



From the Boardroom

Tyler Hobbs, NSBA President

As I write this, I find myself beginning what looks to be a wonderful spring day ahead. It's June now, and in every blueberry field, I see colonies of bees on flatbed trailers and pallets surrounded by shock wire as our girls get to work hitting the blossoms. The rush to get the bees ready for pollination is what wakes the beekeeper from his/her winter slumber and is now once again just a cold, damp memory for this year.

I've heard in many communities around Nova Scotia (including ours) that the post office was able to effectively promote "No-Mow-May." Many of my neighbors were proudly posting pictures of honeybees hard at work on their overgrown lawns, filled with once detested dandelions. The health and vitality gained during the three weeks of dandelions cannot be understated, so we at the NSBA, would like to thank all those who participated this year.

Heading into the summer, our board is keenly aware that Nova Scotia has the privilege of hosting this year's Atlantic Bee Tour, August 19-20. We are very excited to have this opportunity not only because the tour is fun and educational but also because we appreciate the fact that this will be the first time in more than two years that our Atlantic beekeeping community is able to get together in person. Preparations began in April, and many of the details are falling into place. Mario Swinkels has been hard at work heading up the committee that will make sure this is going to be a tour to remember, so don't miss it!

I would like to extend a big thank-you to our sponsors, whose support allows Nova Scotia to shine in the beekeeping industry. A big thank-you also to Compass Distilleries who continue to donate \$1.00 from every bottle sold of their flagship beverage, Royal Gin. We simply could not do the work we do without the assistance of:

- Golden Green (Silver),
- Farm Credit Canada (Silver),
- Dancing Bee (Bronze),
- Dalhousie University Extended Learning (Bronze), and
- Perennia (Bronze)

Finally, a personal note. Alex has left some large shoes to fill. I feel his loss in a real way every day as I try to tackle the needs that the position of president has, without his guidance and advice. He was a man who was well connected with the beekeeping community and industry both here and abroad. To be honest, I have been floundering these past couple of months as I try to remake those connections for the benefit of the NSBA. I don't know how Alex did it all, but he did it every day, over and over again, and we all benefited from it. As I work with the Province of Nova Scotia, ACMA, ATTTA, The Blueberry Growers Association, The Joint Pollination Committee, our tireless board here at the NSBA, and you our amazing members, I do find courage. Just thinking about all the potential that we have when we work together makes me very hopeful, excited, and proud to be your current president.

In This Issue

From the Boardroom	1
<i>Tyler Hobbs</i>	
Administrator Update	2
<i>Ashley Anderson</i>	
ATTTA Update	2
<i>Andrew Byers</i>	
Provincial Apiculturist Update	4
<i>Jason Sproule</i>	

Administrator Update

Ashley Anderson, Agri-Commodity Management Association

Registration is now open for the upcoming **Atlantic Bee Tour, occurring August 19th-20th, 2022, around the Antigonish area.** Additional information on the Atlantic Bee Tour, such as the registration form and agenda, can be found on the [NSBA website](#), or by contacting Ashley at 902-893-7455 or coordinator@agricommodity.ca. Registration closes August 5th, 2022.

Receipts and member cards were issued in early-May via email to all paid 2022 NSBA members. If your receipt was not received, please contact Ashley.

Useful Links:

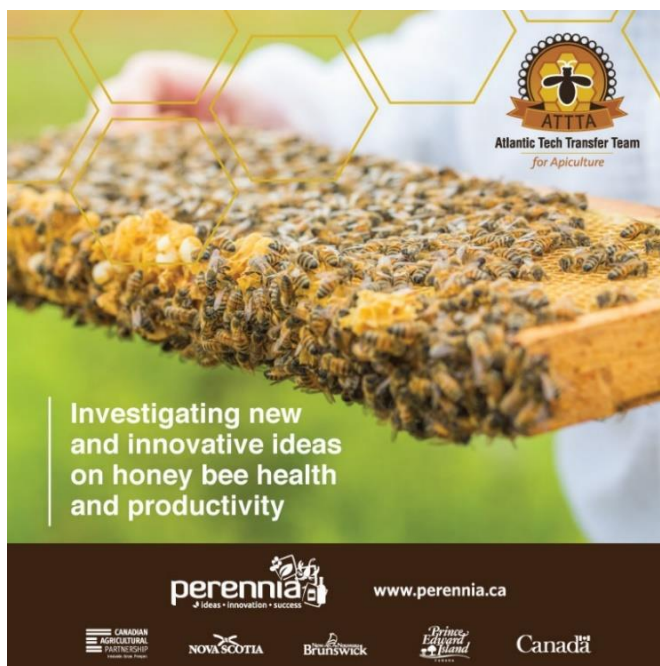
- [NSBA 2022 Membership Application Form](#)
- [New Brunswick Beekeepers Association](#)
- [Prince Edward Island Beekeepers Association](#)

ATTTA Update

Andrew Byers, Atlantic Tech Transfer Team for Apiculture

After a challenging winter, the beekeeping season is progressing nicely. Across our region, we have had a little more wet weather this spring than perhaps is ideal, but overall, the season is looking good! With another early spring, the anticipated long beekeeping season means varroa mite management is vital.

The work of the Atlantic Tech Transfer Team for Apiculture (ATTTA) is progressing well as we complete the final season of field trials for the program. Over the last five years, a great deal of work has been done by the team, and this has had a positive contribution to our beekeeping industry. We are working with our partner associations and other stakeholders to put another project in place for the following five years. It is our hope that ATTTA will continue to support beekeepers, blueberry producers, and their respective industries into the next funding framework starting in April 2023.



