March/April 2017
VOL 75, No. 2

American Beekeeping Federation NEWS
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Number in parentheses next to Director's name indicates the year their current term ends and whether they are in their 1st or 2nd term.

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NEWS
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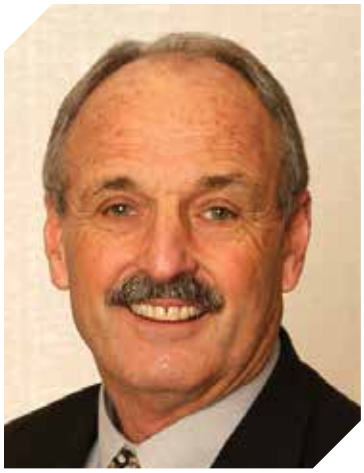
Perspectives in Beekeeping:
Spring Has Sprung!

by: Gene Brandi
ABF President



Gene Brandi, ABF President

Spring has sprung with a vengeance here in California as we are having above normal temperatures in the Central Valley and have not had rain for more than three weeks, the longest dry spell of the winter. However, as I write this, many parts of the upper Mid-West and Atlantic states are being pounded with the biggest snowstorm of the season. Fires buffeted by strong winds in other parts of the Mid-West have recently devastated thousands of acres of farms and rangeland. I certainly hope that the areas where you live and keep your bees have been spared from any unusually devastating weather conditions.

Almond pollination is just about over and bee hives are being removed from the orchards daily. Only the later blooming almond varieties have any petals at all as I write this but there are very few viable flowers remaining on the trees. Thousands of hives are being moved out of California daily to Southern states, the Pacific Northwest, or to other locations in California for further crop pollination, splitting, or perhaps early honey production.

There have been reports of bee kills from early pesticide applications to other crops near almond orchards prior to and during 2017 almond bloom. These occurrences are not as commonplace as they used to be when delayed dormant sprays of organophosphates, carbamates, or other pesticides were very often applied to tree crops, including almonds just prior to bloom. This year it appears that most of the major bee kill problems have been caused by thrip sprays on blooming nectarines. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands of colonies were severely damaged just as almond bloom was beginning in mid-February. Most nectarine growers will apply these generally short residual sprays to their blooming nectarines at night to minimize damage to bees in the area, but it appears that at least some spraying occurred during the day as well. It is a devastating situation for the beekeepers as well as the almond growers involved who need strong beehives to adequately pollinate the almond orchards. One beekeeper reportedly had to supply more than 1,000 additional colonies on one ranch where that number of colonies had been severely weakened or killed by pesticide applications to blooming nectarines on properties within two miles of the almonds where the bees were located.

Reports of bee or brood loss from bloom sprays in the almonds this year are becoming more numerous each day. Tank mixing of insect growth regulators with fungicides has been reported in some areas, despite the Almond Board's best management practices and the educational efforts of a great many beekeepers. It only takes one grower in an area who applies an offending tank mix, insecticide, or even a fungicide (without IGR) during the day to cause problems for all bee hives in the area.

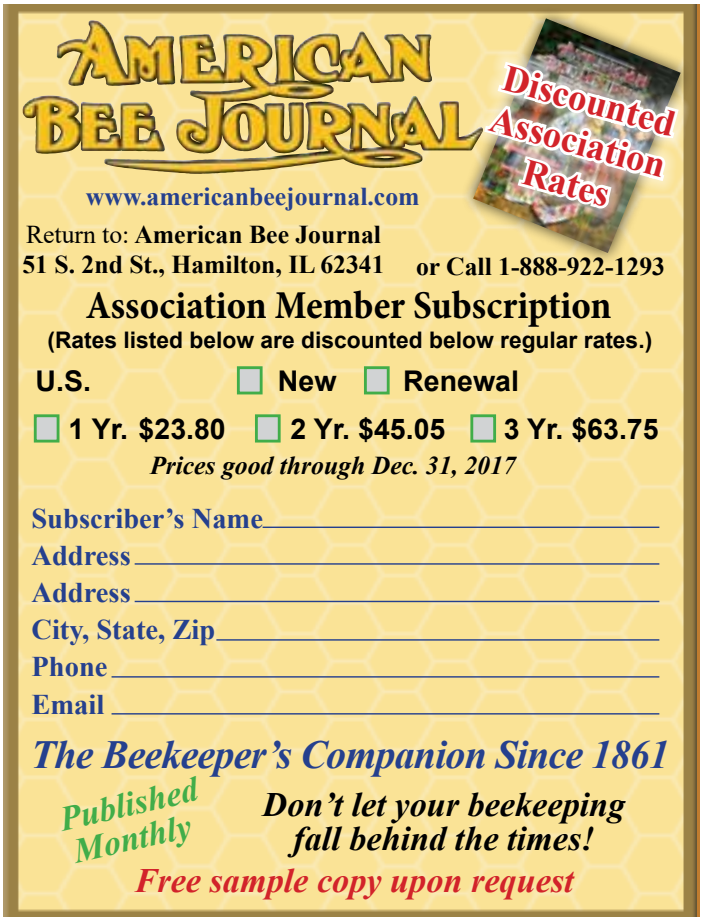
We would very much like to know if you, or any fellow beekeepers you know, encountered bee losses or brood damage during almond pollination this year. Please let us know by sending a message to *gbrandi@sbcglobal.net* with as many details as possible including number of colonies involved, locations, and which pesticides were applied if known.

