



Buzzwords ...



Postage Paid
Wellington
Permit No. 699

Return address:
Box 4048
Wellington

ISSN 0114 -0795

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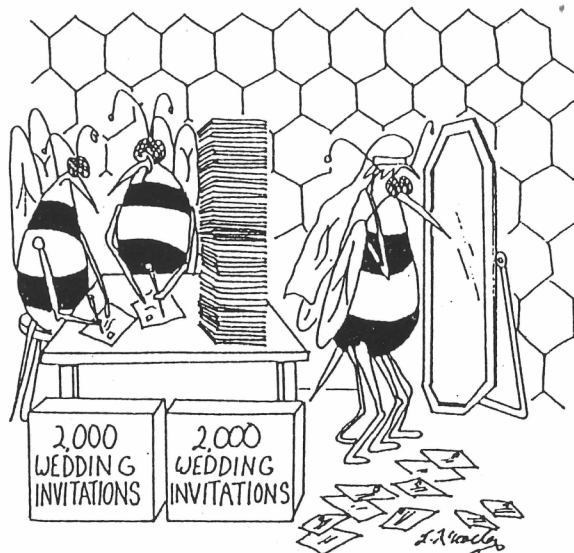
WALLING 21

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

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Buzzwords No 41 May 1992



"I WISH THEY'D ELOPE! WE SIMPLY CAN'T AFFORD TO INVITE ALL OUR RELATIVES."



FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the national executive, I would like to express our sincere thanks to all who have donated to the Honey Marketing and Promotion fund. Thank you for making such a positive contribution to our industry. I understand there are still a number of individuals and firms who have expressed their intention to give, but have not yet been able to do so because of the more pressing financial concerns of tax payments, hive levies, and crop processing costs. Your executive appreciates that this is a time of year where such demands reach a peak.

Sadly, I have just been told that one of our large packers has recently reduced the price of white honey into store by five cents per unit. I am also aware that not long ago an exporter dropped the value of New Zealand honey on the world market. It is obvious that there are a few individuals in our industry who have decided to lower the price of honey to all

beekeepers. New Zealand beekeepers are producing a premium, natural product we can all be proud of. Let's take a positive approach and try to get the best possible price for our product.

Dudley Ward, president

FROM THE MARKETING COMMITTEE

The Honey Marketing and Promotion fund has almost reached \$9000. Thank you to those beekeepers, honey packers, and industries that have donated promptly to this fund. The fund continues to accept donations, and pledges are also welcome. They can be sent to the fund c/- the Executive Secretary, NBA, PO Box 4048, Wellington.

We have already harvested benefits from the manuka media release prepared by Bill Floyd of Floyd Marketing. Our honeys, both domestically and internationally, have

certainly received a higher profile. Demand for manuka honey has risen substantially, resulting in a higher return to manuka producers. An investment from the industry of approximately \$15,000 has resulted in an increase in income of between \$150,000 and \$200,000 nationwide.

The Marketing Committee formed a subcommittee (focus group) to work directly with Bill Floyd. Our mission statement was to increase the return to the beekeeper. We established a set of objectives and looked at the industry's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We then saw an immediate opportunity to flex our media muscle and gain a higher profile for manuka honey using Dr. Peter Molan's research work at Waikato University.

With the manuka media release we are aware of the spinoffs to manuka producers, but we are also looking at uses for clover and multifloral honeys. For the long term we have looked at the development of the honey industry not from the standpoint of table honeys, but as a food ingredient - in baking, drinks and as a spray dried product. The plan is to concentrate on new product opportunities. Bill Floyd is making the necessary contacts for us in conjunction with the Marketing Committee's focus group.

Sue Jenkins, Marketing Committee

BROTHER ADAM OUSTED

It's not often that an article on beekeeping appears in the "world's greatest newspaper". But then this isn't just **any** article! Read on:

"Abroad he is the Einstein of bee breeding, but at home it would seem he's just a dodderly old man. Brother Adam, the 93 year old Benedictine monk who is the world's most celebrated beekeeper, has been forced from his post after losing a monastic power struggle. He is deaf, losing his sight, and has trouble keeping his balance. But experts in genetics say Brother Adam, who has been in charge of bees at Buckfast Abbey, Devon, for 73 years, is at the height of his professional powers and on the verge of a scientific breakthrough.

"He was about to announce a new strain of bee which is resistant to a devastating parasite, and was developing a "green" bee that could end the need for chemicals in European honey. But last month, Father David, Buckfast's newly elected abbot, told Brother Adam he could not employ an assistant. The decision, despite the fact that Brother Adam's bees earned NZ\$73,000 in royalties last year, meant that he could not carry on.

HAWKES BAY CONFERENCE

The Hawkes Bay branch is probably one of the most active in the country, and the NBA annual conference they are running this year looks to be a real winner. The conference is scheduled for July 20 -23, with specialty group meetings on Monday, and the NBA Seminar on Tuesday. Theme for the seminar is "Innovation in Beekeeping", with sessions on several "hot topics" including honey marketing, antibacterial honey, and honey "fingerprinting". It's your opportunity to hear about these exciting new developments in your industry first-hand. The conference itself should also be stimulating. Discussion will no doubt centre on the increase to the hive levy to fund American foulbrood control.

