

and later moved to more convenient locations. Producing a "good stand" of bees depended on whether or not the colony cast a good swarm each spring.

This unpredictable method of producing bees became obsolete with the invention of the movable frame hive by Rev. L.L. Langstroth in 1851. The newly designed hive, which featured moveable, interchangeable frames and uniform "bee space," eventually led to the production of package bees and fertile young queens.

While package bee and queen production began in the early 1900's, it did not become an enterprising part of the apiary industry until the period between the World Wars. According to many sources, the reason for the increasing popularity and profit of bees was due in part to a dependable delivery system which could provide Northern beekeepers with replacement for winter loss and stock for spring expansion.

It was only natural that the newly developing industry gained a strong foothold in Georgia. The climate and flora, particularly in the southeastern part of the state, made the area ideal for bee production. This location also offered an almost continuous light honey flow (the time of year nectar producing flowers are in bloom) more favorable for producing bees rather than honey.

Through the years, Georgia has remained a leader in package bee and queen production. Many of the companies in operation today are those which pioneered the industry in the state. For example, Harvey York's father started his commercial bee business in Jesup back in

1924. The Rossman family of Moultrie has been involved in the bee industry since 1928, while Wilbanks Apiary has been operating since 1947.

While many segments of agriculture have undergone drastic changes in recent years, package bee and queen production techniques have changed little. One of the most important to enhance Georgia's industry has been the development of an interstate highway system. This has helped the migratory business in particular, since it has allowed producers to more easily move bees to other states.

Bees are sold by the pound, most commonly in two, three or five pound packages. There are an estimated 3500 to 4000 bees per pound. The insects are shipped in special screened crates which include a food supply. Package bees are sold with or without a queen. Queen bees also can be purchased and shipped separately.



QUEEN



WORKER



DRONE BEE