## February 2016 Summary

Our chairman Sean, firstly gave us a short update on the progress of trying to place restrictions on the importation of bees; to try and prevent the introduction of the hive beetle to Ireland. The emphasis has now been placed on government and the EU to be obliged to protect our indigenous (relatively varroa tolerant) species AMM, with the goal of obtaining a designation for a conservation area for our Black Bee Species.

Foul Brood Disease has been detected in the North of the country and can easily be spread via unregulated nuc production. Therefore, it is important to be vigilant at association level and random sampling through testing for AFD is best practice (Samples to testing sent to Mary Coffey). Hiding the presence of /ignoring AFB is bad practice and has consequences for our members. This disease needs to be handled quickly and efficiently in order to prevent any further spread.

David Geoghegan continued this theme and stressed the importance of using our own wax supplies (and bees); through recycling and reuse of our own local resources. He brought along some excellent examples of useful items involved in the wax extraction process. David has made his own solar wax extractor. It comprised of a bee proof cabinet on wheels with a glass roof and a mesh basket inside. It was lined with kingspan insulation and painted black. It was internally lined with flat profile with a tilt and spout for the liquid wax to flow through. It works cheaply and efficiently in good weather conditions.

*Solar wax extractor*

David next demonstrated his homemade steamer box. Constructed from an old "tea box" with a double-sealed lid and internal ledges and a small fall to one side for wax flow. It is then connected to a steam source, as required. Since the bees build their wax at a slight angle, the old frames are placed in upside down at a similar angle! The box can sterilize 30 frames at a time. Odd bits of frame wax/debris can be placed in a potato bag (material type :)) which is suspended and steamed in the box.

Recycled, locally produced wax is very desirable and could substitute some unnecessary imports of non-native wax which may be contaminated with chemicals and be of unknown origin. It is important to rotate the wax within the hive to achieve better hygiene and reduce the prevalence of diseases such as nosema and acarine.

Finally, David gave a fascinating demonstration of how to create wax foundation sheets from recycled wax. He used a device for keeping the wax melted along with a wax foundation sheet mould device, which had a water cooling system attached. A

ladle of melted wax is applied to the silicon mould which has been pre-cleaned with a soft brush. The top mould is then applied to squish the shape out. A knife is used which trims away the excess wax which is then placed in the water tray at the front for reuse. The final product is then removed and the group were very impressed with the quality of the results!

On behalf of our members, I would like to thank David for his time and efforts in setting up this excellent demonstration. This equipment has great potential and could prove to be extremely valuable to the health of the Connemara bee population.

*Wax foundation creation*