What is the solution to this perpetual problem of bees being exposed to the harmful effects of pesticides? If bees can't be adequately protected in California, the state where they are most needed for agricultural pollination services, how can they ever be protected from pesticides in other states? Clear enforceable label language

Robson Honey Company

on products which are either acutely toxic to bees, or that can cause damage to bee colonies, is the fundamental basis of pollinator protection from pesticides. EPA has actually weakened language on certain pesticide products in recent years by creating loopholes which can allow some toxic products to be applied to blooming plants. Fungicides and insect growth regulators have no bee hazard warning on their labels whatsoever, so how are growers, pest control advisors, or applicators to know whether a product is toxic to bees? EPA has not moved in that direction in recent years despite our urging. This is unconscionable given the many problems that have surfaced with bloom sprays during almonds. More education for growers, PCA's, and applicators would be helpful, but there needs to be greater incentive to follow the label or use Best Management Practices in cases where the bee hazard label language is clearly inadequate.

continued on page 4



Perspectives in Beekeeping – cont. from page3

When educating growers and pesticide applicators about the downside of daytime bloom sprays on any crop, it is important for beekeepers to stress to them that anything applied during bloom can impair pollination efficiency as well as harm the bees or their colonies. The foraging bees get wet and may chill in cool weather which makes it very difficult for them to dry off, warm up and make it back to the hive. The blast of air from ground rigs, airplanes or helicopters can be fatal for them as well. It is good to remind growers of the fact that they are paying good money for the bees they rent and they should allow the bees to do their job when it is possible for them to get it done. If fungicide or other applications are needed, they should be applied when the bees are not pollinating, such as very late in the day or during the evening.

In a recent ABF E-Buzz, I mentioned that there have been fewer reported bee hive thefts this year prior to almond pollination season, which has historically been when most thefts have occurred. Well, I spoke too soon! One evening while I was loading a semi with bees, my brother (who was loading another semi on a neighboring orchard) drove over and told me that 96 hives had been stolen from his grower's orchard in the previous 24 hours! This is not the first-time thieves have been at work after almond pollination is over, but it is a bit unusual. The hives belong to Robson Honey of Carrington, North Dakota. Many hive bodies were branded "D. ROBSON, CARRINGTON, N. DAK" and were singles. Please be on the lookout for this type of equipment.

Message from the ABF Vice President

by: Tim May
ABF Vice President

Tim May, ABF Vice President

As I begin writing this article the snow is continuing to come down. We are expected to get around 7" today. It is mid-March and we have had crazy weather this winter and early spring. This is the first measurable snow that we've had here around Chicago in over two months. We have had days in the 60's during February and some days with 50 mph winds.

The bees have been bringing in tree pollen for the last three weeks. I received a call from one of our apple growers and he informed me that the apple trees may be ready for bees as early as the 3rd week in March. It has never been that early. Most years it is around the 2nd week of April that the trees start blooming and as late as early May. The current snowfall along with an unpredicted week of cold temperatures should slow this process down.

We are set to begin unwrapping our surviving hives. Unfortunately, it looks like we will have losses approaching 50% this year. Most of our losses are occurring during October and November. It seems like when the hive makes it until December it has a good chance of surviving the winter. Most of our surviving hives look strong at this point (see photo).

Honey bees in February

The downward trend of bee survival has become very frustrating. Our mite counts last year were lower than past years yet we still are experiencing large losses. The weather has been mild this winter as well. Bee yards that are two miles apart and treated the same have completely different survival rates. One yard has a 90% survival rate with thriving colonies while two miles away the yard is completely dead. There must be some other variable involved. Personally, I think a lot of the problem can be attributed to pesticides. What else could cause such a variation between bee yards.

I was able to represent the ABF at the annual "Pheasant Fest" in Minneapolis last month. We had a booth in the "Pollinator Plaza" section of the exhibit hall. There were over 30,000 attendees at the event and on Friday afternoon I attended the "Pollinator Symposium."

The symposium was titled "Bees, Butterflies, Birds and You." The discussions revolved around habitat needs for pollinators, new research on the importance of forage to honey bee health, population status of monarchs, and the delivery of goals in the National Pollinator Partnership Action Plan.

Pete Berthelson discussed "The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund's" NextGen Habitat Project program. The program has two primary goals. The first goal is to replace critical wildlife forage and habitat. The second is to demonstrate a better model for pollinator conservation using more cost-effective, pollinator preferred seed mixtures, better establishment procedures and management techniques that reduce weed competition issues and improve wildlife habitat quality.

The NextGen Habitat Project provides free seed mixtures, annual rental, and planting incentive payments with flexible contract options. This program is now available in six upper Midwestern states. North Dakota and South Dakota were the first two states in the program which has now expanded to include Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri. The average project has been 15 acres with an enrollment of six years. Half of these acres are planted with bee friendly seed mixtures while the other half contains butterfly friendly seed mixtures. Seed mixtures are developed for the geographic area where they will be planted.

This is a great program designed to help one of the bee industry's biggest problem, the reduction of critical nutrition due to the lack of proper forage. To get involved please contact "The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund" at www.BeeandButterflyFund.org.

Some of the other presenters at the symposium included: Clint Otto, Research Ecologist, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center; Caydee Savinelli, Pollinator and IPM Stewardship Lead, Syngenta; Keri Carstens, Integrated Product Research and Stewardship, DuPont/ Pioneer; and Matt Filsinger, National Team Lead, USFWS-PFW Program.

Zac Browning was the final presenter and gave an inspiring talk on the importance of pollinator habitat and the changes that his family has witnessed through out their four generations of beekeeping. The symposium concluded with a panel discussion involving all the presenters.

This weekend I am headed to the "Mettawa Bee Seminar" in Lake Forest, IL. The seminar's presenters will discuss the importance of bee nutrition. There is a great list of speakers and I am really looking forward to being at the seminar. I hope your bees are doing well. Enjoy the spring!

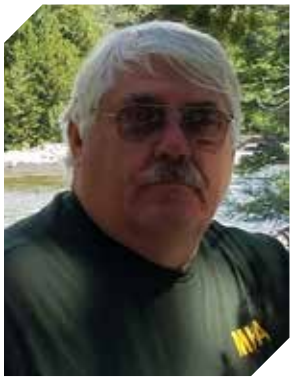
Meet Your ABF Board
State Delegate Representatives

by: Regina K. Robuck
ABF Executive Director

Roger Hooopingarner

Dr. Roger Hoopingarner got his start in beekeeping 70 years ago through the Boy Scouts of America in Detroit, Michigan. Roger received his Bachelor's degree from Michigan State University followed by the University of Wisconsin where he received his Doctorate. Roger remained at the University of Wisconsin for a year on a Post-Doctoral fellowship then returning to Michigan State University in the Entomology department where he worked for over 35 years. During his tenure at Michigan State, Roger worked as a faculty member; teaching and providing research and extension for the University.

