Flowering canola brings heartbreak

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The South African Bee Journal
Die Suid-Afrikaanse Bye Tydskrif

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On the cover: Bees lining up to collect pollen and nectar from a winter-flowering aloe hybrid on the Highveld.
Photograph: Monika Fresen.

Disclaimer: The South African Bee Journal is issued quarterly. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this journal, SABIO cannot be held responsible for any errors which may arise and cannot be held liable for any damages whatsoever arising out of the use of or reliance on the contents of this journal. Sabio is also not responsible for the statements and opinions advanced in the Journal, which may not reflect its own viewpoints.
The latest reports emanate from the Cape where heavy losses have been reported by at least two beekeepers involved in the pollination of canola, which flowers at this time of the year. Environmentally, this is a disaster. But what is more disturbing is the fact that colony mortality suffered by beekeepers who place their hives close to the flowering canola fields occurs regularly. It is a problem that just does not seem to go away. And who is to blame? If methamidophos is the real culprit then it should be banned and a safer, more environmentally friendly alternative should be sought to deal with crop pests. But let’s not jump to hasty conclusions. No amount of finger pointing is going to solve the problem, which is why this journal welcomes the Sabio-initiated move to bring all of the parties together to bring about a working solution to this problem. The answer, we believe, lies in establishing strong communication channels between the growers of canola (farmers), the beekeepers (who provide valuable pollination services), the pesticide producers and their representatives, as well as relevant representatives of government. They will need to iron out thorny problem areas, devise an action plan and follow this up with a comprehensive communications strategy that reaches out to every person involved in the canola production chain.

A one-off chance
There is a monetary cost to this, of course, and we believe that the government should step up to the plate. Too often when it comes to bee matters we are told that funds have run out or are not available. Also, bees and other valuable pollen collecting insects should not be the victims of our indiscretions. And the solution worked out for canola could become the blueprint for other crops where bees are required for pollination duties – such as sunflower, onions, macadamias, pome fruit (apricots, peaches, cherries, apples, etc) and crops where bees are not required, such as wheat.

This is a one-off chance. We urge all parties involved to seize it.

Don Marshall, Editor

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

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SABIO is the official mouthpiece of the bee industry of South Africa. Its mission is to “represent and promote the interests of all persons involved in the beekeeping industry in South Africa in order to establish, support and develop an economically viable and sustainable apiculture sector and ensure the environmental security of the honeybee”.

Sabio website: www.sabio.org.za

**SABIO Board as from July 2016**

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**CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE**

Beekeeping in South Africa has hopefully “turned the corner” following the highly successful BEECON 2016, hosted by the Western Cape Beekeepers Association, which was held in Oudtshoorn in July.

All credit must go to the association for organising a “futuristic” scenario for our industry by focusing on the previously neglected interests of the pollination sector and creating a platform for co-operation between the organised beekeeping industry and the various agricultural sectors which are becoming more and more reliant on bees for pollination.

What this conference proved was that there are a number of opportunities to grow our industry and to work with organisations which regard bees as an important national asset.

I am also pleased to see that following my announcement at SABIO’s AGM of our intention to revamp the SA Bee Journal, that this latest issue signals the start of a fresh initiative to forge strong links with the beekeeping community in South Africa.

Our goal is to make this Journal representative of all aspects of beekeeping – the mouthpiece, if you wish – of what is going on in the bee world. To achieve this we would need to know what is going on in the bigger world and this is where you, the reader, comes into the picture.

You are the Journal’s correspondents – our eyes and ears of what is going on – so please keep us informed of developments in your sector of interest. If we think big then one day this might not only be the South African Bee Journal but the Southern African Bee Journal.

**“OUR GOAL IS TO MAKE THIS JOURNAL REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL ASPECTS OF BEEKEEPING”**

We are now coming to the end of winter and as we all know spring arrives one day and is gone the next! For all beekeepers in the winter rainfall area we hope you have had some decent rains this year! And for those in the summer rainfall area let the rains begin.

Hopefully for everyone a really good season lies ahead.

Mike Miles, Chairman: SABIO
BEECON 2016

New spirit of cooperation emerges from conference

BEECON 2016, held under the auspices of SABIO and hosted by the Western Cape Bee Industry Association, turned out to be a resounding success.

Held in the beautiful surrounds of Surval Olive Estate on the outskirts of Oudtshoorn in the Klein Karoo, the location could not have been better selected for this year’s theme of “Beekeeping in Support of Agriculture”.

The main focus was on cementing constructive ties with the farming sector and addressing the future needs of pollination services. What emerged was that the beekeeping industry will have a vital role to play in the food security needs of this country in years to come and the need for cooperation between beekeeping and farming is indisputable.

Two important events took place in the run-up to the conference. Thanks to the efforts of the Southern Cape...
Beekeepers Association, in conjunction with Western Cape Department of Agriculture's Charles Salmon and also to the facilitation skills of Robert Post, a most successful full day workshop aimed at beginner and developmental beekeepers was held and attended by over 125 participants.

The workshop focused mainly on practical beekeeping, bee biology, bee products, pests and diseases and beekeeping equipment and reports from those who attended the workshop indicated that it was most informative, especially for beginner and intermediate beekeepers keen to learn more about the practical aspects of beekeeping.

**THEY PRODUCED**

**ALARMING FIGURES OF THE GROWTH OF POLLINATION NEEDS OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, WITH BOTH SEEDS AND FRUIT REQUIRING AN EXTRA 30 000 UNITS**

The other pre-conference workshop was a pollinator forum meeting which was hosted by Bayer SA and Klein Karoo Seed and held at the latter's premises. The workshop was attended by representatives of the bee industry and organised agriculture. Christo van der Rheede of AgriSA facilitated proceedings and presentations were made by Dr Christian Maus, of Bayer, and Mike Allsopp, of ARC, Stellenbosch.

