



CAPPINGS

The Official Newsletter of the Kansas Honey Producers Association www.kansashoneyproducers.org

Promoting Mankind's Most Beneficial Insect - The Honey Bee!

Special points of interest:

- Legislative Update
- President's Corner
- Regional News
- Kansas State Fair

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The Legislative Update 2025 by Buck Bradley

Bees Under the Dome returns on February 4, 2026 — Plus, HB2158 buzzes into the New Year

The Kansas State Capitol will once again be buzzing with excitement as the 2nd annual “Bees Under the Dome” event returns on Tuesday, February 4, 2026. This event will be organized by the Kansas Honey Producers Association (KHPA) and the Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers Association (NEKBA).

This yearly tradition brings together beekeepers, legislators, and the public to raise awareness about honey bees, native pollinators, and the role of beekeeping in Kansas agriculture. Visitors can expect educational exhibits, beekeeper resources, and plenty of honey-themed conversation. Last year’s event drew over 200 attendees, and this

year’s timing is expected to boost engagement even further. The goal is to be seen regularly at the Capitol so we can be seen as a resource for the Legislators and their staff.

HB2158 – A Quick Recap and What’s Next in 2026

HB2158 was introduced during the 2025 legislative session by Representative Rebecca Schmoie to allow Kansas beekeepers earning under a specified threshold to sell honey in retail settings without a commercial kitchen license, provided they meet specific safety and labeling requirements.

2025 Highlights:

- The House passed the bill 85–34 after removing the original \$50,000 income cap.
- The Senate approved it 40–0 but reinstated a lower income limit of \$25,000, added a free

registration with the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), and required a label disclaimer:

“Product not subject to routine inspection by the Kansas Department of Agriculture.”

-The bill went to Conference Committee on March 25 but stalled due to unresolved differences between the House and Senate versions.

Looking Ahead:

The bill is still alive and well. It will resume in the 2026 legislative session starting in Conference Committee, avoiding the need to restart from scratch. Advocates hope HB2158 will be one of the first bills signed into law in the new session, potentially simplifying life for hundreds of Kansas beekeepers early in the year.

Want to Get Involved?

If you are a beekeeper, a pollinator enthusiast, a beekeeping organization, or just curious about local agriculture, consider attending “Bees Under the Dome” on February 4, 2026. KHPA and NEKBA also welcome volunteers and local association partners for the event.

Stay engaged, stay informed, and support the bees who help keep Kansas blooming.



Deadlines have changed for submitting fair entries online and getting them to Hutchinson to be judged in the honey show. By August 1st, to avoid any extra fees, have your entries submitted online to the Kansas State Fair. Go to www.kansasstatefair.com. Go to “Competitions” in the upper right side. Next, click on ‘Competitive Exhibits’ with the Pride of Kansas and sunflowers in the picture. Next, scroll down and click on “Agriculture” where there are pumpkins in the picture. From this page, make your online entry and go to the honey section of the fair book to see what honey classes you want to compete in.

It is a \$1.00 cost per entry submitted. The days to get entries to the fair are September 2-4th. Judging is to start on the 5th. Pick up times of entries is September 14th, 6-8pm, 15th, 9am-1pm. Anyone not able to make the trip to or from Hutchinson with entries may contact Kristi Sanderson by phone or text at 913-768-4961. I will make sure your entries make it to and from the fair. Please consider exhibiting your honey so we may have a good showing in the honey area again this year.

Don’t forget the black label competition as well. See if your honey will be judged the best tasting honey in the state of Kansas. Remember, you must enter two other honey classes to be able to participate in the black label class.

Premiums awarded for this division are 1st - \$15, 2nd - \$10, 3rd - \$5. Honey Gift Pkg. will award 1st - \$30, 2nd - \$20, 3rd - \$10. Sweepstakes Award will receive \$15 plus a plaque and a rosette. Judge’s Choice (a new entry) – will receive \$15 and a rosette.