Roger has since retired and currently is an active member in the Michigan Beekeeper's Association and travels the Country giving talks and presentations.



Darrel Rufer

Darrel J. Rufer is an accomplished Chef and Commercial Beekeeper in Minnesota, South Dakota and Texas. In addition, he is self-employed and has over 40 years' experience in business management and marketing in "Bee and Honey" agriculture. Darrel is a contributing "hotline "phone marketing statistical provider for the Mid US Honey Producers, serves as a Minnesota Honey Producers State Delegate to the ABF, is a member of the following beekeeping organizations: ABF, MN Honey Producers, South Dakota Honey Producers, Texas Honey Producers, Sioux Honey Association, and is a member of "Bee Informed," and The Texas Farm Bureau. His accomplishments include classroom and organized presentations, contributions for articles in the "MN Beekeeper" and "Beelines" publications, American Beekeeping Journal and the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, As a Culinary Chef, Darrel served his country as an officer's cook. Darrel's love of bees began when he caught a "swarm" in the parking lot of that establishment and shook them in a box from the dumpster and bungee corded the box to the back of his motorcycle in 1977. As a Chef and now as a Beekeeper his creativity, curiosity, and hands on approach continue to help him develop his unique and practical leadership abilities, his marketing and business applications in management efficiency, and are key qualities for making tough decisions in and out of the bee yard. Governor Perpich presented Darrel with a letter of appreciation that hangs on a wall in his Texas home with the following words, "To Darrel Rufer, with appreciation for your leadership and dedication to promoting Minnesota Honey." Darrel is serving on the ABF Board a second time. Also in 1999 Darrel received "The Beekeeper of the Year" Award from the MN Honey Producers. Darrel's beekeeping philosophy is, "As beekeeping changes the keeper of the bees must change also!"

Debbie Seib

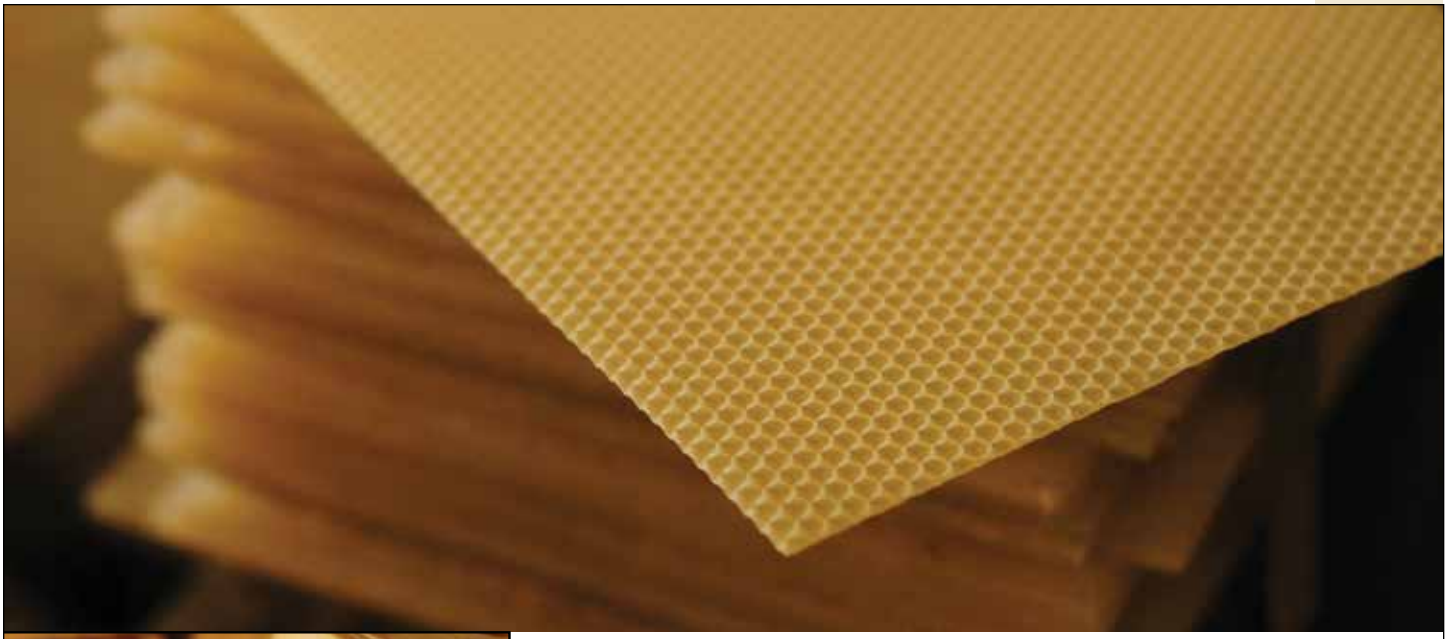
Debbie has been involved in beekeeping since 1984. She was involved in leading the effort to bring Apimondia to the United States. Along with her husband, Mike, they manage a Bee School in Indiana that is attended by over 1,100 beekeepers from several different states. Each spring, she hosts a "Newbie Day" for new beekeepers and continues to present to many local and state associations about different issues that affect our beloved honeybees, pollinators and beekeepers.

She is currently serving as the Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster for The Beekeepers of Indiana, the President for the regional Heartland Apicultural Society and the Indiana delegate for the Eastern Apicultural Society. For the past two years, she has served on the board of the American Beekeeping Federation. Along with her husband, Mike, they keep between 100 to 150 hives.

Blake Shook

Blake Shook, who got his start in beekeeping at the age of 12, and his wife, Kathleen, own Desert Creek Honey Company. They operate over 5,000 hives in Texas, California and North Dakota. Blake packages and markets a wide variety of honey and honey products online and throughout Texas. Blake is a director of the American Beekeeping Federation, as well as our Membership and Marketing Committee chair. He has served as president and vice president of a local beekeeping association in Texas and as president of the Texas Beekeepers Association.

When he is not working bees, he has had the privilege of speaking at local, state, national and international beekeeping conventions promoting beekeeping. He has also written and contributed content for national beekeeping magazines.



