

LOUISIANA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

November 30 – December 1, 2007

Holiday Inn South, Baton Rouge, La.

Opening day of the 46th Louisiana Beekeepers Association Convention was attended by over 75 registered members, speakers, and invited guests. Those attending were provided a great program and, in my view, a great time. State association president Alva Stuard indicated that several attendees had remarked that the program featured many excellent speakers and that the material they provided was very educational.



Mr. Bob Odom, outgoing Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry, provided our opening address. He stressed the importance of having and maintaining strong agricultural industries within the state. Mr. Odom's interest in agriculture has been a lifelong endeavor. He grew up on a 1,000 acre cotton and dairy farm in Haynesville, Louisiana. He first went to work for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture in the 1960's, serving for 17 years in various capacities, foremost as Director of the Department's Pesticides Division. He was elected Commissioner of Agriculture in 1979 and has served in that capacity ever since. He leaves office on January 14, 2008 but plans to continue working within the agricultural field as a consultant.

Dr. Thomas Rinderer and several staff scientists from our Baton Rouge Bee Lab provided overviews of the research projects currently being conducted at the lab. Dr. Robert Danka addressed Colony Collapse Disorder and stressed that we still do not know if all bee losses last fall and winter are related to the same problem or any of the current conditions being investigated. He read a media statement that described the conditions related to the bee losses being reported. The timeframe of the selected report, however, was the 1960's. This may indicate that the problem is not a new one but no one knows yet. Only time and further investigation will tell.



Mr. Mark Brady, current president of the American Honey Producers Association, provided two talks. One covered the importance of bees to commercial crop pollination and the need to be able to move bees. He spoke about certification issues related to moving colonies across the country, primarily annual movement to California for almond pollination. He also provided information on managing his 6,000 colony beekeeping operation which is located in Waxahachie, Texas. He mentioned that his beekeeping practices have changed over the years but they were necessary for survival in today's market place. He also stressed that his beekeeping practices may not be a model for others but that they have worked for his company.

Other speakers included Mr. Allen Fabre, our new state bee inspector, who provided us with a state apiary report. Most important in his report were the new Africanized honey bee detections in Orleans, Rapides, and Vermilion parishes. Dr. Dale Pollet provided information on honey production and the weather, referencing the dry conditions in Louisiana over several of the past few years. Several commercial beekeepers provided informative talks on their beekeeping operations. Mr. E. J. Bordelon, III, owner of Avoyelles Honey Co., provided a presentation on spring queen and package production, and Mr. Joe Sanroma, manager of Evergreen Honey Co., provided a presentation on record keeping. Both were excellent talks. Dr. Jeff Harris joined in with a presentation on honey bee language, showing how bees use odor, taste, and dances to show others how to find local nectar sources when they are available.



Allen Fabre



Dr. Dale Pollet



E. J. Bordelon, III



Joe Sanroma



Dr. Jeff Harris

The LBA banquet was especially nice this year. The food and entertainment was great. Several awards were presented, and our fund raising auction was very profitable for the association.



LBA president, Alva Stuard, presented Mr. Robert Taylor of Ponchatoula with a special award. Robert is an LBA board member and committee chairman of our 2007 "Member Get a Member Campaign." He's been busy promoting this concept to other members and has recruited approximately 20 new members into the LBA within the past 8 months. Robert has stressed that the LBA needs to offer as much assistance as possible to members within our organization. He recently designed a notification system to bring members rapid information on matters of importance. The process utilizes electronic notices and will begin in early 2008. Your e-mail address is needed to get the notices.

The Louisiana Beekeepers Association supports the Louisiana 4-H Foundation's annual state Honey Bee Essay Contest. Plaques are presented to the top three essay winners and certificates are issued to all participants. Cash prizes also go to the three top essay winners in the following amounts: 1st Place-\$250, 2nd Place-\$100, 3rd Place-\$50. The LBA would like to encourage all students to participate in this annual competition which brings focus on several aspects of beekeeping.



The 2007 4-H Essay Contest Winner for Louisiana was Laura Lynn Blount of Livingston Parish. She is pictured with Dr. Dale Pollet receiving her plaque and cash award. Ms. Blount and her family were guests of the LBA at our convention banquet.



Member participation in our annual LBA Honey Baked Contest was excellent this year. Dr. Pollet judged the contest again this year and presented ribbons to the following: 1st Place - Margaret Prell (Margaret's Honey Cream Pralines), 2nd Place - Sharon Hebert (Honey Bakalava), and 3rd Place - Jimmy Dunkley (Honey Nut Peach Nectar Cake). Honey baked entries are also enjoyed by guest of our annual meeting and we encourage more member participation in 2008. Congratulations to all who participated. The entries were simply delicious.

Cajun humorist, T-Frog, and LBA president, Alva Stuard, provided our after dinner entertainment. Mr. Frog wangled his way into the room adorned in a finely crafted, yet exaggerate rendition of a south Louisiana bee suit, although he admitted he didn't like the sting of the bee and thought his suit would best protect him from a mosquito attack. His Justin Wilson brand of Cajun humor was delightful, well received, and I must say, "DAT T-FROG BE FUNNY YEAH, I GAR-ON-TEE!"



Alva followed with the annual LBA auction. The auction was successful in helping raise money for Louisiana beekeeper hurricane relief in 2005 and 2006. Member auction bids and donations brought in over \$1,300.00 in revenue at our 2007 banquet. The LBA would like to thank all who contributed auction items and will use monies received to support LBA programs.

Saturday was for hobbyist and they reported that the program was great. Attendees got to hear about beginning with bees, rendering beeswax, honey marketing, bee removal, and making mead. We were also privileged to have Chef John Folse address our membership. He is ever a promoter of Louisiana, its people and products. When asked what challenges are greatest for his Louisiana based food industry he immediately said it would be hiring and maintaining an educated, trainable work force. Within Louisiana's culinary field, he has been an inspiration and a true leader.

Overall our annual meeting was a big success but we need more participation by Louisiana beekeepers in matters of importance to beekeeping in our state. Louisiana beekeepers registered with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry number near 400, however, LBA memberships number only a quarter of that number. Help us help other Louisiana beekeepers by join your state association in the near future. We need you to maintain a strong voice in state government.



ADDITIONAL PICTURES OF OUR BANQUET GUESTS