Delegates agreed to establish a formal structure to address issues relating to pollination and promote dialogue between stakeholders, while also fostering research into pollination needs. Draft Pollinator Guidelines, which had been drawn up by the office of the Registrar (Act 36/1947) were earmarked for further discussion. The use of OTC in the treatment of brood diseases was also discussed.

During the course of the two-day conference there were a number of presentations which highlighted the critical importance of honeybees for future food security, not only in South Africa but throughout the world.

Following the opening address by Ernest Phoku, Director, Inspection Services, DAFF, Dawie Maree, of FNB, highlighted the critical importance of agriculture to the South African economy and whether we have a future as a “Land of Milk and Honey”… or the opposite.

His synopsis indicated the former, so long as a number of economic and socio-political factors are addressed.

Peter Greeff, in his usual enigmatic style took his audience through the physiology of pollination, in which he addressed the sexual needs of plants and how honeybees luckily add value to this important factor of nature.

An important and enlightening presentation by three representatives from organised farming covered the future demands for pollination. David Malan, from Klein Karoo Seed, covered the seed industry; Ewan Potgieter (Eurafruit) the berry industry and Mariette Kotze (Hortgro) represented the fruit industry in the Western Cape.

They produced alarming figures of the growth of pollination needs over the
next 10 years, with both seeds and fruit requiring an extra 30 000 units (hives) and the berry industry a further 15 000 units to meet demand.

What they were implying was that commercial beekeeping in South Africa needs to give serious attention to both growing and organising its own sector if it is to meet these demands and remain relevant in agribusiness. An offspin of this debate was the current and future lack of forage to sustain bees during the off-season when pollination units are not required.

Dr Doug Somerville, the invited guest speaker from Australia, presented two very informative sessions on practical beekeeping, the first being on the Nutritional Requirements of Honeybees, based on his research conducted in Australia entitled “Fat Bees Skinny Bees”, and the second on “Breeding the Super Bee”, which focused on Queen Rearing and the practicalities of improving honeybee stock.

Dr Christian Maus from Germany, representing Bayer, also gave an informative talk on international trends and in particular research on the relationship between pesticide usage in beekeeping which was conducted overseas.

Very interesting presentations were also offered by Professor Robin Crewe on current and future research being conducted on South African honeybee species; Tlou Masehela of SANBI (South African National Biodiversity Institute) on bee forage and the frightening realities of our dwindling resources; and Mike Allsopp, who presented his scorecard approach on the health of the beekeeping industry in South Africa (It is hoped to reproduce summaries of these important topics in future editions of the SA Bee Journal.)

A further panel discussion was held on the challenges facing commercial beekeeping, which was focused on how to get into and stay in, the commercial sector.

The closing address of the conference was a briefing by the Deputy Director General, DAFF, Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi, who has been associated with the beekeeping industry for many years, in which he highlighted the future role of his Department in achieving the goals of the National Development Plan.

“THE BEEKEEPER OF THE YEAR WAS AWARDED TO A WELL DESERVING “OOM” NICO LANGENHOVEN FOR HIS 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE BEE INDUSTRY

In introducing Mr Ramasodi, Mike Miles, chairman of SABIO, said that, given the background of discussions with the Department of Agriculture, SABIO has a good relationship with the department and that the beekeeping sector was not being ignored.

The final item on the agenda was the awards dinner, when certificates of appreciation were presented to:

- Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi, Deputy Director General DAFF, for his ongoing support to the bee Industry;
- Mr Maanda Rambauli from the Department of Agriculture, a belated presentation from BEECON 2014, for his support on legislative issues facing the beekeeping industry;
- Mr Riaan van Zyl, Senior Inspector DAFF, Western Cape, for his commitment to assisting the South African Bee Industry in all local and regional governmental issues with particular dedication towards fighting the AFB disease;
- Mr Mike Allsopp, Senior Researcher ARC, Stellenbosch, for his constant support of the South African Bee Industry and commitment to addressing the AFB outbreak in the Western and Southern Cape; and to
- Mr Ferdie du Preez for his enthusiasm and commitment to the South African Bee Industry by promoting its image, reputation and legacy through his publications and media.

Finally, the Beekeeper of the Year was awarded to a well deserving “Oom” Nico Langenhoven from Paarl, Western Cape, for his 50 years of service to the bee industry in South Africa and in particular in appreciation for his support of the Western Cape Bee Industry Association.

Theunis Engelbrecht, having served the industry for the past thirty years and who is now standing down from the Board of SABIO was presented with a token of appreciation – a copy of “Collins Beekeepers Bible” – to help him brush up on his beekeeping skills!

The conference was a success and it is hoped that rather than being labelled as “just another talk shop” the future of South African Beekeeping has been secured with goals to pursue and achieve over the next ten years.
**Booster Bee**

**Booster Bee: Protein Feed**

A Pollen Substitute for feeding bees in times of protein scarcity, winter feed and during extended cold conditions. Also a boost feed for bees prior to start of natural honey flow periods. Not intended as a permanent feed for bees as they will prefer natural organic pollen from flora when available. Feed as dry powder form in large container placed close to apiary site.

**Booster Bee: Nectar Feed**

A Nectar Substitute for feeding bees in times of nectar scarcity and as a winter feed. Ideal for establishing trek swarms and struggling colonies. Also a boost feed for bees prior to start of natural honey flow periods. Dilute with boiling water and feed cold in liquid form.

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**The quarterly SABIO meeting was held in KZN – Pietermaritzburg on 22 April for the first time.**

**Successful SABIO get together in Pietermaritzburg**

Craig Campbell and Phil Walker arranged a beekeeping day during April, where local beekeepers were invited to meet the SABIO board members and discuss the future of beekeeping in South Africa. The chairman of SABIO Mike Miles, (JHB), Theunis Engelbrecht (Douglas NC), Sandy Muller (East London), Jaco Wolfaardt (Swellendam), were all present.