Rebecca Campbell,
Seasonal Apiculturist

The core team continues with two consistent members, which include the program lead, Andrew Byers, and full-time apiculturist Annie Bennett. We have added additional members for the busy field season. Two summer students have joined us for the season. Rebecca Campbell is a student at Dalhousie University completing a degree in Bio-Veterinary Science. She will be returning to her final year of study this coming fall. John MacDonald has also joined us for the summer. He is a fourth-year student in Dalhousie University's Plant Science Degree honors program and is working towards certificates in Organic Agriculture and Integrated Pest Management. Both Rebecca and John aspire to careers in or around apiculture. We are also pleased to have Greg Dugas with us. Greg joined the team this spring as a Co-op student. He is finishing high school in June and then off to study at Dalhousie University's Agricultural Campus in the upcoming academic year.

We are always happy to support young beekeepers who will be the future of our industry!



John MacDonald,
Seasonal Apiculturist

A five-year project examining pollination efficiencies for wild blueberries is finishing this season. We are very grateful to the beekeepers and blueberry producers who have directly supported this work by allowing ATTTA access to fields and bees. This year's work will examine different pollination strategies, such as sequential loading of honey bees, to determine efficiencies. This research will support a best management guide to be created at the conclusion of the field studies and available to the industry next year. So the first of three rounds of work has been completed during pollination, and we will be back in the fields twice more in July and again in August.

Additionally, the team is completing research into miticide efficacy. Recent concerns over higher-than-average wintering losses and miticide efficacy have refocused beekeepers on the importance of varroa mite management. This season the team will be sampling bees across the Maritime region. The collected bees will be treated, under laboratory conditions, with miticides and the efficacy of these products determined. Two products are being tested in this research project. Firstly, Apivar[®], with the active ingredient amitraz, was selected. Maintaining the efficacy of this chemical treatment is critical for the industry, and periodic testing is important. Secondly, a newly available product on the Canadian market, Api Life Var[®] is also being trialed. It is hoped that this work will support beekeepers in extending the life of Apivar[®] and adding Api Life Var[®] as a tool for the control of varroa mites. This work will be completed in September, with results shared with our industry shortly thereafter.



One of the strategic aims of the Atlantic beekeeping industry is to become more self-sufficient in local queen production. During the winter of 2021 – 2022, ATTTA successfully demonstrated a system for overwintering banked queens in eastern Canada. With this successful preliminary trial work proving the potential of this practice, ATTTA wants to conduct an expanded trial this year to further develop this method. The overall aim of this work is to improve self-sufficiency in queen production for the beekeeping industry in eastern Canada. This year's study has been expanded thanks to the financial support of the Nova Scotia Beekeeper Association's Research and Education Fund. With two winters of pilot data, a full investigation into methods for overwintering banked queens will be undertaken as part of the team's work through the next five years.

The team is very pleased to be attending in-person workshops and meetings throughout the summer. The Atlantic Bee Tour will be held over the weekend of August 19 in Antigonish with interesting talks and presentation for all beekeepers and pollinators. These training sessions are so important for beekeepers to enhance their skills needed to keep our honey bees healthy and well.

Remember, successful overwintering starts now, so keep on top of your varroa mites. Wishing everyone a great season, and we hope to see you at some of the events over the summer.





Provincial Apiculturist Update

Jason Sproule, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture

It has been a very busy spring for NSDA Bee Inspectors. As I have transitioned to mostly field work and traveling for bee inspections, my office hours have become quite scarce this time of year. While I usually provide a newsletter contribution of some worthy extension topic, this update will be quite brief.

The inspection season is going well. At the time of this writing, our three bee inspectors have completed 115 inspections in at least as many apiaries. Generally, hives look good, with minimal incidence of pests and disease and even weather-related illness. I have seen hardly any chalkbrood, even in yards where we historically would have seen much. In early spring, I did detect serious issues with shrews in some regions. Shrews, in my opinion, are an often-overlooked issue that tends to come to light only when colony loss is catastrophic – which it was in a few incidences. It is a good idea to install shrew guards on hive entrances in late fall/early winter and remove them in early spring.

I have been hearing reports of European foulbrood disease from a few operations, which is a fairly common issue, particularly during and just after blueberry bloom. However, there is a newer strain being reported in hives across North America, that appears to be causing more harm. Fortunately, it is still treatable with antibiotics, but this requires a prescription from a veterinarian. Alternatively, culling of diseased brood frames should also help reduce pathogen levels.

Late last season, I was observing a high incidence of Varroa, mostly in small-scale operations, but have found minimal populations this spring. Hopefully, this is a result of dutiful monitoring and timely application of fall and spring Varroa control treatments. Monitoring and managing Varroa levels is essential for every beekeeper. I recommend this formula: Monitor Varroa levels using sticky boards in March/April and apply a synthetic miticide (if needed) such as Apivar, Bayvarol, or Apistan. Continue to monitor through the season using the "alcohol wash method" and treat (as needed) with softer options like HopGuard II, formic acid (e.g., FormicPro), or registered essential oil-based treatments like Thymovar. Then, clean up any remaining phoretic mites in the fall with Oxalic acid vaporization.

Anecdotally, we heard that Varroa was one of the leading causes of winter colony loss across much of Canada this year. The Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists Preliminary report on Honey Bee Wintering Losses in Canada (2022) will be published shortly and will report an average National hive loss of 45.6%. By contrast, Nova Scotia's average loss sits at 15.2%. I am very pleased that, once again, Nova Scotia has had the lowest bee mortality rate in Canada. A more comprehensive version of this report, that discusses possible causes of loss and management practices, is typically available in mid-July.

Please keep up the super work!