



2019

ANNUAL REPORT





GUIDING PRINCIPLES

THE ALBERTA BEEKEEPERS COMMISSION:

- Commits to accountability and transparency to eligible producers
- Supports good stewardship, science-based innovation and research
- Works in the best interest of Alberta beekeepers





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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The past year has been another eventful year for the Alberta Beekeepers Commission (ABC). After many big changes the previous year, the goal was to build the brand and recognition of the Commission and the Alberta beekeeping industry. With 274,876 hives registered in the province for 2019, our industry continues to show its resolve despite the many challenges it faces. The loss of Fumagillin and the tightened restrictions on antibiotics left many beekeepers concerned going into winter. At the reported 28.8 percent, losses were once again high but not crippling. For most Alberta beekeepers, the 2019 season will be remembered as one of the most difficult years they have experienced. Every year we face many challenges but are well equipped to face them and despite them are still able to finish the year with a decent honey crop. This has been the major difference in 2019 as reports of poor crops bordering on crop failure coupled with an already low price of honey have many beekeepers very concerned. The board of directors decided in August to inform Minister Dreeshen of the situation the industry faces, and will continue to work towards improving resources to assist producers during difficult years due to circumstances out of our control.

In the past year ABC was successful in securing \$832,531 dollars in Canadian Agricultural Partnership funding over the next four years towards five different projects. More information on each project follows in the annual report. Our major project in 2019 was obtaining funding for establishing an Alberta Tech Team. ABC is proud to introduce Renata Borba as our new Tech Team Lead and looks forward to the development of this program to assist the beekeepers of Alberta. Our second major Canadian Agricultural Partnership funded project has been focused on public literacy and telling our story, which has included a revamp of our website, a new tradeshow booth, and a public education campaign focused on Alberta honey. ABC participated in a number of events and initiatives including Farmtech, Canolapolooza, Vermillion Agriculture Fair, Calgary Stampede, and Chops and Crops, and we're continuing our efforts to network, build partnerships and educate stakeholders and consumers about beekeeping and honey in Alberta. Apimondia 2019 was a great event to showcase Alberta Beekeeping to a global community. ABC developed an export catalogue and showcased a range of products available from Alberta at the trade show. In addition,

Renata Borba, Shelley Hoover, Steve Pernal and Marta Guarna contributed to the science program.

Last November three new board members were elected. Bevan Ford and Ryan Hicks took on the 2 Director at Large positions and Rene Larocque stepped in mid term in a By-election as Curtis Miedema took over the Vice President position to assist me in my first year elected as President. Neil Specht was appointed by the board to fill in our second CHC seat. I want to thank all the directors for the large time commitment and efforts they put forward. This year we will be electing a new CHC rep, as well as directors for the 4 regions.

One of our goals was not only to connect with the public but also to connect with our eligible producers. With a number of changing regulations, the ABC offered workshops and training for the new Antimicrobial regulations, the new Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, as well as the Occupational Health and Safety regulations. ABC joined the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) in the past year to support eligible producers with changing labour and temporary foreign worker requirements.

2019 saw a number of new producers joining ABC for the first time. I want to thank everyone for their continued support and encourage everyone to join in as we work together to improve the Alberta Beekeeping industry.



JEREMY OLTHOF, PRESIDENT





JEREMY



RENE



NICO



CURTIS



RYAN



GRACE



BILL



BEVAN



TERRY



NEIL



MIKE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:
JEREMY OLTHOF

CHC Director:
TERRY GREIDANUS

CHC Delegate:
NEIL SPECHT

Vice President:
CURTIS MIEDEMA

North West Region:
RENE LAROCQUE

Past President:
MIKE DEJONG

Peace Region:
BILL TERMEER

Director at Large:
RYAN HICKS

**North East
Central Region:**
NICO MOLENKAMP

Director at Large:
BEVAN FORD

South Region:
GRACE STROM



CONNIE



RENATA



JULES



AARON

STAFF

Executive Director:
CONNIE PHILLIPS

Tech Transfer Team Lead:
RENATA BORBA

Office Manager:
JULES HAM

Program Support:
AARON TOMA

STRATEGIC PLAN

On January 15 & 16, 2019 the Alberta Beekeepers Commission (ABC) Board, Executive Director and staff held our annual Strategic Planning & Governance Retreat. Following a year of internal transition and external changes in 2018, the focus of the 2019 Strategic Planning Retreat was to revisit, reframe and refocus ABC priorities for the next five years.

