**Rowan County Beekeepers Association**

**Meeting Minutes**

**1/10/2022**

**Location: In Person and ZOOM Facilitated by Rowan County Extension Agency**

Marcel Renn called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed all the members there. Marcel introduced officers for anyone new. There were 32 participants in person and 3 on Zoom.

**Program: Youtube Video: How to Split a Hive:** John Smith, Central Beekeeping Supplies (Russell, Arkansas): [How to Split a Hive | Step-by-step tutorial from a Beekeeper [Beekeeping 201] - SPRING 2021 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-UMbEkxBuQ)

Summary: Deep body hive the split is going into has closed robbing screen installed. It’s filled with drawn comb that will go into the donor hive when full frames are put into receiving hive. Queen will be caught in queen catcher. A frame perch is used to keep from setting frames full of bees on the ground. The frame the queen was caught on will stay in the donor hive and will have an X placed on it to make sure you know which frame should have new queen cells on. (The assumption is that the freshest eggs will be on the frame the queen was on.)

A queen excluder had been placed on the bottom deep of the donor hive based on a previous inspection to make sure the beekeeper knew which box the queen was in. As you pull frames from donor hive, check for queen. Queen was caught in a clip. He confirmed that there were eggs in the frame she was on. He then chose the frames that were moved to the receiver hive based on brood and bees present on the frames. Empty drawn comb frames were moved to the outside of the boxes. Moved 4 strong frames of bees and brood and 1 frame of food (pollen and nectar with some capped honey) into the receiving hive. Keep brood frames together. He put the queen excluder back on the donor hive. He went to an upper box and shook some more bees into the receiving hive. He put the old (overwintered) queen into the receiving hive. The old queen, in effect, has swarmed. (The assumption is that moving the queen into a box with fewer bees and room to lay provides similar circumstances to the bees as a swarm would have.)

If you need more bees for the receiving hive, you can put the split in the original location and the field bees will return to the original location. Another option is to move the split to another location. Put brush over the entrance to force the bees to reorient to the new location. Leave brush on for the remainder of the day. You can also move the split to another yard. If 2-3 miles from original location, they should reorient. After 7 days you can bring them back to your apiary and they will reorient again to the new location.

Be sure to feed the split.

In 9 days you’ll return to the donor hive and check for capped queen cells. The new queen should emerge at day 15 or day 16.

Q: Allow them to make their own queen or provide them with a new queen? A. You can allow them to make their own queen (as shown in the video), but providing them with a new queen will allow them to start being productive right away. New queens are fairly easy to find after about mid-April.

Bryan Fisher stated he would have waited to split until after the honey flow. There were several comments about different ways to do splits.

**Secretary Report:** No comments were received on the November minutes. Last month’s minutes were approved.

**Treasurer Report:** Debbie Lucas provided the Treasurer’s report. Beginning balance as of 11/8/21: $2481.60. Ending balance as of 12/31/21: $2489.60. There were no expenses in the month of November or December and 1 member had mailed dues in December.

The Treasurer’s books were audited and no issues were found. The 2 auditors were Cody Craddock and Randy Cox. Mark Heuser (2022 Treasurer) encouraged everyone to pay the local dues at the club and pay the state dues on their website. He also said he would take both sets of dues. The state will email your membership card to you directly.

**Old Business**:

Several folks attended the state meeting in Hickory November 8-9. Attendance was down, fewer vendors were present and most of the discussion was related to research on bees.

**New Business**:

There are several surveys that the Ag. Center will send out. The purpose is to preserve farm land in Rowan County. Randy Elium added that there is another step you can take to preserve your acreage as voluntary ag district. It will register your land as a farm so that future building/development is aware of your farm and may provide some protection from civil suits related to farm activities.

Cody has added a link on the Rowan County Ag webpage for the Rowan County Beekeepers Association: [Rowan County Beekeeper’s Association | North Carolina Cooperative Extension (ncsu.edu)](https://rowan.ces.ncsu.edu/rowan-county-beekeepers-association/). He asked that members review the webpage and provide feedback and suggestions to him at [cjcraddo@ncsu.edu](mailto:cjcraddo@ncsu.edu).

Randall Faggart stated that RCBA member Joe Sulkowski has passed from Covid. Lee will send the family a card.

Bees are bringing in yellow pollen, could be camelias, henbit (red pollen), red maples. Mustard greens planted in the fall provide a lot of nectar on their yellow flowers, but honey collected from greens tends to crystallize quickly. Bees are about 2 weeks ahead of normal this year. Even with what is blooming, they will be going thru a lot of food because they are brooding up rapidly.

There were several new beekeepers welcomed to the meeting.

Bryan Fisher stated that he is now taking orders for nuc colonies.

There were no additional Q&A.

