

# Recordkeeping

**For Beekeepers**

## Before We Start

# HOUSEKEEPING

### Not necessary to take notes

- Entire presentation is available online
- Template of forms discussed also online

[www.EricsHoneyFarm.com](http://www.EricsHoneyFarm.com)



# The “Secret” to Recordkeeping

## BASICS

**The Secret to Recordkeeping is...**

**...No Secret at all**

**Just write stuff down!**



- Simple
- OR -
- Complex & Time Consuming
- Tailor For Your Needs

## Am I Over The Top?

### WHY I KEEP RECORDS

#### What I do and Why I do it:

- Tremendous amount of Recordkeeping
- Very time consuming in field and back at home
- Its a business (IRS records)
- Make Queens by grafting best genetics which include:
  - Survival through Northern Winters
  - Queen longevity (years)
  - Honey Production
  - Lack of Aggressiveness (gentleness)
  - Disease /parasite resistance (chemical-free)



# Why Keep Records?

## GOAL / PURPOSE

"Permanent" record of events:

- brick placement on hives is not permanent record of events.

Limits of Human memory:

- forget things.
- remember things that never happened.

Legal / Regulatory Requirements:

- IRS (income taxes)
- State Dept of Taxation (sales tax on honey, nucs, wax)
- US Dept of Agriculture (crop loss programs)
- State Health Dept (honey extraction, bottling, 3rd party sales, flavored honey - depending on state)
- FDA (cosmetics: creams, lip gloss, health claims).



## Why Keep Records?

### GOAL / PURPOSE [continued]

#### Reason #1- Become a Better Beekeeper:

- Modify practices
- Anticipate Timing of hive management activities



## Many Different Needs

### RECORD TYPES

#### Business records:

- Financial: Income, Sales taxes, expenses (purchase receipts, vehicle mileage)
- Contractual: Pollination agreements, hive locations

#### Lists:

- Customer lists
- Supplier lists
- Equipment list (# supers, frames, foundation)
- Marketing Events (what to bring to Farmer's markets, presentations / speaking engagements, etc)
- Field work (what to bring to when you work the bees).

#### Honey Production:

- Honey per hive
- Overall honey production



## Many Different Needs

### RECORD TYPES [continued]



#### Winter Survival Rates:

- # hives going into winter (by strength)
- # surviving hives
- # nucs beginning and ending

#### Tracking Activities by Hive:

- Numbering hives to correspond to log (letters first year, numbers thereafter)
- date hive last worked
- requeened
- strength of hive
- status going into winter
- equipment on hive
- honey harvested / feed given
- If it died and when





## Many Different Needs

### RECORD TYPES [continued]

#### Specialized activities:

- Pollination Services
- Queen Rearing
- Nuc production
- Unique to your situation



# What Should I Use?

## TOOLS

Paper and pen / pencil

General computer programs:

- Word, Excel, Google docs, etc

Dedicated Computer programs:

- QuickBooks (financial bookkeeping & inventory management)

Specialized Computer Programs:

- Hive Tracks (hivetracks.com) - \$12/yr per hive (\$60 unlimited)
- Beetight (beetight.com) - free up to 6 hives / \$15 per year >6 hives



## What Should I Use?

### TOOLS [continued]

#### Apps (for Smart Phones):

- Apiary Book (Creative Software Grup)
- Bee Hive Tracker (3Pink)

#### Things to Consider with computer programs:

- Free today, \$\$\$ tomorrow
- Will they go out of business (how will you get your records)?
- Simplicity

#### What to Use in the Field:

- Paper and pen / pencil
- Sticky honey / propolis on electronics



# Becoming A Better Beekeeper By Keeping Better Records

## FOCUS ON IMPROVED BEEKEEPING

### General activities and observations:

- Word - diary style

### Specific activities by hive:

- Excel spreadsheet - list style

### Honey Production:

- Excel spreadsheet - list style, calculations

### Winter Survival Rates:

- Excel spreadsheet - list style, calculations



# What's Happened Last Year?



## FOCUS ON IMPROVED BEEKEEPING [cont'd]

### General activities and observations:

- Word (diary style)
- Temperature & Weather Observations
- Plants in bloom
- General Beekeeping Activities (making splits, harvesting honey, Supplemental feeding, Winter preparations)