Board and staff revisited the previous environmental scan, updating opportunities and challenges. Based on this work the Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Priorities were all reviewed and updated. A full copy of the Strategic Plan can be found on the ABC Website: www.albertabeekeepers.ca

VISION, MISSION & PRIORITIES

A vision is a desired future state which keeps us progressing as an industry. This year our vision statement was updated to reflect our focus on innovation, education, collaboration and research.

◆ ◆ ◆ **VISION:** WE ENVISION A VIBRANT, HEALTHY, AND GROWING ALBERTA BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH: INNOVATION, EDUCATION, COLLABORATION, AND RESEARCH.

OUR MISSION, WHICH STATES THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION, WAS ALSO REFRAMED THIS YEAR TO STATE:

◆ ◆ ◆ **MISSION:** TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT INITIATIVES, AND PROVIDE TOOLS SUPPORTING ALBERTA BEEKEEPERS, WHICH IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF HONEYBEE COLONIES, PROMOTE THE QUALITY OF OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS, MARKETS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- RESEARCH
- MARKET DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION AND EDUCATION
- PRODUCER RELATIONS AND EXTENSION
- GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND INDUSTRY AFFAIRS
- GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE



COMMITTEES

During the January Strategic Planning and Governance Retreat, the ABC Board also reviewed the number and effectiveness of ABC committees. The board chose to reduce the number of ongoing committees from 12 to 6. The new committees are also more closely aligned with the Strategic Plan. As needed special projects or task committees will be established. The new committees are as follows:

Governance and Finance Committee

Members: Jeremy Olthof, Curtis Miedema, Nico Molenkamp, Terry Greidanus

Staff Support: Connie Phillips

Government & Industry Affairs Committee

Members: Bill Termeer, Jeremy Olthof, Todd Eastman

Staff Support: Connie Phillips

Market Development, Promotion and Education

Members: Bill Termeer, Bevan Ford, Neil Specht

Staff Support: Connie Phillips, Jules Ham

Producer Relations & Extension

Members: Ryan Hicks, Jeremy Olthof

Staff Support: Jules Ham, Aaron Toma, Renata Borba, Connie Phillips

Tech Team Steering Committee

Members: Grace Strom, Jeremy Olthof, Kevin Nixon, James Morton, Shelley Hoover, Steve Pernal

Staff Support: Connie Phillips

Research and Projects Committee

Members: Grace Strom, Jeremy Olthof, Rene Larocque, Curtis Miedema

Staff Support: Connie Phillips, Renata Borba

National Representatives:

Canadian Honey Council

Terry Greidanus, Neil Specht

Canadian Agriculture Human Resources Council

Jeremy Olthof, Connie Phillips

Provincial Representatives:

AgSafe Alberta

Jeremy Olthof, Connie Phillips

Alberta Food Processors Association

Connie Phillips

Alberta Farmed Animal Care

Adam Ovinge, Connie Phillips

Crop Sector Working Group

Connie Phillips



"After many big changes the previous year, the goal was to build the brand and recognition of the Commission and the Alberta beekeeping industry."



— JEREMY OLTTHOF

STRATEGIC PRIORITY HIGHLIGHTS

Research

Alberta Beekeepers is an associate member of the Agriculture Funding Consortium. As an associate member, Alberta Beekeepers provides a voice for ABC's research priorities and helps guide focus for future research and development in Alberta.

Alberta Beekeepers Commission Research Committee strategically allocates research dollars to projects with the greatest potential to positively impact Alberta's beekeeping industry.

A full version of the revised research priorities is available on the ABC website. The main themes are: *Colony Health, Honey and Pollination*

Five projects were completed during the 2018/19 fiscal year:

1. Getting More Bang for Your Buzz
 2. Alternative Treatments for Nosema
 3. Bee Researcher Project
 4. Review of Analytical Methods for Detecting Honey Adulteration
 5. Sustainability Managing Bee Pests
- Copies of all these reports can be found on the ABC website.*

Seven ABC supported research projects are currently underway:

1. Nosema Epidemiology & Control in Honey Bees Under Canadian Prairie Conditions

The first objective of this study is to determine the effect of environmental stress and fumagillin treatment timing on nosema mean abundance (the mean number of spores in all sampled bees) and colony performance and survival in Alberta.

