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MESSAGE TO OTS QUEEN REARERS

Since the discovery and disclosure of the OTS (On-The-Spot) method of self-sufficient queen rearing in the mid-1980s and the first presentations on my website in January of 2008, I have answered many questions by phone, email, and in person from beekeepers all over the country and internationally that are applying OTS right within their apiaries for their own, varied purposes, i.e. honey production, pollination, bee stock, etc. These intense, inquisitive interactions between beekeepers brainstorming OTS to see all that it can do for their beekeeping operations inspired me to set my sights on writing a book that would finally compile all facets of OTS queen rearing, including information not previously disclosed, into one organized, complete format rather than through various different presentations and articles on my website. It is in this way that **OTS Queen Rearing: A Survival Guide for Beekeepers Worldwide** came to fruition.

After launching the book, I wanted to remove all presentation and research archives from the website but after further thought, I decided that those spontaneous nuggets of information provide a valuable backdrop and historical insight into how OTS was presented to various beekeeping organizations and the various questions and ideas that arose during those visits. Therefore, I will keep them on the website for now.

I have observed a strong trend nationally that it is not hard to get new beekeepers interested in beekeeping but it is hard to keep them interested after several years of failure which is unfortunate for the bees and the beekeepers. In my conversations with novice beekeepers, some of the most frequent questions are, "What is the best bee? Are your bees mite resistant? How do you find the queen?"

What is the best bee? This is a question that can't be answered in a way the novice beekeeper is programmed to understand. For example, if a beekeeper imports a pure Italian queen directly from Italy to use as a breeder queen, they will have a pure Italian queen mother. Her offspring (virgins) that are 100% Italian will mate with up to 15 different random drones so that the daughter queens' future progeny will not be over 50% Italian yet the novice beekeeper is led to believe that they can buy Italian queens that will produce Italian bees. Therefore, the best bee in the world is the one that overwinters in your yards. The queens from these survivor colonies are your best breeder queens from which to rear quality daughter queens. OTS naturally expands upon this foundation of local, strong, survivor stock which is why it is such a powerful queen rearing method.

Are your bees mite resistant? The answer to that question is no, my bees are not mite resistant but I break the mites' breeding cycle naturally with my OTS method. I don't need to use a poison because the OTS biologically reduces mite load to an insignificant level. Anyone that uses a miticide can never know if their bees are mite resistant. It is also important to remember that chemicals have different properties at different temperatures so in my opinion the miticides are not accurate enough to control Varroa mites, not to mention the side effects to the bees and the chemical residue that accumulates on the combs which are very absorbent.

I do recommend the antibiotics Terramycin and Fumagilin-B as they have been around for many years and are, in my opinion, safe. I say this only because I don't want anyone blaming the OTS system for failure when they still have 40-year-old comb in their hives.

How do you find the queen? This is a problem for many novice beekeepers and that is why I wrote a complete chapter in the book on how to rear queens with OTS without finding the queen or removing her from the hive as long as the colony is strong and well fed. This method is straight-forward and fast which has alleviated many a beekeeper.

Rearing quality queens by notching (non-grafting) properly in accordance with my OTS method guidelines has become very successful to many beekeepers worldwide.

I wish all OTS beekeepers much continued success,

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