

# **Lewis County Beekeepers' Association:**

## **January 2012 Newsletter**

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### **Upcoming LCBA Events:**

**January 12: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 – 9 p.m., Old Chehalis Courthouse**

- **Speakers: Tim and Sharette Giese**
- **Topic: Taking Bees on the Road – How the Woogie Bee Pollination Service Works; also, Sharette will give a brief overview of how to synthesize beeswax.**
- **Business Meeting & Bee Q&A**

**February 8: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 – 9 p.m.**

- *Tentative – this will be confirmed at our January meeting*
  - *Darren Gordon, "House of Bees," on planting a bee-friendly garden*

### **Notes from LCBA's December 14 Monthly Meeting:**

President Norm Switzler unfortunately was home with a bad back, so Vice President Ted Saari led our discussion. Our top business item:

***Package Bee Orders:*** Bob Harris reported that he had talked to John Edwards at Ruhl Bees in Portland. Bob noted that LCBA members can order bees wherever they choose, but Ruhl's has treated the club well, giving group order discounts. John's prediction is that package bees will not be in short supply in 2012, but that prices will be decided by suppliers around the second week of January. John was told by Oliveras, his California supplier, to expect about the same prices as last year's, which ranged from \$75 to \$80 per package. John will give LCBA a 5% discount on bees and any supplies and equipment. However, particularly for package bees, it helps John if one or two club members act as the purchasing agent(s), pick up the bees, and transport them back to Lewis County. Bob is willing to front the funds and pick up the bees in his trailer with help from one or two LCBA members. In 2009 we brought the bees to a central location (Borst Park) and LCBA members came to pick them up. John would call three days prior to the delivery, and LCBA could pick up the day after he offloads the bees to his warehouse. Bob noted that we would want to pick up the bees the very next day, while they are in the best possible condition post-shipping.

Pat Swinth asked whether nukes would be available: Bob said that they would be, but details were not available yet. Another member reported having paid \$70 for a nuke in Tacoma, which seemed a tad pricy.

Brandy DeMelt asked when we would be paying: Bob said that he could front the funds from his farm account and then be reimbursed by members. It was suggested that this would be a burden on Bob. Past treasurer Sarah Roebas noted having the club pay up front might be chaotic; having one central source might be best. We agreed to iron out the details at our January business meeting if we decide to order from Ruhl's.

Gary Stelzner is interested in ordering Buckfast Bees, the highly hygienic strain developed by the fabled Brother Adam of the Buckfast Abbey in England after the native black bees of England died out. Brother Adam found queens from various European beekeepers and, for over 50 years, selectively bred for good honey production, calm disposition, and hardiness to local weather. As our southwest Washington climate has much in common with the damp British Isles, including mold, mildew, and fog, these bees might be a good fit in Lewis County. Gary thought these bees might cost \$90-100 from a company called Beeweaver, which is breeding these bees in Texas. If anyone is interested in going in on an order, they should contact Gary (members can email Susanne and she can forward the message to Gary). Gary's experiment could be a great talk for the club.

Empty packages: Steve Howard has empty packages, as does Bob. Bob will call Ruhl's and ask if we can get money back for returning the packages this spring.

***Resolved: LCBA will decide at our January meeting whether we will make a package bee order. Members are asked to decide how many packages they would like to order; members who cannot attend the January meeting are asked to email Susanne ([susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com)) about their orders, and she will coordinate the information with Bob.***

***Southwest Washington Fair?*** Ted raised the possibility of LCBA's having a booth at this August's Southwest Washington Fair to help our club do outreach about what we offer and to share information about bees with the Lewis County public. Brandy talked with Fair managers about space in the grant building, which would be hospitably cool for bees if we had the observation hive. We would get free passes and \$5 vendor rate tickets, plus \$2 parking tickets. However, the Fair would charge us \$425 for the rental of a booth. Brandy will see if they'll work with us on the price, since we are an educational group. Alternative spaces at the Fair are problematic: Sheila Gray advised that we avoid the Grandstand, and Brandy urged avoiding the agricultural building: both would be too hot for bees in the observation hive. The Wildlife building is too tight on space. Brandy also inquired about whether we could sell honey, mugs, other items: Bob thought we could be either educational or for-profit but would have to pick one. Sharette noted that she has display posters about beekeeping, with flip-up puzzles to help people test their knowledge; others have assorted materials for a good educational display.

***Resolved: We will vote on whether or not to move forward with a Fair booth at our January business meeting.*** Ted commented that we should not move forward unless we have a critical mass of volunteers who can staff the booth: in past years, LCBA volunteers supplemented the Sherwoods' booth, but this time, we'd have to manage with only club volunteers, and, as Sarah noted, a number of us are committed to multiple groups, such as the Master Gardeners and Master Composters, who also have Fair booths. John Panesko noted that a "yes vote" at our February meeting needs to be a commitment to volunteer.

