



# Buzzwords ...



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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

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- \* Oz stops honey
- \* Hawaiian queen concern
- \* Rural Bank avoids "risk"
- \* Comvita wins

## Buzzwords No 32 July 1991



### AUSTRALIA STOPS HONEY IMPORTS

Australia has introduced new conditions for the importation of honey from countries with chalkbrood. These conditions, which apply to all states, are for retail packs as well as bulk shipments. Comb honey and pollen remain prohibited items.

In essence the Australian authorities require MAF to certify that the honey has been sterilised by heating to 70°C for 2 hours and that the honey has been tested by a laboratory and found to be free of viable chalkbrood spores. The honey must not have been exposed to chalkbrood once it is sterilised and must be exported in a sealed container.

MAF is in the process of licensing two NZ factories which are able to meet these standards. The factories are

applying to join an Export Certificate Conformity Scheme. Once they are accepted into the scheme MAF will audit their performance and arrange for honey samples to be taken for testing.

Exporters are asked to meet a set of rules as part of the conformity scheme. They do this by describing the management of their processing system in a manual. If the exporter does not wish to write a manual, MAF will provide a draft manual which can be adopted. The system is essentially the same as MAF is offering importers of bee products and exporters of live bees (See *Buzzwords*, June 1991).

These new conditions also prohibit the travelling public from taking honey into Australia. Overseas passengers are now having honey taken from them when enter the country. So if you are going to Australia, or know someone who is, remember that honey should be left at home.

Passengers who do surrender honey to Australian quarantine officers and can prove it was produced in NZ (i.e. it's in a commercial pack) will be allowed to bring it back to NZ with them. They will need to show the Australian quarantine sticker as proof that it has been held under bond.

Murray Reid, MAF Quality Management

### \* \* \* \* \* STOP PRESS \* \* \* \* \*

The Papua New Guinea government has just issued new regulations for imports of honey from New Zealand. PNG officials now require MAF to certify that all NZ honey consignments have been heated to 70°C for 2 hours. Exporters should be on an export conformity scheme (as required by Australia). In addition, honey importers in PNG must have a permit to import from New Zealand. Exporter processing factories must also be approved by PNG authorities and be listed in a PNG government register.

## HAWAIIAN QUEENS GET NOD

The April issue of *Bee Scene*, the BC Honey Producers Association newsletter, reports that Canada is to allow entry of queens from Hawaii next season. This is despite the fact that both the Canadian Honey Council and a majority of provincial apiculture officials opposed the move.

The Canadians insist on stringent disease control and certification procedures from countries like New Zealand, so this latest decision has left beekeepers and government officials here in NZ somewhat perplexed. No adequate surveys have been conducted in Hawaii for either tracheal or *Varroa* mites and no testing has been done of the large feral bee population. There's no one qualified to do a survey because the Hawaiian state government doesn't have an apiculture budget and employs no professional staff. They don't even keep an official record of beekeepers and apiary sites.

This situation is bad enough, but the risk of mite introduction is even worse. There are over 100 flights arriving daily in Hawaii from the continental U.S. and because the flights are domestic, quarantine inspection is minimal. The declaration of agricultural goods brought into Hawaii from the U.S. mainland is voluntary.

As you can imagine, some Canadian beekeepers are up-in-arms about the issue. They have started a letter-writing campaign to members of parliament and will no doubt be putting heavy pressure on the federal Minister of Agriculture to change what was his unilateral decision on Hawaiian bee imports.

## RURAL BANK TAKES A RUNNER

I guess it was only a matter of time. The sale of the Rural Bank to the private sector has meant a big shake up for this once-pillar of New Zealand agricultural development. The bank is operating in a commercial world now and has quietly begun to shift its client base. In the past few months that shift has begun to take in beekeeping.

Beekeepers in several parts of the country have been told recently by Rural Bank staff that the bank isn't taking on any new clients in beekeeping. In one case, a beekeeper who had been encouraged to take up a new cheque writing facility with the bank was told when he went to sign on that the bank was no longer interested.

A client services executive with the bank in Tauranga, Mr. Stewart Wright, said "the bank intends to focus on farms and orchards, and not service industries." According to Mr. Wright, the change has been under way for some time now, and includes other types of enterprises as well as beekeeping. "Beekeeping may have been a part of our business when we were a government department and made loans at concession rates, but we're a commercial vendor now and it's a commercial world. The beekeeping industry is too high a risk."

Obviously that point could be argued, since risk is relative and it doesn't make sense to write off whole industries. Surely well-run beekeeping businesses are a much better risk than poorly run orchards or farms. Still, that's the way it is in the commercial world. And if a bank wants to limit potential market, there are plenty of other banking competitors out there who can turn the Rural Bank's decision to their advantage.

## BRANCH NEWS

The **Marlborough** branch sent us a copy of their newsletter which includes details of coming meetings and an interesting article on the Africanised honey bee. Since this was the winter issue, the logo was a picture of a snow man. I hope we don't see many of those at conference!

