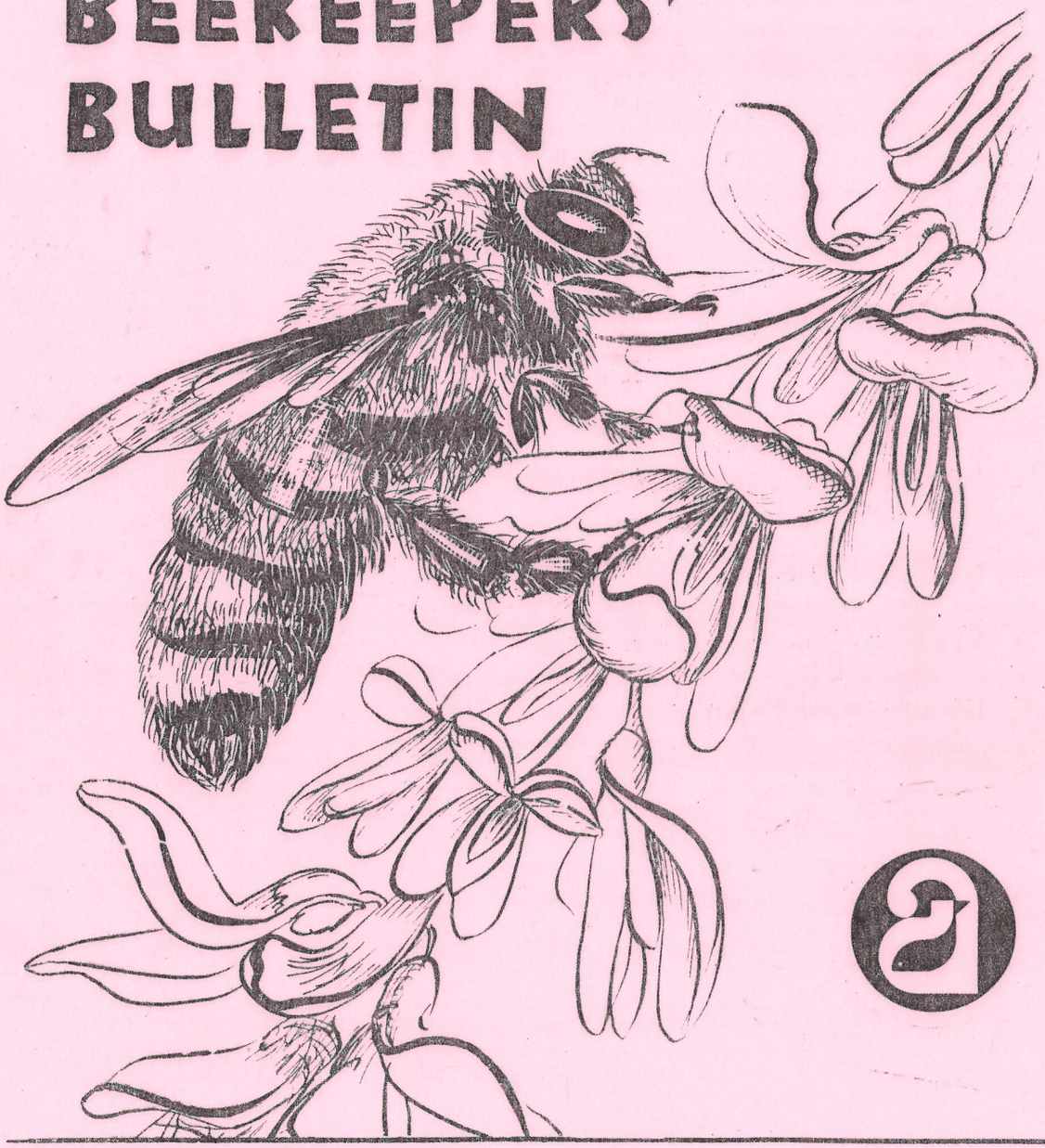
THE BEEKEEPERS' BULLETIN



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Volume 4 Number 2

November 1982

I once heard an American say that "you Noo Zealanders don't have real climate, just sample packages". And he could be right. In Nelson we had spring instead of winter, summer instead of early spring, and winter during October. I'm too scared to guess what we'll have in December and January!

I hope that you either had your requeening programme well under control this year or, failing that, swarm boxes at the ready - you would have needed to.

This spring I just seemed to be boring a path from one field day or meeting to another; Seddon to Punakaiki to Takaka within two weeks at one stage. People often say to me; "why don't you come out our way more often", or "come out and see us some time".

The point is that there are a lot of demands on my time, and if you don't grab me, someone else will. So if you want to see me at your place, by all means ask, that's what I'm here for. But don't be vague about it, make sure your name goes down for a specific date, or at least on a list. That way I won't forget about you.

In the last Bulletin I mentioned that there will no longer be a Chief Advisory Officer (Apiculture) position in Wellington. While some of the tasks associated with the job have been delegated out to non-apiculture staff, most of the mantle has fallen on Murray Reid's shoulders.

Some of you will remember Murray from his time in Christchurch a few years ago. He is now AAO in Hamilton district, a controlling officer for some other advisers in that office, and now the "father figure" of the apiculture staff as well. (He's got grey hair to fit the bill, too).

