

A final report prepared for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

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**PROMOTION OF THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF BEGINNING BEE KEEPERS
XP2017-18**

Principle Investigator: Duane Bajema, Ph.D. Dordt College

Institutional Official: Nathan Tintle, Ph.D. Dordt College

Contact Information:

**Duane Bajema, Ph.D.
Agriculture Department
498 4th Ave. NE
Dordt College
Sioux Center, IA 51250
Phone: 712.722.6275
FAX: 712.722.6035
E-mail: duane.bajema@dordt.edu**

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Non-Technical Summary

Title: Promotion of the Continued Development of Beginning Bee Keepers

LCSA: XP2017-18

Principle Investigator: Duane Bajema, Ph.D.
Dordt College – Agriculture Department
498 4th Ave.
Sioux Center, IA 51250
712-722-6275
Duane.bajema@dordt.edu

The Leopold Center supported the project “Promotion of the Continued Development of Beginning Bee Keepers” in the summer of 2017 that allowed us to host two summer field days and employ two technicians to provide on-site technical assistance to the bee keepers.

The project served a definite need. Beginner beekeeping courses served over 130 people from the Tri-State Region of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota, with people coming from an approximate fifty-mile radius. Over seventy of the course participants have started keeping honeybees and have become involved in the general promotion of beekeeping and pollinator-friendly crops. Approximately one hundred fifty to one hundred seventy-five new bee colonies have been introduced into the region because of the educational efforts.

Prior to our field days and the access to technicians, beginner beekeepers had to adjusting to a steep learning curve. There was a need for technical support to deal with the challenges associated with beekeeping and general pollinator care. The fledgling beekeepers lacked local support to solve problems and they became frustrated and discouraged due to winter losses and parasitic mite problems. Access to technical help was limited since most of the beekeepers were part-time and needed help on weekends and evenings due to work schedules.

The technical support provided by two field days and the on-site visits by technicians was a definite success. The challenges encountered by the technicians as they visited with various bee keepers on-site helped determine the content provided at the two field days.

The technicians also facilitated the continued development of a local beekeeping club, the *Siouxland Beekeepers*. Their monthly meetings occur at the Iowa State University Extension Office in Orange City with generally 35 - 65 people in attendance at each meeting, the majority of whom have taken a beginning beekeeper course. Two sub-groups have formed because of the travel distance to Orange City, with one group meeting near Inwood, IA and the other in Sioux City, IA. Approximately 10 – 15 people attend the sub-group meetings.

The relatively new beekeepers have developed an excitement and passion for beekeeping. They are vocal and positive in their activities, and their numbers and passion are noted. One outcome of their activity is the Iowa Honey Producers Association will hold their annual summer field day for 2018 in Northwest Iowa for the first time ever, and beekeepers from the 4-state area of Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Nebraska will benefit. Another outcome is that two beekeepers from the local area have become heavily involved with the Iowa Honey Producers Association (IHPA). Ron Rynders serves as the editor for *The Buzz*, the monthly publication of the IHPA. Dave Korver serves as a regional district representative to the IHPA.

In summary, the grant from the Leopold Center has successfully served beginning beekeepers with technical support, educational field day activity, and the continuation and strengthening of beekeeping activity. Pollinator habitat sensitivity and promotion has increased, and people have become very active in pollinator promotion. There is every indication that the activity will continue to strengthen and develop.

The technicians were also instrumental in the development of county fair activities related to beekeepers and pollinator habitat. Information booths were developed and staffed by volunteers at the Lyon, Sioux, and Plymouth County Fairs, a first-ever activity for the fairs. Discussions have occurred for bigger and better activities next year to promote beekeeping.

The feedback from the beekeepers helped establish the areas covered during the field days and the types of hands-on training needed to ensure success for the beekeepers. They have learned how to resolve their problems, allowing them to move forward with confidence.

