

# THE MANITOBA BEEKEEPER



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# Honey Show Report

from Charles Polcyn



The 2012 Manitoba Honey Show took place the weekend of September 28th to September 30th at the Forks Market in Centre Court. It had as its theme " **Keep Manitoba Bees Buzzing**". Colorful signage provided a lot of information about bees, how honey is produced and other aspects of beekeeping.

The Observation Hive continues to be a popular feature with visitors of all ages. Our many volunteers spent hours near the frames answering questions and pointing out aspects of the bee/honey equipment displayed and identified on the tables.

It was a disappointment that larger or commercial beekeepers had not entered into the Honey Show, as it is an opportunity to showcase the variety and quality of honey from all areas of Manitoba. Perhaps next year more of them will participate.

Several groups of students of 20 or more were at the Forks on Friday asking many questions as they moved about the tables. Many of them spent time at the Observation Hive and indicated a good knowledge of the Honey Bee world. Both Saturday and Sunday were moderately busy days at the Honey Show, but the good outside weather reduced attendance considerably.

Congratulations to Charles Polcyn for capturing the Champion Exhibitor prize this year. Close runners up to Charles were Brian Smith and Ray Hourd. All of the entrants showed off some of their best honey and the competition displays attracted attention from the visitors.

There was a Honey Extraction demonstration on Sunday afternoon by Charles Polcyn with assistance from Brian Smith. A crowd of 30 or more gathered in the Forks kitchen area to hear about how honey is produced and then extracted. A small two-frame extractor is used to show

how honey is spun out of the combs. Many people in the crowd helped with turning the crank handle on the extractor and received some of the freshly spun out honey for their efforts.

Thanks to the many RRAA volunteers helping out at the display areas, Jim Campbell for advice, all the competition entrants, MAFRI Staff and the Honey Show Judges, Rhéal Lafrenière, Gordon Marks, and Martin Nechwediuk. Also thanks to the Manitoba Beekeeping Association (MBA) for funding some of the Show Expenses. Thanks to Bee Maid for their donation and providing a variety of their equipment for display purposes. The small rubber/foam black and yellow stress balls from the Bee Outfitter Shop were very popular with all ages

Of visitors to the Honey Show. We ran out of them by Saturday noon. Bee Maid pencils were also distributed, but were not as much in demand.

Despite the marvelous weather over the 3-day weekend, many people came to the Forks for the Honey Show. They enjoyed the variety of displays and had a chance to observe the bees, talk with beekeepers and perhaps purchase different types of honey from the two vendors, one from Anola and the other from Whitemouth. Three different television stations also came to the Forks for brief interviews. CTV did a live interview video for a mini- honey show starting at 6:40 AM on Friday morning. Videos and interviews were made by two other stations on Saturday and Sunday.

The **2012 HONEY SHOW** enabled visitors to learn more about **honey and the honeybee**. Beekeeper volunteers realized that people are more interested now in honey bees, including some who want to become urban beekeepers. Questions asked showed we have a lot of educating to do about bees and beekeeping.



# Provincial Apiarist Report

Rhéal Lafrenière

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives



## **Discovery of Small Hive Beetle in a honey beekeeping operation near the Manitoba-North Dakota border – Rhéal Lafrenière, MAFRI Provincial Apiarist**

The small hive beetle (SHB), *Aethina tumida* Murray, is an emerging and invasive pest of the honey bee, which was discovered in North America in Florida in 1998. It is now found in most states across the US, especially in warm, coastal states along the Atlantic. In Canada, the SHB was initially discovered in Manitoba associated with the importation of raw beeswax from Texas (2002) and secondly with the importation of packaged bees from Australia (2006). In both situations, the pest failed to establish a successful breeding population the following spring and died out.

SHB has also been found in Alberta (2006), Québec (2008 – 2012) and Ontario (2010 – 2012). Similar to Manitoba, SHB failed to establish in Alberta in 2006, but has been found practically every year in Québec and Ontario after its initial discovery.

In September 2012, a beekeeper from the Morden area reported finding what he suspected may be an adult SHB in his extracting facility. After initially identifying that the beetle specimen closely resembled SHB, MAFRI staff notified the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) of the discovery and asked to validate the identification. CFIA confirmed that the submitted specimen appeared to be an adult SHB, but that the size of the beetle appeared to be atypical and requested additional specimens be submitted.

MAFRI conducted an inspection of the extracting facility as well as the apiary sites that were associated with the equipment in the building at the time of the

beetle discovery. No more beetles were found in the extracting facility but One (1) adult SHB was discovered in a colony located in one of original apiary sites.

The beetle specimen was submitted to CFIA and confirmed to be SHB, but again the size of the specimen was atypical so 100% confirmation was difficult. MAFRI also inspected two (2) apiary sites of a neighbouring beekeeping operation. One of the apiary sites was located within one (1) mile of the apiary where the beetle was found and the second site was located one (1) mile from the Manitoba-North Dakota border and approximately eight (8) miles from the SHB positive apiary site.

One (1) adult SHB was found in a honey bee colony in the apiary site closest to the border. The beetle specimen was submitted to CFIA for identification, but given that it closely resembled reference specimens in the MAFRI Apiculture lab including size, it is highly suspected to be confirmed to be SHB.

Under the authority of *The Bee Act* B15, effective immediately MAFRI have undertaken to establish a temporary quarantine of the affected operations, until which time a proper control strategy can be put in place. At this time of the year, this should have little to no impact on the affected beekeeper, at least until spring.

( Continued on page 4 )

In light that the route of this SHB invasion was most likely due to beetle dispersal across the border rather than through the importation of bees or hive products from locations known to have SHB, any control action will have to take into consideration what barriers for re-infestation are feasible.

MAFRI will consult with CFIA, the other Provinces and industry to determine the necessary surveillance and control actions required to maintain the SHB status that currently exists in Canada. Based on the outcome of the consultation process, MAFRI can decide if the quarantine should continue next spring and if so what resources would be required to maintain or expand the SHB control strategy. At the very least, MAFRI will continue to work closely with the beekeepers in the affected area to monitor the colonies over winter and inspect other beekeeping operation along the border next spring.

SHB is on the list of immediately notifiable diseases with the CFIA and as such is regarded as a non-endemic pest, which is not generally found in Canada. The principal reason why CFIA is able to defend that statement is because of the extensive surveillance and control measures conducted in Ontario and Québec to allow the country to be regarded as “free” of small hive beetle outside of the control zones. If CFIA was no longer able to declare Canada as free of SHB, this could have significant impact on import/export conditions placed on Canadian bees and bee products with certain countries.

If Manitoba does not take the necessary action to control SHB, which would continue to allow CFIA to defend Canada’s SHB free status, in addition to impacting Canada’s international trade, other provinces may also decide to restrict inter-provincial movement of bees and equipment originating from Manitoba. This would include the movement of 3000+ colonies that are transported every year from Manitoba to BC for wintering.



