

Mountain Empire Beekeepers Association

Minutes

February 23, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Anthony Ellis, MEBA President at Wytheville Community College, in Smyth Hall room 122. 29 members were present.

**Minutes:** A motion was made to approve the minutes by Mickey Cunningham, and was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Drew White.

**Speaker:** Brian Kreowski, Agricultural Inspector

**Presentation:** Apiary Inspection Program Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter44/>

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title2/agency5/chapter319/section30/>

<file:///H:/2022-2023/MEBA/Brian%20Kreowski%20-%20202-23-2023%20Presentation/Apiary%20Inspection%20Map.pdf>

**Old Business:**

- The trifold needs to be redone. Wytheville Word Print may have the original. We need members to submit pictures of people extracting, going into their hives or food service with honey. Pictures of flowers, shrubs or trees that bees like are needed too.

**New Business:**

- The Bee Class will run February 28-March 28, 2023. April 4 will be a makeup should there be any inclement weather.
- Tim Service is going in March to pick up package bees with queens for about \$150.00 if anyone is interested. [canoemaker@centurylink.net](mailto:canoemaker@centurylink.net)
- A motion was made by Mickey Cunningham to have \$200.00 to procure items for the bee class raffle. Drew White seconded it.
- Mickey Cunningham shared that Crimson Clover (annual) is great for bees, but not the perennial Crimson Clover. He suggested that those of us who want to purchase some do so in bulk together in order to save money. \$10.25 per lb. For information: <https://territorialseed.com/products/clover-crimson-clover>
- Dr. Tignor with VSBA did research that shows **sunflowers** tend to keep the varroa mite population down. **Get your seeds early!**
- Do not feed pollen or protein supplements in September or October.
- The president of Wytheville Community College approved for MEBA to have open hives on campus Saturday May 13 for the bee class. Volunteers will be needed to help that day. The site on campus is

yet to be determined by the executive committee. 3-5 colonies will be needed. A Security Safety Plan will be submitted to Wytheville Community College 72 hours before bees are brought to campus. Mickey Cunningham, Cathy Hounshell, Fred Williams, Joe Turpin and Jeff Sexton have volunteered to help.

- Fred Jones from Pilot, Virginia bought Tim Service's queen rearing business. He will have queens available. His phone number is (540) 745-2982.
- Tim Service purchased 50 packages of bees. Call him between now and March 2 to buy a package from him. His phone number is (276) 952-5077.
- The Mann Lake Bee Supply will be having their March Madness Sale through the month of March. Joyce with Mann Lake can help you at this phone number (218) 675-6688.
- Tractor Supply has the cheapest prices on sugar right now.
- "Tator" David Miller of Abingdon, Virginia is still buying wood to make woodenware bee supplies. He can be reached at 25155 Walden Road Abingdon, Va 24210. His phone number is (276) 608-6225.
- Mickey Cunningham will be verifying the pricing with Karén Avetisyan, Ph.D. of Bee and Comb, LLC on the new British hood and jacket. The price is around \$79.00. Bee and Comb, LLC in Durham, North Carolina is offering **free shipping** on orders more than \$50.00. \*Also, when sent to **Virginia is tax-free**. <https://www.beekeepingservices.com/> Let Mickey know if you are interested in purchasing. His number is (276) 579-2123.
- A motion for consideration as "How to Conduct Basic Bee Class" for the next five (5) years

"Whereas part of the mission for Mountain Empire Beekeepers Associations (association) is to help new beekeepers to become established, therefore, I move that the tuition cost be set at \$47.00 per student and family discount be set at \$75.00 and family tuition provides maximum of two textbooks per family. Duration of this motion is not to exceed five (5) years from January 26, 2023. (Second required here)

Discussion: Purpose of this motion is to aid class recruitment on a multiyear basis. Also, this motion is not to limit the powers of the executive committee on a biennial basis to adjust tuition based upon the economy and the development of a new textbook.

