

NMBKA



New Mexico Beekeepers
Association

NEWSLETTER
March 2015



PHOTO: Randy Swartz

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SAVE THE DATE!

NMBKA Celebrates
National Pollinator Week

June 20, 2015

The New Mexico Beekeepers Association is a nonprofit organization of private beekeepers, commercial beekeepers, persons interested in promoting the importance of the honey bee in the environment, and businesses related to the honey industry.

2015 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2015 NMBKA Annual Meeting took place February 6-7 in Albuquerque – and we had a fantastic time!

We kicked off the weekend by hearing from several representatives from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA). We learned that while the number of noncommercial beekeepers in our state is increasing dramatically (though the exact number is unknown) the number of commercial beekeepers has decreased to five. In 2015, there are plans to begin a New Mexico honeybee survey, primarily of noncommercial apiaries, to provide a good profile of the health of our honeybees. Loretta McGrath of Farm to Table shared with us how that organization's Pollinator Partners Program (is creating pollinator-friendly habitats around New Mexico.

REMINDER: Please visit www.DriftWatch.org to register your apiary site(s). It's free, and registering is the first step in opening up communication between pesticide applicators and beekeepers!

Featured guest speaker Dr. Marla Spivak, who currently runs the University of Minnesota Bee Lab, began her talk by sharing a funny story about her first beekeeping experience: a very unpleasant nighttime hive move with Jerry Cole, a commercial beekeeper in New Mexico. She then let us know that construction is underway on a new Bee and Pollinator Research Lab located on UMN's St. Paul Campus, and a public Bee and Pollinator Discovery Center at the university's Landscape Arboretum. Dr. Spivak went on to share information about the current status of honeybees and the concept of Ratchet, Hatchet and Pivot. "Ratchet" refers to the buildup of a species (i.e., bees). "Hatchet" is the extinction point (such as varroa destructor spreading viruses, or large tracks of land with no blooming plants).

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ANNUAL MEETING

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“Pivot” is the point where things need to change to save the species. Dr. Spivak emphasized that public awareness of how important bees are to our food supply is the Pivot, and that it needs to happen now, to help save our honeybees.

Friday evening ended with the People’s Choice Art Show at the Factory at 5th. Saturday began with NMBKA President Jessie Brown presenting an update on the progress of the Association’s four-part plan. 1) Organizational Development: Mary Hanrahan designed a beautiful logo package for the Association, the NMBKA Grant Program has commenced, the website was redeveloped to grow through time, and the Association continues to work on chapter development. 2) Outreach and Advocacy: The Association has been working on partnerships with the USDA, the Western Apicultural Society and the American Beekeeping Federation. 3) Beekeeper Professional Development: The Association continues to support and drive the market for local beekeepers goods and

services by including vending at meetings and providing a place on the new website for services and goods. 4) Education: Christina Allay-Bondy has curated a series of “how to” beekeeping videos, the newsletter has been re-launched, and the Albuquerque Certified Beekeepers Apprentices Program was adopted as a program under NMBKA.

Dr. Spivak’s Saturday morning talk focused on the dizzying amount of research at the UNM Bee Lab. Research has found that roughing up the interiors of beehives encourages bees to build a propolis envelope, which helps their immune systems fight disease. For a detailed account of different research areas at the UMN Bee Lab, visit <http://beelab.umn.edu/Research/index.htm>

At the NMBKA Business Meeting, a new Board of Directors was elected. Congratulations to President Jessie Brown, Vice President Kate Whealen, Treasurer Tom Day, Secretary Sam Lopez, and Members-at-Large Raymond Espinoza and Kent Huisingh. Changes were also made to the bylaws, viewable on the NMBKA website.

Darren Jewel, an Albuquerque beekeeper who specializes in live honeybee removals, shared information about different removal techniques. Mr. Jewel is currently working on trying to change best practices for pest control companies to include closing up the entrance hole to a hive that has been exterminated via persistent pesticides. This practice would help reduce the loss of neighboring colonies that “rob out” or take honey from hives that have been poisoned, then bring it back to their own colonies, thus infecting healthy colonies. Ken Bower of Eldorado Windy Farm spoke about the biology of plants and covered how to track pollen sources in your area. If you live close to Eldorado, you can view Ken’s blooming schedule and pollen tracking at <http://www.eldoradowindyfarm.com/pollenstudy.html>. Finally, Western Apicultural Society President Beth Conrey gave a lively talk focusing on how small-scale beekeepers can make money by keeping bees. (The key: the money is in products, not so much in bees!) The 2015 Annual WAS Conference will take place October 1-3 in Colorado.

