AMERICAN BEEKEEPING FEDERATION

QUARTERLY

VOL. 83, NO. 1, 2025

Did We Forget the Flowers?

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Probiotics for Honey Bees

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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

PATTY SUNDBERG, ABF PRESIDENT

By now, most of you have heard something about the huge colony deaths happening throughout the USA. Within hours of submitting my article for the January EBuzz, my phone began to ring from beekeepers expressing their concern for their sudden and large colony losses. These calls were coming from throughout the country, and, within a day, it appeared this was big.

The American Beekeeping Federation put a quick survey out to our commercial beekeepers for Jay Evans of the USDA-ARS Beltsville Bee Research Laboratory. This way, we could get a quick look at how widespread the losses were. This was followed by an additional survey by Project Apis m. and one conducted by ABF Board member Bret Adee of South Dakota. By January 24, Dr. Zachary S. Lamas was in California and began collecting samples of bees, dead and alive. He was collecting stored honey, pollen, and wax. For those of you experiencing the issue, you are anxiously awaiting answers. Unfortunately, answers take time. There is a collaboration of labs and researchers working together to fast track samples.

What we know is there is a very large loss. Some are experiencing losses as high as 100%. The bee losses are widespread, coast to coast and border to border, indoor wintering and outside wintering. A joint update has been released by Project Apis m., the American Beekeeping Federation, and the American Honey Producers Association.

What should we do while we wait? We need to work hard on bringing our industry together. This is a time to support each other and to reach out to others that would be interested in speaking up for honeybees. We need to get the word out more that honeybee losses are a USA food security issue and a food economics issue. The numbers of colonies and the size of the colonies available for pollination are down, and it will take time and money to bring colony levels back to previous levels.

If you experienced high losses, you need to write to your U.S representative and senators in Washington DC and share your story. We need to write to our local state senators and representatives, as many of them are in session now, and inform them regarding what is happening in the beekeeping industry. Knowledge and sharing information are critical at this point; we must be open about the challenges the industry is facing to receive any federal support.

The ABF Board of Directors has drafted documentation to send to key representatives in Washington, DC, with our lobbyist Fran Boyd. This is a start, and we will need everyone to continue to bring this issue to the forefront and on the radar of our elected officials.

Over the upcoming months, as more information is gathered, ABF will provide updates on this issue and provide you with continued guidance on how to contact your legislators or provide data for these studies. In the interim, do not hesitate to contact your legislators now to let them know how bee deaths affect all constituents and our food supply in the United States.

Thank you to everyone who has contacted me and the ABF Board of Directors on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your concerns or questions. Our success in overcoming this season and issue is to work together to find solutions, share information, and support each other.

Patty Sundberg

President

Debbie Seib,
ABF VICE PRESIDENT

WHERE DID 2024 GO?

As I begin my second year as your Vice-President, I look back and question, where did the year go?

I said that to myself when January 7th rolled around and it was time for another conference. The excitement of seeing old friends; the nervousness of wondering if we forgot something; and the anticipation of will all our speakers be able to get in based on the weather.

Including attendees, speakers and vendors, there were approximately 840 participants. We are already starting on the 2026 ABF Conference & Tradeshow in Mobile, Alabama; watch future issues for more information.

I recognize how quickly things change. Early in 2022, commercial beekeepers were struggling to find truckers with large bee hauling companies that were “well-insured and responsible.” Fast forward to early 2025 and we have the opposite as truckers were actually calling beekeepers to see if they had bees they needed to haul. You may ask if this was because there are more truckers than in 2022? The answer is much simpler than that - there are less bees.

Just shy of two months ago, we were gathered in Reno for the ABF Conference and Tradeshow. The mood was positive, the smiles plentiful and the excitement was building as everyone was looking forward to the new season. The end of January, we started hearing from commercial beekeepers that 40-60%, and some even higher, of their colonies were dead. The frightening thing was it happened almost overnight. They checked their hives and found 6-8 frames covered in bees; however, the next inspection the colony was dead.

ABF leadership was contacted and working with USDA quickly created a survey to see how wide spread the issue was. When it became apparent the impact was across the U.S., the Standing Domestic Losses Coordination meeting was started up again. Researchers from USDA and Universities visited some of the sites to take samples from dead colonies. So, what do we know?

- In the short time our survey was open, there were over 100,000 colony losses.
- The losses were across the entire United States.
- They were overwintered both inside sheds and outside.
- While all responders said they treated for Varroa, some stated the treatment was not affective.

What we do not know is the cause of the losses and speculation can lead to panic.

At this time, we are working with USDA and will publish results as soon as we

You are not just a beekeeper, you are a part of an industry.

MEMBER MILESTONES

for January - March 2024

40 *YEARS*

Larry Lindokken
Duane Rekeweg

25 *YEARS*

Joe Butala
Rodney Hurd

20 *YEARS*

David Mendes
Mike Parker
Tammy Potter

15 *YEARS*

Don Thill
Larry Roth
Karla Eisen
Blake Shook
Peter Shultz
Larue Shultz

10 *YEARS*

Harrison Rogers
Shelley Rice
Steven Melton
Brian Nilson
Jason Miller
Wisconsin Honey Producers Association
Shelly Astle
Jerry Gudauskas
Melanie Kirby
Jake Mays
Mindy Ryan Gehring

5 *YEARS*

Sheri Elison
Richard Dimanin
Joc Rawls
Timothy Campbell
Susan Collins
Dale Brooks
Stephanie Slater
Mike Crouse
Justin Kolarik
Steven Nash
Andy Hemken
Bill Whitney
Keith Roberts
Nicholas Hoefly
Laura Goldsmith
Jeff Ott
Gregory Morrison

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have solid information. We expect this to be in 2-3 weeks.

We Do Hear You….

Issues we heard from our member in 2024 and how we addressed them:

- "Honey bees are not native and cannot be kept on government land." - We brought in Diana Cox-Foster and Arathi Seshadri who are experts in the field to share their research on this topic.
- "Hive thefts in California" - Saturday morning, Rowdy Freeman talked about what to do. He is the lead of California's Rural Crime Prevention Task Force.
- "We completed the US Beekeeping Survey, but we haven't heard the results" - We had Geoff Williams, whose team managed the survey in 2024, share the results and the importance of continuing the survey.
- "The Yellow-Legged-Hornet is extremely harmful. What are we doing about it?" - Our panel of experts reviewed the process for identifying, notifying, and tracking the Hornet. Followed by Questions and Answers.
- "We'd like to hear from commercial beekeepers" - On Saturday, we held three different panel discussions from our commercial beekeepers on Requeening, Preparing for Spring and Splitting Hives.
- "What's the latest on opening the Canadian Border for US packages" - We heard from Rod Scarlett and as we continue to say, "This is now in the hands of Canadian CFIA."

Feel free to contact me to discuss any of the above topics or other issues you may have at seibshoosierhoney@yahoo.com

Debbie Seib
Vice-President
Legislative Chair

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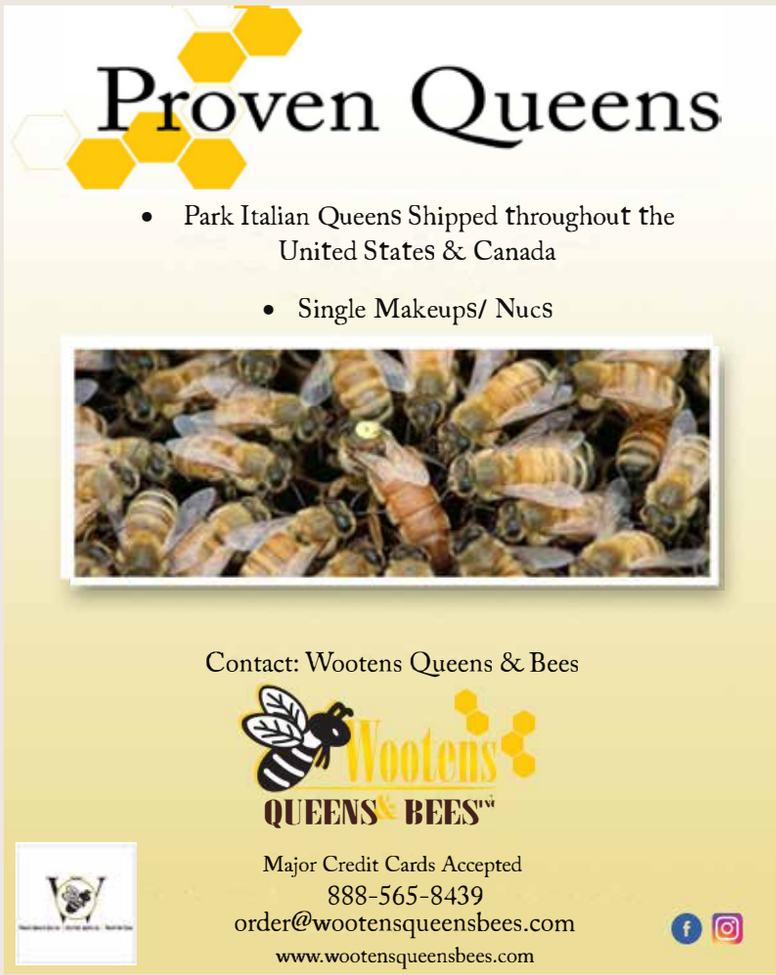

