

The BUZZ

in the NSBA



SPRING

2020

From the Board Room

Alex Crouse, NSBA President

IN THIS ISSUE

From The Board Room <i>By Alex Crouse</i>	1
What's all the Buzz with ATTTA? <i>By Robyn McCallum</i>	2
Working with the NSDA <i>By Alex Crouse</i>	4
Getting Involved in Pollination <i>By Kori MacCara</i>	4
Joint Pollination Meeting <i>By Alex Crouse</i>	5

Another season is upon us and like most springs, we will be faced with different challenges. We are currently in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which not only puts us in self isolation and practicing social distancing, but creates additional challenges for our industry.

The newly appointed board has already met and has elected the slate of officers for the upcoming year. We welcome Duncan Wentzel to the board and thank all of those who were duly appointed to their offices. The new board represents all beekeepers and is willing to serve.

President:	Alex Crouse	Director:	Ben Cornect
Vice President:	Mario Swinkles	Director:	Tyler Hobbs
Secretary:	Kori MacCara	Director:	Ben Little
Treasurer:	Shelley McDermott	Director:	Sawyer Olmstead
		Director:	Duncan Wetzle

The 2020 AGM boasted attendance of close to 130 people each day. The board would like to thank all of the presenters and special guest speakers who made the event a great success. A special thanks to Jason Sproule, who worked with us to ensure that the agenda was robust and balanced with topics relative to all sizes of operations.

During the 2019 season the board worked on value adding projects that would benefit the entire membership. In 2020, the board will be focussing on:

1. Improving the NSBA value for commercial members.
2. Building pollination capacity.
3. Food safety and traceability.
4. Building the face of the industry through media.

As a member of the NSBA, you may be called upon to provide input or to assist with this work. As a board we often receive feedback after the fact. If you have specific ideas or concerns, please reach out to us so that we can consider them as we plan and, before we execute.

We have started the process of updating the NSBA Strategic plan. We will be approaching a small group of beekeepers to participate in several conference calls. This work will contribute to the industry direction and focus for the upcoming year. We hope that you will accept, if you are asked to participate.

From the Board Room, Continued.

As I mentioned in an email that went out a few weeks ago, we are facing different challenges this spring. The fear of shortages, lack of queens, and restricted travel are all part of the current reality in which we work and live. The key to managing your business is planning and dealing with those things within your control. Most of the products that we need as beekeepers are readily available. Your supplier may need additional lead time to secure exactly what you need, but they will be able to get it. The Canadian Honey Council and our queen suppliers have been working around the clock to get the logistics in place to ensure that we have the queens we need to do our May splits. A special thanks to all of these people who identified the issue early and have been able to come up with a workable solution.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we hope that you will be safe and have a successful bee season!

What's all the Buzz with ATTTA?

Robyn McCallum, Atlantic Tech Transfer Team for Apiculture

As the days lengthen and temperatures rise, it is time to get back into bee mode! April was a critical month for beekeepers because it is the month that hives that are short on food may starve. April is also a good time for beekeepers to feed pollen patties, at least until a reliable source of natural pollen is available. By now, pollen and nectar should be trickling into hives and continuing to increase. Depending on weather conditions, hives can be unwrapped in late April and spring cleaning, including scraping bottom boards and removing entrance reducers, can be done.

ATTTA was present at the NSBA AGM this past February and delivered a number of presentations and workshops. Due to the current recommendations of social distancing, a number of industry events that ATTTA apiculturists had planned to attend were canceled or postponed. The Modern Beekeeper Course through Dalhousie University will not run this year due to current health recommendations but check back for 2021. We are limiting farm calls and social interaction, but we are always available by phone or email so please reach out!

If you haven't done so already, check out our new reports including:

- Evaluating the effect of feeding pollen substitute to honey bee colonies destined for wild blueberry pollination in Colchester County, Nova Scotia
- The efficacy of Formic ProTM and 65% liquid formic acid against varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) in honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies in autumn in Nova Scotia, Canada
- Apivar® and Bayvarol® suppress varroa mites in honey bee colonies in Canadian Maritime Provinces

Our spring management fact sheet is also available here:

https://www.perennia.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Spring-Management-Guide_2018.pdf.

Factsheets and other resources are all available on our website:

<https://www.perennia.ca/portfolio-items/honey-bees/>.

Finally, Apiculturist Sawyer Olmstead has accepted a new position with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture effective April 1st, and has therefore left the Tech Transfer Program. We wish him all the best in his new role! In the meantime, Jillian Shaw, our summer student from last year will be returning to make sure that research projects go smoothly this summer during the transition period. We are excited to welcome Jillian back for a second summer!

As always feel free to reach out to ATTTA apiculturists for any questions or concerns you see in your hives as you begin spring management. Have a great spring!

Robyn McCallum: rmccallum@perennia.ca

COUNTRYFIELDS.CA

Shop Local.



Shop Online.

Come Visit Our New Location!

Largest In Stock Selection of Beekeeping and Honey Equipment in Atlantic Canada!



Competitive Prices.

Bulk Order Discounts.

Open Year Round.

We Ship throughout Atlantic Canada at Cost!