Mike Allsop a leading researcher in South Africa was invited to speak to the guests on the current AFB situation as well as the Capensis problem. These two problems will affect each beekeeper in the industry, whether you have one hive or one thousand hives.

Paul Renolds from Southbroom chemicals was invited to discuss how to combat our disease problems.

Dr Michael Meusel from the UKZN delivered a short talk about his studies on bee genetics and pathogen loads of our bees.

The venue for the Beekeeping Day was Dunaverty B&B (www.dunaverty.co.za), where we were hosted by Miranda Train.

"**These two problems will affect each beekeeper in the industry, whether you have one hive or one thousand hives**"

There was a "bring and braai" for lunch and everyone had a chance to socialise and mingle with each other. Thank you to all who made this day a raging success and we look forward to seeing you all at our next beekeepers day.
Flowering canola **brings heartbreak** to crop pollinators

**Several incidents of bee losses, allegedly the result of insecticide poisoning following aerial spraying of flowering canola crops, have been reported by beekeepers in the Western Cape.**

These latest incidents put the spotlight once again on the relationship between crop growers and beekeepers, and the use by some farmers of certain insecticides to eradicate pests such as aphids from their fields.

The main culprit appears to be the use of methamidaphos on flowering canola and there appears to be some uncertainty whether it is in fact registered for use in South Africa.

According to Mike Allsopp, from the Agricultural Research Council in Stellenbosch, the use of this insecticide – whether applied aerially or otherwise – on canola results in the near total extermination of all managed honey bee colonies in the vicinity – as well as all other nectar or pollen collecting insects within foraging distance.

"In short, it turns the spraying area into a death zone", he said.

Veteran beekeeper John Moodie, of Honeywood Farm near Heidelberg, reported losing 40 colonies of bees near Witsand in the Overberg, with a further 100 colonies severely affected.

His losses followed a report from Tulbagh in the Boland that an unnamed beekeeper had lost 400 swarms.

Canola and wheat are farmed extensively in both areas and Mr Moodie said it had been suggested that his bees could have been exposed to the drift from insecticides used for the aerial spraying of nearby wheat.

**Communication is key**

Mr Moodie is proposing better communication between the crop producers, the bee pollinators and the chemical industry as a solution to the problem, which occurs annually as the canola flowers.

"The problem in some instances is that some beekeepers storm into canola areas without correctly notifying the growers.

"The growers have a right to control pests – and need to spray their crops – but there seems to be very little regulation of what they can use.

"There are few, if any, registered sprays for canola and farmers depend on chemical manufacturing companies and their advisers for direction. In the end responsibility is passed between grower, adviser and chemical company, so no one is prepared to accept responsibility.

"We are all aware of the crisis bees are in – pollination demands are increasing so rapidly that there are insufficient bee colonies available to do the work that lies ahead.

"To wipe out bees as they build up for pollination will have a disastrous effect on other agricultural sectors if no action is taken soon", Mr Moodie said.

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A mass of dead bees at the bottom of a brood box, probably poisoned by methamidaphos. Photo on right shows dead brood.

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John Moodie, Western Cape beekeeper, experienced significant colony losses.

**THE PROBLEM IN SOME INSTANCES IS THAT SOME BEEKEEPERS STORM INTO CANOLA AREAS WITHOUT CORRECTLY NOTIFYING THE GROWERS.**
The aim of the forum will be to establish a working body to improve dialogue between all stakeholders and will include the development of guidelines on bee health and monitoring incidents of bee losses.

Preliminary discussions between Dirk Uys, representing AVCASA, Les Hillowitz, of Croplife Africa, and Mike Miles, chairman of SABIO, have resulted in a proposed structure for the Pollination Industry (see illustration). AgriSA was also included in earlier discussions on setting up the forum.

The Pollination Industry is comprised of three main interest groups; growers, pollinators (beekeepers) and the crop protection industry. Technical advisers, acting independently, will advise the forum. The forum's first objectives will be to establish a code of conduct for all parties associated with pollination, create reliable communication channels between them, and set out guidelines to prevent unnecessary bee losses in the future.

The Pollinator Forum will be assisted by a facilitator (ideally Agri-SA) in dealing with Government, which remains the Enforcement Agency in terms of Act 36 of 1947. An inaugural meeting of the proposed new structure has been set for September 2016, in Pretoria.

It is hoped that by establishing the forum incidents of bee losses (see page 16) will be reduced and ultimately eliminated and in so doing will contribute to the growth and sustainability of the expanding pollination industry in South Africa.

Progress has already been made with the setting up of a new Pollinator Forum following a successful workshop held in Oudtshoorn prior to BEECON 2016 to discuss the needs of the Pollination Industry.
The South African Bee Industry Organisation (SABIO) has expressed serious concern about reports and consumer complaints alleging that honey diluted with fructose is fraudulently being sold as natural, raw honey.

**By Lloyd Phillips**

Speaking to Farmer’s Weekly, SABIO chairperson Mike Miles said that most of these complaints originated from KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

Recently, a KZN beekeeper and raw honey producer, who asked that his name be withheld, told Farmer’s Weekly that he had been contacted by a sales representative claiming to represent a sugar company. The beekeeper, who declined to name the sugar company for fear of legal action, said the caller had offered to sell him fructose to use in the manufacturing of his honey.

“I asked the lady why I would need fructose and she said that beekeepers often used it in their honey manufacturing. I only produce and sell pure raw honey, and told her I did not need her fructose,” the beekeeper said.

Miles said that natural honey was composed of sucrose, fructose and dextrose, which bees extracted from vegetation nectar and converted into raw honey. Beekeepers who diluted their raw honey with added fructose, and then marketed it without indicating the fructose dilution on the label, were contravening the law.

He added that any sugar company promoting the practice of adding fructose to honey was behaving unethically and “fooling the consumer and undermining the South African bee industry”.

A spokesperson for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), Bomikazi Molapo, said that only honey derived by bees from the nectar of flowers, sugar excretions and plant juices was allowed to be marketed as pure honey. “Nothing else may thus be added to honey and be presented as honey only,” she said.

