



2018 AGM & Conference



Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS) Master Beekeeper Program

by Vince Aloyo, Master Beekeeper

The Master Beekeeper (MB) program was developed to certify highly competent beekeepers as Master Beekeepers. These Master Beekeepers are to provide education and assistance to all beekeepers, but especially beginning beekeepers. Additionally, MBs serve in other capacities in the community as experts in beekeeping.

The Master Beekeeping program was initially developed by Dr. Roger A. Morse at Cornell University, and has been expanded and updated by the Eastern Apicultural Society of North America.

The advantage of the EAS Master Beekeeper program is that no particular state residency is required. The EAS MB has no apprentice or journeyman steps in its program, nor is any course of study associated with it. The Master Beekeeper candidate must be diligent in performing independent study. It is incumbent on the candidate to learn as much about beekeeping as possible both by reading and by handling bees.

The rigorous EAS MB exam is designed to test all aspects of beekeeping in order to certify that the Master Beekeeper is very knowledgeable regarding all aspects of the art and science of beekeeping. To this end, the exam is divided into four parts: written, laboratory, oral and field. All parts of the exam are administered during the annual EAS conference – usually on Tuesday and Wednesday of the week-long conference.

Written Exam

The written exam is composed of a variety of questions, i.e. true-false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short essays, etc. A total of 100 points is possible; a passing grade is **85**. Candidates have up to **4 hours** to complete the exam. Applicants are expected to show a reasonable command of the English language. Clear, direct, precise, full-sentence answers are best. Handwriting should be readable. Spelling mistakes will not be downgraded, but the intended word/meaning should be clear.

Laboratory Exam

In the laboratory examination, applicants move from station to station where a variety of items, specimens and equipment associated with beekeeping is displayed. Questions might include identification, context of use, relevant information about what is displayed (control for a disease, for example), and other pertinent information about the item. For example, one might be asked what time of year a particular item would be

used. Some stations may have only a photo or computer image. There is a **four-hour time limit** to take the laboratory exam. Passing grade is **85**.

Oral Exam

The Oral Exam portion of testing looks at a candidate's ability to communicate their knowledge of honey bees accurately and positively. Master Beekeepers are teachers, and it is critical that they be able to "stand and deliver" under virtually any circumstance. They provide education and support for other beekeepers and serve their communities as experts in beekeeping. Once accepted for testing, candidates are given a "prepared question" topic in advance of the conference, which they have 5 minutes to present to their panel of three MB examiners. In addition to the prepared question, they are also asked three "impromptu questions" by the panel. They must answer these questions accurately, concisely, and completely in a three minute period. Each of the four questions in the oral exam is worth 25 points.

Candidates must obtain a grade of at least 85% from two of the three panelists to pass.

Field Exam

Candidates are graded on their skill in colony examination and on their ability to accurately assess the condition of a colony and recommend appropriate management. They are evaluated by two Master Beekeeper examiners. An average score of 85% or better is required to pass the field exam.

Eligibility

Any experienced beekeeper is eligible to apply for certification as a Master Beekeeper. The applicant must be a member of EAS at the time the exam is taken. Persons interested in applying should have a minimum of 5 years as a serious beekeeper in some aspect of apiary management such as a very dedicated hobbyist, a commercial beekeeper, working for a commercial beekeeper or as an apiary inspector. Also, it is helpful if applicants have completed the equivalent of a college level course in beekeeping. An applicant should be well read in apicultural literature. In addition, a Recommendation of Candidate for EAS Master Beekeeper Examination in support of the individual seeking Master Beekeeper Certification must be submitted by the application deadline. This recommendation may be supplied by a current Master Beekeeper, professional beekeeping specialist or current president of a local, state or regional beekeeping organization **with whom the applicant has a long standing personal association**. The recommendation can be submitted with the application or can be sent separately but must be received by the application deadline.

More information can be obtained on the EAS website (<http://www.easternapiculture.org/>) under the Master Beekeeper tab.