BEE LINE
on Honey Notes

May 2017

Notes from the President

It certainly is starting to feel like spring in Idaho. We have a full array of dandelions in the fields, the apricot trees are blooming, with the apple trees following right behind. My back is also well aware of the season from checking nucs, putting in queens, and throwing on brood boxes.

What a busy yet fun time to be a bee keeper! It is this time of year that we get to see the miracle of a growing bee hive, sometimes at an explosive rate with fresh foundations being drawn, and young queens with lots of vigor to grow the hive for the summer. I hope amongst all the business, you have had a minute to stop and enjoy some of the benefits of the job; whether it be a beautiful bee yard, or the full sheet of brood in new foundation. Whatever it is that drives you to figure out this game of bee keeping.

Summer is on the horizon, and following a strong winter I am optimistic about the prospects of a good year. I hope my optimism serves us all well, and before long we will be adding supers and dusting of the extracting equipment. Until then, I hope you have safe travels and healthy hives.

Brody Tomazin
President

Report from Idaho Honey Commission

The Idaho Honey Commission met by conference call on May 2nd. Election results are as follows:

Chairman – Phil Puckett
Vice Chairman – Dan Mudd
Secretary/Treasurer – Jay Miller
Administrator – Rick Waitley

The Commission agreed to reimburse the Idaho Honey Association for the following:

Travel for Convention Presenter: Ellen Topitzhofer - $805
WSU Research project - $4000

These funds will be taken from the honey assessment.

The following was a note from Mike Cooper that was shared with the commission:

A commercial beekeeping operation was hit with an inspection from Central District Health recently. The inspector tried to apply commercial kitchen standards to the extractor room and process, which is a harvest operation much like a mint still, which is exempt from regulation. When they asked the inspector for the regs concerning extracting operations, he backed down. I think the Health Department can apply the Commercial Kitchen Standards to a bottling operation, but not extracting. So, I have to wonder if this signals a potential targeting of commercial honey producers, like happened in the Lewiston area a few years ago. Have you heard anything?

Note: Please notify our office immediately if you hear of this type of activity.

If you need honey promotional materials from the National Honey Board, visit the website (www.idahohoney.org) or contact our office.

Check out the Idaho Honey Industry website. Information is available to help you stay informed.

REMINDER: 2017 dues are payable now.

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Beekeeper Pollination Survey Report 2016

By Dewey M. Caron and Ramesh Sagili, OSU

Oregon State University initiated a survey of Pollination Economics of large scale commercial beekeepers in 1986. This is our 31st report. A total of 39 survey responses were used for analysis of 2016 pollination rentals that included 27 PNW commercial, 10 semi-commercial and 2 small-scale beekeepers. We include 12 responses from commercial Idaho beekeepers (500 plus colonies) and 1 from a semi-commercial beekeeper.

We THANK all Idaho beekeepers who completed the one-page survey – if you did not get one in the mail please let us know and we will get your address on the mailing list.

The 2015 summary report by Ramesh and Dewey was published in July 2016 American Bee Journal. Separate Oregon and Washington reports have been published in their newsletters. A 2016 report will also be submitted to American Bee Journal. This article includes the Idaho survey results.

In our latest survey, Idaho commercial respondents managed an average of 6,659 colonies/individual (range from 600 to 10,000 plus colonies). The Idaho survey respondents (owning a total of 79,909 colonies) managed 86% of the total estimated colony numbers in the state. PNW total colony number (154,483 colonies), represents 61% of the estimated colonies managed in the three states (this is an increase in response from 57% last year). Overall, the 39 PNW beekeepers included in this study reported 138 crop rental opportunities consisting of 18 different crops, constituting a total of over 195,500 colony rentals.

Sum of total value of pollination fee reported by the 39 PNW respondents was slightly over $26.3 million. The 2016 weighted average fee of rental colonies was $134.60, an increase of $16.20 over the previous year (see accompanying Graph). Also illustrated in the graph are weighted averages for the past 16 years for almonds ($185.55 weighted average in 2016, $12.30 greater than the previous year), tree fruits, blueberry, vegetable seed production ($19.50 increase over previous year) and squash & pumpkin rentals.

The latest pollination survey continues to illustrate the importance of pollination rentals for beekeepers of the PNW states. The 13 Idaho beekeepers reported renting colonies to one (almonds in California) or as many as 7 different crops, averaging 3 crop rentals/commercial beekeeper. Idaho beekeeper total rentals reported consisted of 69,557 colonies, for gross fee income of slightly over $11.3 million (see Table).

By far the largest fee generator for Idaho and PNW beekeepers is California almond rentals, as has been the case for the last dozen years. All but one Idaho beekeeper respondent rented 57,019 colonies (range <500 to 20,000 plus colonies) to almond growers. Rental fee received by Idaho beekeepers for almond crop ranged from $160 to $195, with a weighted average of $186.50, which is $13.30 above the previous year. For Idaho beekeepers, almonds represent 82% of the total crop rentals and generated over $10.6 million gross fee income (93.5% of total gross income). For PNW beekeepers of Idaho, Washington and Oregon, almonds accounted for 60% of the total rentals and 83% of total income.

Closer to home, Idaho beekeeper rental of colonies for pears, sweet cherries and apples remained the top “local” income opportunity. In 2016, just over 2,200 pollination rentals were to fruit orchards with income of slightly more than $104,000. If we exclude almonds and consider only Idaho beekeeper rentals in the PNW states, tree fruit represents 18% of rental colony number and 14% of the income.