Perception from recruiting this year is that more persons will be retiring to the area covered by the association and that when discussion on the class reaches price for tuition it should remain stable for at least two years. Secondly, this motion will allow our membership to talk to other persons with assurance of facts about our educational program." *This motion has been tabled for 2 months.*

### **Raffle Winners:**

Five sheets of foundation wax– Darlene Lockard

Hive box woodenware deep – Jonathan Wright

Mouse guard/anti-robbing screen/pesticide protection screen – Justin Osborne

Inner cover – Hank Sturkie

**Next meeting:** Thursday March 23, 2023 at Wytheville Community College in Smyth Hall room 122.

**Adjourned:** at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Armentrout, MEBA Secretary

**Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**  
**Apiary Inspection Program**  
**02/23/2023**

**Objectives for 02/23/2023 Presentation for MEBA by Brian Kreowski:**

- Cover Bee Law and VDACS Apiary Inspection Program
- Overview of 2022
- Related contacts
- Where to find information

**Why are beekeepers regulated?**

- Contagious Diseases (European Foul Brood is a stress disease usually seen at the end of spring)
- Invasive pests (small hive beetle, etc...)
- Protection from each other

**Virginia Bee Law**

**Title 3.2 Agriculture, Animal Care, and Food**

- Chapter 44 Beekeeping
- ( § 3.2-4400 through 3.2-4416)  
-<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter44/>

**Virginia Administrative Code**

- Chapter 319. Best Management Practices for the Operation of Apiaries in Order to Limit Operator Liability  
-<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title2/agency5/chapter319/section30/>

2VAC5-319-30. Best management practices for the keeping of honeybees.

A. For the purpose of this section, "bee" means the honey bee, *Apis mellifera* and genetic variations thereof, at any living stage, and does not mean other hymenopterous insects that depend on pollen and nectar for food.

B. An apiary operator shall maintain a healthy populous colony of bees by:

1. Removing or securely sealing any empty bee equipment in an apiary. For the purpose of this subdivision, "empty" means without bees but containing comb or other materials attractive to bees and does not include equipment in use as a bait hive for capturing a swarm;
2. Removing all colonies in a state of decline, combining such colonies with other colonies, or taking other action to establish a healthy populous condition in such colonies;
3. Repairing or replacing damaged or defective hive boxes, frames, and other bee equipment;

4. Replacing frames containing old comb with new or cleaned frames containing foundation such that all comb in a hive is replaced every five to seven years;
5. Feeding or maintaining an adequate amount of honey and pollen in a hive for brood production during the growing season;
6. Preventing disturbance or injury to bee colony or hive by vertebrate pests; and
7. Managing the colony to address any disease or pest infestation or remove all disease or pest-infested hives that may be detrimental to the health of other colonies in the vicinity of the apiary. An apiary operator shall inspect hives for disease at least once every three months.

C. For the purposes of this subsection, (i) "full hive" means a hive consisting of a minimum of two eight-frame deep hive boxes for a Langstroth-style hive, or a hive of equivalent capacity, that has movable frames with combs, and (ii) "nucleus hive" means a hive with less capacity than a full hive. A full hive should enter the winter with a minimum of 60 pounds of honey and the equivalent of four frames of pollen stores. A nucleus hive should enter the winter with a minimum of 30 pounds of honey and the equivalent of two frames of pollen stores.

D. An apiary operator shall practice proper management and control techniques to reduce the likelihood of swarming.

E. An apiary operator shall maintain all colonies at least 10 feet away from property lines to prevent an individual from impeding normal bee flight activity from a hive. An apiary operator shall place all colonies that are less than 40 feet from a property line behind a barrier that is no less than six feet in height and is located between the colony and the property line or elevate the hive entrance no less than six feet above the property line. Barriers should be of sufficient density, length, and height to establish bee flyways six feet or higher above ground level.

F. When an apiary is located in an area in which the apiary operator should reasonably expect that the bees may rely on a nearby unnatural source of water, the apiary operator shall maintain a water source within 50 feet of a colony or less than one-half the distance to the nearest unnatural source of water, whichever is closest. An unnatural source of water includes a swimming pool, bird bath, and pet or livestock watering receptacle.

G. An apiary operator shall avoid opening or disturbing a colony when the apiary operator has knowledge that another person is participating in outside non-beekeeping activities or using machinery within 150 feet of the apiary.

H. An apiary operator shall only maintain a colony with EHB or EHB hybrid stock and shall:

1. Purchase queens, packaged bees, nucleus colonies, or established hives from suppliers providing EHB stock, or obtain a queen and bees from a local supplier or raise queens from stock owned by the apiary operator, provided the origin and EHB status of the mother queen is known;
2. Not obtain queens or bees from suppliers within 100 miles from known Africanized honeybee populations;
3. Introduce queens from healthy stock when making divisions or splits of established colonies;
4. Replace queens in all captured or trapped swarms within 45 days of capturing or trapping swarms;
5. Replace queens in all colonies every two years to minimize swarming behavior; and
6. Mark the thorax or clip a wing of the queens in a manner that allows the age of the queens to be determined prior to their introduction to splits, swarms, or colonies.