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## The Small Hive Beetle

The small hive beetle, *Aethina tumida* Murray, is a scavenger beetle belonging to the insect family Nitidulidae (sap beetle). It is native to the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa where it is commonly found in honey bee hives but seldom considered a major pest in this area.

It was first identified in North America in Florida in 1998 and has since spread to many States, especially along the eastern seaboard. It was also discovered in Australia in 2000. Reports of damage caused by the small hive beetle in the U.S. indicates that this beetle may be a more serious pest for European honey bee stocks than its native African bee hosts, *Apis mellifera scutellata* and *A. mellifera capensis*.

The small hive beetle was first found in Canada in 2002. It was accidentally imported with a shipment of unprocessed beeswax sent to Manitoba for rendering. The beetle population in Manitoba failed to establish and died off during the winter. In 2006, the small hive beetle was accidentally imported into Canada again, but this time in shipment of package bees from Australia. Again the small hive beetle population failed to establish.

Small hive beetle was discovered in southern Quebec in 2008 and south western Ontario in 2010 where quarantine and eradication programs have been used to control the establishment of the pest and to prevent it from spreading to other areas. Recently (2102), Manitoba reported finding small hive beetle in some colonies close to the Canada-US border. Quarantine measures have been taken but it is uncertain whether the beetle will be able to survive the winter to establish an endemic population.

### Life Cycle

The female adult beetles lay their eggs in irregular masses (3-5 eggs/mass) on or near the combs in the hive. They especially like to lay their eggs in cracks and crevices, where the eggs are protected from predators. Each female beetle is capable of

laying up to 100-1000 egg masses. Eggs hatch in 2-4 days. The developing larvae feed on pollen, bee brood, and honey. Once the larvae are fully developed (10-16 days), they leave the hive to pupate in the soil. The mature larvae do not travel very far from the hive to pupate; it is generally within 30 cm from the hive entrance and less than 10 cm deep in the soil. Pupae require 15-30 days to become adults. Adult beetles emerge from the soil and fly back to the bee hives. Female beetles will start laying eggs approximately one week after they have emerged from the soil.

Adult beetles have been reported to live in excess of 6 months and are capable of wintering inside the cluster of a honey bee colony. Observations in South Africa indicate that the developmental rate is rather variable, the life cycle from egg to adult requires anywhere between 38-81 days and that the small hive beetle may have up to five generations per year. Like most insects, the small hive beetle requires a specific set of conditions relating to nutrition and environmental factors, such as temperature and soil humidity, in order to successfully complete its development.

### Identification

An adult small hive beetle has clubbed-shaped antennae and is reddish brown to black in colour with an oval to oblong body that is covered with fine hair (Figure 1). Adult beetles show great variations in size but most of them are approximately 5-7mm long.



J. Lotz

**Figure 1** - Adult Small hive beetle, *Aethina tumida* Murray (dorsal view)

( Continued on page 6)



The eggs are pearly-white in colour and similar in appearance to honey bee eggs except they are smaller (approximately 1.5mm long). The larvae are elongated, whitish grubs with numerous spines (i.e. protuberances) all over their body. The larvae are similar in appearance to wax moth larvae except they only have three pairs of legs (i.e. no prolegs) and do not produce silk (Figure 2).



J. Lotz

**Figure 2** - Small hive beetle larvae on a brood frame

The pupae are the same size as the adults and are white in colour but turn darker as they mature.

### Impact

Similar to wax moth, it is the larval stage that causes the greatest amount of damage. The beetle larvae tunnel through combs feeding on pollen, brood and honey. The small hive beetle typically attacks weakened or small colonies, but because the beetles are not easily ejected from the hive even strong colonies can be severely affected once the beetles gain access. Therefore, unlike wax moth, it is generally not recommended that infested supers be placed on strong colonies for pest control and clean up.

As the larvae feed, they defecate on the honey causing it to ferment and bubble out of the cells. Fermented honey and beetle secretions produce a slime that contaminates the equipment causing the bees to stop raising brood and abandon the

infested hive. The fermented honey smells like rotting oranges and is unsuitable for human consumption. Contaminated hives can not be repopulated with bees until the slime has been removed.

The small hive beetle can also be a major problem in honey houses, where stored comb, supers of honey, and wax cappings are all potential breeding areas for the beetles. Environmental conditions generally associated with honey houses, such as high temperature and humidity, provide optimal conditions for beetle development, therefore proper management of stored honey, wax and comb are essential in the prevention of beetle infestations.

Although the potential geographical limits of the small hive beetle are still unknown, some reports have indicated that adult beetles are capable of surviving the wintered inside the honey bee cluster. Research indicates that beetles can be dispersed via the movement of infested honey bee colonies for pollination, shipment of package bees and queens, and swarming of feral and commercial colonies. Adult beetles can also disperse quickly since they can fly and are capable of surviving up to 5 days without food and water. They can also survive on a number of alternative food sources and hosts such as fruit (e.g. cantaloupe) and other bee species (bumble bee colonies).

Ultimately, environmental conditions such as climate, type and condition of the soil where the beetles pupate and availability of food sources will dictate whether or not the small hive beetle will be classified as a serious North American pest.

### Prevention and Control

To reduce the spread and damage caused by the small hive beetle, beekeepers are recommended to regularly inspect their colonies to detect early infestations. A simple trap made from a piece of corrugated cardboard or plastic (22.5 x 10 cm) placed ridged side down on the bottom board is commonly used to monitor for beetle activity in the hive. In the case of cardboard traps, it is important to cover the non corrugated side of the trap with duck trap to protect it from chewing damage caused by the bees. The traps can be treated with a strip of

( Continued on page 7)

CheckMite+™ (10% Coumaphos) stapled to the center of the ridged side of the trap. Place the trap down in the centre of the bottom board, making sure the surface of the bottom board is clean, so that the board lays flat.

Begin monitoring when temperatures are warm enough that colonies are no longer clustered during the day and when bees are using their bottom hive entrances. One day later, adult beetles can be found under the cardboard if they are present.

In a heavily infested colony, hundreds of beetle larvae and adults can be seen on the comb and bottom boards, especially towards the rear of the hive. Tipping hives forward and inspecting the bottom board is often considered a fast and easy way of monitoring for beetle activity. Another sign of beetle infestation is the odour of fermented honey, which often drips from the opened cells and runs out of the hive entrance.

CheckMite+™ is recommended for the control of the small hive beetle in honey bee colonies. In some part of Canada, 40% Permethrin is recommended as a soil drench treatment to control the beetles in the soil around the hives. Chemical application should be in accordance to label instructions. Contact your local provincial apiarist to determine approved treatments for this pest.