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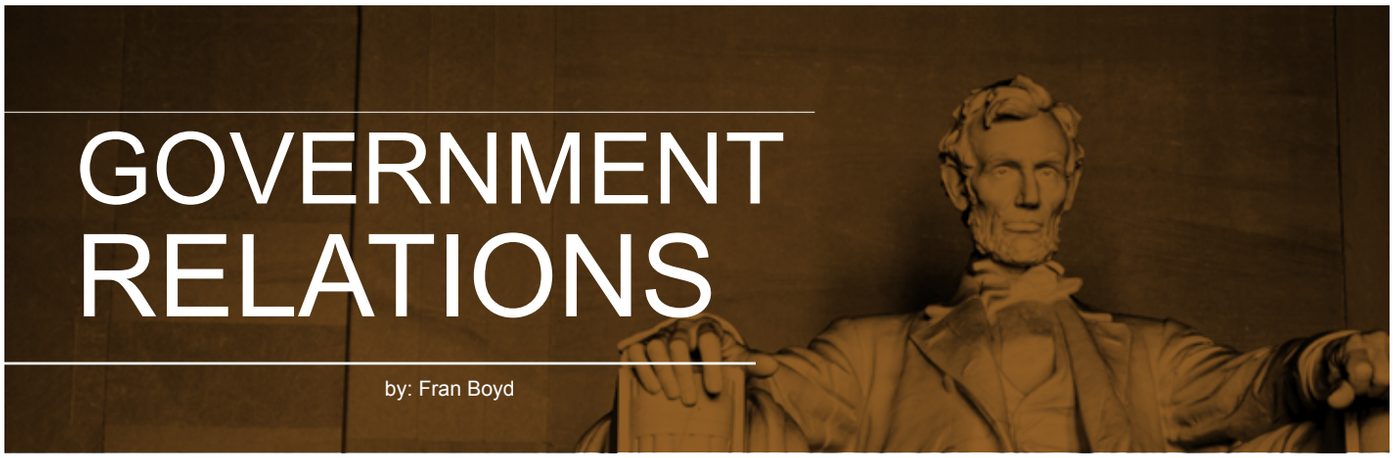

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

by: Fran Boyd

As I sit to write this column it has been 4 weeks since President Trump and his new team have arrived in DC and much has happened. If the first 4 weeks are any indication, we can expect a lot more. I will not be able to report on everything that has happened in this short time, but I will focus on some things that will carry through the next several months.

To date most of the President's cabinet selections have successfully weathered the Senate hearing process and survived votes on the Senate floor. Some by very tight margins others securing the support of Democrats . There are still a few cabinet positions to be voted on by the Senate and they have yet to really begin the hearing process and floor consideration needed to place the hundreds of subcabinet nominees into their positions across the many agencies of government.

Yesterday, Brooke Rollins assumed her position as the next Secretary of Agriculture. She had a strong bipartisan vote in the Senate Agriculture committee and a confirmation vote of 72 to 28 in the Senate. During her confirmation hearing she had the support of over 450 national agriculture and commodity organizations, including ABF. After taking the oath of office in a private ceremony, Secretary Rollins address a large crowd of USDA employees, members of Congress and supporters gathered at USDA to welcome her to the Department. During her brief remarks she promised "she will be a voice for America's farmers and ranchers in the Trump Administration." Secretary Rollins pledged to deal with the severe economic situation facing America's farmers and ranchers and the concern Americans have for health. She pledged to defend American agriculture "at the table" in the Trump Administration. Secretary Rollins, a woman from a small town in rural Texas and the first female student body president of Texas A&M University, told the crowd "it's time to go to work."

In addition to Secretary Rollins, several other cabinet members who will have a significant effect on our industry recently were confirmed and assumed leadership of their departments and agencies. Former governor of North Dakota Doug Burgum has been sworn in as our next Secretary of Interior. Secretary Burgum will be responsible for the management and conservation of most federal land and natural resources. As governor of North Dakota, Secretary Burgum knows the importance of

bees to U.S. agriculture and conservation.

Another cabinet selection who will have a significant impact on our industry and agriculture in general is Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who was recently sworn in Secretary of U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS). Secretary Kennedy will have the responsibility of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA has the regulatory control of all food products (with the exclusion of meat and poultry at USDA) including honey. Secretary Kennedy was confirmed by the Senate with a vote of 52-48.

In addition to Interior and HHS, the other agency that is significantly important to our industry and US agriculture is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The new Administrator at EPA is Lee Zeldin, a former Republican House member from New York. Administrator Zeldin will determine the direction of pesticide and chemical policy for the U.S. Administrator Zeldin was confirmed by the Senate by a vote of 56-42.

These three department and agencies have historically had the most impact on the honey and the US beekeeping industry and this will be the case for the next 4 years. It is important to us who runs them as well as the many Undersecretaries and Administrators who will serve in their subcabinets. These men and women appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate will establish and carry out the policies and directions of the new Administration . It is critical that we get to know them and understand them. We also need to do all we can to help them understand the needs and problems facing our industry.

On the Hill

When you read this column, we may be in the middle of a government shut down. Currently we are funding the government under a Continuing Resolution (CR), which will expire on March 14th unless it is extended, or a new FY 2025 Appropriations bill is agreed to by both the House and Senate. Every day we get closer to March 14th, finding a solution to this problem becomes more and more difficult. The margins between Republicans and Democrats, especially in the House, are razor thin and Speaker of the House Johnson (R-LA) will need all his members on board to be successful. Currently, I do not think he is anticipating getting much help from the other side of the isle. Even if he is successful and gets something out of the House to the Senate, Majority Leader Thune (R-SD) will need 60 votes to send a funding bill to the President. As of this writing, several Senate Democrats are talking about “drawing a line in the sand” and opposing any House passed funding bill. Such an action will shut down the federal government; for how long, no one can guess.

In addition, this week the House Budget Committee passed a budget resolution and reported it to the full House which is expected to consider it when they return from recess. The budget resolution reported out of committee by a straight-line party vote, calls for up to $4.5 trillion in new deficits through tax cuts which House Republicans plan to use to extend President Trump’s expiring 2017 tax laws and pass other pieces of this tax agenda.

It calls for $1.5 trillion in spending cuts, with an additional wrinkle; the House budget package must include $2 trillion in cuts to the "mandatory parts of federal spending." This covers programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and SNAP (food benefits), or the $4.5 trillion amount in tax breaks must be reduced by a commensurate amount.

The budget also sends instructions to each committee regarding the amount of spending they need to cut from programs under their discretion over 10 years. The House Agriculture Committees instruction from the House Budget Committee is $230 billion over 10 years. Latter this all comes together under a single vote called the Budget Reconciliation. What make the budget reconciliation unique is only a simple majority in the Senate is needed to pass it, not a 60-vote threshold. The House favors one bill, one big vote whereas the Senate strategy prefers it be divided into two votes. The White House currently has not tipped their hand to which strategy they prefer.

As you can see there is quite a bit going on and moving quickly in many directions. Add to this we still have a farm bill that expires at the end of September and work needs to be done to have the HIVE Act reintroduced as well as other legislation and issues that will arise that effect our industry. Indeed, we have our work cut out for us and it will take everyone’s commitment and energy to keep focused on what needs to be done for the benefit of America’s beekeepers.

2025 American Honey Show Winners

Congratulations to All Our Winners!

The American Honey Show showcases the best examples of honey and beeswax. It includes 18 classes: 12 for honey, five for beeswax, one for beeswax art and the gift box class. The gift box theme for 2025 was "Sending Sunshine".

Class A: Water White Honey
Sponsored by Sioux Honey Association
1. Lisa Marie Ghezzi, Easton, MD
2. Dave McComb, Yoder, IN

Class B: Extra White Honey
Sponsored by Dutch Gold Honey
1. Charles Lorence, Aurora, IL
2. Glenn Clayton, Jr., Shipman, VA

Class C: White Honey
Sponsored by Barkman Honey
1. Stephanie Slater, Elkhorn, WI
2. Peter Delaney, Boxford, MA

Class D: Extra Light Amber Honey
Sponsored by Winter Apiaries
1. Stephanie Slater, Elkhorn, WI
2. Dave McComb, Yoder, IN
3. Jim Gross, Nantucket, MA

Class E: Light Amber Honey
Sponsored by Patty and Lance Sundberg
1. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX
2. Glenn Clayton, Jr., Shipman, VA
3. Charles Lorence, Aurora, IL

Class F: Amber Honey
Sponsored by Burleson's Honey
1. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX
2. Glenn Clayton, Jr., Shipman, VA

Class G: Dark Honey
Sponsored by Winter Apiaries
1. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX
2. Glenn Clayton, Jr., Shipman, VA
3. Charles Lorence, Aurora, IL

Class H: Chunk Honey
Sponsored by Gene Brandi Apiaries
1. Charles Lorence, Aurora, IL

Class I: Round Comb Sections
Sponsored by Joan Gunter
1. Jim Rodenberg, Wolf Point, MT

Class J: Comb Section Honey
Sponsored by Walker Honey Farm
1. Karen Belli, Wadsworth, IL

Class K: Cut Comb Honey
Sponsored by Walker Honey Farm
1. Dan Piechowski, Redgranite, WI
2. Charles Lorence, Aurora, IL