***Additional LCBA Outreach Opportunities:***

- ***Gardening for Everyone, February 11, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Centralia College:*** Peter Glover, Susanne, Kimo Thielges, and others will be at GFE. Kimo will have a display about Mason Bees, and Peter and Susanne, plus any other interested LCBA members, will staff an LCBA table. This outreach opportunity doesn't cost the club anything.
- ***Home and Garden Show:*** Also, Peter has volunteered to give a talk on beekeeping at the Master Gardeners' Home and Garden show.
- ***Methodiners:*** Ted suggested that the Methodiners' potluck, which takes place once a month, might also be a worthwhile opportunity to help others learn about bees.

The discussion of Bee Talks reminded Bob that Dr. Ted Shepherd at WSU tried for years to get a bee to talk, but so far, he's only managed to make it buzz. . . . ☺

**Lewis County Mushroom Group:** Sheila announced that 73 people attended the first meeting of the new, Extension-sponsored mushroom group. Their next meeting will be the second Tuesday in January (1/10), 6 p.m. at the Extension classroom at the Courthouse.

## **Bees & Honey In the News:**

### ***“Tests Show Most Store Honey Isn’t Honey. . . .”***

Bob Harris found a fascinating article at *FoodNewsService.com* which investigates just what exactly is in those commercial honey jars at the supermarket. According to the piece, “More than three-fourths of honey sold in U.S. grocery stores isn’t exactly what the bees produce”: pollen is filtered out, and this means that the source of the honey – and its health benefits, or lack of them – can’t be traced. The article gives the facts on what supermarket chains are actually selling, and explains the major role that the FDA plays in failing to police this problem. The complete article is very interesting reading, and certainly a spur to those of us who would like to produce and patronize local honey instead! A long piece, but well worth the read – thanks, Bob! Because this article IS long, I’m just giving the website address here: if you’d like the entire piece in hard copy, please email me ([Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com)) or let me know at our January meeting, and I’ll make a copy for you.

**“Tests Show Most Store Honey Isn't Honey:  
Ultra-filtering Removes Pollen, Hides Honey Origins”  
by Andrew Schneider | Nov 07, 2011 / Food News Service  
<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2011/11/tests-show-most-store-honey-isnt-honey/>**

## **Annual Bee/Honey Production Report Needs Friends!**

Jim Bach sent a bulletin from Kim Flottum of “Catch the Buzz,” an excellent e-zine that is available online at <http://home.ezezine.com/1636/1636-2011.11.25.11.37.archive.html>. Apiarists have been benefiting from research funded by the USDA focused on the Honey Production Report, but this funding is now in jeopardy. Here’s the story:

*CATCH THE BUZZ: Annual Report Still in Jeopardy - Help Save the Annual Bee/Honey Production Report – by Kim Flottum*

A couple of weeks ago Bee Culture’s Buzz informed you that the Annual NASS Honey Report was slated to be discontinued, and, perhaps the monthly ERS Honey Price Report was in trouble, too. We urged you to write a short note requesting that they NOT be discontinued because of the their importance to the beekeeping industry.

Now it seems some money has been reinstated, and that some of those reports will remain...those that get the most support from their members. The American Federation has joined the parade and they are urging their members to support continuing these reports. Below is their letter. The Buzz report generated some response, but more is needed. If you sent a letter to the original cause, send it again to the person listed below. We need these reports.

USDA-NASS had announced that it would discontinue the annual bee/honey production report along with a wide range of agricultural survey programs. Now, Congress has passed the 2012 Agricultural Appropriations bill, which gives the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) sufficient funding to continue some of these reports – those that receive the most support from their industries.

Beekeepers need to contact NASS to urge that the agency continue the annual bee/honey report.

“This is the only production report NASS provides for the honey industry,” says ABF president David Mendes. “We have a chance to save the report. It is important that the honey industry let NASS know how critical this annual report is to the industry and support the reinstatement of its publication.”

In addition to giving producers information on honey production and colony numbers in the various states, the annual report is used by the National Honey Board as a comparison to its domestic assessment collections and is a vital component of the fledgling beekeeper crop insurance program.

“When we go to Congress and USDA to make our case for programs to benefit beekeepers, we rely on the annual bee/honey report as an indication of the health and trends of our industry. Without the NASS report, we would have nothing to base our requests on,” said Mendes.

Beekeepers, packers, state associations and others associated with the honey industry are encouraged to take a moment to send an e-mail to the Joseph Prusacki, NASS statistics division director, at [Joseph\\_Prusacki@nass.usda.gov](mailto:Joseph_Prusacki@nass.usda.gov), explaining the importance of this report to you and to the industry.