For prevention and control of the small hive beetle in honey houses, beekeepers should promptly extract their supers as soon as possible after they have been pulled from bee hives. Keeping the relative humidity in the stored supers below 50% by circulating air through the boxes has proven successful for preventing beetle eggs from hatching. Extracted honey should be stored in tightly sealed drums and wax cappings should be quickly processed. The honey house and extracting equipment have to be kept clean. Beekeepers are also advised to store honey supers in a closed, cool well area or place them back on the hives as soon as the honey has been extracted.

Numerous types of commercially available traps are now being sold as monitoring and control tools for small hive beetle, but it is important that these devices should not be used with unregistered chemical treatments. Again, please contact your local provincial apiarist to determine approved treatments for this pest.



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# MANITOBA HONEY SHOW

2012 Competition Results

## Class 1

*Liquid Honey, White*

First place: Brian Smith  
Second place: Charles Polcyn  
Third place: Ken Fehler

*Liquid Honey, Amber*

First place: Ray Hourd  
Second place: Brian Smith  
Third place: Charles Polcyn

*Liquid Honey, Dark*

First place: Charles Polcyn  
Second place: Donna Ladan  
Third place: Ken Fehler

*Granulated Honey, White*

First place: Ron Rudiak  
Second place: Ray Hourd  
Third place: Jami Worms

*Comb Honey*

First place: Alex Remkes  
Second place: Charles Polcyn

## Class 2

*Comb Honey*

First place: Alex Remkes  
Second place: Charles Polcyn

*Frame of Honey*

First place: Brian Smith  
Second place: Ray Hourd  
Third place: Charles Polcyn

*Beeswax*

First place: Brian Smith

## Class 3

*Best Taste*

First place: Ray Hourd  
Second place: Donna Ladan

*Champion Honey Show Exhibitor*

Best of Show 2012: Charles Polcyn

*Honey Judges:*

Gordon Marks  
Martin Nechwediuk  
Rhéal Lafrenière

**Congratulations to all entrants!!**





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## Varroa Control: A Focus on Oxalic Acid

David Ostermann

**Introduction** – Varroa control is near or at the top of our beekeeping priorities. Without a doubt it's gotten more complicated and more difficult to do. There is no "silver bullet", and in my opinion there are no perfect products. Without considering cost and labour, this means there's no product that is totally effective all the time, that can be relied on each year, each and every year. Instead, our ability to monitor levels, assess risk and use the right product(s) at the right time, is our best 'tool' against varroa. With this in mind, oxalic acid is one of the treatments that is registered and can be a good fit.

**Popularity** - The last survey in which we asked about varroa control products was from the 2010 season, and Manitoba beekeepers said oxalic acid was the 3rd most popular treatment. Specifically, 11% of respondents said they used oxalic acid. This was behind Apivar, the most common at 56%, and formic acid second at 40% of respondents (note the total exceeds 100% since some indicated more than one). In the 2008 season survey, 10% of respondents said they used oxalic acid - so its use didn't change much in that time, and I suspect is similar today. We didn't ask how it was used (i.e. vaporization or drizzle method) in either survey.

**Treatment goals** - As we know varroa levels need to be managed and knocked down, on a regular basis, to prevent increasing and remaining above what is referred to as "economic threshold". The video we made and posted (<http://manitobabee.org/hive/category/videos/>) discusses thresholds. A treatment should get levels below the economic threshold, and if this isn't achieved, a follow-up treatment should be used. In this scenario, oxalic acid may be a good initial treatment, but perhaps even a better follow-up

treatment to give varroa the "1-2 punch", or otherwise clean it up. As discussed in the video, individual treatment response may also be influenced by personal risk tolerance. The oxalic acid label can be found here: [http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/1\\_1/view\\_label?p\\_ukid=25950481](http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/1_1/view_label?p_ukid=25950481).

**When to use** – Oxalic acid doesn't kill mites in cells and is a short-duration treatment, so it's most effective in broodless periods (Example: late fall). Therefore, its benefit as a standalone treatment is more limited - because if levels are high, it is preferable to bring them down as soon as possible (to prevent virus problems or damage otherwise), rather than waiting until the hive is broodless. If levels are lower, after a formic acid treatment for example, a follow-up treatment with oxalic acid can give you the mite knock back that you're looking for, to relieve the mite pressures for the upcoming season. A follow-up treatment with oxalic acid can also kill mites that survived the prior treatment which helps prevent the propagation of resistant traits. An early spring application (with brood present) will still get you some varroa control but less than late fall (when broodless).

**Methods** – There are 2 ways to apply oxalic acid: (1) vaporization, and (2) drizzle (also known as the trickle, or solution, or dribble method). The vaporization method can be done with a small heating spoon-like applicator (Example: Varrox-Vaporizer (contact Beemaid Bee Outfitters (Manitoba))), or a larger commercial unit on wheels (Fig. 1) (Example: B-Mitexx (contact Cor Dewit 780-986-8582 (Alberta))). If you use the vaporization method it's very important to avoid the vapours as they are dangerous (see label Precautions to take). Dissolving the crystals in sugar syrup (i.e. the drizzle method) is safer to handle. It can be drizzled using a syringe or a cattle gun-type applicator, etc., as long as the amount can be measured and release rate controlled. Beemaid Bee Outfitters sells 1 kg of oxalic acid product (treats 560 colonies) for about \$10.50, so the product is not expensive. However, particularly if using the drizzle method on doubles, the application is labour intensive because you have to apply to each brood chamber. For this reason, and to minimize the disturbance of the colony at more stressful times of the year, the drizzle method is generally considered a better fit for singles (but works for



both singles and doubles when applied according to label).

**Experiences/reports** - Keeping in mind there's no perfect product there are reports of good efficacy of oxalic acid but results and impact on the colony may vary. When there is some brood there are reports of 70% efficacy or so; when there is no brood efficacy can be 93% or more (Medhat Nasr pers. comm.). There may be research results coming out in the near future, based on tests in the Prairies, to provide further information on how well it works. Like many products, try to limit use to once per year. This will prolong the life of the product. Even though it's "organic" it can still be hard on the bees, including "it might damage bee brood" as stated on the label. It's uncertain if there are risks with oxalic acid residue. The bees need to be in the hive to be in contact with the treatment in order for oxalic acid to work. Applying the drizzle method when outside temperature is about 7-8°C when the bees are all in the hive, and the cluster is somewhat loose rather than tightly huddled, helps for better distribution of the treatment.

**Conclusion** – Oxalic acid is a registered treatment and is a good option for controlling varroa to consider. There are two ways to apply it to choose from. It's most effective when there is no brood, which usually makes late fall the best time to use it. For more information contact David (Winnipeg) 204-945-3861.



Fig. 1. The B-Mitexx comes in a 2-hive or 4-hive model (picture by Medhat Nasr).



