

Apis m. Esoteria 1a

Beekeepers Job

Beekeepers job: Was to harvest honey!

Then it was: Be the bee doctor. Get educated and learn diseases and treatments.

Now: Holistic hive management. This is a full-fledged agricultural livestock management program. One of the “Buzz words” is Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Now we must recognize honeybee diseases, understand the best treatment for the situation and grow healthy bees. By understanding the level of disease or infestation in the hive we can choose the mildest treatment that will give us the adequate results we want without compromising the health of our bee colony.

We must manage our colony populations. We want the largest healthiest population. This makes us manage at a level just below the swarming stimuli. This is a fine line that must be monitored constantly once it is achieved. A large population can withstand some pathogens (bad things in the hive). Wax moths, hive beetles, robbing, a little chalk brood, and some varroa mites (vectoring viruses) are examples. The larger population of workers will put up more food stores (honey, and pollen) for the winter. A large population of nurse bees will stimulate the queen to lay more eggs, providing more young bees to forage and winter over in the hive.

You must be a “junior CPA”. You must manage your budget. Even a one hive operation must be prepared to replace the colony due to winter kill. This will happen to the best of beekeepers. If you are successful in keeping your colony alive and making honey, your ego may drive you to expand to 2 hives. Do you have enough money to pay for the management decisions you want to make? Do I buy a new queen? Do I feed my bees syrup? Do I want to feed a pollen, nutritional supplement? Do I need to buy one of the chemical varroa mite treatments? What about that fancy hive beetle trap? My wife is tired of turning my 2-frame extractor!!!

You need to be a marketeer. You have a little honey left over after all your family and friends find out you collect the best honey in the county. Put a sign out by the

mailbox and sell it. But sell it at a good and proper price. Don't undercut yourself because you are only a sideliner or hobbyist. You have a valuable commodity that is 60% rarer this year (2012) than it was last year and may be rare again this year (2018). Honey has been down in production through 2021. Also, you may want to maximize the income from your colony. It is very easy to process a little bee's wax from your cappings and old comb that you change out of your hive. Quilters, wood workers, and blacksmiths all use bee's wax. Consider collecting propolis. The health food industry has a hard time getting enough propolis. Imported propolis may be contaminated.

As in good honey, "**KNOW YOUR BEEKEEPER**" holds true for pollen, propolis, and bee's wax.

Local pollen is the best for "hay fever" allergies. All pollen is a good energy source, but local pollen will help reduce the severity of reaction to local floral "hay fever". You can create a side business providing pollen in your area.

There is a whole line of cosmetics that are made with honey or bees' wax. The recipes are on the internet.