

Honey industry, unlike others, can benefit from continued rains

BY JOLENE STEVENS

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While many wildlife creatures may well have been impacted or continue to feel effects of the area's current Missouri River flooding, the honey bee has been for the most part more non-effected by the high waters.

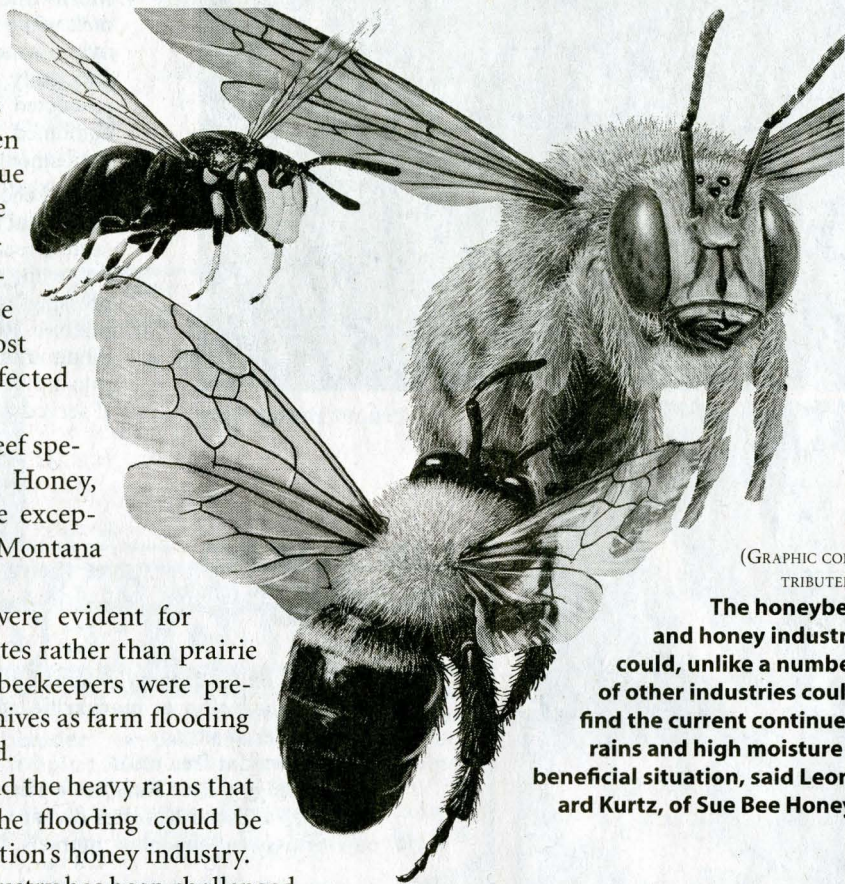
Leonard Kurtz, beef specialist at Sue Bee Honey, Sioux City, said the exception has been in Montana and North Dakota.

Problems there were evident for bees hived at farmsites rather than prairie locations as those beekeepers were prevented from filling hives as farm flooding occurred, Kurtz said.

If anything, he said the heavy rains that earlier prompted the flooding could be beneficial for the nation's honey industry.

Kurtz said the industry has been challenged during the last 10 years by climatic changes as well as declines in the bee population due to swarm deaths.

"The moisture can help assure a better plant growth, and with continued warm temperatures, result in better plants," he said. "The ade-



(GRAPHIC CONTRIBUTED)

The honeybee and honey industry could, unlike a number of other industries could find the current continued rains and high moisture a beneficial situation, said Leonard Kurtz, of Sue Bee Honey.

quate moisture and heat should also trigger higher nectar production from these plants. This means more honey is produced which in turn can mean a more profitable return for the beekeeper and our honey industry."