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Government Relations Report

by: Tim May
ABF Vice President

The comment period on FDA's nutritional labelling ruling ended on March 6th. The ABF submitted a comment on the ruling as well as signing on to a comment drafted by the National Honey Packers and Dealers Association (NHPDA).

The ABF Legislative committee has been discussing and putting together a list of our legislative priorities. We are also working on our industry priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill process is continuing with House Ag subcommittees beginning with several rounds of hearings. Most commodity groups and general farm organizations are also using this time to finalize their Farm Bill priorities.

The proposed budget by the new administration calls for drastic cuts in domestic programs that effect the beekeeping and honey industry. Proposed cuts include USDA (29%), EPA (30%), HHS (23%) and Labor (21%). Although these are drastic cuts they are only the Administration's policy priorities. Congress will treat this as an advisory document and begin the budget process. "The President proposes the Congress deposes"

These percentage cuts are only aggregate numbers. To see how this will really affect our industry we must look through the accompanying budget indexes and documents. This will tell us which individual programs are receiving the proposed cuts and what type of policy direction we can expect from the new Administration. The department teams are still being formed and this process is taking longer than in the past.

ABF President Gene Brandi and I are planning our annual trip to Washington, D.C. in June. Our visit will coincide with this years "Pollinator Week". Our Washington representative, Fran Boyd (Meyer's and Associates) will be accompanying on this visit when we plan to discuss our priorities with various agencies.

We will also be working with the AHPA to draft our industry priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill. Gene and I are looking forward to the challenge that we face in Washington. We appreciate your support.

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ABF's New Membership Coordinator
Sherrell L. Bailey

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Sherrell L. Bailey brings with her, 10 years of customer service experience. She has spent the last 6 years dedicated as the Program Administrator for one of Atlanta's highly rated child care centers. During her tenure, Sherrell was praised for creating new program policies and creating innovative ways to help the organization strive. Previously she worked for a large chain hotel in North Carolina as the Front Desk Ambassador.

Sherrell stems from a diverse educational background, receiving her bachelor's degree in Sports Science from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in 2011 and her Certificate in Project Management from Georgia State University in 2015. Sherrell is currently enrolled at Clayton State University where she will receive her Certificate in Meeting and Event Planning this year.

On March 1, 2017, Sherrell joined Meeting Expectations at the Senior Association Coordinator, bringing her commitment to customer services and result driven attitude to help produce success.

United States Honey Production Up 3 Percent for Operations with Five or More Colonies in 2016

by: USDA-NASS

Released March 22, 2017, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

United States honey production in 2016 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 162 million pounds, up 3 percent from 2015. There were 2.78 million colonies from which honey was harvested in 2016, up 4 percent from 2015. Yield of honey harvested per colony averaged 58.3 pounds, down 1 percent from the 58.9 pounds in 2015. Colonies which produced honey in more than one State were counted in each State where the honey was produced. Therefore, at the United States level yield per colony may be understated, but total production would not be impacted. Colonies were not included if honey was not harvested. Producer honey stocks were 41.3 million pounds on December 15, 2016, down 2 percent from a year earlier. Stocks held by producers exclude those held under the commodity loan program.

Operations with Less than Five Colonies Produced 766 Thousand Pounds of Honey in 2016

United States honey production in 2016 from producers with less than five colonies totaled 766 thousand pounds, up 6 percent from 2015. There were 24 thousand colonies from which honey was harvested in 2016, up 4 percent from 2015. The average yield was 31.9 pounds per colony in 2016, up 2 percent from the previous year. This yield is 26.4 pounds less than what was harvested per colony on operations with five or more colonies.

Honey Prices Down Slightly for Operations with Five or More Colonies in 2016

United States honey prices decreased during 2016 to 207.5 cents per pound, down slightly from 208.3 cents per pound in 2015. 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 the 2015 crop reflect honey sold in 2015 and 2016. Some 2015 honey was sold in 2016, which caused some revisions to the 2015 honey prices. Price data was not collected for operations with less than five colonies.

Price Paid per Queen was 19 Dollars for Operations with Five or More Colonies in 2016

For operations with five or more colonies, the average prices paid in 2016 for honey bee queens, packages, and nucs were $19, $89, and $117 respectively. The average prices paid in 2016 for operations with less than five colonies were $33 per queen, $109 per package, and $122 per nuc. Comparable data is not available for 2015. For operations with five more colonies, pollination income for 2016 was $338 million, down 1 percent from 2015. Other income from honey bees for operations with five or more colonies in 2016 was $149 million, down 10 percent from 2015. These estimates along with expenditure and apiary worker information can be found on pages 4 and 5 of this report.

NEW COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPING *TEXTING PROGRAM*

The ABF recently initiated a new texting program for its commercial members and these two issues, bee/brood damage and hive theft in almonds were the subjects of the first text message. This new commercial member benefit is meant to be a two-way street so beekeepers are encouraged to send in any news items of importance to the ABF so that pertinent news can be shared amongst our commercial members.

If you are a commercial or Presidents Club member of ABF, you are entitled to be included in this program. To participate, ABF must have your cell phone number for the texts. If your cell phone number is not part of your member profile, please contact the ABF office at 404.760.2875 or email at ***info@abfnet.org*** and let them know your number, so you can be included in the texting program.

Your opinion matters, so please let us know how the texting program is working for you and if you have any suggestions as to how it may be improved.

Nosema ceranae: A sweet surprise?

by: Courtney MacInnis
Foundation of the Preservation of Honey Bees 2017 Scholarship Recipient

Courtney MacInnis

Courtney I. MacInnis[1,2], B. Andrew Keddie[1], and Stephen F. Pernal[2]
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Nosema ceranae is a midgut parasite of adult bees, only recently described from A. mellifera[1]. Since its discovery, this emerging parasite has had demonstrably negative effects on honey bee health. In recent years, Canadian beekeepers have often cited N. ceranae as a factor contributing to winter colony loss[2]. In Southwest Europe, infection with N. ceranae at the colony level is associated with a decrease in colony size, brood rearing capacity, honey production, and collapsing colonies[3,4,5]. Previous work conducted in the U.S. has also shown a relationship between Nosema spp. presence and survival, in that Nosema spp. infections were more prevalent in colonies suffering from colony collapse disorder than healthy colonies[6]. In individual workers, infection with N. ceranae has been shown to: suppress the honey bee immune system[7], degenerate midgut tissues[8], induce energetic stress[9], decrease the lifespan and nursing ability of young bees[10, 11], lead to early-onset foraging[9, 11], and impair flight behaviour[12].

