American Beekeeping Federation NEWSLETTER
March/April 2014 • Vol. 72, No. 2

# Perspectives in Beekeeping – Almonds and Bees

*by Tim Tucker, ABF President*

Tim Tucker
ABF President

I've been reading a lot about almonds lately and have found out quite a number of things that I didn't know about these nutritious little stone fruits. They are good for lowering your LDL – Cholesterol, which may also help reduce your risk of heart disease. The monounsaturated fats that almonds contain are the same ones found in olive oil. Studies have demonstrated that substituting nuts for dairy products or saturated fats contributed to a 45% reduction in the risk of heart disease. They are packed full of magnesium and potassium, which can help you with minimizing damage if a heart attack occurs. There's also plenty of vitamin E, which is an antioxidant and they also help lower the risk of diabetes. Further, they help to lower blood sugar levels, the glycemic index of a particular meal, and blood fat levels. A study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that a diet including foods such as soy, plant sterols and almonds can reduce cholesterol levels just as much as first generation statin drugs. It's also been suggested that almonds can help you lose weight and reduce your chance for developing gallstones, so start eating some of these heart-healthy almonds every day!

*By Tiago J. G. Fernandes from Portimão, Portugal (Busy bee ... Uploaded by tm) [CC-BY-2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0)], via Wikimedia Commons*

There are over thirty varieties of almonds grown in the valley, but ten varieties account for almost 70% of them with three major classifications of almonds; Nonpareil, Mission and California. Nonpareil are easily blanched (skin removed) and used wherever there's a need for quality looking almonds or slices. Mission types have a stronger flavor and are short and fat and have a thick wrinkled skin which is good for the adherence of salt or coatings. California varieties are also easily blanched and are used mainly in processed foods. They are also very laid back and tend to dress tastefully yet casually. Since bees are instrumental in the almond growing process, it is clear that we should promote both almonds and our honey wherever we go. The pollination efforts in California this year were sufficient since there will be less water available for irrigation. Some farmers will get no water at all and it may be that recently planted trees will not make it through this drought and will have to be replanted. There were reports early on that all of the bees coming in wouldn't be placed, but it looks like the last minute calls did in fact place all of the bees that were there. There's no doubt the weather and lack of moisture cutting back on a large number of bees made the situation balance out without shortages of bees. That wouldn't have likely been the case were there plenty of snow in the sierras and the lakes were full of water stores. There's no doubt that these coming years will find shortages of bees with so many bees being lost and more and more trees being planted.

One of the things that we have to focus on is eliminating the unnecessary poisoning of bees. Joe Traynor reported a bill kill where the grower had refused to let the beekeeper pull his bees a week earlier even though the bloom stage was near the end and

*(continued on page 12)*

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*(EC) indicates Executive Committee member. Number in parentheses next to Director's name indicates the year the Director's current term ends and whether in their 1st or 2nd term.*


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# “Now...the Rest of the Story”

*by Gene Brandi, ABF Vice President*

*Gene Brandi*
*ABF Vice President*

In my last message I discussed a number of issues relating to almond pollination as well as the uncertainties regarding the demand for bees due to the lack of irrigation water in California. As Paul Harvey used to say, “Now....the rest of the story.”

Now that the dust has settled on the 2014 almond pollination season, there was no surplus of good beehives for almond pollination this year. A number of almond orchards were removed and some growers did not rent bees this year in order to avoid setting a crop that they could not irrigate sufficiently (in most areas their trees were pollinated by neighboring bees). The official numbers have not yet been announced, but it appears that there was at least as much young almond acreage that came into production as there were older orchards removed. Initially, there were a number of beekeepers that came up short on their hive numbers; however it appears that this deficit was filled by colonies released by the growers with the most severe water situations. Essentially, supply and demand matched up fairly well this year, although there were some issues with hive quality in some areas.

It may be difficult to imagine for those of you in regions of the country which have endured such a severe winter with copious amounts of rain, snow, and ice, but California remains in the midst of a catastrophic, record-breaking drought with corresponding higher than average temperatures. The “rainy season” here generally begins in November and ends in April or early May. We are approaching our normally dry season with record low water levels in most of our reservoirs, 25% or less of average snowpack in the mountains and insignificant stream flows in most of the creeks and rivers.