NEW MEXICO BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 7188
Albuquerque, NM 87194
info@nmbeekeepers.org
www.nmbeekeepers.org

2015 NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President: Jessie Brown president@nmbeekeepers.org
Vice President: Kate Whealen vicepresident@nmbeekeepers.org
Secretary: Sam Lopez secretary@nmbeekeepers.org
Treasurer: Tom Day treasurer@nmbeekeepers.org

BOARD MEMBERS:

Raymond Espinoza memberatlarge1@nmbeekeepers.org
Kent Huisingh memberatlarge2@nmbeekeepers.org



PHOTO: Melanie Kirby

THINK GLOBAL, BREED LOCAL

Melanie Kirby

The good news: everybody wants to help save the bees. In fact, ever since the term “Colony Collapse Disorder” gained prominence in 2006, increased public awareness of the plight of the pollinators has inspired a small beekeeping renaissance. Concern over this global issue has motivated many to become beekeepers – stewards of a precious resource.

The bad news: the ability of established local beekeepers to develop and maintain acclimated and adaptable stock lines is being threatened. This is due to unintentional, yet harmful, distribution of compromised stock from other areas as surging numbers of beekeepers spark massive importations.

WHY IT’S HAPPENING

Starting out as a beekeeper can be overwhelming, to be sure – especially now, with environmental impacts and compromised agricultural and developmental management practices to consider. Not all bees are the same, nor are they readily available everywhere. There is a stupefying amount of information for newbees to absorb, about the origins of the bees and what kinds are suited for what locations. Purchasing online or

through bee “flippers” (who move packages and nucs into the area, then turn around and sell and distribute them to others) can therefore seem economical and less hassle. Yet such transactions are negatively impacting New Mexico agriculture in urban, rural, managed and wild settings.

Imported bees may not be as healthy or as gentle as existing local stock, and any new line that is moved in can impact the genetic pool and affect other bees and beekeepers directly, as bees interact while foraging or mating under various weather and flow conditions. As a queen honeybee breeder, I witness firsthand the effects of imported stock on our New Mexican landscape and on the breeding zones of our apiaries. I also hear from other stewards about how this concern has hit home in both urban and rural communities. A story recently reached me about beekeepers in the Midwest who purchased packages that had come out of almonds from California. These bees did not overwinter successfully, and lab examination of some of the dead specimens implicated a previously unknown viral disease.

WHAT WE CAN DO

The best way to respond to this crisis is to encourage urban beekeepers, who make up the bulk of newer beekeepers, to consider the benefits of proactive stock management right from the beginning of their stewardship. Starting with what is available in our area may seem limiting and a test of patience, but massive demand for bees now is having negative repercussions even for stewards located far from urban centers. Local stewards can also make an important contribution by working with one another regionally to share acclimated stock lines, and by respecting existing local lines and areas used for localized breeding efforts. This will help preserve New Mexico breeding zones.

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Have an idea for an article or feature that you would like to see in the NM Beekeepers Association Newsletter? Please get in touch!
editor@nmbeekeepers.org

BEEKEEPING IN NEW MEXICO

A Historical Overview

PART TWO OF FOUR

LOCAL HERO

Janet Yagoda Shagam

Tammy Horn, in the introduction to her book *Bees in America*, states that “interactions between the beekeepers themselves” is a neglected area of research and the one she finds most intriguing. Like Horn, I too am fascinated with the ways everyday people can improve the quality of life for those living in their community and elsewhere. Nathan Spatcier, a late 19th-century Mesilla Valley resident is an interesting example of a community-minded beekeeper.

Why Spatcier (1818-1898), who was born in Alsace-Lorraine, a region straddling the French/German border, settled in southern New Mexico is a mystery. But whatever the reasons may have been, it is apparent he was a welcomed and respected citizen, horticulturist and farmer.

Some of the first evidence that places Spatcier in the Mesilla Valley is a truly charming account of a discussion between a *Las Cruces Sun Times* reporter and Mr. Spatcier. In response to the reporter’s insistence that merely “N. Spatcier, Las Cruces” is not the most advantageous way to advertise the opening of “Spatcier’s General

Merchandise” store, Spatcier retorts, “Mr. Grand Mogal, I know every lady in the Mesilla Valley and I have kissed all - well, their babies.” On a different page, Spatcier is listed as one of several signatories on a petition to establish a new school district. So in addition to kissing - babies - he was a civic-minded individual.