Class L: Creamed Honey
Sponsored by Barkman Honey
1. Dave McComb, Yoder, IN
2. John Piechowski, Redgranite, WI
3. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX

Class M: Beeswax Block
Sponsored by St. Croix Bee LLC
1. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX
2. Charles Lorence, Aurora, IL

Class N: Artistic Beeswax
Sponsored by Premier Bee Products
1. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX

Class O: Beeswax Candles
Sponsored by Ellingson's Inc.
1. Virginia Webb, Clarksville, GA
2. Charles Lorence, Aurora, IL

Class P: Artistic Beeswax Candles
Sponsored by Joan Gunter
1. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX
2. Virginia Webb, Clarksville, GA
3. Mark Rulison, Amsterdam, NY

Class Q: Beeswax Art
Sponsored by Jaydee Burns
1. George Hansen, Colton, OR

Class R: Honey Gift Box
Sponsored by Duffy's Garden
1. Monica Siwiak, Richmond, TX
2. Dodie Stillman, Round Rock, TX

BEST OF SHOW: HONEY
MONICA SIWIAK, RICHMOND, TX (AMBER HONEY)

BEST OF SHOW: RELATED PRODUCTS
MONICA SIWIAK, RICHMOND, TX (HONEY GIFT BOX)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2025 ABF CONFERENCE

By Debbie Seib

As we begin planning our 2026 Conference and Tradeshow in Mobile, Alabama, we reflect on our previous conference less than a month ago in Reno, and reviewed the feedback on what went well, what didn't and how can we improve.

In New Orleans, we focused on education, fun and something new. Did we achieve that again in Reno? We lined up 4 full days of educational sessions for beekeepers of all levels.

From the smiles on everyone's faces, they were certainly having fun; reminiscing about the past and easier times as a beekeeper and the 'do you remember when?'

Our 'Photo Booth' was a new touch that will be a part of our agenda next year.

Including attendees, speakers and vendors, there were over 840 participants. The panel discussions were highly attended and ABF participants attended some of the ABRC talks as well.

Posters from the Apiary Inspectors of America was a highlight, as was the annual Kids and Bees Expo. Back to its normal Saturday event, the American Queen Program rolled out the royal carpet for the high attendance.

Joining us was the Apiary Inspectors of America and the American Association of Professional Apiculturists (AAPA). Both organizations joined us as the ABF conference served as the host location for their American Bee Research Conference (ABRC).

The Honey Show was awesome as usual with eighteen different categories.

Saints preserve us through our Past Presidents, shown below.

Don't miss all the excitement at the 2026 ABF Conference and Tradeshow in Mobile, Alabama and if you have any questions, send an email to Debbie Seib at abfnet.org@gmail.com.

Top row: Danny Weaver (2006-2007), Clint Walker III (2000-2001), Dan Winter (2022-2023), Zac Browning (2008-2009), Dave Hackenberg (1998-1999) and Bob Brandi (1990-1991). Bottom row: Dave Ellingson (2004-2005), Dave Mendes (2010-2011), George Hansen (2012-2013), Gene Brandi (2016-2017), Joan Gunter (2020-2021) and Tim May (2018-2019).

Probiotics for Honey Bees

Image courtesy OSU

By Dewey Caron

Probiotics are live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host according to The National Institutes of Health (NIH). Mostly bacteria, but also yeasts, probiotics are naturally present in fermented foods; they also may be added to some food products. They are available as dietary supplements to humans as well as to our livestock.

Not all foods and dietary supplements labeled as probiotics have proven health benefits to humans or our bees. FDA has some limited oversight on them. For beekeepers, probiotics are increasing popular to increase defenses against diseases and promote the overall health of colonies. But our science of what constitutes healthy, disease fighting bee guts is not advanced to the point to be able to make well informed decisions.

“There are surprisingly few validation studies associated with probiotics for bees” says Graham J. Thompson, Professor of Biology at the University of Western Ontario and senior author in a Journal of Insects publication summarizing studies on probiotics. “Some products work, some do not. For most products, it’s ‘take our word for it’.”

We are familiar with dietary supplements like feeding various sugars to bees or use of pollen substitutes/supplements. We use such additions to stimulate brood increase, keep colonies alive when resources are unavailable, to administer medications, raise drones and strengthen weaker colonies. They are part and parcel of maintaining healthy adult populations to enable our bees to survive winter, grow their brood area and promote larger adult populations for honey production or pollination services.

Some dietary supplements work better than others. Individuals have choices which protein supplement they might purchase to feed to bees. Those that contain natural pollens provide essential amino acids and supply cholesterol that bees need, whereas substitutes do not. Trapping and freezing pollen to feed back to bees is a low-cost means of providing a better diet. Bees being supplemented with sugar do better and live longer on some sugar sources compared to others. Economics certainly pay a role in what to use and how much to supplement. The Honey Bee Health Coalition has an excellent guide on bee colony nutrition: https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/nutritionguide/

Two management aspects, feeding antibiotics and robbing behavior, potentially influence our need to supplement colonies. Antibiotics negatively impact and even eliminate favorable microbiota in the insect gut.

Microbial imbalance can disrupt the bee’s ability to activate innate defenses, extract nutrients from feed, interfere with detoxifying environmentally acquired pollutants and even lead to resistance to

More PROBIOTICS, page 15

PROBIOTICS, from page 14

pathogens. Robbing, usually (always?) initiated by the beekeeper, disrupts normal colony defenses; it is an aggressive and risky worker foraging strategy. It necessitates equalization of colony populations and supplemental feeding of colonies by beekeepers. [See end notes for recent (2025) review of robbing by a team of Chinese scientists].

The Journal of Insect Science article referred to above was part of the November 2023 issue featuring articles on Honey Bees. https://academic.oup.com/jinsectscience/issue/23/6#1822518-7504430 There are 3 articles on Varroa, 2 on pesticide affects, and 3 others on microbiota and probiotics, in addition to the review article on probiotics. The probiotics review by Argentinean/Canadian authors cites over 125 published articles, although not all are stickily probiotic related. [see reference in end notes].

The review cites positive effects; probiotics may "bolster queen productivity, stimulate innate immune responses in larvae or adults, or provide functional support to the bee's own native microbiome." The review goes on to say that "So far, probiotic studies have mostly assessed the effect of oral supplementation (especially lactic acid bacteria) … focused on diseases that infect the honey bee intestinal tract such as American foulbrood (AFB), European foulbrood (EFB), chalkbrood, and Nosemosis". The beneficial effects of supplementing a colony may be especially helpful to beekeepers following use of an antibiotic or when handling a disease-associated situation.

The review focuses on why we might consider feeding bees naturally fermented products. Bees produce one such fermented food, bee bread. Bee bread is a fermented mix of pollen, bee saliva, and flower nectar stored within the brood area in beeswax cells. Exposure to agrochemicals can deplete the symbiotic microbial communities involved in the fermentation process within the hive. Natural supplements could provide an important countermeasure. Probiotics, especially lactic acid bacteria and select yeasts, "are emerging as a promising alternative to antibiotics for management of bee diseases."

The review concludes that while "there is substantial evidence from in vitro laboratory studies that suggest beneficial microbes could be an effective method for improving disease resistance in honey bees, colony level evidence is lacking." The article calls for an "urgent need for further validation via controlled field trials experimentally designed to test defined microbial compositions against specific diseases of interest".

So, if you are using probiotics should you continue to do or are you considering use of supplemental feeding of a probiotic? Can they be cost effective in your disease management? Do the colonies just "look better" when they are used? Or more importantly do the colonies do better when probiotics are used? This review may help you make a more informed decision and even suggest what you need to look for to validate their effectiveness.

End notes:

Wang, X.; Huang, T.; Ji, Q. Guo, J.; Zhao, Y. 2025. Honey Robbing: Causes, Impacts and Preventive

Measures. Insects 16: 15. https://doi.org/10.3390/insects16010015.

https://entomologytoday.org/2024/01/12/probiotics-honey-bees-beneficial-microbes-hive-health/

Rodríguez, Maria A., Leticia A. Fernández, Brendan A. Daisley, Francisco J. Reynaldi, Emma Allen-Vercoe, & Graham J. Thompson. 2023. Probiotics and in-hive fermentation as a source of beneficial microbes to support the gut microbial health of honey bees. Journal of Insect Science. 23 (6): 19. https://doi.org/10.1093/jisesa/iead093

Save the Date
Kids and Bees 2026

The annual Kids and Bees educational expo will be held during the 2026 ABF Convention in Mobile, Alabama. Volunteers will be needed to make this event a success. More details coming this summer.

DID WE FORGET THE FLOWERS?

By Richard Coy

Honey bees and other pollinators are feeling the effects of habitat destruction. Urban sprawl and intensive agriculture have been chipping away habitats for decades. Now pollinators face an even greater risk from the increasing use of a herbicide known as Dicamba. This herbicide has been documented to turn into a gas and move uncontrollably across the landscape. Researchers refer to this as volatility. In other words, Dicamba turns into a gaseous state when applied to crops and does not stay on the targeted crops.

