

Feeding Urged

Honey Bee Losses Reported High

Losses of honey bees ran high this winter, reports the Penn State extension service.

Arnold G. Lueck, associate county agent, reported in a recent newsletter that some beekeepers reported almost half of their bees are dead. This compares to a normal 10 per cent loss due to queen failure and starvation.

The reason for the high loss this year was the weather. Many bees did not have a flight for six to eight weeks because of snow and low temperatures. Large colonies had less trouble than weak ones.

Bees must have enough warm weather to move the cluster to fold if they are to survive.

Locations and upper entrances were very important this winter. Bees should be protected from the prevailing winds, and they should be in sunlight.

All colonies will benefit from feeding. Sugar syrup fed in the early Spring will not only save some colonies, but will stimulate brood rearing. Since it takes over six weeks to develop a colony headed by a good queen, feeding should be started late March.

This helps to bring the colony to its peak strength in late May at the time when most areas have their main honey flow.

It is important that a constant supply of honey or food is available once brood rearing

has started. Plants such as skunk cabbage, red bud, maple willow, dandelion and fruit are important plants at this time.

Sugar syrup should be made up of at least 1 1/2 parts sugar to 1 part hot water by volume.

Feeding is best done inside the hive over the brood nest. This is where the hive is the warmest, the bees are located,

Give Layers Shell Matter

Eggs that grade AA and A must have sound normal shells.

Varying degrees of egg thinness are permitted in B and C grades. These defects determine the final grade despite the fact interior quality may meet A or AA requirements, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture reports.

Poultrymen can aid sound shell structure by providing ample shell making material to their laying flocks.

After 10 to 12 months of intensive production, shell glands of some laying hens fail to function as ably as before and shell defects become more evident.

Poultrymen who seek to carry their better layers into second year production should determine the feasibility of this practice on the percent of sound shells produced toward the end of the laying year.

and the food is needed. The entrance feeder does not work as well as a feeder inside the hive since the bees will not go down to get food on cool mornings.

There is a need for pollen in many of the colonies which were checked this Spring.

Although pollen substitutes are not as good as natural pollen, they do help in the development of the colony. Pollen is the protein of the bees' diet and is necessary if brood is to be reared. Pollen substitutes are available through most bee supply houses. The ready-mixed product is the best buy for the smaller beekeeper.

Bees which are fed and cared for properly in the Spring will develop into large colonies in time to take advantage of even the light honey flows. There is danger that these colonies may swarm.

Most swarming can be stopped by proper supering. In the case of two-story colonies, reversing hive bodies is about the same as adding a super. This reversing should be done about the middle of April when the weather is warm.

Not all colonies need reversed, only those colonies which insist in staying in the top super. Another super may be needed by the first of May when dandelion and fruit are in bloom.

Since adding supers will not stop all swarming, it is important to check the colony every 8-10 days for the presence of queen cells. It is only necessary to check the second story since this is where the queen cells are found under normal conditions. This can be done quickly by merely tipping the top super back and looking up between the frames.

If there are queen cells, this is the time to act. One of the best ways to handle such a colony is to insert a double screen between the upper and lower hive bodies.

Be sure to add a super full of combs to the lower body and check to see that the queen is in the lower one. Have an entrance to the rear in the upper

body or in the double screen as well as one not treated in this manner, and the division may produce during the Summer and Fall.

Normally, any queen cells in the lower body are destroyed by the bees, and the bees above the double screen will rear a new queen. This new queen may be used to requeen either the parent colony or another colony, or the whole top hive body with the new queen may be moved to make a new colony or to strengthen a weak hive. It is seldom that a colony treated in this manner swarms. The parent colony will produce about

as well as one not treated in this manner, and the division may produce during the Summer and Fall.

Add supers early enough: watch the colony, and as soon as there is a sign of a honey flow, add one. The next is added as soon as the bees are well established in the first. In the early Spring only extracting should be used. If comb honey is desired, the supers should be added just prior to what is considered the main flow.

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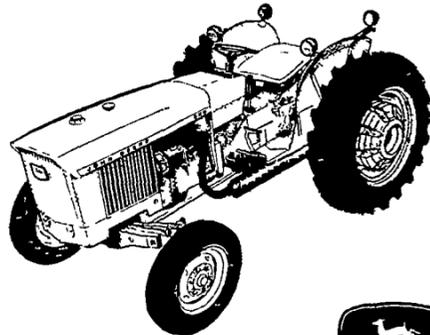
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