The Hawkes Bay branch has negotiated a special \$70 room rate at the conference venue, the Angus Inn Motor Hotel, Hastings, the area's leading conference centre. According to Ron Morrison, the conference secretary, the rate "includes you, your wife or girl friend or mate" (what ever you say, Ron!). You can also take advantage of Air New Zealand's 30% fare reduction by quoting "DOM 605/91."

Register for the conference by filling out the attached form and returning it to the conference secretary no later than June 8.

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NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION - REGISTRATION FORM - CONFERENCE 1992

Yes, I will attend the July 20, 1992 conference to be held at the Angus Inn Motor Hotel, HASTINGS

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"Breeders on four continents are outraged, claiming he has been forced out to make way for a retiring abbot with no interest in genetics. "It's as though Einstein has been replaced at Princeton University by an administrator with no knowledge of physics," said a Dutch breeder.

"The old monk himself says he was not consulted, and is so upset that he wants nothing more to do with bees. Friends fear that without his life's work he will die, and beekeepers across the world are considering withholding royalties in an attempt to force his reinstatement.

"The row centres on whether Buckfast is to continue as a place of genetic research. Brother Adam has chosen as his successor a helper who has worked with him for more than 20 years. But the abbey wants to concentrate on honey production, and argues that the time for change has come.

"The bee world is astounded. "Brother Adam stands out as one of the foremost figures in traditional bee breeding in the 20th century," Andrew Matheson, director of the International Bee Research Association in Cardiff, said yesterday. "It's his life." And according to Joe Graham, editor of the *American Bee Journal*, "Brother Adam is genuinely regarded as a legend in the United States. I can't believe they would just arbitrarily take his job away like that."

"Brother Adam is hailed by apiculturalists, but has had little recognition within the Buckfast community. In recent years the community has gained a reputation for entrepreneurial rather than devotional endeavour, with a thriving tourist trade, gift shop, general store and lucrative tonic wine business. The monastery was dubbed "Fastbuck Abbey" when the former abbot, Father Leo Smith, and Father David tried to develop a motor and hotel service complex.

"Brother Adam, who joined the 984 year old community in 1910 and still works a 10 hour day, established his fame in bee breeding during half a century of experimentation. Combing Europe, the Middle East and Africa for bees that would provide useful genetic material, he created the Buckfast Bee, regarded by many as the healthiest and most prolific honey producer ever bred. At present he is on the brink of a breakthrough with a bee that is resistant to acarine disease, which is sweeping the U.S. He is also working on a strain resistant to varroa, common in Europe. The development of the second strain would end the need for chemical applications to hive three times a year.

"The concern of beekeepers and bee breeders around the world is that, despite his age, Brother Adam's work has been brought to an unnecessary and untimely end," said David Taylor, a naturalist who has made a series of television films about the monk. "Half a century's genetic research is to be abandoned in favour of selling combs of honey to ladies from Lancashire in the Buckfast gift shop."

"A taste of the outrage to come reached Father David in a letter from Jim Holland, chairman of the Ulster Beekeeper's Association. "There has never since Aristotle been a commentator on the habits of the honey bee like Brother Adam," he wrote. "When the history of Brother Adam is retold in years to come, anyone who has impeded (him) will be seen in the worst possible light."

"Brother Adam, who sports a mop of white hair and a German accent he has not lost despite living in Devon since the age of 11, did not want to comment publicly last week out of loyalty to the abbey. But a private letter made his feelings plain. "I want now to forget bees and beekeeping for the duration of the time providence will grant me. I really have had no time of my own since I was given charge of our beekeeping on September 1, 1919."

The Sunday London Times, March 1, 1992

ORGANIC MISTAKE

The New Zealand Biological Producers Council, which certifies organic production under the Bio-Gro label, has brought to our attention an error in our study paper entitled "A Comparison of Standards for New Zealand Organic Honey." The paper was prepared for us in June, 1991 by MAF Quality Management.

The document states on page 14 that the Bio-Gro standard allows for the use of fatty acid compounds on a restricted basis for weed control, and then in parentheses refers to glyphosate [trade name: Roundup]. It turns out that while a number of aliphatic compounds are fatty acids, and glyphosate is an aliphatic acid, glyphosate is not in fact a fatty acid.

Beekeepers are reminded that the NBA document is an internal study paper and that the only document to be used in seeking Bio-Gro certification is the Certified Bio-Gro Organic Production Standards. They should also be aware that under that standard the use of any chemicals on a restricted basis is not allowed without first consulting a Bio-Gro advisor. Bio-Gro will only approve herbicides derived from fatty acids which are a product of saponification of naturally occurring oils. There are a number of fatty acids which do not fall into this category.

The National Beekeepers Association and MAF Quality Management apologise for any inconvenience this mistake may have caused.

