



ROSS ROUNDS™ Section equipment makes comb honey production easy and profitable for the beekeeper. It requires about one fourth of the labor of former methods, and produces a finished product that is attractively packaged and durable enough to withstand handling. Any beekeeper with moderate skills and a good nectar supply can produce round sections. If help is needed, a number of books are available that give detailed information on management; one of the best is Richard Taylor's *THE COMB HONEY BOOK* which describes several procedures for section production.

ROSS ROUNDS™ equipment consists of brown molded plastic frames into which are inserted white plastic section rings and a sheet of beeswax foundation. The frame is made in halves so that insertion of the rings and foundation is easy. These frames filled with rings and foundation are then placed in a wood super or rack, and are ready to be filled with honey by the bees. Plastic covers are made to fit the top and bottom of the sections, and a wrap-around label completes the package. Covers can be clear both top or bottom, or a clear cover on top and an opaque cover on the bottom. This last arrangement is preferred by some commercial beekeepers.

After the bees have finished the sections, the supers are taken off, and the frames removed and separated into halves. The sections are taken from the frames, excess foundation removed with a small knife, plastic covers fitted on top and bottom, and the sections finished with a wrap-around label.

In most areas one additional step is necessary to protect the section from wax moth damage: the covered sections are placed in plastic bags, tightly sealed, and placed in a freezer at 10 degrees F or less (0 is best) for at least twenty-four hours. After freezing, the sections are allowed to come up to room temperature before opening the bag in order to avoid condensation on the sections. The sections may be left frozen indefinitely without crystallization, until removed for market.

Suggestions for Assembling and Using *Ross Rounds™* Equipment:

There are different ways to efficiently place rings and foundation in the frames. One way is to insert a hive tool in the slot at the end of the frame, and twist slightly to separate the halves. Open the halves like a book and arrange a table full of the open pairs. Take a handful of rings, and place a ring on each cavity, positioning the ring with the notch side down, and the wide parts of the rings next to each other along the centerline of the frame. Do not bother at this time to seat the rings in the cavities - simply position them as accurately as possible while working fast.

Continue until there is a ring on each cavity of all the frames. Then, using two hands, adjust each ring to fit down flush in the cavity. If the ring is positioned properly, it will fit down snug and flush without force - if resistance is felt, re-position the ring correctly. Visually inspect the table full of frames to be sure there is a ring in each cavity; you will be sorry later if you miss one! If all is in order, lay a sheet of foundation on every other frame half, close the halves together, and place the frames in the supers.

Again inspect the work, looking down on the frames to see if there is a white ring on both sides of each cavity, and that the frame halves fit tightly together. If all is in order, the supers are ready for the bees. These inspections take only a few seconds, and save you time and money. The bees will put honey in the cavity, whether or not the section rings are in place. People have been known to put a super on the bees with no section rings in the frames, but seldom do it a second time; the second inspection mentioned above will keep you from doing it the first time.

After filling the frames with rings and foundation, place them in the super. Insert the loose follower board, force the frames tightly together with a hive tool, then use three super springs to hold the loose follower in place and force the frames together.

When harvesting, place the filled frame on a table, insert the corner of a hive tool in the end foundation slot, twist, and lift off the frame half. Turn the sections flat on the table and lift off the other frame half. When enough supers have been emptied, separate each section from the sheet of foundation, and trim excess foundation with a small knife. Arrange rows of sections, place covers on one side, turn over all sections, and place the other cover. The sections may be labeled at this time, or better, just before being sold, as some buyers want them unlabeled, or with their own special label. In any case, if you are in a wax moth area (and most of us are), seal the covered sections in plastic bags, freeze at 0 degrees F, and be sure to let the sections warm up to room temperature before opening the sealed bag.

Some beekeepers refill the frames with rings and foundation immediately after they are emptied at harvest, and place them on the bees for a second or third filling. Even if your area will not fill a super twice, immediately filling the frames with rings saves some time in handling, but be cautious about inserting foundation a season ahead, as cold beeswax is very brittle and may crack if moved and supers filled with beeswax need to be protected from mice and dust."

When harvesting, unfinished sections can be grouped in supers, and returned to a strong hive to finish, provided nectar is still available. This is a good reason to harvest as soon as sections are filled and sealed, as this usually leaves time to finish the culls into good sections. Some people have finished unsealed sections by placing them back on a strong hive, and top feeding them with liquid honey, but this does not always work, and it is probable that more have failed than have succeeded. It is much better to harvest promptly, and get any culls finished while nectar is available.