With more or less the same workload among fewer staff it's natural that we'll get more each. Most field staff have already copped some work delegated from Murray's desk, and this might keep me desk-bound a little more often. But that has to be balanced against less inspection work that I have to do personally. There are three newly-trained MAF part-time inspectors in the district, which should mean that the level of inspection will be kept up.

Which leads me on to some harsh words about disease:

B.L. AGAIN

The clerical staff tell me that very few of the larger beekeeping businesses have submitted their inspection statements so far this year. There is really no excuse for this kind of slackness.

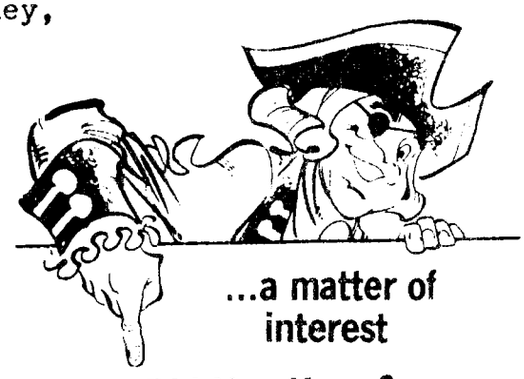
The returns are supposed to come in as soon as inspections are completed, and the end of November deadline is really just a last resort. The process of sending out several hundred reminders is time-consuming, costly (your taxes), and wasteful.

I'm often asked what the B.L. situation is like in the district. Very difficult to say, when people don't notify it to MAF straightaway (as they're required to do), or even submit returns by the due date.

The disease control programme carried out by MAF is to protect <u>you</u> and <u>your</u> industry. All the mouthings of concern at conference mean absolutely nothing if beekeepers aren't doing their own bit.

Some people might still be living in the Dark Ages as far as disease control techniques go. The only effective practice (and the only legal one) is:

- burning of all honey, wax, bees, frames (on site if practicable).
- burning of all woodware that is not in good condition.
- paraffin dipping (10 minutes at 160°C - buy a thermometer) of woodware and queen excluders as soon as possible.
- prompt notice to MAF.



Don't leave cyanide-filled hives sitting in your shed for months, and don't leave diseased boxes sitting there for ages either.

And in answer to the question - very little B.L. has shown up so far this year. It occurs in outfits more than in areas, and there are still a couple of outfits with it cropping up very sporadically, a sure sign of contaminated gear.

NEW TIMBER PRESERVATIVE

A new timber preservative called Woodlife II has come on the market recently, and is being pushed for beekeepers. It hasn't been on the market long enough for me to evaluate its usefulness, or to find out if there are any problems with it. The manufacturers claim that it is not toxic to honey bees, and is suitable for hive woodware.

Woodlife II is a water-soluble product, which does away with the cost of kerosene as a diluent. It can be brushed, sprayed, or rolled on to the surface, or the wood dipped for 3 minutes. Drying takes 4 - 8 hours.

The manufacturers claim that Woodlife II prevents warping, swelling, and fungal decay. It protects the individual cells and fibres of the timber (like Metalex), rather than preventing water absorption (like paraffin). In fact it should give good protection if followed by paraffining.

Woodlife II should be available from stock and station firms or hardware stores - for instance Odlins in Nelson stock it.

The manufacturers are Roberts Company NZ Ltd, P O Box 12 319, Penrose, Auckland 6. Phone 591 149.

Prices are:

	ready to use	concentrate (dilute with 6 parts water
1 l	$5.35	-
2 l	$17.35	-
20 l	$52.80	$242.70 (makes 140 l)
173 l	$398.00	$2325.00 (makes 1 211 l)

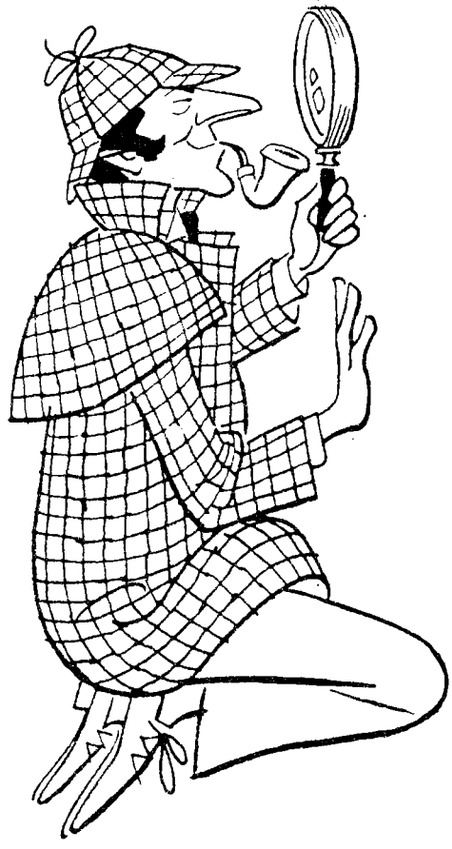
READERSHIP SURVEY

With the last issue of the Bulletin I sent out a short questionnaire about the newsletter. I did this to find out how useful you think it is, and to get some ideas for future issues.