Calendar & Observations			
Date	Category	Description	Weather
2016.04.05	Observed	First two weeks of April as much as 20° below average (including record low of 9° on 4/5/2016).	Mid-50°s / low 30°s
2016.03.30	Observed	March was on average 10° above average. Maple trees blooming.	60°s / 30°s
2016.03.27	Observed	Warmer than historic average. Bees still bringing in pollen. Reported that lots of bees in the corn bins at the farm on warm days (enough to keep the calves from feeding)! Fruit tree buds in Syracuse swollen. Turning colder, below average next couple of weeks.	Mid-50°s / low 30°s
2016.03.27	Management	Unwrapped all hives on Jerome. Dealt with 4 hives. Marked 3 last year queens, couldn't find the other. Gave frames of pollen to 2 weak hives.	64° / 29°
2016.03.12	Management	Unwrapped all 3 hives at Rd#2 yard. Bees already bringing in light tan pollen. More than a super of honey left on each hive. Saw all queens marked in blue (last year's color). Reversed boxes. Leveled hive stands.	59° / 28°
2016.02.28	Observed	Warm day. High 55° and sunny. Very little snow remaining. Past week was about 5° warmer than average. Overall January & February were on par with historic averages.	55° / 38°
2016.02.20	Management	Checked all hives due to warm weather. Hive#6 dead from Laying Worker. All hives actively consuming sugar with about 1/2 box gone on average (about 7lb)	52° / 36°

# How Did Each Hive Do?



## FOCUS ON IMPROVED BEEKEEPING [cont'd]

Specific activities by hive:

	A	B	D	E	F	G	H
1	2015 Hive	Marked Queen (any color)	New Queen	Average	Strong	On Watch	Weak
2	Location	#2 Rd	Jerome Rd	Jerome Rd	Jerome Rd	Jerome Rd	Jerome Rd
3		#1 (was F)	#3 (was L)	#4 (was E)	#5 (was N)	#6 (was D)	#7 (was J)
4		(FireHouse > F/1)	(fr Hive5)	(fr Hive 5)	(from 5>A)	Italian Queen	4 > NM-14
5	Date	(G) Tiger	(R) Tiger	{G} Dark	{R} Dark	(G) Golden	(G) Golden
128	8/30/15	Finishing Top two boxes	Added second super.	Box 4 (super) still empty	Finishing Top two boxes	Box 3 still mostly empty.	
	9/5/15 & 9/7/15	Working top 2 boxes. Top 1/2 full.	Took 12# honey. Needs another box.	Laying workers. Layed mass eggs above QX. Gave frame larvae from HiveC.		Box 3 still mostly empty!	Took 12# honey
129	9/19-20/15	Boxes 4 & 5 half full. Bees coming out of bottom board from back of hive	Took 60# honey.	Doesn't appear to have raised QCell (as expected).	Took 55# honey. Left 15# (4 frames) for winter.	Barely working box3!	Took 6# honey. Some for winter in Box4.
130	9/26/15	No hole in Bottom board. Partially robbed. Reduced entrance. Box 4 partially full for winter.					
131	10/4/15						Took just 3# honey.
132	TO DO	Harvest Top 2 Boxes		Check for Eggs. Likely need to combine		Likely need to combine.	
133							

- Excel spreadsheet (list style)
- Hive Manipulation
- Overall Strength
- Brood expansion
- Honey estimate
- Honey Harvested
- Equipment in Use
- Temperament
- Queen Marking
- Follow-up Tasks

# Was It Worth The Effort?



## FOCUS ON IMPROVED BEEKEEPING [cont'd]

### Honey Production:

- Excel spreadsheet (list style, Calculations)
- How much harvested and when
- Less: any honey given
- Estimate based on average weight per frame or box

