

"Promoting the Craft, Science and Future of Beekeeping since 1947"

# THE BEELINE

Official Newsletter of the Central Iowa Beekeepers Association



## ISSUE: Fall 2021

Editor: Laura Miller

### CIBA MEMBER MEETING & PIZZA PARTY

**Saturday, September 18 5:00-8:00 p.m.**

**Northridge Baptist Church**

**3700 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Des Moines**

**Topic:** *Overwintering Honey Bees with Doyle Kincy*

Business meeting 5 p.m., program 5:30-6:30 p.m.;  
Pizza & Dessert 6:30-7:30 p.m.; Q&A 7:30-8 p.m.  
More details on **page 3**.

### SAVE THE DATE: CIBA WINTER SEMINAR

**Saturday, March 19, 2022**

*In-person location TBA (also via Zoom)*

Biologist and author Tom Seeley will join us remotely, but other speakers will be there in-person to talk bees. You will not want to miss this program! More about our keynote speaker on **page 3**.

**Questions?** Call Program Chair Jeremiah Kusel,  
(515) 447-3203

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**IF YOU HAVE PROGRAM IDEAS, OR WANT  
TO LEARN ABOUT A SPECIFIC TOPIC, LET  
THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE KNOW!**

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### DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER:

**November 10, 2021**

**Email submissions and comments to:**

Laura Miller, [Beeline\\_editor@yahoo.com](mailto:Beeline_editor@yahoo.com)

We encourage you to receive the newsletter via email; however, we understand if electronic delivery is not for you! You may update your subscription by contacting Linn Wilbur, [lwilbur50201@gmail.com](mailto:lwilbur50201@gmail.com)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT, JAMIE BEYER

As CIBA President, I get a lot of questions and comments about beekeeping. A question posed by Diane Forristall led to what could be an exciting twist to how we market our honey in the Midwest.

Diane asked me to check out research reported by Kirsten Traynor, editor of *2 Million Blossoms* magazine. I sent an email to Kristin and she sent me a 2002 paper from the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* (see reference on page 7). The research showed that soy honey from an Illinois beekeeper had high antioxidant activity, similar to many buckwheat honeys. The health benefits of eating honey instead of sugar is well known but knowing that our honey in the Midwest may have exceptional health benefits beyond normal honey could be used to market our honey. Kirsten also says that "soy honey deserves way more attention."

Of course, not all Midwest honey will contain soybean honey, especially honey that is harvested before the bloom period of soybeans. In my own case, I harvest honey well after the soybean bloom period and when I extract, honey from all frames are mixed together. So frames of honey that were capped early in the season will not have soybean honey in it, whereas later frames will.

A bee researcher from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, Carol Fassbinder-Orth, found that most of the honey from Iowa has soybean honey in it. With all this information, those of us in the Midwest (at least Iowa) should be telling our story!!

Marketing our honey is a very important part of beekeeping. This was one aspect that I initially did not expect to do. I was thinking that the "few" hives I had would supply my family and friends. Well, the "few" hives turned into MANY hives and I am now on the constant hunt of how to better market my honey. The type of label and jar, even the way you sell your honey, is a very important part of marketing. CIBA had a program a few years ago about marketing our honey but I think that we can revisit that topic in the future.

Laura Miller, our newsletter editor, is planning an article on this topic and would like your help. Please send her, or me or any CIBA board director, your tips and hints that you use in marketing your honey. We'll include them in a future newsletter. **Let's hear from you!**

Thanks for being a member and see ya' September 18!

Find us on the web: <https://www.centraliowabeekeepersassoc.org/>

Find us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CentrallowaBeekeepersAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/CentrallowaBeekeepersAssociation)

Join our CIBA Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/353306835159561/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/353306835159561/)

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## Editor's Document Navigation Tips



"Face it, Fred—you're lost."

**Table of Contents:** Hover over any section of the Table of Contents, then hold the CTRL button down on your keyboard. This action will create a pointing finger image - press the left button on your mouse on any section of the Table of Contents to go directly to that section.

**Document navigation:** No matter where you are in this document, if you press the CTRL + Home buttons on your keyboard concurrently, the action will take you to the top of the BEELINE. You can then scroll to page 2 to gain access to the Table of Contents to navigate the entire document using guidance in bullet number 1.

# CIBA Program Updates

## It's September, time to get ready for winter

**Date:** Saturday, September 18

**Time:** 5-8 p.m.

**Location:** Northridge Baptist Church, 3700 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Des Moines

**Program:** Overwintering Honey Bees, Doyle Kincy

**Schedule:** Business meeting from 5-5:30 p.m.; Program from 5:30-6:30 p.m.; Pizza & dessert 6:30-7:30 p.m.; Q&A 7:30-8 p.m.

*NOTE: Park in the lot on Clinton Avenue but enter the building by the door near the alley (not Clinton Avenue), where there is a wheelchair ramp.*



After so many CIBA member meetings on Zoom, we are FINALLY getting together for a face-to-face meeting in September! To help us celebrate, CIBA is providing pizza, soda and dessert for everyone who can attend.

