

President's report for Semi-Annual AGM March 20, 2021

Welcome to spring! We are on the cusp of a new beekeeping season, one which I hope will be an improvement from the fall/winter we are just emerging from. In my part of the province and in some other areas as well, there have been unusually high losses this year, possibly due to high mite levels. In support for members with losses who would like to figure out what happened, we have decided to set up an early spring electronic poll during today's meeting to try to determine how widespread and extensive these losses might be. We will also have a brief discussion towards the end of the morning to delve a little deeper into it. It is important to talk about our losses so we can understand what happened, learn from each other, and maybe prevent a recurrence.

This past year has been a tough go for many of us, dealing not only with pandemic isolation, health worries, and possible economic effects, but sometimes difficult bee issues as well. We may not be able to get back to normal yet in our personal lives, but perhaps with our bees we can reach forward to a new improved normal, enhancing our beekeeping with increased mite monitoring and reevaluating our mite treatments to incorporate more Integrated Pest Management techniques. We all want to see our bees thrive, so increasing our knowledge and elevating our beekeeping to a new level can only improve our bees' health and provide us with happier outcomes for our efforts!

My first five months as president have been full ones: I've been learning how each of the executive functions individually, how much of their personal time they put into their positions, and how well they work together as a group. It is the sum of their efforts that enables us to host the annual and semi-annual meetings and provide excellent educational resources for our members. The BCHPA has grown to over 560 members, and I'd like to welcome and encourage all new members and also clubs that are in the process of becoming branches this year.

One unexpected pleasure as president has been the support we are receiving from the provincial Ministry of Agriculture, with Lana Popham returning as our Agriculture Minister. She has ensured the BeeBC program is continuing, funding dozens of small scale but important projects run by individual beekeepers such as yourselves! The other support we are receiving is the ministry's engagement with the executive over a series of meetings in which we have been encouraged to proceed with plans to initiate a Tech Transfer program.

I am also excited by the high level of honey bee research that is taking place in BC. I may be biased as I currently work on a large national project being run by Leonard Foster's UBC lab, but in addition to the research results, there are many positive spin-offs that flow from such projects, including new up-and-coming researchers being trained, economic benefits to local suppliers, increased availability of speakers for bee club talks and association workshops, interactions with local beekeepers in communities throughout the province, and results that directly benefit beekeepers, two of which you will hear about in the educational program: the honey authentication project and queen research being done by Ali McAfee and Abbi Chapman. Other projects include the 2018 Bee Health in Blueberry Pollination project, and eventually, perhaps a new compound to fight varroa being developed and field-tested by Erika Plettner's lab at SFU with Steve Pernal at Agriculture Canada. It is exciting to witness the evolution of new research projects, and especially exciting to see the next generation of new bee researchers who will benefit our industry for years to come!

I hope all of you are looking forward to the rest of the meeting and educational sessions as much as I am, and I wish you a spring of productive and fun beekeeping! Stay safe and enjoy your bees!