During the summer of 2017, farmers in Soybean and Cotton growing regions began planting a new form of seed that had tolerance to Dicamba. The Dicamba Tolerant (DT) seeds are known as Roundup Ready Xtend System. This technology was developed by Monsanto so farmers would have better control of weeds. Although the Xtend System was effective for farmers who chose to use the product, its uncontrollable damage to non-DT crops, gardens, and pollinator habitats became evident. Weed science experts Dr. Ford Baldwin and Dr. David Mortensen warned of the volatility component of Dicamba for many years prior to the release of the Xtend System. Prior to the release of the Xtend crops, Dr. Mortensen published a research study in 2015 showing that sub-lethal doses of Dicamba, (.1% of labeled rate), on non DT plants, such as alfalfa and boneset, would reduce flowering and subsequently reduce pollinator visits by 50 percent. (Eric W. Bohnenblust, Anthony D. Vaudo, J. Franklin Egan, David A. Mortensen, John F. Tooker, Effects of the herbicide dicamba on nontarget plants and pollinator visitation, Published July 2015)

Beekeepers have been experiencing below-average honey yields and reduced colony strength in areas where Xtend crops are grown. This is due to non-crop vegetation being damaged by volatile Dicamba. Honeybees rely on an abundance of pollen and nectar in order to sustain a healthy colony. Without the essential components of pollen and nectar, honeybee colonies are doomed to an unhealthy existence which in many cases leads to the death of the colony. Multiple state agencies and environmental groups across the central US have documented Dicamba residue in multiple species of trees, flowering vines, clover, and alfalfa.

A plethora of Research has been conducted within the past few years regarding the effects of Dicamba on pollinators and their habitat. One recent study , Off-target drift of the herbicide dicamba disrupts plant-pollinator interactions vianovel pathways (Baucom, Iriart, Soble, Armstrong, Ashman), found results that are astonishing as well as frightening. “Our pollinator abundance surveys found a 70% reduction in pollinating insects within dicamba-exposed experimental plots compared to the control plots”. Another important fact regarding this study shows us that it only takes a small amount to create a big problem. For instance, a sub lethal dose of Dicamba can result in a plant that looks normal yet has reduced reward for pollinators. “We applied 1% of the field dose of dicamba (3,6-dichloro-2-methoxybenzoic acid, Albaugh, LLC, Ankeny, IA) to plants within five randomly chosen plots and a 0% control to another four plots four weeks post transplantation on July 21, 2021. The 1% dicamba treatment represents a particle drift rate (i.e., when herbicide particles travel by wind).”

Is Dicamba toxic to honey bees? This is a question that many have asked. EPA recently announced that chronic effects from dicamba exposure have been shown in mammals (reduced weight and delayed sexual maturation), birds (reduced number of offspring), and honey bees (reduced weight, reduced survival, and reduced

More DICAMBA, page 22

USDA APPOINTS MEMBERS TO NATIONAL HONEY BOARD

By National Honey Board

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced the seven newly appointed and reappointed board members to the National Honey Board, effective Jan. 1, 2025. Six of the appointees will serve three-year terms through Dec. 31, 2027, with one first handler alternate serving a one-year term through Dec. 31, 2025. We are pleased to welcome:

- Producer Member: Brock Ashurst, El Centro, Calif.
- Producer Alternate: George Hansen, Colton, Ore.
- First Handler Member: MindyRyan Tharp Gehring, Hillsboro, Kan.
- First Handler Alternate: Stacey Drab, Waxahachie, Texas
- First Handler Alternate (1-year): Jeff Caley, Lancaster, Pa.
- Importer Member: Sarah Neves, Tustin, Calif.
- Importer Alternate: Tom Sargeantson, New Canaan, Conn.

The 20-member National Honey Board is composed of three first handler representatives, three importer representatives, three producer representatives, one marketing cooperative representative and their respective alternates. You can see the USDA's press release at www.ams.usda.gov.

We thank these new and returning members for their willingness to serve. If you are interested in serving on the National Honey Board, you can see how you can apply at www.honey.com. All board member nominations are made by qualified national organizations and selected by the USDA Secretary.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our spring board meeting, April 23rd – 25th in San Diego, California.

For more information, please send an email to Honey@nhb.org.

QUEEN Committee Report

by: Anna Kettlewell, *American Honey Queen Program Committee Chairperson*

A new year brings new opportunities! The American Honey Queen Committee is excited for what 2025 has in store, notably for our promotion spokespersons, the Kids and Bees Expo, and exciting events new and established!

The 2025 American Beekeeping Federation in Reno was a fabulous example of what the ABF is all about – an umbrella organization open to the broad spectrum of the beekeeping industry, working together for positive outcomes and industry promotion and betterment. The American Honey Queen Program was thrilled with the support that we received as we spearheaded the return of the Kids and Bees Expo at our convention. Returning the Expo to Saturday allowed us to open the event generally to the public, and we had attendees from throughout Reno visit, with children and adults alike, to learn about the beekeeping industry. This effort was made possible by members of the American Honey Queen Committee, former American Honey Queens and Princesses, members of ABF's Education Committee, members of the Honey Marketing Team, and the local Reno beekeeping organization, with the Foundation for the Preservation of Honeybees providing the backbone of support.

This core group of individuals worked with universities, extension offices, beekeeping supply vendors, ABF members, and many businesses to bring in all the supplies needed for a successful event. Thank you to all our sponsors and partners, who are all listed on the Kids and Bees website, www.kidsandbees.org. Plans are now underway for our event in Mobile, and we value the input that you can provide us. Better yet, we'd love to have you help as we offer the Kids and Bees program next year. Contact Louann Hausner at intlmarathoner21@gmail.com to see how you can support next year's event! Planning is underway already.

The Kids and Bees Expo was a highlight of the convention for our Honey Queens this year. Our extremely qualified group of applicants along with your 2024 American Honey Queen Kaelyn Sumner were great volunteers for the Expo and throughout the ABF convention. Thank you to all our members who supported both Kaelyn and 2024 American Honey Princess Lainey Bell and their promotional work throughout the United States last year. Collectively, these representatives promoted honey in 28 states, six on repeat occasions over 265 promotional days. We thank them for their service to the ABF and the beekeeping industry nationwide.

Now we embark on 2025 promotions with a renewed energy and enthusiasm post-ABF convention. Your 2025 American Honey Queen Cheyenne Bastian-Brown and 2025 American Honey Princess Emilia Burnham hit the ground running in January as our newest spokespersons. They were thorough and inquisitive students in their media and presentation training in January and are eager to spread the word about honey and honeybee pollination nationwide.

We are busy preparing a robust promotional schedule for them and need your help! Have you thought about hosting a Honey Queen or do you know what the Honey Queen or Princess could bring to your event? Contact me at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com or 414.545.5514 to discuss promotional opportunities. We'd love to have them speak to your beekeeping clubs in person or virtually, promote and sell your honey at your fairs, festivals, and farmers' markets, and give educational presentations to groups in your community interested in learning about honey or beekeeping. Cheyenne and Emilia have exciting stories and industry knowledge to share with consumers in a wide range of settings. Don't miss out on the opportunity to promote alongside them this year!

Local media highlighted the ABF's Kids and Bees Expo, interviewing Foundation for the Preservation of Honeybees Chair Gene Brandi.

The American Honey Queen Program is managed and administered by ABF volunteers, former American Honey Queens and Princesses, and state honey queen program chairpersons. We need additional volunteers, notably individuals who attend ABF conventions regularly, with several activities. If you could help with some of these tasks or are interested in learning more, contact me at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com. Best wishes for a successful promotional year!

2024 AMERICAN HONEY

Queen Final Report

by Kaelyn Sumner

Good day, members of ABF!

I traveled to the Kentucky State Fair August 22-24. Working with the Kentucky State Beekeepers Association (KSBA), I helped provide fairgoers samples of the liquid and creamed honey that beekeepers from throughout Kentucky brought to the State Fair to sell. This was an excellent way to showcase the varieties of honey throughout the state. I had a three-minute live television interview with WDRB, promoting the KSBA booth and the Certified Kentucky Honey program.

I also presented to fairgoers on stage about honeybees and the benefits of honey, while KSBA Board member Tom Ballinger prepared breakfast for the attendees using honey in every part of the meal.

On the 4-H Cloverville Stage, I presented to Kentucky State 4-H officers and a few younger 4-H members about the beekeeping industry and the American Honey Queen Program. I also worked with Kentucky State Apiarist Amanda Skidmore to answer questions about honeybees and the entries in the Kentucky State Fair Honey Show. There were over 100 entries in the honey show, which also included the baked goods made with honey. Thank you to Tom Ballinger and the Kentucky State Beekeepers Association for inviting me to the Kentucky State Fair and coordinating my promotions.

From August 25 to September 2, I helped the Nebraska Beekeepers Association with their booth at the Nebraska State Fair. Many fairgoers were very surprised to see how different honeys can be from each other, even three varieties of wildflower honeys. I helped to emphasize the importance of buying United States honey by having a sample of honey that was sourced from a few countries across the world and letting the fairgoers compare the flavor of three samples from Nebraska. The fairgoers preferred the local honey every time!

Queen Kaelyn shared the importance of the beekeeping industry with the students at NILE in Billings, Montana.

I presented cooking with honey demonstrations to five different audiences fairgoers, some attended by up to 70 people. The fairgoers sampled the recipes and many came to the Nebraska Beekeepers Association's booth afterwards to purchase honey for making those recipes again.

I also handed out samples of 11 different creamed honeys from producers in Nebraska. Many people who had never heard of creamed honey before walked away purchasing at least one jar of creamed honey after having a sample.