Well, my thanks to the 58% of you who replied. I would have preferred that you were joined by a few others, but hopefully the replies were enough to give me an accurate picture of things.

What did I find out? Firstly, there are two information sources that you value most highly - the N.Z. Beekeeper and the Beekeepers' Bulletin. That response I find most gratifying.

Generally you read most articles and liked the writing style. Subjects most popular are:



- my ideas on beekeeping management
- equipment and gadgets
- research results from overseas
- district news and events

Subjects that you wanted more of are:

- financial and business management
- local conditions and problems
- equipment

And other ideas for the future? Well, ¾ of you simply said more of the same please. That's

good, and that's more or less what you'll get. Others asked for more frequent publication. Unfortunately, I can't see that a change to say, 6 copies a year, would achieve much except a thinner magazine, and more midnight oil being burnt by me. So no change in the meantime I'm afraid.

A surprising number of people used back copies for reference, and some asked for an index. I did one at the end of volume 3, but will now do one in the final issue of each volume (May each year). If you use the Bulletin for reference, why not get a ring binder or lever-arch file to keep them in?

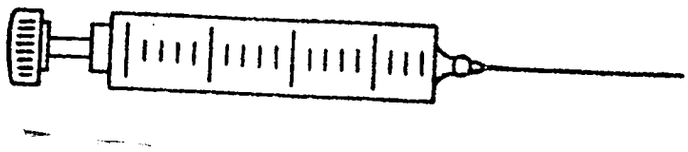
Then you won't be like the beekeeper who was in my office one morning, proudly extolling the virtues of his new accountant. "Saved the first year's fee already, by putting me onto the South Island power rebate."

Aha! said I. You could have saved yourself that for a couple of years now - it was in the August 1980 issue of the Bulletin ...

I'm also quite happy to put in a buy, sell or exchange column, as some people requested, as I know how hard it is to come by bits and pieces of equipment sometimes.

Right back in the very first issue I said that it was "YOUR NEWSLETTER and will not function adequately without comments, contributions or criticism". So keep the bits and pieces of news and information coming, and I'll keep turning out your newsletter.

DRUG FEEDING FOR FOULBROOD CONTROL



Australia usedto have the same policy as we do on using drugs for foulbrood control - totally prohibited. But when they discovered they had EFB, and there was no way they were going to eradicate it, antibiotic feeding was allowed.

In an address to a recent beekeepers' conference, a microbiologist working on bee disease research spelled some of the consequences. He said:

> "Although there is no doubt that antibiotics can control EFB, antibiotics appear to be responsible for massive increases of American foulbrood (AFB). In 1981 1154 hives infected with AFB were burnt in New South Wales, as compared to 254 in 1980.
>
> A similar trend has been observed in England, and I quote from the Veterinary Record:
>
> "It is believed that the unsupervised use of antibiotics has resulted in the massive rise in cases of American foulbrood (caused by Bacillus larvae infection) notified in 1980 by the brood disease inspectors of the Ministry of Agriculture in Wiltshire. There were 249 cases compared with an average of about 25 per year previously.

The use of antibiotics suppresses active infection in bee larvae and the colony is able to survive, even thrive, but the highly resistant spores contaminate honey and equipment, with the likelihood of the spread of infection to other colonies by robbing or emergence of infected bees in swarms.""

Reference. Hornitzky, M. 1982. Bee disease research. Australasian Beekeeper 84(1): 7 - 10.

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HONEY HOUSE INTERIOR FINISHES

Building or modifying your honey house? I have a fairly comprehensive list of interior finishes for walls and floors, that are acceptable for use in dairy factories. Contact me if you want any more information.

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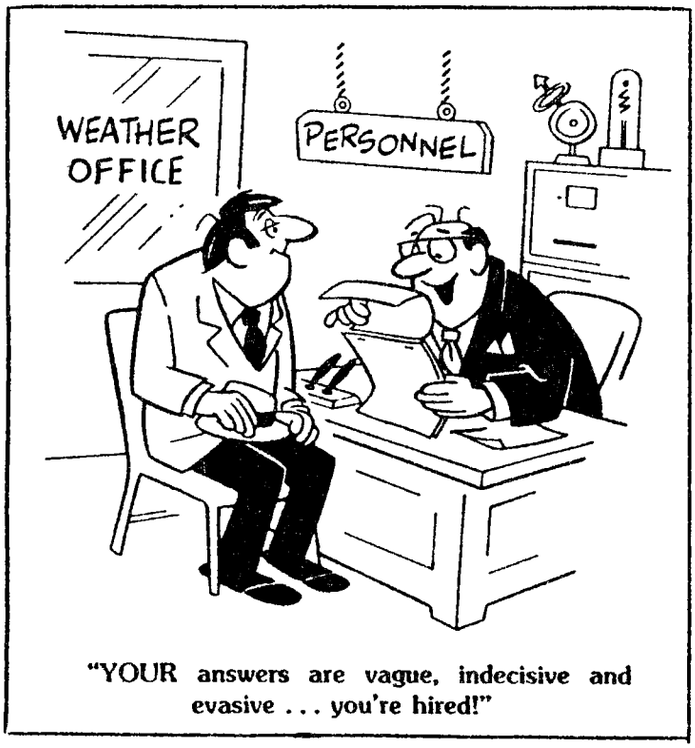
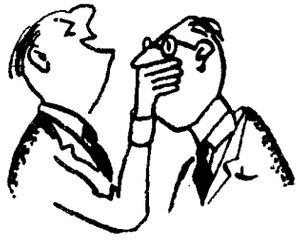


"YOUR answers are vague, indecisive and evasive . . . you're hired!"

NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND MAF SEMINAR



Have you been sounding off lately about conference being held at expensive holiday resorts in far-off lands like the North Island? Soon you'll have the chance to put your money where your mouth is, so to speak.

Next year the mountain is going to come to Mohammed. Nelson will be the venue for the NBA annual conference and MAF one-day seminar. Already preparations are well under way to make this conference go with a real "buzz".

There'll be no excuse this time for you not to attend. Mark the dates in your diary now:

MAF seminar - Tuesday 26 July
NBA conference - Wednesday 27 and Thursday 28 July

The venue for both is the Rutherford Hotel, though accommodation will be at Leisure Lodge. More details in forthcoming issues of the N.Z. Beekeeper.

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"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then give up. There's no use in being a damn fool about it."

- W.C. FIELDS

HIVE TOOLS

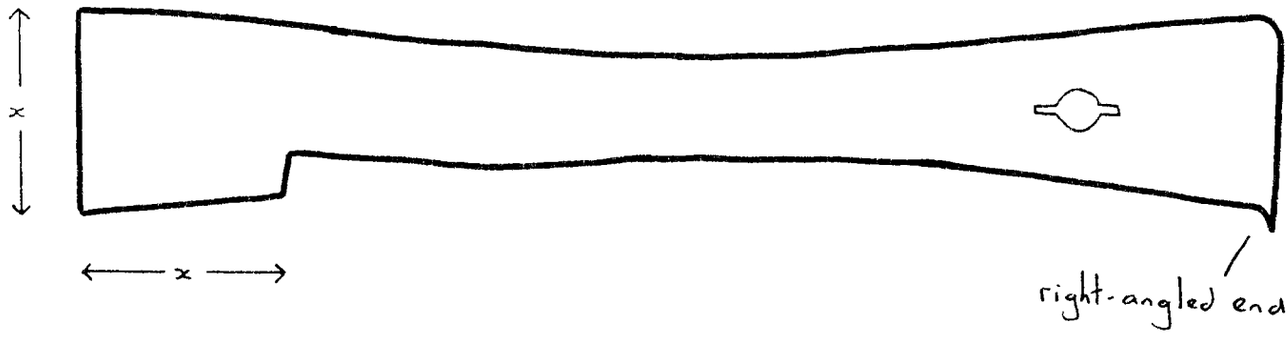
Screwdrivers and paint scrapers, Kelleys and Maxants, jemmy bars and tyre levers. They're all used for hive tools, and I guess each beekeeper uses the one they feel most confortable with.

I prefer the Kelley type, which has a right-angle bend at one end. That end is useful for scraping bottom boards, and the tool can be belted with the palm of the hand when cracking stubborn boxes.

Silly little hooks are only for people with ten frames to a box (and who would do that?).

The right angled scraper part on a Kelley is also good for prising frames apart while working across a box, but you're forever turning it round to use the other end.

One solution to this problem is to attack the Kelley with a grindstone, and put a notch in one side. This, in effect, makes a side blade, which is useful for working apart the frames in the box without having to flip the tool around all the time. It also gives a definite fulcrum point for cracking boxes.



The notch is 8 - 10 mm deep, which makes the "shaft" of the tool more or less the same width for most of its length. The side blade is as long as the end of the tool is wide. If you're left-handed the notch will be on the other side.

* * * * *

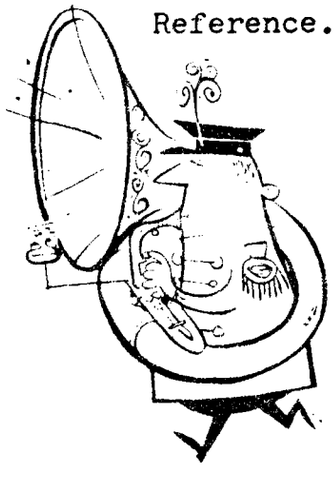
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TASMAN

Ever heard of the big honey crops gained by Aussie beekeepers? Well in a recent Australian Bee Journal that I read, they gave away the secret of their big crops.

"Average production 51.6 kg/hive" (or 5.2 tonnes/100 as we would say). Sounds good until you read the fine print - average production per production beehive (beehives from which honey was taken).

In Aussie they have 530 000 hives (twice the N.Z. total), of which 72% were classified as "productive" hives in 1980 - 81, and the rest weren't used in calculating in the production statistics. If you work out their honey production over all hives, it becomes a more familiar 36.9 kg/hive (3.7 tonnes/100).

Crop estimates done by MAF in New Zealand include surplus honey only (i.e. not feed), and the tonnes/100 figure is calculated using all hives, not just "the ones that produced".



