MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES : TAURANGA

BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1974

1. It has been decided to introduce a beekeepers newsletter to keep producers up to date on district and other matters and it is intended to send a copy to all semi-commercial and commercial apiarists.

   The dates of issue will be flexible but it is proposed that three issues will be made during the first year (1974).

2. CROP VARIATIONS

The season has been a varied one and crops have fluctuated quite extensively from place to place. Good crops have been secured in the Waihi-Whangamata areas and throughout parts of the Tauranga section of the Bay of Plenty. A warm and settled December was experienced in these areas.

Rewa rewa in most cases carried a good setting of flowers but the resultant crop stored from this source was disappointing and not up to expectations. Tawari on the other hand flowered well and because of the settled weather flowered for a longer time than usual and in most cases good crops were secured. Clover in the Tauranga area, although quite good, did not have the flower showing that was experienced last year. Very dry conditions were experienced during late December and early January resulting in pastures drying out seriously. Crop returns in these pasture areas were not good.

Rotorua, experiencing cooler conditions during December, did not get the "early" honey secured in the Waihi-Tauranga areas.

At the time of writing, clover is flowering quite well in places but in others the season is past. Reports indicate that only average crops will be secured in the Rotorua region.

3. HONEY HANDLING

Care should always be exercised when extracting the honey crop. It is very easy to contribute to "colour loss" (and subsequently a reduced payout). This colour loss can be attributed to factors such as :-

a) Extracting from darkened brood combs
b) Overheating
c) Honey from cappings reducer
d) Floral source.

Sort as much as possible, combs containing light honey from those containing dark honey.

Sort brood combs containing honey, from lighter or virgin combs.

Pack more "even" lines of honey wherever possible.

Remember -
It takes very little dark honey to darken a line of light honey -

But -
It takes a lot of light honey to lift the colour of a dark line.

A colour loss chart outlining this factor is attached to this Newsletter and it is well worth studying.

(Technical data by C. Rope Honey Grader)

4. HYGIENE AROUND HONEY HOUSES

You are handling a commodity that will ultimately be consumed (you hope!) - are your handling techniques up to standard? It is said that Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

5. POLLINATION

About 400 hives of bees were required this year for pollination purposes by orchardists in the Tauranga-Te Puke areas. This requirement is expected to increase quite substantially in the future.

Remember -
This paid pollination service is a two way affair = orchardist - beekeeper and both parties have their part to play.
(i) Supply only strong hives.
(ii) Meet the deadlines requested by the orchardist.
(iii) Don't undercut your fellow beekeeper.

Bee activity was much improved on last year and initial indications are that the fruit set is very satisfactory. There appeared to be no significant bee mortality this year.

There is a point now emerging that "Bee Saturation" may be desirable to ensure adequate pollination under all circumstances.

Where hives were placed at a density of 7-8 per hectare (3 hives per acre) activity was strong even under marginal conditions.

6. RESEARCH

This year a two man team from Wallaceville Research Centre (Mr T. Palmer-Jones and Mr P. Clinch) commenced an extensive pollination trial on chinese gooseberries. This is a two year project and will be continued again this coming season.

It would appear that while the chinese gooseberry flower is structurally adapted to insect pollination, it is unattractive to bees from a nectar point of view. Bees actively work the flower for pollen.

7. WASP NUISANCE

Work continues on research into finding a suitable toxic wasp bait. This is proving a hard nut to crack. Will keep you informed on this one.

8. RESTRICTED BEEKEEPING ZONE

This year 46 Special Permits were issued to commercial beekeepers in the Tauranga/Hamilton apiary districts to establish apiaries in the Restricted Beekeeping Zone in the Bay of Plenty. For those who qualify (beekeepers with 400 hives or more registered) there is still room for more apiaries. The pro rata has now been lifted as from the 1974 season from 10% to 15% of all hives registered in the Tauranga and/or Hamilton Apiary districts.

In view of two cases of honey poisoning last year a small additional area in the Opotiki County has been included in the Restricted Zone.

9. PASSION VINE HOPPER (Scollypopa australis)

With the hot dry summer so far this year, the build up of the Passion Vine Hopper has been earlier than most years. Density of the insect is relatively high and there is evidence of "honey dew" in many places. Those with apiaries in suspect areas (where Tutu abounds) should make sure that only honey stored early in the season is extracted.