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P		
1		<b>Honey Production Log</b>		Enter pounds harvested (enter as a <b>negative</b> when giving hive frames of honey)														
2				estimating weight: Full Deep Frame = 4 lbs honey. Full Medium Frame = 3 lbs honey.														
3																		
4																		
5			<b>Total</b>															
6		<b>Hive #</b>	<b>Harvested</b>	<u>5/30/15</u>	<u>6/6/15</u>	<u>7/18/15</u>	<u>8/2/15</u>	<u>8/22/15</u>	<u>8/30/15</u>	<u>9/7/15</u>	<u>9/20/15</u>	<u>9/26/15</u>	<u>10/4/15</u>	<u>10/11/15</u>	<u>10/24/15</u>			
7																		
8		1	0															
9		2	0															
10		3	72															
11		4	59															
12		5	45															
13		6	-10															
14		7	69															
15		8	63	12	-4													
16		9	0															
17		10	65															
18		11	0															
19		12	63	8														
20		13	53															
21		14	40															
22		15	0															
23																		
24		<b>Total</b>	<b>519</b>	20	-4	12	8	60	0	27	305	70	58	0	-37			

# Here We Go Again!



## FOCUS ON IMPROVED BEEKEEPING [cont'd]

### Winter Survival Rates:

- Excel spreadsheet (list style, Calculations)
- Weight entering winter
- Winter survivor or date died

A	B	C	D	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	<b>2014-15 Winter Survival Rates</b>									
2						frigid				
3		<b>WEIGHT</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>#boxes</b>	<b>Condition (Dead / Live)</b>					
4										
5	<b>Hive #</b>	<b>Created</b>	<b>9/28</b>		<b>11/23</b>	<b>11/23</b>	<b>2/22</b>	<b>2/28</b>	<b>3/13</b>	<b>2/1</b>
6	1	Prior Yr	Heavy	#2 Rd	3		alive		Sgr bd+pattie	alive
7	2	Prior Yr	Heavy	Jerome	5			DEAD		
8	3	Prior Yr	Heavy	Jerome	4			alive	Sgr bd+pattie	alive
9	4	Prior Yr	Heavy	Jerome	3	+sugar bd		alive	+pol/hony	alive
10	5	Prior Yr	Heavy	Jerome	4			alive	Sgr bd+pattie	alive
11	9	Prior Yr	Heavy	Jerome	3			alive	Sgr bd+pattie	alive
12										
13	D	06/29/14	Medium	Jerome	2	+sugar bd		alive	+pol/hony	alive
14	F	06/20/14	Lite	Jerome	1	+sugar bd		DEAD		
15	H	07/04/14	Lite	Jerome	1	+sugar bd		DEAD		
16	J	06/20/14	Medium	Jerome	2	+sugar bd		alive	+pol/hony	alive
17	K	06/20/14	Medium	Jerome	3	+sugar bd		alive	+pol/hony	alive
18	M	06/20/14	Lite	Jerome	2	+sugar bd		alive	+pol/hony	alive

A	B	D	E	F
1	<b>Winter Survival Rates</b>			
2				
3		2014	2013	2012
4		to	to	to
5		2015	2014	2013
13	<b>Heavy</b>			
14	Starting	6	2	7
15	Survived	5	2	6
16	Died	1	0	1
17	Survival %	83%	100%	86%
18				
19	<b>Medium</b>			
20	Starting	7	10	0
21	Survived	5	6	0
22	Died	2	4	0
23	Survival %	71%	60%	
24				
25	<b>Weak (lite &amp; feather)</b>			
26	Starting	12	9	4
27	Survived	2	2	2
28	Died	10	7	2
29	Survival %	17%	22%	50%
30				
31	<b>Total</b>			
32	Starting	25	21	11
33	Survived	12	10	8
34	Died	13	11	3
35	Survival %	48%	48%	73%





# Now You Know “Secret” to Better Beekeeping

## SUMMARY

- Keep Bees -
  - Keep Records -
    - Keep It Simple -



Thank You