Molapo said that the compositional properties of honey sold as 100% pure in South Africa were defined by the Agricultural Products Standards Act No. 119 of 1990. This had been updated in 2000, and now also provided regulations concerning the grading, packing and labelling of honey and mixtures of bee products intended for sale in South Africa.

Miles said that the regulations prohibited the inclusion of any impurities, additives or adulterants in honey or mixtures of honey and bee products.

“You can’t add fructose to honey, thereby diluting its natural raw composition, and still call it honey,” he said. He added that any consumer complaints about honey quality received were referred to designated DAFF officials.

“In a recent meeting [with DAFF’s Directorate of Agricultural Products Inspection Service], these complaints were once again highlighted and DAFF is investigating the matter,” he said.

Spokespersons for major sugar companies, Illovo Sugar and Tongaat Hulett Sugar (THS), told Farmer’s Weekly that they had no records of fructose sales to registered beekeepers. However, THS said that non-beekeeping fructose buyers could not be prevented from selling their own fructose to beekeepers.

**Don’t you dare talk dirty near my honey!**

**You did it again!**
Efforts by KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) beekeepers to attract more entries for the honey competition at the annual Royal Show in Pietermaritzburg seems to be paying off, with more than 50 entries being received for this year’s competition.

For the past four years the goal has been to drum up greater interest in the show’s apiarian section, which was once regarded as the premier honey show in South Africa and drew entries from around the country. Regrettably, over the years the show lost its momentum, although it managed to keep going, while all the other honey shows throughout the country ceased to exist.

This year the competition drew larger interest from beekeepers in other provinces, with a wider representation of entrants coming from Free State, Gauteng and the Western Cape – to give the KZN producers much needed competition.

It is our hope that producers from outside KZN will continue to support the Royal Show competition and that the trophies awarded annually will bear the names of beekeepers from all over South Africa.

Mr Terry Strachan, CEO of the Royal Agricultural Society, has always been a firm supporter of the Apiarian Judging Competition.
Craig Campbell (KZN) indicates to Jaco Wolfaardt (Swellendam) how big the Natal bees build their honeycombs compared to the Cape bees!

Section with its informative Honey Hall, and the KwaZulu-Natal Bee Farmers Association would like to express its deep gratitude to him for his unfailing support and encouragement because without it we would still be floundering.

A major problem in rejuvenating the Honey Show has been the lack of qualified judges. Fortunately, with the assistance of Reg Leweridge and Reg Morgan, two highly regarded judges, we have seen two new judges emerge in William Urquhart and Kim McCall. The two experienced judges will continue to tutor their protégés until they are able to adjudicate on their own. For the assistance of both Mr Leveridge and Mr Morgan, and their continued support of the show, we are truly grateful.

With the judging team working in harmony, the sweet task of judging in excess of 50 entries went off without a hitch and was completed in a most professional manner.

Kim McCall and her mother Sheila, walked away with most trophies, including the show's premier award – the Champion Bottle – and became the first women in the show's history to do so for a second time.

Nelson Delaquera, in conjunction with Daddas Spices, was awarded the Ron Botha Memorial Trophy for the highest-scoring bottle of honey on show entered from outside KZN.
Die eerste skou, wat as die “Great Western Exhibition” bekend gestaan het, is reeds in 1864 gehou. Dit maak die Swellendam landbouskou die oudste skou in die Suidelike Halfrond. Dit word ook gereken as een van die oudste ononderbroekte landbouskoue in die wêreld.

Die hoogtepunt hierdie jaar was die landbouvoorligtingsoggend wat gehou is. Die klem het geval op bewusmaking ten opsigte van die byebedryf, en die belangrikheid van die heuningby in kommersiële landbou.

Die leuse vir die oggend was: “Verminder risiko in die landbou deur saam met die omgewing te werk.”

Vooraanstaande sprekers
Die byeenkoms is ook toegespreek deur vooraanstaande persone vanuit die akademiese- en handelswêreld. Hulle het hul hulsel op die breër terrein van die landbou toegelê. Die volgende sprekers het opgetree: Professor Mohammad Karaan, dekaan van die fakulteit Agri-wetenskappe (Universiteit van Stellenbosch), Meneer Jan van Staden, portefeuillehoof by Momentum, en Meneer Dirk Uys, Nasionale produkbestuurder van Bayer SA. Die volgende sprekers het spesifiek oor kernaspekte wat die byebedryf raak gepraat: Meneer Mike Allsopp – Landbou Navorsingsraad (“The contribution of the beekeeping industry to fruit and seed production in South Africa”), Meneer John Moodie – byeboer en voormalige voorsitter van Sabio (“The importance of nurturing bee forage for food security in South Africa”) en Meneer Riaan van Zyl – Inspeksiedienste, Dept, van Landbou Bosbou en Seevisserye (Wetgewing oor die Suid-Afrikaanse byebedryf en die bydrae wat grondeienaars kan lever.)

Bydrae van bye
In ‘n neutedop saamgevat, het Mike Allsopp, onder meer, die verskillende produkte wat die heuningby oplewer bespreek. Hy het beklemtoon dat 80% van alle Suid-Afrikaanse plante deur die heuningby oplewer. Die bydrae van bye vir die handhawing van ekosisteme is onontbeerlik.

Interessante is dat die geldwaarde wat bye tot vrugte- en saadoeste in Suid-Afrikaanse byebedryf en hydraat van die Suid-Afrikaanse byebedryf en die bydrae wat grondeienaars kan lever.)