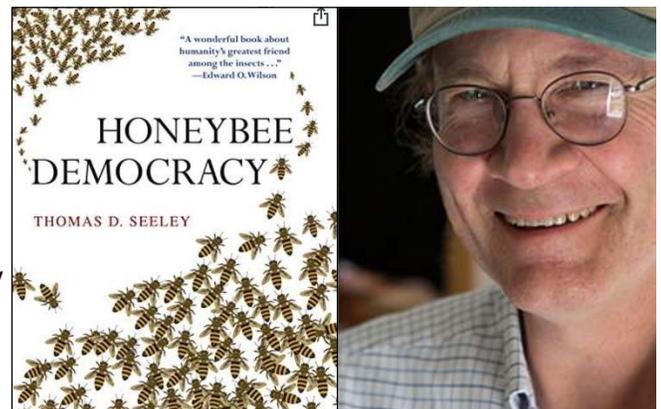
Experienced beekeeper Doyle Kincy, well-known for his expert presentations, will talk about how to get your hives ready for winter. Doyle lives in Urbandale and is a former District 4 director for the Iowa Honey Producers Association (IHPA). If you don't know him, you probably have seen him behind the counter at the IHPA booth at the Iowa State Fair. He has mentored many central Iowa beekeepers and cares for hives at the Iowa Governor's mansion at Terrace Hill. You will not want to miss this program!

The Q&A will pair Doyle with two other expert beekeepers, Mike Sander of Altoona and Phil Ebert of Lynville. Bring your questions – these guys will have answers!

## Circle March 19, 2022 on your calendar today!

Central Iowa beekeepers have a real treat in store for next year. World-famous beekeeper and author Tom Seeley will present at the annual CIBA Winter Seminar in 2022.

The annual event, usually held in January, is set for Saturday, March 19, 2022. The program committee is preparing a full day of speakers – both in-person and online – including two sessions by Tom Seeley, a professor at Cornell University. He will be joining us via Zoom.



Tom is the Horace White Professor in Biology in the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell. He is the author of several books on honeybee behavior, including *Honeybee Democracy* (2010), *The Wisdom of the Hive* (1995 and winner of the 1998 Best Science Book), *Following the Wild Bees* (2019), *Honeybee Ecology* (2014), and *The Lives of Bees: The Untold Story of the Honey Bee in the Wild* (2019).

So now's the time to read up on this fascinating scientist who studies one of our most fascinating creatures. Here are a few websites to get you started:

Tom Seeley's web page at Cornell: <https://nbb.cornell.edu/thomas-seeley>

One-hour 2020 podcast on CornellCast: <https://www.cornell.edu/video/thomas-d-seeley-lives-of-bees>

Yale University 2019 podcast:  
<http://www.whenwetalkaboutanimals.org/2019/05/13/ep-16-thomas-seeley/>

2015 article about Seeley in *Bee Culture*:  
<https://www.bee-culture.com/tom-seeley/>

## Beekeepers open their hives for July apiary tours

You cannot get more hands-on than this: five apiaries, nearly 40 beekeepers in full gear, and experienced bee inspectors and beekeepers ready to offer observations and advice on what they discovered at each location.

The annual summer field day of the Central Iowa Beekeepers Association (CIBA) was a day-long tour on July 17 of five apiaries in northern Polk County and southern Story County. Led by State Apiarist Andy Joseph, discussions covered the gamut of all things related to keeping bees: what to look for when locating colonies such as windbreaks, ease of access for the beekeeper, and availability of nearby water and forage sources for the bees; the importance of aesthetics when locating apiaries on other properties; the best fuel for smokers, to name a few.

For new beekeeper Steve Fisher of Pilot Mound, the day was much more than he had anticipated. As he said, it was a “course on beekeeping packed into a beautiful day!”

“We visited five hive sites where each site was presented by its keeper and discussed by the experts among us,” he said. “It was a chance to see the pros and cons of each site and each approach to managing bees. The hives were opened, the bees inspected and viewed by all of us attending – wow! Reading about bee management is one thing, seeing it in real time is better.”

He said he liked the mix of experts and hobbyist beekeepers, and the opportunity to learn things not available in a classroom. Lunch at a city park in Ankeny gave participants a chance to answer other questions and keep the conversations going.

Louisa Perry, who set up her first two hives in April on their acreage near Bondurant, said she was happy to welcome visitors. The inspection showed that one hive had swarmed, the new queen was small and not laying many eggs. As a result, she said she may try to combine them before winter.

Many thanks are in store for the other beekeepers who offered their apiaries as classroom for the day: Andy Joseph, who has an apiary in rural Maxwell; Todd Roberts, who keeps 16 hives on his rural Maxwell acreage; Jeremiah Kusel, who has an apiary on a hill in a rural subdivision outside of Bondurant; and Mike Sanders, who set up four hives at a landowner’s request in rural Bondurant.

And of course, the CIBA Food Committee offered cold drinks of every kind, tons of cookies and packaged goodies, even cups of fruit and veggies for a healthy addition to sack lunches that participants brought from home. Serving on the committee for this event were Ann Wilbur, Keri Kenoyer and Val Just.



*Above left, Louisa Perry and her two new colonies; lower left, Mike Sanders set up between grain bins; above, Todd Roberts shares details; and right, Jeremiah Kusel. Not pictured: Andy Joseph’s apiary.*

## Other CIBA Business

### Looking for 2022 Queen/Ambassador candidates

Do you know a young person age 16-20 who has a passion for honey bees, beekeeping and promoting beekeeping in central Iowa?

We are looking for candidates to serve as CIBA's 2022 honey queen or honey ambassador, the public face of our organization. Responsibilities of the queen or ambassador include (but are not limited to) promoting and educating the public about CIBA, beekeeping, the value of honey bees, honey, beeswax and other products of the hive.

This is a great opportunity for a young person who wants to tell people about beekeeping and honey bees in presentations, story times and other forms of community outreach. The Central Iowa Honey Queen/Ambassador also can be part of the Iowa Honey Producer's state fair booth and give bee-related presentations at the state fair. Our current Queen Ellie Nusbaum and Ambassador Jason Vernon have been active this year sharing about honey bees and beekeeping at various presentations and Zoom meetings.