Reference. Australian Bee Journal 63(4):13, 1982.

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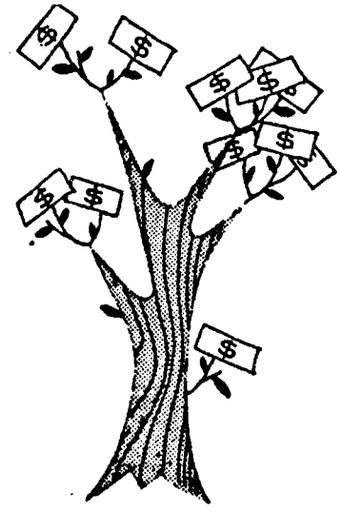
CASH FLOW FORECASTS

Don't forget the computer program available for doing cash flow forecasting (see May 1982 issue for details).

The steps involved in starting with this are:

1. Prepare a plan for your next season's activities (i.e. how many hives you will be running, changes in crop (extracted/cut comb), and so on).
2. Use this to help draw up a cash flow forecast, on the basis of last year's cashbook, modified by inflation and your plan in (1) above.
3. The income and expenditure categories you select will be determined by
   - what you want to look at in your forecast, and
   - the categories used by your accountant.
4. Put the forecast on your own forecast form, which I can get typed up here for your particular business.
5. This information is put on your file in the computer, and a printout of the calculations is sent to you.
6. Use the forecast forms to update the forecast. (This is the most important step.)

Naturally I am available to assist with any or all of these steps.



It helps if you lay out income and expenditure categories in some logical order, e.g.

INCOME
- Farm income
- Non-farm income

EXPENDITURE

- Crop expenses: feed, queens, extracting costs, freight
- Repairs and maintenance: hives, plant, buildings
- Vehicles: all vehicle expenses
- Administration: accountant, office expenses, travelling
- Standing charges: rates, levies, subscriptions
- Capital: development expenditure
- Loan charges: interest and principal
- Taxation
- Personal drawings (if there's anything left!)

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POLLEN PRODUCTION

There is a new aglink out on pollen collection and processing. Ask for FPP 532 Beekeeping/pollen production/ collection and processing.

This will be followed soon by another aglink on pollen trap designs.

* * * * *

By the way, have you ever heard the Advisory Service's motto?

We the willing,
Led by the unknowing,
Are doing the impossible
For the ungrateful.
We have done so much
For so long for so little,
We are now qualified
To do anything with nothing.

BEEKEEPING COURSES

As the saying goes, "due to popular demand", MAF will again be running short courses for commercial and semi-commercial beekeepers at its farm training institutes.

Courses for 1983 at Telford (near Balclutha) will be:

- raising your own queen bees.
  1 pm Monday 21 March - 12 noon Thursday 24 March.
  This is a course for honey producers who wish to improve their queen breeding programmes, and raise more or better queens for their own use.

- expanding into commercial beekeeping.
  1 pm Tuesday 28 June - 12 noon, Friday 1 July
  For people in the process of "going commercial". A bit of everything on technical subjects, and a good deal on how to plan your own business successfully.


"Same with me pal - a week at Telford and I start talking to myself."

Both these courses are at Telford Farm Training Institute, just south of Balclutha. Accommodation is provided on campus for some, in single rooms at $19/night. Hotel/motel accommodation is also available in nearby Balclutha. Three cooked meals per day at Telford cost $3.20. (Note. These are all last year's prices, and may be changed for 1983 courses.) The course will cost you around $25 for tuition and class materials.

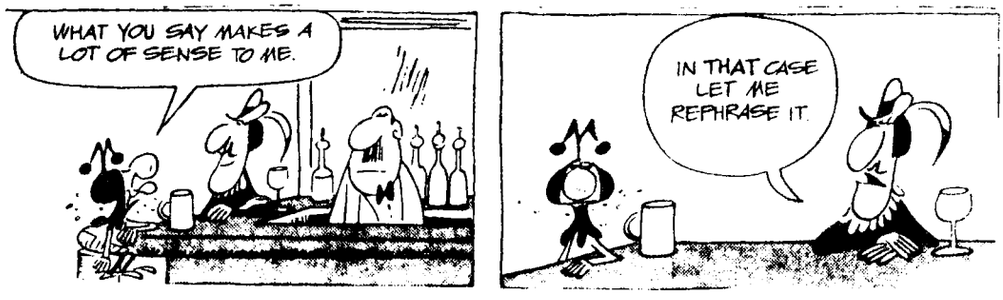
Although Balclutha is a fair hike, transport costs can be minimized by making up a carload from your area. Telford usually helps by sending out course lists to participants in advance.

Flock House courses are back on the menu again, and 1983's serving is a queen raising course. Unfortunately, dates are not to hand at the moment, but it will probably be in February or March.

Flock House has single accommodation at $19/day including meals. Married couples can also be catered for. Tuition costs will be about $25 for the course. Again, these costs may be subject to change.

James Air runs a direct air service to Palmerston from Nelson or Blenheim, for $72 and $86 respectively. Ground transport from the airport is arranged by Flock House.