The only registered chemical therapy available to manage N. ceranae infections in North America is Fumagilin-B®. At low concentrations, this antibiotic may exacerbate N. ceranae infections[13], and dicyclohexylamine, a salt present in Fumagilin-B®, may have potential toxic side effects in adult honey bees[14]. In addition, Fumagilin-B® only inactivates the reproductive stages, and not the infectious (spore) stage of N. ceranae. As a result, when Fumagilin-B® is applied to an active N. ceranae infection, it suppresses the infection rather than eliminating it. Given that we do not yet fully understand how N. ceranae is transmitted, the development of more effective, economical, and chemical-free management strategies for beekeepers to maintain healthy honey bee colonies is challenging.

Figure 1. *A newly-emerged Nosema spp.-free bee being prepared for inoculation (A, B) and receiving a dose of N. ceranae inoculum (C).*

A few published studies have examined the survival of N. ceranae spores under laboratory conditions, suggesting the organism to be thermotolerant, and cold intolerant[15, 16, 17, 18]. Despite this, the parasite appears to be enigmatic, as it persists and proliferates in cold temperate climates as well as warmer climates, resulting in the displacement of N. apis. We hypothesize that this parasite can survive at low temperatures in substrates associated with honey bee colonies, owing to N. ceranae's persistence in cooler climates. We assessed the viability (survival) and infectivity (ability to infect a host) (Fig. 1) of N. ceranae spores stored on beeswax, in honey, 2M sucrose, and water after exposure to four biologically relevant temperatures for temperate climates (33, 20, -12, and -20°C) with the goal of producing information from which to develop urgently-needed chemical-free methods for N. ceranae control.

For N. ceranae spores maintained in 2M sucrose, viability and infectivity were slightly higher for spores maintained at -12 and -20°C than at 20 and 33°C. N. ceranae spores kept in honey at -12 and -20°C also maintained higher viability and infectivity than those at 20 and 33°C (Fig. 2). Spores maintained at -20°C were the most infective (data not shown). These experiments provide evidence for cold tolerance, which explains the parasite's persistence in temperate climates, and suggests that contaminated feed may act as the primary route of transmission in commercial beekeeping operations. A common practice of beekeepers in temperate climates is to maintain contaminated equipment (i.e., honey frames) outside over the winter. However, these results suggest that this is not an effective method for reducing N. ceranae spore viability.

In the summer of 2016, we fed Nosema spp.-free colonies N. ceranae spores that had been maintained in honey at -20°C for eight months to determine if the parasite was infective at the colony level. We are still in the data analysis phase of this project.

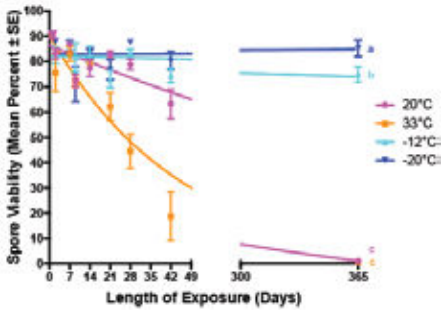

Figure 2. *Mean Nosema ceranae spore viability (±SE) for spores stored in honey. Each point represents the mean spore viability for samples analyzed at that time point. Letters indicate statistically significant differences (P<0.05) for the last time point (Day 365) only. [Day 365 F3,12=446.6, P<0.0001, one- way ANOVA, Tukey's HSD]*

For references, please visit: *http://preservationofhoneybees.org/foundation-scholarship/2017-scholars*

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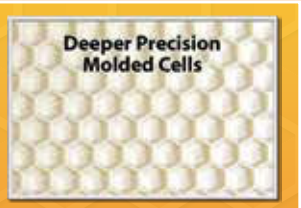

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National Honey Board CEO to Speak at California Honey Festival

Beekeepers and packers across the country have long relied on the National Honey Board (NHB) to promote honey and communicate the latest industry developments. NHB CEO, Margaret Lombard is especially focused on increasing successful honey marketing.

With the inaugural California Honey Festival on May 6th in Woodland, CA, the National Honey Board and Director Lombard will have another platform to promote honey and teach the public about this extraordinary product.

The California Honey Festival is a day-long celebration of the honey and pollination industry and is delighted to announce that Director Lombard will be speaking on the dedicated Beekeeper stage.

"I'm really looking forward to being at the California Honey Festival this year" says Lombard. "It's a tremendous opportunity to celebrate our industry and communicate how important honey and honey bees are to our food system."

The 'Beekeeper Stage' where Lombard will be speaking is one of 5 stages at the festival offering a range of music, culinary learning, kids entertainment, gardening ideas and more. Besides the stage entertainment, the festival has several hands-on activities embedded throughout the festival.

One such sweet element is 'The Honey Lab'; a dedicated zone offering guests an immersive sensory experience to learn about the nuances of honey flavor, the history of honey, the biology of bees, and more. The California Honey Festival is co-sponsored by the Honey & Pollination Center at the Robert Mondavi Institute, UC Davis and will use their infamous 'Honey Wheel' to help teach guests about honey flavor.

Other festival features include live music, carnival rides, delicious honey inspired food, arts & crafts, vendors and much more. Travel and accommodations to the festival can be found at the website: www.CaliforniaHoneyFestival.com.

The May 6th event will also announce the winner of the California Wildflower Honey Contest. Submissions now being accepted for the California Wildflower Honey Contest- applications can be downloaded online at: www.CaliforniaHoneyFestival.com.

Bee Connected: ABF Facebook Fan Page

by: Regina K. Robuck
ABF Executive Director

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 over 19,500 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 lineup.

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!