Although we are always hopeful and will certainly welcome any precipitation we may receive in the next few weeks, the impact of a third dry year in a row is taking its toll on the entire state generally and almond growers and beekeepers in particular. The drought has certainly impacted the availability of natural forage for our bees. Locations which normally would be supplying bees with good pollen and nectar are barely even green yet and it is questionable whether or not any decent forage will become available at all this year in many areas.

Growers on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley have a zero irrigation water allotment for 2014 and are limping through this season on water carried over from 2013 or on poor quality well water. At this point it looks like there will be no water to carry over into 2015, so unless this coming winter brings an abundance of precipitation, substantial west valley almond acreage will likely be removed after this season due to the lack of available irrigation water. Growers in other parts of the valley have had their water allotments cut by 75% or more and are in a precarious situation as well, but most are at least somewhat better off than the majority of west side growers. If you bring your bees to California for almond pollination, stay in contact with your growers during the coming year just to check and see if they will be able to keep all of their acreage in production due to these water issues.

Unfortunately, one problem that occurs every year to some degree is bee hive theft. Historically this has occurred in the weeks just prior to almond pollination as thieves see the opportunity for pollination income as they rent the stolen hives to an unsuspecting almond grower. There were reports of hundreds of colonies stolen prior to almond bloom in 2014. In addition, there were over 800 colonies reported stolen after almond pollination this year, which is very unusual. The California State Beekeepers Association offers up to a $10,000 reward for information which leads to the arrest and conviction of persons who have stolen bees from CSBA members.

Another problem which appears to be worse than normal this year is brood damage in colonies which were exposed to certain fungicides or fungicide/insect growth regulator combinations applied to blooming almonds. A number of beekeepers have reported significant brood damage to their colonies a couple of weeks or so after such applications. A number of beekeepers are finding insufficient brood to make splits. For many years, growers and pesticide applicators have been urged to either not use such products during bloom or to apply them either late in the day or at night in order to minimize exposure to bees. None of these products have a bee

*(continued on page 12)*

# Government Relations Update

*by Gene Brandi, ABF Vice President*

Re: ABF Legislative Fund Appeal

Dear ABF Member,

The American Beekeeping Federation continues to work in Washington D.C. and around the country to further the legislative and regulatory related priorities important to ABF members. ABF President, Tim Tucker, and ABF Past President, George Hansen, have already made one legislative trip to Washington in conjunction with the Varroa Summit they recently attended.

The legislative priorities of the ABF in 2014 include:

- Funding for Research. There is no question that the bee industry continues to sustain major colony losses throughout the country. Given the recent passage of the Farm Bill, we will work with Congress in an effort to obtain the necessary appropriations so that vital research into the many problems which negatively impact honey bee health can continue. In addition to USDA-ARS, we plan to work with other public and private research sources that can provide meaningful research opportunities for our industry.

- Maintaining ARS Lab Funding. The ABF continues to urge that USDA-ARS honey bee research facilities be fully funded in order to maintain and enhance their research efforts.

- Protecting our Honey Market. There continues to be a great deal of discussion concerning the state of our honey market. The discussions come down to two priorities: 1) establishing a national standard of identity for honey; and 2) stopping illegal imports, particularly transshipment of Chinese honey through intermediary countries. We are being told that our honey market is in precarious shape. We need to take strong steps to shore it up.

The FDA has thus far refused work on the honey standard of identity submitted by the industry, led by the ABF in 2006. However, there is language in the recently passed Farm Bill which requires that the USDA address the need for a national standard of identity for honey within 180 days. The standard of identity will give state and federal enforcement officials a better tool to use to stop those who are adding cheaper sweeteners to our honey. In addition, several persons accused of being involved in honey transshipment have been arrested and convicted. The ABF, along with representatives other honey industry groups, has developed a modified proposal for a national honey standard that we would like to see adopted by FDA.