For more information, visit the CIBA website, [www.centraliowabeekeepersassoc.org/queen-ambassador](http://www.centraliowabeekeepersassoc.org/queen-ambassador) Applications will be accepted until December 1, 2021. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to email Susan Kelly, [CIBAQueenChair@gmail.com](mailto:CIBAQueenChair@gmail.com)

### The Queen/Ambassador's Corner

Hello central Iowa, it's your queen and ambassador here! If you read our last report, you know we did an interview with a writer from *Fresh Pickings*, the quarterly magazine of the Iowa Food & Family Project funded by commodity checkoff dollars. It was published in their summer issue and we are beyond excited to have had that opportunity! We hope it can inspire some future beekeepers!

Another fun activity is to help in the Iowa Honey Producers' booth at the Iowa State Fair. We were scheduled to present a Kids Expo on bees the second Saturday of the fair. Earlier this summer, we attended a learning day for the Scouts at Briggs Woods Park south of Webster City. We had a wonderful time helping Keith Bidne teach about pollination and release native bees. The scouts were eager to learn about beekeeping and it was a wonderful experience. A few said that they wanted to be beekeepers when they grow up. Each student left with a tropical milkweed plant and lots of knowledge about pollinators.

We have been in contact with libraries and schools throughout central Iowa to begin planning our fall events and programs. There will be quite a few story times in store for us and we cannot wait! With the school season coming back around, planning with the FFAs also has begun. We want to reach all age ranges of students as restrictions related to the pandemic are lifted in schools.

Please contact Susan Kelly if you want to reach us ([CIBAQueenChair@gmail.com](mailto:CIBAQueenChair@gmail.com)) and happy beekeeping! – Submitted by Queen Ellie Nusbaum and Ambassador Jason Vernon

Read the article, Honeybee heroes: Inside the hive of activity building Iowa's beekeeping community, on the *Fresh Pickings* website: [https://issuu.com/iasoybeans/docs/fpm21\\_summer\\_hr\\_pages](https://issuu.com/iasoybeans/docs/fpm21_summer_hr_pages)

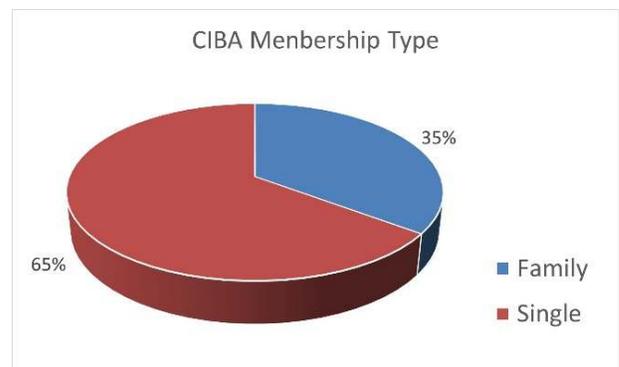
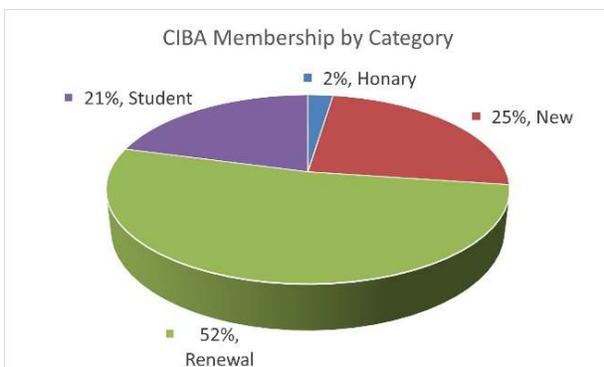
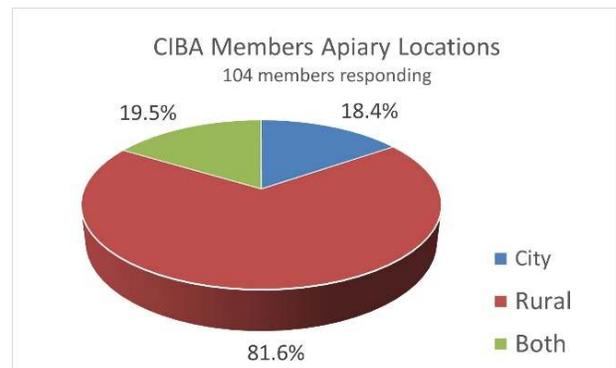
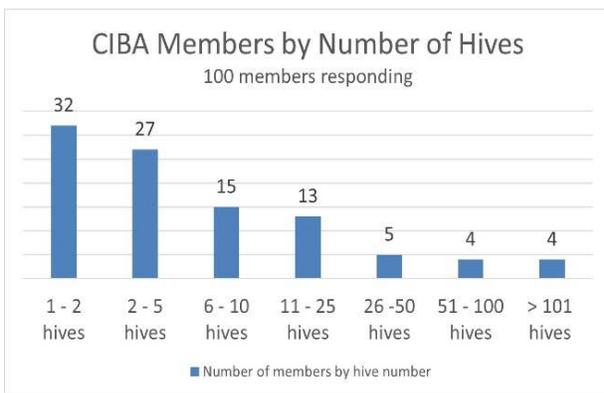
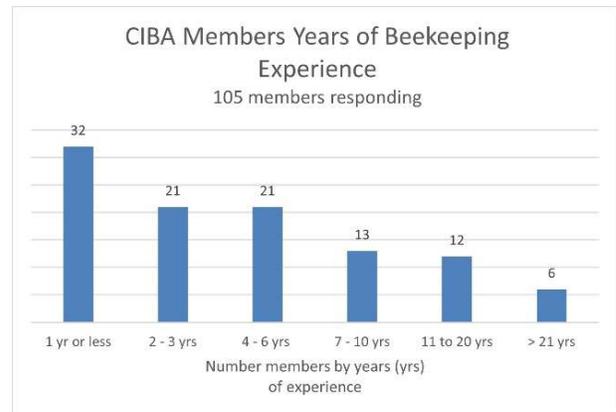
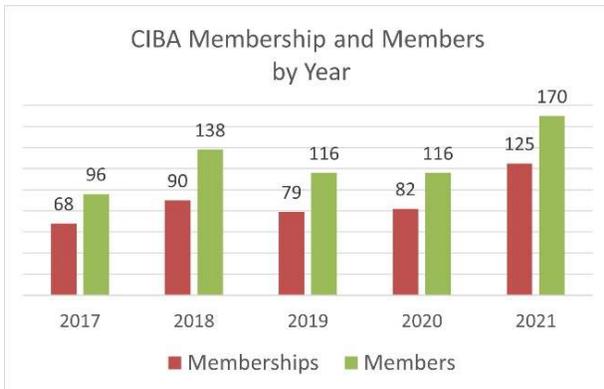


