

The Bandera PROPHEET

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The View From Dry Creek Hill

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After years of managing and reducing our feral cat population through Trap, Neuter and Release, we're down to two feral cats. They'd both be eligible for cat AARP if it existed. They were always homebodies and didn't take the risks many of their colony-mates did.

We fed the colony dry food, but used canned food for special purposes. We used it for bait in the traps for our neutering program, medication delivery, and as a nightcap before the cats snuggled up in their hay-filled shelters on cold nights.

Our two old-timers get canned food every day as an afternoon supplement to their dry food. We've become fond of them over the years and they get special attention befitting their status as the last of the tribe.

They get the canned food no matter the weather, and they look forward to it. Unfortunately, bees look forward to it just as much.

In summer the bee population slowly grows and it becomes very noticeable in dry weather. The bees congregate at our watering tubs, bird baths and hummingbird feeders. The bees also learn the canned cat food schedule, and by the end of the season we have to leave the bees a few little globs of food on rocks or we can't get to the cats through the clouds of bees.

I have no idea where the bees go with their loads of cat food, but squadrons fly in, collect canned cat food and buzz away into the woods. Folks prize certain types of honey for the taste or the allergy inoculation

properties of the blossoms the bees pollinated, but what about cat food honey?

These bees may be just as feral as the cats originally were and keep the honey for themselves. But if someone is harvesting the honey, I wonder—are they trying to figure out why their honey has undertones of liver and chicken dinner? And does it help or hurt a cat dander allergy?