



Buzzwords ...

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

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Social Insects



TERRY GAVIN LIFE MEMBER

Without doubt the most popular decision made at this year's conference was the granting of life membership status to Mr. Terry Gavin, Whangarei. Terry has been an active member of the NBA for over forty years and has held leadership positions at both the local and national level. He was also the founding president of the New Zealand Queen Bee Producers Association.

Terry and his wife Pat ran both a beekeeping and queen rearing operation while at the same time raising eight children. Last year, regrettably, the queen rearing operation (Whiteline Queens) was closed due to Terry's severe propolis allergy and an injury to a key staff member. The beekeeping business, Gavin's Apiaries, is now in the capable hands of Terry's son, John.

Terry and Pat are still very much involved in the industry, though. Last month they were honoured at the Whangarei

Winter Show. Their honey stand has been in every Winter Show for the past forty years.

Congratulations, Terry and Pat, and keep up the good work.

NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPING ON THE WORLD STAGE

Beekeeping in New Zealand features prominently in current issues of journals published by the International Bee Research Association (IBRA).

"Beekeeping: leading agricultural change in New Zealand" is a two-part article appearing in the latest edition of *Bee World*. The article is written by Andrew Matheson, formerly Apicultural Consultant with MAF and now director at IBRA. The article profiles the industry in New Zealand, emphasizing

its progressive nature and how beekeeping has responded to the many changes of the past 10-15 years. The first part covers bees and beekeeping methods used in New Zealand, while the concluding part deals with industry infrastructure, legislation, and pests and diseases. According to Andrew, highlighting the New Zealand industry is intended to let beekeepers in other countries learn from "one of the most innovative and progressive beekeeping countries in the world".

Original research papers from New Zealand scientists also make a healthy contribution to the issues of *Journal of Apicultural Research* currently being published. Recent articles or ones about to be published include:

- * Parasitic status of *Melittiphis alvearius* (Gibbons and Van Toor)
- * Honey bee pests and pathogens in Fiji (Anderson)
- * Nutrient content of honey bee collected pollen in Otago (Day, Beyer, Mercer and Ogden)
- * Lead concentration in some New Zealand honeys (Rowarth)
- * Pollen collection in Canterbury high country (Pearson and Braiden)

Bee World and the *Journal of Apicultural Research* are two of the four journals published by IBRA as part of its information service to world beekeeping. IBRA is a non-profit charity, relying on support from members and subscribers.

Further information on the IBRA can be obtained from IBRA's two regional representatives in New Zealand -- Cliff Van Eaton, MAF, Tauranga, and Peter Brunt, Nelson Polytechnic, Nelson, or by writing to the IBRA, 18 North Road, Cardiff, CF1 3DY, United Kingdom.

IBRA

HEARD AT CONFERENCE (II)

"I'd like to delete everything in the remit from 'that' to 'that'." The remit would then read "that that."

"If we're not willing to pay for this programme ourselves, I doubt whether the minister will be so inclined."

"When times are good we don't need marketing. When times get tough we can't afford it."

"If you'd like any help in writing your conclusions before you start your research, we'd be happy to oblige."

LACTALBUMIN DISCONTINUED

The New Zealand Dairy Board milk powder sales company, Alaco, has decided to discontinue sales of Lactalbumin Alata 560, a product which has been used extensively in bee protein supplements. That's the bad news. The good news is, 1. the product has two good alternatives (Alanate 180 and Alanate 380), and 2. Alaco has appointed Waikato Honey Products Ltd., Kihikihi, as sole sales agents of their products to beekeepers. The owner of Waikato Honey Products, Brian Clements, tells us that the Alanate products may be even better for bees than lactalbumin because they

have lower lactic acid levels. Brian will be using lactalbumin in his Spitfire Bee Protein product until stocks run out, and will then be switching to Alanate. He warns, by the way, that the other lactalbumin product produced by Alaco, Alata 510, is **definitely not** suitable for bees.

WASP BUSTERS NEED BUCKS

Research needs a major injection of funds if the wasp problem in New Zealand is ever to be solved. That was the major conclusion of a meeting of scientists held in Christchurch in July. Researchers from around the country and from a range of organisations including DSIR, MAF, Forest Research Institute, DoC, and the universities, met in an effort to co-ordinate wasp research.

While acknowledging that progress has been made in the past few years, a number of new research initiatives were identified. "We have plenty of ideas on how to go about solving the wasp problem, but nowhere near enough money to even start most of them," says Jacqueline Beggs, a spokesman for the group. "We estimate that there would need to be a tripling in research effort if we are to make significant and fast progress in solving the wasp problem."

A recent survey of public opinion showed that wasps are rated as one of the country's most important pests. Not only are they a serious nuisance and a health risk, they also have a dramatic impact on native beech forests because they consume both insects and honeydew that birds and other animals depend on. According to Ms. Beggs, "if you think wasps ruin a family picnic, imagine how a tui or kaka feels."