The next meeting of the **Hawkes Bay** branch will be Tuesday, June 9 at 7:30 at the Polytech. The meeting will focus on voting for conference remits, so members are urged to attend or send their proxy votes to the secretary. Remember, these proxies must be received before the meeting.

The **Waikato** branch has meetings scheduled for July (remit voting) and August 9 (conference review). Both meetings will be held at the MAF Homestead, Ruakura, and start at 10 am.

And here's a great idea. The **Waikato** branch is organising a car convoy to conference. The idea is to car pool to save money and have a great time along the way. Assembly point is Tony Lorimer's honey house, Tauwhare Road (between Tamahere and Matangi, near Hamilton). Spare vehicles can be left on site. Other "pick-up" points planned include Taupo and Turangi. The journey is likely to get under way on the Friday before conference. Contact Tony (ph. (071) 69 625) for details.

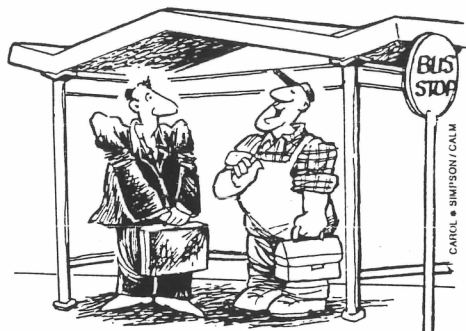
The **Bay of Plenty** branch has a full set of interesting meetings planned for this winter. Next up is a computer demonstration at the BOP Polytech, Monday July 8 at 7 pm. The demonstration will be run by NBA executive member Nick Wallingford. The branch is also getting ready for the annual golf clash with the **Waikato** branch on Tuesday, July 2. Tee off time is set for 12:30 pm at the Okoroire golf course, Okoroire Hotel. Golf clubs can be hired at the hotel, but



according to branch secretary Dale Gifford, hockey sticks are not allowed! Dale also mentions that players should bring their togs for a soak in the hot pools after the finish of play. Sounds like a hard fought battle is in the offing.

Another reminder that the **Auckland** branch will be holding its next meeting at the St. Hildas Church Hall, 12 Youngs Road, Penrose, on July 11 at 7:30 pm. The main activity will be voting on conference remits.

And staying with the **Auckland** branch, details of their field day have now been finalised. The field day will be held on Saturday, August 3, beginning at 10 am, at the MAF Treatment Technology Centre (Fumigation Station), Auckland Airport (turn left at the first lights inside the airport boundary). There is a \$5 entry fee which includes lunch and morning and afternoon teas. The programme includes a tour of the fumigation station and presentations on the honey bee improvement group, package bees, bee sting allergy research, and exotic bee disease emergency response procedures. There will also be a trade and exchange area, 2kg wax block competition, gadget display, and frame nailing competition. Billets can be arranged for out-of-town guests by phoning (09) 238 7464 or (09) 236 0336.



"Actually I've got an excellent profit-sharing plan... It's called a union contract."

## BEESWAX SUBSCRIPTIONS

New Zealanders tend to regard beekeeping as a highly complex and sophisticated industry, with trucks, and loaders, and lots of processing gear. But in many of the world's poorer countries, beekeeping is seen as one of the simplest, least expensive forms of agricultural development. It can be undertaken by small-holders and even landless people and it doesn't compete with other forms of agriculture. In fact, as we all know, it can often enhance food production through increased pollination.

What's great about beekeeping is that it can be taken up in these countries at a level of technology that fits with available resources, from simple hives, through intermediate designs to the moveable frame hives used in developed countries. Aid agencies call this concept "appropriate technology" and for the small-holder the rewards can be great. The cash income that can be generated from even a small number of hives is often much greater than from other types of farming.

The International Bee Research Association, as the world's leading provider of scientific and practical information on bees and beekeeping, has for a long time been at the forefront of beekeeping in the developing world. It has published books and pamphlets specifically related to this

area and organises the International Conference on Apiculture in Tropical Climates (the next one convenes in Trinidad and Tobago, 7-12 September 1992).

The IBRA is also now publishing a magazine, called *Beekeeping and Development*. The magazine is aimed directly at beekeepers in the developing world and provides practical information on "appropriate technology" beekeeping. There are also interesting articles on beekeeping in various countries as well as news and views from around the world.

A unique feature of the magazine is its subscription scheme. Beekeepers in many developing countries often have a problem in obtaining foreign currency. So *Beekeeping and Development* decided to accept beeswax as barter payment for the magazine!

*Beekeeping and Development* is also available to those of us in the developed world (no beeswax, though, folks) at a cost of US\$20 per year from the IBRA, 18 North Road, Cardiff CF1 3DY, UK, or New Zealand's IBRA representatives, Cliff Van Eaton, MAF, Private Bag, Tauranga, and Peter Brunt, Nelson Polytechnic, Private Bag, Nelson. And don't forget! These IBRA representatives also stock a full range of beekeeping books and IBRA publications.