Wetlike toesassing teen AFB
Riaan van Zyl het volledig verslag gedoen oor die wetlike toesassing teen AFB. Hy het daardie punte uitgewys wat van toepassing sal wees tydens inspeksies van staanplekke. Daar sal, byvoorbeeld, minstens vier korwe per staanplek geinspekteer word. Die ideale situasie sal wees dat die eienaars self die korwe oompaa en rame uithaal. Die Wes-Kaap besit dat die meeste byebe- nutters en korwe in Suid-Afrika (soos op die datum van hierdie skrywe), naamlik, onderskeidelik 492 en 39 332.
**FIELD DAY: 23 JULY 2016, KZN MIDLANDS**

**Freesing’s day marked by chilly weather**

On the 23rd of July the KwaZulu-Natal Bee Farmers Association held an open day for beekeepers in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal.

Open days or field days, held throughout the year, are hosted by various association members and are geared towards new members, hobbyists or anyone in any way interested in bees and beekeeping.

Mostly run by the professional or commercial bee keepers in the association, these days are hands-on and the goal is to make use of an apiary site that needs some form of management in the hives. The standing joke among members is that by hosting an open day they get their management done free by cheap labour.

The most recent open day was hosted by Kezia Freese, one of the association’s committee members. The apiary site chosen for our visit was situated on her in-law’s farm in the Cramond-Albert Falls area just outside of Pietermaritzburg.

Despite the wet, cool weather there was a very good attendance of between 30 and 40 beekeepers. Not long after people started arriving the rain came down in buckets but fortunately did not last. The rain stopped and the day became fairly bright but chilly.

Kezia, having just had her first baby, has not had as much time as she would like to have to attend to her bees, so she asked us to look inside some of her hives that she felt needed attention. In general the colonies were in good shape, considering the dry season we have just had in KwaZulu-Natal.

Some hives had stores of honey in one super, while others had stores in the brood chamber.

During the opening of the hives members were able to engage with the experienced beekeepers and ask questions related to what they had observed. Discussions continued later on a wide variety of pertinent subjects, such as disease, pests, theft and vandalism.

After the apiary visit the group went to the farmhouse for tea, followed by a bring-and-braai, where the two SABIO board members from KwaZulu-Natal, Craig Campbell and Phil Walker, delivered a report-back on Beecon 2016 and the recent SABIO board meeting.

Meanwhile, interest in all things related to bees in KZN continues to grow and the incumbent KZN committee will continue with its efforts to educate people about bees and the broader industry.
**HERFSVELDDAG: 5 MAART 2016 TE ELGIN, GRABOUW**

Dinge is aan die gebeur in die Wes-Kaap

Deur Ferdie du Preez

Tussen al die gewoel wat met die voorbereidings vir die 2016 Beecon gepaard gegaan het, het die Wes-Kaapse Bybedryfsvereniging (WKBV) op bogenoemde datum ‘n hoog geslaagde velddag aangebied.

Dit is gehou te Bradford Apiaries wat aan Matthew Surridge behoort.

Dit was ‘n pragtige sonskyndag en 32 byebenutters het vir die geleentheid opgedaag. Hulle is verras deur die teenwoordigheid van twee lede van die SABIO-Raad, naamlik Charles Salmon vanaf Ladismith (Kaap) en Craig Campbell al die pad vanaf Pietermaritzburg. Ons sê dankie vir hul wilwellendheidsbesoek.

Die meerderheid aanwesiges was van betreklike ouderdom, en ‘n aansienlike aantal is terselfde tyd nuwelinge in die bedryf wat wys dat daar steeds ‘n gesonde belangstelling in byeboerdery bestaan.

Danie Vorster, WKBV-voorsitter, het die byeenkoms kortliks geopen. Die kern van sy boodskap was dat daar nie ‘n alfa en omega vir die bedryf is nie. Hoewel daar riglyne bestaan is daar nie noodwendig rigiede metodes waarvolgens gewerk word nie. Solank die probleem suksesvol aangepak word, is dit reg so.

Dawid het die besprekings geleid. Matthew het almal op ‘n toer van sy heuningkamer geneem. Hier het hy almal op langs die verschillende fasette van sy heuningkamer. Daarna stapel hy die kiste opmekaar met gifpille (Phostoxin) tussenin.


Die velddag is afgesluit deur gesellig om ’n braaivleisvuur te verkeer.

*Ter afsluiting is daar weer tyd gegee vir vrae. Ons sê dankie vir hul wilwellendheidsbesoek.*

**NASKRIF:** Bogenoemde byeenkoms is opgevolg deur ‘n verdere velddag wat op 9 April 2016 te Hopefield gehou is. Mooi so! WKBV.
**SKBBV CANOLA VELDDAG: 30 JULIE 2016**

### Alles oor bye by Karringmelksvlei

**Deur Herman Venter**

’n Groep entoesiastiese byeboere het die koue getrotseer en op 30 Julie ’n baie leersame Canola-velddag op die plaas Karringmelksvlei, van Andre de Jager bygewoon.

Dit het die voorafgaande dae gereen, en die lande was lekker nat. Die weer het ons ’n breek gegee en ons kon ons canola-dag hou.

Ons voorsitter, Willie van Rensburg, het almal welkom laat voel en die goeie bywoning as verblydend bestempel.

Daarna is Andre de Jager, ’n man wat ’n meestersgraad in “alles van bye” het, aan die woord gestel.

Die aanbieding het uiteraard afgeskop met die voordele wat Canola inhou vir die byeboer en sy bye, hoewel die produksie van sommige cultivars Canola laer is as ander, hoe om afswerming te verminder, die hoeveelheid kaste per hektaar, en nog vele ander aspekte.

Die tweede gedeelte van sy aanbieding het gehandel oor die verskillende maniere van swermverdeling. Die voor- en nadele van elke metode, en ook wat hy as die beste metode ervaar in ons omgewing. Daarna het hy met ons ’n draai gaan maak in Engeland waar hy saam met navorsers koninginne geteel het. Die probleem met koninginne teel, is dat jy later met ’n “kamer vol koninginne sit” en dan is die weerste-stande nie gunstig daar buite om die koninginne in die korwe te plaas nie.

Alles was ’n mondvol en die nodigheid om weer so ’n dag te reël met die uitruil van inligting is beklemtoon.

