

From the Editor...

I think the year 2008 will go down as one of the strangest weather years in MN beekeeping history. My case: There was more snow on the ground for Easter this April than there was on the previous Christmas. In West-Central Minnesota we were hit with a record setting blizzard during the last week of April. Then the months of May and June brought record amounts of rain. But just when things started to look normal in July, the rain failed to come back. We ended up with a critical rain shortfall through August, which really cut into our buckwheat honey crop. When September came around, the rain returned with near-record amounts for both September and October. We also had a very early snowfall, October 26, that put 4 inches of snow on the ground in Fergus Falls! All told, we had only 5 ½ months this summer without snow on the ground! Let's hope for a better 2009...

In the last issue, the 2008 Farm Bill had yet to pass. Contrary to what I said, things DID come out pretty good for beekeepers. According to *The Speedy Bee*, "The legislation contains a variety of provisions that could be a boon to beekeepers, including specific authorizations for beekeeping research, especially for CCD; inclusion of honey bees and other pollinators in cultural practices for conservation reserve programs; listing honey bees in a disaster relief program; and requiring a study of crop insurance to cover the loss of bees."

Momentum is gaining on linking bee losses to neonicotinoids. Germany has joined France in banning the toxic chemical family. The French refer to the affliction as "mad bee disease." Hopefully, research being done here at the University of Minnesota by Vera Krishik will shed some light on these disturbing chemicals. Imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, clothianidin and mehtiocarb are examples of some of neonicotinoid active ingredients that are under fire.

Many beekeepers are treating for nosema this fall. The presence of *Nosema Ceranae* has made many of us wonder out loud if this might be yet another link to the "disappearing bee" problems. The symptoms seem very similar: normal looking colonies in the summer followed by rapid declines in the late summer and fall.

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Idabelle retired from Honeywell in 1984 and went on to own and operate the Pond Restaurant in Maple Lake. She was known as the "Bee Lady" for the Minnesota Honey Producers at the Minnesota State Fair.

Visitation was Tuesday, December 4th, 2007 from 4 to 7 pm at the Peterson Chapel of Buffalo. The Peterson Chapel of Buffalo served the family. Online condolences may be made at www.thepetersonchapel.com.

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Crop reports around the state are mixed. Northern parts of the state came out pretty good with reports as high as 120 lb averages. The central parts of the state didn't fare as well. In the lakes region 40 lb averages are the norm. Southern areas also report mostly below average crops.

The honey market seems to be holding firm in spite of, or because of, the financial crisis that the world economy is in.

Keep your dues current! Check you label to see if your dues are current. If not send money to Conrad now!

All members are invited to attend the board of director's meeting in St. Cloud December 4 at 10 a.m. This will be a one-day event.

A reminder: meetings of the executive board are open to all members of the Minnesota Honey Producers Association.

Enjoy this issue!

