

# Nebraska Honey Queen makes pollen, beeswax her business

By Tammy Kaup

Barbara McKeone, the 1984 Nebraska Honey Queen, is as poised and articulate as honey is sweet and sticky. The UNL freshman, a public relations and broadcasting major from Cozad, is promoting honey across the state, and will represent Nebraska next January in the 1985 National Beekeepers Convention in Tampa, Fla.

McKeone was selected by the Nebraska Honey Producers last November, and will reign until next January. She said queen candidates were judged on their talents and an interview about their knowledge of honey and reasons for wanting to be queen. They also spoke before groups to prove their speaking ability and poise.

During her reign, McKeone will ride in parades, promote honey in information booths across the state and speak to grade school children.

McKeone's father, Joe, is a full-time beekeeper. Of the approximately 200 beekeepers in Nebraska, about 200 are full time and the remainder are hobby beekeepers who work mostly in the summer, she said.

Nebraska ranks seventh nationwide in a 1980 census of honey-production states, she said. She said Nebraska honey is produced from clover and alfalfa plants, which makes a top-grade clear honey. "Honey is like a fine wine," she said. "It has lots of

different tastes from each plant that it is drawn from."

The United States imports honey from many countries, McKeone said, and that results in low honey prices here. Many honey producers stay in the business because they know how important it is. But there may be trouble if the prices don't rise.

"I've eaten honey ever since I was little," McKeone said. "We eat it on cereal, pancakes, anything. My mom substitutes honey for sugar in all the recipes."

"Honey is a good food because it is a natural product," McKeone said. All the honey producers do is heat it to separate out the wax. Athletes and older people often use it because it is 99 percent predigested and therefore the body doesn't have to work so hard to break it down. Also, it is a form of quick energy for athletes.

McKeone said she has worked with the bees since she was about 13 years old. The 1,000 McKeone bee colonies are set in fields near alfalfa and clover plants, and the top two boxes of honey from the stacks are brought to the farm. The rest of the boxes of honey are left for the bees to use later, she said. The frames from the boxes are put through machinery, and the honey is whipped out of the frames. It is then heated, and the wax and honey separated. The honey is placed in a tank, then in barrels or containers for shipment or sale, McKeone said.

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## May brings UNL flowers

By Mark Davis

Enough April showers, it's time for the flowers. UNL is blooming with flowers, lacing the campus with color. People enjoy looking at the flowers, but one person is especially proud of the landscaping.

Bud Dasenbrock is the director of UNL grounds. His crews are responsible for cleaning and keeping up City and East campuses. In the winter, his crews clean up litter or take care of snow removed. But in the spring, people work on a bed of daisies or pruning a magnolia tree.

"Working with the foliage is the best part of our people's job. It gives them the most satisfaction," Dasenbrock said.

But for the last two years bad weather has stopped spring planting.

Yvonne Summers, assistant ground director, said that this spring's weather will let her plant perennial flowers.

"I get a lot of personal satisfaction from growing things and watching them develop," Summers said. She has been working for the grounds department for seven years.

"Three-fourths of the students never see our work," Summers said. "The flowers are in full bloom during the summer when most of the students aren't here."

The grounds crew also is planting shrubs and trees this spring.

The work does not stop in the fall. Besides their regular duties, 10 members of the grounds crew work in the green house preparing seedlings to be transplanted again in the spring.

"We buy most of our flowers from commercial sources," Dasenbrock said. He said that working in the green house was a welcome relief from snow removal for the grounds crew.

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