



Summer updates

Thanks to our supporters:



Aloha from staff at the Hawai`i Apiary Program! The year is speeding by and we hope you and your bees are doing well. We'll start out this issue of our quarterly newsletter with a short description of what we've been up to lately...

- Results from the USDA National Honey Bee Health Survey have finally come in. If you provided samples for this survey, you should have received your results in the mail. If you have any questions about your results, please contact us and we would be happy to discuss this with you. When the USDA folks publish all their findings for the year, we'll let you know—this will give a summary of all the Hawai`i data and show a comparison with the other states that participated.

- Governor Abercrombie, at the request of the Hawai`i Apiary Program, proclaimed June 18-24, 2012 as the first Hawai`i Pollinator Week. Pollinator Partnership, a non-profit whose mission is to promote the health of pollinators, first started Pollinator Week in 2007. Last year, 37 states declared their own pollinator week—this year, in addition to Hawai`i, both the US Department of Agriculture and the Department of Interior designated National Pollinator Weeks. Click [here](#) for more information and to see [pictures](#) of the signing ceremony at Governor Abercrombie's office.
- We were sad to detect small hive beetle on Kaua`i in May. The first report came from near Lihu`e town and a

survey by our staff the next week discovered that this pest was already widespread. We currently have confirmed reports ranging from Po`ipu to Kilauea.

- House Bill 2100, appropriating \$30,000 for honey bee research statewide, was signed into law as Act 129 on June 18, 2012. Funds will be disbursed through HDOA and Dr. Lorna Tsutsumi at UH Hilo.
- The Hawai`i Apiary Program was awarded \$189,000 through the USDA FY2012 Farm Bill. Funds will be used to participate in the USDA National Survey again this year, to continue and enhance our swarm trapping program at ports, and to do some local experiments with SHB control and Varroa Sensitive Hygiene bee stock.



Profile: Melvin Dickens, a FRONT yard beehkeeper

Max. number of colonies: 200. Has kept bees for more than 65 years.

What brought you to bees? When Melvin was a small child, he survived a nearly fatal car accident. Afterwards, his father introduced him to beekeeping as a livelihood. He took to the craft and has since become a proud and productive kupuna beehkeeper on Kaua`i. He keeps most of his hives right in the front yard, marked with his charming honey sign.

Favorite thing about bee-

keeping: A truly unique and kind soul, Melvin believes that "we need these creatures on Earth, and we learn from bees" and he calls honey "the Lord's food." He also keeps busy making his own woodenware (although his table saw nearly cost him a finger—it was to be amputated until he successfully healed it with honey at home) and struggles to keep up with the demand for his honey. "The bee and its merchandise is good medicine," he says and he believes

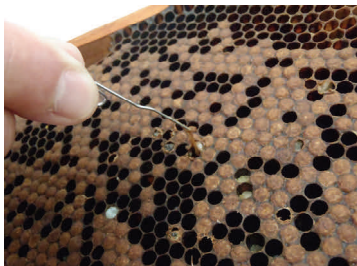
in the restorative and medicinal properties of honey. Like many beehkeepers, Melvin is young at heart but getting on in years, so he works to share his many decades of knowledge with new beehkeepers—hosting educational events and welcoming all to come work with him to learn the trade. He wants to establish a bee sanctuary on Kaua`i for beehkeepers to use and benefit from and will (no joke) tell you with a smile that he plans to be laid to rest in a steel box of "the Lord's food."



American foulbrood disease (AFB)



Perforated cappings showing dead, brown colored brood inside.



Inserting a stick into the brown brood to perform the 'ropiness' test

American foulbrood or AFB is a bacterial disease that affects honey bee brood worldwide. Epidemics of this highly contagious disease is the primary reason many US states formed Apiary Programs and/or bee laws. The disease may develop slowly or it may advance rapidly and weaken or kill the colony quickly—either way, AFB almost always results in death of the colony. In fact, AFB nearly wiped out the Hawaiian beekeeping industry in the 1930s and the disease is still present at low levels in the local environment. The bacterium that causes AFB can go into a dormant state called a spore—this spore is resistant

to temperature, humidity, and chemicals, including antibiotics. Spores can remain “alive” in comb and on equipment for over 50 years, simply waiting for a good time to become active and cause disease. Once AFB occurs, there is no cure. Applying antibiotics will only hide symptoms and will not get rid of the disease. At low levels, infected combs can be removed, but colonies with disease throughout must be killed and the equipment burned. The Apiary Program has detected AFB over the past year on Maui and on both sides of the Big Island. Healthy bees robbing out failing colonies or abandoned equipment will

bring the disease home. If your bees have AFB, your neighbor's bees may soon get it, too. It pays to detect AFB early—learn to look for perforated, discolored or sunken cappings on brood. If the brood inside that capping is brown, insert a stick into it and see if the brood stretches out of the cell—if **this 'ropiness' test shows brown cell contents that stretch out to one inch before breaking, it is very likely AFB.** The ropy cell contents may also have a rotten smell. Contact the Apiary Program if you need more information or if you know of abandoned hives.

Traditional log beekeeping in Madagascar

By M. Ramadan, HDOA Exploratory Entomologist



Working bees without veils or shirts was a shock for me. During an exploratory trip in Jan 2012, I met traditional beekeepers in Toliara, the most southeastern region of Madagascar.

Like Hawai`i, everything in Madagascar is unique—approximately 90% of flora and fauna are endemic. Honey bees in traditional beekeeping are also endemic to the island. Unlike their aggressive cousins in mainland Africa, the Mada-

gascan subspecies, *Apis mellifera unicolor*, is completely black and dark brown and so gentle that it is kept close to houses and beekeepers tend them without veils (Pic 1). Log hives (called tohoka, pic 2) are hollow trunks of the traveler's palm. Hives produce 2-5 liters of honey per year. The honey produced in Toliara is from lychee, eucalyptus, and the natural forest. 80 % of Madagascar's honey comes from honey hunting in natural sites. Price per liter is less than \$1US.

Varroa mite officially arrived in Madagascar in February 2010. Disappearance of wild colonies will have negative effects on beekeepers, especially the farmer whose family beekeeping is their main source of income and also the farmers who rely on bees for crop pollination. Beekeeping in Madagascar has the potential to play an important role in poverty alleviation and conservation of the natural environment.

A look at your fellow registrants...

Hawai`i Apiary Program

Where we're at:

16 E. Lanikaula Street
Hilo, HI 96720
808-352-3010

1428 S. King Street
Honolulu, HI 96814
808-339-1977

www.hawaiibee.com

We would really like to thank all 120 of you that have stepped up to join our voluntary registry! Our program was created to serve beekeepers, and it's really helpful when we can identify who our constituents are. Here is a brief look at your fellow registrants:

Number of registered bees by island: Kaua'i: 22, O'ahu:

23, Maui: 12, Big Island: 63.

None registered yet from Molo'ka'i or Lana'i (although we've met many of you and we know you're out there...).

Average number of colonies per beekeeper: Kaua'i: 61, O'ahu: 13, Maui: 8, Big Island: 237.

Prior to this new voluntary

registry, the only information about beekeepers in Hawai`i was that collected by USDA-NASS, which aims to count all beekeepers with 5 or more colonies. This listing has included only 35-40 operations over the past 5 years—we now know that there are many more of you out there, including many who have not yet registered with us.