I also narrated a honey harvesting demonstration while a beekeeper filled the extractor with honey frames and showed the audience how the extractor pulls the honey from the frame. The Nebraska Beekeepers Association had a “Beekeeper in a Box” hive demonstrations, where I answered questions about what the fairgoers were seeing inside the beehive and on the frames that the beekeeper showed within an enclosed area.

I had two television interviews, that were aired on three different stations, bringing more than $13,000 of free media publicly to our industry. I had an afternoon interview with Nebraska TV/KHGI TV, and a morning interview with Pure Nebraska, a lifestyle program of KOLN and KGIN. Thank you to Jamie Vrtiska and Brian Nilson for arranging a wonderful Nebraska promotion.

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2024 AMERICAN HONEY

Princess Final Report

by Lainey Bell

Hello ABF! This last quarter has been full of lots of fantastic events! During this quarter, I focused on promotions in the Northeast, especially in my home state of Maine!

On August 29, I attended the Windsor Fair in Windsor, Maine. There, I was a guest judge for the fair's Apple Queen Pageant. During the pageant, I presented to a large audience about importance of honeybees in the United States, especially as it relates to Maine's apple industry. I also spoke about the American Honey Queen Program and my role as the American Honey Princess. Many people in the audience were interested in the important role that the American Honey Queen Program plays in promoting honeybees, as well as the beekeeping industry.

On September 8, I attended the Maine State Beekeepers Association's first annual BeeFest. This event featured speakers on a wide variety of topics, as well as demonstrations of anything from bear fence setup to treating hives for mites. I worked at the honey tasting contest, providing samples to attendees of the honey that was entered into the contest and taking votes. I also gave a few presentations on how and why different honey varieties have different tastes and colors. This event had a great turnout, with about 200 attendees! Thank you to Beth Goodwin for the invitation to promote with the Maine State Beekeepers Association again!

In the month of October, my first promotion was from October 3-6 at the Fryeburg Fair in Fryeburg, Maine. While there, I worked with the Western Maine Beekeepers Association in the Garden Center. I also worked with Swan's Honey in their Specialty Foods booth selling honey, beeswax, and other hive products. I also worked with a company called Naturally Jammin, a store that sells jams and other goods using honey as the sole sweetener! During my visit, there were about 21,000 people who attended the Fair. Thank you to the Sennetts for hosting me during my visit.

Princess Lainey teaches kindergartners the Honeybee Countdown at Hollis Elementary School in Maine.

On October 19, I attended the Maine State Beekeepers Association's Annual Meeting. While there, I met with many beekeepers throughout the state, making new promotional connections for the ABF. I also gave a presentation about the American Honey Queen Program and my role as the American Honey Princess to the attendees. This event had around 200 beekeepers from all over the state of Maine in attendance! Thank you again to Beth Goodwin for inviting me to speak to the MSBA and for all the support this group has provided me this year.

On October 25, I traveled to Rochester, New Hampshire, to speak with students at Gonic School and East Rochester School. These presentations allowed the American Honey Queen Program to promote in the state of New Hampshire for the first time in over 10 years! Between the two schools, I spoke with around 140 students.

The students in one school were very interested in how honeybees help us to have other foods outside of just crops and other plants. A good way to illustrate to the students the impact that honeybees have on our food is by discussing the pollination of alfalfa, which feeds our cows, which ultimately provide us with milk, cheese, and even ice cream! This really connects the dots for

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2025 AMERICAN HONEY

Queen Report

by Cheyenne Bastian-Brown

Greetings Beekeepers!

My name is Cheyenne Bastian-Brown, and I am serving this year as the 2025 American Honey Queen. I am the 22-year-old daughter of Cory and Jennifer Brown from Ralston, Pennsylvania. I was inspired to investigate every part of the various agricultural industries after joining FFA in my freshman year of high school and was fortunate to serve as a Pennsylvania State FFA Officer. It was through my FFA chapter that I learned more about honeybees and pollination, which inspired me to write multiple speeches on the subject for public speaking competitions. With the help of a local beekeeper, Glenn Crimbring, I gained knowledge and love for honeybees and their environmental contributions.

Queen Cheyenne practices approaching media outlets to initiate the discussion of a potential interview during media training in January.

I am studying Agricultural and Extension Education with a minor in International Agriculture at the Pennsylvania State University (PSU). On campus, I have been highly involved in multiple leadership positions as a member of the PSU FFA Alumni and Supporters, University Park Undergraduate Association, Ag Student Council, the National Society of Leadership and Success, Phi Eta Sigma, Alpha Tau Alpha, the Beta Sisterhood, Collegiate Farm Bureau, and multiple specialized college committees. Post graduation in May 2025, I plan to obtain a position as a secondary agricultural educator in Pennsylvania and eventually pursue a career in curriculum development.

Since being selected as a national spokesperson for the ABF in January, Princess Emilia and I have been busy! During our training in Wisconsin in early February, we learned all the inner workings of the American Honey Queen Program. With members of the American Honey Queen Committee, we practiced media relations skills, focusing on interviews, types of media formats, and our vocal and visual appearance in media interviews. This included practicing various scenarios to ensure that we are prepared for any question we may encounter while on the road.

Queen Cheyenne taught Wisconsin elementary school students about how worker bees pollinate crops.

In addition, we developed key messages for the year that we wanted to share with the public about honey and beekeeping. A key message is a small tag line used for redirect and promotion of a specific topic in a media interview. Some of our focus will be on the healing properties of honey, pollination, and honeybee's impact on agriculture and food supply.

Lastly, we worked through some social media training and posted introductory videos on our YouTube channel.

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2025 AMERICAN HONEY

Princess Report

by Emilia Burnham

Hello! My name is Emilia Burnham, and I am the 2025 American Honey Princess! I am from Murrieta, California, and graduated in 2024 with my Bachelor of Science in Entomology from the University of California: Riverside. I am currently a Master's in Entomology student and will be graduating in the spring. I am a graduate student researcher in the Center for Integrative Bee Research (CIBER) under Dr. Boris Baer and Dr. Kerry Mauck. I work on fungal parasite Nosema ceranae, which causes lethargy and diarrhea in honeybee colonies. I plan to pursue my Ph.D. in Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Sciences, focusing on honeybee venom. My research and entomology outreach experiences led me to become the 2024 California Honey Queen. I traveled throughout Southern California to speak about honeybees with students and collaborated with beekeepers at their meetings.

Princess Emilia practices a media interview with Rachel Bryson during honey queen training in January.

At the end of 2023, I met Roger Wynn over lunch with Dr. Baer, where we had both discussed our adventures in beekeeping and outreach/teaching experiences. Roger and I became friends, and he encouraged me to apply for the American Honey Queen Program, so, I did!

After my initial interview with the American Honey Queen Committee, I became even more excited about the program and all the wonderful good that it does to bring awareness to honey and the beekeeping industry.

At the American Beekeeping Federation Conference, I enjoyed meeting so many beekeepers and listening to the keynote speakers' presentations. Everyone was so kind and encouraging, and I am proud to represent this organization. Thank you to the California State Beekeepers Association for their financial support for getting me to the conference this year. I also thank my local Southern California beekeeping clubs for their immense emotional and financial support: the Los Angeles County Beekeepers Association, Beekeepers Association of Southern California, Long Beach Beekeepers, Orange County Beekeepers Association, and to the San Diego Beekeeping Society. Thank you to the Center for Integrative Bee Research for giving me the education to help me get to where I am today.

As I write this in early February, Queen Cheyenne and I are in Wisconsin for our media and presentation training! As soon as I got off the plane, I immersed myself in the Wisconsin culture! We have been working hard honing our media training skills, practicing presentations, and so much more!

Queen Cheyenne and Princess Emilia enjoy the aroma of a barrel of wax cappings during their tour of Henry's Honey Farm with Dan Piechowski in Wisconsin.

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2024 QUEEN, from page 19

The Lithopolis Honeyfest in Ohio occurred September 6-7. A few days before the festival, I was on live television with Columbus's ABC 6. This morning interview reached approximately 700,000 households, and it was a great way to promote the festival while sharing industry information. This year's Honeyfest had a record attendance of about 25,000 people! The Lithopolis Honeyfest was started in 2007 on the front lawn of the local library, and it has since expanded to most of the main street and businesses in Lithopolis. The festival had 11 honey vendors from across Ohio, and about 50 craft vendors that had some of their works relating to honeybees.

Queen Kaelyn conducts a hive demonstration for attendees of the Lithopolis Honeyfest in Ohio.

During the festival, I narrated and answered questions during two bee beards demonstrations and two honey harvesting demonstrations. On the main stage, I shared more honeybee information and also asked the children in attendance honeybee trivia. Many of the kids were very surprised to learn that each honey can taste very different based on the floral source. I also presented a live hive inspection and explained the many things that were visible in the colony. Thank you to Tess Conrad for inviting me to this event and to Tami Morehart for hosting me.

I promoted at the Big E, the Eastern States Exposition, in Massachusetts, September 13-15. Each of the six New England states (Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine) has a building dedicated to highlighting the unique aspects that state brings to the United States economy. During my three-day visit, the Big E had an all-time single day attendance record with over 121,000 people one day. Throughout my visit, nearly 300,000 people attended this event! I worked with the Hampden County Beekeepers selling honey in the Massachusetts building.