Impact of Neonicotinoid Pesticides on Male Insects

by: Lars Straub
Foundation of the Preservation of Honey Bees 2017 Scholarship Recipient

It is widely believed that multiple simultaneous stressors are responsible for recent observations of elevated managed honey bee colony mortality in the northern hemisphere[1,2]; however, basic data are still lacking[3,4]. Neonicotinoid pesticides are believed to be one potential stressor contributing to these losses. They are commonly employed in agriculture as a pest control agent, and have repeatedly been shown to negatively affect beneficial insects[5,6]. In the past, primarily non-reproductive female (worker) honey bees have been the main focus of ecotoxicology studies aimed to understand effects of neonicotinoids on honey bees, despite the importance of other groups within the colony such as the primary reproductive female (the queen) and reproductive males (the drones).

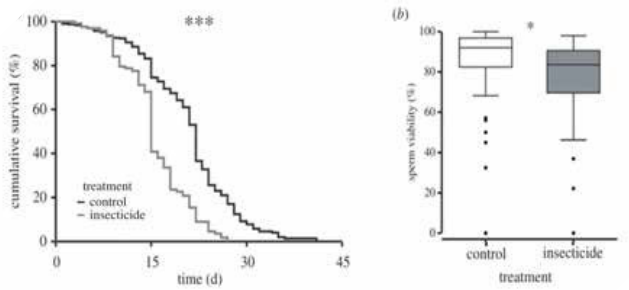

*Figure 1: Honey bee drone (male) cage mortality and sperm assessment. (a) Survival curves indicate the cumulative survival (%) of honey bee (Apis mellifera) drones (N = 567) under neonicotinoid insecticide exposure compared with controls. A significant difference was observed for the mortality of drones ($p < 0.001$). (b) Percentage of viable sperm in honey bee drones showed significant differences ($p = 0.03$). A significant difference between treatment groups is indicated by * $p < 0.05$ and by *** $p < 0.001$.*

Mating is the only significant function of an adult drone. They do not contribute to colony survival, except when cannibalized as brood in periods of dearth[7,8]. During the process of copulation, semen (consisting of sperm and mucus) is transferred to the queen's oviducts[9]. Insemination quality and quantity plays a crucial role not only for the honey bee queens (poorly inseminated queens are less attractive to workers and are typically replaced[10]), but also for survival of the entire colony[11].

The objective of my doctoral thesis is to investigate the potential impact of neonicotinoid pesticides on male insects using drone honey bees as a model; to date no data exist regarding the effects of these commonly occurring chemicals on these males. Therefore, I aim to investigate the potential effects of neonicotinoids on drone lifespan, drifting behaviour and reproductive health (sperm quality). I will perform experiments under controlled laboratory (**Objective 1**) and natural colony conditions (**Objective 2**). Longevity is an important indicator for an individual's overall state of health [12], and past studies have shown that neonicotinoids can reduce worker lifespan[13]. Similar results for drones could have severe consequences for colony fitness, as well as reduce overall genetic diversity within honey bee populations[14] because drones may not reach the age of sexual maturity [15]. Furthermore, successful transfer of sperm is the primary goal of copulation[16]. Therefore, the importance of large quantities and high quality drone sperm cannot be understated. Any decrease in these reproductive traits could have drastic consequences upon queen mating[17], and could provide one possible explanation for increased colony failure[18]. Drone drifting behavior will also be monitored to determine possible effects of pesticides on drone acquired navigational memory. Recent studies have indicated that neonicotinoids can potentially block remote memory or alter navigational memory in worker bees[19].

Additionally, I aim to investigate the potential effects of neonicotinoids on drone mating behaviour (orientation) and mating success with virgin queens (**Objective 3**). Previous studies have shown that worker bees exposed to pesticides showed a significantly reduced sense of orientation[19]. Similar effects on drones could reduce their capability of finding drone congregation areas (DCA's), and therefore significantly reduce their mating opportunities. Ultimately, the proportion of successful matings between exposed to non-exposed drones will reveal the potential risks of pesticides to drone mating behaviour.

The primary results (**Objective 1**) of my Ph.D. clearly demonstrate that neonicotinoid pesticides can have significant lethal (lifespan) and sublethal (sperm viability and living sperm quantity) effects on honey bee drones. Using the honey bee as a model, we hereby provide the first evidence that field relevant concentrations of these chemicals can elicit effects on male insect reproductive capacity. The may help to explain recent queen problems reported by many beekeepers in the northern hemisphere (e.g. in the USA[17]), and may also have implications for wild bee species. Currently, these clear effects of neonicotinoid pesticides on the reproduction of beneficial insects are not sufficiently addressed in current risk assessment schemes[20]. The obtained results of my Ph.D. will help to improve current risk assessments, as well as our understanding of how pesticides can affect the health and well-being of beneficial insects[21].

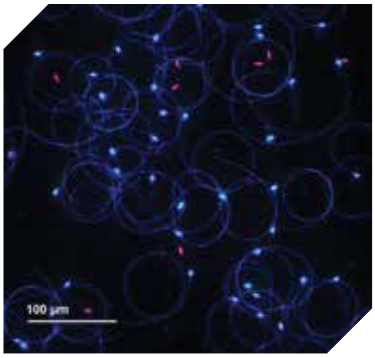

***Figure 2:** Drone sperm viewed using fluorescent microscopy. Living sperm are blue; dead sperm are red.*

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Queen Committee Report

by: Anna Kettlewell
Honey Queen Program Chair

The first two months of the calendar year are an incredibly hectic time for the American Honey Queen Committee. I write this article as we close out the end of February, and the busy season has certainly begun.

Immediately after the ABF convention in early to mid-January, the Queen Committee embarks on completing all the tasks we set out to accomplish after our annual Committee meeting at the convention. Training plans are finalized for the Queen and Princess, including lining up the many individuals who assist with the training (this year, we had 11 different people assisting with the nearly week-long training process); finalizing a training schedule that maximizes learning time, yet gives the queens time to recoup and absorb the many new ideas and concepts they learn; and organizing presentations in area schools so the queens can practice their new skills while receiving valuable critique and feedback. The transition from being a state representative and expert on an individual state to being a national industry representative takes some time, and there is a learning curve. It requires study and learning opportunities throughout the year. Queens from the northern states quickly have to learn and study about how beekeeping differs in the south and the west, but also in their neighboring states. Queens from southern states need to learn about beekeeping with extreme differences in weather and also how the industry and challenges therein vary beyond their home state.

