

## 1<sup>st</sup> RMSQB Mtg. Summation

Held June 6, 2012 online

**Bees** We discussed the status of everyone's bees/apiaries and overwintering experiences. If we can procure more for those who are interested, we will do.

Janet shared via email that she will be attending Colorado State Beekeepers Mtg next weekend in Silt, CO and will forward us info if anyone is advertising bees.

Melanie will follow up with Seth of Humbolt, CA and Pancho Garcia of Las Cruces, NM.

If you have any leads for clean, healthy bees- please share. Even if there isn't enough to go around, at least then we'll know who can get some for themselves and who still needs.

**BEAR FENCING** for NM- Moira shared contact info: Jerry Radcliffe and Cal Baca with Fish and Game. I just emailed Cal and will share his response.

**QUEENS:** Both Marygael and Kris made interesting points to consider when we begin deciding which/whose queens we would like to introduce and test out in our individual systems.

Since each of you has your own apiaries, philosophies and practices, I believe each can move forward in the manner they feel comfortable and interested in because it isn't until we rear daughters off of these introduced queens, that will we be incorporating their stock. At this point, it is a manner of testing and finding and trying quality queens of diverse strains, as it can only fuel our discoveries.

Perhaps our distinct locations may require certain protocol.

*For Urban beekeepers-* since the genetic pool of available bee stock in the area is assumed to be diverse and relatively "unknown", then incorporating in stock of designated traits may be helpful, i.e. obtaining a known VSH/SMR queen or Minnesota Hygienics. This way, you know what you are mixing with the "unknowns" vs. "unknown" x "unknown", as Marygael pointed out. However, incorporating the latter is still very much worthwhile, as we aren't necessarily trying to isolate individual traits, but broad spectrum traits such as survivability, longevity....which are encompassing.

*For Rural beekeepers-* some of us may have more "control" of our area genetics. And as such, some of us may experience or have already experienced the need to incorporate more variations. In this case, then obtaining tested "mutts" and bred stock may prove to work to broaden the spectrum and to keep the developed lines from bottlenecking and leading to inbreeding in a negative way.

*For Both-* We are all relying on an open mating system- which means that the virgin queens we rear, will mate with area drones. Drones can travel up to 15 miles to mate, increasing the diversity of the available genetic stock. As we incorporate queens from others- whether they be single strains or "mutts" (known and unknown), it is from these monitored that we will then

rear daughter queens. It is these daughter queens whose performance will most interest us over time. Their mothers are of interest to us as well, but since they are in the duration of their testing, they will show their true colors in the seasons to come.

I recommend that all stocks incorporated this season for this project be grafted to produce some daughter queens. Despite the fact that these newly purchased queens have not been tested through each of your systems for a season yet, their grafted daughters will continue their lineage (50%) lest we lose the originals for some reason (i.e. mishap, lack of overwintering ability, disease, malnutrition, etc).

As Kris mentioned, the more bees that you can run and test, the more you will be able to select from that survive. In other words, incorporating various strains and crosses will lend credence to your testing methodology and leave you with some that are cream of the crop, some mediocre, and some not worth a thing.

*Having the ability to select from these is what will give our project the opportunity to develop a pedigree in selection and production though the genetics vary from queen to queen and from season to season.*

It is true, that not all of them that we incorporate nor rear will survive. The more we can run as a group, then the better chance that we'll have a fair amount to start off next season with as tested stock.

**Please send me a list of queens/producers that you are interested in trying. I will then send the group a compiled list for review. We can then begin discussing who orders what, how many and for whom.**

**SUGGESTED STOCK OPTIONS:**

I will contact *Kirk Webster Champlain Valley Bees & Queens- Vermont*, and get us on his list.

I have plans to receive *Marin Cnty (Bonnie Bee)- CA* survivor stock (several variations)

*Pendell Apiaries*, as mentioned by Kris- (great Cordovan Itl. Stock- which also helps to track genetics- when you start to see super blonde bees in your crossed hives, then you know that the Cord. gene is integrating in).

*Old Sol- Oregon*

*Purvis – Georgia* (though in my experience, their Italians didn't know when to stop brooding up.) What has been others experience?

*Olympic Wilderness- Washington*

*VP Bees- Maryland*

*Michael Bush*

*Glenn Apiaries* I've made arrangements to swap some ZQB queens with him for 1 or 2 II

(Instrumentally inseminated) queens. I plan to graft off of them right away after getting

them established in nucs in order to get some daughters outcrossed to go into winter with. I plan to share these daughters- virgins or mated with those of you interested. *Local Stocks*- from each other and others you may be interested in incorporating in. Please share ideas.

What would work is for each of us to come up with 3 to 4 different kinds you'd like to try- in order of preference. We'll do the numbers and then make some calls.