The second objective is to determine the seasonal variation and prevalence (the proportion of infected colonies) of *Nosema ceranae* and *Nosema apis* in Alberta.

2. Comprehensive Comparison of the Therapeutic Efficacy of Fumagillin, Prebiotics & Probiotics Against Nosema Infection of Honey Bee Colonies

This project is being done in partnership with Saskatchewan Bee Development Corporation and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, with funding from the Saskatchewan Agriculture Development Fund and ABC.

3. Spray Drying Honey

Exploring the potential of honey as a powdered sugar substitute.

4. A Study of Foulbrood in Canadian Apiaries

5. Research into Synthetic Biology Applications for Bee Health Related Issues

ABC has funded this work jointly with Manitoba Beekeepers and Agriculture and Forestry. The project is being carried out by the National Bee Diagnostic Centre. Year 1 work has been completed.

6. NMR – Based Honey Quality System Study

ABC is supporting work towards establishing a nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy-based methodology as a standard for measuring honey characteristics and for detection of fraudulent honey products.

The NMR methodology has the potential to become; a standard QA/QC and traceability documentation process for producers, a product certification and marketing tool for producers, wholesalers and retailers, part of an improved product surveillance process at CFIA for both domestic and imported honey products.

If successful, an established honey traceability and quality system in Alberta and Canada as a whole would enable our honey producers to be fully aligned with quality and antifraud systems being developed abroad, and in particular, in the US.

7. Economics of Pollination from an Ecosystem Services Perspective

The primary deliverable is an economic analysis of the benefits we receive from honey bees in Alberta.

The analysis should also inform the current pollination services model as lead by Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute as a partner of Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Network.

The Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Network (ESBN) are developing the knowledge (science) and capacity (systems, policy) required to implement ecosystem services and biodiversity markets in Alberta. Although there has been significant progress, we know that the concept of ES and biodiversity markets are still new to many stakeholders. In order to be successful, we need to work together in identifying common interests, and creating a community of shared understanding. This project will increase understanding of pollination services in Alberta.

Market Development, Promotion & Education

ABC was able to leverage funds through the successful submission of proposals to the Canadian Agriculture Partnership – Alberta grant program:

- 1) **Domestic Market Development Opportunities:** The objective of this project was to evaluate the potential and identify the opportunities for Alberta honey in the domestic market. - complete
- 2) **Public Literacy: Telling Our Story.** For this project ABC is working with AdFarm to generate awareness among consumers and key industry stakeholders of the important role and positive impact the Alberta Beekeepers Commission (ABC) and its members have on the Alberta economy, our food system, and our environment. For this initial first step with AdFarm the focus will be on honey.
- 3) **Energy Efficiency Assessment:** Improving energy efficiency – using less energy to provide the same level or improved output and service is widely recognized as the most cost effective and readily available means to address numerous energy related issues, including energy security, the social and economic impacts of high energy prices and concerns about climate change. At the same time, energy efficiency increases business competitiveness and promotes consumer welfare. ABC is working with Dandelion Renewables on this project.

ABC participated in student led projects with Grant MacEwan and the University of Alberta

- 1) Grant MacEwan students conducted a study on the market potential for Alberta honey in the United Arab

Emirates. The students presented their results as well as provided a report on their findings.

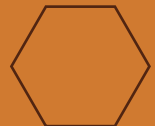
- 2) University of Alberta 4th Year Mechanical Engineering Design students designed an overwintering building for bees.
- 3) University of Alberta iGEM Synthetic Biology applications to improve disease resistance in honey bees.

With a focus on promotion ABC has developed promotional materials for display and distribution, expanded our use of social media and participated in several events throughout the year including; Farmtech, Crops and Chops, Advancing Women in Agriculture, Alberta on the Plate, Calgary Stampede Reception, CanolaPALOOZA, Vermillion Agriculture Fair, Apimondia... and sponsored a few others...

ABC increased the number of bursaries offered this year to 3. Congratulations go to: Courtney McInnis, Chloe Paradis, and Rhonda Thygesen.