La Flor del Valle, Spatcier’s 250-acre demonstration farm located about 35 miles west of Las Cruces, must have been a sight to behold as well as a honeybee heaven. In a first-hand account, the farm is described as having at least 100 acres sown in alfalfa with the remainder planted with approximately 6,000 grape vines, 2,000 fruit trees, as well as with assorted vegetables and herbs.

Spatcier’s ingenious irrigation system, one in which piped-in

water replaced traditional flood irrigation methods, contributed to making La Flor de Valle an agricultural showpiece. This photograph of Spatcier in his apiary shows that, in addition to efficient irrigation practices, honeybees also contributed the farm’s success.

According to the *Las Cruces Sun Times*, the origins of Spatcier’s apiary were two hives he received from a Mr. Shirley. The reporter goes on to say that “the bees are said to be Italians and that the honey is said to be good.” This apparent neighborly relationship acknowledges the presence of other local beekeepers.

The statement, “the bees were said to be Italians,” is an interesting one. One would expect that beekeepers living in or near Las Cruces, by many

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Nathan Spatcier’s home and apiary (1897). By permission New Mexico State University Library, Archives and Special Collections.

Strategic Planning for

APIARY LOCATION

Reprinted from Kelley Beekeeping Newsletter, Jan. 2015

Phill Remick

Beginning beekeepers have so many concerns occupying their bee-fuddled minds! First and foremost is deciding exactly where to place the apiary. Here is a basic strategy for planning this crucial endeavor.

Are there other colonies in the area? Take a spin to see if you can spot any existing apiaries within flying distance, say two miles or so from you. Know what competition you have for floral sources.

It takes about one acre (!) of blooming flowers, trees and shrubs for *one* colony to prosper (of course this is an approximation - actual acreage will vary). By using this rule of thumb, you can determine if there enough sustenance for your bee pals to make a living in their new neighborhood.

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PHOTO: Randy Swartz

BREED LOCAL

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A COMMUNITY BREEDING PROGRAM FOR CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

Several Duke City beekeepers have expressed interest in developing a localized breeding program for central New Mexico. Zia Queenbees would like to help launch this endeavor by sharing our skills and our process. Initial meetings will be held right after the ABQ Beeks meetings on March 5th and April 2nd at the Bosque School. We will brainstorm ideas for initiating an urban community bee breeding program with a goal of implementing a pilot project this spring. Interested beekeepers who are willing to share brood or apiary for mating are welcome to participate, as are newbees interested in helping (and hoping to receive local bees).

The more stewards that participate, the better for all of New Mexico. If enough stewards express interest, grant funding will be sought to help offset equipment and technical expenses. Please contact Carlos Aragon at The.Crafty.Goats@gmail.com to indicate your interest and share ideas for a state-centered community breeding program.

A native New Mexican, Melanie Kirby has been keeping bees professionally for 19 years. She and partner Mark Spitzig established Zia Queenbees which specializes in treatment-free, survivor stock queen honeybee breeding, exquisite hive products and apiceuticals, and sustainable beekeeping management research. She can be reached at ziaqueenbees@hotmail.com.



THE BEEKEEPER IN WINTER

Paul Kline

Our beekeeping journey began with a flash, a clap of thunder – and a bolt of lightning hitting my son, Sebastian, in the chest. The shock stopped his heart and scrambled his neurocircuitry. His physical and cognitive rehabilitation included small carpentry projects and gardening, which in turn led him to a fascination with honeybees, since they could help his plants.

We built our first top bar hive together, four years ago (I'm still a relatively new beekeeper). It was fall, much too late to obtain bees. We let the hive overwinter and off-gas so the bees would accept it. (We had put in two plastic windows using a silicone caulk, so off-gassing seemed like a good idea.) That first winter was a time of anticipation – and some anxiety. What I didn't realize back then was just how much a beekeeper can accomplish during the winter months...

READ & RESEARCH

As Joe “The Bee Guy” Westbrook says, winter is a great time for reading. It's a chance to expose yourself to new information, or old information in a new way. Often, my spring and summer reading is more anxiety-driven as I am usually trying to find the answers to problems or concerns about the hive. During the winter there is more time to relax.