Volunteers Needed for Honey Sales Booth at Kansas State Fair

This year volunteers will be needed from September 3-14, 2025 at the fair. The Pride of Kansas building will be open from 9AM-9PM the 5th-14th. Volunteers will be needed to set up the display area on September 2nd and label products to be sold in the booth. Our time frame for selling will be 3-4-hour shifts with the 1st shift from 9-1, the 2nd shift from 1-5, and the 3rd shift from 5-9. Don’t be bashful and think, “I don’t know enough about bees”. You have more knowledge than the general public and there will be other beekeepers present to help. For every day an entry ticket is needed, one will be provided for you at the guest services office once you get to the fair. Use [SignUpGenius 2025](#) to sign up for the times that fit your schedule. If you have signed up this way in the past, you should have already received an email notification when this program became available. If you need assistance signing up to volunteer, contact Kristi by phone or text at 913-768-4961.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Becky Tipton

Every occupation faces challenges. If it's worth doing it probably isn't easy to do. What are the challenges faced by beekeepers? Like a lot of things beekeeping related, ask ten beekeepers and get eleven answers. So, I asked 10 beekeepers (more or less) and got some food for thought.

Coming in at challenge number one (mentioned by several), Varroa mites. This really should be combined with hive health. Beekeeping was very different pre mite. We now have myriads of viruses carried by the mites and the damage they do to our bees physically makes them more vulnerable. A beekeeping student of ours was expounding upon his success with bees over the recent winter. I asked him to what he attributed his changed success. His answer, I started taking mites seriously. Commercial beekeepers faced unprecedented losses this past winter, as much as 60% loss has been reported. That's millions of colonies lost nationwide. These losses are attributed to a combination of factors including Varroa mite infestations, disease outbreaks (particularly viral infections), and pesticide exposure. The situation is impacting agricultural production, even threatening our food resiliency.

From a new(er) beekeeper, the challenge is learning about beekeeping. Compared to the books I read 40 years ago, peer reviewed and published by reputable sources, the internet is the 'wild, wild west' of information. It may be great, and it may be bunk. Beekeeping is a vast subject. It is also deceptively simple; you have bugs in a box. But truly managing the colony, understanding seasonal timing, knowing the floral sources, and trying to keep the bees working is a juggling act with stingers. When, how, why, and best practice. Best practice is a moving target. You must keep up with the latest research because last year's meds (Amitraz) may be ineffective this season. You are growing food, and everyone wants honey to be a safe and wholesome product. We seem to be fighting the EPA and FDA while we all work toward the same goals. Healthy bees and safe food.

Not all forage is created equal. Your bees need abundant and varied floral sources. With the change of farming practices to favor monoculture crops and herbicides replacing cultivation, floral diversity is a thing of the past. Even crops with good nectar sources may be tainted with systemic pesticides (neonicotinoids). Many bee-experts name loss of forage/habitat as the number one threat to bee health.

The beekeeper has several products of the hive to market. Pollination services, generally a commodity sold by larger beekeepers, can add significantly to business profit. But it's not without risk. Will your bees be safe from pesticides, vandalism, theft, weather, etc. But it's very lucrative. Sell the bees. Healthy hives will need split, or they swarm. Here is a whole new skill set to master—how to manage hives for growth without encouraging swarming behavior. Market your honey. Only people who have done a farmers' market have any idea how much work is involved in manning a market booth each week. Rain, shine, hot, cold, wind (we are in Kansas), ruined product, happy customers, unhappy customers, a product with your name right on the label (yes it needs a label). Or

you can sell in buckets and get a fraction of the amount your beautiful honey is actually worth. The market is international. You'll compete with China and adulterated honey selling for a fraction of real honey. Is your honey organic, raw, local, varietal? Can you explain that while smiling? Yes, trying to make money from beekeeping is challenging.

The challenge reported by Steve Tipton, age. We must consider our physical limitations in a job that is hot, heavy, and dirty. Time challenges: beekeeping is timely, and procrastination will destroy good intentions. The biggest lie the beekeeper tells himself, I'll remember. The details matter.

The challenges are many and fierce. But oh, those rewards! The hum of the bees is the music of the garden (Elizabeth Lawrence). The taste of summer honey is the sunshine vintage. At every meeting of the Kansas Honey Producers, we tackle some of these challenges. The meeting this November will be no different, we will talk and laugh and taste the honey. Please join us.