ABC has been in discussions with University of Lethbridge, NAIT, Olds College and Lakeland College about the potential of adding bees to their curriculums.

Changes to Anti-microbial regulations changed the relationship between beekeepers and veterinarians. ABC worked with Olds College, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, the Provincial Apiculturist, Alberta Farmed Animal Care and the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association to offer a course on bee health and biology to Alberta's veterinarians.



Producer Relations and Extension

ABC's major project in the 2018/19 fiscal year was to establish an Alberta Tech Team. To this end, ABC was successful in obtaining a 4 year grant through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership Risk Mitigation program of \$667,375 to establish an Alberta Tech Team. The ABC Board established a Tech Team Steering Committee, who following an extensive recruitment and interview process hired Dr. Renata Borba as Alberta's Tech Team Lead.

Throughout the year the ABC has provided support and training in a number of areas including; Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, Occupational Health and Safety, the Advance Payment Program, and access to the CAHRC toolbox.

The annual convention offered a range of topics covering the gamut from polyporphyrins to marketing. The Integrated Pest Management Workshop introduced us all to Dr. Ramsey and the new research into Varroa while the Southern Alberta Beekeepers meeting explored extension strategies and celebrated 100 years of Philpotts.

ABC has established many new partnerships and relationships over the past two years:

- University of Lethbridge
- NAIT
- Olds College
- Lakeland College
- University of Alberta
- Grant MacEwan University
- AgSafe Alberta
- Alberta Food Processors Association
- Alberta Animal Farmed Care

- National Bee Diagnostic Centre-TAC
- Alberta on the Plate
- CAHRC
- Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute
- Crop Sector Working Group

The Advance Payment Program continues to evolve. Over the past year requirements of administrators of the program have increased significantly.

Government Relations and Industry Affairs

- Over the past year, ABC has raised the profile the Alberta's beekeeping industry with Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Innovates, the Alberta Funding Consortium and within Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.
- The ABC Board Executive met with the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. Executives presented challenges and issues that face the industry as well as explored ways the Ministry and ABC could work more closely together.
- In addition to face to face meetings, ABC Board and staff have been communicating with all levels of government via letter and/or email on issues of concern to the industry.
- ABC has participated in several meetings and webinars throughout the year advocating on behalf of the industry in regard to streamlining the hiring of temporary foreign workers and gaining access to resources to support producers, e.g.; the QAMP Guide, A Guide to Hiring and Managing International Workers on Your Farm, which can be found on the ABC website.



- ABC has approached Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF) International Market Development staff to develop a plan for communicating directly with Canadian Consulates and Trade offices in the US as well as plan a marketing campaign for Alberta Honey in the US.
- ABC has been working with BeeMaid and AdFarm on the promotion of Alberta honey. Alberta Honey Producers/BeeMaid, Saskatchewan Bee Development Corporation and ABC joined forces supporting producers with training for the new Safe Food for Canadians Regulations
- ABC is working closely with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Grande Prairie Regional College and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada to ensure the Alberta Tech Team lead has access to facilities and labs as required.

