

NCSBA Master Beekeeper Program

Master Beekeeper Field Exam Instructions

1. Candidate is required to light a smoker prior to the start of hive inspection:

- Candidate should demonstrate the judicious use of smoke to control colony and manipulate bees.

2. PPE should be worn at candidate's discretion:

- No excessive delay in the inspection should result from PPE being applied after hive has been opened.

3. Entrance Assessment:

- Level of flight activity. Pollen or lack of being brought in. Guarding behavior. Robbing behavior. Bearding. Orientation flights. Dead bees or larva on landing board or ground. Bees crawling on ground.

4. Opening of Hive:

- Confidence with use of hive tool. Placement of hive covers and boxes. Logical removal of frames.

5. Colony Temperament:

- Candidate should assess the defensiveness or temper of the colony.
 - **Calm – no running on the combs, no unprovoked stings, no reaction to hand movements above the frames.**
 - Normal – normal guard bee behavior, maybe a sting or a slight reaction to movements above the frames.
 - Defensive – running on the combs, excessive stinging, guard bees following you some distance from the hive.

6. Queen Right Inspection:

- Find and demonstrate how to catch and mark queen. If unable to find queen, mark drone or worker.
- Candidate should know the proper queen marking color for the current year and the previous year.
- Point specifically and accurately to cells containing eggs. If queen or eggs cannot be found, present a good reason they are not located. Describe steps that would help locate queen in the next inspection.
- If no eggs are found estimate how long ago the queen stopped laying.
- Presence Of: Queen Cups, Uncapped or Capped Queen Cells. Evaluate by location on frames and time of year what their presence likely indicates.

7. Evaluate Brood Chamber Frames:

- Spotty – speculate on possible reasons.
- Average – some misses or holes in the brood pattern, but not enough to warrant concern.
- Excellent – wall to wall brood, with few misses.
- Ratio of: Eggs to Open Brood to Capped Brood. What might be considered ideal?
- Drone Brood: Normal for the time of year?
- Comb: Old or in need of replacement?
- Other Brood Frame Observations: Pests. Parasites. Diseases.

8. Nutrition:

- Discuss Carbohydrate needs or abundance in hive and readily available sources nearby.
- Discuss Protein needs or abundance in hive and readily available sources nearby.
- Describe feeding methods for both carbohydrates and protein if needed.

9. Varroa Mite Testing:

- Candidate is required to perform a varroa mite infestation level test and report to examiners: Number of mites per 100 bees. The assessment of sample with respect to the most recent recommendations for treatment thresholds per Honey Bee Health Coalition guidelines.

10. Varroa Treatment Recommendations:

- Candidate should access appropriate treatments for this particular colony based on sample infestation rate, population increase, peak, decrease, or dormancy stage, and preferences for synthetic or non-synthetic options. Including specific detail of hive configuration, special equipment needed, and treatment duration.
- Candidate should be able to discuss in general several current varroa treatment options for various population stages, temperature ranges, brood and bee population levels, and use with or without honey supers.

11. Colony Assessment and Management Recommendations:

- Candidate should be able synthesize inspection observations into a comprehensive assessment of the colonies health and discuss a plan for its future short and long-term management.
 - Weak - low population, low stores of pollen and nectar, not thriving, disease indicators.
 - Average – small but compact brood nest, sufficient resources.
 - Strong – sheets of brood on many frames, heavy resources, probably running out of space in the hive.

12. Notes:

- Candidate should record observations of the inspection in a manner useful to future evaluations.

NCSBA Master Beekeeper Program

Master Beekeeper Examiner Guidelines and Evaluation

Examiner Guidelines:

Three Master Beekeepers, one must be a member of the MBP Committee, will administer this exam. Candidate must be passed by consensus agreement of the three examiners to have successfully completed this field exam. The exam will be conducted at an apiary of the MBP Committee's choosing. Candidate must supply all necessary tools for the exam. Exam should not exceed one hour in time, and generally should be time efficient.

1. Candidate is required to light a smoker prior to the start of hive inspection:

- Candidate should demonstrate the judicious use of smoke to control colony and manipulate bees.

**Judicious use of smoke is obviously subjective, extreme misuse is generally noticeable.*

2. PPE should be worn at candidate's discretion:

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3. Entrance Assessment:

- Level of flight activity. Pollen or lack of being brought in. Guarding behavior. Robbing behavior. Bearding. Orientation flights. Dead bees or larva on landing board or ground. Bees crawling on ground.

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Examiners Summary Statement

Does examiner consider the candidate sufficiently knowledgeable, proficient, and by temperament, capable of appropriately representing the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Master Beekeeper Program as a Master Beekeeper to fellow beekeepers and to the public?

___ Yes ___ No

If not, please specify your reasons:

Recommendations for improvement:

Candidate's Name: _____

Examiner's Name: _____

Date: _____