Hannes van Zyl was volgende aan die woord met die onderwerp, “Onderhoud in die broeikas”. Hy het beklemtoon hoe...
met rooi geswelde oë sal laat terugkeer, maar by se kind was rustig as gevolg van die koue. 

Die dag is afgesluit met 'n gesellige kuier en worsbraai, agter die stoormuur uit die wind uit, en daar is natuurlik lank gepraat, oor baie aspekte, want die middel wat geneem is teen die koue het bygedra tot sinvolle gesprek. Ons sien uit na die volgende velddag.

belangrik dit is om gereeld inspeksies van die broeikas te hou en ook hoe noodsaaflik dit is om gereeld nuwe wasvelle in die broeikas te plaas. Vir die vang van swerms, kan wasvelstrokes gebruik word, maar wanneer vervangingsrame in 'n broeikas gesit word, moet dit verkieslik vol wasvelle wees. Die werker-bye sal dan die fondasie uitsit wat die korrekte selgrootte het om hommel-vorming te voorkom. Dit is ook belangrik om die ou rame, met die dik, swart was, te verwyder om die korf vars en gesond te hou.

Met die teoretiese gedeelte van die dag afgehandel, is daar byepakke aangetrek en het ons vertrek na die korwe wat omring is van Canola – so ver jy kan sien. 'n Droomgesig vir 'n byeboer.

Almal het gedink dat die bye hulle nie vriendelik sal ontvang nie, en hulle dalk met rooi geswelde oë sal laat terugkeer, maar by se kind was rustig as gevolg van die koue.

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Ons sien uit na die volgende velddag.
At the August meeting of the Southerns Beekeeping Association in Johannesburg, Andy Harding, beekeeper and retired pharmacist, gave an interesting presentation on the use of beeswax, propolis and olive oil in making lotions and skin creams, as well as for treating beestings. Southerns is the largest beekeeping association in the country in terms of membership, and regularly attracts 50 to 70 mainly hobbyist beekeepers to its monthly meetings, which are held in Bryanston.

Mr Riaan van Zyl and Mr Kobus Kemp are the persons who beekeepers should contact if they have any suspicion about bee diseases such as AFB or suspicions about the presence of AFB. They can also be contacted regarding legislation concerning honey labelling and standards and import requirements of honey. They do not provide advice on beekeeping practices, but will if possible direct persons with enquiries to the correct or experienced sources.

Please contact them.
Riaan van Zyl: (Capensis) Tel: 021 809 1702. Cell: 083 414 2494 Email: riaanvz@daff.gov.za
Kobus Kemp: (Scutellata) Tel: 012 309 8762. Cell: 082 873 1678 Email: kobusk@daff.gov.za

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Een siening van die byebedryf se hartklop vandag

Deur Ferdie du Preez

As Wes-Kapenaar beskou ek bogenoemde onderwerp grootliks deur ‘n Kaapse bril. Dit is as gevolg van ‘n gebrek aan eerstehandse inligting oor gebeurlike in die ander streke. Gevolglik steun ek hier in ‘n mate op hoorsê.

’n Bedreiglike Meetinstrument

Mens is geneig om die hartklop van die bedryf te meet aan die tempo van die aanwas van byeenutters en korwe in die land. Ek dink dit is ‘n verkeerde uitgangspunt, en in Suid-Afrika se geval, ‘n bedrieglike meetinstrument. Weiplek vir bye in die land is op baie plekke oorbevolk, en die kans op sinvolle uitbreiding is uiters skraal.

Aanwas by ons dui nie altyd op vooruitgang nie, en kan in sekere gebiede selfs nadelig vir die bedryf wees. Daar behoort eerder na ander aanwysers gekyk te word om te bepaal of daar lewe in die bedryf is. Daar is veral die kleiner dingetjies wat tel.

Minusse

Kom ons kyk eerste oorsigtelik na die minusse in die bedryf. Baie daarvan is toe te swak, of geen beheer oor het nie. Groot dele van die land is die afgelope paar seisoene gekenmerk deur ‘n sterf afname in die volume heuningproduksie. Dit is grootliks tewyte aan uitgerekte droogtes wat groot dele van die land teister.

Dit is grootliks tewyte aan uitgerekte droogtes wat groot dele van die land teister. Dan is daar ook afnames wat nie aanvul nie. Die wegbeheer vanaf suiwier heuning-produksie na bestuiwing mag ook ‘n invloed op produksie hê. Daar bestaan ongelukkig nie amptelike syfers om die omvang van hierdie afnames te bepaal nie. In die Wes-Kaap is daar deeds welbekende Amerikaanse Jongbysiekte (AFB) wat steeds pla. Dit is motorlê om die uitwerking van die siekte op produk- siedewering te bepaal. Daar bestaan minstens een boer wat soveel as 150 korwe as gevolg van die siekte verloor het.

Dit laat ’n proses van natuurlike seleksie ontstaan. Dit is ‘n geval van waar net die sterkste sal oorleef. Die boer wat nie teen hierdie uitdaginge opgewasse is nie val uit langs die pad. Wat oorbly is die sterkere boer wat die bedryf vorentoe kan vat. Ee dink dat hierdie neiging in die dae vorentoe gaan toeene. Hierdie omstandighede kan bydra om ‘n natuurlike balans tussen die getal byeenutters en die beskikbare weiveld te help bewerkstellig.

Die bye se habitat word steeds bedreig vanweë industrialisasie en die uitbreiding van veral informele vlooberoue. Die hele byebedryf is bedreig vanweë industrialisasie en die uitbreiding van veral informele vlooberoue. Daar bestaan nie ‘n standaard opleidingsprogram vir die bedryf nie. Kursusse word nog oraoral uitgeroep. Op sosiale vlak het die heuningskou, barometer vir entoesiasme in die bedryf, feitlik totaal van die toneel verdwyn.