## Manitoba Events and News

### **\*Director Elections**

Designated Representatives of Manitoba Beekeepers' Association are invited to fill positions on the Board of Directors. Interested producers should contact Murray Lewis, Nomination Committee Chair prior to the 14 November Annual Meeting elections. Contact Murray at 204-637-2596 or e-mail [lfarms@mts.net](mailto:lfarms@mts.net)



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# Honey Show 2012

By Jim Campbell



The Manitoba Honey show continues to attract a variety of customers seeking information on the benefits of Bees for pollination and honey production.

For the 2012 event, the traditional Honey Show and Competition took on a new name for the weekend of 28-30 September. “Part of the reason” says Jim Campbell, MBA Secretary,” was to simplify the event name to make it more customer-friendly. The name Honey Days represents the familiar product customers can relate to. The other reason was to link into a Canada-wide celebration”.

I Love Culture, is typically held the last weekend of October. The cross-Canada event showcases many hands on activities, typically in the Arts and Entertainment fields, yet has been extended to include things that are typical in cultures, including the Agriculture sector. Promotion of Honey Days featured a description of the Winnipeg event along with a picture of our activities. Honey Days was featured in a national press release sent out by the main office to all of the press contacts and organizers around Canada. It's also on the national Culture Days website. To view the promo, visit: <http://culturedays.ca/en/2012-activities/view/50352cbc-03b8-4e44-a1ca-5fe34c4a89be>

The Forks Market also promoted Honey Days in their one page monthly event calendar. This bright orange sheet identifies a variety of things visitors are able to see while visiting the market place.

Another part of the promotion included an Interview by CTV, of Charles Polcyn, Red River Apiarist Association President. This took place on the first day of Honey Days, and featured a variety of honey products along with live bees. In addition, a live interview on CBC Morning Radio, was to report on the benefits of keeping bees healthy.

Along this line, the theme for the 2012 show focused on “Keeping Manitoba Honey Bees Buzzing”. The theme was emphasized by a colourful poster of flowers being visited by Honey Bees. In addition to the competition and promo display, the industry display features many pieces of equipment used by honey producers whether hobbyist, or full strength commercial operators.





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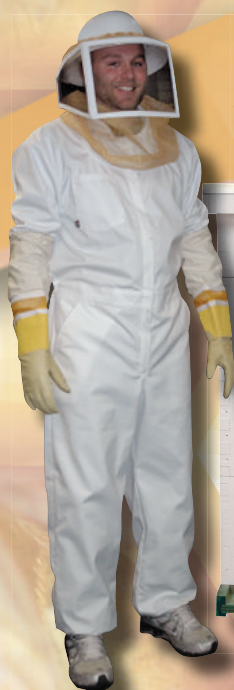
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# NATIONAL HONEY REPORT



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[www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/fvmhoney.pdf](http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/fvmhoney.pdf)

Number XXXII - #8

Issued Monthly

September 14, 2012

## HONEY MARKET FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST, 2012

### IN VOLUMES OF 10,000 POUNDS OR GREATER UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

Prices paid to beekeepers for extracted, unprocessed honey in major producing states by packers, handlers & other large users, cents per pound, f.o.b. or delivered nearby, containers exchanged or returned, prompt delivery & payment unless otherwise stated.

- REPORT INCLUDES BOTH NEW AND OLD CROP HONEY -

(# Some in Small Lot --- +Some delayed payments or previous commitment)

ARKANSAS				Alfalfa	White	\$1.90	-	\$1.95
	Wild flower	Light Amber	\$1.50	Clover	Extra Light Amber	\$1.80		
CALIFORNIA				OKLAHOMA				
	Alfalfa	White	\$1.89		Wildflower	Light Amber	\$1.70	
	Avocado	Light Amber	\$1.49	OHIO				
	Buckwheat	Extra Light Amber	\$1.74		Alfalfa	White	\$1.90	
	Cotton	Extra Light Amber	\$1.84	TEXAS				
	Orange	White	\$1.89 - \$1.94		Tallow	Extra Light Amber	\$1.48	- \$1.55
	Orange	Extra Light Amber	\$2.00		Tallow	Light Amber	\$1.48	- \$1.60
	Orange	Light Amber	\$1.89	WISCONSIN				
	Sage	White	\$1.89		Basswood	White	\$1.90	
	Wildflower	Extra Light Amber	\$1.89		Wildflower	White	\$1.95	
DAKOTAS					Wildflower	Extra Light Amber	\$1.80	
	Alfalfa	White	\$1.90 - \$1.95	Prices paid to Canadian Beekeepers for unprocessed, bulk honey by packers and importers in U. S. currency, f.o.b. shipping point, containers included unless otherwise stated. Duty and crossing charges extra. Cents per pound.				
	Canola	White	\$1.90 - \$1.95					
	Clover	White	\$1.80 - \$2.00		Canola	White	\$1.65	
	Clover	Extra Light Amber	\$1.90		Clover	White	\$1.67	
	Sunflower	White	\$1.95		Clover	Extra Light Amber	\$1.47	
	Western	White	\$1.95					
	Western	Extra Light Amber	\$1.95					
FLORIDA								

## Manitoba Beekeepers' Association 2012 Recommended Honey House Price

**\$2.75 per pound**

**\$6.10 per kilogram**

**( in customer supplied containers)**



# An Unusual Discovery!!?

This past summer a Manitoba beekeeper found something unusual in a honey bee hive. We collected a sample for identification and took some pictures. The images are pretty dramatic, especially the close up one in Image 3.

The honey bee colony was in 3 standard boxes. It was not treated for varroa in the spring and appeared to have high levels of varroa as the mite could be seen on adult bees. The red worm-like larvae were only found on live bees on frames, in the brood area, in one hive. We saw these larvae on about 10 bees or so. We didn't look at all bees in the hive, so there could've been more.

It was determined that the red larvae are beetle larvae of the family *Meloidae*, which includes blister beetles. I've never seen anything like this before and it's not certain what the species is. There is record of a species (*M. impressus*) from this family being found in Manitoba before, and being a predator in the nest of honey bees, but not associated with economic injury<sup>1</sup>.



Image 1: Numerous live *Meloidae* larvae in the space between the thorax and abdomen, and one crawling near the head, of a live honey bee collected in Manitoba, this summer (2012).



Image 2: A close up of one of the collected *Meloe* larva.



Image 3: A closer view of the numerous *Meloe* larvae on a live honey bee.

When I returned to the same hive later in the summer, I did not see any of the red larvae on any bees. It appears, as expected/hoped, that it didn't reproduce in the hive. I suspect the larvae we saw hitched a ride onto a foraging bee and were carried back to the hive by the bee.

Some first instar *Meloidae* larvae are known to clump together, are phoretic and highly mobile, and when a bee approaches a flower can rear up on their hind legs and attach themselves to the hairs of the bee with their claws and mandibles<sup>1</sup>. At this first larval stage they're referred to as "triungulins" since they have 3 claws at this stage.

