



FDA issues policy changes for beekeepers

BY JULIA BAYLY
BDN STAFF

They may be neither fish nor fowl, but as far as the United States government is concerned, honeybees are livestock.

Which means as of the first of the year, beekeepers — including the roughly 1,200 in Maine — will no longer have access to certain over-the-counter antibiotics used to treat the condition known as European foulbrood, and are

going to need prescriptions for the drug from a licensed veterinarian.

European foulbrood is a bacterial disease that affects honeybee larvae before the capped stage and is characterized by dead and dying larvae in the hive.

“Thanks to a pending [Federal Drug Administration] policy and rule change, veterinarians will need to be involved,” according to Dr. Don Hoenig, former state veterinarian and beekeeper. “This is a major policy shift.”

It’s treated with oxytetracycline sold under the trade name Terramycin and is currently available online or at agricultural feed stores.

That is all about to change, according to Hoenig.

“This is the result of changes to FDA policy concerning the use of antibiotics [and] especially the ones administered in [animal] feed,” he said. “And it includes the ones used for treating foulbrood in bees.”

Adopted three years ago, the policy going into effect on Jan. 1 requires beekeepers to have an existing relationship with a licensed veterinarian, who must then issue a so-called “veterinary feed directive” prescribing the medication.

To do that, Hoenig said, the veterinarian must be willing to actually examine the bees.

“Many of the beekeepers knew this was coming,” he said. “But a lot of veterinarians are not aware

of this new policy,” he said.

Among them are Dr. Christiana Yule at Fort Kent Animal Hospital.

“I don’t remember studying insects in veterinary school,” Yule said. “I wonder if they are going to have to start adding it to the curriculum.”

While the likelihood of a beekeeper bringing all 60,000 residents of a working hive into Yule’s clinic for an exam is rare, *See Bees, Page C2*



Farmer Ian Jerolmack stands by a field of onions that have suffered in the drought on Thursday in Bowdoinham.

KATHLEEN PIERCE | BDN

How home gardeners can contend with dry conditions

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

BELFAST — Throughout much of Maine, once-green grass is burned and brown and ponds, lakes and streams are shallow and bony — all symptoms of the abnormally dry conditions affecting more than half of the state. Although welcome rain fell this week, there is a lot of moisture to make up, with rainfall in the first half of August still well under normal in cities including Portland and Augusta.

And even though the livelihood of home gardeners does not depend on how well their gardens grow — which is not the case with Maine’s worried farmers — the drought is affecting them, too, according to a gardening expert with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.



JIM CLARK

Watering efforts have helped to save this Belfast vegetable garden, but the brown, dry grass nearby shows the effects of a summer without normal rainfall.

“We’ve had really dry and hot weather,” Caragh Fitzgerald, an agriculture professor with the Kennebec County extension office, said this week. “That can lead to a variety of changes in plant performance. If the plant doesn’t have enough moisture, it doesn’t have enough water for the fruit.”

That can look like sour tomatoes that seem seedier and less sweet than usual; dry, undersized blueberries and shriveled, misshapen cucumbers, she said. There are things that gardeners can do to try and alleviate problems caused by the lack of rain this season, but one of the first — and perhaps hardest — things to do may be to pull back and take stock.

“In some cases, people may need to make some tough decisions,” she said, adding that factors to consider include the cost of water or concern about private wells. “One of my kids said that he’s not going to take a bath, he’s going to take a shower, because he wants to water the tomatoes. It’s something that gardeners are talking about, and it’s good for kids to understand how our natural resources are used and what we can do to conserve.” *See Garden, Page C2*

Desert farmer

Maine grower finds way to cope with drought

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

On the 12-acre Stonecipher Farm, rows of sun-scorched beets are experiencing a second growth wave.

“A week ago this looked like someone sprayed them with herbicide,” said farmer Ian Jerolmack, plucking off a dying leaf. “I have never seen beets that bad.”