The beekeepers in Massachusetts do not usually harvest honeys from specific crops, but instead they have spring, summer, and fall honeys that get progressively darker throughout the year. In both the Massachusetts building and the Farm-A-Rama, a building on the grounds that is dedicated to the agriculture from the New England states, I answered attendees' questions about the ongoings in the observation hives. In the Farm-A-Rama building, I also had three on-stage presentations about the products of the beehive, the beekeeper's job, and the different honeybees in the beehive. Thank you to the Bill Crawford and the Hampden County Beekeepers Association for inviting me and to Cindy and Eric Nelson and Debra and Dan Boronski for hosting me.

My next promotion during National Honey Month was in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, area September 16-22. I had a variety of activities to celebrate honey, including nine school presentations and several community festivals.

Using recipes from the National Honey Board and our recipe brochures, I taught high school foods classes how different floral sources result in uniquely tasting honey and had the students try six varieties of honey. This sparked the students' interest in honey infusion, and they were eager to do their own experiments with infused honey.

Another highlight of this trip was promoting honey in the Jewish community. The Pittsburgh area has a very large Jewish population, and honey is a huge part of the holiday of Rosh Hashanah, which occurred shortly after my visit. I spoke in several Jewish schools about how honeybees play a vital role in the Jewish New Year Celebration of Rosh Hashanah. The students were excited to share with me that apples are dipped in honey signify bringing in a "sweet" New Year, while I shared with them that each apple needs to be pollinated five times to give each apple its characteristic five seeds.

At the Squirrel Hill Market, a Jewish-owned deli and small grocery store, I hosted a honey tasting with honey varieties sold at the market, which prompted the guests to purchase one variety. I also promoted honey at three festivals. At a Rosh Hashanah Festival for children, I served apples dipped in honey as part of the new year celebration. It made my day when a young girl visited me to tell me and her parents the honeybee facts that I had shared with her school earlier in the week.

At the Covered Bridge Festival, a craft fair outside

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THE BEE PRACTICAL AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED

The American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) is proud to support innovation in beekeeping through its annual Practical Beekeeping Award, offering $2,000 to a beekeeper with ideas that improve hive management or sustainability.

Each year, we receive numerous submissions from beekeepers across the country, showcasing creative and practical solutions to common challenges in the field. After careful review, the ABF Research Committee selects one recipient based on the originality, feasibility, and potential impact of their idea.

In 2024, we were thrilled to recognize Frank Linton as our awardee for his work on bivouac traps, a method for swarm capture.

Frank Linton's research idea focuses on bivouac traps—a method for capturing swarms before they establish colonies in tree cavities or structures.

Swarming presents challenges for beekeepers, including the loss of valuable queens, reduced honey production, and potential conflicts with homeowners. While bait hives are commonly used, bivouac traps offer another opportunity to intercept swarms before they relocate.

Traditional bivouac traps, such as Russian scions, have been used in parts of the former Soviet Union, but there is little formal research on their effectiveness.

Linton conducted a literature review, surveyed beekeepers, and deployed 22 traps in a pilot study. Despite observing 44 swarms, none landed on the traps.

Moving forward, he aims to refine trap design, test automated swarm detection sensors, and evaluate ease of retrieval. His goal is to develop a more effective bivouac trap and share findings with the beekeeping community through publications and the annual American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) conference.

DICAMBA, from page 16

adult emergence). Also, EPA says "Based on the weight of evidence, there is an identified risk concern for terrestrial plants." (Dicamba: Draft Ecological Risk Assessment for Registration Review

Posted by the Environmental Protection Agency on Aug 17, 2022). The chronic effects on honey bees as well as the risk to their habitat should sound an alarming bell throughout our industry.

There have been many legal challenges regarding the Xtend System and as of January 22, 2025, there are no labeled Dicamba products for use on Xtend Crops. The plaintiffs in Ctr. for Biological Diversity v. U.S. Envtl. Agency, No. 4:20-cv-00555 (D. Ariz. Feb. 6, 2024) raised various legal challenges against the 2020 over-the-top dicamba registration, claiming that the decision violated FIFRA and the ESA. The Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and vacated the labels of Xtendimax , Engenia, and Tavium. This decision is a crucial win for the environment, as well as beekeepers, but many problems still exist.

With the introduction of Dicamba tolerant Soybeans in the Midwest and Northern Plains, we have seen an increase of Dicamba use in Corn. Since Corn is naturally tolerant to Dicamba, if a grower plants Dicamba tolerant Soybeans alongside his Corn, he can use Dicamba without harming either crop. To further exasperate the problem, products such as Status, (Dicamba and Diflufenzopyr) are labeled for corn but not soybeans and therefore they are unaffected by the court ruling.

Unfortunately, the situation is becoming increasingly complicated due to the recent developments of Dicamba tolerant Sugar beets and Canola. The sugar beets have been approved by USDA and are now being considered by FDA, whereas the Canola is waiting USDA approval. It is important to note that Canada has approved and implemented the use of Dicamba tolerant Canola.

Over the past 30 years we have been working on solutions to combat parasites, viruses, and low honey prices. While focusing on those issues, I fear we have lost our focus on protecting our greatest asset. Flowers!!

2025 QUEEN, from page 21

Check out our social media platforms on Facebook and Instagram, @americanhoneyqueenprogram, to see some of the highlights of our training!

Thank you for your support. I am truly honored to serve as the American Honey Queen and appreciate your hospitality and encouragement! I am looking forward to upcoming events in Pennsylvania, Florida, and Texas!

We still have availability for the upcoming year, so if you have an event in mind, please contact Anna Kettlewell at 414.545.5514 or via email at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com. I'll bee seeing

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2025 PRINCESS, from page 22

One of my goals this year is to gain more commercial beekeeping knowledge, which started during training when Cheyenne and I toured Henry's Honey Farm with Dan Piechowski. We were guided through commercial honey production from start to finish and learned the process of producing creamed honey. We were both lucky to gain some insight into queen rearing and to try painting some queen thoraxes ourselves!

At the conclusion of the training week, we will put our skills into action in the local schools in rural and urban settings. After this week, I feel excited and well equipped with the skills to make trips to other states this year! Coming up soon, I am excited to travel to and promote our industry in Kentucky, Florida, and California.

I am honored to represent the American Beekeeping Federation this year and to proudly talk about the honey and beekeeping industry all over the United States! If you would like to schedule a promotional event for Queen Cheyenne or me, contact American Honey Queen Program Chairperson Anna Kettlewell at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com or 414.545.5514. I hope to "bee" seeing you soon!

STATE DELEGATES

Each state having ABF members may appoint a state delegate to serve as a liaison between ABF and its state association and local clubs. Each state delegate acts as a membership and legislative coordinator — communicating important membership and legislative information between ABF and the state and local clubs.

Let's grow together! Don't miss this opportunity to publicize your state meetings. Let us know if you want your state more involved with the membership and legislative happenings and consider becoming a state sponsor of the ABF.

By Jaydee Burns

On Wednesday January 8th, we held our State Delegates Assembly meeting at the American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) conference in Reno, Nevada. We had 43 delegates out of 79 representing 30 states, 4 additional board members and everyone was treated to a great lunch. Everyone who attended received their annual Beekeeping Calendar and this year an engraved Smoker. Our guest speaker was Dr. Scott McArt.

We had signs that showed our State Sponsorships and the levels along with buttons for attendees in those states. This year we have 31 States/ Local State Sponsors.

In accordance with our by-laws, we elected four members of the Assembly to serve on the Nominations Committee:

- Robert Duffy
- Bill Crawford
- Dave Ellingson
- John J. Talbert

We also elected our two new State Delegates Directors so our four State Delegate Directors to serve on the ABF Board of Directors are:

- Jaydee Burns (New)
- Susan Collins
- Lisa Marie Ghezzi
- Brian Nilson (New)
- Dawn Beck – Runner Up

Our goals for the 2025 year:

- Each State to have at least one State Delegate
- Get 75% states to have allowed number of delegates
  - 37 States
- Maintain 10 states to be Platinum sponsors
- Increase number of Gold, Silver, and Bronze
  - Gold = 10
  - Silver = 10
  - Bronze = 5
- Get 2 New State Sponsors
- Get 50 of the current delegates to attend one call

Our bi-monthly meetings will move from the second Tuesday to the second Thursday beginning in March.

Jaydee Burns has agreed to take on the chair position for the State Delegates Assembly. We'd like to thank Debbie Seib for her hard work and all her years of chairing this committee.

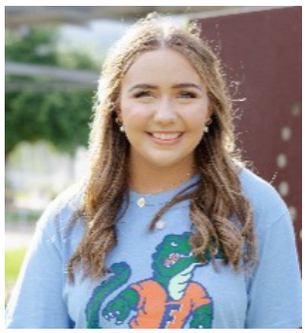
The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees Scholars

By Gene Brandi

Ian Collins is a PhD of Science in Entomology student working with Dr. Lewis Bartlett, at the University of Georgia. His current focus is preventing and controlling small hive beetles as a cornerstone of improving honey bee health in the Southeast. He completing this PhD with the goal of eventually becoming an academic researcher working on honey bees and wider social insects. His research and academic emphasis focus on honey bees, community outreach and extension, with a goals of: 1) expanding the scientific knowledge of honey bees and 2) aiding beekeepers and apiculturists in their further enjoyment of honey bees. Along with research, creating a population of beekeepers armed with the knowledge of how to care for healthy bees and conserve the environment they thrive in is a cornerstone of his future academic career and goals.