There were no door prizes and the meeting was adjourned at 8:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Williams, Secretary

**CALENDAR FOR BEEKEEPING IN CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA**

Nancy Ruppert, Apiary Inspector, NCDA & CS nancy.ruppert@ncagr.gov Updated December 2019

This calendar was designed for general beekeeping use in most of central North Carolina. Recommendations are based on average climate/weather conditions, and may vary with significant temperature changes. Those who manage hives for commercial operations may have different needs than those listed below. Details regarding bloom types/dates and pest/disease management are not included here due to space limitations; consult reliable and current resources for this information. This calendar is subject to being updated as new information becomes available. Remember: bees often follow a different calendar than humans do!

January: Add pollen supplements, if needed; check amount and location of honey stores, and feed (2:1 syrup, candy board or fondant) if <3/4 super of stored honey left.

Check/repair/replace stored equipment; order wax/woodenware.

Consider single dose of oxalic acid vapor or drizzle early in Jan. to clean up residual varroa in hives.

Order nucs/packages.

Keep learning---beekeeping class, read books/journals, etc.

Combine or insulate smaller (less than 4 frames of bees) hives.

Combine hives where queen has failed, if they’re still alive and haven’t absconded.

Move hives if they’ll need to be relocated this year.

Bees may need help removing dead bodies and/or heavy snow from entrance area.

February: Noticeable pollen flow under way, especially red maple-; brood build-up intensifying.

Minimal if any nectar available---most hives need feeding (1:1 syrup in most cases, unless honey stores very low [i.e., <1/2 super left], or continue candy board/fondant).

Combine hives if needed (see January entries above).

Repair/replace equipment if needed; move hives if needed; keep learning.

During last half of February, consider adding super/hive body of wax foundation to allow bees to draw out more comb for spring. (Feeding or nectar is required for this.)

Replace a few (<4) frames where comb is old or damaged.

Some hives may need testing for Nosema disease, especially if too cold for cleansing flights. Also, late February is not too early to begin/continue varroa mite assessments, especially in southeastern NC.

Call your local cooperative extension office if you want your name on a “swarm-catcher” list.

Make plans to attend the annual NCSBA Spring Meeting in March.

March: NCSBA annual Spring Meeting (usually first weekend in March)---great learning opportunity!

Swarming under way-; implement prevention measures (make splits, remove queen cells, “checker board”, temporarily or permanently remove current mother queen); set up “bait” hives.

Reverse bottom two or three boxes on hive to give queen more room to lay: most hives have moved up above the bottom hive body, leaving it virtually empty. This measure also helps reduce swarming. Caution: be careful not to split up clusters of brood when you do this. Two to three weeks after this reversal, it’s likely that you’ll need to reverse them again. (An alternative to reversal: simply add another hive body or super.)

Assess for pest and/or disease problems (especially varroa mites, American foulbrood, and European foulbrood) and treat if needed. Treatments should be completed by early April to limit risk of contaminating honey.

Check honey stores; feed (1:1 or thinner syrup) if needed.

Look closely at the brood pattern; order new queen if current one failing.

Continue to replace few frames of old/undesirable comb, if needed.

Near end of the month, add at least one honey super; remove entrance reducers; equalize hives.

April: Nectar flow is often heaviest this month: make sure that all medications are out of hive unless required for bees’ survival, be prepared to add new supers every 7-10 days, and remove feeders from all except new or weak hives.

Bees should be very busy; closely examine hives that are not, and trim weeds that may be hindering flight.

Swarming usually heavy---continue prevention/capture measures.

Look closely at brood pattern; replace queen if needed.

Have everything ready to install nucs/packages that you’ve ordered; feed upon installation.

Consider adding queen excluder to prevent brood in honey supers.

May: Nectar flow continues---keep adding supers; get extraction/bottling equipment ready. Consider adding an additional hive entrance (via 5/8” hole or shim) above brood area, for foragers.

Swarming continues---keep up prevention/capture measures.

Replace failing queens.

Start/continue planting warm season annuals for ongoing nectar/pollen supplementation.

Install traps for small hive beetles if needed (i.e., if more than 20 adult beetles seen in hive).

Place two or more bee “watering holes” in apiary, if not already present.

June: Main nectar flow starts to dwindle---fewer supers needed, unless sourwood nearby: if in area of sourwood, consider harvesting available honey before mid-June sourwood flow to ensure more “pure” sourwood crop.

If honey being harvested, put “wet” supers back on hives late in day to limit robbing.

Can start late-season splits during last half of June; feed splits initially, even if there is nectar available

Continue measures to control small hive beetle population.

Check varroa mite levels if not done since February. (www.honeybeehealthcoalition.org)

Keep water for bees constantly available.

Make plans for attending NCSBA Summer Meeting in mid-July.

July: May harvest some (or all) of honey; may continue late-season splits; continue beetle controls; keep water available for bees (see June activities).

Attend NCSBA annual Summer Meeting, if possible (usually mid-July)---great learning opportunity!