Recent rainfall provided some relief for southern and central Maine farmers suffering in this year’s severe drought, but for many, it’s too little, too late.

Jerolmack is grateful his plants are still alive as the crucial summer days fly from the calendar, but the organic farmer has lost crops, had to lay off employees and has learned to farm differently.

“We are getting used to the idea that this is what it’s like to farm in a desert,” said Jerolmack, who is in his eighth year running a diversified farm two miles from Merry-meeting Bay. “You can’t as-



Sun-scorched beets from Stonecipher Farm, which are smaller than normal because of severe drought this season.

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sume seeds are going to germinate. This summer it may never happen again. The old timers are telling me it has not been this bad since 1947.”

That’s the year of the Great Fires, when more than 200,000 acres of wooded land

burned statewide.

Though Jerolmack, who delivers vegetables to 40 restaurants and markets in Portland, is irrigating, he’s lost a handful of key crops. Brussel sprouts are toast, fennel fried, his half-grown

carrots look iffy, and onions are small and spotty. Don’t even ask about broccoli and cauliflower.

“We should be bringing in 300 pounds of broccoli and cauliflower a week. We have none,” said the frustrated farmer. “We have no cabbage. We should have more than we want of cabbage.”

Since May, a succession of hot, dry, rainless days have dominated. Moving irrigation around the farm in 90 degree heat is slow and tiresome. The earth in some regions turned dry as powder. Farmers such as Jerolmack are making tough decisions on what to water and what to let go. He calls it “a hope scale.”

Because he can’t water everything, he is diligently dousing fall carrots.

“Those carrots now represent more hope than the broccoli,” he said.

For many farmers in Sagadahoc, Androscoggin, Cumberland and York counties, it’s been a rough summer. Though stress has not registered across the board.

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Baking their way to college savings

Home-based granola company helps pay for children’s education

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

GORHAM — From the outside, the Terry family’s modest house blends in with the quiet Gorham neighborhood. But step into the kitchen, and the bouquet of grain, cinnamon and nuts wafting from the oven is the first clue this is no ordinary address.

The kitchen, for this family of five, doubles as headquarters for MoMunch Granola, a thriving home-based business. On the island are trays of oats, buckets of seeds, labels, bags and scattered iPhones.

“It’s the homework counter, the dinner counter, the crying counter and the granola counter,” said Maureen Terry, assembling

batches of cinnamon pecan and peanut butter granola on a recent morning as her three daughters pitched in. “It’s seen it all, and it has the marks to prove it.”

Maureen Terry, a part-time chef at Saint Joseph’s College in Standish, wields her culinary skills to make mounds of wholesome granola. It’s a hit at farmers markets, hotels and stores such as The Good Food Store in Bethel. But this is more than an artisan redux of the crunchy 1960s staple.

The former restaurant chef created the line, part of her Three Daughters Cookie Co., to spend time with her girls and, more importantly, build an education fund for their future.

“I want to be involved in their lives. Working from home makes

it a whole heck of a lot easier,” said Maureen Terry, 48. “I work in the middle of the night.”

Most evenings, when her children are in bed, the night owl bakes batches of pumpkin walnut, apple walnut and an oat-free version for Paleo diets. Some summer mornings she includes her daughters, combining business with pleasure. Close to 5 years old, the baking company teaches her girls, ages 12, 15 and 18, necessary skills for business and life.

“I work at a lobster company, and I have to talk to a lot of people,” said Grace Terry, 15. “A lot of my co-workers don’t know how. I’ve learned that from talking to people at farmers markets.”

By focusing on the popular, profitable, protein-packed mix, in-



Siobhan Terry (left), 12, pitches in with granola production with her mother, Maureen Terry, recently in their home’s kitchen in Gorham.

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stead of cookies, the matriarch has increased the growth of her daughters’ college fund.

“My husband’s paycheck pretty

much pays the bills,” said Maureen Terry, adding that granola fills the gaps.

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