

Ashe County Beekeeping Association  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
5/14/15

1. Total attendance - 10
2. Officers present – Randy Baldwin, Helen Baldwin, Fowler Bush and Doug Ehrhardt.
3. Welcome by Randy...
  - a. Doug Vinson to speak
  - b. Attendance tonight down due to the number of members being out of town.
  - c. 1st Time attendees - Jessica Tolliver (from Randy's class), Brenda and George Cole (from Shelley's class)
  - d. Fowler stated that our association forms are available and dues are \$10
  - e. Please sign in
  - f. Caps and t-Shirts
  - g. Assembly of wooden ware on Saturday, May 17 from 1-5 at Randy's Bee Yard
  - h. May 19, 2015 another class begins at Wilkes Community College, Randy Baldwin will be the instructor.
  - i. Joy Lewis has a recipe which she found for bee lure for attracting/trapping wild bees. You can pick up a copy after the meeting at the back of the room.
  - j. State NCSBA is trying to update their website and has requested pictures, news, etc. from the different associations to be shared so they can publish in their magazine.
  - k. Harry Galer brought information from Apimundia looking for donations to promote the world organization to the US in 2019. Meeting is only held every 3-4 years and the last time in the US was around '39. Doug Vinson shared information that he knew of the organization...a HUGE bee meeting.
    1. Doug Ehrhardt proposed we send \$25, Helen Baldwin seconded.
    2. Passed
4. Introduction of speaker: Doug Vinson. Joy was supposed to introduce, but she was not in attendance due to some "chicken" problems.
  - a. Regional Director for the Mountain Region of the NCSBA
  - b. VP Catawba Valley Bee Assoc.
  - c. Master beekeeper
  - d. Learned beekeeping from his father, but was away from it for many years
  - e. Maintains 30 hives in Avery and Catawba County
  - f. Retired dentist
  - g. Presentation on "*Summer splits, timing and techniques for mite load reduction, colony manipulations to interrupt Varroa mites*"
5. Doug Vinson - remarks
  - a. Spoke with Joy Lewis for logistics
  - b. From Macon, Franklin County originally
  - c. Learned from his dad...
  - d. Website listing of officer group...impressive list of participants
  - e. Regional director and available at any time for assistance and support. NCSBA on the right track, so any questions or concerns, they are here to help.

f. Disclaimer

1. NOT an expert
2. Ideas not original, but collected from years of experience and
3. Timing and Techniques for mite load reduction

g. Mite load reduction

1. Sustainability
2. Reducing winter losses
3. Healthier late season bees
4. These are the three components of the story

h. Major concerns?

1. Winter losses
2. Queen issues
3. Absconding
4. Sick bees
5. Mite overload
6. Dwindling
7. Collapse (picture of a rapidly collapsing colony) - brood scattered, no honey,

not many bees.

i. When bees are concentrated over a narrow area of brood until there is just a few left...foragers are gone. Leave and don't come back! Queen is laying eggs, but they are not being nurtured.

j. Causes?

1. varroa mite
2. viruses
3. nosema
4. chemicals
5. nutrition
6. immune response disorder
7. stress
8. Combination of the above?

k. Now with monoculture, asphalt and lesser foraging areas.

l. "Varroa mite toughest challenge ever faced by the American beekeeper...Randy Oliver

m. How to make up for losses? We buy bees...buy bees...buy bees! Or just give up!

n. Package bee industry is huge...spring '15, Catawba County 600 packages

o. Summer increase math:

- 10 hives going into winter x 30% loss = 7 hives remaining (typical)
- 5 summer splits (nucs) + 10 parent hives = 15
- 15 x 30% loss = surviving hives in spring
- NET GAIN OF 1

p. Packages are easy but NOT foolproof. (P\$#\* POOR BEEKEEPING)

q. Making summer increases make for healthier bees and not have such losses.

r. Assume mite/virus reduction is a big issue and work to do mite reduction..."take your losses in the fall and make our increase in the spring." But this advice may not be as important now...don't recommend putting weak hive with a strong hive because you can't treat in winter.

s. Make your increase in summer to hedge against fall and winter losses...avert a mite explosion in early fall...

t. Terminology

1. Splits- doesn't have to be an equal #
2. Starts - take a few frames from other hives
3. Increase

u. Spring splits have inherent problems:

1. weather
2. fewer resources
3. fewer drones
4. slow buildup
5. queen availability
6. feeding issues

v. Advantages of July splits (starts)

1. mite load reduction (reproductive cycle)
2. available queens (local), drones
3. much more flexible timetable
4. good weather
5. hedge against winter losses with overwintered nucs
6. greater resources (bees, brood, etc.)

w. Definition: Superseding of queens - hive replaces the queen. A July split is an artificial superseding.

x. What do surviving colonies have in common:

1. summer mated queen
2. small nest cavity over winter
3. queenless periods during late summer
4. mite reduction at a critical time
5. related to survivor stock

Therefore:

1. summer splits have periods of queenlessness and therefore periods of no 8 day old open brood
2. during this period, varroa has no place to breed so their reproductive cycle is interrupted
3. the length of this period depends on how you requeen your split(s)

y. Mel Disselkoen...mdasplitter.com. Has a new OTS (*On The Spot*) book. Queen rearing class in Henderson County and Haywood County

5. Doug Vinson - How to use the information?

a. divide colonies in July to create a queenless state just before mites reach a deadly threshold in Aug and September

b. lack of uncapped brood will prevent varroa from having a place to reproduce

c. Aug and Sept mite population explosion has deadly impact:

1. brood is stressed and dies
2. viruses run rampant

d. Make a summer split and you won't have as heavy a mite load/1000 bees

e. Bees outbreed the mites

f. A new queen needs to be mated after the summer solstice (June 21). If she begins to lay like a spring queen

g. What to do after honey harvest?

1. goal with summer split is to make as many 5 frame nucs as resources will allow
2. make sure that the introduced queen is mated after June 21st
3. Overwinter these 5 frame boxes
4. Or convert to larger equipment

h. Mite breeding grounds are removed...before the new queen can emerge, mate and begin to lay, all the old brood will have hatched with no replacement for up to 30 days.

i. Lemming effect: mites that have been deprived breeding media are super anxious to resume survival breeding. When the new queen begins to lay and 8 day old larvae are available, mites enter cells in greater numbers (4+ up to 14!) than can be fed by the pupae hemolymph and starve!

j. Management of newly made nucs

1. move or leave in same apiary
2. feed
3. check for laying queen in a couple of weeks
4. remove brood as necessary for more splits or strengthen others
5. put to bed for winter