



PRESIDENT'S REPORT CARD 2014

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administration, fellow
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family for supporting
me through my term as
president.*

THIS IS MY LAST REPORT AS PRESIDENT, and in thinking about my time in office, I would say it's been quite the couple of years. Our work to remove neonicotinoid-coated seed from field crops has been 'front and centre' and although I hoped it would have been resolved by the end of my term, I do feel that we have made major progress. Our focus has been on building public awareness and support, strengthening our relationship with governments, particularly provincial, and ensuring that our positions and strategies were based on both science and experience. The biggest challenge to me, personally, has been to deal with the views of so many different parties. But we made a special effort to stay in touch with the beekeeping community to ensure that our position reflected that of the majority and we are confident that we have done so. And we have tried to keep the lines of communication open with other stakeholders.

Our recent meeting with Glen Murray, the Minister of the Environment, was very positive and we felt that our thoughts and concerns were well received. The report of the Environmental Commissioner tabled in early October, which stated (among other things) that neonics are "the biggest threat to the structure and ecological integrity of the ecosystem..." supports OBA's position, as well as the Government's commitment to apply regulatory control to the use of these pesticides. In all, we've been pleased at the degree to which this government understands the issues and is following through on its election promises.

Although the neonicotinoid issue is by far the most visible, I want to stress that it is only part of what we do at the OBA. You will see by the rest of my report that we have moved forward on all our strategic directions. This year, TTP has reached nearly 300 beekeepers through their training programs, and even more than that through outreach to meetings and conferences. As well, it has generated a number of practical research projects to improve the success of beekeepers across the Province. In addition, we have developed programs and partnered with others to ensure honey is included in Ontario's food strategy. Currently, more than a thousand people a month visit the "Where to buy honey" section of our website. Other issues we've been involved with include compensation, border protection and small hive beetle.

I want to thank all the board members, administration, fellow beekeepers, friends and family for supporting me through my term as president. We have a good working board at this time but are always open for new people who wish to contribute. I'd also like to thank Maureen VanderMarel for her service to the organization. Maureen will be moving on at the end of the year so we are currently looking for a new General Manager. We wish you all the best, Maureen.

I'M READY TO HAND THE REINS OVER TO TIBOR, WHO I KNOW WILL PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP NECESSARY FOR THIS NEXT STAGE IN THE ORGANIZATION.

The Board is behind him and we hope OBA members will support him as well. It's shaping up to be a very interesting and important couple of years and all of us need to work together to protect and grow the industry.



IN OUR VISION,
ONTARIO LEADS WITH
WELL-INFORMED AND
SKILLED BEEKEEPERS,
HEALTHY AND
PLENTIFUL HONEY BEES
RAISED IN ONTARIO,
A PROSPEROUS
BEEKEEPING
INDUSTRY, AS WELL
AS A WIDESPREAD
APPRECIATION FOR
HONEY AND THE
CRITICAL ROLE THAT
HONEY BEES PLAY IN
AGRICULTURE.



HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2013—2014 TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL ONE: ADVOCACY

Amplify our voice for beekeeping through stronger influence with government and industry.

- Successfully negotiated a proposed permit system on field crops with the Ontario government that will control and reduce the use of neonicotinoid-treated seeds.
- Enabled the launch of a class-action suit against Syngenta and Bayer to provide compensation to beekeepers who have experienced losses due to the indiscriminate use of neonicotinoids.
- Developed a political awareness campaign for the Provincial election to encourage an informed and engaged beekeeping electorate.
- Developed constructive working relationships with new Ministers and senior staff at OMAFRA and MOE and hosted a briefing meeting between OMAFRA senior leadership and commercial beekeepers.
- Provided industry leadership on the Government of Ontario's Bee Health Working Group and submitted detailed public response to their report.
- Increased public awareness of the neonic issue through six media releases and provided dozens of interviews which reached millions of people through more than 200 TV, radio, print and social media mentions.
- Testified before the Canadian Senate Committee on Bee Health and provided them with resources and research to aid in their deliberations.
- Provided input and worked with other stakeholders to encourage public response to PMRA's Call for Comments resulting in thousands of responses.
- Monitored the Small Hive Beetle situation and provided advice to OMAFRA to ensure appropriate policies and actions.
- Advised on the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program to ensure continued coverage.