During this past year, I rediscovered the library. Borrowing instead of buying has saved me a bundle! The Internet is another great resource for gathering information on any beekeeping subject. You can read articles or click on an expansive variety of YouTube videos on building and purchasing hives, Langstroth, top bar, Warre and other hives, methods for managing bees, trap out instruction, cut out instruction, feeding methods, and treatment methods for integrated

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NMBKA

New Mexico Beekeepers Association

Join us! Members receive perks like free admission to events, website listings and newsletters...

MEMBERSHIP FORM

CONTACT INFORMATION (PRIVATE)

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE:

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FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

FULL-YEAR
\$30

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\$15

NEWSLETTER

EMAIL
(FREE)

PAPER
(\$5.00/YEAR)

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Members can advertise for free! If you wish to have your information added to the Bee Services section of our website, please fill out this section:

NAME OR COMPANY

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WEBSITE

CITY OR AREA

List for swarm capture? YES NO

List as a bee educator? YES NO

List for selling honey? YES NO

Do you sell queens or bees? YES NO

Do you sell wax/pollen/propolis? YES NO

Do you sell hive equipment? YES NO
If yes, what kind?

MAIL COMPLETED FORM & PAYMENT TO:

NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 7188
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87194

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO:

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QUESTIONS? EMAIL: info@nmbeekeepers.org



WINTER

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pest management. The NMBKA website also offers a library of “Beekeeping Basics” videos.

ORDER & BUILD

Procrastination is one of my most accomplished faults, but I still recommend getting a jump on spring. If you anticipate needing another Langstroth hive, or other beekeeping equipment, winter is a great time to order. You can save money by ordering unassembled boxes and frames; assembly is easy and the perfect project for a cold winter day. Better to have that extra hive handy as opposed to scrambling to figure out where to hive that swarm or trap out opportunity. Winter is also a great time to make that top bar or Langstroth nucleus (small hive) in preparation for splitting a hive in the spring.

STOCK & RESTOCK

Winter is a time for restocking consumable supplies like pine

needles, horse manure, egg cartons, and wood chips for burning in the smoker. My current smoker starter preference is ponderosa pine needles; they are easy to gather by hand and ignite quickly before adding dried horse manure or wood chips. Storage is easy in a plastic tub or bag.

WATER & FOOD

Providing water is still critical during the winter. Because of freezing, placing the water container in the sun promotes ice melting, making it accessible to the bees on days warm enough for the girls to fly. But do your beehives need to be fed or not? Some beekeepers are “for” feeding, some “against,” and the “beet sugar or cane sugar” debate continues. *The Beekeeper’s Bible* provides a simple winter formula: Fill a jar with sugar, add boiling water and stir until sugar is dissolved. Fondant can be purchased from many beekeeping supply vendors. A homemade fondant recipe from *The Barefoot Beekeeper* is: 5 pounds of sugar,



PHOTO: Randy Swartz

1 pint of water, 3 tbsp. of organic cider vinegar. Bring to a boil stirring constantly and when cool, add a dollop of honey. Well-known beekeeper and speaker, Michael Bush, just adds dry sugar to the hive if needed. The advantage of dry sugar is it adds no moisture; excess moisture during the winter can cause condensation inside the hive resulting in the possibility of cold water dropping onto the bee cluster and chilling the bees.

If we truly learn from our mistakes, I should be brilliant by now. I’m not sure that’s happened, but hopefully this summary of winter activities, learned through bumpy experience, might at least help a few of you prepare for our New Mexico spring!

LOCAL HERO

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standards a frontier town, would use feral queens to repopulate their hives. And of course, local honey tastes good!

Spatcier’s reputation extended far beyond the Mesilla Valley. Each year, his fruits and vegetables were prize-winning entries in the Territorial Fair held

in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1893, four varieties of Spatcier’s grapes took first place at the World’s Chicago-Columbian Exposition. The following year, he brought an exhibit of Mexican and Native American medicinal herbs to the New Orleans Exposition. As reported in the *Las Cruces Sun Times*, “all were labeled with their name and use - thus making the exhibit of interest to “eastern medical men.”

In 1890, Spatcier traveled to Washington DC to get permission from the United States Department of Agriculture to import five date palms from Egypt. Although it’s tempting to say that Spatcier introduced date palms to Las Cruces, we do not know if permission was granted or if the imported palms flourished in their new location.

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LOCAL HERO

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The trees we now see in and around Las Cruces are the desert fan palm – the only palm tree native to western North America.