The same communication should be sent to your members of Congress and to the NASS field office in your state. To locate the NASS office in your state, go to [http://nass.usda.gov/About\\_NASS/sso\\_directory.pdf](http://nass.usda.gov/About_NASS/sso_directory.pdf).

## ***Clothianidin – A Chemical Threat to Honey Bees - What You Can Do to Help***

Also from Jim Bach is this report on the threat that an agricultural chemical called Clothianidin has on honey bees. Jim writes:

“Hi Fellow Beekeepers.

Charles Bennett, the WSBA Executive Board member recently elected to represent Area 2 has asked me to forward to you the following information in the hopes that you will also write your Congress person making the request that they ban the use of Clothianidin on crops in the US because of its impact on honey bees. He wrote to his local member of Congress about the use of the product on crops. His Congress Person returned the following reply [below].

You may find your Representative by going to the following website:  
[www.house.gov/representatives/find/](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/). You may find your senators by going to:  
[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

You can find a lot of information on Clothianidin by doing a Google search.

Regards, James C Bach, WSBA Secretary, WAS Treasurer, [jcbach@fairpoint.net](mailto:jcbach@fairpoint.net)

*From: "Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler" WA03JB@mail.house.gov*

*To: Charles Bennett, [cbennett3491@comcast.net](mailto:cbennett3491@comcast.net)*

*Subject: Responding to your message*

*November 14, 2011*

*Dear Mr. Bennett,*

*Thank you for writing me regarding the use of Clothianidin and the effect it has on our crops. It is an honor to represent the people of Southwest Washington, and I appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with me.*

*Recently the House and Senate passed H.R. 1473, which funded the federal government through the end of the fiscal year. I supported this bill, which includes \$1.14 billion for the Agriculture Research Service which directly allocates money to understand why there is a decline in bee populations.*

*It is in everyone's best interest to maintain healthy honey bee populations. The bees are critical to crop fertility, and I expect that clothianidin will continue to be a subject of close scrutiny from scientists, regulators and farmers. I am reviewing the available material on clothianidin. If it is proven that clothianidin is causing the decline in bee populations than its use should be discontinued immediately. I will keep your concerns in mind should the issue come before Congress.*

*Thank you again for contacting me on this important issue. I invite you to visit my website at [www.herrerabeuthler@house.gov](http://www.herrerabeuthler@house.gov) for additional information or to sign up to*

*be kept up to date on these issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.*

*Sincerely, Jaime Herrera Beutler, Member of Congress*

## **LCBA / WSBA News and Announcements:**

***Need Help with Your Bees? Call LCBA bee mentors!***

- ***If you'd like to be connected with a honey bee mentor in your area, call Susanne at 360 880 8130 or email [Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com).***
- ***If you need help with Mason Bees, check with Kimo Thielges ([kimosabe@compprime.com](mailto:kimosabe@compprime.com)), or Ted Saari ([KNT98632@q.com](mailto:KNT98632@q.com)).***

***Would You Like to Volunteer as a Bee Mentor (taking calls, answering questions, maybe visiting members' bee yards)? If yes, please call Susanne at 360 880 8130.***

***Free Swarm & Colony Removals: Can You Help In 2012?*** Swarm/colony removal is a free service that LCBA, as a nonprofit educational organization, offers the public. Swarm season is over (let's hope!!), but if you're interested in riding along when it all begins again next May, give LCBA Secretary Susanne a call (see # above): it's free, fun, educational, and it saves bees from the exterminator!

***Need a Local Source for Beekeeping Supplies? Visit Honey Hut at Centralia Deli Steakhouse & BBQ***, 708 Harrison Avenue in Centralia. Call Tim Weible, 736-1015, for more information about supplies and prices. Tim has pretty much everything you may need by way of supplies in stock: suits in small to XX, gloves, boxes assembled or unassembled, supers, wax and plastic foundation, frames, tops, bottoms, smokers, tools, and books. The Honey Hut also sells local honey, and even mead, in addition to serving generous & delicious BBQ.

***Growing Places Farm needs beekeeping supplies:*** If you have gear, especially bee suits and visors, that you can spare, please email [lford@gpfep.org](mailto:lford@gpfep.org).

**COOKING WITH HONEY:** *Cooking With Honey is taking a break this month. It was suggested at our open Board meeting that in 2012, we'd like to invite LCBA members to send their favorite recipes that involve honey. Would you like to share a recipe? Please send it to Susanne at [susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com).*

***Respectfully reported—bee happy!***

*Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary: [susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com); 360 880 8130*