I think that it would be interesting for several of us to test out similar lines- meaning, if both Kris and Me and whoever else want to get Pendell's we each can. We can ask Pendell for different breeder daughters if you want something different from each other.

I worry that if only one of us gets some from a specific breeder, if there is an issue at an apiary or rough conditions, then all might be lost. I also think that it is interesting to test these same company queens in different locations.

I know that some of us are interested in trying similar stock. Our options are still rather limited when it comes to trying "known" hearty lines. We take our chances regardless but it would be best to put funds towards known and unknown- but of course, we should all be open to taking what is available.

Lest we not forget about swarm queens as well. If you retrieve swarms and think the queen may be older and are extremely impressed with how the swarm establishes itself, then grafting daughters off of these is recommended as well.

### **QUEEN REARING WORKSHOP- June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012- ZQB home apiary Truchas, NM**

I'm looking forward to seeing and visiting with everyone when you come to Truchas. I will send an agenda shortly along with directions. If you need a place to stay, let me know.

- We will go over rearing protocol ideas and establish a common timeline for all of us in terms of harvesting (# days left in nuc) so as to ensure well mated and proven laying queens.
- We will select dates in July and August for site visits to CO and NM. We will also set up a calendar for swapping queens on these visits and discuss any potential mailings of stock to each other.
- We will discuss how to graft in queenless and queenright cell builders. We will also discuss both onesy- twosie and "walk away" splits. There are advantages and disadvantages for each. Depending on what you have available for bees will determine which method will work for you. We'll also discuss swapping larval comb and drone brood comb.

- We will also go over harvesting, marking, caging and “banking” of both mated and virgin queens.
- We will discuss caring for cells/virgins, incubating them in hive and out of hive, and their transport.
- We will also prep some queens for shipping- this way if you have cells, or virgins we can mail them to each other.
- Please bring any examples of equipment that you think is pertinent to your queen rearing efforts for demonstration. We can learn from each other techniques that may work well within our individual systems and help to influence our efficiency.
- I can provide some initial queen rearing equipment. I do have a couple new grafting tools for each of you along with some cell cups and cages. We can discuss wax cell cups vs. plastic. I will send information for those of you interested in bringing young larva and/or drone brood for swapping.

### **FUNDING**

I will be calling Kristi Jensen on Monday- June 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss the budget clarifications. One is that they ask us to “finish” our project earlier- by six months. I’ll email everyone clarifications and also find out if we need to just begin saving receipts for reimbursements. I had hoped that they would advance funds by June. My small farm doesn’t have capital funds to lend out. I was told by both Kristi and the financial officer that they do advances for situations such as ours so I am hoping there won’t be any sincere delays.

### **EQUIPMENT**

Depending on what Kristi informs me of in regards to the funding advances, you should begin to research equipment options. For top bar folks, of course standardizing yourself is a given. I think most of you use Les’s design which is great for swapping comb. For Langstroth- being that we are in different locations, might be easier to have stuff shipped to each accordingly but to order as a group. I like Mann Lake in that they offer free shipping. I will call them and discuss the nature of our project and our locations and see if they can arrange some sort of discount for us. Kris also recommended Western Bee.

I am excited to learn more about each of your operations and styles. 😊

### **DOCUMENTATION**

Please begin keeping a log on your suggestions and ideas for your apiary management. The ultimate goal of this grant is to promote survivor stock and survivor stock resources.

If you have a digital camera- please have a photo of yourself in your apiary taken. This can be shared on the RMSQBCoop.org website and also on your blog page.

When I come around to visit, I can take one of you then if you don’t have one already.

Make a list and if possible- take a picture of your breeders.

**T-Shirts** Marygael requested everyone send her their size.

**BLOG** She will also need each person's blog link. You can go to [www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com) or [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) or?

As for titles of your blog- you can reference RMSQBCoop in the title, but do not have to. Ideas for introductory entries include a short bee bio of yourself (and whatever other interesting tidbits about yourself that you want to share) along with a description of your location and your interest in survivor stock rearing and sharing.

Description of your breeding stock and your projected process would also be nice.

Your blogs will also help to keep me informed of what you are each up to. I do not expect daily or weekly entries, but at least one a month would be nice (or for every graft or swap exchange and their introduction).

HAVE FUN! These blogs are an effort to share with others interested various processes and diverse beekeepers and styles with the greater public. The more info you are comfortable sharing, I'm sure the reading audience will appreciate. These are your individual forums.

**THANK YOU LADIES.**

SOME OF YOU MAY THINK THAT WE ARE STARTING LATE, BUT I FEEL THAT WE ARE RIGHT ON TIME. SUMMER SEEMS TO BE MORE CONDUCIVE TO QUEEN REARING WHEN HIVES ARE GAINING STRENGTH AND VOLATILE SPRING WEATHER CONDITIONS HAVE PASSED. More to Come...I keep in touch! -MK