In the twelve-plus years that Spatcier lived in Las Cruces, he proved himself to be a respected – though somewhat rakish – citizen, as well as a remarkable horticulturist and farmer. His demonstration farm introduced local farmers to new and improved agricultural practices, developed the local economy, and brought national recognition to the Mesilla Valley. Without question, Nathan Spatcier was a quiet hero whose dedication and efforts enriched the lives of the people living throughout the Mesilla Valley.



Janet Yagoda Shagam is a freelance medical and science writer as well as an avid beekeeper. She lives in Albuquerque with her husband and several cats. Be sure to ask about her grandchildren.

References:

Various articles published in the *Albuquerque Citizen*, *Las Cruces Sun Times* and the *Lordsburg Western Liberal* between the years 1882 and 1898.

Acknowledgements:

Leah Tookey, Curator of History, New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, and Caitlin R. Wells, M.L.S., M.A., Archivist for

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER: RANDY SWARTZ

In our last newsletter, we presented some amazing bee photographs by Konnie Nelson. In this current issue, we are thrilled to be able to feature the work of beekeeper and photographer Randy Swartz.

Randy purchased his first two Langstroth nucleus hives in May 2007. He now has six hives (two Top Bar and four Langstroth). However, Randy has been taking photographs for much longer: ever since he was 11 or 12. In high school and college he developed his own film in a darkroom; today he utilizes digital photography. Most of his photos were taken with a Nikon D5100 Digital SLR, but he will occasionally use an iPhone as well! One of the very first photos Randy ever took of his new beehive ended up being selected to appear on the cover of *Bee Culture Magazine*.

All of Randy's photos in this issue are from his own hives in his northern Rio Rancho neighborhood. Russian Sage is common there, and when the monsoon rains come, Broom Dalia (aka Purple Sage) and lots of other wild flowers bloom in great abundance in the surrounding area. Randy says that photographing bees is always a challenge, especially bees on flowers. They never hold still, so it is difficult to keep them in focus.

People are always amazed when Randy tells them he is a beekeeper. Since he can't bring them all to his hives and let them see inside, sharing his photographs is an opportunity to show them the wonders of the hive and answer many of their questions.

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RANDY SWARTZ

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“For me, photographing bees makes them even more remarkable,” Randy explains. “Through my photos I have an even greater appreciation for their complex comb design and architecture, the beauty of honey and the marvels of their highly functioning bodies.”



PHOTO: Randy Swartz

APIARY LOCATION

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Let's do the numbers. With packages the average number of bees per pound is 3,500. If you purchase a four-pound package, roughly 14,000 bees instantly become dependent on your expertise or lack thereof. Add a second or third package and the numbers rise dramatically. That's a lot of mouths to feed. Mistakenly, many believe that generally possessing (or living near) a yard full of wild growth is adequate forage. Mark Twain once remarked, “It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure, that just ain't so.”

New beekeepers will benefit thoroughly from understanding local weather cycles - including wind patterns, floral sources, time and duration of bloom, length of bloom and, of utmost importance, whether plants are dependable pollen and quality nectar sources. Do your best to avoid acreage known for pesticide applications or field “hotspots” which have a history of being doused with chemicals. If your bees reside in this type of surrounding, get acquainted with growers, spray applicators and the bee inspector/county AG office; it is time well spent. Also, have a plan in case you need to move your apiary.

What about water? The majority of us don't have a sparkling, babbling brook running through our desired apiary area. Fresh water is a must; you may have to provide this resource if not readily available (babbling brook optional). In the heat of the summer, honey bees require close to one gallon per day, per hive.

Your bee yard ideally will be an area with good drainage, in mostly open air and protected from extreme winds. It must allow easy, unrestricted entry during all seasons. If you have access to property with a locked gate - perfect! Place the bees where they have the least amount of visibility by humans (which can deter vandals), yet with plenty of sunlight. It's just human nature; once neighbors spot beehives, any negative action that can be attributed to your colonies is imaginable. Keep your apiary away from out buildings that are in regular use, farm equipment, and avoid any populated, common space. Pools are another obvious issue; never, ever place bees near a swimming pool! I call this my “Out of sight, out of mind” policy.

Finally, don't forget: we also want to face colonies east or southeast. Honey bees require direct sunlight in the morning and if possible, partial afternoon shade during the most intense heat of the day. Consider implementing this mode as the colony can warm up early in the morning, getting all the foragers out and about, which can increase your chances of a substantial honey crop.

