

# COMB Courier

“I speak for those who can’t speak for themselves”

Vol. 3 No. 6

June 2016

Editor: mike ffrench

## Michigan Honey Production

Michigan Honey Production for 2015 totaled 5.22 million pounds, down 9 percent from 2014. This estimate included honey from producers with 5 or more colonies. Nationally, Michigan ranked 8th in honey production in 2015; no change from previous year. Yields from Michigan’s 90,000 honey producing colonies averaged 58 pounds in 2015, compared with 63 pounds in 2014.

Michigan honey price averaged \$2.43 per pound (wholesale price), down 6 cents per pound from last year. Value of production totaled \$12.7 million, down 11 percent from 2014.

Nationally, honey production in 2015 from producers with 5 or more colonies totaled 157 million pounds, down 12 percent from 2014. There were 2.66 million colonies from which honey was harvested in 2015, down 3 percent from 2014. Yield of honey harvested nationwide per colony averaged 58.9 pounds, down 10 percent from the 65.1 pounds in 2014.

N.B. Reproduced from *Farmer’s Advance*, May 2016.

## Need a prop

Like many of you I have heard various tales of the wondrous properties of propolis. The most ear-stretching is the story of the propolised mouse. Yes, so the tale is weaved, of a beekeeper who found a propolised mouse in his hive after another hard Michigan winter. Is this true, or just another urban legend?

If anyone has actually seen or know of anyone with a propolised mouse, please let me know, I am fascinated with the thought of it. Better yet, if you have discovered a frozen-in-time rodent in your hive please bring it to the meeting for the edification of us all.

## Does size matter

Now I’ve got your attention. Are hive designs: Fun, fashion, future? What size should your hive be? At bee conferences the instructor always seemed to be demonstrating with a hive combination different from mine. Why did I always feel like I was using the wrong equipment? Two hive bodies, 3 mediums, four small? Economy of scale dictates a uniform size in supers. Too heavy? Take out frame one at a time, or half a super. Compromise with Mediums.

C.O.M.B. Monthly meeting.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month 6:30pm.  
MSU Pavilion, Farm Lane, E. Lansing

## Bees be gone!

Once more the warning is sounded, are we listening? A recent item in a PBS newscast once again issued a update on the disappearance of bees from nature’s backyard. Bees are the canary in the coalmine, the bellwether of things to come. Are we listening?

Will we reach a state of affairs whereby cantaloupes replace caviar as the dish of the rich?

Yes, I know, you have heard it all before; as beekeepers we have become blasé about the constant supply of fear-mongering from the *Jeremiah Times*. But we know in our hearts that as

an industry, yes we are an industry, we are potentially doomed to extinction alongside the bees. In our capitalist society we have elevated greed and avarice to the top of the pyramid, meaning that everything has its price. If we don't change our ways, that price will become too high.

We have two choices, we can stand idly by and let nature take its course—and us along with it—or, we can mount a full-scale, all-out cooperative effort to address the problem. The so-called national news programs are dedicated to stories about dog rescues, and trees felled by the latest storm, neither of which helps anything. Our politicians are no help either, only interested in getting re-elected and publicly excoriating the character and matrimonial intrigues of their opponents.

I have seen the enemy, and it is us.

We humans have abrogated to ourselves the title of, most-advanced-form-of-life. It is time we offered proof of that vain glorious title. We should take a page from the playbook of our fellow planet dwellers—the bees, cooperate and more closely align our goals for the future, if we are to have one!

One word bandied about like a football at the Superbowl is, transparency. Currently, it is the latest buzzword, but like the result of the Superbowl, fleeting. What would be helpful is a state by state conference to discuss the state of the bee industry, conflated with a national conference to iron out our problems. Sure, we have these conferences now, with demos, vendors, seminars ad infinitum, but after the balloons have been deflated and thrown out to finish up in the middle of the Pacific as a gigantic trash barrel, everyone goes home and it is business as usual.

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

There are three constants in human affairs: me, us, and them. In order to produce order, *me* must become *us* and convince *them* to join us. All progress has one common denominator: the individual who is willing to put his, or her, head above the trench inviting the ire of those dedicated to self-interest. *They* want you to row their lifeboat and make you pay for the privilege.

I know that this will be seen by some as a Socialist diatribe, but as W.H.Auden said: No one likes the truth teller, the graves of history are filled with martyrs whose only crime was to tell the truth.

### Bee Read

If you have a comment, query, problem, or an interesting story or anecdote concerning bees that you would like to share with your fellow beekeepers, here is your chance. Send it in to [mjbusybee@frontier.com](mailto:mjbusybee@frontier.com) or [debbie.foote1962@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.foote1962@gmail.com) or hand it in at the meeting. Jane Carhartt may be contacted at [janesbees@yahoo.com](mailto:janesbees@yahoo.com)  
This is your newsletter, make use of it!

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### Bee Classifieds

If you have any bee-related items you would like to buy, sell, or trade, this section is for you. This service is free for members of C.O.M.B. You may submit ads to Mike French or Deb Foote. There will be a nominal fee for associate members.

Deadline for next issue is June 30th