The courses are packed full of technical content. But just as important is the opportunity you have of mixing with other beekeepers, many of whom will be facing the same situations and problems as you. This part of the courses is rated highly by those who attend.



Many beekeepers in my district have now been on a farm training institute course. Think about whether any of those listed are appropriate for you. You might like to talk about them to me, or to neighbouring beekeepers who have attended one previously.

Places at the courses are limited. To register, write to:

Registrar		Registrar
Telford F.T.I.		Flock House F.T.I.
Private Bag	Or	Private Bag
Balclutha		Bulls

depending on the course.

* * * * *

WHAT A WASTE!

From the trivial facts department:" In AD 1015 a fire in the German city of Meissan was extinguished with mead because of lack of water".

(Crane, E. 1980. A book of honey. p 94).

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BUY, SELL OR EXCHANGE

If you have any items for this column, let me know. The Bulletin is published in February, May, August and November.

* Gavin White (Takaka 58 088) advises that December and January queens will be sold at a 20% discount. Queens at this time could be ideal for making splits, especially in areas with an early honey flow.

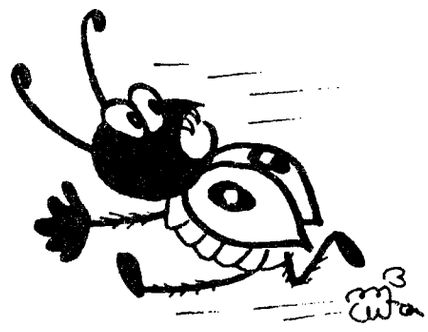
* Arthur Day is selling a 60 litre plastic honey tank, for $45. Phone 82210 or Box 879, Nelson.

BEEKEEPING BUREAUCRACY

Beekeepers in Blenheim and Richmond are hopping mad about a bit more red tape that's cluttering up their beekeeping. The borough councils in both towns have adopted bylaws to control the keeping of bees.

Rather than write their own bylaws, most local bodies adopt (with or without modification) standard bylaws, written for them by the N.Z. Standards Association. This saves time, and in many cases the standard bylaws may have already been tested in court.

The standard bylaw controlling beekeeping is "NZS 901 Chapter 13: The keeping of animals, poultry and bees", dated 1972. In its unmodified form it says that;



- no-one can keep bees without being licensed by the local authority,
- the council can set conditions on the number and positioning of hives,
- the council can refuse or revoke a licence if they consider that beekeeping would be a nuisance, injurious to health, or against the town's current district scheme.

A fee may be charged for the licence, which must be renewed each year.

Blenheim beekeepers were lulled into a sense of false security by the council's promise that the fee was a "oncer". It was, for a while. This year the council has decided to make the $10 fee an annual affair.

Richmond beekeepers now have the same sort of bylaw to cope with. The borough council there says that at the moment it doesn't propose to charge any fee.

What can you do about it? Quite a lot. First of all, recognize that in many cases these bylaws have been imposed because of beekeepers being thoughtless of others - both other members of the public and other beekeepers.

I know, from bitter experience, what it's like to live under a steady "rain", from the flight paths of a dozen hives.

It's no fun washing (or rather, scraping) the windows every three weeks and re-doing a third of the washing every time. So from that point of view, a bylaw in Nelson city would make me quite pleased.

Beekeeping and towns go together well, provided a few ground rules are kept:

- no more than 2 - 3 hives in a normal section;
- keep them out of sight;
- make the bees fly up over a barrier, to keep them out of people's hair;
- be a good beekeeper - work them only on fine days, keep them a gentle strain, don't let them swarm, don't allow robbing to start, and don't wear gloves;

- provide a water supply;
- give some honey to the neighbours.

An aglink on urban beekeeping is in the pipeline at the moment, and should be out in a while.

Beekeepers in Motueka nearly had a bylaw brought in a few years ago, after complaints about spotting because of a large number of hives on a residential section. The bylaw wasn't brought in. Conversation at the council meeting didn't rise much above the level of the Mayor's suggestion that the council should insist that each bee wears a number plate and pays a fee of $1.

Be a good beekeeping neighbour, and make sure that a council has no grounds for bringing in a bylaw. Probably the only way an existing bylaw could be removed is by a publicity and letter-writing campaign organised through the local branch or club.

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KIWIFRUIT POLLINATION IN NELSON

In May last year I put in this Bulletin an estimate of kiwifruit plantings in Nelson and Golden Bay, and possible hive requirements. Recently I updated these forecasts for a talk to the kiwifruit growers' association. It's quite amazing to see how much higher these latest predictions are.

My guestimates are given in the table over the page. They are worked out on the basis of 8 hives per hectare for 4 year old vines and over, and 4 hives per hectare for for 3 year old vines. I'm not suggesting that every grower

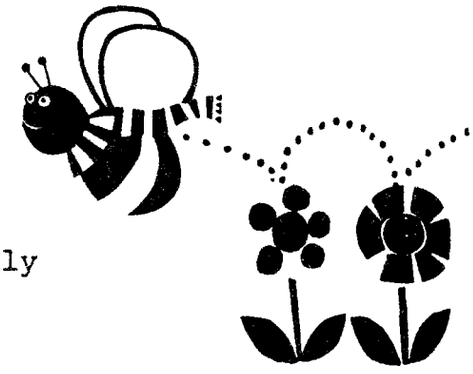
is going to (or even should) follow that formula, but it does give us an approximate yardstick for predictions.