The parasitoid *Sphecofphaga vesparum* was introduced about 5 years ago in an attempt to control wasps. It is still too early to know whether or not it will be successful, but in the meantime experiments could be done which would help give an answer. There are also other biological control agents which may hold equal promise. "While we go through the lengthy process of evaluation and propagating other control agents, we could be finding out whether *Sphecofphaga* is going to work," says Ms. Beggs. "It is all important to find out more about what affects wasp numbers so we have the best possible chance of choosing a control agent that is likely to work."

Part of the problem with the present approach is that there are only enough resources to attack small pieces of the puzzle at any one time. Researchers at the meeting felt that a co-ordinated and intense effort would give a much greater chance of success and in the long-term would be much better value for money.

Scientists are also concerned that lack of funding may mean an end to the production of *Sphecofphaga*. According to Dr. Barry Donovan, a DSIR Plant Protection scientist, "we will have to make a decision very soon as to whether the parasitoid programme is to continue. This will reduce the chance of the parasitoid working because we are still developing better ways of spreading it."

As well as biological control there exist excellent opportunities for improving poison baits, including new chemicals that will attract wasps to baits, baits that have a longer life, and



poisons which are more environmentally acceptable than the 1080 currently used.

Ms. Beggs believes "it is likely that we will need a number of strategies to outmanoeuvre such a successful invader as the wasp. Unfortunately, we may not be given the chance to work on some of these ideas. Wasp research has operated on a shoestring for the last few years and the situation is now critical. The impetus is there for pooling expertise and the baseline work is under way. What is really needed is an injection of funds in the next year to give us a good chance at beating the problem of wasps." DSIR scientists are asking for public support to ensure that this occurs.

DSIR Land Resources

APIMONDIA POSTPONED

Over the last six months your executive has received a number of information circulars from Apimondia concerning their proposed 33rd International Apiculture Congress. The congress was scheduled for the end of September in Split, Yugoslavia, but we held off publicising this conference because of the deteriorating political situation in that country. It now looks like we did the right thing because it has just been announced that the congress has been postponed until the end of September, 1992. All bookings for registrations and trade displays remain confirmed for this new date with no change in fees. A 5% deduction will be made for anyone wishing to cancel their current registration. The 34th congress is still scheduled for 1993, in Beijing, China.

Apimondia

MARKETING MISCELLANY

- * Saudi company Al-Zahid Trading and Catering Corp. is interested in importing a range of foodstuffs including honey. Contact them at PO Box 438, Dhahran Airport 31932, Saudi Arabia. Fax: 00966-3-895-0948. (*Export News, July 18, 1991*)
- * The percentage change for honey in a monthly survey of NZ retail prices was down -1.2%, from \$2.44 per 500g to \$2.41. (*Marlborough Branch Newsletter, spring edition*).
- * It seems the Australians have scored a big hit with the introduction in Tasmania of a new type of ale. Taverner's Good Ale Mead follows the recipe of the original North European ales which were made from honey. The careful blending of hops and light honey by mead maker Dr. David Thomas has led to the production of a fine, mellow ale which is very refreshing and clean on the palate, finishing with a pleasant honey aftertaste. First-time tasters of the ale are quite surprised to find that it isn't sweet like most meads, but instead has the flavour of a good ale. Taverner's Good Ale Mead is now available in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide and is likely to be exported to the UK later this year. (*Hospitality Beverage, March-April 1991, and The Australasian Beekeeper, April 1991*)

- * New Zealand seldom makes the pages of Europe's fashion glossies. *British Harpers and Queen*, however, has put this country right into its July Barometers column, the very page which tells its sophisticated readers what's in and what's out. The ambiguous item lauds -- or laughs at -- raw, organic New Zealand honey which, it says "does good, tastes good -- and smells of cats' pee!" I wonder what they would say about kippers? (*Evening Post, July 20, 1991*)

- * Further confirmation (see last month's *Buzzwords*) that the market for organic produce is heating up comes from, of all places, the Federated Farmers newspaper. According to *Straight Furrow*, demand for organically grown products has increased enormously and has considerable commercial potential overseas. Figures quoted show that the demand for organic produce in the UK increased by some 50% last year alone, while in West Germany the demand is growing at 25% per annum. (*Straight Furrow, June 1991*)

- * The Korean Government has recently released its latest import liberalisation package for agricultural products. The list includes pollen and honey. The Trade Development Board can advise on the liberalisation process, but its trade commissioner in Korea, Mr. David Leishman, warns that the Korean market is not an easy one and that exporters should be well prepared before approaching Korean importers. (*Export News, May 9, 1991*)

