

## Additional Q&A for Webinar Talk 8 October 2020

**Q** How to stop wax blocks going mouldy? I've kept mine in a sealed plastic box but had to remove to cardboard boxes as it goes mouldy. I'm also concerned wax blocks will attract wax moth.

**A** We store our very clean 'show' wax wrapped in paper in sealed plastic boxes. Our less clean wax is stored in the cardboard boxes that honey jars come in. Wax moth will not attack just wax. They are interested in the protein they can get from the pupal skins that the emerging bees leave in cells. This is why they do not attack combs that have never had brood in. We have never had wax blocks go mouldy and even dirty wax does not seem to attract wax moth.

**Q** You showed a picture of Tesco's soda crystals. Do you find they work well? We didn't think they were as good as Dri-pak.

**A** We have only ever used Tesco's so can't compare. But, washing soda is sodium carbonate (an industrial chemical) and all brands *should* be exactly the same.

**Q** What is the going rate for wax cappings once cleaned and filtered for selling to make candles or wraps?

**A** This will vary over the country. We know that we sell quite cheaply but our main customer is happy with wax that is still quite dark in colour for her wraps. Best advice is to look at the going wax exchange rate for foundation and charge above that. The cleaner the wax the higher the price.

**Q** What size is your stainless steel rod please?

**A** Assuming you mean the rods that Wally has in the steamer? He is going to put the plans for building one on the website.

**Q** If there is a chance to inspect at this time of the year, and you can have a visual inspection instead of hefting to indicate if fed sufficiently, how much is the right amount of stores if it's a double brood configuration e.g. a lot of capped honey cells?

**A** It is fine to open hives during any month of the year providing the weather is reasonable with a temperature above 5-10 deg C, and providing you do it quickly. For this purpose, you are only going to lift the cover board and look at the frames from above and it is easy to see if they contain capped stores. Most of the stores will be near the centre of the hive (depending where the cluster is located) and these are the important ones. Frames near the hive wall may contain little or nothing. If in doubt just lift a few frames.

**Q** I soak the boiled frames in 1 percent cold bleach solution to be sure of killing AFB spores. Do you think it is worthwhile?

**A** If AFB has been confirmed then the frames will have been destroyed. Frank answered this during the Q&A and he confirmed that steaming and washing soda should eliminate AFB spores. So, no need for bleach.

**Q** What do you charge for wax, e.g. cappings, for wraps, candles etc?

**A** We have charged our local person £12/kilo and they come and collect. This is not the very best capping wax and the user is not bothered that it is slightly brown in colour. We know this is cheap and that some people charge £18/kilo.

**Q** You mentioned at the beginning that bees do not re-use wax. If I uncap super frames with a hot air gun instead of a knife, all the wax remains on the frame. Don't bees reuse this? Does this make it easier for bees when refilling frames?

**A** Extracted frames can of course be reused, provided they are clean and in good condition. We have never used a hot air gun to uncap honey as it inevitably heats some of the honey and we like to produce as natural a product as possible.

**Q** This year, we got our first hive. We put in some drawn frames in July and they still haven't touched any part of one frame. It was fully drawn and still had the smell of bees on it. Do you know what's happening?

**A** If you use second-hand frames, there is a risk of disease transfer so, hopefully you knew that these combs came from a disease-free colony. It would have been better to give the colony foundation and feed them a weak sugar solution. Bees expect to draw comb and it means that you build your colony with new combs that will not need to be replaced for a few years.

**Q** Can you use an old pillow cover for filtering the wax as well?

**A** Yes. J-cloths, bio-degradable nappies and garden fleece have also been suggested.

**Q** Can we have a close up shot of the frame with the screw in please?

**A** Will send you a photo but very simple. Cut 6-7mm of end of frames and replace with small screw 3.0 x 20mm about the right size.

**Q** Sorry if I have missed this, but is it worth investing in equipment to make your own foundation?

**A** I do have a simple press into which you pour molten wax. It is nothing like as easy as this sounds; the mould has to be absolutely clean and wet with water containing some detergent and honey, and everything has to be at just the right temperature (wax and the mould). I am sure if you worked at it you could devise a successful routine but I failed to do so. I suspect it is not practical if you want to make any quantity of foundation. Some beekeepers do this simply because they are assured about the source of the foundation produced.