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FIT BEES FOR WINTER

Get Them in Shape for Their Long "Shut In."

Be Sure Your Queen Is a Good One—A Strong Colony and Plenty of Stores the Next Requisites—Pay Less for Better Bulls.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

It is taken for granted that the beekeeper has introduced a vigorous Italian queen to every colony in which a failing or poor queen was found, late in July or early August. If this has been done and room provided, so that the queen could lay to capacity and the bees still store any surplus honey that might be harvested, then the beekeeper is in a fair way to winter the bees successfully. There are two other manipulations, however, which should be completed to assure successful wintering.

First, unless one has a first-class cellar, it does not pay to attempt to winter weak colonies in the cellar. Weak colonies or nuclei cannot be wintered outdoors with success at any time.

All colonies covering less than three frames, on both sides, should be united with other colonies. The best way to unite is to place a sheet of newspaper between each brood-chamber and allow the bees to unite without any further attention, except that in a week or two the paper should be removed and the bees left in one hive-body.

The second manipulation, and equally important, with having a good queen and a strong colony, is the question of the winter food supply. Beekeepers who are willing to make an investment of not less than fifty pounds of first-class honey per colony, are the beekeepers who next season secure the large crops of honey. If the fall honey is not of known quality, then it will be better to feed each colony from ten to fifteen pounds of sugar syrup, mixed in the proportion of two of sugar to one of water. The sugar should be thoroughly dissolved, but the syrup must not be burned. This syrup should be fed while quite warm in an inverted Mason fruit jar or honey pail with perforated cover; and if fed inside an empty super, with the entrance reduced, there will be very little fear of robbing. Feed the warm syrup in the evening and before the end of September. Then if the colony has 50 pounds of natural stores and is headed by a good Italian queen, this colony will then be in shape to either pack for outdoor wintering or to place in the cellar.

In the winter of 1919-1920, the winter loss throughout Ontario was over 50 per cent., yet even in a winter when the loss was so heavy, many successful beekeepers wintered practically without loss. It is unnecessary to have a heavy winter loss in bees, provided the beekeepers will give the same thought and attention to the apilary, which successful business men in all walks of life give to their individual business.

The office of the Provincial Apiarist, Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, is always ready to assist beekeepers in any way to make beekeeping more successful. Consult him, if in doubt.—F. Eric Millen, O. A. College, Guelph.

Paying Less for Better Bulls.

A survey recently made in connection with the "Better Sires—Better Stock" campaign carried on by the United States Department of Agriculture shows a general ratio of one bull to every 18.9 cows. Experience, however, in Pennsylvania, the state which leads in the number of bull associations, shows that 93 bulls are sufficient for the 5,604 cows belonging to members of the bull associations, or an average of about one bull for every 60 cows. These figures are taken from the bull association directory recently issued by the Dairy Division, United States Department of Agriculture.

If the members of these associations owned their bulls individually, at the usual ratio of one bull for every 18.9 cows, they would need 296 bulls instead of 93. Yet the 93 bulls give the required service as effectively as 296 would do, and in fact better, because the resulting offspring are better. The association bulls are of better quality than the ordinary run of sires privately owned, and their daughters are apt to be better-producing cows.

Even this does not tell the whole story. After an individually owned sire has been used for about two years it is usually necessary to get a new one. In eight years, therefore, these Pennsylvania farmers, if they owned their bulls separately, would have to provide themselves with four times 296 bulls, or 1,184; whereas in the bull associations at the end of two years they simply move each bull to another block. The original 93 bulls, if they all live and do well, can be used for the whole eight years. There is quite a difference between the cost of 93 bulls and that of 1,184, to say nothing of the difference in their usefulness.

The members of bull associations sometimes pay less and always receive more for their money than cow owners who go it alone.

Clean Threshing. Saves Wheat.

Members of the farm bureau of Kittson County, Minn., last year saved \$77,000, or about \$500 to each threshing machine, by using tight-bottom racks, canvas under the feeder, cleaning up when required and after each setting of the machine during the threshing season. A conservative estimate of the saving by clean threshing in this county was 27,500 bushels of wheat, 20,400 bushels of oats, and 10,000 bushels of barley.

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