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10 Buckfast Breeding Statements

by Erik Österlund

(10 important facts from the lecture held at Apimondia 1999 in Vancouver)

- Races are looked upon in connection to each other, in a similar way as different local varieties of a certain geographical race are looked upon. They are possible genetic resources for combinations.
- The Buckfast bee is more similar to a geographical race, than to a commercial hybrid.
- A key word in Buckfast breeding is drone control. And especially when developing a new strain using sister groups as the drone source is essential. The mother colony of this sister group is then the genetical 'father' of the new colonies achieved.
- Avoid close inbreeding. It is the biggest enemy in bee breeding, but could be used occasionally.
- Let the bees tell you! In whatever way the colony you look at has come to be, let it tell you how good it is, don't just look in the pedigree or on your theory.
- You have to be able to discern the differences between the colonies and discover the peculiarities of different colonies.
- Take care of the positive extremes you find among the colonies and let them in some way and to some extent give forth their heritage to the next generation for a test.
- You need at least 100 colonies to be able to be enough certain to do a reasonable progress in your breeding.
- You need to look in the colonies yourself to get to know them, if you are the one who will make the selection of breeders.

- Share your genetic results with other beekeepers. You will get it back in due time and together you will get a better result than you would have got only by yourself.

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