Benjamin Nichols is a PhD student at Oregon State University. He earned a Master of Science Degree in Environmental Biology from Swansea University, Swansea Wales, UK and a Master of Science Degree in Entomology from University of Nebraska, Lincoln Nebraska. He has been working at the Baton Rouge Bee Lab in the Agricultural Research Service – Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics & Physiology Lab. His work focused on: manage multiple honeybee colonies, conduct choice assays and diet formulation, initiate and maintain caged bee experiments, euthanize and dissect specimens following ethical guidelines, data analysis and graphing with GraphPad Prism, and general lab maintenance Benjamin is the primary author of soon-to-be published work.

Rogan Tokach is a doctoral student at Auburn University and was selected as a FFAR Fellow studying Entomology. He began beekeeping after a local beekeeper brought an observation colony to my local county fair. He became infatuated with it and made sure to return every day to try and find the queen. After the fair, he told his mom that he wanted to become a beekeeper. Thinking this was just a phase, she bought him the book Beekeeping for Dummies and told me if he read it all the way through, she would know he was serious. The plan ended up backfiring on her as he read the book cover to cover, and later that next year, he applied and was awarded a scholarship from the Kansas Honey Producers Association for his first honey bee colony. He has been a beekeeper ever since! Through his work, he hopes to perform research aimed at improving colony health and communicating those results to beekeepers to help them limit their colony losses. In Rogan's free time, he enjoys hiking and running with his dog Naz. He is also an avid sports fan.



Marie Yanchak is a master's student at the University of Florida Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab. Marie has a background in commercial beekeeping and joined HBREL in 2024 after completing a B.S. in both Entomology and Agricultural Leadership & Development at Texas A&M University. Marie's graduate research with Dr. Cameron Jack focuses on optimizing current methods of oxalic acid application for the control of Varroa destructor.

2025 4-H Essay Contest

The Importance of Youth in Beekeeping: How 4-H Members Can Make a Difference!

FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HONEY BEES, INC.

FOUNDATION 4-H ESSAY CONTEST

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Honey Bee is once again pleased to sponsor its annual 4-H Essay Contest. This year, the essay topic is "The Importance of Youth in Beekeeping: How 4-H Members can Make a Difference!"

For this essay, a 4-H student should answer these questions: Why youth are important in beekeeping? How can 4-H members make a difference? How can more young people get involved in beekeeping? What are your future plans as a beekeeper? What is a major contribution a young beekeeper has brought to the industry?

Eligibility: The 2025 National 4-H Beekeeping Essay Competition is open to active 4-H Club members only.

Any 4-H Club member who placed first, second or third in previous years of the national competition is NOT eligible to win in 2025; however, state competition winners remain eligible to enter the national competition. Essays entered must encompass the designated topic only. There will be no exceptions.

Competition Rules & Essay Requirements: Any 4-H Club member interested in writing an essay should contact their local 4-H office for competition details. The state selection process must be completed through the 4-H system.

Failure to meet any one of the essay requirements will result in disqualification.

Essay Requirements for National Judging: Essays must be typewritten or computer-generated on single-sided pages and formatted following standard manuscript format using double-spaced type and 12pt font in a legible font face.

Essays must encompass the designated topic in 750 to 1,000 words. Word count does not include sources, works cited, or the writer's biographical statement.

All factual statements and interview references must be cited in a "sources" or "bibliography."

Essays will be judged on (a) scope of research, 40%; (b) accuracy, 30%; (c) creativity, 10%; (d) conciseness, 10%; and (e) logical development of the topic, 10%.

On a separate page, please include a brief biographical statement of the writer including mailing address, email address, and phone number.

The deadline for national submission is May 1, 2025.

National winners will be announced June 15, 2025

Each state may submit only ONE entry.

National competition entries may be submitted for judging via mail to the address listed below or email to abfnet.org@gmail.com. Use "4-H Essay Entry from <State>" as the subject line.

Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees

480 Town Center St. N, PMB #253

Mooresville, IN 46158

Decisions made by the trustees of the Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees during national judging are final. All national competition entries become the property of the foundation and may be used as it sees fit. No essays will be returned.

Awards:

Three cash prizes will be awarded in the 2025 National 4-H Beekeeping Essay Competition. The author of the highest-scoring essay will win first prize. The author of the second-highest scoring essay will win second prize. The author of the third-highest scoring essay will win third prize.

- First Prize: $750
- Second Prize: $500
- Third Prize: $250

The three prize-winning essays will be published in ABF Quarterly, the magazine of the American Beekeeping Federation. All authors of essays submitted to the national competition will receive a relevant book on honey bees, beekeeping, or honey.

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of Pittsburgh with over 1,000 attendees, I helped children make a honeybee puppet and a comb rubbing while sharing facts about honeybees. Finally, I shared all about honeybees by the observation hive at Triple B Farms Fall Festival. My visit to the area was featured in the Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh, which reaches approximately 121,000 people. Thank you to Alyssa Fine, 2012 American Honey Queen, for hosting and developing a busy week of promotions!

On October 6, I worked with the Oregon Ridge Nature Center's Honey Harvest Festival outside Baltimore, Maryland. With a record-breaking attendance of more than 2,800 people coming to celebrate honey and some of the products that honeybees help pollinate, many attendees left with a newfound appreciation for everything honeybees do for us. Throughout the day, I narrated three honey extraction demonstrations; these three presentations were attended by more than 500 people! During these presentations, I shared how the extraction process is similar between hobbyists and commercial beekeepers. Many attendees had never heard of some of the many jobs of a beekeeper and were surprised to learn that many of our fruits and vegetables are pollinated by commercial beekeepers. Thank you to the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council and especially Sindhu Moon and Winny Tan for hosting me while I was in Maryland.

From October 7-12 I returned to Massachusetts for the Topsfield Fair, the oldest county fair in the United States. This fair was filled with so many activities to promote honey! In the honeybee building, I gave nine presentations to elementary school groups as part of the Ag in the Classroom curriculum to area students. This was a great opportunity to introduce the students to all the amazing things they would see in the building. With these presentations, along with an additional classroom visit, I reached 270 students! I loved teaching the elementary school groups the jobs of the honeybees and encouraging them to join me in a "waggle dance."

The honeybee building also had four observation hives, and the students with their newfound knowledge, were ready to earn their "I Found the Queen" ribbon at one of the hives. I also helped attendees roll beeswax candles.

Queen Kaelyn helps a young fairgoer to roll a beeswax candle at the Topsfield Fair in Massachusetts.

The Essex County Beekeepers offer generous beginning beekeeping grants through their make-your-own candle station. I saw some beautiful color combinations in the two-colored rolled candles. No one was an expert, but all enjoyed the hands-on activity and learned more about honeybees, while helping a great cause. Using my recipe brochure as a promotional tool, I taught many customers about honey at the sales counter. I encouraged fairgoers to try the recipes and find uses for honey beyond just their tea and toast. When I wasn't in the honeybee building, I was promoting the beekeeping industry across the fairgrounds and brought attention to the beekeeping building.

I participated in a long-standing Topsfield tradition of the Rooster Crowing Contest, encouraging my assigned rooster to crow as many times as possible during the 10-minute contest! During the contest, I shared with the emcee some industry facts and figures and encouraged fairgoers to learn more at the beekeeping building. I also met some of my favorite musical artists, Maddie and Tae, at the nightly concert on the fairgrounds. I gave them both a jar of Massachusetts honey and a recipe brochure. My picture with them was posted to the Topsfield Fair website, and many fairgoers came to the honeybee building to share that they saw the picture and wanted to learn more about honeybees! Thank you to Chris and Peter Delaney and the Essex County Beekeepers Association for inviting me and hosting me during the Topsfield Fair.

I went to Montana from October 13-18 for the Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE) Ag in the Classroom Days and the Montana State Beekeepers Association Convention. The NILE is a significant opportunity for students in Billings to learn about agriculture. Did you know that honeybees are classified as livestock? With Montana ranked fourth nationally in honey production, the NILE is a great opportunity to showcase its

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importance.

During the three days of Ag in the Classroom presentations, I reached almost 1,500 fourth graders in quick sessions to pique their interest. There was much excitement over finding the queen in the observation hive and trying new types of honey. It was an honor to work with ABF President Patty Sundberg to show the numerous students the live honeybees in October! The Billings Gazette highlighted the event with pictures from the education stations, including my presentation; this article reached 10,000 people.

Following the NILE, I travelled to Helena for the Montana State Beekeepers Association annual convention. I presented to the general assembly of beekeepers, most of which are commercial beekeepers, and to the Auxiliary about my year, highlighting outreach and media publicity and some of my opportunities for the year, along with encouraging the members to support the American Honey Queen Program by purchasing quilt raffle tickets. I also promoted attendance at ABF's convention in Reno! Thank you to Lance and Patty Sundberg for hosting me while I was in Montana.