Apparently they may eat honey bee eggs and young larvae, but it's not clear if that was the case in this hive. On the way home from the site, a couple bees I collected with these larvae on them were twitching and seemed otherwise paralysed. It's not clear if this was related to them being collected and transported, or the larvae on them. Other bees with the larvae on them seemed ok. Fortunately, as far as we observed, this interesting discovery was limited to a relatively small number of bees in one hive and did not cause significant or on-going economic injury.

## Reference:

<sup>1</sup>Campbell, J.M., M.J. Sarazin, & D.B. Lyons. 1989. Canadian beetles (Coleoptera) injurious to crops, ornamentals, stored products, and buildings. Book 491 pp.





# MASC Buzzes Into Second Year of Bee Mortality Insurance

Most beekeepers winter their bees in Manitoba to lower costs and/or insulate their hives from prevalent pests and diseases. Apiculture is integral to agriculture, but until recently beekeepers were on their own when confronted with excessive losses due to the inherent risks of overwintering hives in Manitoba.

The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) began the Overwinter Bee Mortality Insurance program in 2011 to assist with the financial burden of excessive uncontrollable losses occasionally encountered during the overwintering period.

Insurable overwinter losses, however, are numerous. “So many different things can cause reductions in overwinter bee health and colony development,” says Doug Wilcox, Manager of Program Development – Insurance. “Natural perils like mites, epidemics, extreme cold, and so on. In the end, it seemed the best solution for everyone was to insure against excessive unmanageable natural perils. Losses due to unsound management practices, vandalism, theft and so forth are not covered.”

Developed with invaluable input from the Manitoba Beekeepers’ Association and MAFRI specialists, the program’s first year saw 44 beekeepers sign up for coverage. “It was a good start,” commented Jaret Sawchuk, MASC Agronomist – Special Crops. “Uptake of the program met our expectations, and there were really no major hiccups in the program’s first year.”

Eligible beekeepers must reside and operate an apiary in Manitoba, be registered under *The Bee Act (Manitoba)*, and be registered with the Manitoba Beekeeper’s Association as a ‘registered producer’ in accordance with the *Manitoba Honey Marketing Plan Regulation* made under *The Farm Products Marketing Act*.

Under the program, beekeepers are given the option to insure a minimum of 50 colonies either at the high



dollar (\$150 per colony) or low dollar (\$100 per colony) coverage level, and an indemnity is paid if their overwinter losses exceed the coverage deductible. Coverage is available for strong colonies placed indoors or in outdoor storage for the winter, and for nuclear colonies placed in indoor storage.

For example, if you want the \$150 high dollar coverage for 100 colonies, you would first calculate the deductible (100 colonies x 30% deductible = 70 colonies), and then multiply the result by \$150, so your total coverage would be 70 colonies x \$150 = \$10,500.

The beekeeper’s share of premiums for the 2012/13 winter period works out to \$2.30 per colony for low dollar coverage, and \$3.44 per colony for high dollar coverage. For the above example, insuring 100 colonies at the high dollar coverage works out to \$344 premium for the year.

The program requires that a beekeeper reports their overwintering actions. For 2012/13, the deadline to apply for Overwinter Bee Mortality Insurance is August 31, 2012; colonies must be placed in winter storage by November 15, 2012; and you must file a Declaration of Overwinter Colonies Report with MASC by November

(Continued on page 18)



30, 2012. Claims must be filed by May 15, 2013 to avoid any late fee, with May 31, 2013 being the deadline to file your Declaration of Overwinter Colonies Mortality Report.

“The date to place colonies into winter storage for last year’s program initially was October 31, 2011,” says Sawchuk, “But after consultation with the Beekeepers’ Association, it was pushed back to November 15 to accommodate more beekeepers and their normal practices.” The later November 15 deadline for placing colonies in winter storage will continue for the 2012/13 program.

To date, MASC has paid out a total of \$213,600 on claims for 2011/12. Claims are paid if your overwinter losses due to insurable causes exceed your deductible. Using the previous example, if 44 of your 100 colonies are lost, you would be paid for 14 colonies, or \$2,100.

For coverage purposes, a ‘frame of brood’ is a frame with at least two-thirds of cells on each side of the frame filled with brood or eggs, or covered with live bees, or a combination thereof. MASC defines colonies entering winter storage as ‘strong’ if there are seven or more frames of brood, or ‘nuclear’ if there are six frames of brood. Exiting winter storage, colonies which were defined as ‘strong’ when entering storage are classified as ‘strong’ with seven or more frames of brood, ‘weak’ with three to six frames of brood, or ‘dead’ if two or less frames of brood. Colonies defined as ‘nuclear’ when entering storage are classified as ‘nuclear’ when exiting winter storage with four to six frames of brood, ‘weak’ with three frames of brood, or ‘dead’ with two or less frames of brood.

MASC will continue to work with the Manitoba Beekeepers’ Association to ensure that the Overwinter Bee Mortality Insurance program meets the needs of Manitoba’s beekeepers. For more information about MASC and Overwinter Bee Mortality Insurance, contact any MASC Insurance office or visit [www.masc.mb.ca](http://www.masc.mb.ca).



106th Annual General Meeting  
Wednesday November 14,  
2012  
Starting at 10:00 a.m.

Auditorium, Neepawa United  
Church  
475 Mountain Avenue,  
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Members \$40.00 each  
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## *PRESIDENTS REPORT*

*Fall 2012*



“ No Report At This Time.”

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# Bee IPM Project Update II – Results from our 2011 Hygienic Behaviour Survey

By Shelley Hoover and Stephen Pernal,

Beaverlodge Research Farm, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

In this article, I will discuss the selective breeding programme of the BEE IPM project.

Selective breeding of honey bees has been going on since humans first domesticated bees, but conventional methods are laborious, and require a great investment of time to assess the stock at each generation. While genomic technologies hold promise to improve this process, they have not yet been used on honey bees due to the special considerations involved in breeding bees (*e.g.*, one queen mates in flight with many drones). I should also point out at this juncture that we are not breeding genetically-modified bees. A genetically-modified organism (GMO) is one whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques; DNA molecules from other sources are combined and transferred into an organism, thus giving it novel genes. In contrast, our breeding program uses bee stocks from commercial apiaries in Western Canada; we are using molecular techniques to identify bees with proteins we know to be involved in hygienic behaviour and *Varroa*-sensitive hygiene, and subsequently breed from them using instrumental insemination.

You may recall that in 2008 Leonard Foster and Stephen Pernal led a biomarker discovery project, *Apis mellifera* Proteomics of Innate reSistance (APIS) that identified heritable markers of disease-resistance traits of honey bees, including hygienic behaviour. This project has now identified several candidate proteins, and in the current project we will validate and apply these biomarkers. It is interesting to note that some of the proteins that we have identified are likely functionally involved in the traits: *e.g.*, one marker is an odorant-binding protein, which may function as transporter of the chemical signals originated from the infected or dead larvae, and a protein involved in synaptic transmission are the two proteins most closely linked to hygienic behaviour levels.

