

MAF REPORT

Organisation and Staffing

MAF continued to negotiate with the beekeeping industry, and with government, in an effort to secure funding for regulatory activities undertaken by MAFQual staff. These include maintaining the eight apiary registers (which contain over 41,000 names and addresses), coordinating and participating in control of endemic bee diseases, surveying and inspecting for exotic bee diseases and pests, maintaining systems ready to respond to an introduction of an exotic pest or disease or the Africanized honey bee, controlling the placement and management of hives in the toxic honey areas, and issuing export certificates for honey and bees.

Andrew Matheson, formerly AAO Nelson, transferred to Tauranga, to fill a vacancy left by Trevor Bryant's resignation while Derek Bettsworth was appointed to the vacant AAO position in Whangarei. John Smith, AAO Christchurch, applied for retraining as an Agricultural Quarantine Officer and took up this new appointment during the year. Negotiations with MAFTech and MAFQual failed to secure a replacement for the Nelson vacancy.

The South Island continued to be served by only one AAO in Gore, with assistance from a field officer in Ashburton and a livestock officer in Blenheim. Until funds are available, this situation is likely to remain. It also seems certain that if any other AAO's leave then they will not be replaced.

Mr Colin Rope, formerly Apicultural Advisory Officer Auckland, accepted an early retirement option offered by MAF. Mr Rope and John Smith have both given many years service to the beekeeping industry during which time they have held the offices of instructor, honey grader (and deputy grader) and

advisory officer. Their contributions to the industry and to MAF are gratefully acknowledged.

Mr Vince Cook, former AAO Oamaru and acting Chief Advisory Officer (Apiculture), passed away during the year. Vince had recently taken up a position with the International Bee Research Association in Cardiff, Wales. His death is a big loss to the beekeeping industry in NZ and in the UK.

A number of field officers and livestock officers, as well as beekeepers, were engaged as part-time inspectors with a majority of beekeepers volunteering their time and vehicles without charge. This situation is unique in the agricultural scene and is appreciated by MAF.

Beekeeping Statistics

(a) Beekeepers, Apiaries and Hives

There were 7,191 beekeepers owning 335,702 hives of bees at 31 May 1988 (fig I.) Both beekeeper and hive numbers were down on last year and this trend is likely to continue as economic conditions become less favourable and the industry attempts to levy itself to fund MAF's activities.

The former Oamaru apiary district was amalgamated with Gore and Christchurch districts, while the Nelson and Christchurch registers were maintained in Blenheim and Ashburton respectively.

(b) Honey Production

The total crop was assessed at 7,748 tonnes (23.1 kg/hive) compared to last year's crop of 10,091 tonnes (Fig II). Many North Island areas produced low crops and the crop of honeydew was also poor in the South Island. The low prices offered to beekeepers for the majority of the 1986/87 crop saw a large carry over of stocks into the current season. Weak prices on the world

market meant beekeepers were again offered reduced prices for their new season's honey. Prices ranged from 70c kg to \$1.40 kg with some speciality lines such as thyme, low moisture honeys, ling heather, honeydew, and vipers bugloss returning higher prices. Ten years ago the base price offered by the HMA was 81c kg.

The combination of large carry over, poor world prices and, severe competition amongst packers for local sales forced many beekeepers' to consider their future in the industry. A number of outfits have been offered for sale, and many more are available for purchase if a willing buyer could be found. Many beekeepers found alternative work for the winter or hired out their vehicles for cartage work, especially kiwifruit and apples.

Interest in comb honey was strong as a result of weak prices for bulk honeys and export sales were steady. However, the strength of the NZ dollar has lowered returns to beekeepers.

For the year July 1987 NZ exported 604.6 tonnes of bulk honey (\$2.52 kg), 238.3 tonnes of retail packs (\$3.74 kg), 272.6 tonnes of comb honey (\$5.47 kg), 405.8 tonnes of honeydew (\$2.12 kg) and 62.6 tonnes of wax (\$6.08 kg).

Since then average prices for export bulk honey have dropped to \$1.76 kg while comb honey has held at an average of \$5.78 kg.

(c) American Foulbrood Disease and Diagnostic Services

The level of American foulbrood disease (AFB) infected hives reported by beekeepers, or found by MAF, increased by more than 10% over the previous year (Fig III). The most significant increases occurred in Auckland and South Canterbury but other localised outbreaks also caused concern. The most worrying of these involve kiwifruit orchardists who own hives, stolen hives, and some outfits that are financially marginal.

The MAF inspected 8.2% of apiaries compared to 8.6% last year. This was less than the target of 10% and was due to re-organisation of MAFQual staff and to uncertainty over MAF funding this work. Beekeepers in the Whangarei and Auckland apiary districts made cash grants to the MAF to assist with hive inspections and this is gratefully acknowledged.