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In die Wes/Suid-Kaap is daar vir my, hoewel sporadies, ‘n bemoedigende teken van oplewing. Daar behoort eerder na ander aanwysers gekyk te word. Op sosiale vlak het die heuningskou, barometer vir entoesiasme in die bedryf, feitlik totaal van die toneel verdwyn.

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PLUSSE

Hoewel genoemde minusse groot inovd op produksie het, is die gevolge daarvan nie noodwendig altyd sleg vir die bedryf nie. Dit laat ’n proses van natuurlike seleksie ontstaan. Dit is ‘n geval van waar net die sterkste sal oorleef. Die boer wat nie teen hierdie uitdaginge opgewasse is nie val uit langs die pad. Wat oorbly is die sterkere boer wat die bedryf vorentoe kan vat. Ee dink dat hierdie neiging in die dae vorentoe gaan toeene. Hierdie omstandighede kan bydra om ‘n natuurlike balans tussen die getal byeenutters en die beskikbare weiveld te help bewerkstellig.

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Meer verblydende tekens is die verbeterde pryse wat tans vir heuning betaal word, en die verwagte toene- mende vraag na bestuiwing (minstens in die Wes-Kaap.) Dit word verwag dat selfs as heuningsproduksie weer gaan toeene, pryse nie sal daal nie. Boere is verder verseker van ‘n volgehoue aanvraag na hul produk. Nóg ’n moontlikhede inhou. In die noorde van Kaapstad is weer ’n mega heuningsentrum opgerig. Hoewel die byenutters se habitat word steeds bedreig vanweë industrialisasie en die uitbreiding van veral informele vlooberoue. Daar bestaan nie ‘n standaard opleidingsprogram vir die bedryf nie. Kursusse word nog oraoral uitgeroep. Op sosiale vlak het die heuningskou, barometer vir entoesiasme in die bedryf, feitlik totaal van die toneel verdwyn.

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Die byebedryf geniet tans groter bloot- stelling in die media as wat waarskynlik ooit die geval was. Miskien vanweë die verkeerde rede. Die uitbreek van AFB het ’n geweldige belangstelling onder die publiek geraak. Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel. ’n Groter bewuswording vir die byeboer se probleme is ontwikkel.
**GUMS & BEES BOOKLET**

This booklet aims to help landowners protect or grow forage resources for honeybees, and understand why Eucalyptus trees are vital to the beekeeping and agricultural industries in South Africa.

**Abbreviated contents:**
- Why are gum trees important
- New laws for invasive gum trees
- Five steps to evaluating gum trees
- Step 1 Gums not requiring any intervention
- Step 2 Gums requiring removal
- Step 3 Identify your listed gum species
- Step 4 Permits for listed species
- Step 5 Removing invasive gum trees

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**Die psige van vandag se byeboer**

Só, wat is die psige van die Suid-Afrikaanse byeboer vandag? Ek dink dat die terugslae ’n meer geharde en vasberade boer opgelever het. Hy het geleer om aan te pas en beter bestuur toe te pas. Waar hy voorheen nie sy bye in tye van droogte gevoer het nie, dink hy nou daaraan. In tye van skaarste koop hy weer ekstra gevoer aan om in sy kliente se behoeftes te bly voorsien. Die byeboer van vandag se innerlike belewenis is een van groot afwagting. Hy weet dat die gety moet draai, en wag dat die weer-patronen ten goede sal verander. Hy wag ook om te sien of ons bye ’n natuurlike weerstand teen AFB en ander pestilen-sies gaan ontwikkel. Vandag se byeboer is besorg oor die toekoms, maar het nog glad nie sy vertroue in byeboerdery verloor nie. Hy bly bedryfsgebond.

**Resultaat**

Kwantitatief gesproke, speel die bedryf se plusses en minussen ongeveer gelyk. Desondanks, en ten spyte van moeilike tye, kom die bedryf se hartklop steeds as gesond voor.
It appears that spring is coming early this year. The first swarms on the Highveld are already arriving in the trap boxes in the first two weeks of August and the bees are consuming large quantities of water from my bird bath; a sure sign that they are already building up for the new season.

I commenced with annual spring management early in August and this year am only using half foundation sheets in the new brood frames. In the past I have always used full sheets to avoid build-up of drone brood, encouraging the bees to only draw out worker cells. But with the rising costs of wax foundation sheets and the rapid build-up of combs given the changing climatic conditions I am experimenting this year with half sheets.

I normally replace frames one and 10, but if the queen has already covered four brood frames I generally split the brood and insert a new frame in between in the centre.

If she has only laid in three or less frames I place the new frames with foundation on the outside of the brood combs.

Often you may find the bees have propolised the end frames to the side walls, or over the hive entrance, so be careful when removing the frames.

During the cold weather in winter on the Highveld the bees propolise up their entrances and will attach a bridge of propolis from the entrance on to the end frames.

It is also now the time to put out your trap boxes if you want to increase your stock. Sometimes on the Highveld weaker colonies succumb to a lack of food, especially in the rural areas and these swarms will need to be replaced. In the suburbs, catch the trek swarms in trap hives rather than letting them settle in water metre boxes or under roofs where they may end up being destroyed by non-caring suburbanites.

Brendan Ashley Cooper from the Western Cape

As spring approaches every beekeeper should inspect his brood chambers to assess the strength of each colony, check for signs of ill-health and give the colony fresh room to build new comb for the season ahead.

It is important to replace at least two frames with full sheets of new foundation (or drawn comb if you have) to relieve congestion (being one of the main causes of swarming) by removing pollen and honey-bound frames, as well as replacing old poor condition combs.

Ideally you should remove two old combs from the sides of the ten-frame brood box and replace as above either at numbers one or two and nine or 10.

In the Western Cape AFB has not disappeared, so do your work responsibly. By early August we have finished our first round of inspections for AFB and out of 1250 hives inspected we found 25 hives with clinical symptoms. Luckily only 2%! These colonies have been isolated and will go to the ARC in Stellenbosch for testing and research purposes.

