Produce Honey
Make Nucs for Hive Increase
Raise Queens

Factors for Success with Bees Overwinter Strong Colonies

Rapid Spring Buildup
Preventing Swarming
Add Multiple Honey Supers Early
Harvest Early and Often

How are your bees doing this Winter

- Do they have adequate food reserves for next 4 weeks
- What is the strength of your hive
 - How many frames of bees
 - Each Frame around 2000-2500 bees
- Winter feeding should never be considered emergency feed
- Winter is not a survival time, just another phase in beekeeping.
- January thru March I use sugar blocks and sugar/protein blocks on top frames in 3" spacer
 - I check them every 14 days and replenish as necessary
- Clean and check SBB
 - You can tell the strength and location of your cluster
 - Check for high number mites and SHB
- I am a firm believer of providing protein all winter









Spring Buildup

- May 1st honey flow begins in my location
 - Locust and tulip popular blooming
 - Your foraging bees must be built up before the flow starts
 - Number one reason for weak honey crop is the bees build up on the flow
- Start feeding 1:1 syrup mid February to mid March 1st
 - 1:1 Stimulates queen to start laying, once you start feeding you must continue until natural nectar is available
 - Depends on temperature, need 3-4 days a week in high 40's to low 50's
 - If feeding winter food, leave it in until last of March
- Start Feeding Protein Patties mid February to mid March 1st
 - Queen requires protein to lay eggs
 - Feed only what bees will take (SHB love protein patties)
 - Continue to feed protein patties even after bees start bringing in pollen from Maples in March
- Treat bees for Nosema
 - One gallon per 20,000 bees
 - Usually treat after 1-2 feedings
- Keep SBB closed
 - I keep mine closed until May 1st
 - Queens like dark spaces to lay in

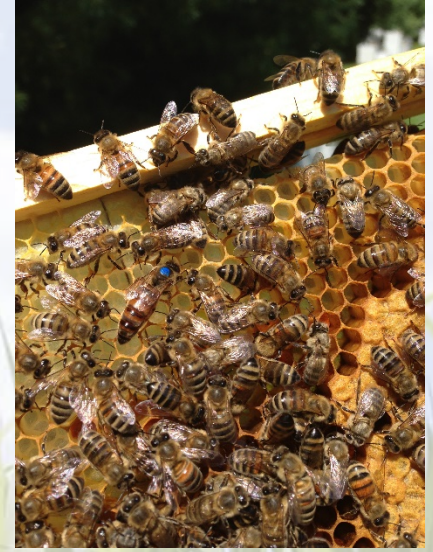
Spring Buildup

- Hive and Queen evaluation
 - March 1st I want 6-7 frames bees minimum, 1250 average each side, so 2500 per frame
 - Russian bees can be an exception to this, they usually have less
 - Around first or second week of March inspect hive and brood
 - Depends on temperature, need 3-4 days a week in mid to high 50's
 - Want to see 2-3 frames brood (a frame with 70% brood is about 2300 cells each side (6500 cells total on deep frame) so that is 4600 bees to hatch
 - Egg to forager is 42 days
 - First 21 days egg to hatch
 - Second 21 days in hive as nurse, worker, guard
 - Honey flow in KY May-July (Tulip Poplar and Locust in May)
 - Grade bees A-C and record frames of brood
 - Watch for honey bound hive, no laying space
- Inspect again in 2 weeks, want increase in bees and brood frames, DOUBLED
- Remember you must have a **STRONG** colony of bees to produce honey

Spring Buildup

- Hive manipulation:
 - Reverse
 - Need nightly temperatures averaging around 50 degrees
 - Reverse more than once in necessary
 - Re-arrange frames, create queen laying space, keep her laying in the center and in bottom box
 - Remove honey if necessary to provide laying space
- Prevent Swarming
 - Congestion
 - Weak queen pheromone (queen perfume)
 - Have young queens
 - Add supers of comb
 - Remove brood
 - Reverse hive boxes
 - Remove old queen and re-queen
 - Find swarm cells break hive down into nucs.







