

Orange County Beekeepers Association

Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2022

Tim Struttman, OCBA President, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone for the April meeting. The meeting was attended by 27 members (12 via Zoom, and 15 in-person at the Orange County Extension Office in Hillsborough). For this month's meeting presentation, the McDowell County Beekeepers association generously invited us to Zoom into their club's meeting so we could hear the presentation by their speakers.

Nancy Oglesby, OCBA Vice President, introduced our speakers. **Ed and Karen Speer** own and operate Sweet Betsy Farm in Marion, NC which provides local honey, bees, eggs and agritourism experiences. Currently they manage about 30 bee hives on their farm. Karen is an NCSBA Master Beekeeper, an NCSBA Mountain Region Director and chairs the McDowell Honey Bees very successful annual beginner beekeeping school. Ed is a retired geologist and current President of the McDowell Beekeepers Association, as well as Chairman of the NCSBA Certified Honey Producer Program. They began keeping bees in 2009.

Presentations:

1. NCSBA Certified Honey Producer Program (Ed Speer)

Ed provided an overview of the Certified Honey Producer Program (CHPP). This program was developed as a means to educate the consumer on the goodness of NC honey and promote the direct hive to table sales of real NC honey. Consumers can go to www.realnchoney.com to find certified NC honey producers near them.

The CHPP has many benefits for the NC beekeeper, including:

- Certified honey labels (only members can use these)
- Interactive honey locator map (potential customers can use to find local honey producers nearby)
- Advertising and promotion (including license plates)
- Increased number of customers/sales

There are important guidelines that members of the CHPP must agree to. These include:

- Honey must come from honeybees located in NC
- No adulterated or fake honey
- No addition (or removal) of pollen, no enzyme-destructive heating, or added flavorings
- Beekeepers must employ established/reasonable beekeeping practices (including not feeding processed sugar during the nectar flow)
- Beekeepers must employ sanitary honey extraction and bottling practices
- Truth in labeling

For more information on the Certified Honey Producer Program and how to apply, please visit <https://www.ncbeekeepers.org/programs/certified-honey-producer>.

2. The Basics of Packaging and Labeling Honey for Sale and Competition (Karen Speer)

Karen's presentation began with an overview of the minimum required label elements for selling honey:

- Product Name – “Honey” (name of plant or blossom only if primary source)
- Net weight in ounces and grams (on lower 3rd of the front label)
- Ingredients (if anything else added besides honey) *Any added flavorings, nuts etc must follow Safe Foods Certification standards and FDA requirements.
- Contact Information (Name/Address, website can be used if it includes a physical address, text must be at least 1/16” tall)

There are other pieces of information/descriptors that can be added as selling points:

- Consider adding country, county, community of origin. “Local Honey” is a big attraction.
- Certifications such as “NCSBA Certified Honey Producer” if applicable
- “Natural” is okay to use if nothing artificial or synthetic has been added that consumers would not expect to be in honey. However, “organic” is most likely not true or practical to guarantee. Use of the term “organic” only if certified by an accredited agent. As an alternative, one could consider using “No chemical treatments” if applicable.

Karen ended her presentation with some tips about selling other products from the hive, including pollen, wax, and propolis.

Club Business:

Membership

Wayne Vanderburg, Membership Co-director, reported 254 active members.

Finance

Nothing new to report.

Bee School

Randall Austin, Education Director: no update

Apprenticeship Beekeeper Program

Kent/Vikki Robertson, Mentorship Co-Directors: no update

Outreach

Dawn Rogers, Community Outreach Director: no update

Other Announcements:

Celeste Mayer provided an update on the Beekeeper Support and Recovery Program. There were 3 calls for temporary hive care, with 8 volunteers supporting the requests. Celeste has identified 3 local high schools that would be willing to host any hives that come in via the rehoming part of the program.

Bee Buddies: A reminder about this informal program to encourage members to collaborate with other local beekeepers.

Christmas Parade: We are looking for volunteers to design a float and participate in the parade. Another way to give OCBA exposure to the local community. An announcement will be forthcoming (via the listserv).

Equipment Sale: An equipment sale will be held prior the May meeting (cash only). Nancy Oglesby coordinated fumigation of the equipment, so it will be clean. Proceeds will be donated to the Tarpy lab (NCSU Apiary Fund).

Door Prizes

1. OCBA cap: (in person) Traci Greco
2. OCBA tote bag: (online) Cely Chicurel
3. In-hive frame feeder: (in person) Grey Reavis
4. OCBA cap: (online) Ryan Chamberlain
5. T-shirt: (in person) Wayne Vanderburg

Next Month's Speaker

The speaker at the May 12th meeting will be Cindy Hodges. She is a Master Craftsman beekeeper from the Atlanta GA area. Cindy will talk to us about propolis, the relationship between propolis and social immunity, and her research on textured hive interiors.

Erika Wittchen
OCBA Secretary