

As promised, my recommendations for the treatment of Varroa for both the novice and advanced beekeeper.

First, let me state that Varroa has never been worse in Ohio. We had a third more Varroa in Ohio in 2017, than we did in 2016, and this is not the direction we need to be headed in. To make matters worse, according to the Natural Agricultural Statistics Services (NASS), Ohio is tied 16th overall in total number of colonies per state. Yet, we rank number 5 over all with Varroa at 45.6 percent affected colonies. The periods of April-June 2017, we remain consistently high in this area. If I remember correctly, at one point we were second nationally with the Varroa problem in 2014 or 2015. These are not hard numbers but just stats. The Ohio Dept. of Agri. (ODA) numbers are much more accurate and actually worse at 46.9 percent for the entire 2017 season with affected, inspected colonies.

Secondly, for those who follow me on Facebook and elsewhere, you know that I do not exempt myself, organizations, teachers, instructors, mentors, etc.; from directly contributing to the Varroa problem and associated diseases. We need to address the following question - Why do we teach hundreds, if not thousands of new beekeepers across the state of Ohio each year, and our organizations never reflect those numbers the following year?

And, if we come to the conclusion that the answer is due to new beekeepers loosing bees during their first winter and Varroa is the culprit, then blaming the beekeeper is not the solution. I find that we pander to the whims of the majority and avoid giving matter of fact information, or we ourselves lack accurate details about the control of Varroa and severity of the problem, not sure which. I do not see this change until the above groups decide to change our approach to the problem.

WE SHOULD NOT GIVE OPTIONS OF ANY KIND TO NEW BEEKEEPERS and this includes treatment for Varroa because this only leads to confusion on their part. New beekeepers depend on our expertise, and we should take advantage of this period of dependence to influence them in the most effective direction to keep bees in all areas, especially Varroa control.

My treatment recommendations are as follows:

For the beekeeper that is overwintering colonies, I suggest one vaporized oxalic acid treatment (VOA) a month during the winter, or low brood time frames such as December through February. At these times and before each months treatment if a screened bottom is in use, the bottom board should be checked to track results of the last month's treatment. If no Varroa is found, skip a month and resume the following month without question, because these are optimal times to use oxalic. Also temperatures at the time of treatment should not

be lower than 50 degrees because a loose cluster is needed to contact all bees in the colony at the time of treatment. If February is skipped, do three treatments of 7 to 10 days apart in March weather permitting. Skip April and May. Do a Mite-Away treatment in June or before it starts to get too hot for this product to be effective. Resort back to oxalic in August, three treatments 7 to 10 days apart and repeat in October or switch out with a MiteAway II treatment in Oct. because temperature restrictions merit the switch, if in doubt - TREAT!

For the new beekeepers starting this year, if possible treat package bees with oxalic before installation by placing package bees in 9-5/8 deep box with no frames. Place package on its side supported by two 2 X 4's cut to proper length. The 4" side of the 2 X 4 should support the package. Place the telescoping cover on the top and add enough oxalic in vaporizer to treat one deep or 2 grams and place between the 2 X 4's, then repeat all the information listed above through the remaining time periods or months, and I will guarantee that you will never replace another package of bees due to Varroa losses.