



2016 Jeffery P. La Fage Student Award for Applied Research on Social Insects

The Jeffery P. La Fage Student Award for Applied Research on Social Insects recognizes a graduate student for distinguished research and scholarly activity on social insects with an emphasis on applied projects. The award consists of a plaque and an honorarium. The Awards Committee considered several very fine nominees this year and after careful deliberation settled on one as the most deserving of this award. The North American Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects is proud to announce that **Kaira Wagoner, PhD (2015), University of North Carolina, Greensboro** is the recipient of the 2016 Jeffery P. La Fage Student Award for Applied Research on Social Insects.

Kaira's research on hygienic behavior in honeybees is highly relevant to arresting the recent decline experienced by managed colonies. She has discovered that selection for hygienic behavior (i.e. worker removal of unhealthy brood) influences brood signaling, not just adult sensitivity, as previously thought. Her work showed that larval genotype has a significant effect on the probability of removal of brood infested by *Varroa* mites, which has implications for this major threat to the health of honeybees. She has also identified a candidate substance that appears to trigger hygienic behavior, leading to a patent application for use of this substance to improve selective breeding of hygienic bee strains. Furthermore, her work has identified for the first time that the use of iron-containing wires as supports can have detrimental effects on the health of a colony. This research was highly interdisciplinary, combining apicultural techniques and behavioral measurements with analytical chemistry and molecular biology. It promises new products and management techniques that can reduce colony losses and enhance beekeeping sustainability. These accomplishments make Kaira Wagoner a highly deserving winner of this year's Jeffery P. La Fage Student Award.

IUSI-NAS Awards Committee

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