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GUILFORD  
COUNTY  
BEE  
KEEPERS  
ASSOCIATION

CLUB  
NEWS  
APRIL, MAY, JUNE, 2004

a local chapter of NORTH CAROLINA STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

### MEETINGS & PROGRAMS:

- **Saturday, April 3, Annual Field Day at the Barn.** This year will be similar to last year's program. The club will provide burgers, hot dogs & buns, and ice. Bring a covered dish or dessert and *YOUR OWN Drinks, & Chairs*.

Activities will begin at 11 a.m. with practical testing for Bee-ginner course members who wish to complete their Certified testing process. Jack Fleming & Joe Brown have offered their bees, which will be a short distance away. "Thanks, Jack and Joe."

Two packages of bees will be installed in the club hives at the barn: one in the morning and one after lunch. Door prizes, raffles, and other activities are planned so be sure to make plans to attend.

And finally, those who ordered package bees and queens may pick them up after the program.

- **Tuesday, May 11, 6:30 Covered dish meal.** Guest speaker tonight is Karen Neill, Extension Agent, TV personality, writer and long time friend of Guilford Beekeepers. Nectar producing plants in Guilford County will be her topic. Bring your concerns and questions and make her feel welcome.
- **Tuesday, June 8, 7:00 No meal.** Speaker for June will be Will (better late than never) Hicks. He will be speaking on his responsibilities as a state apiary inspector and what services the state provides involving honeybees. He will also be giving information on "What to look for in June" when inspecting your honeybees.

### REVIEW:

This article was provided by Dr.. David Tarpy from his "Wolfpack's Bee Yard" papers and reviews. De Guzman et al. (2002) *Apidologie*, 33: 411-416. Written: 9/ 29/ 2003

**Question: Are Russian bees resistant to both types of parasitic mites?**

**Answer: Apparently yes, which is terrific news**

The Russians are coming! Put your shotgun away, militia man, it's not the unlikely cold war scenario coming to fruition. And no, it's not the mail-order bride business skyrocketing. It's some of the better news that beekeepers have had for a while.

Parasitic mites have been the bane of beekeepers for decades. The Varroa mite *Varroa destructor* (previously *V. jacobsoni*) was first found in the US in 1987 and quickly spread throughout the country. If you've never seen a varroa mite, you probably haven't been keeping bees for very long. Because the mite co-evolved with the eastern honey bee (*Apis cerana*), our poor western honey bee (*A. mellifera*) has no natural defenses against it. Entire feral populations have since been decimated as a result of these pests, and the number managed colonies has declined dramatically. For example, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture estimates that the number of managed honey bee colonies in the state has dropped from 180,000 to around 100,000 since the mite's introduction. As you might expect, there has been a concerted effort in the apiculture community to reduce the impact of Varroa.

Many of you who keep your ear close to the ground have probably heard that researchers at the USDA Baton Rouge lab have imported a particular strain of bees from the Primorsky region in Russia to combat Varroa. These bees are sympatric with *Apis cerana* (i.e., they live in the same area), and so they have probably been exposed to the mite for longer than any other strain of western honey bee. Indeed, repeated research has documented Varroa mite resistance in the Russian bees.

The question that Lilia de Guzman and colleagues posed in a recent research project was whether they are also resistant to that other pesky parasitic mite, the tracheal mite *Acarapis woodi*. These microscopic critters live in the air passageways of adult bees, chewing holes in the tube walls and feeding on hemolymph. Low infestation levels can be difficult to detect, but their impact can be serious since they compromise the immuno-defenses of workers, making them more susceptible to other diseases. The researchers compared 22 colonies headed by Russian queens with 22 colonies headed by queens of standard domestic stock. Each colony was housed in standard equipment and initially given 3 lbs. of workers.

The researchers followed the colonies over the course of two years, requeening each in the spring to ensure

