

Leiston Beekeepers' Newsletter

'A Merry Yuletide to All'

December Issue 2009

Laurie Wiseman.....Editor - Leiston and District Bee Keepers' Association

Coming Events for the Diary

Apiary Bees to be treated!

Come along to the Apiary

Saturday 12th December 2009

2:00pm

To see how the winter oxalic treatment is carried out by John Blakesley

Nosema Evening

in conjunction with the Suffolk Nosema Survey

Thursday 25th March 2010

From 7pm onwards.

United Reformed Church

Chapel Road, Saxmundham

Bring a matchbox full of bees for examination and attached Survey Sheet. The Survey sheet has instructions on how to collect your bees.

A Reminder

'A Beginners' Beekeeping Course'

On the following dates:-

Thursday 25 February

Thursday 4 March

Monday 8 March

Wednesday 17 March

at the

United Reformed Church
Chapel Road, Saxmundham

7pm-9pm

(£8 for the complete course)

Another date for the dairy

The L&DBKA Annual General Meeting has been booked for Saturday 20th February 2010 at 2:30pm United Reformed Church, Chapel Road, Saxmundham. More to follow later.

Eastern Associations' Research Studentship (EARS)

Last spring the Suffolk Association attended the Eastern Region Beekeepers' Forum organised by Andy Wattam, the then Regional Bee Inspector. At this meeting it was decided to do something for research and in conjunction with the National Bee Unit and Sheffield University an application for a grant was made to the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council to investigate the interaction of honey bees and varroa. A grant of £80,000 was obtained! In addition to our own commitment of £16,000 this made roughly £100,000 in all. This money is to be spent over four years to carry out a 'PHD' research into the varroa mite. This research student has started work and I recently interviewed her at Sheffield University on behalf of the regional forum group. (see over for report).

The Annual Delegates meeting at Stoneleigh

This policy forum is to take place on the 16 January 2010 at the BBKA HQ at Stoneleigh. The only contentious motion on the agenda is a motion saying that *'the BBKA shall cease to endorse pesticides and insecticides as soon as contractually possible'*. Suffolk is to support this motion.

Did you know?

The use of nectar and honey in a colony during the course of a year is enormous and is used mainly for foraging, brood rearing and wax making. This honey is never seen by the beekeeper. The calculation is as follows:-

Flying bee uses 10mg/hour.

Forager flies for 5 hours/day, therefore honey consumption = 50mg/day for 21days.

Queen lays 1500 eggs/day for 100days, therefore produces 150,000bees in a season.

Honey required to rear one bee = 50 to 150mg say 100mg.

Foraging=(150x50x21)/(1000x1000)=157kg=346.5lbs
Brood rearing=(150,000x100)=15kg=33lbs

Honey needed for wax making (for say 1lb of wax)= 8lb

Total honey consumed before surplus = 387.5lbs

EARS Project Takes Off!

David Bancalari and I travelled to Sheffield University on 23 November 2009 to meet Ricarda (Ricky) Kather, our EARS research student, and to talk to her about her four-year doctorate on "The effect of Varroa mite viral diseases on the honeybee recognition system". Like the NASA space programme, Ricky has had to do some solid foundation work and experiment planning before her serious practical work can sensibly "take off". She said that she is at present carrying out a "literature review" of key papers on studies of similar parasites on bees and bringing herself up to date with the latest Varroa research.

She is producing a list of experiments to be carried out. She wants to discover how varroa mites adapt themselves to particular honeybee colonies and avoid detection. She also wants to discover whether the mites use their own chemistry to mimic the colony's recognition chemicals, or use the bees' own substances.



Ricky at work in the new Arthur Willis Environment Centre, Sheffield University

Ricky said that it has been found that the varroa mite has not mutated genetically despite its reproduction method of inbreeding. Mites have no problems with inbreeding as we would know it. This trait will make it easier to design any future beneficial treatments as all mites will be related. To discover how the bees produce the recognition materials it is proposed to 'radio mark' particular molecules in their food and then see where it ends up, how it is used and manipulated. The recognition behavior of healthy bees will be studied; then these same bees will be infected with mites and their behavior patterns compared. It is thought that infected bees are far more attractive to mites than healthy bees and are a source of viral spread.

Ricky will also review research papers of all bees and wasps to discover if recognition chemicals have always been present or have evolved for particular or general behavioral activities in colonies or solitary bees.

Ricky Kather is also finalising her 'challenging' Masters Degree paper on the function of alkanes and alkenes in the honeybee recognition system.Laurie Wiseman EARS

Stop Press:-

20 January

Ipswich & East Suffolk - Dr Pamela Ewan from Addenbrooke's Hospital will talk about – Bee Venom Allergy at St Michael's, Martlesham Heath at 7.30 p.m.