



# Buzzwords ...



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Return address:  
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Wellington

ISSN 0114 -0795

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

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## Buzzwords No 50 March 1993



The four basic personality types



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

It would appear that most beekeepers in NZ have had a very disappointing honey season, although some have reported that where the clover is flowering, they have experienced a good honey flow on warm days. The weather is no doubt the culprit, and this must surely be one of the coldest beekeeping years on record.

This season proves once again how important it is to be able to diversify. A number of beekeepers this season are raising queens, collecting pollen, and producing propolis. There is surely a market for these commodities. I was talking to Claude Stratford of Comvita NZ recently, and he tells me they are having difficulty obtaining sufficient quantities of both pollen and propolis for their requirements.

Your executive will once again have to deal with the issue of Australian honey imports at its March meeting. You will

recall that in October, Acting Chief Veterinary Officer Chris Boland deferred the import protocol because important technical information had come to light. Dr. Mark Goodwin has been most helpful in providing us with further technical background, but we will have our work cut out convincing the government that such imports will put our industry at risk. The present government doesn't seem to want to make exceptions for anyone. In this regard, the recent outbreak of chalkbrood in Australia could be timely and may work in our favour. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

And finally, some good news from Dr. Peter Molan. On February 24, the ethics committee gave its final approval for the manuka honey stomach ulcer trials. Peter has also mentioned his intention to seek approval for honey burn treatment trials, but this will have to wait until the ulcer trial is completed.

Dudley Ward, president

## BUZZWORDS IS FIFTY

It's hard to believe (at least for us), but *Buzzwords* has been going now for 50 issues. That's a bit of a milestone, so we thought we'd look back and share our thoughts about how *Buzzwords* has changed.

It all began back in September, 1988. *Buzzwords* was born out of the need, identified in the Industry Plan, to improve communication to NBA members. In fact, *Buzzwords* was an NBA objective for that year, and the objective was even accomplished three months ahead of schedule!

In the opening message, then-president Alan McCaw identified *Buzzwords*'s purpose as providing relevant, timely and readable information, together with up-dates on executive meetings where major issues would be discussed which affect NBA members. Alan even mentioned "the current negotiations to provide inspection services" as a prime example, and in the ensuing four and a half years that topic has certainly made the pages of *Buzzwords* many times.

Alan also mentioned that *Buzzwords* would likely replace the newsletters then being published by district AAO's. He hoped that much of the valuable information from those newsletters would make it into *Buzzwords* and benefit all beekeepers because *Buzzwords* would be mailed nationwide.

Since that first issue, *Buzzwords* has changed in many ways. Gone are the US Market Reports, and you'll notice that there's a lot less "white" space now and not so many pictures and cartoons. *Buzzwords* is now much more of a "beekeepers' newspaper", with longer articles from time to time and more on industry politics. It wasn't our intention to spend so much time on things like Australian honey import protocols and the Bio-Security Bill, but unfortunately the affect of government policies on our industry in the last few years has required this sort of coverage. While some readers may think *Buzzwords* shouldn't spend so much time on these matters, we believe it is absolutely essential that all NBA members be kept current on these vital issues which have the potential to so affect the continued profitability of our industry.

In the last several years we have also made a point of publishing a "special edition" following the annual conference. The idea is to try to capture some of what happens at conference for those many members who for one reason or another can't make it to the venue. From the comments we have had from readers we feel we have more or less achieved that goal.

Another highlight for us was the EFB "special edition" (*Buzzwords* 37) which covered the Nelson EFB Emergency Response. This was a six page issue which was put together in a great rush while the response was still in progress and just as kiwifruit pollination was beginning to get under way. We felt it was very important for beekeepers throughout the country to get a sense of what was going on at Nelson from the beekeeping point of view, both because the tv and print media were so distorting the situation and

because the great work and cooperation of NBA members was something which made us feel so proud.

Other highlights for us have included the powerful lobbying effort our industry mounted over the Australian honey protocols, the "rags to riches" manuka story, and being able to report the marketing successes of so many companies and individuals in our industry. And then of course there's the time the Minister of Agriculture waved a copy of *Buzzwords* at your president as he complained bitterly about one of our articles ("Commodity Levy Farce", *Buzzwords* 42). We didn't even write that one; it was taken almost verbatim from the Vegetable Growers Federation magazine. But at least it showed us the message was getting through.

As to disappointments, well they're actually few and far between. Mostly we wish we had more space because these days we always have more than enough good copy. And we feel a bit foolish saying in *Buzzwords* 31 that we were going to start a beekeepers' story feature called "Heard It on the Grapevine". The problem wasn't a lack of good stories; far from it. It's just that the "burning issues of the day" seem to always take up all the space.

And the articles we've had the most comments about? Believe it or not, first prize goes to the slip-up we made with the 1000 tonnes of royal jelly (*Buzzwords* 45). A few beekeepers jokingly accused us of doing it on purpose to find out if anybody was actually reading *Buzzwords*. And yes, you guessed it, the other story you all seemed to like was the continuing saga of Brother Adam. Beekeepers are still asking us "what's the latest?"