Phill Remick is a former commercial beekeeper who teaches beekeeping classes, offers year round apiary troubleshooting, management and sells beekeeping supplies in Albuquerque's North Valley. Contact him at www.NewBeeRescue.com



American Beekeeping Federation

ABF 2015 A NEWBEE'S PERSPECTIVE

An Aspiring New Beekeeper Reports from the 2015 North American Beekeeping Conference & Tradeshow

Mike Nakamura

Until recently, my most memorable experience involving honeybees was being stung on the neck while riding my motorcycle. I'm happy to report that attending the American Beekeeping Federation's 2015 North American Beekeeping Conference & Tradeshow in Anaheim, CA (right next to Disneyland!) was a lot more fun, for the bees and for me! My wife Khrys and I are true NewBees, and the ABF conference was our first bee-related event; since we live in the Los Angeles area, it was right in our backyard and seemed like the perfect place to start.

We decided to go because after many generations of livestock overgrazing, Khrys's family ranch south of Gallup, NM has (like the whole region) seen a significant decline in forage and forbs, and devastation to the environment. We are hoping that by pollinating native plants, honeybees will aid in the restoration and regeneration of the land. Plus, the allure of harvesting honey for consumption is very appealing! To find out if European honeybees are compatible with the indigenous bees, other pollinators, and plants of the region, we reached out to NMBKA's Jessie Brown, who felt that there should not be any compatibility issues.

The conference included honey tasting, the crowning of the 2015 honey queen, a silent auction, meetings for breeders, large and small scale honey producers and packers, and sideliners. Naturally, there were presentations covering colony collapse. One went over the use of biopesticides, mechanical controls, and other measures that can be taken when a colony is infected with varroa mites. Another option mentioned was to use Russian bees since they have adapted to varroa mites. Since Russian bees are less prolific producers of honey than the Italian species, using pollen paddies can increase their honey production. Another presentation stressed maintaining a strong and healthy colony through a clean hive, a good diet of pollen, nectar, and clean water, and avoiding condensation build-up. Both lectures mentioned a technique involving dusting the bees in the hive with powdered sugar to elicit grooming, which helps remove the varroa mites. This was a lot of information for

NewBees, but we felt a little less overwhelmed when presenter Chappie McChesney, who has been raising bees successfully for over 60 years (!) told us that colony collapse tends to be a more pressing concern for commercial beekeepers than it will likely be for us as we start out.

The session that had the biggest impact on me was Paul Stamets's talk on "How Mushrooms Can Save Bees and Our Food Supply." (You can find him giving similar presentations at other venues on YouTube.) I had recently read a book about how healthy soils can restore plant life, attract and retain water, and reduce carbon dioxide in the air, so I was very interested in his discussion of how fungi can build soil health to maintain a healthy ecosystem. Stamets has also observed his honeybees harvesting the exudate from the mycelium of the Garden Giant mushroom in his home garden, and confirmed through his research that the compounds from the exudate increase worker bee longevity and decrease viral loads contracted from varroa mites.

Khrys and I also toured the Sioux Honey Association's nearby facility, where Sue Bee honey is produced by a co-op of American beekeepers – the largest honey marketing co-op in the world. We saw 55-gallon steel drums of honey arriving and being washed in a giant stainless steel washer. The honey is then

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PHOTO: Randy Swartz



ABF 2015

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poured into a melting and blending oven. From there, the honey goes through a filtering system and is heated to facilitate honey flow through a pipe array. Finally, it is transported to the bottling area, which is mostly automated. After the bottles are sealed, capped, labeled, date stamped, inspected, and boxed, they are stacked on pallets for shipping. The facility processes organic, raw and unfiltered, clover, and orange honey; the bottling run for each type is done on different days with the system

flushed with hot water and dried in between runs. The tour concluded with light refreshments – and of course, honey to squeeze on the eats.

Throughout the conference, there were opportunities to network with beekeepers and wannabe beekeepers alike. There was the hall full of exhibitors: insurance companies, organizations, books, equipment, hats, suits, nutrients, medications, hives, and honey. Browsing the aisles proved fun and educational as the exhibitors were helpful and informative.

Now, our next big challenge is to educate our family in New Mexico about the benefits of honeybees for the ranch, since we ourselves will only be able to travel there several times during the year. Fortunately, the conference armed us with a plethora of information and left us feeling energized, knowing there is a support system out there for NewBees like us.

**NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 7188
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87194**