I. An apiary operator shall limit the number of colonies that he places in his apiary as follows:

1. If the property on which the apiary is located is 1/4 acre or smaller, the apiary shall not have more than two colonies. The apiary operator may increase the number of colonies up to four colonies for not more than 60 consecutive days for the purpose of queen mating and swarm control.

2. If the property on which the apiary is located is more than 1/4 acre, but less than 1/2 acre, the apiary shall not have more than four colonies. The apiary operator may increase the number of colonies up to eight colonies for not more than 60 consecutive days for the purpose of queen mating and swarm control.
3. If the property on which the apiary is located is 1/2 acre or more, but less than one acre, the apiary shall not have more than six colonies. The apiary operator may increase the number of colonies up to 12 colonies for not more than 60 consecutive days for the purpose of queen mating and swarm control.
4. If the property on which the apiary is located is one acre or more, the apiary shall not have more than six colonies per acre. The apiary operator may increase the number of colonies up to 12 colonies per acre for not more than 60 consecutive days for the purpose of queen mating and swarm control.
5. If all colonies are placed at least 200 feet from all property lines, there is no limit on the number of colonies that an apiary operator may place in his apiary.

## **Limited Liability for Beekeepers**

### **Best Management Practices**

- Designed for Protection for General Public
- Voluntary
- Applies only to honeybee management
- Addresses typical behavior of bees that could present risk to public
  - Minimizes occurrence of defensive behavior
  - Minimizes spread of diseases to nearby colonies
  - Minimizes bee-human interaction

### **Code of Virginia § 3.2-4411.1**

- Individual not be liable for any personal injury or property damage that occurs in connection with his keeping and maintaining of bees, bee equipment, queen breeding equipment, apiaries, or appliances.
- Limitation of liability does not apply to intentional tortious conduct or acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or negligence.
- Post name and address of the owner or operator in a conspicuous place in apiary on another's property.
- Operate apiary in a reasonable manner
- Comply with local zoning restrictions
- Conform with the written best management practices as provided by regulation of VDACS.

### **Apiary Inspection Program**

#### **Inspector's Duties:**

- Examine bees for disease, etc...
- Prohibit movement or sale of diseased hives
- Order destruction of hives when necessary

## **Beekeeper's Role**

- Provide movable frames
- Tightly close dead hives
- Notify State Apiarist of diseased bees
- Notify State Apiarist of possible Africanized Honeybee
  - No honey in candy for queen cages
  - Queen rearing and queen mating apiary inspection
  - Inspection certificate for packages
  - Inspection prior to bringing hives to Virginia
  - Inspection certificate for sale of comb, hives, used equipment with comb or appliances
  - Inspection for removal of hives from state
  - Under \$250.00 sold –do not have to have your honey inspected

## **Virginia State Apiarist**

- Keith Tignor
- VDACS-OPIS  
P.O. Box 1163  
Richmond, Virginia 23218  
or  
102 Governor Street, Rm. LL55  
Richmond, Virginia 23219
- Phone: 804-786-3515

## **Apiary Inspection Program**

- Sale of hives, nucs, packages, or used equipment
- Queen rearing and queen mating apiary inspection
- Movement of hives out-of-state
- Suspect contagious disease
- Suspect Africanized bees

## **Schedule an Appointment**

- Earlier the better
- You need to be there for inspection
- Must have moveable frames
- Weather must cooperate (over 50°, sunny, not windy)

**Southwest Virginia Apiary Inspection  
Wytheville Regional Office  
276-228-5501**

**What to expect on the day of inspection**

- Number of colonies determines how many get examined
  - Less than 10=100% inspected
  - Greater than 10: 20%, 33%, or 50% inspected.
- Colony gone through from top to bottom board.
- Presence of foul brood ends inspection

**2022 Statistics for Area**

- 31% of inspected hives have Small Hive Beetle
- 26% of hives with Varroa mite
- 11% of hives defensive
- 6% with virus symptoms
- No American Foulbrood reported in Virginia

**Who takes care of pesticide kills?**

Pesticide Investigator

Jim Atwell

276-228-5501

**Honey houses**

Food Safety Program Inspector

Office: 540-562-3641

**Problems with Bears**

DWR –Wildlife Conflict Helpline:

855-571-9003

- DWR recommends an electric fence
- Electrified beehives (a.k.a. The Hanger Hive Guard)

## Useful Websites/Apps

- <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-beekeeping-apriary-inspection.shtml>
- FieldWatch Beecheck <https://beecheck.org/>
- MiteCheck Survey <https://bip2.beeinformed.org/mitecheck/>

Spotted Latternfly

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/spotted-lanternfly.shtml>

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/spotted-lanternfly-checklist.pdf>