

Bee Disease Could Cost Local Growers

NEWARK, Del.—As in any business, farming relies on dependable workers, and every spring and summer farmers look to honey bees to pollinate their crops.

In Delaware, fruit crops and many vegetable crops require the pollination help of those industrious worker bees.

During the growing season, beekeepers move their bee hives from farm to farm and orchard to orchard. Farmers hire the pollination services their crops require and beekeepers harvest the honey.

But this year, a disease pathogen that affects honey bees has caused bee losses of up to 50 percent in Delaware, resulting in

devastating reductions to populations.

"We're not sure what's causing this disease condition. Probably, it is a virus," said Dr. Dewey Caron, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension entomologist and bee specialist. "The only common variable so far is Varroa mites, which may be leaving the bees open to a virus that's killing them. Bees can tolerate some mites, but the mites make the bees more susceptible to a pathogen."

About a third of the food Americans eat comes directly from the pollination honey bees perform, Caron said, so the direct value to U.S. farmers and to consumers is significant. In fact, the agricultural function of the honey

bee is more economically significant than the honey.

According to Caron, the value of California's annual almond crop produced with the help of honey bees is more than twice the value of all the honey produced in the United States in any given year. In Delaware, apple, blueberry, watermelon, cantaloupe, and cucumber crops depend on bee pollination.

A loss of 10 to 15 percent of bee colonies each winter to cold weather, food deprivation, and disease is not uncommon, but losing half of the bee population could be catastrophic to growers in the entire Delmarva region.


Some documented losses have reached 50 percent on the Delmarva peninsula, though the average in Delaware is 35 percent. Both managed hives and wild bees are affected.

"It's a crisis situation," said Caron. "The devastating loss of bee colonies has an economic impact on agricultural production. Producers must have the bees, so they pay more for bee services from farther away. That's if they can find them. This is an expense the consumer will eventually see in food prices at roadside stands and supermarkets."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is investigating the cause

of the virus at their laboratory in Beltsville, Md. But regardless of their findings, this season local growers are being forced to look farther afield for a supply of bee pollinators. Caron notes that he knows of two large vegetable producers who are still trying to contract bee colonies all along the Eastern Seaboard.

"It takes one colony to pollinate an acre of cucumbers, a major vegetable crop in this state," Caron said. "Fewer colonies means economic hardship for growers. It's a major agricultural consideration in a state where bees are responsible for \$10 million in vegetable production annually."



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1 FARM EQUIPMENT

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1066 black stipe new rebuilt motor, 20.8-38, good condition; 1066 cab, good TA and motor, 18-4-38, 4200 hours; 1466 cab, good TA and motor, 20-8-38, 3900 hours; 240 UIT, good condition, 1000 hours, good rubber; 300 good condition, TA and motor; M good, live hyd., PS; 1811 Cub Cadet, 450 hours, 44" mower. 717-966-3483.

1100 gal. polyethylene round tank, \$225; 10" Papac hammermill, w/7 sleeves, \$125; tractor chains to fit 24"-28" tires, \$100; 12 sheets, galvanized tin, 16'Lx38"W, \$10/per sheet. 717-677-6703.

11 Kinze interplanter units from older Twinline Planter good condition. 610-837-0847.

(1)3000 & (1)9000 Gal. SS nitrogen storage tanks. 703/639-2262, after 8pm 703/382-0570.

14' Grain Body Dump Truck, 1974 International, 30,000 GVW, PS, Air Brakes, Inspected. \$4200 OBO. (717)369-2540.

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1947 JD model B, restored at cost of \$1950. New tires, good paint, \$2495. Dick Gutshall 717-249-2591 after 5PM except Sunday.

1947 John Deere A; Ford 8N. 717-336-2497 after 4PM.

1948 Ford truck w/12' flatbed dump body, truck runs, has very little rust on cab and fenders, \$500 OBO, 410-756-4060 call anytime.

1979 International 1440 axle flow combine, 2900 hrs., 13', 810 grain head, 843 corn head, always kept inside. Nice, \$25,000. 814-629-9566.

1980 Tryco 3-wheel sludge application machine, D.D., Allison automatic, 66" tires, 1750 hours, Moro vacuum system, \$14,000 OBO. 609/894-2849.

1986 Ford 4610 4WD, 52hp, cab w/H&A, 2280 hours, excellent condition, \$19,800. (412)627-5287.

1986 GVM Sprayer, Ford 350 4WD, 460 engine, auto trans., AC, 400 gal. poly tank, 45' hyd. booms, 5hp Honda engine for 2x1 1/2 product pump, Ravens 440 controller, 35 gal. foam marker, SS inductor. 410/239-3226.

1990 JD lawn tractor, excellent condition, \$2,500. Please call between 8am-5pm, (717)748-1095.

1994 Alloway power till, HD, 7' rotor tiller w/packer roller, used approximately 100 hrs., \$6,500. (410)549-7392.

IHC Dump Wagon, 7X14 Metal Body, \$450; JD 2R Corn Planter, 3Pt. Hitch, \$475. (610)488-0723.

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(2) Firestone 13.6x38 tires, new (2) Firestone 13.6x46 new Safemarc 18.4x34, 50% tread, 18.4x38 Goodrich 40% tread 18.4x38 Armstrong 60% tread 218.4x26 Firestone good. (717)966-1208.

(2) flail mowers: Mott 1993 & 1994, less than 300 hours, side mount, 74", complete mount kit for Ford coarse cut. Carl Neutzel Services. (410)329-6791.

(2) Goodyear 18.4R42, 10 ply, dyna torque, radial w/ tubes, 45% tread, \$350. (412)887-5389.

(2) Grove 14' hydro-driven forage wagons; MF 410 combine w/4R (30"row) corn head; MF 300 combine w/13' grain head; (2) 2-wheel wagon chassis. 717/648-8048.

(2) JD 8300 18x7 drills; (3) IH 5100 drills. Zeisloft Used Equipment, 800/919-3322.

(2) JD LA tractors, running condition, \$2,200 and \$1,500. Chester County. (610)495-6170.

2 used Chisholm-Ryder snapbean harvesters w/ hyd. dump wagon, good cond., call 609-691-5097.

(2) White 5400, 6R corn planters, \$1300-\$1100; Better Bit 2400 gal. vacuum tank, \$3500. 215-348-5514.

2-Wisconsin engines model V460, V461; 410-472-2617.

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(2) FMC-GB110 green bean multi-row harvesters, hydro, 4WD, cab & air, excellent condition. 609/935-0348.

489 Ford NH haybine, nice \$4,800., NH 450, 3pt mower \$750.; Cub sickle bar mower \$100., 717-653-5733.

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