News from Northeast Kansas

It's time to harvest honey in the NE KS Region. Various beekeepers in the region have commented that it has been a good year with large yields. Personally, I can say that the flow has lasted longer than in past years. Surprisingly this year, some local beekeepers found honey supers low in moisture content despite the rainfall we received. Flows were strong and comb honey production went well. Those with colonies west of the Lawrence area were able to collect a Black Locust flow.

The annual NEKBA Funday was held June 7th at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, Lawrence, KS. There were approximately 250 in attendance for the all-day event. This year there was a deep dive queen rearing class taught by Jim Kellie, John Speckman, and Matt Winstead. Class was limited to the first 25 to sign up and it filled up quickly. Also, a photography contest and painted hive competition were added. Guest speakers for Funday were Amy Vu, University of Florida; Kim Mahaleck, EAS Master Beekeeper; Dr. Judy Wu-Smart, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and Eugene Makovec, Editor of American Bee Journal.

The NEKBA Open Apiary, located at Pendleton's Country Market, 1446 E 1850 Rd, Lawrence, KS, currently has ten colonies. The colonies were recently tested by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, a department of the USDA. Bee and wax samples were taken to assess overall health and *Tropilaelaps* mite testing. A repeat test will be in September or October. Educational sessions for beginners have been held regularly through spring and summer. Honey extraction is tentatively scheduled for August 3, 2025, location to be determined. Information and updates of apiary activities can be found at nekba.org. The club website will direct those wanting to attend to SignUpGenius.

The Tiptons, Becky and Steve, continue to teach beekeeping classes through the Shawnee County Parks Dept. Classes will continue through October and are held at the Ward Meade Botanical Garden, 124 NW Fillmore St, Topeka, KS 66606. Contact Becky for more information at 1 (785) 554-1591.

There is also a hands-on opportunity for mentoring at Cecil Sweeney and Joli Winer's house, 19201 S Clare Rd, Spring Hill KS. Weather permitting, classes are held at 5:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of month through October. Call Joli to let her know you are interested in attending at 913-856-8356.

Jo Patrick, Northeastern Region Representative

North Central Region News

Hello Bee Friends!

I think one of the most fun things about beekeeping is seeing the ideas and talents of all the beekeepers. While there are many ways to do any beekeeping task, we have people in our community who can build things, design gizmos, decorate, and garden in the most amazing ways. It's a blessing to meet so many people who share a hobby, but have their own talents to put their spin on it. And the best way to get acquainted with all of these talented people is to get together!

We have many opportunities coming up in North Central Kansas. On August 16th we have Open Apiary at Sunset Zoo in Manhattan. In September we have Open Apiary at Sunset Zoo on the 13th, then get in the bees together at Rolling Hills Zoo near Salina on the 14th. October 11, we have Open Apiary at Sunset Zoo again. We will wrap up the year with the KHPA meeting in Salina on November 7 & 8.

You can learn so much listening to other beekeepers and getting into hives together. You may even learn about other talents. It's a good time to connect with people, so get out there with the beekeepers, they're pretty cool people.

Nikki Bowman, North Central Region Representative

South Central Region News

After a couple of dry years here in the South-Central part of Kansas, we are now getting the rain that we prayed for. We need the moisture, but now we are seeing struggles with crop harvesting/ planting, flooding, and other damages from the storms. Flooding of rivers, softball size hail in Ark City, and monsoon storms have all been reported throughout the region. Talking with beekeepers, the rain may have even come at a time during our bigger nectar flow as many are not seeing much honey this time of year.

Wichita Beekeeper Alliance still tried to host some meetings and educational events but some had to be rescheduled due to flooded apiaries. As we move closer to fall, we hope that the rain does not turn off completely, that everyone is safe, and that the bees are happy and healthy.

Zach Cooper, South Central Region Representative



KHPA Scholarship Grant Program

Applications for the 2025 grant will be accepted until October 20, 2025! Applications for the grant will be accepted from schools and community organizations, clubs, or groups wishing to explore the world of honey bees and beekeeping.