Well, that's enough of that. Let's get to work on fifty more! We hope you've enjoyed reading *Buzzwords* these last four and a half years as much as we have producing it.

Cliff and Nick

## CHALKBROOD IN AUSTRALIA

News has just come to hand that chalkbrood has now been discovered in Australia. We understand that the initial find was in two apiary sites north of Brisbane, close to a rubbish dump. Inspections revealed infection in a further 13 apiaries in two separate areas. Authorities destroyed some \$10,000 worth of bee equipment in an effort to eradicate the disease, but have now decided to cease eradication attempts. They have instead placed a ban on the shipment of bees across the border from Queensland and New South Wales. Thankfully, shipments of heat-treated New Zealand honey are not being blamed for the outbreak. Our sources tell us that the prime suspect is illegally imported Spanish pollen.

## PROPOLIS TESTED

A potential for chemical contamination has been revealed in tests recently conducted on propolis scraped from beehives. The tests were conducted by a private laboratory. Several samples collected showed high levels of lead and arsenic, although neither substance has so far been found in propolis sold at the retail level.



Beekeepers who collect propolis for sale from woodenware need to take extra precautions to ensure they do not scrape painted surfaces or edges. It is believed that old lead priming paints were the cause of the lead contamination.

The arsenic undoubtedly comes from tanned timber. Tanned wood precipitates out arsenic as a salt which can then be picked up off the wood's surface. For that reason, tanned timber isn't recommended in situations where the wood comes into direct contact with bees. Nevertheless, some beekeepers do use the product for bottom boards and lids, without noticeable effects on the bees. It should be obvious, however, that propolis destined for human consumption shouldn't be collected from tanned woodenware.

The purest propolis is generally obtained from plastic mesh placed on the top of frames or hung inside supers against the outside wall. Untreated frames are the next best bet. Scrapings from boxes, lids, and floor boards should be avoided because of the risk of contamination.

As a result of these tests, it is likely that commercial buyers of propolis will in the future require a negative test for lead and arsenic prior to purchase. Suppliers may also be faced with sales contract provisions making them liable for any costs incurred should the propolis need to be treated to remove these contaminants.

Propolis is now seen by most consumers as a beneficial antibiotic substance. It's therefore essential that we protect the image of this valuable byproduct by tidying up our collection practices.

*MAF Quality Management*

## QUALITY MATTERS

\* Roger Maxwell, the Minister of Business Development, has launched a cooperative venture between the "Buy NZ Made" campaign and Telarc New Zealand, which will help under-resourced small manufacturers raise their quality management standards.

According to Mr. Maxwell, the programme, called "Buy NZ Made Q-Base", is a very positive move for the future of New Zealand small business. "Small manufacturers have traditionally been too under-resourced to contemplate costly quality management programmes, despite the fact that they can help make them more profitable. This programme will make it possible for small businesses to undertake quality management without great investment."

"This initiative is designed specifically for smaller companies, the sector which is most buoyant at present. Formal quality management is becoming increasingly important in our international markets, and we all know that this country's continued economic recovery depends on successful exporting."

The Buy NZ Made Q-Base Programme is a modular correspondence course approach towards Telarc certification, which will assist companies to establish their own achievable quality management procedures. Enrolment in the course, which is available only to members

of the "Buy NZ Made" campaign, costs \$100. Progress is at the pace of the company; there are no outside deadlines for completion. Once the company completes the course, its quality management procedures are then audited by Telarc New Zealand. If the procedures are not consistent, Telarc will advise on improvements until the company does gain its Q-Base Certificate.

Certification entitles the Q-Base company to be listed on a national purchasing register which gives that company and its products a competitive edge over similar organisations.

*Export News, September 1992*

\* The Ministry of Commerce's Business Development Programme offers a series of grants to New Zealand businesses, including an Enterprise Growth Development Scheme (EGDS). The scheme will fund 50% of qualifying costs to a maximum grant of \$3500 for undertaking quality assurance audits/accreditation. Contact your local Business Development Centre for details.

\* As we reported in *Buzzwords 42*, the Australians are taking seriously the challenge of quality management. They have set in place a programme to ensure that their major packer/exporters achieve accreditation to ISO 9002 standards by July 1993. They are also introducing the concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM), as evidenced by an article on the subject in the November 1992 issue of *The Australasian Beekeeper*. The article is too long to review here, but suffice it to say that in Oz the quality message seems to be getting to the grass roots.

\* The National Honey Board in the US has developed a special education programme called PRIDE to help beekeepers maintain quality standards in honey production. The PRIDE Program consists of an 8-minute videotape and an educational packet. The video features beekeeper Bruce Beekman (*his real name! - ed*) and highlights safe honey production practices from the bee hive to the honey house. The packet includes tips for beekeepers on proper chemical use (a major topic for US producers), honey house sanitation, and details on record keeping.

