

# Wendell Estate Honey Founder Receives National Award for Outstanding Contributions to Canada's Beekeeping Industry

*Tim Wendell received the Fred Rathje Memorial Award for outstanding efforts in contributing to improving the country's beekeeping industry on 8 February, 2024.*

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA, March 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Canadian National Beekeeping Convention and Trade Show was held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada from February 8-10, 2024. On Thursday evening, February 8th, there was a mixer for Canadian Honey Council members. The next two days of scientific and educational

programming saw hallways and conference rooms packed with over 250 registered attendees from across the country. The Scientific presentations were mixed with panel discussions aimed at key issues facing the Canadian beekeeping industry. At the convention, the Fred Rathje



Tim Wendell receives the Fred Rathje Memorial Award for outstanding efforts in contributing to improving the country's beekeeping industry

Memorial Award for outstanding efforts in contributing to improving the country's beekeeping industry was presented to Tim Wendell by Jake Berg, Canadian Honey Council Chair and Saskatchewan delegate.

Tim Wendell has owned Wendell Honey, a family honey farm/beekeeping operation, since purchasing it from his father, John Wendell in 1974. Wendell is also the founding owner of Wendell Estate Honey. The retail raw honey brand was launched in 2011 when Wendell noticed that consumers without direct access to honey producers would have a difficult time finding pure, natural raw honey. Wendell chose the best honey his farm produced each

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*Jake Berg, Canadian Honey Council Chair*

year and packaged it fresh into retail jars on site almost immediately after harvesting from his

own beehives. In 2011 virtually all honey on supermarket shelves was processed, pasteurized, blended honey that lacks the complex flavors and health benefits of raw honey. Since 2011 there has been much media attention to both the health benefits of pure raw honey and the shocking abundance of adulterated and/or contaminated honey on store shelves. Wendell's premium raw honey sells online and across the USA and Canada.

Jake Berg, Canadian Honey Council Chair, based his speech on prominent BC beekeeper, Stan Reist's nomination letter.

"Tim has been dedicated to improving the beekeeping industry. He has always graciously volunteered his time and efforts to serve beekeeping in Saskatchewan and beyond. Tim has always been generous, sharing ideas and experiences with other beekeepers. With his ample experiences and fearless willingness to try new things, he has vast amounts of knowledge to share. He has spent many hours in meetings, giving presentations and in person passing on the successful ideas and techniques to help other beekeepers. This knowledge has helped to ensure a progressive, positive industry in Saskatchewan and beyond.

"Tim has also been a very active member of the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association (SBA). He was president for 8 of the 14 years that he spent on the SBA board of directors. During his time on the SBA, he was a driving force behind



Wendell (right) Speaking at a Beekeeping Conference



Wendell doing what he loves most, checking his bees in the great outdoors (photo credit: Pipcreek Studio)

During his time on the SBA, he was a driving force behind

changes in the industry. He was instrumental in addressing many challenges the beekeeping industry faced over the years. These challenges include optimizing business risk programs like the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) to make the program work for beekeepers, representing Saskatchewan on national committees and working groups like importing queens from the United States, and so much more.

“Honeybee research has always been near and dear to Tim. He has donated money, time, effort, bees and equipment; however, while he was president, Tim realized that more was needed, and what was needed was a commission. Tim led the initiative but worked with many others to establish the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission (SBDC). The main goals of the commission are to better support promotion of the industry and research. The legacy of this commission has been vast, enhanced support of many research programs, establishing the Saskatchewan Tech Adaptation Team to work directly on applied research projects, and more have all been offshoots from the implementation of the SBDC.”

And who was Fred Rathje, the man that this memorial award was named after? Fred became interested in beekeeping and packing honey in the early 1940's. He was well known in the Canadian honey industry for his enthusiasm and love of anything pertaining to honey. As manager of the Central Alberta Dairy Pool's honey division at Bassano Alberta he gained respect from beekeepers. Fred served as CHC's executive Secretary Treasure from 1975 – 1982. It is said that in the eyes of those who knew him, to receive the Fred Rathje award would be an outstanding honour.

Wendell is well known for having opinions and voicing them, but receiving the Rathje award caught him entirely off guard and almost rendered him speechless. When asked about how he felt about joining the ranks of former Rathje award winners such as Dr S. Cameron Jay, Emeritus Professor of Entomology at the University of Manitoba and Dr. Mark L. Winston, Simon Fraser University Research Professor, Wendell replied “It was unexpected and an honor to say the least. To be honest I feel a little undeserving. A lot of people that I've respected over the years have received this award so I feel honored to be listed among those who have gone before me.”

Wendell did have a personal connection with Fred Rathje. “I knew him a little bit. Fred had some of the [nicest creamed honey anywhere](#) back in the days when my dad was still around. We used to buy Fred's creamed honey to use as seed honey for our own creamed honey years ago.”

Canadian prairie honey tends crystallize rapidly. To deal with this, beekeepers often use the Dyce method of making creamed honey. This involves adding a small amount of “seed honey”, honey with fine crystals, to freshly harvested raw honey. The fine crystals of the seed honey cause the fresh honey to crystallize into a softer, creamier texture than often happens when left to crystallize on its own. Notably, Wendell's Wendell Estate Honey brand no longer uses any seed honey and achieves it's signature smooth, creamy texture simply by carefully selecting honey based on its properties and packaging the [unheated and unprocessed raw honey almost immediately after harvesting](#) it from the beehives.

Wendell is passionate about bees and beekeeping. He loves to garner and share beekeeping knowledge but more than anything, he loves to be in a bee yard in the spring with the sights, smells and sounds of his prairie world growing into a summer honey season.

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