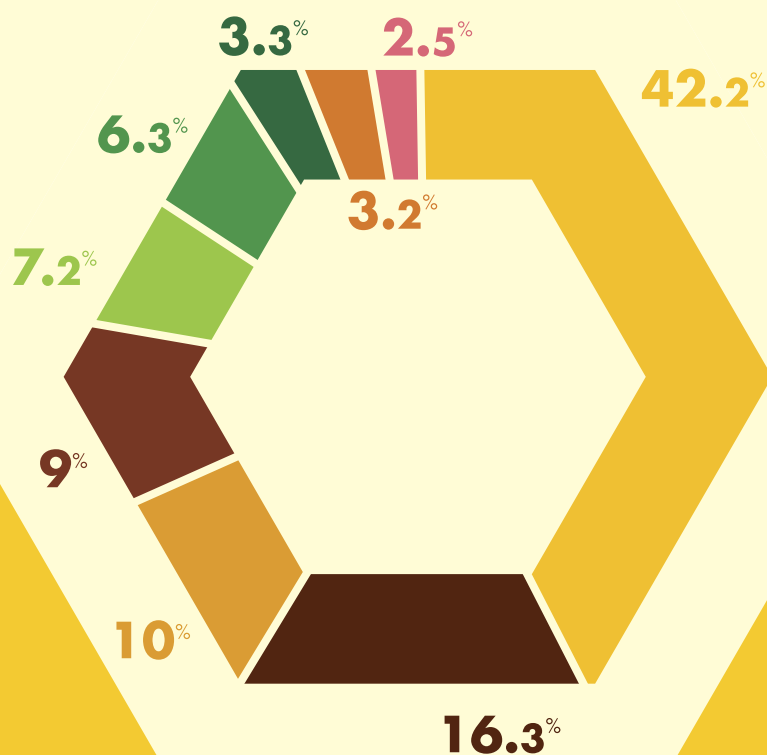
Governance and Finance

- ABC staff and board fill several roles throughout the year in carrying out their responsibilities in respect to the Bee Plan Regulation, offering services and support to eligible producers, promotion and advocacy of the industry. Over the past year office staff have been working to streamline administrative tasks and to improve transparency.
- The board and staff have made a commitment to ensuring the Commission operates following good governance principles. Over the past year, ABC's policy manual and regulations were reviewed by a governance specialist and an analysis with recommendations was presented to the board and staff.
- ABC Board and Staff received training on board responsibilities, liabilities and indemnifications.
- ABC staff and board have continued to work towards continuous improvement in the management of ABC finances.
 - o All of ABC's financial assets have been moved to Alberta Treasury Branch
 - o ABC has set aside \$250,000 as a shut down reserve (required by regulation)
 - o ABC has created a pool of reserve funds, set aside in a higher interest account to ensure current project commitments can be met into the future
 - o A Financial Policies and Process Manual has been developed



ALBERTA BEEKEEPERS COMMISSION 2018/19

EXPENDITURES





RESOLUTIONS

1. The Canadian Honey Council develop Vision, Mission, mandate, annual workplan and review its current governance structure in conjunction with all provinces and to be shared on the CHC website. **APPROVED.** The request was forwarded to CHC. CHC held a strategic planning meeting at their face to face board meeting in November 2018. CHC has provided their Strategic Plan
2. The Canadian Honey Council update the Canadian Bee Industry Safety Quality Traceability (CBISQT) Producer Manual Version 1.0 2014 so that it reflects the changes associated with the new Safe Food for Canadians regulation requirements. **APPROVED.** The request was forwarded to CHC and **DECLINED**
3. The Alberta Beekeepers Commission will investigate and communicate with existing bee tech teams to investigate and identify working models and seek funding via the Canadian Agriculture Partnership program to develop and implement a bee tech team **APPROVED & COMPLETE**
4. Be it resolved that the ABC continue to hold the Convention and Annual General Meeting at the Fantasyland Hotel. **APPROVED & COMPLETE**
5. Be it resolved that the Alberta Beekeepers Commission seek the support of CHC and CFIA to bring in up to 200 packages in the spring of 2019 or as soon as possible from California to an isolated area in Alberta such as the Peace Region under a similar protocol for queen importations as a Test Pilot for future importations on a larger scale. The hives could be monitored by the appropriate government agencies over the summer for health and productivity, and the data collected could be used towards an updated risk assessment. **APPROVED.** The request was forwarded to CHC and **DECLINED**
6. The ABC approach Marketing Council to have the executive positions be appointed from within the board of directors annually after the AGM. ABC has met with Marketing Council to discuss the option of having executive positions appointed from within. Making this change will require a change in the regulations. The regulations come up for review in 2021. There will be an opportunity to make this change at that time with Eligible Producer approval.
7. Be it resolved that the ABC work with the NBDC to implement a standard testing procedure to determine the quality of queens (sperm count/ sperm viability/ other?) imported into Alberta. **NO ACTION TO DATE**
8. The Alberta Beekeepers Commission lobby federal and provincial governments to encourage and promote NMR testing of Canadian honeys to ensure the integrity of the Canadian honey market. **APPROVED.** ABC has supported a number of projects related to testing for adulterated honey, including a technology assessment, the pros and cons of NMR vs other technologies and establishing a business case for both traceability and quality assurance (as of this date, this is still underway) CFIA has also conducted a test for adulteration utilizing NMR as well as the existing their existing standard.

"Alberta Beekeepers Commission Research Committee strategically allocates research dollars to projects with the greatest potential to positively impact Alberta's beekeeping industry."







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