- Pesticides. We are losing our bees at unsustainable rates, and it is increasingly clear that pesticides play a major role in colony decline. The verification that neonicotinoids have been implicated in honey bee losses during corn planting in the US and Canada is a reminder that this is an area that cannot be overlooked, no matter the pushback from entities with vested interests. The fact that neonicotinoids and other pesticides applied to a variety of crops continue to have negative effects on honey bees throughout the country is of extreme concern to the ABF. The ABF, on its own and with the National Honey Bee Advisory Board (NHBAB) have developed a working relationship with the EPA as a stakeholder in the efforts to revise registration and labeling of pesticides. It is clear that the incident reporting system and the policing of compliance issues are broken. ABF leaders and members have already devoted considerable time and effort toward these issues in recent years but there is a great deal more work which must be done if real progress is to be made in protecting honey bees from the negative effects of pesticides.

- Promoting and protecting Honey Bee Habitat. Lack of sufficient clean foraging resources for honey bees in many parts of the country is having a profoundly negative effect on hive health and productivity. We are committed to working with government agencies, agriculture allies, and other stakeholders to develop policies and programs to enhance, protect, expand, and provide access to suitable pollinator habitat. ABF Vice-President, Gene Brandi and Past President, Zac Browning recently met with representatives of Pheasants Forever and Project Apis-M to discuss potential partnerships in bee forage/habitat projects.

*(continued on page 5)*

- Crop Insurance, ELAP, and H-2A Labor Programs. The ABF continues to work for USDA disaster programs to be more available to beekeepers, and to make funding of these programs permanent. We need programs that allow for the management of risk without opening the door to fraud. The beekeeping industry's need for legal laborers requires an H-2A labor program that works. In addition, the ABF continues to be an active member of the agriculture labor coalition working on meaningful immigration reform. These are difficult issues and require our input and consistent voice to resolve.

- Transportation Issues. We are continuing to work on a waiver/exemption from additional hours of service limitations for drivers of trucks who haul bees. This is a bee health issue which we believe can be addressed without adversely impacting traffic safety.

In order to carry out these ABF objectives, it is necessary that your ABF representatives travel to Washington periodically. This is always an expensive endeavor as airline fares keep increasing and hotel rates in Washington are some of the highest in the nation. The services of Meyers and Associates are necessary to assist the ABF with legislative and government relations efforts in Washington and their fees must be paid on a regular basis. We must have them working for us on the scene, in order to keep us abreast of anything that may impact the beekeeping industry.

The bottom line is that the ABF cannot achieve the goals set by the membership without the financial resources to get the job done and, at this time, we are again well behind budget in the ABF Legislative Fund. Your commitment to help in these efforts is essential to their success. We can assure you that your contributions to the ABF Legislative Fund are spent carefully and with full consideration of how important this work is for you, the ABF members. Your legislative fund donations are very much appreciated and are an investment in the future of your business, as well as the bee industry as a whole. You can easily donate online at abfnet.org (click on the "Donate to the ABF" link on the home page), or send a check to the ABF office at the letterhead address.

While your contributions are essential to the success of ABF efforts, there is something else just as important – maybe more important at times. We need you to keep in contact with your members of Congress, both your Representative and your state's two Senators. They and their staff members need to be aware of your beekeeping activities and of our industry's needs – and they need to hear this from you. There is helpful information in this newsletter that can assist you when contacting your Congressional representatives and Senators.

There is a role for each of us, and together we can accomplish a great deal. As we progress throughout the year, it is our intention to keep you informed with the latest developments and needs in the legislative areas that are critical to our industry. Please let us know how we can better serve you and all ABF members.

Gene Brandi, Chairman
ABF Legislative Committee

## *FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HONEY BEES*

The following individuals contributed to the Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bee during the months of January and February 2014.These donations enable us to fund grants into beekeeping research and education.

Karlie Bisordi, PA
Kyle Brown, CO
Ferris Bukhari, OH
Priscilla Croak, MA
Michael Ebersole, AZ
David & Debra Ellingson, MN
Foothills Honey Co., OR
Carin Ford, CT
Eloise Gilbert, FL
Kathleen Hering, CA
Jonathan King, SC
Joan Malarkey, MD
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# How to Contact Your Congressional Representative

The ABF encourages you to keep in contact with your members of Congress – both your representative and your state's two senators. They and their staff members need to be aware of your beekeeping activities and of our industry's needs. And they need to hear this from you. Below are some tips on how to make these contacts. If you need any assistance, please contact the ABF offices at 404.760.2875 or info@abfnet.org.

