

Mountain Empire Beekeepers Association

Minutes

May 24, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Anthony Ellis in room 122, Smyth Hall Wytheville Community College. 35 members and 3 guests were present.

Minutes and Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve minutes—Mickey Cunningham, seconded by Kirk Burkett. Minutes approved. Mickey Cunningham presented the treasurers report. The report was filed for audit.

Speaker: Dr. Rick Fell Professor Emeritus Department of Entomology Virginia Tech

Presentation: Queen Evaluation and Requeening

Queen Management: Problems and Replacement

- Queens can lay up to 2000 eggs per day
- There are several pheromones used for communication.
- It takes 6 to 10 hours before the workers know that the queen is not there.
- It takes 12 or more males to mate with the queen to make a good queen. (better health, more productive, fight off disease better)
- We are seeing a higher incidence of queen failure.
- Beekeepers report that queen failure is a major factor in 30% of hive losses.

What Problems were identified?

- Queen not accepted by the hive when introduced
- High number of drones
- Rearing queens is difficult
- Disappearing supercedure cells
- There has been a high rate of queen failure in package bees usually within the first several months. This may be due to production problems- poorly reared queens.
- “Poorly reared queens of productive stock will be inferior to well-reared queens of less productive stock” C.L. Farrer
- Interaction of mites
- Miticide use and residue
- Agriculture chemical residues

Miticide Effects on Colony Health- Contributes to queen failure possibly

- Decreases drone production
- Inhibits rearing
- Reproductive physiology of drones and queens
- Loss of sperm viability

What Can We Do To Improve?

- Hive Location – Location should be where there is fresh water and the location is not too shady.
- Good nutrition – pollen supplements- starting feeding in January
- Reduce mites and disease
- Reduce pesticide exposure
- Sample colonies to determine mite levels (Sample in July)
- Use oxalic acid during the first part of August
- Limit miticide and antibiotic use; do not use if rearing queens
- Cycle out old comb to reduce pesticide residues and disease (Every 3-5 years)
- Evaluate queen and requeen frequently

Queen Evaluation

- Physical appearance of the queen is not that important
- Performance – Should have a solid pattern, have brood of similar age, compact brood nest
- Never judge a queen by one frame
- Evaluate with a parallelogram of 100 cells in 3-4 areas. Only count the empty cells. A greater % of empty cells indicates worse brood patterns and overall poor brood health.
- Young queens are more productive and produce more pheromones (1-2 yrs. of age)
- Young queens are less likely to swarm.

Requeening

- Requeen on a regular basis - annually if possible
- Requeening preferably should be done late summer to early autumn.
- Spring is not a recommended time as it delays build-up
- Dr. Fell's personal preference is requeening with a **local** queen
- Rear your own queens or purchase from a breeder
- Selection factors to consider: race, hybrids, disease resistance, mite resistance, etc....

Basic Rules for Requeening

- The new queen should be in a similar condition of the old queen
- Weaker colonies except queens more easily than do strong colonies.
- Requeening is easier done during nectar flows.

Old Business:

- Gary Tolley reported the audit for MEBA came out fine.
- On-line registration for the **Virginia State Beekeeper's Association 100th Anniversary June 15-16** in Roanoke is now available. The website is <https://bpt.me/3381742>.
- Anyone interested in 55 gallon drums of sugar contact Jeff Mullins at (276) 620-0130.
- To sign up for the Bee Informed Newsletter go to <https://beeinformed.org/newsletter/>

New Business:

- Tim Service was contacted by the Greg Smith of the Wytheville Farmers Market to see who would like MEBA to participate in the Pollinator Week again this year. Cathy Hounshell will be available to be there for this on Saturday June 30 8:00-12:00.
- Next month's presentation will be on Food Safety and Honey Labeling by Sandy Stoneman, REHS,CP-PS
- Mickey Cunningham stated that the trifold brochures are running low and we might want to update the brochure with new pictures and information before printing more.

What Should You Be Doing with Your Hives?

Watch for Swarm cells

Feeding

Look out for Small Hive Beetles -SHB

Raffle Winners:

Diana Gardner– necklace
 John Slingerland–Intercover
 Fred Williams – frame gripper/lifter
 Ronnie Dillman – Wax scratcher
 Herman Hearn - 5 wax foundations
 John Slingerland – Florida moving screen
 Peter French – MEBA ball cap

Adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Armentrout
 Secretary, MEBA