## Hygienic behaviour

Hygienic behaviour in honey bees is a behavioural disease resistance mechanism; worker bees detect the presence of infected brood, remove the wax cap of sealed brood cells, and then remove the diseased individual. Its primary function in disease resistance is thought to be the continual elimination of brood pathogens from the hive environment, which would otherwise remain and potentially infect other bees. In the case of *Paenibacillus larvae* (the bacteria causing American Foulbrood), bees specifically remove infected larvae or pupae when the bacteria are still in the vegetative state, before they are infective. Although the term hygienic behaviour was originally used to describe removal of brood infected with AFB, its use has gradually been expanded to describe the removal of brood infected with chalkbrood disease (*Ascosphaera apis*), as well as brood parasitized with greater wax moth (*Galleria mellonella*), small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) and *Varroa*. Levels of hygienic behaviour are typically tested by freeze-killing patches of capped brood, reinserting the combs into the colony, and returning 24 hours later to count the percentage of the dead larvae that were removed by the bees in that time.

We are aware that previous attempts to select only for hygienic behaviour have not resulted in economically-enhanced bees, and we will be assessing the economic impact of using the final generation of selected bees in commercial apiaries in 2013. We expect that assessments of selected bee stocks will demonstrate an economic enhancement as the starting breeding population will already be selected for its economic parameters by commercial beekeepers.

## *Varroa*-Sensitive Hygiene (VSH)

*Varroa* sensitive hygiene (VSH) has two general elements: the removal of *Varroa* infested brood cells and a high frequency of non-reproducing mites remaining in the brood. Colonies exhibiting high levels of VSH express a specialized form of hygienic behaviour whereby workers are able to detect pupae that have actively reproducing *Varroa* mites on them, then uncap their cells and remove the pupae. Consequently, colonies expressing high levels of the VSH trait have lower levels of mites in their colonies, and a higher proportion of mites remaining in infested brood cells that are considered non-reproductive.

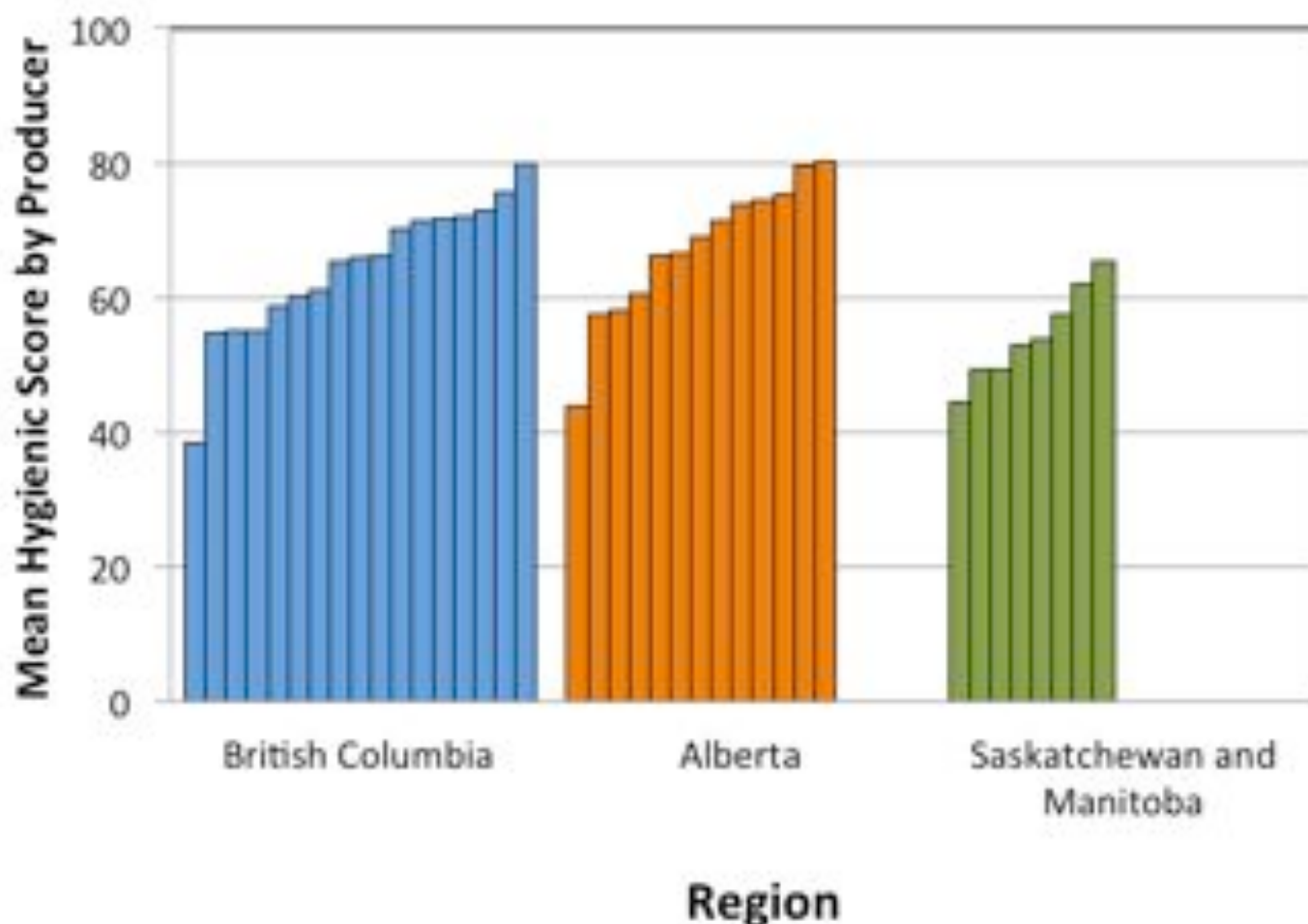
## Survey of Western Canadian Bee Populations

In 2011 we broadly surveyed stock from 37 commercial or research operations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, choosing a subset of their own breeding stock for our breeding purposes. We have selected 110 of the top scoring colonies in our hygienic tests, and a further 100 colonies were randomly chosen from the commercial beekeepers' breeding stock. The highly-hygienic stock was divided between two queen breeders in British

Columbia. The randomly selected ‘benchmark’ stock was divided between Rob Currie at the University of Manitoba and ourselves here in Beaverlodge. This summer (2012) we will be propagating both stocks. In 2012, the 10 top-scoring hygienic colonies that successfully overwinter will be used as parents in the first generation of selected stocks. We will then assess the hygienic behaviour, VSH, and protein marker scores of the F1 daughter colonies. An additional second generation will be bred from the top-scoring colonies of the first selected generation, with the final third generation bred in 2013, and distributed to commercial operations for evaluation.