## Representatives

***Write:*** The Honorable _____
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

***Call:*** 202.225.3121
Ask for your Representative's office and request to speak to the agricultural aide.

## Senate

***Write:*** The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

***Call:*** 202.224.3121
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***E-mail:*** To locate and e-mail your representatives and senators, visit www.congress.gov.

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# Legislative Fund Contributions

The following individuals contributed to the Legislative Fund during the months of January and February 2014.These donations will help ABF's lobbying efforts in Washington, D. C.

*Bob Brandi, CA*
*Michael Ebersole, AZ*
*David & Debra Ellingson, MN*
*Foothills Honey Co., OR*
*Louise Johnson, IA*
*Jonathan King, SC*
*Robert McDonell, IL*
*Christy Miller, TX*
*Albert Saistria, TX*
*Treasure Valley Bees LLC, ID*
*Shannon Wooten, CA*

# Research Donations

*The following individuals contributed to the Research Fund during the months of January and February 2014. These donations will help ABF continue to support research efforts and grants within the beekeeping industry and community.*

*David Hackenberg, PA*
*David & Debra Ellingson, MN*
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## Is Your Contact Information Up-to-Date in the ABF Membership Database?

If not, you're missing out on important communications from us, such as annual conference details, industry updates and alerts, and the monthly ABF *E-Buzz* electronic newsletter. Please call us at 404.760.2875 or send us an e-mail at info@abfnet.org to update your information today!

# Friends of the Bee Fund Contributions

The following individuals contributed to the Friends of the Bee Fund during the months of January and February 2014. These donations enable us to fund educational programs and services that will benefit ABF members and the American beekeeping industry.

Paul Albano, NY
Brent Barkman, KS
Antoinette Burnham, D.C.
Liz Corbett, ON Canada
Lawrence Dubose, IL
Yves Garez, SK Canada
Jim Geddes, GA
Rand & Jo Honl, MN
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Robert Morlock, ND
Eloise Naylor, NJ
Margaret Reid, OH
John & Marion Stoll, MI
Liz Vaenoski, WI
Tim Wendell, MB Canada
Brent & Bonnie Woodworth, ND

# Farmer and Rancher Disaster Assistance Programs

WASHINGTON, April 7, 2014 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today that farmers and ranchers can sign-up for disaster assistance programs, reestablished and strengthened by the 2014 Farm Bill, beginning Tuesday, April 15, 2014. Quick implementation of the programs has been a top priority for USDA.

"These programs will provide long-awaited disaster relief for many livestock producers who have endured significant financial hardship from weather-related disasters while the programs were expired and awaiting Congressional action," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "President Obama and I prioritized the implementation of these disaster assistance programs now that the Farm Bill has restored and strengthened them."

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) will provide payments to eligible producers for livestock deaths and grazing losses that have occurred since the expiration of the livestock disaster assistance programs in 2011, and including calendar years 2012, 2013, and 2014.

Enrollment also begins on April 15 for producers with losses covered by the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Read more at abfnet.org.

## HONEY DEFENSE FUND

***The following individuals contributed to the Honey Defense Fund during the months of January and February 2014. These donations will help ABF continue to support research efforts and grants within the beekeeping industry and community.***

Jonathan King, SC
Jerry Poelman, AB Canada
William Spear, TX

# Honey Report

Released March 21, 2014, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Honey production in 2013 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 149 million pounds, up 5 percent from 2012. There were 2.64 million colonies producing honey in 2013, up 4 percent from 2012. Yield per colony averaged 56.6 pounds, up 1 percent from the 56.0 pounds in 2012. Colonies that produced honey in multiple states counted each state of production. The United States level yield per colony may appear understated, but total production is not impacted. Colonies were not included if honey was not harvested. Producer honey stock was 38.2 million pounds on December 15, 2013, an increase of 20 percent from the year prior. Stocks held by producers exclude those held under the commodity loan program.