In Wisconsin, I worked to get students in the LaCrosse area excited about the Kids and Bees Expo hosted by the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association (WHPA) during their annual convention. From October 28-November 1, I presented in 16 classrooms reaching 1,150 preschool to high school seniors. I received so many insightful questions form the students, but the most unique was, "What is a bee made of?" This question was difficult for me to answer, because, as an entomology minor, I could go into great depth with the makeup of an insect! I ended up briefly explaining an exoskeleton and then showed the students how you can count to six on a honeybee. One honeybee has one stinger, two antennas or two stomachs, three body parts (the head, thorax, and abdomen), four wings, five eyes, and six legs. With the high school students, I shared about how I started beekeeping and encouraged careers within the industry, so perhaps they could help us find the answers to the questions we still have about honeybees.

The high school students also tried some of the different varieties of honey that I collected throughout my travels this year. I also had three radio interviews and two television interviews promoting the industry and the Kids and Bees Expo! Among the radio interviews on Cow 97.1 in Sparta, KQ98 in LaCrosse, and WIZM 92.3 in LaCrosse, I was on air for nearly 100 minutes. On WKBT 8 and WXOW 19 television, I shared about the importance of the beekeeping industry in Wisconsin and Minnesota. On November 2, at the WHPA convention, alongside 2024 Wisconsin Honey Queen Sadie Goettl and other volunteers, I shared about honeybees at several interactive stations at the Kids and Bees Expo. Nearly 200 students and visitors came to the event, many with whom had visited earlier in the week, and they excitedly told their families what they had learned from my presentations.

I also presented to WHPA members about my year representing them and the ABF across the country. Thank you to Lorie and Rich Dale and the WHPA for hosting me!

My last out of state trip before attending the ABF convention in Reno, Nevada, was to Virginia from November 18-22. I presented in nine schools in Prince William County reaching more than 1,700 students! Most of these presentations were to elementary students, who were studying the importance of pollinators, so honeybees were a natural fit! I met my goal for the year to present to 25 Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes during this promotion. CTE classes teach many life skills to middle and high school students, such as food science, home economics, and agricultural classes. As an Agricultural Education major, these classes are the ones that I plan to teach after graduation. With the CTE students, I demonstrated some fall themed recipes that featured honey, using local honey while also promoting commercial beekeeping as a viable career path. Thank you to my aunt and uncle, Vikki and Shaun Harraden, for hosting me!

Thank you to each and every ABF member for supporting the American Honey Queen Program, as we have promoted the beekeeping industry across the United States for the last 66 years! This year, I have grown immensely as a presenter, speaker, and member of the national beekeeping industry.

To schedule an appearance from the 2025 American Honey Queen and Princess, please contact Anna Kettlewell at 414.545.5514 or honeyqueen99@hotmail.com.

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students on the larger impact of honeybee pollination!

On November 11, I went to Hollis Elementary School in Hollis, Maine. An attendee of the Fryeburg Fair learned about the American Honey Queen Program during my visit and subsequently invited me to speak to his students! I spoke to 30 kindergartners who were incredibly interested in all things related to honey, especially the many uses of it! After my presentation, I assisted the teachers in handing out honey samples to the students. For many of them, it was their first time trying honey! Honey samples were a great way for us to continue our discussion on the many varieties of honey across the nation. The teacher shared with me that, during a pollination activity they did after my presentation, many of the students remembered the vocabulary used and ideas that we talked about. It was a very rewarding visit!

At the Walden School in West Danville, Vermont, Princess Lainey answers honeybee questions from the students.

On November 21, I went to Mexico! Actually, it was Mexico, Maine, and I spoke with third grade students at Meroby Elementary School. At the invite of teacher and beekeeper Maggie Corlett, who I met at the Maine State Beekeepers Association convention, I witnessed some outstanding honeybee education in action. These students have their own classroom apiary that they have been working on this year. They have gained valuable experience extracting and bottling their honey, as well as using the beeswax they have harvested to make lip balms and lotion bars to sell. I used this opportunity to expand on some of my usual presentation points and to give the kids a chance to ask more in-depth questions. I also went to Rumford Elementary School in Rumford, Maine, and spoke to the fourth grade students. These students were all very interested in the process of how a hive makes a new queen for themselves. In total, I spoke to about 80 students between both schools. The Rumford Falls Times covered by visit in the region, highlighting my some great bee facts along with how commercial beekeeping operations manage hives in the colder months while supporting pollination in other regions of the country.

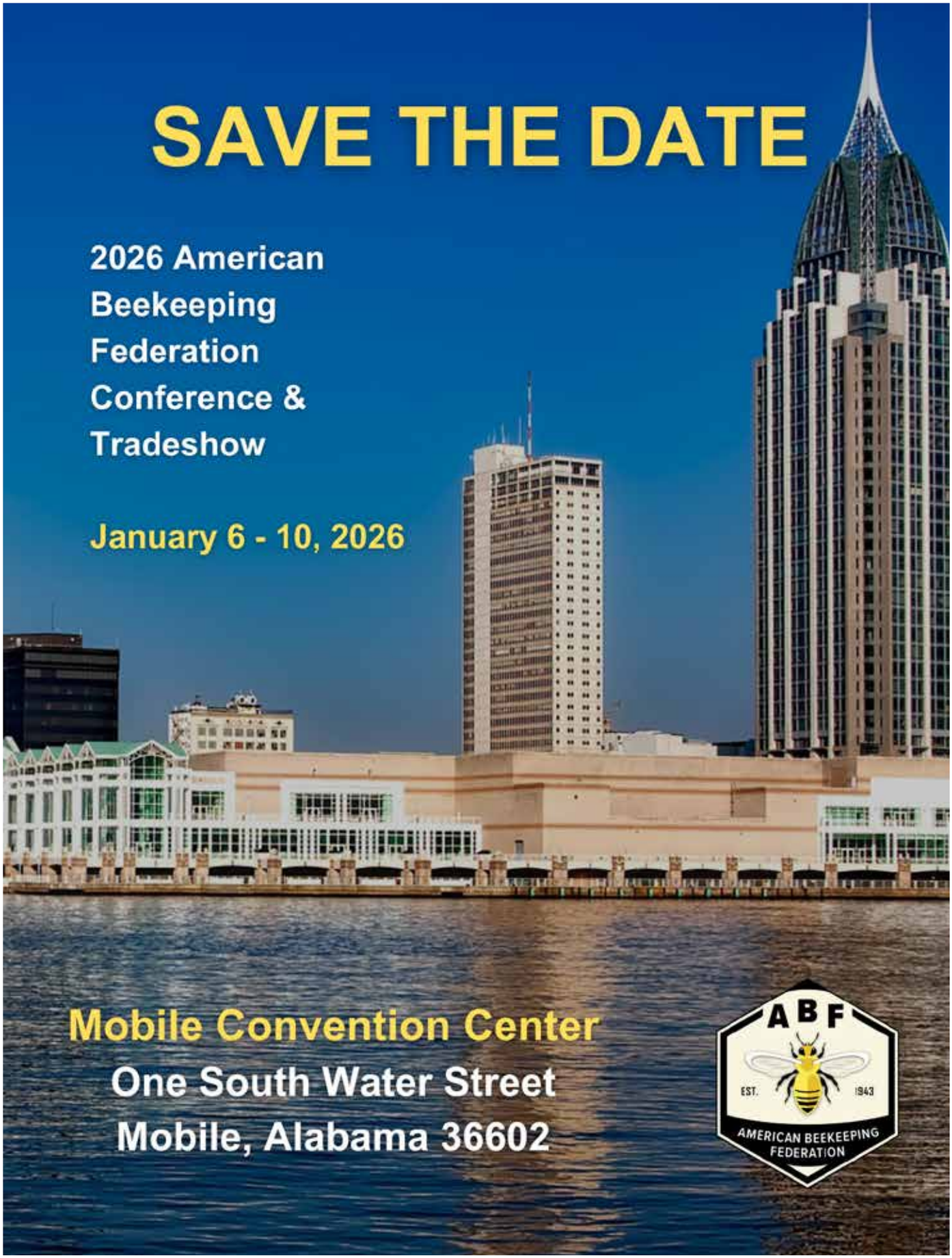
After that, I traveled to Vermont on November 22, to speak with first through fourth grade students at Good Shepard Catholic School in St Johnsbury and at the Walden School in West Danville. These groups were both fascinated with the idea of using honey for many different purposes, such as in beauty products or in healing ointments. This trip was particularly special because this was the first time a representative from the American Honey Queen Program had promoted in Vermont in over 10 years!

As I wrap up my year, I would like to thank the American Beekeeping Federation and its members for their support throughout this year. Being the 2024 American Honey Princess has given me so many amazing experiences and has even influenced my major. After gaining experience in both on-the-ground and through social media promotions this year, I decided to add a marketing major to my degree. I would also like to thank Lincoln and Karen Sennett, as well as their daughter Abby Lennon, for encouraging me to apply for this role. I had no idea that beginning work at their honey farm as a young 15-year-old would lead me to such an amazing opportunity.

Please give us a follow on Instagram @ americanhoneyqueenprogram and on Facebook under the name American Honey Queen Program. If you would like to schedule next year's Queen or Princess to come to your event, please contact Anna Kettlewell at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com. Thank you!

Heads Up!!! ABF will be creating our next 2025/2026 Membership Directory. The information will be pulled from our current database, so please be sure your information is up to date.

To verify your information, go to https://abfnet.org/member-portal. If you need help with your password, contact abfnet.org@gmail.com.


SAVE THE DATE
2026 American Beekeeping Federation Conference & Tradeshow
January 6 - 10, 2026
Mobile Convention Center
One South Water Street
Mobile, Alabama 36602
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