

Summer 2020 TAT Update

By: Cecilia Estable

The 2020 TAT team started off the spring strong, with only 15% overwintering loss in our project colonies, leading us with a total count of 112 live colonies. This year we are focused on two main projects: demonstrating the newly-registered miticide, Hopguard II; and exploring pre- and pro-biotic feed supplements for honey bees and their impacts on colony health. These are funded through the Saskatchewan ministries Agricultural Demonstration of Practices & Technology (ADOPT) and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Development Fund (ADF), respectively.

Trials for the Hopguard II concluded in late June. Our preliminary results are a mixed-bag, with some colonies having their mite-load reduced to below threshold, and others increasing mid-treatment.

Though our results still need to be evaluated, there is some indication that Hopguard II could be useful as a fall mite treatment. This project was made possible through the participation of Steven Hawrishok of Kitako Lake Honey, and Jake Berg of SJ Beez. We are incredibly grateful for their support in exploring the feasibility of new technologies in the field of apiculture.

Our project evaluating pre- and pro-biotic feed supplements' impact on *Nosema spp.* and honey bee health is still in progress. We are exploring 5 different treatments: Fumagillin, Pro-Bee, Honey-B-Healthy, Nozevit Complete, and

Super DFM. We should have final results from this project to report by the end of the year.

The covid-19 pandemic has presented some challenges in how to adapt our queen rearing course for an online audience. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Canadian Honey Council, the TAT team was tasked with developing videos for how to transport queen cells, and mini-mating nuc preparation and installation. After an hour of MacGyvering a tripod out of empty bee boxes and hive reducers, and with occasional interruptions from our new canine research assistants (Maisie and Holocene), we got the shot! Watch out for TAT's directorial debut



upcoming online later this year. You better watch your back, Scorsese.

The rainy days have also lead to our first--and fingers-crossed--only swarm of the season. With some clever truck-manipulations and patience, we caught and re-homed the

swarm. We've since been taking further measures to prevent swarming behaviour, including offsetting our honey-supers from the brood chambers and continually adding honey supers as needed.

Finally, we are excited to welcome 3 new members to the TAT team: Cecilia, Maisie, and Holocene. Cecilia has a BSc. in Biology from the University of Guelph, and Maisie and Holocene are graduates from the Canis L. Familiaris University of Excellence. All three are excited to be part of the TAT team!