News from Western Kansas

Lessons From the Hives

Just like the buzz in a hive before a spring swarm ... “We’re out of room” ... “It’s too crowded” ... “I can’t get to what I need without crawling over crap!” These were the comments (plus others not appropriate to share here) I made to my husband because the bee equipment was always buried under and behind projects in the farm shop!

Yes, I’m a tad bit feisty and like MY STUFF organized – a place for everything and everything in its place. Vic, on the other hand, laid back, wants HIS STUFF within reach, or, in other words, out all over the shop! Even though over the last decade I’ve claimed space in the farm shop with some nifty projects of my own, getting to the bee equipment when I needed it was daunting!

Living on a farm where there are many “treasures” left from past generations, my motto is “from a pile to a purpose!”

Solution! We turned an **old grain bin** into a **Bee Bin!**

The top center cover of the bin, which had blown off years ago, has been replaced with plexi-glass – We have a skylight.

Electrical outlets were installed around the perimeter of the bin. We have lighting and power for a small water heater and equipment.

Aeration channels in the cement floor were converted into a floor drain and space for water lines.

A counter was built for an old kitchen sink (yep, we had one of those laying around too.)

Contraptions of “this and that” have been converted to store frames... as well as shelving to dry herbs and flowers used for “hive inspired creations.”

So, what have I learned?

Creating the Bee Bin to store equipment is kind of like a swarm leaving the hive! It might take a bit of time to find a suitable location and convince everyone to follow. (Yep, it took a bit of convincing for Vic to agree to a grain bin remodel.) However, rebuilding, reimagining, and organizing new space has value, is refreshing and so much more efficient!

Breathe and Just BEE.

Brenda Mazanec, Western Region Representative

Southeast Kansas News

Happy day from soggy Southeast Kansas. Even with all the rain we have had this Spring, the bees are working hard to put up honey. Beekeepers are working hard to keep boxes on the hives. In their spare time, they are getting exhibits ready for the State Fair.

Tiny has invited beekeepers to gather September 1 at 1 pm at City of Lebo city park. Pot luck BBQ cook out, beekeepers swap meet, talk bees, and maybe a dance.

The park has disc golf, volleyball, fishing pond, and rest rooms. Event is hosted by Coffey County Beekeepers Association. Contact Tiny Jackson for additional information @ 1 (620) 481-1275.

Rhonda Heston, Southeast Region Representative



Fyi- Deadline for the One Hive travel stipend application is August 1st. There is a limited number of stipends so apply early.

One Hive will also offer complimentary registration for the ABF Conference as part of the award.

The 2026 ABF conference will be held at the Mobile Convention Center (One South Water Street Mobile, AL 36602). For more information on the conference: [2026 ABF Conference – American Beekeeping Federation](#)

Title: Bee-Friendly Policy & Advocacy Training for Beekeepers

Synopsis: Frustrated with the lack of support for beekeepers? Annoyed by the lack of action to help our bees? Join the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bee Lab for a 3-hour professional development workshop that focuses on demystifying the legislative process and teaches beekeepers how to make meaningful connections with local and state policymakers. We will break down the steps and simplify the process, so you feel more empowered and prepared to engage effectively with legislators and their staff, who can, in turn, introduce new policies that support bee-friendly practices. The One Hive Foundation offers travel grants for participants to enjoy the American Beekeeping Federation conference and attend the policy workshop.

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A Message from our 1st Vice President

2025 sure is flying by quickly – it's hard to believe we are in the third quarter already and KS State Fair is just around the corner. Our area had a nice but very short-lived sweet yellow clover bloom this summer. Anything would be better than the last few years thanks to drought. We are far from not out of the woods yet but did have some rain earlier this year that helped considerably – but nothing for quite a while in the Hays area. Our clover was met by a week of 100° temps with 40-50+ mph winds that dried out and put a quick demise to the blooms.