According to Randy Johnson, chairperson of the Honey Board's industry relations committee, "beekeepers who participate in the programme show their commitment to the safe beekeeping and honey handling practices that give honey its image as a pure and natural product. That image is what ensures honey's marketability."

*American Bee Journal, September 1992*

## AFB HONEY TEST OFFERED

Does your honey contain American foulbrood spores? If you have always wanted to know, contact us at Ruakura. We are trying to determine if there is a relationship between the number of American foulbrood spores in honey and the number of AFB hives found by the beekeeper producing the honey. If there is, it may be possible to use honey testing as an early warning device for potential disease problems.

If you wish to participate, we will need a few samples of



## HONEY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND

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

honey and information on the percentage of hives you found that had AFB over the last two years. We will keep your name confidential and provide you with a copy of your test results. If you are interested please contact Mark Goodwin at (07) 838-5049, so that we can get the information we will need from you and tell you how to collect the samples. As we may not be able to test samples from everybody who offers, please phone us before taking the samples.

Apicultural Research t, HortResearch

## MARKETING PLAN DEVELOPMENTS

As mentioned in *Buzzwords* 49, the marketing committee met on 17-18 February in Wellington. Alan McCaw has accepted the position of chairman of the committee, and Bill Floyd was in attendance. The meeting was positive and intensive with a lot of important ground covered.

A wide-ranging discussion of the beekeeping marketing situation was held, using a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). One major conclusion from this analysis was that beekeeping in NZ should be seen by the public as a viable, professional industry with considerable future promise. We need to be positive about ourselves, our products and our industry, emphasizing excellence and quality throughout the whole process.

It was agreed that we require an ongoing strategic marketing plan, covering all of our products and services in a cost-effective way. Floyd Marketing has been contracted to produce this plan, based on the analysis carried out during the meeting. The contracted cost is \$7000 plus GST. The marketing committee will present the plan to the NBA executive at their late April meeting.

The goals we set ourselves should be achievable, and present a system through which we can see some tangible results. Marketing returns may not be immediately noticeable, although in the past year honey has gained a 2% market share advantage over jams. This is a very encouraging indicator of the progress we are making in the domestic spread market.

The marketing committee will also be looking at the question of funding for marketing through the Commodities Levy Act. It is expected that in the future an application will be presented to the Minister to replace the Hive Levy.

The committee is also concerned that there appears to be some misinformation amongst beekeepers over the spending of the present 50 cent marketing levy. It must be stressed that Floyd Marketing is not receiving the projected \$120,000 which will be collected. Major decisions on spending have not yet been made, and any money collected will be used for a variety of marketing activities, some of which may possibly include contracts with Floyd Marketing.

Finally, a reminder to branches that members of the marketing committee are available to talk to meetings, field days and seminars to keep you up-to-date with marketing activities and to discuss your concerns in marketing your products. The marketing committee members are:

Allen McCaw	Ph and Fax 03/417 7198
Peter Bray	Ph 03/324 3569 Fax 03/324 3236
Sue Jenkins	Ph and Fax 03/578 9325
Neil Stuckey	Ph 09/473 8491 Fax 09/473 8778
Graham Cammell	Ph 09/275 6457 Fax 09/275 9097
Steve Lyttle	Ph 03/6848882 Fax 03/688 4859
Nick Wallingford	Ph 07/578 1422 Fax 07/544 2386
Bill Floyd	Ph 03/578 2706 Fax 03/577 8429

Sue Jenkins, Marketing Committee

## NORTH ISLAND FIELD DAYS

The **Southern North Island** branch will be holding its autumn field day on Saturday, 13 March at Trevor and Gaye Rowe's property, 1 km north of Eltham on the main road. Topics include honey extraction and honey handling (Trevor's well-appointed honey house), export options, requeening, and preparing hives for winter. There will also be an afternoon "bar-bee-que". The field day gets under way at 10 am. Registration is \$4 per family.

Little did the **Bay of Plenty** branch realise that the proposed date for its summer field day clashed with the long-established date of the **Waikato** branch field day. Not wanting to break the **Waikato's** tradition, the **BOP** branch has therefore re-scheduled its field day for Saturday, 20 March, beginning at 10 am, at John Brown's Katikati Honey Centre, SH2, just south of Katikati. In keeping with the theme "Value-Added Honey", speakers include Peter Bray on the honey marketing committee and value-added honey, Brian Clements on quality management and honey, Alan Bougen on honey exports and alternative bee products, and Dr. Peter Molan on "magic manuka". There will also be a cut comb demonstration and a honey competition including the following classes: 3 jars, any type; 1 jar granulated; section honey, 3 sections; wax, 1 cake; beekeeping appliance or invention; cake made with honey. All North Island (and any South Island!) beekeepers are cordially invited to attend.

## 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.

