



Dr. Peter Stöfen

## Spring Letter 2017

Dear fellow bee-keepers, dear customers, dear friends,

Just a few days before we started to transferring the larvae, I am pleased to be able to take a few moments to reflect and to write our annual spring missal. April started off very cold here but we are fortunate not to have to worry about the caprices of the weather. The thoughts expressed by Goethe on the right are an expression of his strong appreciation for nature. This is not surprising – he was after all a bee-keeper. It seems that bees were an integral part of Goethe's garden even though he wrote very little about them. But, reading this verse, one could think that these lines are all about the bees. In this spirit, we should always try to find new ways to listen to our bees. Listening to their voices, studying their essence and admiring them again and again.

*So joyously, many years ago,  
And so eagerly, my mind strove  
To discover, to experience,  
How Nature in creativity lives.  
And it is the everlasting One,  
That reveals itself in the many:  
Small is great, great is small,  
Everything after its own way;  
Ever changing, ever constant,  
Near and far, far and near,  
Shaping, re-shaping —  
In Wonder at all this am I here.*

Very little of Goethe's *raison* can be felt in our modern times. Our natural world, our bees would be in much better shape if many of the material frivolities of a great majority of us humans had just a little of his understanding. We bee-keepers can be proud of ourselves and continue to function as role models in this respect.

The repeated violations committed on the natural world and the destruction of the livelihood of our bees that goes along with it continue to take on a new magnitude, notwithstanding all of the lip service paid to such topics in our society. We shouldn't allow this to daunt us. We should continue to determinedly tend our bees and make our contribution to a better world. I find myself

having to remind myself of this fact over and over so that I can manage to channel my anger and frustration about our polluted world into tangible positive actions. The varroa mites continue to be a cause for considerable consternation. Treatment methods that were considered relatively effective just a few years ago have been shown more and more to be ineffective. The disturbing sight of dead colonies is surely one of the worst things that can happen in the life of a bee-keeper and shakes at the emotional foundation of all bee-keepers.

Based on my own personal but somewhat wretched experience, once the harvest has been concluded, we create artificial swarms from most colonies and then allow the brood to develop in so-called brood stables. In this way we have been able to efficiently and with relative certainty free them from this scourge. A fledgling is also a possibility where about half of the bees are swept from the brood chamber to avoid otherwise having only old bees in the new colony. As mentioned, all incubated combs are placed into a brood stable or brood collector which requires more bases, frames and lids. This tower is then placed elsewhere and from it new bee material is produced for further artificial swarms and to strengthen all of the colonies. If the first wingless bees (penguins) start to appear, the combs will be consistently melted down; a painful experience. The fledgling is furnished with a new or an old queen and placed on internal walls or lights combs before then being held together by an asp. They are

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then fed with a thin nectar-like feeding solution and, after the first eggs have been laid, basted with oxalic acid. Colonies that were treated in accordance with this method had a high survival rate and weathered well and in good numbers over the winter.

An even better option seems to be to sweep approx. 1.5kg of bees into a box before then giving them a good shaking with 50ml of 3.5% oxalic acid solution. They are then placed in a cool, dark place for one day and in the evening are placed in the colony as described. It is possible that this method allows the bees to come into better and more intense contact with the drugs. None of this is new and is certainly not my invention. The process developed and described by Dr Rüttner seemed to be too labour intensive and complicated. Having said that, in the meantime we have integrated it into our working processes. Once again, it really does work and I would not like to be without it. We intend to produce a video and post it to our YouTube page to demonstrate this method.

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I did not have good results when using formic acid. But that probably has more to do with my own inability and my fear of losing valuable queens. If you have been getting along well with this method, it is absolutely advisable to stick with it. Never change a winning team!

I am struggling more and more with the use of synthetic methods but it has taken much too long. My emotional connection with chemistry and the corresponding alleged liberation from the yoke of manual labour was like a blockage in my thought process. For most of us, there are good reasons to abstain from using chemicals or rather to make use of them only in cases of absolute emergency. The reasons are surely well known. One aspect that is perhaps not well known among beekeepers but that leaves me, as a farmer, dumbfounded is the pricing policy of the cartels. It is an expression of how little the work of us beekeepers is valued. Almost all active components that are used to control mites in bees were first used in respect of other farm animals, in particular in the cases of sheep and cattle. As soon as these same substances are

made available to us the beekeepers, it costs at least 4-500 times more than when it was being used in respect of the aforementioned livestock. The politics of our self-governing body does not seem to be interested by this fact.

Perhaps beekeeping is too insignificant and economically irrelevant so that it is impossible to conduct effective lobbying. And this fact is being fully exploited. And I include all small and medium size food producers when making this statement. Even if beekeepers enjoy a certain special status because of our meaningless financial added value, we are obviously politically and socially not wanted. Or, in other words, our honey is much too cheap! Most foodstuffs can only be produced at such prices by industrial mass production: a trend that seems to increase more and more. But are we really better off if we are in a position to be able to feed ourselves more and more cheaply and that as a result more money is available for residual commercial consumption? The question seems to be: who profits from it and who suffers as a result? Is it the will of political decision-makers? And what could be done to work against this development in some form?

Having said all that, we should nonetheless aim to look positively towards the future and towards our new season of beekeeping. After we were able for the first time this year to sell a small amount of queens that had weathered throughout the winter, we are now fully concentrated on the mating station.