GOAL TWO: KNOWLEDGE

Be the authoritative source for knowledge about the practice and profession of beekeeping.

- Enhanced beekeeping skills of nearly 300 people through eleven beekeeping courses across the Province.
- Initiated five new knowledge transfer and research projects to improve best practices:
 - o “Decontamination of Bee Hive Equipment with Ozone Fumigation”
 - o “Implementation of ‘Beecareful’ Traceability and Labour Productivity Software”
 - o “Advanced Integrated Pest Management, Queen Breeding and Expansion of Pollination Services workshops”
 - o “Effect of Sublethal Doses of Neonicotinoids on Honey Bee Colonies in Ontario”
 - o “Efficacy test of new unregistered thymol-based treatment”
- Collaborated with Dr. Ernesto Guzman and the UofG Honey Bee Research Program comparing colony health between those on organic and those on conventional agricultural land.
- Collaborated with Dr. Amro Zayed from York University on his research project on the effects of neonicotinoids and chronic bee health.
- Provided knowledge transfer presentations on research findings to 2013 OBA AGM, 2014 spring and summer meetings, fifteen local Ontario beekeepers’ associations, the New Brunswick Beekeepers’ Association AGM, the Maritime Summer Bee Tour, and the Eastern Apiculture Society 2014 Conference in Kentucky.

GOAL THREE: SUSTAINABILITY

Promote the development of a diverse and economically sustainable apiculture industry.

- Launched the Ontario Resistant Honey Bee Selection Program (ORHBS) to build the bee breeding component of the industry and to support the production of high quality queens, queen cells and nucs through education and practical support.
- Developing a bee breeding workshop for Ontario beekeepers using the ORHBS Protocols. (Ten ORHBS breeders have had 209 colonies tested for hygienic behavior and breeder colony health status and nine queens analyzed for fertility and sperm viability so far.)

- The OBA’s Ontario Honey Bee Pollination Association has contributed to the growth in pollination services to eastern Canada, from 13,000 in 2010 to over 30,000 in 2014.
- Protected Ontario’s bees from imported diseases and pests through restricted imports from U.S.
- Developed additional marketing materials to promote 100% Ontario Honey.
- Increased awareness of honey through partnership with Foodland Ontario Marketing Committee and participation in other food marketing events such as the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Farm Food Care, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, Ontario Agricultural Fair Society (eight fairs), and the International Plowing Match.

GOAL FOUR: REACH

Increase OBA membership through outreach, communications and member services.

- OBA membership is expected to exceed 800 for 2014.
- Bi-weekly OBA electronic newsletter for all Ontario beekeepers now has distribution of 2,000 to keep beekeepers up to date on OBA activities and to provide current news and timely beekeeping information and support.
- Social media reaches on average 3,000/week on Facebook and 8,000/week on Twitter (1,600 followers), building broad-based awareness of critical beekeeping issues.
- OBA website is now supporting 15,000 users per month. In the past year, there have been over 150,000 sessions involving 520,000 pages.
- The Ontario Bee Journal is larger and more focused on practical and timely information for commercial and small beekeepers.
- Implemented a beekeeper survey on key issues and attitudes resulting in a re-design of the Ontario Bee Journal and stronger advocacy positions.

GOAL FIVE: CAPACITY

Optimize organizational performance through effective structures, systems, policies and funding.

- Received a clean financial audit for 2012/13.
- Revising financial reporting systems to provide more transparency.
- Developed board member terms of office to support long-term stability and planning.