Fun with Scouts at Briggs Woods Park

# Who is CIBA?

The Central Iowa Beekeeping Association (CIBA) is nothing without you the membership. Presently for 2021 there are 125 CIBA memberships with 170 members who represent a wide range of experience, hive numbers and hive locations. Forty-six percent of our membership is either currently enrolled in a beekeeping class or new to CIBA and roughly 50 percent have been keeping bees less than three years. There is a lot we can learn from each other, too, with 18 percent of our membership having more than a decade of experience in beekeeping.

The graphs below may help you understand who CIBA members are and who CIBA needs to serve to advance the science and craft of beekeeping.



## Thanks for your comments!

Thanks for your responses to our newsletter survey. If you'd like to serve on the newsletter or website committee, please contact either Laura Miller or Val Just. We're looking for your ideas!

## Meet Our New Board Member, Mark Moberly

My wife Kelly and I have been keeping honey bees in our back yard in Webster City for six years. We keep around eight hives most of the time. Last winter was the worst for us when we lost all but one hive by spring. Two nucs, four splits and a swarm have us up to eight again. The nucs had terrible queens; each requeened within a month.

I have been a member of the Iowa Honey Producers Association for five years and a CIBA member for four years. I subscribe to *Bee Culture* and *American Bee Journal* magazines, and I read the *BEELINE* newsletter and the *Buzz* newsletter from the IHPA.

As a director, I hope to bring good insight into the future direction of our club. I love to talk about bees with everyone and always tell them to join CIBA. The most enjoyable thing about our club for me is the willingness of all members to share and tutor others without degrading the newbies. New ideas some have tried, whether they end in success or failure, is freely shared.

My personal challenge is over-wintering bees. In our first year, we had two hives. One made it and exploded into four hives by May the next spring. I thought, 'Wow, I got this!' But then this past winter proved me wrong.

I love nearly everything bees. Lifting a deep frame full of honey is not fun anymore, so now I pull frames, put them in my wagon and take them to be extracted. I tell new beekeepers three things: 1) join a local bee group; 2) watch videos, and most importantly, 3) take a beginning beekeeping course.

Every hive is different, so study how they act and keep notes on them. – *Mark Moberly*



## Honey Bees and Soybeans, a Good Combination

In addition to the fascinating news from President Jamie Beyer about the health benefits of soybean honey (see his column on page 1), new research at Iowa State University shows that honey bees and other pollinators can improve soybean yields.

The findings suggest growing soybeans near pollinator habitat might lead to better yields, according to Lisa Schulte Moore, an ISU professor of natural resource ecology and management and a co-author of the study. Previous research has shown incorporating pollinator habitat into soybeans could lead to a number of environmental benefits, but the new paper shows how pollinator habitat may also improve production as well.

She explained that most soybean varieties are bred to be self-pollinating. That is, the pollen produced by a soybean plant's flower fertilizes the pistil of the same flower. The research team analyzed 16 previous studies from across the globe and found that wild bees and honey bees can improve soybean yields upwards of 20 percent when they help pollinate the soybean plants.

Schulte Moore said converting marginal acres that don't usually turn a profit for farmers due to poor soil or hydrological conditions to pollinator habitat might make sense, but more research needs to be done in Iowa. The results were published in the most recent issue of *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*.

Here's the reference for the research on soybean honey (referenced on page 1) if you want more details. Put the doi number in your web search engine and you'll go straight to the abstract of the article):

N. Gheldof and N. Engseth, Antioxidant capacity of honeys from various floral sources based on the determination of oxygen radical absorbance capacity and inhibition of in vitro lipoprotein oxidation in human serum samples, *J. Ag. Food Chem.* 2002: 50 pp 3050-3055. doi:10.1021/jf0114637

## A Word from ISU Extension Bee Specialist, Randall Cass

### Got STRIPS? Honey bees and native bees may thrive there



Iowa State University continued field research this past summer on honey bees and native bees. The goal of the ISU Bee Program's research has been to explore how the Iowa landscape affects honey production and colony health. This year, our research looked at whether prairie strips (a conservative practice used in agriculture) provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat for honey bees and native bees.

In 2021, Ph.D. student Kate Borchardt began studying native bee diversity and abundance in these strips. Iowa is home to more than 300 different species of native bees, most of which are solitary. She is interested in identifying whether the presence of honey bee apiaries at prairie strips sites negatively impacts native bees by creating more competition for floral resources.