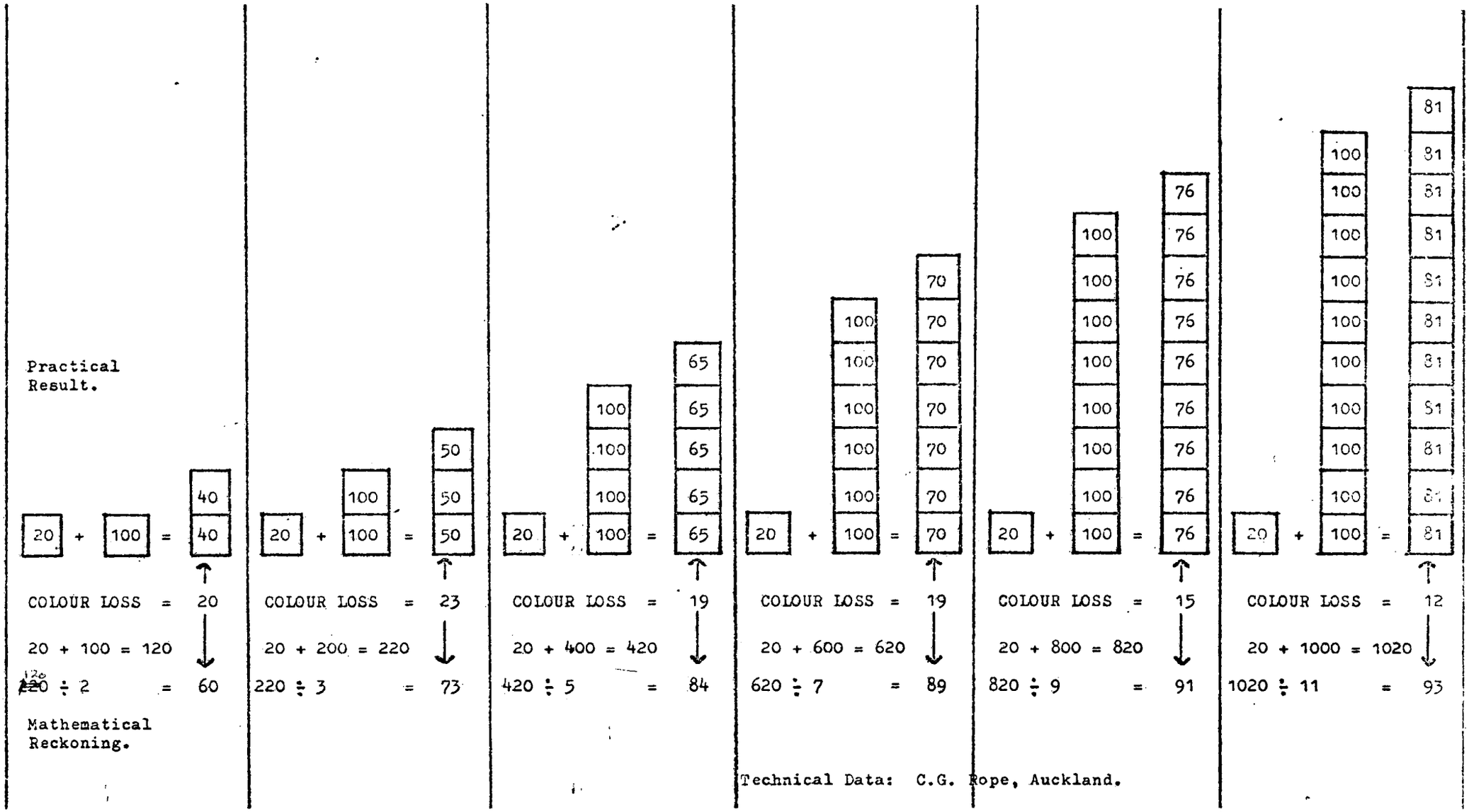
10. FIELD DAY

The local branch of the National Beekeepers Association intends holding a beekeepers' Field Day on Saturday February 16. This function will be held at Rotary Park, Maungatapu, Tauranga, commencing at 10.30 a.m. All beekeepers are welcome.

D.A. BRISCOE
APIARY INSTRUCTOR
TAURANGA

COLOUR LOSS IN BLENDED HONEY DUE TO PIGMENT FACTOR

MIXING EXTREMES OF COLOUR



Technical Data: C.G. Rope, Auckland.