## Our breeding lines in 2017: Breed mother 2017

As in previous years, we will be drawing on the best daughters of our drone mother from the previous year (B27 ABg). I had already made a pre-selection of 20 of these queens last autumn. Some weeks ago, we finally had some good flying weather so that I was able to make the final decision regarding their selection. By its very nature, this selection process cannot be 100% objective but I make it my highest aim to select

queens that fulfil the criteria of Buckfast bees to the greatest extent possible. The main criteria was, of course, the quantity of honey produced last year in rapeseed. The breed mother in 2017 will be

**B17(BZF) = .15-B27(ABg)frkgB49(DB).**

Further genetic details can be found in the Breeding Programme of the European Buckfast beekeepers.

3 further queens, B19, B22 und B23, with the same lineage and almost identical characteristics are on standby in the rapeseed fields and will be used for further breeding if necessary. In the

**B144(HST)** =.14-B63(HST)hbgB101(CHP)  
.12-B137(TR)balB72(TR)

event that unforeseen circumstances compel us to take this step, this will be noted on the relevant breeding card.

### **Mother of Drones 2017**

As stated in our autumn letter, the drone mothers for 2017 come from Bavaria and were bred by Stefan Holmer. His pedigrees speak for themselves and for the intensity of his breeding work. He has worked regularly with all of the major mating stations, including both of Eugen Neuhauser's stations. For this reason, he has already managed to accumulate a wealth of experience in combination breeding. He provided me with his B 144(HST) in autumn 2015.

: imq.13-B63(TR)hbgB235(PJ)  
: .11-B55(TR) bal GR109(TR)

The lineage is promising on the basis of the names that are linked to it and, in line with our philosophy, are tried and tested. We do not wish to experiment with our drones, rather we aim to preserve the current, proven Buckfast lineage. The breeding work of Thomas Ruppel is unrivalled and

requires no further praise. One of the first to recognise this was Brother Adam. Paul Jungels is another breeder in this league. I remember fondly the daughters of his B235, which were unfortunately decimated by mites. In this way, this line has returned to our operations; what a fortunate stroke of fate.

method of contacting us:  
**info@buckfast-zucht.de.**

In this way, nothing will be lost in the hectic course of a busy working day and you will be assured of a quick reply.

### **Shipping dates**

We aim to start shipping our queens on 6 June 2017 and generally send parcels every Monday. This allows us to collect and prepare the queens for shipping over the weekend. It also helps us to prevent the additional stress for a queens of spending a weekend in the post office in the event that the delivery is delayed. As always, we will provide you with an e-mail approx. 1 week before the shipping date. This has proven to be a tried and tested approach over the last few years. Incidentally, last year we were forced to delay the delivery dates announced on one occasion only

### **Orders/Getting in touch**

As the work mounts up quickly at this time of year, we kindly ask that all questions and orders are placed by our homepage [www.buckfast-zucht.de](http://www.buckfast-zucht.de) or by **E-Mail**. For the first time this season, we have created a hotline for **urgent** questions related to orders. You will be connected to Mr. Steinfeld directly via telephone, text message or WhatsApp. We would kindly ask you to bear in mind that this number will not be active outside the times mentioned below. Beekeeping with a mobile phone in the hand is a tricky business and prevents focussed work!

Mon.-Sat. 16.00 - 18.00  
Fon/WhatsApp/Text message  
+49-(0)178 - 111 70 04

Having said that, I would like to reiterate that you would really be assisting our work greatly if you could please use our E-Mail as your primary

and then by only two days as a storm made it impossible to work at the mating station.

We are currently accepting orders for our economy queens, queens from the mating station and selected cultivation queens. Please do make sure that you place your order in plenty of time. We

always try our very best to ensure delivery at short notice too but are subject to certain limitations in this regard. An overview with prices and shipping options is attached for your convenience.

May we be blessed with a good year for us and our bees and may we always have a little bit of beekeeper's luck. In this spirit, I wish you all the best and much success as well as personal self-fulfilment with your proteges.

Best regards,



Dr. Peter Stöfen



## Orderform 2017

<b>my order</b> .....	price (incl. VAT.)
_____ <b>Buckfast</b> queen, economy queen, package with 3 queens.....	114,-
Shipment from beginning of June to beginning of August	
_____ <b>Buckfast</b> queen, mating station stimulated.....	62,-
Shipment from beginning of June to beginning of August	
_____ <b>Buckfast</b> cultivation queen, selected .....	98,-
Shipment from mid of June until end of August	

## shipping

We might ship economy and mating station stimulated queens in separate packages. In case of combined orders we might charge shipping costs twice. A package includes up to 7 queens max.

- Europe, registered mail ..... (EUR 20,00 - 10,00 / one package, incl. Tracking)  
 (for example: Belgium 20,-, Poland 27,-, Balearen: 74,-, Greece (Athen): 45,-, Romania: 38,-)

preferred period of shipping: ca. \_\_\_\_\_

## contact

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name Mr. / Mrs.....  
 first name.....  
 company .....

street .....

country .....

ZIP/Postal code/city .....

phone..... / .....

mobile..... / .....

email .....

(date / signature)

- After you have placed your order you will get a confirmation and information about the shipment and the terms of payment. We kindly ask customers from abroad to pay in advance - **but only after having received an invoice** by e-mail (at the latest, two weeks before shipping date). Thank you for your cooperation.
- Please take care that all costs of financial transaction are covered by you, too. Thank you. Besides **bank transfers** you are welcome to use **paypal**, too. If you want to use **Western Union** please contact us in advance.
- You will be informed about the shipping date by email in advance.
- SORRY: We do not deliver to Bulgaria, Russia, Belarus, Turkey and Ukraine at the moment. Unfortunately transport in these countries is not safe and delivery time can't be estimated by us.

**Info** Please find detailed information here: [www.buckfast-zucht.de](http://www.buckfast-zucht.de)

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