KIWIFRUIT TRENDS IN NELSON PROVINCE

Year	Area in Kiwifruit (ha)	Change from previous year's	"Recommended" Hive numbers
1973	5		
1974	5	0	
1975	8	+3	
1976	11	+3	
1977	33	+22	40
1978	93	+60	52
1979	172	+79	76
1980	367	+195	176
1981	699	+332	504
1982	(1000)	(+301)	1060
1983	(1120)	(+120)	2156
1984	(1235)	(+115)	4264
1985	(1350)	(+115)	(6796)
1986	(1465)	(+115)	(8480)

Figures in brackets are conservative estimates

POLLEN SUPPLEMENTS



Some beekeepers have been having trouble getting hold of soya bean flour for making artificial protein diets. The brand recommended has been Staley I-200, which is apparently unobtainable now. Suitable alternatives are:

* for making supplements (i.e. with natural pollen in)
  Staley F-200 defatted soyaflour, obtainable from the importers A M Satterthwaite & Co Ltd, 203 Hereford St, Christchurch. Phone 796 130. (1981 price $0.90 - 1.20/kg, depending on quantities).
* for making substitutes (i.e. with no added pollen)
  Archer Daniels Toasted Nutrisoy T-6, obtainable from T.J. Edmonds Ltd, P O Box 472, Christchurch. Phone Christchurch 893 189. (Price probably about $1.80/kg)

If you can't get hold of any Staley F-200 or I-200 soyaflour for use in supplements, you could try Staley Bland 50 soyaflour, also from Satterthwaite's.

Overseas experience suggests that it may not be as good as the other two, but will probably be adequate. It is only partially toasted, so it would benefit from toasting at 250°F/120°C for 20 minutes in a shallow pan.

Disclaimer. Mention of any proprietary product is for convenience only, and does not imply endorsement by MAF over similar products not mentioned.

SYRUP FEEDERS

Top feeders have been with us for many years. They are often called Miller feeders, after an American beekeeper who pioneered their use.

Beaverlodge Research Station in Alberta, Canada, has recently come up with a modified version of the feeder. It features a screened entrance cover which restricts the bees to a small area of the feeder, and prevents them from drowning in the syrup. No floatation material is needed.

Figure 1 is an overall view of the feeder, which has a capacity of about 9 litres. It could easily be made deeper, to accommodate more syrup. Construction is straightforward, along the lines of a conventional Miller feeder. But the access hole has some unusual features.

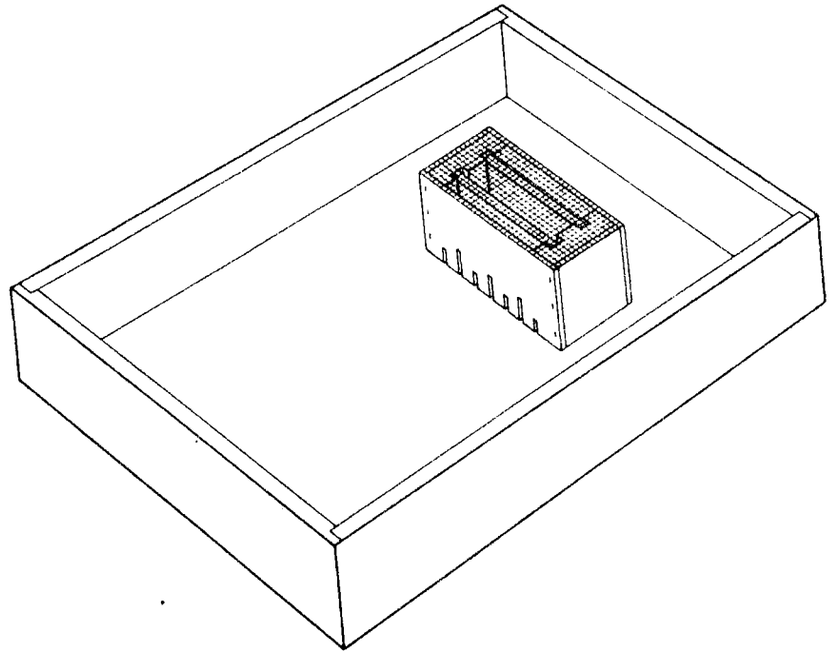


Fig. 1. A modified hive top feeder.

A hole 21 x 105 mm is cut in the bottom of the feeder. This is situated towards one end, so that more feed will be accessible if the hive is not level. The entrance way is made of two pieces of plywood (hardboard would do) glued and nailed into two grooved end pieces. So far, so good.

The main difference is in the entrance cover, which slides over the entrance way. It has slots cut into the bottom to allow syrup to flow to the plywood uprights where the bees feed. A beespace is preserved there, because of the method of constructing the entrance way. The top of the entrance cover is 3 mm (8/inch) mesh screen.