Some of the hives inspected were low on stores before the canola started flowering (a few dead hives with bees stuck head first in the combs from starvation) but with ‘nice’ weather building up fast the outlook is improving. The bees in general are looking healthy and strong with large brood patterns.

The hives should be going into pollination with four frames of brood and eight frames of bees (no bigger, no smaller). It is important not to take in hives which have too much brood or bees. Regular inspections and swarm management are essential to prevent the hives from swarming before or during pollination.

I predict that this will be a favorable spring for our bees in the Cape area with good build-up for honey production or pollination. Our bees are likely to swarm a lot this spring if not managed regularly, so pay particular attention to congestion in the brood nest!
Sharing the latest buzz about bees with Grade 7 learners

By Ezette du Rand

As part of an outreach programme to create awareness of the plight of the bee, The Social Insect Research Group from the University of Pretoria aka ‘The Bee Group’ visited the Grade 7 pupils of Cornwall Hill College during their Natural Science lessons on 26 May.

The aim of the visit was to educate the pupils about pollination services, bee keeping and bee conservation in light of the worrying declines in bee populations across the globe. Bees and other pollinators and the invaluable pollinating services they provide us with, help produce approximately one out of every three bites of food we eat. Most crops grown for their fruits (including vegetables), nuts, seeds, fibre (such as cotton) and hay require pollination by insects. Pollinating insects also play a critical role in maintaining natural plant communities and ensuring production of seeds in most flowering plants. The main insect pollinators, by far, are bees, and while honey bees are the best known and widely managed pollinators, there are also hundreds of other species of bees that contribute some level of pollination services to crops and are very important in natural ecosystems.

The lessons were both informative and interactive. Not only did the learners have the opportunity to view bee larvae and pupae under the microscope but the display also included worker bees carrying pollen in their pollen baskets on their hind legs and a rear glimpse of the queen bee. The learners were also treated to a taste of freshly harvested comb honey from the University’s apiary, which was the first time many of the learners tasted honey in the wax comb. The main attraction, however, were most definitely the observation hive – a small sealed hive consisting of two brood frames and 200 – 300 young bees cleaning and tending the brood. The box has glass panels through which the activities inside the hive can be viewed. Afterwards, the teacher quizzed the learners a bit on the subject of bees and pollination. These clever youngsters seemed to know the correct answers to all the questions. This shows that these future leaders are keen on beekeeping.

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Honeybee threats in Africa

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Honeybees (Apis mellifera L.) are threatened by numerous pests, parasites, and pathogens as well as changing landscapes and pesticide use. Therefore, honeybee health and colony losses continue to be a topic of concern and ongoing research.

Africa has the advantage of having a large wild honeybee population and a high number of diverse sub-species. Although African honeybees are also susceptible to the same threats than anywhere else around the world, no reports of extensive losses have been recorded yet. In our recent article on Honeybee Health in Africa, the presence of all the pests, parasites, pathogens as well as other threats honeybees face, was reviewed comprehensively (1). Most of the pathogens and parasites mentioned in this review have been reported in South Africa (Fig. 1) and have the potential to affect the beekeeping industry and agriculture (eg. American foulbrood outbreak in the western Cape).

**Figure 1:** a. Distribution of pathogens, including bacteria, fungi and viruses throughout Africa. b. Presence of parasites, more specifically both Varroa destructor and Acarapis woodi mites, in Africa.
publication reported the effects of the neonicotinoid, thiamethoxam, on savannah honeybee food consumption and their sensitivity to sugar (6). Whereas nutrition was not affected, the sensitivity to high concentrations of sugar was decreased (Fig. 3). The honeybees became less responsive to sugar concentrations usually found in nectars: their taste for sugar was reduced. Such a simple effect may eventually disrupt foraging efficiency and colony activity.

Figure 3.
On the left, honeybees in individual holders (Credits: Kendall Cross). On the right, graph showing the proportion of bees responding to different sugar concentrations. The black line represents the control group, the red line the group treated with thiamethoxam. When tested for solutions highly concentrated in sugar, bees fed with the pesticide responded less than control bees. This underlines a taste reduction due to the pesticide action.

In conclusion, so far we have looked at the effects of single factors on honeybee physiology. In order to take research to the next level, future projects should investigate how a combination of factors (eg. nutrition, parasites, pathogens and/or pesticides) influences honeybee health.

References
Have you heard?

Bees hit a musical high note

The buzzing of bees has hit a high note in the music world and the latest musician to take up beekeeping is the virtuoso bassist of the Red Hot Chili Peppers band who goes by the unlikely name of Flea.

According to Modern Farmer, an American magazine devoted to agriculture and food, Flea and the rest of the Chili Peppers have a history of activism – from music education to get-out-the-vote campaigns to Tibetan independence – and environmentalism is nothing new.

Starting in 2015, Flea began learning about and keeping his own bees. Today, he has three hives. He regularly posts pictures and updates on his Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram about his beekeeping exploits, all of which show the musician wearing proper beekeeping attire instead of his usual shirtless stage costume. The bees have, naturally, been christened “Flea’s Bees.”

All you need is a loud trill followed by a short grunt...

And, while we are on the subject of music, did you know that new research has revealed a new dimension to a bird-human relationship that focuses on the sounds both make.

The research was conducted in Mozambique by the universities of Cape Town and Cambridge and was published recently in the journal Science.

The report states that it has long been known that, in many parts of southern Africa, humans and greater honeyguides work together to find bees’ nests from which the humans collect honey and the birds eat the honeycomb wax.

But it is not only the bird’s special call that keeps the relationship going, the humans have a honey-hunting “call”, too – a loud trill followed by a short grunt.

It more than tripled the chances of a successful interaction with the bird, according to lead researcher Claire Spottiswoode.

“What’s remarkable is that it involves free-living animals whose interactions with humans have probably evolved through natural selection over hundreds of thousands of years”, she said.
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