

MAF Quality Management (MQM) Report to the Annual Conference of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand - Waitangi, 22-23 July 1998

1.0 Organisation and Personnel

During the year the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Agriculture were merged into a new Ministry with the Border Services, and parts of meat inspection and verification being relocated in core MAF.

The rest of MQM remain as separate business units within the new Ministry until 1 November when MQM will become two State Owned Enterprises (SOE's). One SOE, called SOE1 (for the time being), involves meat services while the other, known as SOE2, comprises livestock, plants, animal and plant health laboratories, dairy and apiculture. SOE2 has a staff of over 600 and a turnover of around \$50 million.

The viability of the National Apiculture Business Unit (NABU) within SOE2, will depend on securing contracts from the industry as well as government through the MAF Regularity Authority (MAFReg). Retraining, relocating or 'right sizing' will be some of the options necessary if NABU's income stream is significantly reduced.

We lost three staff during the year with the resignation of Robert Rice from Lincoln and Cliff Van Eaton from Tauranga. Tribute has been paid to these officers in BeeFax December 1997. Sadly we also lost the services of a revered colleague Ted Roberts from Palmerston North who passed away in April 1998. Ted had been active in the bee industry since emigrating with his family from the UK via Uganda in 1970. Ted joined the MAF as an Apicultural Advisory Officer in 1985 and his sudden departure is still being deeply felt by his former colleagues.

2.0 Beekeeping Statistics

2.1 Beekeepers, apiaries and hives

There were 5356 registered beekeepers owning 298,921 hives on 23754 apiaries, as at 30 June 1998 (Table 4).

2.2 Honey Production

The total saleable crop was assessed at 8081 tonnes (27.0kg/hive) which is a decrease on last year's crop of 8537 tonnes (29.5kg/hive). The six year average is 8697 tonnes or 29.7kg/hive (Table 5). Per hive figures are taken over all registered hives not just the productive ones.

2.3 Live bee exports

There were 25,722 x 1.5k equivalent packages of bees (each with one queen-bee) exported in 1997/98 and 20,815 queen-bees.

3.0 Exotic Disease and Pest Response (EDPR) Capability

As reported in the September issue of BeeFax, an outbreak response exercise involving NBA and MQM staff was run from a base in Hamilton during the last week of August 97. A total of 2525 hives in 261 apiaries were inspected by 35 teams

over two days. This was a most successful test for our response procedures as it involved 33 MQM staff, 45 beekeepers from the Waikato branch and 11 from the Auckland branch. We were planning to run a similar exercise in the South Island based at Cromwell. Unfortunately this coincided with the rabbit virus response and had to be cancelled.

Restructuring of MAF and the imminent creation of two SOE's from MQM means that outbreak response will be delivered differently in future. These changes are well underway. In future, responses will be managed from the Exotic Disease Response Centre (EDRC) operating out of a permanent facility in Wallaceville. This will remain a core MAF function although in a response, specialist staff will be contracted in. Field work will be managed from a temporary Satellite Headquarters close to the scene of the action.

MQM have the contract to manage the field part of the operation and to provide technical experts to the EDRC. As part of this contract we are to maintain a staff training programme and develop new procedures for communication between the EDRC and the Satellite Headquarters. Unfortunately this contract does not include funding for a joint exercise this financial year but we are hopeful that this can be done the following year to test out the new structure.

New Outbreaks Response standards and contracts from MAFReg are clearly moving in the direction of requiring all primary industries to make a greater contribution toward any future response affecting their industry. The beekeeping industry is well ahead of any other in this area. However it is probable that MAFReg will require this commitment to be formalised in some sort of contract setting out the responsibilities and contributions of all the parties.

One of the issues that will be part of such discussion is access to the information on the apiary register in the event of a response. Timely response to an exotic disease would not be possible without immediate access to high quality information from this database. Another area that needs to be formalised is accreditation of beekeepers and Authorised Persons to carry out inspections and other activities in a response. Clearly it would make sense to integrate this with accreditation as Authorised Persons under the PMS for AFB inspections. The process of accreditation of Authorised Persons under the Biosecurity Act is more difficult than the process of appointment of Temporary Inspectors under the Apiaries Act which will no longer be possible.