**Record High Honey Prices**

Honey prices increased to a record high during 2013 to 212.1 cents per pound, up 6 percent from 199.2 cents per pound in 2012. United States and state level prices reflect the portions of honey sold through cooperatives, private and retail channels. Prices for each color class are derived by weighting the quantities sold for each marketing channel. Prices for 2012 crops reflect honey sold in 2012 and 2013. Some 2012 crop honey was sold in 2013, which caused some revisions to the 2012 crop prices. The complete NASS Honey Report is available on the American Beekeeping Federation website at www.abfnet.org under the “Education & Events” tab, “Honey Facts.”


***Know a new beekeeper?***
**Introduce them to the American Beekeeping Federation!**

# Milestones

*Congratulations to the following ABF members that have reached milestone years during the month of February 2014:*

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Michael Embry, MD
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Mario Jakob, FL
Donald Thill, WI

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*Perspectives in Beekeeping*
*(continued from cover)*

there was no pollen available to the bees. As Joe said, it's difficult to argue with growers who are paying top dollar in rental fees but they need to understand that if you need to spray, you need to release the bees. Many large growers are not doing any spraying when there are bees in their groves. It seems that so many of our problems are a result of poor communication and a lack of proper education in the matter. Several treatments that were done with bees still present were done with complete lack of regard for the safety of the bees. Unfortunately, applicators are tank mixing fungicides with insect growth regulators that may not have individual warnings for bees, but when combined, yield synergistic effects that are disastrous. Many of these applications don't kill the entire colony but they damage the brood so severely that the hives are set back weeks or months. As I write this, Gene and Bob Brandi and a group of involved beekeepers are meeting with the EPA and local officials to see if incidents like this one can be prevented. With bees being so short and with more acreages of almond trees coming in to production each year growers should do all that can be done to protect the bees. Anything that is an insecticide has the potential for harming bees and there's no reason to take chances when it's as easy as letting a beekeeper leave remove his colonies before treatment or perhaps not doing tank mixing of compounds we have found to be harmful when applied together. I would like to keep eating my almonds and almond butter!


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*Now...The Rest of the Story*
*(continued from page 3)*

hazard warning on their labels since they are relatively nontoxic to adult honey bees, but they can certainly damage the colony by destroying substantial amounts of brood. Ironically, the largest almond grower in the state (actually, in the world for that matter) normally does not spray during bloom.

In spite of all the problems encountered as we endeavor to supply the ever increasing demand for strong, healthy bee colonies necessary for the world's largest pollination job, somehow we continue to get it done every year. It is truly a miracle that 1.6 million or more bee hives get moved in a timely fashion for almond pollination every year. Time will tell just how much longer the almond industry will continue to grow given the constraints of the water situation here in California.

# Bee Connected: ABF Facebook Fan Page

If you are a member of Facebook, you can be a fan of the ABF Facebook page. All you have to do is simply search Facebook for "American Beekeeping Federation" to access the page and click the "Like" button to become a fan.

Everyone is welcome. To date, we have 3,454 fans and are reaching new fans each day.

If you have a Facebook fan page for your business or local beekeeping association, let us know and we'll add you to our line up.

Please feel free to post your beekeeping photos on our page, write on our wall and keep sending your friends to our page. Stay tuned for ABF updates, fun facts, recipes and photos of our ABF members doing what they do best!

# *Have You Caught the Buzz?*

Sent via e-mail monthly to all ABF members, *ABF E-Buzz* is a key member benefit and is published to inform members about ABF activities, as well as key happenings in the beekeeping industry. If you haven't been receiving the newsletter, please be sure to contact the ABF office at info@abfnet.org or 404.760.2875 to ensure we have your most up-to-date contact information. Also, if you wish to contribute content to the newsletter, please contact Tim Tucker, *ABF E-Buzz* editor, at tuckerb@hit.net. We welcome your submissions!

# Queen Committee Report

*by Anna Kettlewell, Honey Queen Program Chair*

The first quarter of 2014 has been a busy time for the Queen Program. Not only have Susannah and Elena visited nine states (nearly a third of the way through our 30-state promotional goal), but I have also presented on behalf of the program.