This feeder allows the bees access to the syrup, while preventing drownings. The entrance cover is removable to allow for clearing out dead bees beneath it, or to give bees access to the whole feeder when feeding dry sugar.

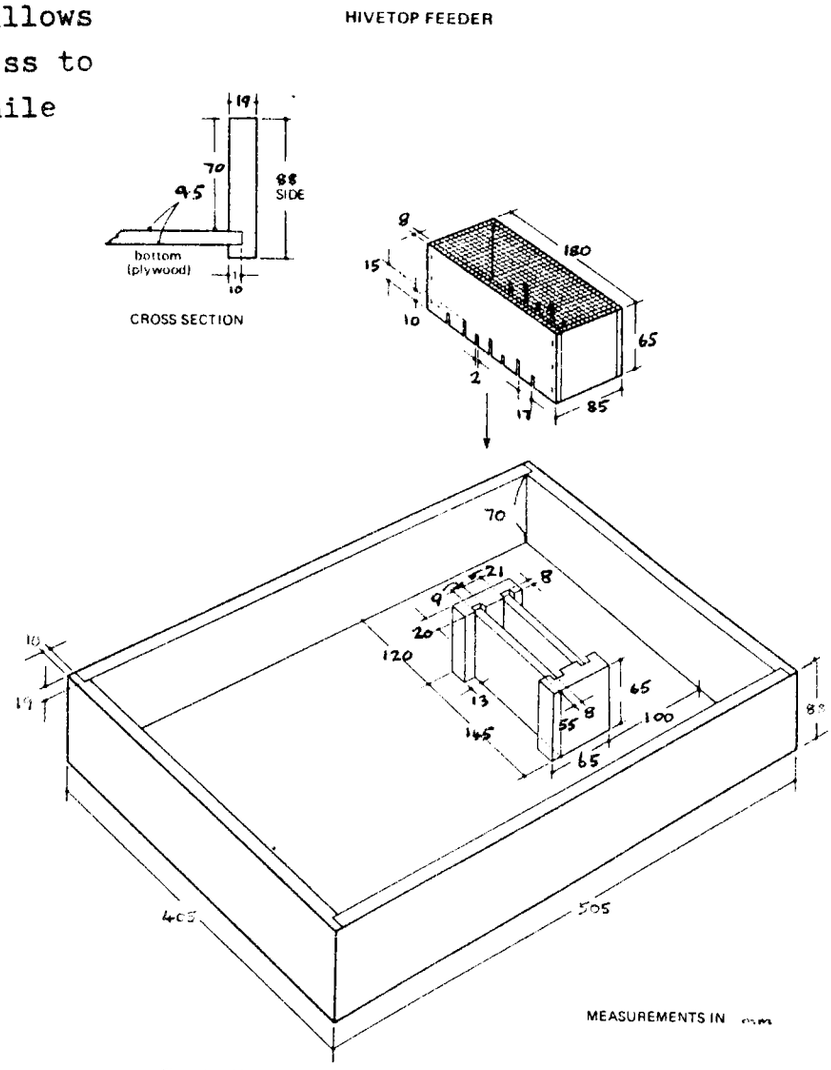


Fig. 2. Measurements of the Beaverlodge hive top feeder.

Dimensions given in fig 2 are in millimetres.

Sealing the joints of syrup feeders is often a problem. Paraffin dipping works well, but often only until the next time they get knocked about on the back of the truck. One solution is to coat the inside with a two-pot fibreglass resin, though perhaps that's rather expensive.

A good preventative measure is to glue all joints during construction, using a good gap-filling glue such as Aerolite 308.

Reference: Szabo, T.I.; Neilson, S.D. 1982. A modified hive top feeder. American Bee Journal 122(7):488 -489.

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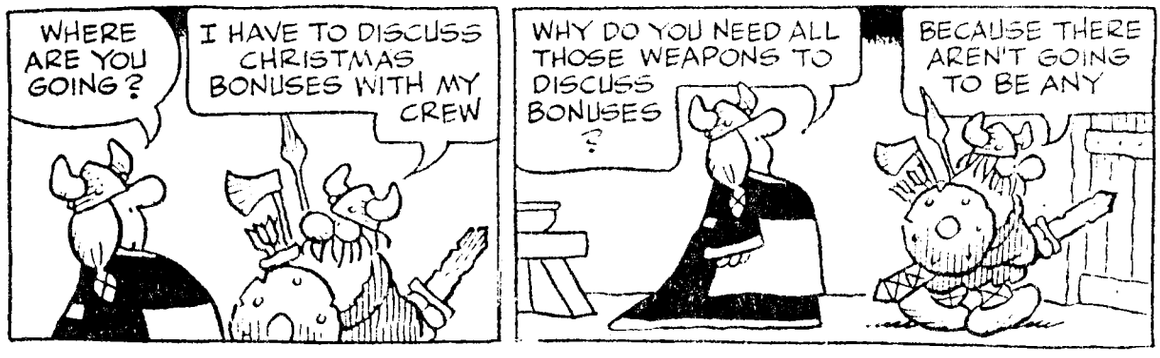
That's enough from me. Finally, how about a sneak preview of December in many beekeeping businesses:



Cheers,

Andrew.

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