Get supers on for cotton honey, if hives near cotton fields.

Replace failing queens; consider replacing any queen that is two years old or older.

Continue varroa mite assessments, and treat if needed/practical.

August: If not in area of significant cotton bloom, harvest remaining desired honey by mid-month to keep bees from eating it.

Nectar dearth in most areas; may need to feed carbohydrates (1:2 sugar:water, or honey water)

Pest control is critical this month: hive beetle populations are peaking, varroa mites are nearing their peak populations, some factors increase risk of damage from wax moth larvae, and yellow jackets/ hornets tend to be plentiful.

Careful assessment of queen performance---this month is usually last chance to replace queens until the following spring.

Can still make late-season splits early in August if using mated queens.

Keep water available for bees constantly.

Be prepared for ”badly behaving bees”: because nectar flow is so scarce, bees may become more defensive and more likely to rob other hives; install robbing screens or entrance reducers (but be aware of need for ventilation), and keep hive inspections as brief as possible.

Completing honey harvest + decrease in queen’s egg-laying = extra empty supers of drawn comb; store them using method that prevents damage from wax moth larvae (freezing, keeping open to light/ventilation, using paradichlorobenzene [PDB] crystals).

September: Continue measures for pest control. Varroa control should be completed by end of month!!

May feed thin (1:1 or more diluted) sugar syrup for 2-3 weeks to stimulate queen laying---builds up winter population---but by last week of September, begin feeding thicker (2:1) syrup for winter stores, although thicker syrup may not be necessary if >3 supers of honey left on hive and/or heavy fall nectar flow.

Consider assessment for Nosema parasites.

Combine colonies later in the month if weak and/or have failing queens.

Should have brood in bottom box; if not, may need to rearrange things.

October: Assess for varroa mites via sugar roll or alcohol wash. Varroa levels need to be below threshold by mid-October, as winter bees are developing and can be permanently damaged by varroa.

Remove all queen excluders, if present.

Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens.

Feed thick syrup, if needed, for winter food stores.

Limit frequency of inspections after mid-October: bees are sealing cracks with propolis, and waste lots of time/energy if they have to keep replacing it.

Add entrance reducers near end of month to keep mice out.

Drones being expelled in most hives.

Plant (October through December) herbaceous perennials, shrubs and trees for future nectar/pollen sources.

November: Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens.

Ensure adequate ventilation near top of hive.

Feed thick syrup, candy boards or fondant if needed, for winter stores.

Provide weights (brick, rock, concrete block, etc.) for tops of hives to limit wind-induced toplessness.

Plant trees for future nectar/pollen sources (tulip poplar, maple, sourwood, etc.).

Consider closing off screened bottom board to improve heat insulation.

Bee caught up before Thanksgiving, so you can enjoy food, family, football, Black Friday, etc.!

December: Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens.

Feed thick syrup, candy board or fondant if needed (i.e., if not more than one super of honey stored up).

Consider insulating smaller hives (those with 4 or fewer frames of bees).

Consider single dose of oxalic acid late in Dec. (while hive is likely broodless) to clean up residual varroa.

Sell honey to Christmas gift shoppers.

Year-end review/assessment of apiary success/challenges.

Leave bees alone, if possible. (Take a break---you probably need it by now!)

As of APRIL 2021

EXTRACTOR EQUIPMENT LIST FOR USE BY RCBA MEMBERS

(YOU MUST BE A CURRENT MEMBER OF RCBA TO USE THE EXTRACTOR.)

Please fill out the Sign-Out sheet with date, your name, and phone number.

1. Randy Elium is managing the extractor and accessories
   1. Phone: 704-213-2661
   2. Address: 2085 Lake Rd, Salisbury, NC 28146
2. The list of extracting equipment includes the following (15 items):
   1. Maxant 9-frame Electric Extractor s/n VO851A0015
   2. Extractor wood floor bracket (keeps it from vibrating)
   3. Hot knife
   4. 2 Capping scratchers
   5. Stainless steel strainers (sieves)—2 parts. Smaller sieve has straight sides and fits inside the larger bowl-shaped sieve. The larger sieve has side arms that adjust to hold sieve over top of a bucket
   6. Collection Bucket (5 gallon bucket with honey gate)
   7. Capping bar (yellow rectangular device to fit over top of bucket and support frame as caps cut off)
   8. bracket for supporting a tipped bucket to drain into another bucket or container
   9. lubricant for the extractor axel—needs to be food-grade
   10. Refractometer
   11. Capping vault (5 parts):
       1. Bottom box with honey gate
       2. Top box with separate metal grid to catch cappings
       3. Wooden support with nail to balance frames on while uncapping
       4. lid

All small accessories are inside the gray capping vault box labelled “RCBA”

Extractor Instructions and diagram are included, in a small plastic bag.

1. Please thoroughly clean all equipment when finished extracting and return all equipment to Randy Elium.