In addition to preparing and executing a training session, the Committee is designing, preparing, and distributing tens of thousands of recipe brochures that the program utilizes throughout the year. This year, former American Honey Princess Angela (Fisher) Koltz designed and laid out the brochure. Not only does she have an exceptional eye for design, she aided the program financially by donating her time and talent for this task. We hope that you enjoy this year's brochure, which is designed to help consumers use honey in their parties and appetizers! Check out a preview of this brochure on the ABF's website!

Beyond these two big tasks, the Queens themselves are transitioning into new and exciting roles. They are learning to adapt their writing for a variety of audiences, such as the eight-year-old target audience of the program's blog, www.buzzingacrossamerica.com, ABF members in our newsletter, and the public in general through Facebook. They have to figure out how to balance their Queen promotional duties with their college and work obligations. They are taking their first solo trips, learning from our promotional sponsors, and studying up on industry facts and statistics that will aid them in their work for the ABF.

Finally, in these first few months, the Committee is feeling your excitement for their journeys, their appearances in your states, and all the work that they will do for the beekeeping industry in a rapidly moving year! We receive your many requests for appearances, field calls and emails from media outlets, and work with the queens to get them ready for each of these visits. Throughout this time, I personally am receiving requests for the queens through October, but my focus in these first two months is on the promotions for February through April. The Committee and I work as quickly as possible to respond to your requests, but members should understand that the Committee's work is extremely hectic in these first two months. We appreciate all that ABF members do for this program and your patience as we comb through the work of the first quarter of the year!

Please continue to send me your promotional requests for Queen Maia and Princess Hope as soon as possible! I am looking forward to finalizing their late spring and early summer promotions in these upcoming months! You can reach me at 414.545.5514 or *honeyqueen99@hotmail.com*.

Member Milestones

Milestones for January & February 2017

5 Years
Henry Campbell, SC
Robert Deemer, NY
Karen Sabath, NY
James Vinson, NE

10 Years
Paul Hosticka, WA

15 Years
Kevin Hackett, MD
James Rodenberg, MT

20 Years
Louann Hausner, MD

25 Years
Debbie Ellingson, MN
Alicia Ellingson, MN
Holly Ellingson, MN
Donald Harcus, FL
Brent Woodworth, ND
Kevin Young, PA

30 Years
Joan Gunter, ND
David Shenefield, IN

35 Years
Darrel Rufer, MN
Roy Abel, FL

45 Years
Fred Holte, MN
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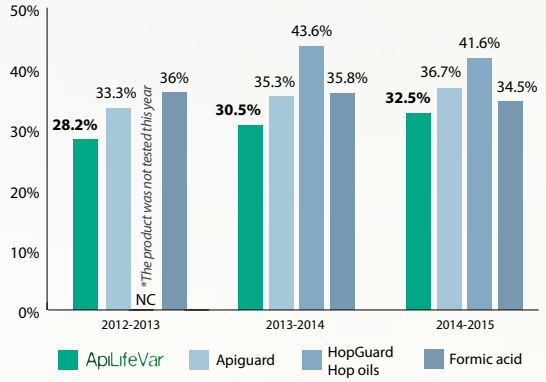
Bee Informed Partnership survey



In addition, beekeepers who reported treating with Apilife Var lost 31.9% fewer colonies than those who reported NOT treating with any varroa mite control product.

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Bee Informed Partnership 2015 survey

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American Honey Queen Report

by: Maia Jaycox
American Honey Queen

Maia Jaycox
American Honey Queen

Hello, everybody! I am very excited to have started my American Honey Queen journey, and I cannot wait to attend more events as they come into my schedule!

To start off my year, Princess Hope and I attended our official training in Wisconsin with the Queen Program Chair, Anna Kettlewell February 1-7. Training was a very busy week, full of many different learning events. To start off the week, we had image training with Carmen Risi, which also included a skin care and makeup lesson to prepare for our television interviews and other public appearances. Over the next few days of training we worked with Louann Hausner, Danielle Dale, Angie Lundeen, Jolene McNutt, Rachel Bryson, and Kim Kester on many different things. These women gave us valuable lessons in media interviews and presentations, including school, government, cooking and product presentations and demonstrations. Not only did we learn, but we practiced presentations and developed messages for the year. It was such a great experience working with all these ladies, and they were such a great help preparing me for this upcoming year. We also had the opportunity to tour Henry's Honey Farm in Redgranite, Wisconsin. It was an amazing experience touring and learning about commercial beekeeping and how it has changed over the years. It was my first time touring a commercial operation, so you can imagine that I was amazed by how big of an establishment it was!

Queen Maia had great volunteers in Wisconsin showing elementary students what beekeepers wear when they work their hives.

While there we also learned about using social media platforms to enhance our promotional work for the industry so be sure to like our American Honey Queen Program and Facebook and check out our photos from the tour!

At the end of training, Princess Hope and I put our new skills into action. We gave our first school presentations of the year at Redgranite Elementary School, Clay Lamberton Elementary School, and Southwood Glen Elementary School in central and southeastern Wisconsin. In total, I taught 94 students, a mixture of third and fourth graders, about beekeeping and the honeybees. I send special thanks to all the trainers and to Dan and Gina Piechowski for hosting us during our visit.

Queen Maia worked with the Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund – a great group working for a great cause.

My next promotion was in Minnesota for Pheasant Fest in Minneapolis February 17-19. While attending I had the opportunity to work with the Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund which was founded by Project ApisM, Pheasants Forever, and Browning's Honey Company. Pheasant Fest was a wonderful learning experience. The Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund is working to inform more of the public on ways they can join the project to help the pollinators. During the trip, I spoke to many of the thousands of attendees about how important healthy and a sustainable habitat is important for our pollinators, including honeybees. I also had the pleasure of working with American Beekeeping Federation Vice President, Tim May. Be sure to like the Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund on Facebook, and, if you have Instagram, you can also follow them there as well. Thank you to Danielle Downey, Camille Yameen, and Zac Browning for arranging my weekend at Pheasant Fest!