Prairie strips, or STRIPS (Science-based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips), use small amounts of native perennial vegetation in strategic locations within corn and soybean fields. The prairie strips protect soil and water by reducing both sediment movement from crop fields, as well as reducing phosphorous and nitrogen lost through field runoff. Landowners also can receive funds through the Conservation Reserve Program to establish prairie strips on farms.

The 2021 bee research project is multi-faceted, but primarily investigates prairie strips as beneficial habitat for both honey bees and native bees. In May, apiaries each with 20 hives were placed at three different corn and soybean sites with prairie strips. Our team monitored these colonies throughout the summer to estimate overall colony health and to collect data on honey production.

Previous research (conducted by Ge Zhang as part of his Ph.D. work at ISU) showed that prairie strips provided apiaries, each with four hives, with better forage and more honey production than apiaries at field sites without prairie strips. This year we increased the number of colonies at our prairie strips apiary sites to 20 to determine whether we could recommend strips as a suitable place for commercial honey producers to locate their colonies.

At each strips site where we have placed a honey bee apiary, our team also is surveying the landscape to determine the diversity and abundance of native bee species. The team then collects additional data from strips sites where honey bee apiaries are not present to find out whether honey bee colonies negatively impact native bee populations.

Additionally, our team received funding from the ISU Student Innovation Center to explore the marketability of honey harvested from our research apiaries. We collect honey samples each month from our hives at strips sites that are analyzed for pollen content to determine whether bees in our colonies are visiting flowering plants in the prairie strips.

We plan to sell our Prairie Strips Honey through the ISU Horticulture Research Station and other vendors. Sales will be monitored to determine whether consumers are interested in a honey product with the added value of coming from sites where conservation practices are implemented.

Look for Prairie Strips Honey this fall on the ISU Horticulture Research Station website:

<https://foodlo.cals.iastate.edu/horticulture-research-station>

Visit the new ISU Bee Program website: <https://bees.cals.iastate.edu/>

You also can follow our work on Instagram: [@iowastatebees](https://www.instagram.com/iowastatebees)

More information on prairie strips, findings from more than 10 years of research on this practice, and how to establish prairie strips, is on the Iowa State STRIPS website: <https://www.nrem.iastate.edu/research/STRIPS>



# CIBA Member Contributions

## What's going on inside my hive?

Submitted by Ray Knapp, Jr.

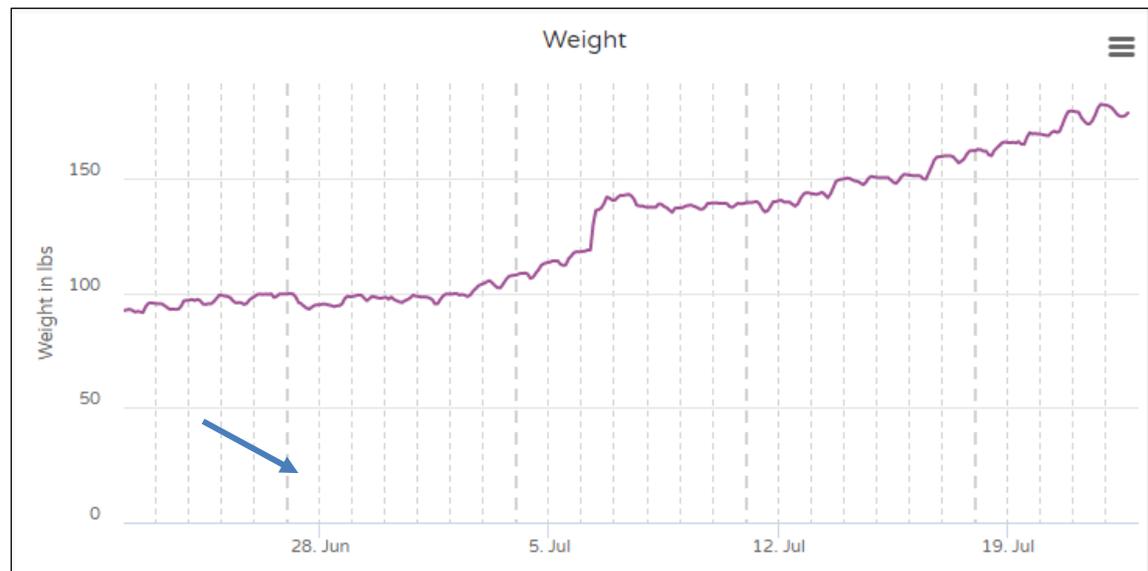
This is one of my hives in my back yard. It was painted by my sister in Illinois and it has a story that goes with it. If you see me around, ask and I will tell you.

Now, to the subject at hand. What is going on in this hive? Most everyone would say, get your bee jacket on and grab the hive tools and let's go digging in the hive. I will explain my alternative to hive digging.