In 2012 we will be receiving first-generation queens from the selection program. At Beaverlodge, we will be challenging them with American foulbrood, to compare the ability of first generation queen selected by both protein markers and traditional field hygienic tests to our unselected benchmark stocks, and gauge the process of the selection programme. Colonies from all three stocks will be deliberately exposed to AFB, and subsequently their level of infection will be monitored. We will repeat this experiment with the third and final selected generation. Rob Currie will do parallel experiments exposing the stocks to *Varroa* at the University of Manitoba.

We will be propagating the F1 selected stocks using instrumental insemination beginning in May 2012.



#### Results to date:

Figure 1. Mean hygienic score of colonies in the breeding stock survey. Each bar represents the average of one commercial operation. Numbers in white boxes are provincial average hygienic scores. Average scores for the commercial operations ranged between 39% and 80% hygienic (% of dead brood completely removed within 24 hours).



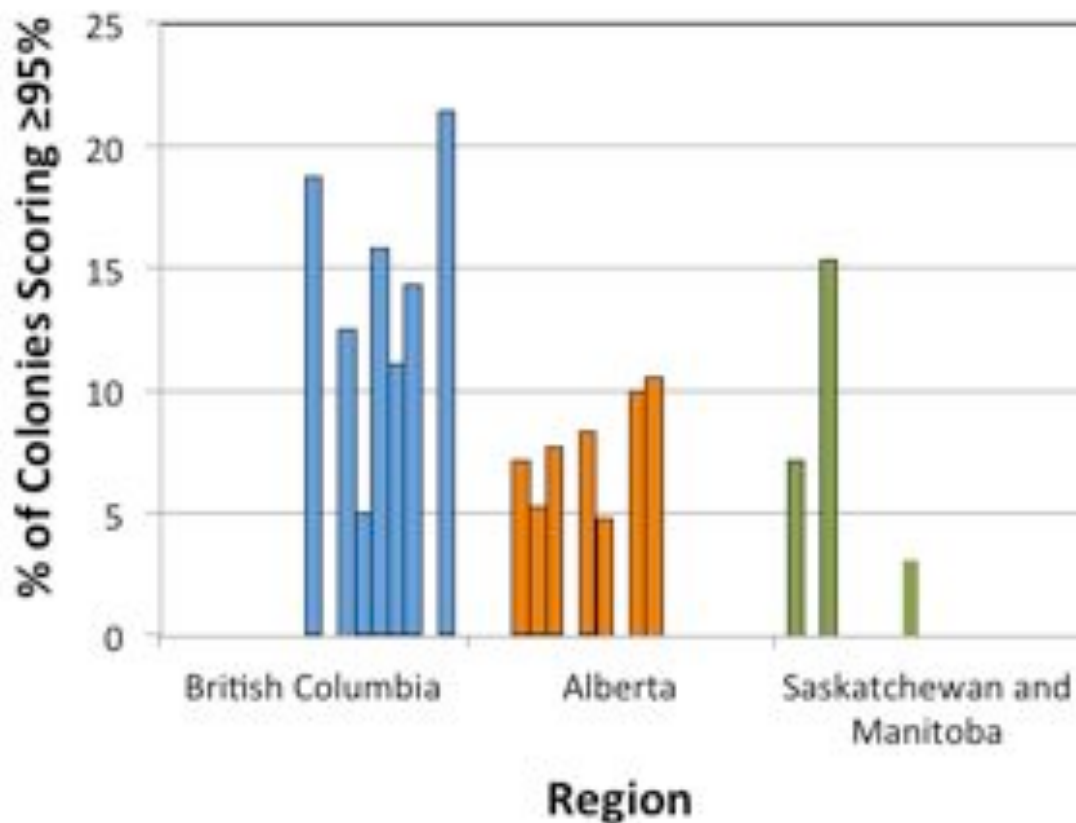
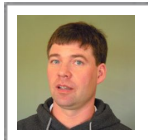


Figure 2. Breeding stock, to be considered 'hygienic', should ideally remove greater than 95% of the freeze-killed larvae within 24 hours. This graph shows the percent of each producers colonies that scored >95%. Some producers had no colonies at this level, whereas others had up to 21% of their tested colonies scoring 95% or more of dead larvae completely removed in 24 hours.



## CHC REPORT

OCTOBER 14, 2012



- Resolving the Butyric, Benzaldehyde testing levels with CFIA
- Working on the foreign labour issue resulting in substantial improvements to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program.
- New updated and user friendly CHC web site
- With substantial assistance from CAPA, getting the registration of Apivar completed.
- Working with honey packers to delay proposed changes in the packaging of honey by CFIA.
- Development of a bee biosecurity program for beekeepers.
- Initiating work on a national bee health and pest data-base.
- Formation of working groups and committees to deal with pesticide incidents nationally.
- CBISQT - Technical review in progress
- Development and distribution of bee safety posters

# KAP Shares Harvest

Jim Campbell, MBA Secretary

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) shared some good news from the 2012 crop year plus reflected on farmers' contributions to the economy of Manitoba at a harvest event on August 20 in Winnipeg.

The Harvest event, held at Centre Court, The Forks Market, featured a report by Doug Chorney, KAP President. Doug noted the buzz within the agriculture industry during August was the confluence of good yields and excellent prices.

To emphasize the harvest, those at the event, including Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Ron Kostyshen, were invited to check out the hopper full of hard white spring wheat, which Doug claimed yielded over 50 bushels per acre, on his farm near Selkirk, at a record price of almost \$9 a bushel.

"For every \$1.00 that a grain farmer earns, KAP research shows about \$13.90 is injected into the Manitoba economy," Chorney noted.

In speaking to the audience, Dave Shambrock, Executive Director of the Manitoba Food Processors Association, explained this multiplier effect further.



Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Ron Kostyshen



Doug Chorney, KAP President

Dave noted that if wheat went to a miller, such as Prairie Flour Mills in Elie, they in turn employ people to mill the wheat into flour and subsequently transport the flour to a bakery, who in turn employ staff and transportation personnel to move the finished products to a retail outlet. The grocery stores, naturally, receive a profit from sales to further employ additional people. Dave commented that although this is a simplistic example, it is easy to see the economic and employment spin-off benefits.

"It all starts on the farm-whether it's grain, dairy, beef, chicken, pulse, pork or any other kind of primary agricultural production-and it takes off from there," said Chorney.

KAP is conducting a transit bus campaign called "Sharing The Harvest" to emphasize farmers' economic contributions. As a kick-off to the campaign, those at the event were invited to sample cinnamon buns from Tall Grass Prairie that sources local grains.

"There is a certain amount of optimism about the future potential of the agricultural sector," noted Minister Kostyshen, as he spoke with several producer groups, including Manitoba Beekeepers' Association, after the formal presentation ended. MBA expressed appreciation for the provinces support of Beekeepers with the winter mortality program, and noted producers in several areas were pleased with their harvest, despite dry conditions.