Honey Flow Management

- Remember you must have a **STRONG** colony of bees to produce honey
 - You want 60,000 bees around middle of May if possible for main honey flow
 - One large colony 60,000 bees will out produce two colonies of 30,000 bees
 - A colony requires 15,000 bees for nurse and house bees
 - So a colony with 60,000 bees has 45,000 forager bees and two colonies of 30,000 bees have 15,000 forager bees each for a total of 30,000
- Your foraging bees must be built up before the flow starts
- **Number one reason for weak honey crop is the bees build up on the flow**
- Combine hives if necessary to create a strong honey production hive
- Boost a weak hive with a overwintered nuc
- Re-queen a weak Spring hive ASAP

Honey Flow Management

- have 3 boxes of pulled comb on every honey hive by April 15th tax day
 - Helps to prevent swarming
 - Ready when the flow starts
 - Locust and tulip popular blooming soon
 - Nectar starts out at about 80% water and bees process it to 18.5% to create honey. You must have extra storage space for the nectar storage until bees can process it.
- I only use excluders if necessary and only my modified version
- A super of honey is the best excluder
- Install ventilation spacers
- Remove SBB by May 1st

Honey Flow Management

- If using foundation, use only one super at a time
- When foundation 60-70% pulled, add another super on bottom
- use one or more hives to pull foundation only and then move to honey hives
- Once honey flow starts **Leave Them Alone**
- I harvest three times a year
 - 1st June, July 4th and August 1st
 - All supers off by August 1st
- As soon as last supers pulled I feed all honey hives 4-5 gallon syrup and 2 sugar/protein patties
- Treat for mites (this is when mites are at their worst)
- Continue to feed 1:1 if necessary
 - August is usually a very poor month for nectar
- Continue to feed protein patties
- Watch out for Robbing











Recipes

- **1:1 Sugar Water:**
- 2 gallon syrup
 - 10 lbs. granulated sugar
 - 5 quarts water
 - Heat water to very hot, add sugar and stir
 - Add 4-5 teaspoons of Honey B Healthy per gallon
- 5 gallon syrup
 - 25 lbs. granulated sugar
 - 12.5 quarts water
 - Heat water to very hot, add sugar and stir
 - Add 4-5 teaspoons of Honey B Healthy per gallon
 - Add one cap full of bleach (helps prevent mold)
- **Protein/Sugar Patties:**
 - 9 cups protein powder (Brood Builder, Mega Bee and AP 23)
 - 3 cups sugar
 - Add enough 1:1 or 2:1 syrup to make consistence of peanut butter and form into patties on wax paper.

Recipes

- **2:1 Sugar Syrup:**
- 1.5 gallon syrup
 - 10 lbs. granulated sugar
 - 2.5 quarts water
 - Heat water to very hot, add sugar and stir
 - Add 4-5 teaspoons of Honey B Healthy per gallon
- 5 gallon syrup
 - 25 lbs. granulated sugar
 - 6.25 quarts water
 - Heat water to very hot, add sugar and stir
 - Add 4-5 teaspoons of Honey B Healthy per gallon
 - Add one cap full of bleach (helps prevent mold)
- **Sugar/Protein Patties:**
 - 3 cups protein powder (Brood Builder, Mega Bee and AP 23)
 - 9 cups sugar
 - Add enough 1:1 or 2:1 syrup to make consistence of peanut butter and form into patties on wax paper.

Recipes

- **Hard Sugar Blocks:**

- 1 quart water
- 12 lb. sugar (24 cups)
- 6 teaspoons HBH
- Five 7"x7"x1.25" cake pans or five 9" pie pans (makes five 3 lb. pans)
- Heat water to boil, add HBH, add sugar and mix, heat to 250 deg. mixing occasionally, remove from heat and let cool to 210 deg., stir quickly and pour into pans, let harden (don't let it get too hard while cooling or you can't pour it)

- **Hard Sugar/Protein Blocks:**

- 1 quart water
- 12 lb. sugar (24 cups)
- 3 cups protein powder (I use AP 23 protein powder from Dadant)
- 6 teaspoons HBH
- Five 7"x7"x1.25" cake pans or five 9" pie pans (makes five 3 lb. pans)
- Heat water to boil, add HBH, add sugar and mix, heat to 250 deg. mixing occasionally, remove from heat add protein powder and mix in quickly. Once mixed, pour into pans, let harden.

Summary

- Bees are livestock
- Nobody has all the answers, just opinions
- Feed anytime and every time it is necessary

Honey Bees survival depends on you, the beekeeper.