In March, I was asked to be a guest speaker at the Tri-County Beekeepers Association's annual spring workshop in Wooster, Ohio. I gave a presentation on how to start and administer a successful honey queen program. Ohio, like several other states, is considering establishing (or reestablishing) a honey queen program. The American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) Honey Queen Committee encourages organizations to start local and state honey queen programs. There are many events throughout the country that the American Honey Queen and Princess cannot attend each year, so having capable and dependable state and local honey queens aids our industry in reaching as many people as possible.

Successful and healthy honey queen programs produce outstanding candidates for the American Honey Queen and Princess positions each year. Some states select their state queen from a pool of applicants, while others use a local honey queen system to produce candidates. Whatever the selection process, we ask that all programs conform to the American Honey Queen Program guidelines, so their candidates can be successful applicants at the national level. Good honey queen programs have ample volunteers and people committed to making the program successful; with those ingredients, your state could be home to a future American Honey Queen or Princess!

You can find the American Honey Queen Program's guidebook, which includes information on starting a local or state honey queen program on the ABF website. Click the American Honey Queen's page and scroll down for these guidelines. Additionally, if you or members of your state or local association have questions about where to start, contact me directly at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com or 414.545.5514.

## HONEY QUEEN FUND

**The following individuals contributed to the Honey Queen Fund during the months of January and February 2014. These donations help the Honey Queen/ Princess Program continue to have public representatives educate the public nationwide about the beekeeping industry.**

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# From the Honey Queen

*by Susannah Austin, 2014 American Honey Queen*

*Susannah Austin*
*2014 American Honey Queen*

While February has been a quiet month for our honeybees in colder areas, Princess Elena and I have kept busy promoting our sweet industry!

Shortly after returning from American Honey Queen training in the North, it was time to jump into my responsibilities for the program's social media outlets. The educational outreach of the Honey Queen and Princess is greatly increased through the production of YouTube videos and maintenance of the Honey Queen blog and Facebook page. It's also a good way for Princess Elena and me to promote the beekeeping industry even when we're not on the road. Once I returned to Florida, I was interviewed by my university's newspaper, the Central Florida Future, and had my very first front cover article published! You can find this article through the American Honey Queen program's Facebook page!

Even though it's still snowy in many parts of the country, February is already state fair time in Florida. Since the state fairgrounds in Tampa are not too far from my hometown, I spent a lot of time helping to promote honey with the Florida State Beekeepers Association. On the opening day of the state fair, I attended the Taste of Florida Breakfast to speak with legislators and other officials, including Florida Governor Rick Scott, about the importance of honeybees and the contributions that they make to the state of Florida. I also made appearances on "The Dennis Lee Show" at the fairgrounds several times to talk about the importance of honey bees and promote the beekeeping booth at the fair. These stage shows draw a large crowd, so I reached many people through these appearances. Finally, Honey Day was the last Saturday at the Florida State Fair, and what better way to celebrate than with delicious honey recipes? I gave five cooking demonstrations throughout the day and passed out the sweet treats to over 500 fairgoers!

*Queen Susannah interviews on the Dennis Lee Stage Show at the Florida State Fair in February*

Also during my stay in Tampa, I attended a church Valentine's Day dinner with the Kelley family. American Honey Queens have attended this church dinner for the past several years to provide information about the program and to distribute roses to all of the women in attendance. Later that week, I attended the monthly meeting of the Tampa Bay Beekeepers Association to talk about the American Beekeeping Federation and my work with the American Honey Queen Program. I want to thank Bert Kelley, Noel and Marie Blanchet, the Florida State Beekeepers Association and all of the beekeepers who worked so hard to make the state fair a good experience!

Later in February, Princess Elena and I attended the University of Minnesota Beekeeping short course. During the course, we stayed with Terry McDaniel, who made sure we had a chance to see some of the local area during the weekend. As a native Floridian, the weekend course was a fantastic opportunity for me to learn all about beekeeping in northern climates where winter is actually cold! Both class days were sold out, and, over the weekend, approximately 400 people from across Minnesota learned all they needed to know for the first two years of beekeeping. Dr. Marla Spivak and Gary Reuter taught everything from basic beekeeping equipment to treating diseases and pests. I really enjoyed learning about beekeeping in such a different climate from the one I am used to and am very glad to have even more information for my presentations throughout the rest of the year. After Saturday's classes, Elena and I operated a table for the American Beekeeping Federation to pass out information and answer questions about the benefits of joining the American Beekeeping Federation.