4.0 Surveillance

During the 97/98 season, samples of adult bees were collected from 402 apiaries, by MQM staff for exotic mite testing and 688 were submitted by exporters. In addition 380 larval samples were collected and tested for EFB using PCR technology. Thirty seven suspect EFB and three suspect mites samples were submitted and tested negative.

Table 4: New Zealand Beekeeper, Apiaries and Hives Statistics by Apiary District as at 30 June 1998

Apiary Register	Beekeepers			Apiaries			Hives		
	1998	1997	% Change	1998	1997	% change	1998	1997	% Change
Whangarei	1153	1135	+1.6%	2616	2647	-1.1%	31522	30252	+4.2%
Hamilton	511	522	-2.1%	2955	2893	+2.1%	48722	39692	+22.8%
Tauranga	536	518	+3.5%	3029	3242	-6.6%	46852	47964	-2.3%
Palmerston North	1365	1333	+2.4%	3770	3831	-1.6%	39460	37055	+6.5%
Blenheim	487	469	+3.8%	1884	1986	-5.1%	24102	22894	+5.3%
Lincoln	799	790	+1.1%	5024	5294	-5.1%	58926	58452	+0.8%
Invermay	505	519	-2.7%	3746	3861	-3.0%	49337	51149	-3.5%
TOTAL:	5356	5286	+1.3%	23027	23754	-3.1%	298921	287458	+4.0%

Table 5: New Zealand Honey Production in Tonnes as at 30 June 1998

YEAR	Northland Auckland Hauraki Plains	Waikato King Country Taupo	Bay of Plenty Coromandel Poverty Bay	Hawke's Bay Taranaki Manawatu Wairarapa	NORTH ISLAND	Marlborough Nelson Westland	Canterbury* North Otago	South and Central Otago Southland	SOUTH ISLAND	NEW ZEALAND	Yield per hive (kg)**
1993	1033	811	958	577	3379	560	1611	1536	3707	7086	23.3
1994	1295	1946	1524	1442	6207	493	2883	2236	5612	11819	40.8
1995	354	962	1426	1200	3942	499	1685	1921	4105	8047	27.5
1996	829	1639	1077	1367	4912	607	1287	1804	3698	8610	30.0
1997	766	829	933	1112	3640	919	2339	1639	4897	8537	29.5
1998	1014	1404	1314	1230	4962	598	1238	1283	3119	8081	27.0
6 yr ave	882	1265	1205	1155	4507	613	1841	1737	4190	8697	29.7

*Includes honeydew

Library News

Technical Library - Report to Conference 1998

Lending has dropped compared with previous years. In general the library seems to be under-utilised. One would expect a greater use of the excellent video tapes on endemic and exotic bee diseases and the bee diseases education kit, especially by branches and clubs. Their value as an aid with disease recognition does not seem to be fully appreciated. Very pleasing is the interest of some schools and individual students in borrowing library material for projects and assignments.

Reciprocal arrangements between the *New Zealand BeeKeeper* and a number of overseas magazines has worked well for many years with the result that our library now holds a considerable number of complete volumes. More recently gaps are appearing. A request for help in the *New Zealand BeeKeeper* to fill these has met with a NIL response. Magazines have gone from the Executive Secretary's office to some people prior to sending them to the library. This with the best of intentions, saving time and postage. However these items are apparently not returned, possibly passed on to others and become lost. I have urged the Executive Secretary to stop this practice and pass the material directly to the library. Anyone wanting to borrow has but to ask and we do our best to oblige. Thus we can have control. Of course there will be the normal conditions of loan fees and postage. Sorry, it seems to be the only way. I wish to make it clear that this does not include Floyd Marketing, they are always regular and prompt with sending any material on. Publishers have to be approached for back issues which will take library funds which could be put to better use.

The library committee considered a request by the South Pacific Community Commission for assistance with the establishment of a collection of beekeeping literature at Fiji. It was agreed that we could help with some surplus material providing that any freight should be paid by the recipient. Selected were a number of extra copies of books and magazines and photocopies of articles. Two small crates were forwarded to Suva and arrived in good order. The freight costs amounting to \$240 have been refunded.

Books to the value of about \$90 have been purchased. The inflow of research papers and articles has been at an all time low. Recently a new publication was passed on by our Executive Secretary. Many thanks.

There will be no need at present to increase loan fees. The library fund is healthy with some \$700 held in the cheque account and \$1000 on term deposit with WestpacTrust.

John Heineman, Honorary Librarian

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