

## Normal Seasonal Colony Activity for Kentucky

(Spring activity greatly influenced by seasonal weather)

### Early spring: about February – April

- ❖ Pollen & nectar begin to be available.
- ❖ Egg laying and rearing of brood increases (actually begins in January).
- ❖ By March (will vary due to weather) healthy hives increase in population.
- ❖ By March large amounts of nectar are available (will vary due to weather).
- ❖ In hives the colony is typically found in the top box; the bottom box is empty.

### Spring: April – June

- ❖ Colony populations greatly increase by April.
- ❖ Swarming begins. (Swarm season in Kentucky is generally April – June.)
- ❖ By April, the colony is bringing in surplus honey. (Honey supers should be on.)
- ❖ In June the colony population growth and swarming activity slows.
- ❖ In June robbing is a potential problem.

### Summer: July – August

- ❖ Around mid-July the nectar flow ends and summer dearth begins.
- ❖ Brood rearing is reduced and bearding of bees on hive entrances increases.
- ❖ Honey bees may become very grumpy – *keep your veils on!*
- ❖ Robbing is potentially a serious problem.
- ❖ This is a good window for varroa mite control using non-fumigant control products.
- ❖ Collect samples for nosema and/or varroa testing.

### Early fall: August – September

- ❖ Fall nectar flow begins - primarily asters and goldenrod.
- ❖ By September brood rearing increases. (The colony is producing winter bees.)
- ❖ After Labor Day, you may use varroa control with fumigant control products.
- ❖ In September, if there is no nectar flow or brood rearing, start intermittent feeding of 1:1 sugar syrup to stimulate egg laying and brood rearing.

### Fall: October – November

- ❖ By October, the bees should start to fill the top brood boxes with honey.
- ❖ If the brood boxes do not contain ample honey in October, feed with syrup of 2 parts sugar to 1 part water.
- ❖ The goal of fall management is to have 50+ pounds of honey and a good population of healthy bees by November. (A full deep frame holds about 7-8 pounds of honey.)

### Winter: December & January

- ❖ The colony clusters to conserve warmth.
- ❖ Colony begins winter in the bottom box. After consuming food in bottom, will move to top.
- ❖ Brood rearing begins in January.