Among Idaho respondents, berry rentals (blackberries, and blueberry) accounted for27% of “local” (within region) rentals and 20% of the income. There were 1200 colonies (3 individuals) who rented bees for vegetable seed production. The single reported rental for canola was 43% of local (within region) rental colony total which accounted for 52% of gross income. Two cucurbit (squash and pumpkin) rentals (128 rental colonies) and one legume seed rental (100 rental colonies) were also reported by Idaho beekeepers (see accompanying table).

The range in rental prices reported by PNW respondents was extensive. For pear, the range was from a low of $42 to a high of $65, similar to range in apple $42 to $60/colony; in sweet cherry it was even larger with a range of $35 and $100. The range in reported rental fee in blueberry was $40-70.

Our survey also asked the respondents if a pollination contract was used. Thirty eight percent (38%) said NO and the same percentage said sometimes. Twenty eight percent (28%) of respondents indicated using a contract. Average price to maintain a colony for the year was estimated as $233.50 (22 commercial beekeeper responses); a considerably lower amount ($135) was reported by 5 semi-commercial beekeepers (Note: not all respondents estimated annual costs).

A complete report will be published and posted to the Oregon State Beekeepers Association website as well as prepared for American Bee Journal article.

Mark Your Calendar:

The 2017 Idaho Honey Industry Conference will be held
November 30 -December 1 at the Red Lion Hotel in Boise.

Figure 1. Weighted colony rental fee for all PNW colony rentals (middle bolded line w/ circles), almond (top bold w/diamonds), tree fruits (Lower bold w/ squares - includes pears, sweet cherries and apples), blueberry, vegetable seed crops (principally carrot, radish & onion), and squash & pumpkin crops for sixteen years (2001-2016).

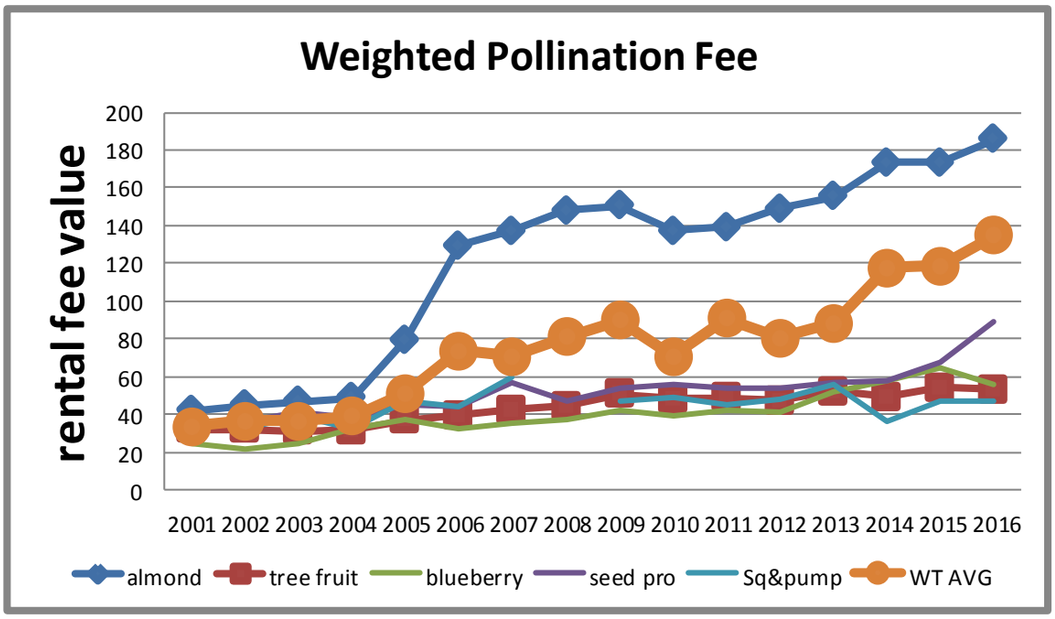

Table 1. 2016 Pollination rentals and income (number of colonies, % of total gross income and % of local income (excludes almond figures) by crop type reported by 38 PNW beekeepers (includes 16 Oregon beekeepers.

crop	# of individuals (PNW&ID)	# of Colony rentals	% rental (% local rental)	Gross income	% gross income (% local income)
Almonds	PNW 34	117,322	60%	$21,805,167	83%
	ID 12	57,019	82%	$10,637,205	93.5%
Tree	PNW 39	41,941	21%	$2,238,143	8.5%
Fruit [1]	ID 10	2214	3% (18%)	$104,470	1% (14%)
Cane- blue	PNW 25	9966	5%	$582,527	3%
berries	ID 8	3396	5% (27%)	$144,616	1% (20%)
Veg seed	PNW 13	8264	4%	$736,950	3%
	ID 3	1200	2% (10%)	$86,200	1%
Legume	PNW 9	6618	3%	$278,490	1%
seed	ID 1	200	<1%	$10,000	
Cucurbits	PNW 10	2894	2%	$167,930	<1%
	ID 2	128	<1%	$5460	<1%
Oil crops [3]	PNW 6	8664	4%	$563,200	2%
	ID 1	5400	8% (43%)	$378,000	3% (52%)
Misc[4]	PNW2	22	<1%	$450	<1%
Totals	PNW 138	195,582		$26,321,867	
	ID 37	69,557		$11,365.951	

[1] Tree fruit includes pear, sweet cherry and almond
[2] There were no cranberry rentals reported this year
[3] Meadowfoam & Canola
[4] Misc = Kiwi