

Questions and Answers

Questions to be answered in these columns should be sent to us not later than the 15th of each month in order to insure their answer appearing in the following issue. We wish to make this department as useful to our readers as possible and a reliable source of information. For the present at least, the replies are procured from various sources.]

QUESTION.—I would be much obliged to you if you would give me your opinion about using second-hand hives.

I have a chance of getting some at a very low figure but am afraid I might get some disease with them.

Should there be any danger if one cleaned them well, and how would you advise cleaning them?

Would it be safe to use the wax from them in the frames?

A. R. V., Ont.

ANSWER.—Second-hand hives that have been very neatly made and well fitted for and of the right size to suit would be the only kinds I would buy if they were selling cheap.

Disease cannot be spread by using second-hand hives and all the cleaning that a hive will ever need is a little scrubbing out sometimes, and for this purpose I have always used a piece of sandpaper saw plate about four inches square and kept it filed square on the back so that I could in a few seconds scrub out a hive until it would fairly shine.

As to the wax made out of diseased combs, the wax will be perfectly safe to use, when they are old combs you won't get much wax unless you use a press.

Wm. McEvoy.

—Mansfield, March 15, 1901.

QUESTION.—Will the honey bee, inbred by continually allowing them to raise their own queens, degenerate in size or working qualities?

J. B., Bracebridge, Ont.

ANSWER.—Passing, for the present, unnoticed, the effect of inbreeding on the size of bees, I shall confine my remarks to inbreeding and its effects on their working qualities.

I am fully aware of the fact that it is peculiar ground towards which the querist so lovingly invites me and I fancy I hear a voice (although I cannot see the friendly intercessor) bidding me "be careful upon what I enter." I shall, however, precipitate the matter by very briefly saying YES, the continuous inbreeding of bees will have a deleterious effect on the working qualities of the same. In support of this seemingly bold statement I will simply refer to that which I, in common with other beekeepers of any considerable experience have repeatedly observed, viz.: the very favorable results obtained by the introduction of new blood into the apiary or the changing of colonies from one apiary to another, which is practically the same thing.

I may also be permitted to quote the words of a prominent author, who says, "I do not think that sufficient attention has been given this subject by the writers in the various bee-journals; it might well replace many subjects of minor importance. While for a time at least no apparent evils may result from in-and-in-breeding, yet I would advise that it be carefully avoided by every possible means."

M. B. Holmes.

Athens, March 20, 1901.

Experimental Union Field Tests for 1901.

The members of the Ontario Agricultural and Experimental Union