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NUMBER OF COLONIES EXPECTED TO BE OPERATED IN 2012 \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Due January 1, with Deadline for membership payment – March 31, 2012

**MEMBERSHIPS cover period from January 01 to December 31 of 2012**

**MANITOBA BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION** NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

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**PLUS \$0.13/COLONY (FOR 1,001 COLONIES AND GREATER) HONEY COUNCIL LEVY \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**2. ASSOCIATE MEMBER – A Volunteer, non-voting category, for beekeepers with 49 or fewer honey bee colonies in Manitoba, or a local or out-of-province industry supporter. \$60.00 BASIC FEE \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**NOTE: PAID-UP MEMBERS automatically receive the MBA newsletter “The Manitoba Beekeeper”, and only MANITOBA RESIDENTS may receive the Canadian Honey Council’s newsletter “Hive Lights”.**

**KEYSTONE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS** NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

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**JOURNAL SUBSCRIPTIONS** - (THIS SERVICE AVAILABLE TO MBA MEMBERS ONLY)

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I request that the above amount be deducted from my account at the Manitoba Co-operative Honey Producers Limited.

THERE IS NO “AUTOMATIC” DEDUCTION FOR PAST MEMBERS.

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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT. INFORMATION MAY BE USED TO PROVIDE PRODUCTS OR SERVICES BENEFITIAL TO MEMBERS.

APPLICATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ APPLICANTS SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this completed application together with payment to:  
Manitoba Beekeepers' Association  
c/o Hilary Stewart, MBA Treasurer, P.O. Box 192 Baldur, MB, R0K 0B0

# MBA Committees for 2012



**Convention/AGM: Chair – Murray Lewis, Rhéal Lafrenière, Jim Campbell, David Ostermann, Bruce Podolsky.**

**Fee/Levy: Co-Chair-Jake Maendal, Terry Karaz, Chris Rempel, Rhéal Lafrenière, Jim Campbell.**

**Finance: Chair – Chris Rempel, Earl Dueck, Jim Campbell, David Ostermann, Murray Lewis**

**Foreign Worker: Chair-Bruce Podolsky, Bryan Ash, Allan Campbell, Chris Rempel, Pierre Faure, Rhéal Lafrenière.**

**Food Safety: Chair-Bryan Ash, Gilles Maguet, Bruce Podolsky,**

**KAP: Chair – Gary Momotiuk, Earl Dueck, Gilles Maguet, Jim Campbell**

**Newsletter: Chair – Earl Dueck, Jim Campbell, Rhéal Lafrenière, David Ostermann**

**Nomination: Chair – Murray Lewis, Bryan Ash, Bruce Podolsky, Jake Maendel, Pierre Faure,**

**Pests & Pest Management: Chair – Murray Lewis, Terry Karaz, Richard Schau,**

**Pollination: Chair – Chris Rempel, Pierre Faure, Bruce Podolsky, David Ostermann.**

**Promotion/Education: Chair – Jake Maendel, Earl Dueck, Gilles Maguet, Richard Schau, Jim Campbell, Rhéal Lafrenière.**

**Resolution: Chair – Chris Rempel, Bryan Ash, Bruce Podolsky**

**Research: Chair – Murray Lewis, Pierre Faure, Gilles Maguet, Rhéal Lafrenière, (Dr. Rob Currie).**

**Safety Nets: Chair – Gary Momotiuk, Earl Dueck, Jake Maendel, Terry Karaz, Bruce Podolsky**

**Stock Replacement: Chair – Bryan Ash, Terry Karaz, Pierre Faure,**



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City of Winnipeg – Public Works Department  
**Insect Control Branch**

## **PUBLIC NOTICE** **INSECTICIDE USE PROGRAM FOR 2012**

The City of Winnipeg's Insect Control Branch is involved in the control of nuisance and disease carrying mosquitoes in the City of Winnipeg and up to 24 km beyond.

Some of the control methodologies that are employed will involve the use of control products including Chlorpyrifos®, Diflubenzuron®, Methoprene®, Permethrin®, Pyrocide®, and Malathion®. However, to protect bees from potential toxic effects of these control products, a 300 metre pesticide free radius will be provided around all registered honeybee and leafcutter bee colonies. Beekeepers are encouraged to participate in this program by advising the Insect Control Branch of bee locations.

The only allowable exception to this spray policy will involve the use of *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis* (Bti) or *Bacillus sphaericus*, which are considered non-toxic to bees.



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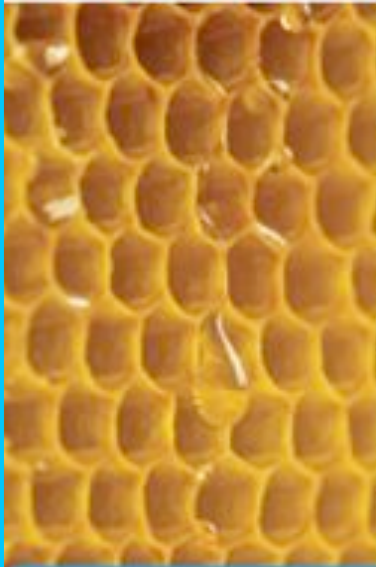
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## Safety Poster Available

Canadian Honey Council is making available an "Agricultural Chemical Safety in Apiculture" poster to producers across Canada.

Posters have been supported by a grant from Growing Forward (Federal and Provincial governments) and were developed in concert with the Canadian Agriculture Safety Association. The purpose of the material is to encourage safety within our industry by reminding workers to "Read The Label Every Time And Stay Safe".

MBA has several FREE copies, some of which were distributed at the Beekeepers Field Day in June. Should you want one or two, please e-mail [mbasecretary@mts.net](mailto:mbasecretary@mts.net) and place your order.

### Agricultural Chemical **Safety** in Apiculture



**READ THE LABEL  
EVERY TIME  
AND STAY SAFE**















**SAFETY TIPS:**

- ▶ Teach employees all safety practices for handling chemicals prior to chemical use.
- ▶ Be careful! Personal protection equipment (respirators, gloves and eye protection equipment, etc.) must be used as instructed on the label.
- ▶ Store all chemical products properly according to the label, out of sight and out of children's reach.

**FOLLOW THE LABEL**

- The label is the rules for safe use of any chemicals.
- The label tells you how to protect yourself, employee, and your bees.
- The label lets you know what to do in the case of emergency.
- The label appears in all legally used agricultural chemicals in apiculture.
- Read and follow the label's instructions to prevent any injury. You could save a life.
- If there is anything in the label instructions that you don't understand, ask for help.

**WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG**

- Immediately alert area occupants and supervisor, and evacuate the area, if necessary.
- If there is a fire or medical attention, contact public safety at 911.

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