Brian Milnes, Diagnostician, Lynfield, continued to operate a diagnostic facility for pests and disease of honey bees on a cost-recovery basis. Lynfield can now offer a bacterial cul-

Fig I: Beekeeper, apiary and hive statistics for NZ as at May 31 1988

Beekeepers	Apiaries		Hives			
	1988	1987	1988	1987	1988	1987
Whangarei	670	690	1837	1927	18335	19656
Auckland	1301	1492	2307	2848	20285	23509
Hamilton	820	753	3113	3041	43678	45705
Tauranga	724	790	3800	3788	61451	58423
Palmerston North	1503	1537	4162	4082	41719	40969
Nelson	587	592	2268	2260	26921	26341
Christchurch	965	835	5181	3782	64233	47869
Oamaru	*	390		3661		47710
Gore	621	373	4509	2231	59080	30251
NZ Total	7191	7452	27177	27620	335702	340433

* The Oamaru district is now amalgamated with Christchurch and Gore.

ture test for European foulbrood. Other scientists at Lynfield provided a full range of analytical services for other bee products such as honey and royal jelly.

(d) Queen and package bee production

The queen bee producing season was a difficult one with inclement weather during the spring cycle and Cyclone Bola during the Autumn. The political and marketing climate in our main Canadian market was very volatile and many orders were placed too late for producers to accept or fill.

However, 27,250 queen bees, worth NZ\$267,050 C & F were exported, along with 10,262 kg packages worth NZ\$513,100.

Fig II: Honey Production in Tonnes by Apiary District as at 31 May 1988.

Year	Whangarei	Auckland	Hamilton	Tauranga	Palmerston North
1986	402	1096	1492	1150	887
1987	412	705	1506	1450	1012
1988	255	225	1298	976	834

Year	Nelson	*Christchurch	Oamaru	Gore	NZ Total	kg/hive
1986	871	950	1473	1150	9471	29.0
1987	966	1070	1954	1011	10091	29.7
1988	807	1503	**	1850	7748	23.1

* Includes honeydew

** The former Oamaru district has been amalgamated with Christchurch and Gore.

Fig III: American Foulbrood disease levels in apiary districts to 31 May 1988 (86/87 figures in brackets)

Apiary District	Diseased apiaries		Diseased Colonies		Apiaries inspected by MAF or MAF agents
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Whangarei	39(40)	2.2(2.1)	185(94)	1.0(0.48)	3.0(6.3)
Auckland	291(240)	11.7(8.4)	1278(867)	5.6(3.7)	18.4(4.0)
Hamilton	84(87)	2.7(2.9)	180(175)	0.4(0.4)	7.8(8.9)
Tauranga	249(267)	6.6(7.1)	514(595)	0.8(1.0)	5.4(6.7)
Palmerston North	121(143)	2.9(3.5)	322(340)	0.8(0.8)	10.9(7.9)
Nelson	125(130)	5.5(5.8)	235(266)	0.9(1.0)	3.5(7.6)
Christchurch	302(81)	5.8(2.2)	429(432)	0.7(0.9)	4.6(14.7)
*Oamaru	(103)	(2.8)	(193)	(0.4)	(9.7)
Gore	287(107)	6.4(4.8)	662(447)	1.1(1.5)	12.0(11.5)
TOTAL	1498(1198)	5.5(4.4)	3805(3409)	1.4(1.1)	8.2(8.6)

* Oamaru district now amalgamated with Christchurch and Gore.

Fig IV: Number of apiaries and hives with American foulbrood disease found by MAF or reported by beekeepers to 31 May 1988 (1986/87 figures in brackets)

	No. apiaries	No. hives
Found by MAF or MAF agents	654 (252)	1786 (709)
Reported by beekeepers	844 (946)	2019 (2700)
Total	1498 (1198)	3805 (3409)

MAF Funding

MAF believes it is appropriate and desirable for the industry to generate the required money in any way it can, and then contract to MAF to deliver negotiated services. The performance of MAF will be subject to audit and regular review by the NBA executive.

The MAFQual Board agreed to continue to fund the operation of the eight apiary registers (annual cost \$104,800) until such time as the beekeeping industry can recover these costs from its

members. However, the Boards expectations are that cost-recovery will be in place during the 1990/91 financial year. The MAF asked for \$120,000 to fund the apiary inspection programme. Much of this money would come back to the industry as wages paid to part-time inspectors.

AAO's continued to generate revenue or recover costs in a number of ways:

- * overseas consultancy to W. Samoa
- * auditing pollination hives in kiwi-

fruit and summer fruit orchards.

* subscription clients and discussion groups

* quality-assurance audits and end-point inspection

* general consultancies.

However, these are not big revenue earners and the National Apicultural Business Unit is still far from meeting revenue targets set by MAFQual management.

Murray Reid

National Apiculture Advisory Officer

Cost effective theft deterrent system

A simple, yet effective, theft deterrent system for office, institutional or factory equipment, which can also assist in inventory control, has been developed by a British company.

Marketwise Idee comprises a self adhesive label which is printed with a company motif or message, and has an integral stencil so that a permanent security mark can be applied. Even if a thief removes the label the security mark remains visible.

To complement the stencil labels a set of markers for any surface can be supplied.

CORN BREAD

- ¾ cup cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons melted butter

• Mix dry ingredients. Add milk, honey, and beaten egg. Add melted butter last. Bake 25 minutes in a buttered shallow pan in hot oven (400°F). Serve with honey.