

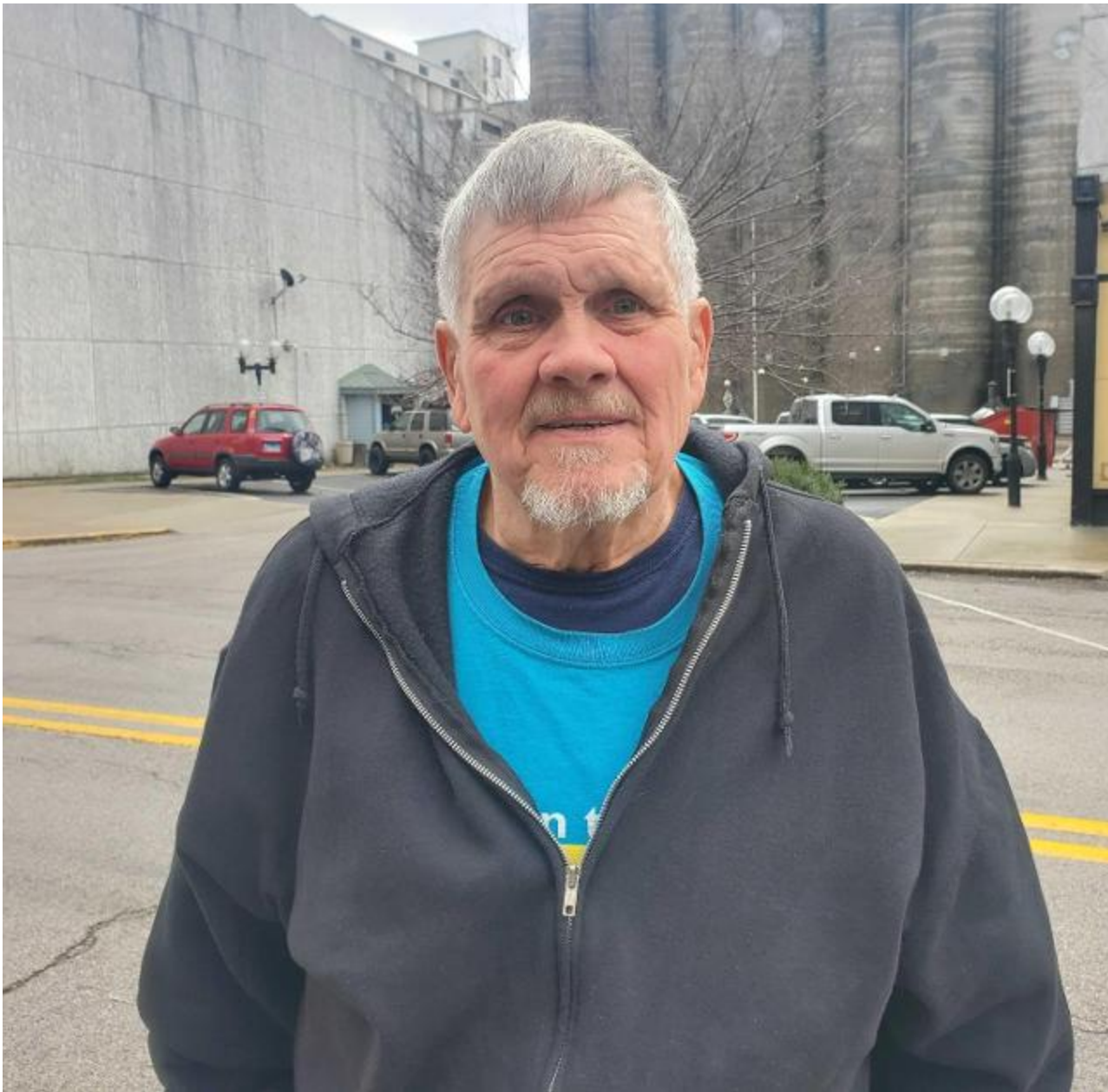


Beekeeper From “Dow On The Farm” Discusses Bees, Local Honey on Our Daily Show

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
December 30 2022 2:23 PM



DOW - Tom Cairns, owner and head beekeeper of Dow On The Farm Apiary, recently appeared on an episode of [Our Daily Show! on Riverbender.com](https://www.riverbender.com) to discuss the process of beekeeping and where to find his own homemade raw honey, which has proven popular at local farmer’s markets in Alton and Jerseyville.



Cairns said he bought his first beehive after a couple of his coworkers got beehives themselves, not knowing how much work would go into taking care of it. After the first winter of having it, he decided he might as well turn his new investment into something productive - an experience he said taught him a few life lessons in the process.

“You’ve gotta learn how to keep them - they’re just like other animals, you’ve got to feed them and take care of them,” Cairns said of the bees. “I joined a bee club in St. Louis at that time ... since I joined that bee club, it’s been uphill since. I’ve had some losses, which is a learning experience - it lets you know what you don’t know.”

Cairns bought an additional beehive after joining the club because several beekeepers recommend having multiple hives at once for backup, due to bees’ different personality traits.

“Bees are like your kids - they’re different. They all have different personalities and different strengths,” he said. “Going through the winter, if you have two hives and you lose one, you’ve still got one left. If you’ve only got one and you lose one, you’re out.”

He added that the St. Clair Bee Keepers Association is hosting “Introduction to Beekeeping” classes in Edwardsville on February 11, 2023. Those interested can sign up on their website at stclairbees.com/class-registration. He also offered some advice for those interested in trying beekeeping themselves.

“My first suggestion is, don’t start out as I did and not know anything - research,” he said. “Research about bees, find somebody that has bees, maybe have a mentor, join a club. It’s good to go to the club meetings ... you’ll learn from some of the other beekeepers at the meetings, some of the problems they have and things like that, you learn from that.”

He said the actual process of making honey is a bit of a slow start, but he was able to keep his hives going through the winter seasons and expand his “herd” of bees, eventually making honey much easier.

“First year, you usually don’t get a lot of honey. But I was lucky, and I got two supers of it, so that’s about a good half-a-gallon to five-gallon bucket of honey,” he said. “The next year, those two hives, I got them through the winter - and anytime you get a hive through the winter, you’ve got a start for the next year.”

Cairns said he keeps a supply of honey at his house and at some local stores, including in Godfrey at the Godfrey Meat Market and Ruby Wren, in Alton at the Olive Oil Marketplace and Hansen’s Meat Market, as well as in Jerseyville at Sinclair Foods and Good Buddy’s Meat Market.

For more information about Dow On The Farm honey, call (618) 972-8282. Watch the full episode on-demand below or at riverbender.com/dailyshow, where you can also catch new episodes live every Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.