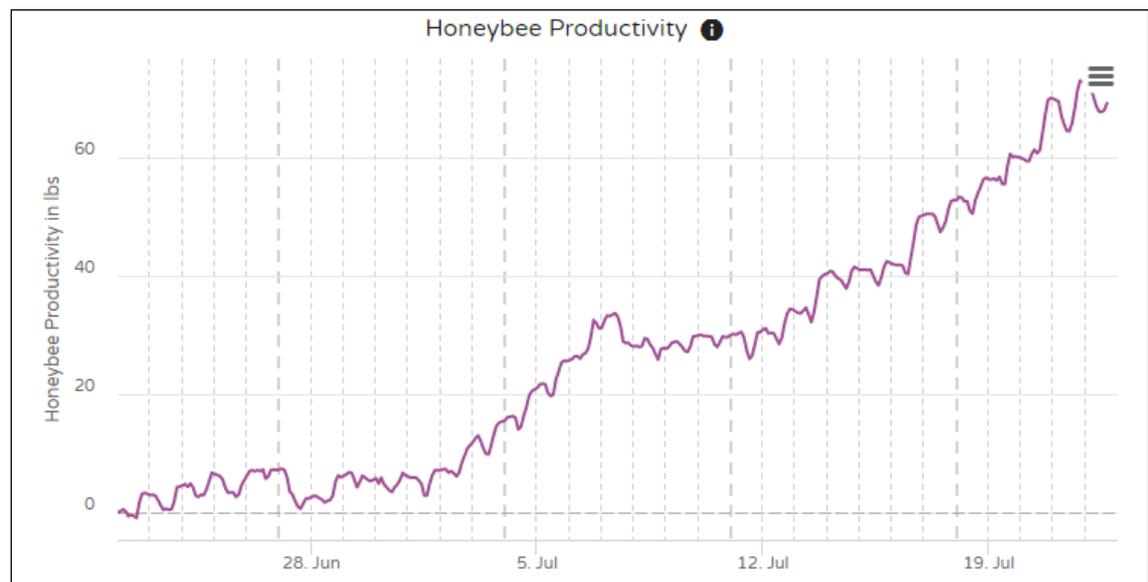
First, we want to see the amount of honey stores that are in the hive at this point. In order to check the weight, I have a key to that. You cannot see it but under the hive I have a scale that tells me the weight. And, that weight is checked every hour and uploaded to the cloud so I can look at it from anywhere I have internet service.



Look at the chart labeled Weight. The blue arrow in the chart shows that there was an increase in weight when I added a honey super. After the addition, the weight of the hive was 136 pounds on July 6 and on July 22 the weight went up to 181 pounds, a difference of 45 pounds. I need to get in gear and put another super on the hive. The bees at the entrance are wanting work.



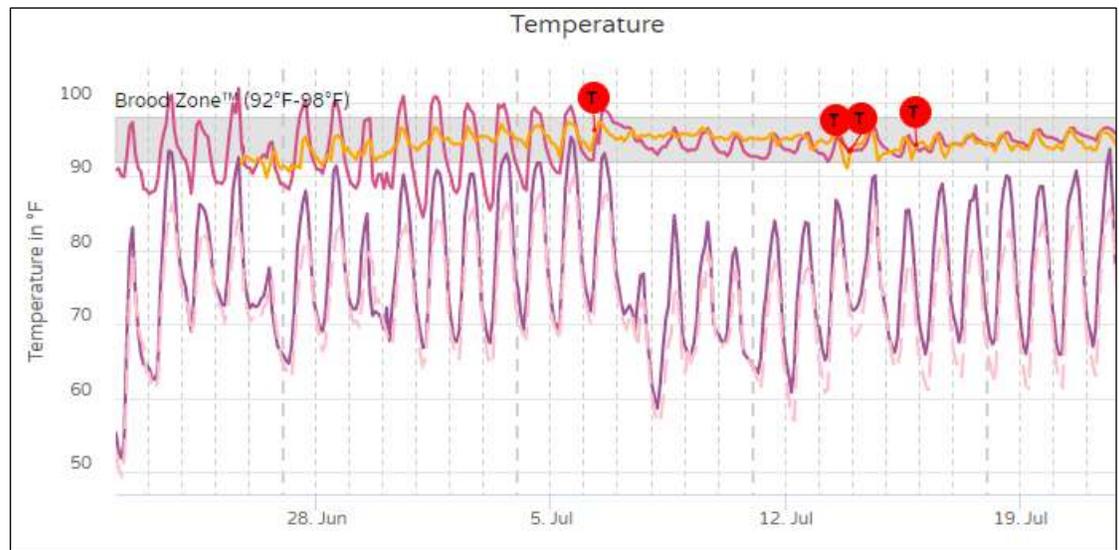
Let us see what else the charts can tell us about the hive. This chart is an estimation of honey production in the hive. This information is derived from the weight gain in the hive. It is really interesting to watch this. It is telling me get my extractor ready!



This chart gives us a lot of information about temperatures in the hive. Why is temperature monitoring important and what can you learn?

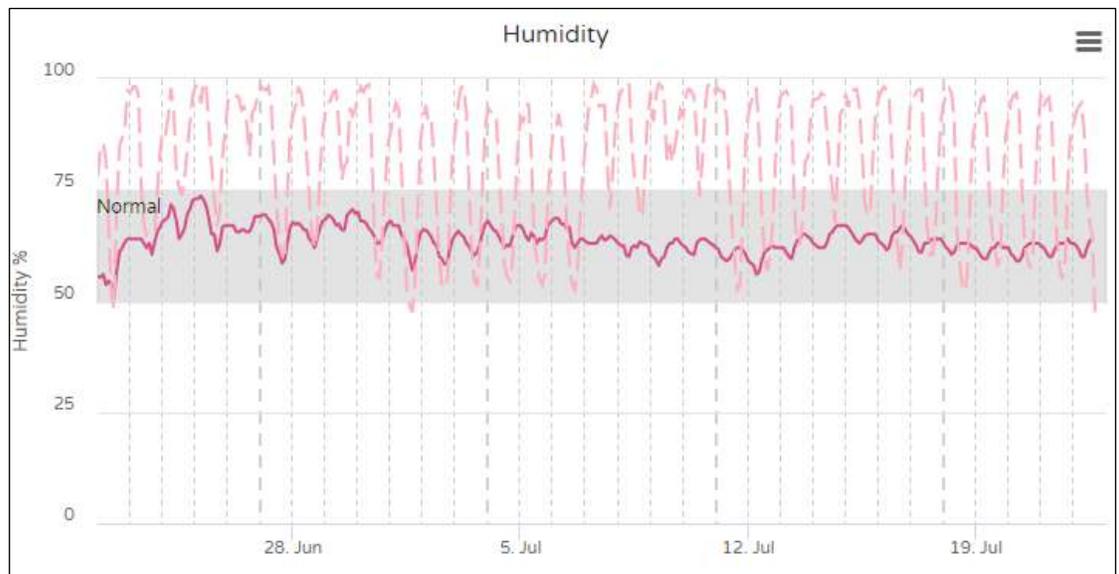
The temperatures are taken from four sources:

1. U.S. Weather Service (broken line)
2. Outside the hive, taken by the weight sensor (purple line)
3. Upper brood box temperature and humidity (reddish line)
4. Hive temperature (orange line), monitored for spikes, which is used to help monitor the hive for swarming.



As you can see from the temperatures, the brood chamber has been kept in the perfect range for brood. The red circles show quick changes in the hive temperature.

The last chart tells me the humidity of the hive (red line) and humidity recorded by the U.S. Weather Service (dashed line). Why do I want to monitor humidity in the hive? That indicates the bees are controlling the humidity so the honey is being prepped for capping.



I have been using these sensors for several years. First, I would read them with my cell phone in the field. Then I moved to using devices that would link to a nearby WIFI to collect the information. This year I got a device that uses cell tower services to get the data to the cloud. I have 10 hives with monitors and it helps to keep me informed about what is going on in the hives without the need to open them. Personally, I think that it makes for happier bees!

For more information about the devices go to [broodminder.com](http://broodminder.com) or @broodminder on Facebook.

P.S. On the day that I wrote this (July 25, 2021), I got an email from the cloud informing me that several of my hives had put up 30 pounds of honey and I could check on them. When I went digging into the hives, I had a lot of burr comb above the honey super and all of the super were full of honey waiting to be capped. The monitors did their job and saved a lot of problems!

## Honey Harvest and Extracting

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was written by the late John Johnson, Central Iowa Beekeepers Association and Iowa Honey Producers Association past president. John used these articles with his mentees through the years. Information has been reviewed and updated as needed.*

- Remove supers during the last half of August. If the colony has an exceptionally large number of bees, you may leave one super to provide space.
- Extract the honey as soon as possible after removing it from the bees, preferably within a day or two. In humid weather honey that has been removed from the bees may absorb moisture. The honey we extract from the combs must be 18.6% moisture or less. If it is higher moisture than 18.6%, it is by definition not honey. Do your best to remove supers from the bees and extract honey when the weather is sunny, clear and temperature is 80 degrees or warmer.
- To ensure the best chance of having honey that is 18.6% moisture or less, sort out frames that are 90% or more capped and extract them first. Keep this honey separate from that which is less than 90% capped.
- Then extract combs with cells that are less than 90% capped. If what you extract has a moisture content of 18.6 percent (or lower), it is defined as honey and okay for human consumption. Material with a higher moisture content is called high moisture honey and can be fed back to bees; while lower in quality, high moisture honey is okay for human consumption as long as it has not fermented. Fermented honey is foul smelling and should be discarded.
- Strain honey as it comes out of the extractor. Store in clean dry buckets or jars (glass or plastic) that have a tight-fitting lid.



## Properties of Honey

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was written by the late John Johnson, Central Iowa Beekeepers Association and Iowa Honey Producers Association past president. John used these articles with his mentees through the years. Information has been reviewed and updated as needed.*

- Solids in honey contain high amounts of sugars such as dextrose (33%), levulose (39%) and small amounts of other sugars such as sucrose (3%), maltose (6%) and quite small amounts of many different higher sugars.
- Honey contains very small amounts of acids such as formic, acetic, butyric, lactic, oxalic and others.
- Honey contains small amounts of minerals such as potassium, chlorine, sulfur, calcium, phosphorus, etc.
- Honey is fat free.
- Since honey consists largely of sugars, it is primarily an energy food. (page 360 of *ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture*, copyright 1978).
- Moisture content of honey is very important. It must be 18.6% or lower to be called honey. If it is higher than 18.6%, it may ferment and be unfit for human consumption.



Some practical points when harvesting, storing and marketing honey:

- Do not store honey in a high-moisture environment. Store where humidity is 40-50% or less.
- Store honey in a place where the temperature and humidity are similar to that in most of our homes. Store it in a pantry, cupboard or some similar place is a good location.
- Do not store honey in the refrigerator. If this is done it will absorb moisture and become a less desirable product.
- Honey is hygroscopic, which means it will absorb moisture from the air under certain conditions.
- Most Iowa honey will granulate, crystallize or sugar. As it begins to granulate, the honey will look cloudy and it will gradually change to a relatively firm solid. It granulates sooner in cold as opposed to warmer temperatures. Granulation does not hurt the quality of honey.
- To return honey to the liquid state, heat it to approximately 140-150 degrees. Heat the honey by some indirect method of heat, such as honey in a glass container in a microwave or honey in a bucket set in a heating unit and the temperature raised to 140 degrees. Do **not** put honey in a container directly over a burner or flame; this will destroy it. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Heating honey in a microwave is not recommended because honey heats unevenly and can reach temperatures that degrade quality.)
- Honey will keep for a long time, but it's best if used within a year or two.