## ANDREW REPORTS

And while on the subject of the IBRA, many beekeepers have asked how Andrew Matheson and his family are getting on. Andrew reports that his first job was to wade through the huge pile of mail that was waiting for him when he arrived. Some of it was more than a year old!

Once that was accomplished he took on the task of reorganising the management systems and helping staff determine the organisation's direction. He used the same Management by Objectives techniques the NBA has found so effective in running its affairs. From all reports the staff were quite enthusiastic and Andrew promises some exciting new initiatives from the IBRA in the near future.

On the domestic front, Andrew and his family seem to have settled in, despite the Welsh winter. One problem, however, has been finding reasonable cost accommodation. Rents range between \$1500 and \$1800 per month. And it seems that Andrew has had to jump another big hurdle, as well. He's had to buy a business suit!

## ZINC CAUSES CONCERN

The February issue of the *Australian Bee Journal* reports that a shipment of Australian honey sent to Switzerland was found to have excessive levels of zinc. The likely culprit was the galvanised steel drums Australian beekeepers are using to store honey. The Australian Honey Board is suggesting that beekeepers take steps to replace their galvanised drums and moves are under way to seek financial help for the replacement programme. One possibility is a move to open-top drums and plastic liners similar to those used in North America.

It seems, based on this report, that the Australians may not be using the approved food surface lining drums common in this country. That's a problem the Health Department authorities here need to consider prior to any freeing up of Australian honey imports into New Zealand.

## SURVEILLANCE ON GUARD

As we reported in past issues of *Buzzwords*, MAF is carrying out an on-going surveillance programme for exotic bee diseases, under contract to MAF Policy. MAF personnel sample a set number of bee hives in each region, following a statistical model, and target their inspections in areas of known risk (airports, seaports, tourist facilities, municipal rubbish dumps). The samples are sent to Ruakura and examined by Mark Goodwin and his team.

Government is prepared to pay for this programme because the information gained is used to both validate our export certification and confirm to our trading partners our high bee health status. In the last month both Japan and Canada have requested full updates on our exotic bee disease surveillance system.

To date this season a total of 684 samples have been collected and tested. Most of the samples have been for internal and external mites, and European foulbrood. But four samples were also processed for Africanised bee. Thankfully, all samples from the surveillance programme have tested negative.

And speaking of Africanised bees, Border Protection Officers and the local Apicultural Consultant were called out recently to investigate a swarm in a shipping container at the Mt. Maunganui port. You may think it's a bit silly looking for Africanised bees in New Zealand, but Africanised swarms have actually travelled in containers as far as the UK.

Border Protection Officers are on a constant lookout for bees and bee products at the port and have also established a good working relationship with the wharfies. In this case it was the wharfie that first noticed the swarm.

The "swarm" turned out to be local bees feeding on sugar residue. Someone had washed spilled sugar out of the container and left the door open so the floor could dry.

A false alarm this time, but proof that the system works. The local NBA branch was so impressed they sent the wharfie that age-old beekeeping thank you - a pot of honey!

*MAF Quality Management*

## COMVITA EXPORT AWARD

Comvita New Zealand Ltd., Te Puke, which promotes its products as being "from nuclear-free New Zealand", recently received an commendation from the Trade Development Board. The award was in recognition of Comvita's rapid growth in the export market. In 1989 Comvita doubled its exports and expects another 100% increase this year.

Comvita produces a wide range of honeys and honey-based spreads which are proving increasingly popular overseas. The company also manufactures a variety of natural health and skin care items based on bee products, including royal jelly and propolis preparations.

According to Comvita's managing director, Alan Bougen, "growing international concern about environmental issues and the chemical additives that go into so many processed foods is generating a lot of demand for natural products like ours."

"There are no artificial additives in anything we make," he stresses. "The only thing we add is a lot of value to about 100 tonnes of honey each year. It would earn considerably less in foreign exchange if exported as a simple bulk commodity."

*Export News, May 1991*

## FUNDING FOR DISEASE CONTROL

Three members of the National Executive and the Executive Secretary had a favourable hearing by the Agriculture, Land, Forestry and Fishing Caucus Committee on 30 May. They were seeking government funding for the disease control programme. A decision was then made by Executive to defer the ballot planned to gauge industry acceptance of a levy. We are now awaiting a decision from the Committee.

## EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

The results of the 1991 election for the North Island representatives on the Executive are:

Graeme Cammell	505 votes
Nick Wallingford	860 votes
Dudley Ward	1143 votes

Nick Wallingford and Dudley Ward are therefore declared to be the duly elected representatives for the North Island.

As no nominations were received for the South Island vacancy this position remains unfilled.

*Stewart Goodman  
Returning Officer*

### **BUZZWORDS IS ...**

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The views expressed in *Buzzwords* are not necessarily those of the National Beekeepers' Association nor of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

