

January/February 1997

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Kids' Videos Available

After months of fund raising and coordinating efforts, Jennifer Tierney has completed her task of making available a kids' video of AHBs. The eleven minute tape depicts a classroom of first graders who are going to be treated to peanut butter and honey crispy cookies. While most of the class is at recess and the cookies are baking (or being shaped), four academically-oriented students stay behind to find out more about killer bees.

Ahead of the technological curve, the students are hooked up to the World Wide Web and search for killer bees. They find a site with four options that explain EHBS, killer bees, value of bees, and avoiding bee problems. The photography of living bees is excellent. The students handle the killer bee information in a very matter-of-fact manner.

Because of the age of the performers, this tape is geared toward third grade and younger children. Because of it's price, there is no reason why the tape should not be obtainable by all nursery and elementary schools across the state. Perhaps, you as a beekeeper, or your club, would like to purchase some tapes and give them to local schools as an educational tool. Teachers like well done, educational tapes.

To order tapes, send \$10 per tape to: The Bee Smart Project, c/o the San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures, 5555 Overland Ave., Bldg. 3, San Diego, CA 92123-1292. If you wish to contact Jennifer, she can be reached at: (619)694-3122 or at [jtiernag@co.san-diego.can.us](mailto:jtiernag@co.san-diego.can.us). The California State Beekeepers' Association provided a healthy portion of the production costs and are credited on the tape. (See next page).

Another new video on honey bees for kids (6 to 9 years old) that was released recently is: "The Magic School Bus in a Beehive." Those not familiar with Magic School Bus books and videos must be told that the teacher, students, and school bus in this series can be transformed in size and shape to anything imaginable in order to take a closer look at something. In the bee video, the kids are transformed into bees, naturally. They visit a hive, but have a hard time learning to do bee work and communicating with the other bees.

I was asked to review the script, before the tape was produced. I found many places to make suggestions. The producers decided in my favor in every case except one: they used the kids' expression "up chuck" twice, once when nectar was being unloaded and once when honey was being deposited in a cell. That blemish is not enough to hurt an otherwise very well done, educational video. They even used the word "pheromone" for me.

I guess that the book and tape can be ordered through bookstores. New, hardbound copies of the book are expensive. About a year later, they are produced in paperback at reasonable prices. If the bookstore cannot help in your quest, The Magic School Bus can be reached at 568 Broadway, Suite 1002, New York, NY 10012 [(212)343-7804] or by FAX [(212)343-7840]. This would be a great video for clubs to loan to schools or other children's organizations.

Extended Certification

In a move designed to reduce unnecessary inconveniences to conducting business, EPA has changed the way some growers will be using federally "restricted" materials. Until recently, whenever a federally or state restricted material was to be applied, the applicator had to obtain a permit from a county Agricultural Commissioner. The applicator had to be "certified" for use of the material, but this was taken care of by the Ag Commissioner asking questions, providing information, and conditioning permits. This is the point in the process when the presence of apiaries is discerned and information released so that beekeepers will be notified.

The changes involve only those applicators working with "perennial" crops: orchards, vineyards, and alfalfa. Nothing changes for California restricted use materials. Applicators wishing to use federally restricted chemicals will be asked to study for and pass a written examination about pesticide use on perennial crops. A passing grade will eliminate the need for a visit to the Ag Commissioner for the next three years. Each year the applicator must take two hours of continuing education courses in pesticide use.

Nothing changes in the state regulations that require notification of beekeepers within a mile of an application site. What does change is the lack of communication with the Ag Commissioner. I hope that this does not lead to communication failures between applicators

and beekeepers. Only time will tell.

Other changes related to pesticide use that should be brought to your attention include: Assembly Bill 697 would categorize use of pesticides on alfalfa and all vegetable crops, when grown for seed production, (except corn, beans, pumpkins, and peas) as non-food uses. The following conditions must be met to obtain such registration: 1. seed screenings must be disposed of where animals can't eat them; 2. no portion of treated plants can be used for food or feed; 3. seed must be labeled as non-food/non-feed; and 4. non-food/non-feed seed cannot be distributed for human consumption or animal feed. This may change the chemicals being used on seed crops. Be sure to communicate with your grower.

Many pesticide labels are being expanded to cover more crops. Pay attention to notices about use of imidacloprid (Admire<sup>®</sup> or Provado<sup>®</sup>), because it is toxic to honey bees. Apparently, an experimental use of Alert<sup>®</sup> will be allowed on 4,000 acres of cotton statewide. This is new chemistry in California and the effects on honey bees are not known.

#### Bee Hazard Statements

In my last newsletter I mention that the federal government is requesting information on honey agreement circumvention and on restrictions to importation of honey bees. Additionally, the federal government is wrestling

with verbiage to put on pesticide labels.

The problem is how to put out a generic statement concerning honey bee and other pollinator hazards. If listed under "Environmental Hazards," the words are mandate. Such a statement exists now: "This product is highly toxic to bees exposed to direct treatment or residues on blooming crops or weeds. Do not apply this product or allow it to drift to blooming crops or weeds if bees are visiting the treatment area." Apparently, pesticide applicators and mosquito abatement agencies feel such verbiage is too restrictive and interferes too much with their work. They have proposed a "Cautionary Statement" (not a mandate) that says the chemical is highly toxic to bees and that the applicator should consider discussing its use with an extension agent before the application is made.

A committee of more than a dozen interested parties are communicating via conference calls on this topic. After each call, Jim Downing, from EPA, tries to generate label verbiage that matches the tone of the meetings. Those statements have covered an extremely broad spectrum. Toward one end, the beekeepers are very dissatisfied. Applicators are very unhappy with most current verbiage and anything else that seems very restrictive. I wrote a letter to Mr. Downing stating that passing the buck to extension agents was unacceptable because we lack the knowledge of chemical and residue toxicities to make informed recommendations.