*(continued on page 16)*

*From the Honey Queen*
*(continued from page 15)*

Also during our Minnesota trip, Elena and I had the opportunity to go on a behind the scenes tour of the newly opened Minnesota Honey Company. The Minnesota Honey Company is a very unique store that features honey and honey bee products from all over the state. From honey candies and specialty chocolates to beeswax soaps and lotions, there was plenty to see and try. A very neat feature of the store is that even though they have a huge variety of products, customers are free to sample any or all of them – you definitely need to try every flavor of honey candy before making the important decision about which to choose! They are also setting up a classroom so that beekeeping and honey education can take place right in the store. It was excellent to see different marketing ideas for honey. I extend many thanks to Marla, Gary and our hostess, Terry McDaniel, for making our visit to Minnesota possible.

*Queen Susannah discusses the queen bee's role in the hive to students in Kentucky*

I spent the first week of March visiting Kentucky for "Bee Friendly Frankfort." The Bluegrass Beekeepers Association's annual Bee School was hosted at Kentucky State University over the weekend. In the week leading up to Bee School, the Capital City Beekeepers Association in Frankfort promoted a wide variety of community events to encourage the local business and residents to learn more about honey bees and ways in which they can be "Bee Friendly." Throughout the week, I visited five different schools and spoke with nearly 500 students about the importance of honey bees and what the students could do to help honey bees and local beekeepers. During my visit to Dadant's distributing center in Frankfort, I also spoke with some local homeschoolers. I visited two senior homes and spoke with residents about honey bees and their importance, as well as some of the interesting biology that occurs inside each hive. I also had three radio interviews, worth about $550 of free advertising, to promote local beekeeping events and encourage people to learn more about honey bees.

At Bee School, people came from all over Kentucky, and some from even further, to learn all there is to know about our favorite insect and how to manage it. During the program, I taught a class about honey bee education – from the reasons why educating the public is important, to some ways in which we can accomplish this and some of the pitfalls to avoid! It was a good opportunity to pass on some of the learning experiences I have had as a honey queen and hopefully give other beekeepers the information they need to begin educating others.

I really enjoyed my time while in Kentucky and did see some very unique ideas for promoting honey bee education. A beehive hairdo contest was held downtown on Friday night with standing room only. Both the participants and audience had a great time enjoying the fun, friends and fabulous hairstyles! Another wonderful idea was a project with the local art programs. The beekeepers provided hives to the art students, who painted and decorated the hives beautifully. The hives were auctioned off at the Bee School and the money made was donated back to the art classes and toward the Bee Friendly activities for the next year. I send a huge thank you to Capital City, Bluegrass and Kentucky State Beekeepers Associations for inviting me to participate in Bee Friendly Frankfort and the Bluegrass Bee School. Also, thanks to Marsha Bezold, John Antenucci and George Fowler for arranging my visit and taking me to all of my promotions and events.

I am excited to see what the coming months bring as I promote in Florida and Oregon! To see more pictures and updates follow the American Honey Queen Program on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AmericanHoneyQueenProgram. If you would like to invite Princess Elena or me to attend your event or would like more information about the American Honey Queen Program, contact Anna Kettlewell at 414.545.5514 or by email at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com.

# From the Honey Princess

*by Elena Hoffman, 2014 American Honey Princess*

*Elena Hoffman*
*2014 American Honey Princess*

The month of February began in my home state of Pennsylvania. I was given the wonderful opportunity to attend the Western Pennsylvania Beekeeping Seminar on February 15. I gave a presentation during the opening of the event in front of almost all the 450 attendees. I reported on my accomplishments for Pennsylvania beekeepers last year, what I will do this year as American Honey Princess and my goals for supporting the beekeeping industry on a national level as a representative of the American Beekeeping Federation (ABF). I also had the honor of crowning the 2014 Pennsylvania Honey Queen, Kaylee Kilgore. To end the event with a full and happy stomach, I joined past American Honey Queen Alyssa Fine in a cooking demonstration. We whipped up four excellent honey recipes, including honey chai tea, and served plenty of food with honey facts to the people who attended our demonstration. Check out some other delicious honey recipes on the blog that Queen Susannah and I write at www.buzzingacrossamerica.com! I send a special thank you to Stephan Repasky for the invitation to such a lovely event, and Rachel Bryson for being my hostess for the weekend.