### **Just for the Fun of It ...**

- Why was the bee fired from the barber shop? He only knew how to give a buzz-cut.
- Who says, "zzub zzub zzub?" A bee flying backwards.
- When a bee is in your hand, what's in your eye? Beauty. Because beauty is in the eye of the bee-holder.
- A bee's favorite sport is rug-bee.
- That pretentious wasp is just plain snob-bee!
- What do you call a bee who speaks too softly? A mumble-bee!
- The only one who can protect the Queen Bee is her hub-bee.
- What do bees like with their sushi? Wasa-bee!
- Bees style their hair with a honeycomb.
- The little bee's favorite type of candy is, of course, bumble gum.
- A bee's favorite haircut is a buzz cut!



### **Send Us Your Marketing Tips**

How do you market your honey? How do you determine what to charge for your products? Where do you get honey containers? What do you put on labels and where do you get them? How do you keep in contact with your customers or sellers?

These are important decisions related to marketing the products of your hive. Whether you are a seasoned beekeeper or a newbie who wants to start selling extra honey, we want to hear from you! We will include your tips and hints in a future BEELINE article.

You can send your marketing tips and hints directly to the BEELINE editor, Laura Miller, [Beeline\\_editor@yahoo.com](mailto:Beeline_editor@yahoo.com), or contact any CIBA board member (contact info is on the last page of every newsletter).

## From the Editor, Laura Miller

### Iowa leads the way in winter colony losses – yikes!

Everyone likes to be first. Consider the attention we paid to gold-medal winners in the Summer Olympics. But this distinction doesn't thrill anyone: Iowa leads the nation in the percentage of honey bee colonies lost last winter.

According to an annual survey conducted by the nonprofit Bee Informed Partnership, an estimated 32.2 percent of managed colonies in the United States were lost last winter (October 1, 2020 through April 1, 2021), an increase of nearly 10 percent from the previous year.

But here's the kick-in-the-gut: Iowa's winter colony loss rate was 58.5 percent, just short of twice the national average!

I tracked down Andy Joseph, our state apiarist and one of the busiest guys around. He told me the survey results were "not surprising and pretty predictable." It all comes down to what Andy always writes about in his columns: mite control, mite control, mite control.

"Too many bees are dying, that's for sure," he said. "I know of beekeepers who lost half their hives over winter. They had astronomical mite loads, and that was **after** mite treatment. Any time you take mite-damaged colonies into winter, they will die."

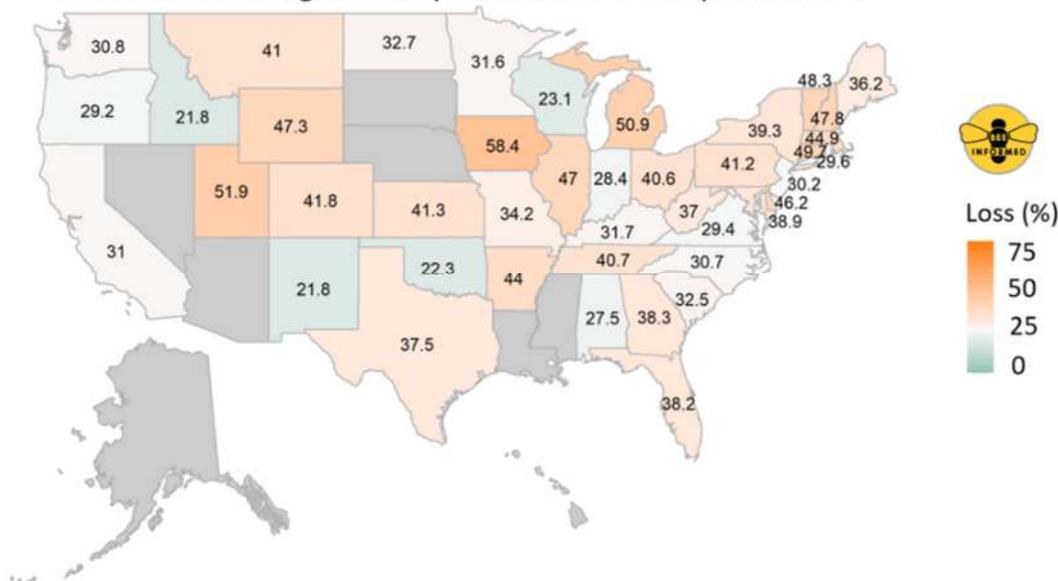
While the survey is a good barometer of honey bee health useful in showing overall trends, it may not reflect what is going on at a local level. In Iowa, the survey included only 44 beekeepers who manage 512 colonies. Nationwide, the survey included 3,347 beekeepers who collectively manage 192,384 hives. The survey is mailed to 22,000 beekeepers each April, and organizers estimate that the findings represent 7 percent of the approximately 2.71 million managed colonies in the country.

Granted, Andy said the 2020-2021 winter posed problems for beekeepers. A hot summer followed by an early cold snap in October shut down many colonies. Some producers found higher-than-usual mite counts requiring multiple treatments. Poor nutrition going into winter also can result in a weaker hive.

Andy's right: mite control is a big deal, maybe even the biggest deal in raising healthy honey bees. I know that I'll be putting on meds this month – and doing a mite count to see how the treatment worked.

I hope, for the health of your bees, you can do the same.

2020-2021 Managed Honey Bee Winter Colony Loss Rates



This map shows state-by-state results of the latest findings from the Bee Informed National Colony Loss and Management Survey.

For more information (and a link to the research abstract), go to:

<https://beeinformed.org/citizen-science/loss-and-management-survey/>

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