Technical Report

The grant followed the plan of actions, and all of the actions were completed.

- promotion
- field day preparation
- employment of technical support
- arranging for Field Day speakers
- acquisition of support equipment for teaching and hands-on training
- technician training
- other associated activity

February – April -----	Administrative planning, promotional development, development of specifics for field day implementation, employ one to two technicians
May – June -----	Prepare for and implement a field day the first week of June that focuses on spring and early summer activities associated with beekeeping
June – September -----	Oversee and provide support to technician(s) as they perform on-site visits to fledgling beekeepers, promote county fair activity, and provide support to the newly developed local beekeeping association.
July – November -----	Implement a second field day that focuses on honey extraction, winterization, mite treatment and those activities associated with late summer and fall activities.
September – November -----	Wrap up technical support activities

Objectives

1. **The project will seek to improve beekeeping management skills and subsequent beekeeping success via one-on-one support and delivery of two field day events.** Plans to accomplish the objective: The field days and on-site technical support from a technician will supplement and reinforce what has been provided to the participants via beginning beekeeper classes, thus increasing which will increase the probability of their success.

2. **The project will support native pollinator importance and appreciation in the promotion, care, and management of honey bees.** Plans to accomplish the objective: Both field days will provide information about general pollinator care and habitat, with attention given to bee pasture and plants that are favorable for all pollinators, including honey bees.

3. **Provide guidance to a local fledgling beekeeper organization to make it stronger and more sustainable.** Plans to accomplish the objective: Assistance will be provided to the organization that started in 2016 by supplying advice, speakers, and opportunities to become involved in local fairs.

4. **Implement the project with the cooperation of the Iowa Honey Producers Association, the ISU Extension Service, and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – specifically the State Apiarist.** Plans to accomplish the objectives: Consultation has already occurred with the organizations listed, and if the grant is provided, the entities have given initial support to the efforts.

5. **Work in conjunction with the Iowa Honey Producers Association, the ISU Extension Service, and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to begin the development of a research project in the NW Iowa region that focuses on the needs of beginning beekeepers.** Plans to accomplish the objectives: Work with the above-mentioned parties to explore what is needed and develop plans for a research project and look for funding for the project.

The grant's objectives guided the implementation of the grant. All of the objectives had successful implementation and outcomes, and the results exceeded the expectations of the principle investigator. Objective 5 is still in process and the precise outcome is still in development.

Budget Report and Narrative

Salaries

25,357

We expended \$22, 503.70 on payroll

Mileage

PI and technicians traveling to beekeeper sites to evaluate and assist 2,041

Thanks to a gracious reallocation of funds from our honoraria budget, we were able to cover the increased mileage costs of \$2988.09. The increase was used cover a broader geographical base of beekeepers and visits to local county fairs.

Equipment

No major equipment of \$5,000 or more will be needed

Supplies/Materials:

Bees for use on field days/teaching demos/fairs 2,100

Classroom materials for field days 900

Bee equipment for technicians and field days 1,536

Bee colony preparation for hands-on work 1,200

5,736

We expended \$5,735.76 on supplies/materials

Promotion

Flyers, newspaper, and other miscellaneous 461

We were able to reduce our costs in this area to \$98.70 due to the use of social media, rather than paid advertising

Honoraria

Field Day speakers and travel 1,000

Many of our presenters donated their time & travel costs, so we spent only \$425.00 in this category. This allowed the monies to be transferred to the mileage line item

TOTAL Amount Budgeted \$34,595

TOTAL Amount Spent \$33,556

Conclusion

The Leopold grant supported a felt need, and as the principle investigator, I am very pleased with the outcome of the activity because it exceeded my expectations. Beekeeping and pollinator habitat now have presence in the region that did not exist three years ago. It is enjoyable to see people encourage one another, socially interact for a common cause, and see that what they do is making a positive difference in their community.

On behalf of all of the many people who benefited from the results of the grant, thank you!