After Pennsylvania, I hopped on a plane to Minnesota to join Queen Susannah in attending the University of Minnesota's "Beekeeping in Northern Climates" short course. The course was completely full! For two days, Susannah and I learned and brushed up on some fantastic beekeeping knowledge. We also operated a table for ABF where we gave out copies of the membership application and informed beginner and potential beekeepers why they should become a member of ABF. To end our stay in Minnesota, we visited the newly opened Minnesota Honey Company to show support for locally sold honey. We tried some Minnesota honey and made some YouTube videos with the owner explaining how honey can be beneficial in products like soap or lotions. It was an outstanding shop filled with any honey product you could imagine! You could almost call it "Willy Wonka and the Honey Factory" with the product diversity in the store! I am very grateful for these promotional opportunities in Minnesota. I extend a special thank you to Dr. Marla Spivak and Gary Reuter for the invitation to the short course and to Terry McDaniel for hosting Susannah and me for the weekend.

Along with these wonderful promotions, I also obtained some media coverage in February. I had my first major newspaper interview with the Philadelphia Inquirer, the largest newspaper in Pennsylvania. The article included information on honeybees' importance to our food supply, pollination, honey production and information on how people can help honeybees by planting bee-friendly flowers and limiting pesticide use! It was a wonderful interview experience and an amazing newspaper article! I was also featured in The Daily Local News, Daily Item, and Lancaster Farming papers in Pennsylvania. These articles generated over $4,000 of free media publicity for the beekeeping industry and the American Beekeeping Federation!

*Princess Elena and 2012 American Honey Queen Alyssa Fine give a cooking with honey demonstration at the Western Pennsylvania Beekeeping Seminar in Mars, PA*

My upcoming promotions are in Texas and Connecticut! If you're worried about Queen Susannah or me being fully booked, don't fret! There are still spots available in our schedule. To invite Queen Susannah or me to your event, contact Anna Kettlewell at 414.545.5514 or via email at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com.

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# From the Auxiliary

*by Lillian Kelley, ABF Auxiliary President*

Even though it has been a cold snowy winter in Virginia, the 2014 beekeeping year is well under way. By this time in March, the crocuses are typically blooming and we are enjoying the forsythia. Instead, our last snow of the winter was the third week in March and our package bees arrive in about two weeks as we desperately await warmer weather. The health of the bees remains a major concern for beekeepers as they prepare for the upcoming season. Keeping the bees alive is also a concern for beekeepers in the spring. Hopefully those sustaining losses are rebuilding in anticipation of the honey production.

As you work with your bees, don't forget to snap pictures of your favorite beekeeper, beehive or kids. Below are two wonderful honey recipes for your enjoyment from our baking contest this year.

*2nd place candy by Ellen Sundberg*

## Caramel Pecan Clusters (Turtles)

- 2/3 cup honey
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup pecans
- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate

Butter a cookie sheet and dust with 1-teaspoon cornstarch. Arrange three pecan halves in groups on a cookie sheet.

In a saucepan over direct heat, mix evaporated milk with the honey, constantly sirring until it reaches 250 F. Drop a teaspoon full of the mixture on the pecan clusters, then let cool.

Create a double boiler and melt the semisweet chocolate over water; coat the top of each cluster with melted chocolate.

*2nd place snacks by Carol Kuehl*

## Peanut Butter and Honey Mix

- 40 ounces party mix style cereal (This recipe used 3 boxes, 1 each of rice wheat and corn)
- 1 ½ cups honey
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 ½ cups peanut butter
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla
- 2-3 cups peanuts

Heat the oven to 250 F. In a saucepan, combine the honey and brown sugar and bring to a rolling boil. Remove the saucepan from heat and stir in the peanut butter until the mixture is smooth; add the vanilla.

Pour hot syrup mixture over cereal and stir to coat. Spread cereal over two jellyroll pans and bake for 30 minutes, stirring after 15 minutes. Break the mixture apart once cooled.

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