BRITAIN DISCOVERS VARROA

Andrew Matheson, director of the International Bee Research Association, has written with the news that the serious bee parasite *Varroa jacobsoni* has been found in Britain. According to Andrew, it was ironic that the discovery was made in Devon, in an apiary belonging to the Torbay Beekeepers Association. Devon is home to a group of beekeepers with a scientific interest in the industry (the Devon Apicultural Research Group) which had already published a booklet with the prophetic title "Living with *Varroa jacobsoni*".

The mite was found at the beginning of April in the club apiary of 18 hives. Later searches there revealed 20 mites in two colonies. Following the finding, the National Bee Unit, under the direction of Medwin Bew, set up an incident room (Emergency Headquarters), established movement control within a 6 km radius, and began hive inspections.



HONEY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND

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

The apiary in question had been under movement control (the British call them "standstill orders") for two years as a result of foulbrood infection. However, detective work soon revealed that prior to the standstill order, hives from the apiary had been in north Devon on a ling heather site. Inspections in that area revealed more infested hives, so a 40 km radius standstill order centred on north Devon was put in place.

As of 14 April, varroa had been found in 34 apiaries spread over a large area, with mite levels in some colonies quite high. It is therefore likely that the mite has been present in Britain for at least two years, and possibly longer. As a result, officials have decided not to destroy any colonies, since varroa is obviously widespread and well-established. The current movement control is simply to allow the UK MAFF to locate and inspect hives in the area (there's no apiary register in Britain). A number of hives are normally moved to and from the infected area, both for heather and for pollination, so it's likely the mite will show up in other regions, too.

No chemicals are registered for varroa control in the UK, so none can legally be used. The EC has yet to work out how the single market (now only eight months away) will facilitate registration of chemicals throughout the community, so in the meantime emergency registration will be sought for three chemicals - probably Apitol, Apistan, and Bayvarol. The procedure could still take months, however.

Britain was already facing the lifting of import restrictions on honey bees from 1993. Because there was no real proof that the country was free of varroa, the EC had decided to "de-regulate" movement of bees. British beekeepers were frantically organizing hive sampling in an effort to prove the country's varroa-free status.

According to Andrew, these events in Britain provide some timely lessons for New Zealand. We should be reminded once again, he says, that the search for exotic diseases and pests relies on alert beekeepers. But at the same time he believes a surveillance programme is also essential. Such a programme is the only way to convince overseas authorities that pests and diseases aren't present, and it's also the best hope we have of picking up chance introductions quickly. Experience in every country to date has shown that by the time a beekeeper "eyeballs" varroa, it's too late to eradicate it.

- As beekeepers in New Zealand know only too well, the press is always quick to pick up on discoveries of an exotic bee disease. It's strange, though, how the stories they come up with always make you wonder about how accurately they report the rest of the news. The latest example comes from *The Independent*, a well-respected new paper that was founded in reaction to Britain's sensationalist tabloids. Their article on the British varroa find was headlined "Deadly Bee Rabies Discovered in Devon"!

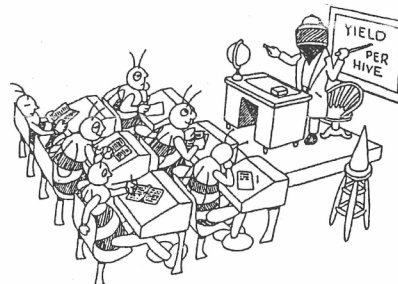
The Independent, April 8, 1992

LIBRARY ADDRESS CHANGE

John Heineman certainly is a wily Dutchman. Rather than inflict the new post office charges on library users (the Beekeepers Library private box has gone up from \$30 to \$80!), John has decided to cancel the box and use the "over-the-counter" approach. So from now on, the address for the National Beekeepers Association Technical Library will be:

c/- N.Z. Post
MILTON

John reckons the new address may not be quite so convenient for users, but will at least "save those few dollars for a better purpose". The cost of a post box is now worth at least the price of a new beekeeping book. Good on you, John!



A WORD OF CAUTION

A podiatrist and beekeeper living in Nelson has written to us concerning the use of honey in treating ulcers and wounds (see *Buzzwords* 38). While she has no doubt that honey works well as an external dressing, she believes it is important that such dressings not be used by people who have diabetes. While such people often suffer from leg and foot ulcerations, if the wound is large and honey is used, there is a risk of absorbing sugars into the bloodstream. One of her diabetic patients recently told her that he had used honey on a leg ulcer. The honey worked well, he said. But unfortunately it also sent his blood sugar levels up too high.

The podiatrist recommends that in future we include a word of caution to diabetics in our publicity about the therapeutic uses of honey.

BUZZWORDS IS ...

Published by the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand, PO Box 4048, Wellington.

Production by Cliff Van Eaton and Nick Wallingford.

Articles and feedback to *Buzzwords*, c/- MAF, Private Bag, Tauranga. Fax (07) 578 8429, phone (07) 578 2069. Deadline for copy is the 20th of each month.

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