Off subject, but our family enjoyed a long week in Alaska mid-June. Every trail we hiked was decorated with all sorts of blooms. I never noticed any bees, probably due to our being far from civilization. Travel tip – Do NOT let the airline lose your luggage. A trip gets very interesting, real fast when that happens. Sandy & I got to share that chaotic event with our younger daughter and granddaughter. We got to experience shopping for everything needed for an 8-day trip in two hours at Walmart in Anchorage before heading out to embark on the ship. Good News: we all have more clothes, luggage, curling irons, etc. than we used to have; and our luggage made it safely home a few days before we did. Travel tip #2- due to high crime rates, jeans, sweaters, socks, underwear, deodorant, etc. are locked up in Anchorage stores: look for a staff member right away to unlock those cases.

Our Fall 2025 KHPA meeting is still in need of a little fine tuning, and it will be a great gathering. Set your calendars for November 7 – 8, 2025 at Courtyard by Marriott, 3020 Riffle Dr. in Salina. We will have some focus on Beyond the Basic Business of Beekeeping, along with updates on Varroa and other common concerns. Dr. Brian McCornack of KSU Entomology Dept. will join us with some interesting updates at my old school where I learned things like how to drink beer and Calculus is just not my thing.

We will be enjoying conversations with Beth Conrey of Colorado on how she built a large bee business with honey and products of the hive and additional business tips. Kimmy Hagar of Hagar Farms, Coldwell, KS is with us to talk about working with wax and consumer health and beauty products. She turned her bee hobby into a community retail store offering their ranch beef, local vegetables, honey, and products of the hive, etc. Kelsey Wendling of Kansas Tourism will speak about Agrotourism. We are working with a lavender farm and hobby beekeeper who host events on their farm. There are people who want to experience a 'farm', and more specifically, a 'bee farm' – maybe your farm is the one that can deliver their needs?

Remember to bring your MEAD!! Nikki & Jessica are setting up a friendly tasting event for your MEADs! (Must be 21+ to join this) The main speaker is in the works again thanks to a conflict. That said, we still have time to get the event fine-tuned and packaged into a great two days of education, camaraderie, and good times.

Lastly, KHPA is looking for a new First V.P., Program Chairperson as I am not seeking to continue after our fall gathering. Perhaps that is YOU?

Greg Swob, 1st Vice President

Entry rules & regulations, with tips and scoring for entries:

Art Design in Beeswax:

- Entries must be 2 pounds minimum weight, 100% beeswax: may be more than one piece but must be firmly joined together: may be cast in a mold or carved. No non-beeswax enhancements allowed.
- Color (straw or canary yellow) (20 pts), cleanliness (25 pts), artistic merit (25 pts), originality (25 pts), appropriate weight (5pts)

Beeswax:

- One 3-pound block in any geometric shape, not decorated with all sides smooth.
- Cleanliness (40 pts), color (straw or canary yellow) (10 pts), aroma (15 pts), absence of cracks & shrinkage (20 pts), weight (15 pts)

Beeswax Candles:

- Four molded or dipped candles of the same shape & size. No non-beeswax enhancements allowed, except wick.
- Cleanliness, color (straw or canary yellow), quality of wax (30pts), design & overall appearance (15 pts), finishing details-molded candle wicks trimmed to 1/2 "and bottoms finished. Dipped candles must have last drip left (25 pts), uniformity of appearance and shape (20 pts), aroma (10 pts)

Chunk Honey:

- Three 1-pound round glass jars: 1 strip of comb the full length of jar packed in honey.
- Uniformity of cut (20 pts), absence of watery cappings, uncapped cells and pollen (20 pts), cleanliness of product-downgrade for travel stains, foreign matter, wax flakes, foam, and crystallization (10 pts), Uniformity of appearance in capping structure, color, and thickness of chunks (20 pts), density-water content above 18.6% and below 15.5% will be docked (15 pts), flavor-points reduced for honey affected by processing (5 pts), container-accuracy of fill and cleanliness (10 pts)

Section Comb Honey:

- Comb honey the bees build in flat round or square containers where a lid is attached to both sides. (Untouched by human processing) submit 3 "rounds" or "cassettes" clear lids on both sides with no labels on sides, or 3 bass wood sections in cardboard carton with window or small appropriately sized bags.
- Uniformity of appearance (20 pts), absence of uncapped cells or perforated cappings (10 pts), uniformity of color (15 pts), absence of watery cappings (15 pts), cleanliness and absence of travel stain (15 pts), freedom from pollen and granulation (10 pts), uniformity of weight (15 pts)

Crystallized/creamed Honey:

- Crystallized honey only, not **whipped**. 3 identical glass jars with net weight between 8 and 16 ounces
- Fineness of crystal (20 pts), color (10 pts), uniformity and firmness of (25 pts), cleanliness and freedom of foam (20 pts), flavor-points reduced for honey adversely affected by processing (15 pts), accuracy of fill and uniformity (10 pts)

Cut Comb Honey:

- Three 4"x4" plastic boxes: cut comb honey piece to be packaged in rigid hard plastic comb honey boxes (4"x4").
- Neatness and uniformity of cut, absence of liquid honey (20 pts), absence of watery cappings, uncapped cells, perforated cappings and pollen (20 pts), cleanliness of product-absence of travel stain, crushed wax, and crystallization (20 pts), uniformity of appearance -color of honey, capping structure, and thickness of comb (20 pts), uniformity of weight (10pts), container (10 pts)

Extracted Honey:

- Three 1 pound glass queenline or classic jars: Also known as strained honey, is separated from the comb by centrifugal force, gravity, straining or other means. All jars must be label free.
- Density-moisture content above 18.6% and below 15.5% will be docked (10 pts), absence of crystals (10 pts), cleanliness-without lint, dirt, wax or foam (40 pts), flavor-points reduced for flavor affected by processing (10 pts), container appearance (10 pts), Accuracy of filling-headroom 1/2"maximum, 1/4" minimum with no visible gap between top of honey and lid. Uniformity of filling (15 pts), color (5 pts)

Frame of Honey:

- Shallow (5 3/8") or medium (6 1/4") depth frames accepted. Leaking frames won't be accepted. Frame of honey must be in a display case with both sides visible, case available on request by calling Kristi @ 913-768-4961
- Uniformity of appearance-even comb (20 pts), absence of uncapped cells (15 pts), uniformity of color (15 pts), absence of watery and perforated caps (15 pts), cleanliness and absence of travel stains (15 pts), cleanliness of frame (10 pts), freedom from pollen and granulation (10 pts)

Honey Gift Package:

- Items must be clearly labeled as they would be offered for sale with fictitious labels so as not to identify the entrant. Labels must meet legal label requirements. No wrapping is to be placed on the gift basket. Homemade food items must have the recipe attached to the item. Packages must contain at least 50% producer made items. A note card must be attached that identifies the intended use the gift package. Youth packages may not contain any alcoholic beverages. If the gift package is too large to sit on a shelf for display it will be placed on the floor in the honey exhibit area.
- Originality/creativity (30 pts), quality of products (20 pts), variety, i.e., products from the hive (25 pts), commercial appeal-quality & neatness of packing-visibility of items in basket (20 pts), card introducing gift package (5 pts)

The honey judge will have the final authority to disqualify any items submitted for exhibit based on the above listed rules. If a container is leaking honey the exhibit will be removed from judging and/or display. Neither The Kansas State Fair or The Kansas Honey Producers Association are responsible for items that are lost or stolen.

Kansas Honey Producer's Association
The Cappings
S. Koehn
P.O. Box 171
Galva, KS 67443

Address Service Requested

2025 Kansas Honey Producer's Association Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Code _____
Phone# _____ E-mail Address _____



Membership Kansas Honey Producer's Association per year (Jan.-Dec.) \$25.00 _____
Additional family members wanting voting rights \$1.00 per person \$1.00 _____
Additional family member's names: _____

Youth Membership (18 years of age or under) \$12.50 _____
Donation Amount _____ Total Due _____

Make checks payable to: KHPA or Kansas Honey Producer's Association or pay online at www.kansashoneyproducers.org

Mail to: Sondra Koehn, P.O. Box 171, Galva, Kansas 67443 Phone# 972-849-4408 or email- skoehn@live.com

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