WINTER PRO PATTIES AND FONDANT AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCY FEEDING
CHILEAN QUEENS AVAILABLE FOR LATE APRIL / EARLY MAY (PRE-ORDER ONLY)
LOCAL NUCS AND PACKAGES



www.countryfields.ca

11 Falls Run, Fall River, NS

Tel: 902-576-3079 or 1-877-505-6363

Working with the NSDA

For the Betterment of Our Industry

Alex Crouse, NSBA President

The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture is in place to support agricultural industries such as ours. In order to ensure that the issues raised within our organization are heard, three members of the board of directors meet with department staff every quarter. Although we discuss matters affecting all beekeepers, the focus is primarily that of commercial keepers, those who raise colonies for pollination, and those who farm bees full time.

By maintaining the regular meeting schedule, our association has the opportunity to have our voices heard on critical issues. The NSDA recognizes the NSBA as the voice of the beekeeping industry in Nova Scotia. This gives us a direct route to members of the department and the Minister of Agriculture. This also allows us to react quickly and ensure responses are prioritized to maximize impact.

Although the regular meetings have been in place for a little over a year, we have had many positive outcomes.

- Joint collaboration on the February 2020 Meeting (close to 130 people attended each day)
- First-hand look and review of the 2020 Honey Bee Import Protocol
- Supported an amended protocol that will allow for used equipment to enter the province with conditions
- Provided input to the first round of revisions for the Bee Industry Act that is now under review
- Worked to secure right of way access with Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) to ensure more space for potential bee yards
- Continue to work on opportunities to access crown land for yard placement
- Provided NSBA input to the 2020 Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) programs relating to our industry
- We are working with personnel in the Sector Development and Innovation group to update the NSBA Strategic Plan

Over the past 12 months we have been successful in navigating through, and supporting, many critical issues that face our industry. Open dialogue continues to keep us all informed.

Getting Involved in Pollination

Kori MacCara, NSBA Secretary

The 2020 pollination season is almost upon us. If you have pollination contracts this season, we encourage you to have a back-up plan for meeting your obligations should you need to be isolated due to Covid-19.

Current forecasts for pollination demand indicate that there is a potential shortfall of hives available for pollination in 2021. To ensure that we can maintain the current biosecurity measures that prevent the importation of hives for the purposes of pollination, the NSBA is focussing on increasing the number of hives available within Nova Scotia for pollination in the 2021 season. To that end we invite beekeepers currently involved in pollination to plan for increased demand, and to become involved with the mentorship of beekeepers who are new to pollination. We are also putting efforts into increasing the number of beekeepers who are able to offer hives for pollination.

Are you interested in getting involved in pollination? Maybe you don't know any growers, maybe you are worried about EFB or other bee health issues, maybe you need help transporting hives, or maybe you want to expand your skill-set and earn an income from your bees! Whatever your reasons, we are interested in hearing from you so that we can develop a program to help you overcome obstacles and prepare to offer hives for pollination in the 2021 season. If getting involved in pollination appeals to you, keep an eye out for a survey from the NSBA board that will help us understand the nature of the obstacles that have been holding you back.

Joint Pollination Meeting

Minute Summary from Nov 2019

Alex Crouse, NSBA President

The 55th semi-annual meeting of the Joint Pollination Committee (JPC) was held in Truro on November 6th. The JPC serves as a venue to address issues relevant to NS beekeepers and wild blueberry growers, as well as forecast demand and availability for pollination service. Presented here is a summary of the discussion.

In 2019, many fields started with fewer blossoms. Wild blueberry yields were ~30 M lbs; about 50% less than two years ago. Weather was favourable during pollination and beekeepers made a decent honey crop during that time, but subsequent dry periods and late season brood break lowered honey yields to about 75% of that for 2018. The late season brood break is a concern for overwintering, but overall colonies look populous and healthy going into winter. Mites did not appear to be a major issue which also bodes well for winter survival. A higher incidence of European foulbrood has been observed in hives coming out of blueberry fields. High rates of swarming during pollination is also a concern. Swarm prevention is key to ensuring optimal pollination service as hives in swarm mode tend to shut down foraging ~10 days in advance.

Blueberry fields look good for the next year and projections are that growers will need approximately 20% more bees than in recent years. As growing hive numbers takes several months, it is critical for beekeepers to know well in advance what the demand for pollination service will be. All representatives agreed that the relationship between grower and beekeeper needs to include regular communication well before the end of the bee season in order to accommodate plans for the upcoming growing season.

Several suggestions were made as to how to improve the function of the JPC including improving JPC member attendance and communicating outcomes to sector stakeholders. Both sides agree that the NSBA and WBPANS should each put forth 4 representatives to sit on the JPC and make attendance a priority. To expedite this, more convenient dates and times for meeting will be explored.

Recommendations:

- Publish a summary or JPC discussions in industry newsletters, blogs, etc. and make minutes available.
- Promote ongoing communication between individual growers and beekeepers to better plan for future pollination needs.
- Following pollination, monitor hives for European foulbrood, and establish a Veterinary Client Patient Relationship with a Veterinarian able to prescribe for bee brood diseases.
- Focus on swarm prevention to ensure colonies are not idle while in pollination fields.