Our most immediate contact on this on going conference is Gene Brandi, of Los Banos, California. Gene keeps bees in areas of relatively intense agrichemical use, and his bees have been in-volved in bee poisoning incidents. Gene is an avid student of AHB and pesticide issues, and he represents the beekeepers very well. Due to lack of data collection on bee kills (because beekeepers usually just complain about their losses but don't file official loss reports), Gene has developing a reporting sheet that was distributed to American Beekeeping Federation members. I included a copy in this newsletter (see next page).

Please help Gene plead your case to EPA administrators by completing the form, or a copy thereof, and mailing or faxing it to Gene. There aren't going to be too many more conference calls before a decision is made. At least we can hope that current language is continued, not relaxed. Thank you for your input.

#### Almond Anthracnose

the following information is paraphrased from a article written by J.E. Adaskaveg, Plant Pathologist at UC Riverside. The article "Managing Almond Anthracnose," was published in the February, 1997, edition of Nut Growers magazine.

Anthracnose of almonds is a fungal disease caused by one or

more species of Colletorichum, but probably C. acutatum. The following symptoms were severe enough to cause economic damage in orchards in Butte, Glenn, Merced, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties: 1. blossom blight, 2. fruit infections with initial symptoms appearing as orangish, circular, and sunken lesions that often gummed in advance stages of infection, and branch disback with associated leaf yellowing, wilting and death, 3. fruit often did not drop and the infections continued to develop into the spurs and shoots.

Why is this of interest to beekeepers? Because captan turns out to be one of the best fungicides to use against the disease. For years, beekeepers have been leery of captan, because they have experienced broad losses after its use. When Larry Atkins conducted research on toxic effects of pest-icides to honey bee brood, he estimated that captan, used at normal field rates, would kill about 30-40% of the brood each time it was used.

Following field tests against anthracnose, with various fungi-cides and fungicide combinations, researchers concluded that, "None of the treatments eradicated the disease and all performed as protectants. Once treatments stopped, and conducive conditions [Ed.-rain] continued, the disease subsequently increased. Thus, fungicide programs are dependent on continued applications prior to conducive wet conditions throughout the spring."

It would be prudent to check with your almond grower about his or her plans for almond disease control before moving into the orchard. In petri dishes, propiconazole, tebuconazole and captan were about equally effective. Hopefully, a fungicide non-toxic to bees can be used for anthracnose control.

### U.S.D.A. Honey Stats

Honey production records for beekeepers operating five or more colonies of bees in 1996 were released recently. Californians reported a state total of 27,300,000 pounds. Runners-up, Florida, South Dakota, and North Dakota produced 25,200,000; 23,280,000, and 19,780,000 pounds, respectively. California's average production, in pounds per colony was 70 pounds. Twenty-five other states beat that average, with Hawaii taking the top per colony production at 155 pounds.

Only 390,000 colonies were reported on in California in 1996. This is 30,000 (7%) colonies fewer than in 1995 report. Those numbers lead me to believe that not every California beekeeper with five or more colonies is on the USDA survey list. In fact, the list may be 50,000 to 100,000 short. Whatever the true numbers, the beekeeping profession across the state and nation still appear to be declining. I hope some stability returns before long.

### Honey Board Offerings

Now, a low-fat honey cookbook! I don't know about you, but with age I continue to

gain mass. My exercise level remains moderately low, but my appetite, especially for "rich" foods, is as strong as ever. It is a losing battle unless you fight back.

The new cookbook, "Sweetened Naturally with Honey" contains over 100 delectable honey recipes with full-color, mouth watering photo-graphs throughout. If you didn't pick up a copy at a supermarket checkout stand, you can order one or more directly from the National Honey Board.

A single copy costs \$2.95. Larger orders are discounted: 10-49 cookbooks are \$2.65 each; 50-119 are \$2.25 each; and 120 or more cookbooks costs only \$1.75 each. Single to few copies are available from:

National Honey Board  
Dept. BK  
P.O. Box 125

Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495.  
Larger orders should be placed through:

National Honey Board  
Cookbook  
Longmont, CO 80501-6045  
Checks, money order, or credit card purchases are acceptable.

For the younger set, the Honey Board pooled resources and ideas with the Texas Peanut Producers and Washington State Apple Commission to develop a full-page, four color page for food section editors of newspapers across the country. Fun and foolproof snacks, like "Nutty Honey-Bear Wraps" and "Apple Snacksters with Honey and Peanut Butter," were promoted, along with honey bee trivia and kitchen safety. If you would like copies of the recipes, contact Jami Yanoski at the

Lashley Street address listed above on page 7.

### Bee Schools

The Sacramento Area Beekeepers' Association is sponsoring two beekeeping courses this spring. The first session is "Beginning Beekeeping," taught by Randy Oliver, and experienced beekeeper and enthusiastic instructor. The second session will be "Intermediate Beekeeping," taught by Eric Mussen, Extension Apiculturist.

The dates of the courses are Saturday, April 12 and April 19. Both courses will begin at 8:00 am and conclude at 4:30 pm with a

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reasonable lunch break. The meeting place is the Sacramento County Cooperative Agricultural Extension Auditorium, 4145 Branch Center Road, Sacramento. The cost for each session is \$25 per person or \$40 per family. Class size is limited, so please contact Nancy at (916)451-2337 or Pam at (916)773-1693 [Tuesday through Saturday] to register and obtain detailed information.

Sincerely,

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