- * Kowabunga, dudes! The latest promotional item in the U.S. is Honey Ooze, a substance which plays an important part in the latest Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movie. It seems the ooze provides the "powerful energy food" for the turtles in their battles with the bad guys. Ralston Purina, a large food manufacturer in the U.S., has been marketing its Ninja Turtles breakfast cereal ever since the Turtle craze took off, and is now including a squeeze pouch of Honey Ooze "in every specially marked box." The honey is produced by Glorybee Natural Sweeteners of Oregon, who also manufacture the innovative Honey Stix. And the talking point with the nation's children -- Honey Ooze includes a food colour which makes it bright green! (*Gleanings in Bee Culture, May 1991*)

- * Proof positive that real demand exists for organically grown foods -- in quantity -- is evidenced in a plea from a single U.K. distributor who is looking for a wide range of fully certified organic goods. Included among the tonnes of rice and thousands of litres of fruit juices is honey. The distributor needs 50 tonnes. What's interesting about this is the fact that so far the only suppliers who have been able to provide even a part of the order are NZ honey producers. It seems, once again, NZ beekeepers lead the way!

The British company in question, Captivia Brands International, is looking to make contact with certified suppliers for long term deals. Contact is Elizabeth Vann, Captivia Brands International, 21 Church Rd., Poole, England. Fax 44-0202-715130. (*Growing Today, August 1991*)



BRANCH NOTES

The next meeting of the **Hawkes Bay** branch is Tuesday, September 10, at the Polytech. John Dobson will speak on queen selection and the new Bee Genetic Improvement Group. Starting time is 7:30 pm. With the new season upon us, the branch is also involved in several other activities, including setting up a swarm collection/wasp destruction programme and conducting a publicity campaign on pollination and the use of pesticides. And believe it or not, preparations are already under way for next year's conference. They already have speakers for half of the seminar and interest from two potential advertisers.

The **Auckland** branch had a very good field day last month at the airport MAF Treatment Technology Centre. According to reports, all speakers were of excellent quality and the branch wishes to thank them for the obvious effort they put into their presentations. It sounds like the frame nailing competition and the barbecue also went down well. Their next branch meeting is scheduled for October 31.

The **Marlborough** branch has a number of activities planned for this spring. The branch will hold a diseaseathon on September 21, starting at 8:00 am at the Blenheim MAF office. This will be followed by a woodwork day on October 12 at the Boys College woodwork room (12 noon start), and a spring field day on November 17 at Blairich in the Awatere Valley. We'll publish more details on the field day in the October issue. The branch also has for sale a number of yellow baseball hats (from conference) with the NBA monogram at the bargain price of \$15. Phone Sue Jenkins at (03) 578 9325.

The **Southern North Island** branch will be holding a Spring Field Day at Rob and Beth Johnson's property, Whelans Road, Levin, on Saturday, October 12. Starting time is 10 am. Make sure to bring your lunch and bee gear.

The **Southland** branch will be holding a Spring Field Day at Don Stedman's property, Grove Bush - Woodlands Road (about 600m from SH 1), Woodlands, on Saturday, October 12. The field day will focus on domestic beekeeping and will emphasise hive health, spring checks, colony manipulations, and queen replacement. Don's contact phone number is (03) 231 3200.

We have also heard from another hobbyist club. This time it's the **New Plymouth** Amateur Beekeepers' Club, an active club in South Taranaki with over 60 members. The club recently put on a two day "country" display at the New Plymouth Museum. The museum holds these country days to take the country to the town, letting people experience typical country activities while at the same time bringing rural history and traditions to life. The beekeeping display included an observation hive, candle making, and hiveware assembly. Club members, dressed in their bee gear, conducted the demonstrations and answered the inevitable questions. Sounds like a good idea, especially in an area where the town by-law inspectors aren't exactly known as the 'beekeepers' friend.

MORE MANUKA

It's now common knowledge that manuka honey has unique antibacterial properties not found in other honeys. Recent work by Dr. Peter Molan of Waikato University has shown, however, that there is a great deal of variability in this bacteria-destroying activity. Dr. Molan has therefore decided to investigate the reason for this variation. He has proposed several explanations, including mis-identification of manuka honey samples, samples containing honeydew from the manuka scale insect, the possibility of different manuka sub-species, the location of the manuka itself (eg. swamps vs. dry hillsides, exposed vrs. sheltered), and the likelihood of samples containing proportions of other nectar sources.

Of course the only way Dr. Molan can test these theories is if he can obtain a range of manuka samples. As a result, beekeepers around the country are being asked once again to supply 10-20 g of manuka honey together with as much information as possible on where the samples came from so that Dr. Molan can look for any correlation with antibacterial activity. He would also appreciate receiving samples of kanuka honey where beekeepers can ascertain that the honey is pure kanuka and not manuka. Dr. Molan points out that because there is increasing commercial interest in manuka honey as an antibacterial substance, we need to find an explanation for this variable activity as soon as possible.

Send your samples to:

Dr. Peter Molan
Department of Biological Sciences
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
HAMILTON

ph (07) 856 2889

HONEY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND

Applications for funding close on 15 August and 15 February. Forms available from NBA, PO Box 4048, Wellington.

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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.