I cannot wait for the events that I have coming up in the near future, such as trips to Minnesota, Florida, Connecticut, and Wyoming, and for more great learning experiences. I am very grateful to have the opportunity to represent such an amazing industry, and I am excited to promote the industry wherever I can. If you are interested in having Princess Hope or myself appear at your event, contact Anna Kettlewell at *honeyqueen99@hotmail.com* or 414.545.5514. Have a bee-utiful day!

American Honey Princess Report

by: Hope Pettibon
American Honey Princess

Hope Pettibon
American Honey Princess

Hello, everyone! I hope you and your bees are doing well! Spring is almost here, and my bees love our peach blossoms that are blooming in my backyard!

My first appearance this year was on January 25, assisting my sister Abby with a presentation for a local cub scout troop. I helped Abby and the current Collin County Honey Queen, by answering many questions that the 12 children and their parents had. One parent said that they had been thinking about starting beekeeping for a long time, and our presentation made them more comfortable starting their beekeeping journey! I'm looking forward to seeing them at our county club meetings soon.

I started my year of out of state travels with an amazing trip to Wisconsin for a week of training, February 1-7. American Honey Queen Maia Jaycox and I learned so much that our brains could hardly contain all the wonderful information! We covered many topics, but one of my favorite things that we learned was how to approach a media interviewer. Maia and I were paired with different people, including a former television reporter, who gave us mock interviews for practice. The interviews were recorded, so we could watch them to see where we could improve and what we did well. I was astonished to see the difference between how we were when we started and how we were when we ended. We greatly improved with every practice session. I am now even more excited to do a real interview and to share with people about the honeybee's importance. Another important part of training was learning how to manage the Program's blog, www.buzzingacrossamerica.com. Students are so excited about this website, especially when we tell them that it is made for them and that they can ask questions, even after we leave their school. I send special thanks to Dan and Gina Piechowski for housing us during our stay in Wisconsin and for giving us a tour of Henry's Honey Farm. I learned so much about commercial beekeeping and this tour gave a great visual of how things are done. Thank you to our many trainers, including Louann Hausner, Danielle Dale, Jolene McNutt, Rachel Bryson, Angie Lundeen, Bill Graffin, Carmen Risi, and Anna Kettlewell, for all the time you spent teaching us and make us better spokespersons for the ABF.

Princess Hope shows students the BuzzingAcrossAmerica.com blog during a school presentation in Wisconsin.

After my week in Wisconsin, I flew home for one night. The very next morning, I left for Tampa, Florida for a week at the Florida State Fair. I am on the move! At the Fair, the Florida State Beekeepers Association had a beekeeping booth where we sold four different honeys: holly, palmetto, tallow, and orange blossom. Over 7,700 people visited our booth over my visit, and many of them purchased some of the delicious honey varietals. During the first day of my visit, there was a breakfast at the fair, and the beekeeping booth gave fairgoers muffins paired with delicious orange honey butter to spread on top. It was a great opportunity to share with fairgoers how honeybees make honey and how many bees it takes to make all the honey at the exhibit! In addition to working at the Fair, I attended the Tampa Bay Beekeepers Association meeting to give a presentation about the American Beekeeping Federation and the American Honey Queen Program. This organization is over 100 members strong, and they taught me much more about beekeeping in Florida. While I was there, the meeting organizer mentioned they needed someone to instruct a beginning beekeeping course. Since I have experience in this area, I told them I was happy to assist. The members were so engaged, asking some amazing questions and it was very encouraging to see new club members' passion for honeybees.

Princess Hope shared honey samples with fairgoers at the Florida State Fair.

I also had a unique experience in Florida with one of my host families – learning to graft queens! I have to admit that I failed many times trying to scoop the egg up and not touch it to the wall of the cells or even scoop it up at all, but it was an excellent opportunity. Thank you to Noel and Marie Blanchett for their willingness to host me and to Bert Kelley for coordinating my visit to the Florida State Fair.

I'm headed to Minnesota and Kentucky in early March for more beekeeping meetings, school visits, and community visits. I thank the ABF for your continued support as I represent honey and beekeeping throughout the country. If you are interested in scheduling a promotional visit from Queen Maia or me, please contact Anna Kettlewell at *honeyqueen99@hotmail.com* or 414.545.5514. I would love to spend some time with you promoting our industry!

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From the Auxiliary

by: Louise Johnson
ABF Auxiliary President

Spring is here! Farmers Markets will be starting soon, flowers will be blooming, and bees will be flying, and that's a sure sign of spring.

We just finished teaching a 6 week Beginning Beekeeping Class at NICC in the beginning of March and had a total of 48 students complete the class. Packages will be here soon, then the fun begins! Hopefully the weather will be nice since March came in like a Lion; maybe it will go out like a Lamb. The bees we have checked so far seem to have wintered well as it has been a very mild winter. I hope everyone is fine and the bees are healthy.

Keep taking pictures for the Auxiliary photo contest.

photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey

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Honey Recipe:

Spicy Honey Hummus

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Cup Dried Chickpeas
- 1/2 Cup Tahini
- 1/2 TSP Ground Cumin
- 1/2 TSP Ground Coriander
- 1/2 TSP Ground Chile
- 3 TBSP Lemon Juice
- 1 TBSP Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 Clove Garlic Peeled and Crushed
- 1 TBSP Honey
- Sea Salt and Black Pepper freshly ground

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place chickpeas in a colander and rinse thoroughly with cold water, then drain and transfer to a large bowl. Cover them with cold water and soak for 12 hours.
2. Drain the chickpeas, rinse again with cold water and transfer to a large saucepan. Cover with plenty of cold water and place over medium heat; bring slowly up to a boil, then simmer for 2 hours, skimming off any foam that accumulates.
3. When chickpeas are tender, drain and reserve the cooking water. Rinse the chickpeas briefly under cold water drain well, then transfer them to a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped
4. Add tahini, spices, lemon juice, oil, garlic, and honey process until smooth—add a little cooking water if you want smoother hummus
5. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon into serving bowl. Drizzle with a little more Honey, Serve warm with Pita bread or crudités.

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