



CONFERENCE '84

OPENING ADDRESS

JOHN SCOTT, Deputy Director of Advisory Services, MAF.

This is the second time I've had the chance to speak to you at an annual conference. I met you last year at Nelson and put forward my views on the importance of planning and the part I thought you should play in this. A controversial topic and I was provocative.

I welcome this second change because there are things that have happened this year in your organisation that I want to comment on, and also because I should like to share with you what is happening in MAF.

First, I sat in for a while at a planning workshop at Flock House with your Executive, some MAF staff, and representatives of interested groups.

It was a heart-warming experience to join that band of grizzled individuals to see them working as a team, to hear them debating strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. I was impressed by the way they accepted the discipline required by planning and their concern for the industry as a whole.

I believe, however, that this could all go for nought unless you too contribute. I cannot see your executive imposing their decisions on you without consultation, without feedback, without seeking your ideas, and your response will determine the effectiveness of the whole planning exercise.

Now I should like to shift the focus from beekeepers to planning in the MAF and, as I said before, share some of the experiences and conclusions with you.

The results we are looking for from this contribution lie in the following areas:

Agricultural development and productivity

Plant health

Quality assurance

Agricultural policy

These four "result areas" have a bearing on our relationship with you folk—with the beekeeping industry.

Agricultural Development and Productivity

Much of the work of our apicultural advisory officers is directed to this end and I'm sure you will be aware of examples of advisers passing on information, ideas, technology, which have led to increased productivity.

Bee Health

This is an area where we have responsibilities under legislation, responsibilities we share with all beekeepers to monitor disease and take appropriate action when disease is present.

We take this job seriously. It can, and very occasionally does, give rise to conflict. For our part I believe we must show a proper concern for the rights of the beekeeper and,

at the same time, ensure that what has to be done is done. There is probably a continuing need for action by both MAF and the industry to publicise the hazards of diseases to all beekeepers, particularly newcomers and hobbyists.

Quality assurance

The certification of export produce is a case of the NZ Government saying to the Government of the importing country that we know its requirements and we verify that this consignment meets those requirements.

Agricultural policy

Our input to Government policy—that is, the information and advice we give to the government of the day. An example that comes to mind is the representation we made to the Government last year for assistance to Southland beekeepers.

A major difficulty we face is in deciding how limited MAF resources can best be allocated between all the opportunities that exist in this country for increasing net export earnings.

We look at present export earnings. We look at indirect contributions. We assess the vigour of our industry, the likelihood of it achieving its potential for growth and, finally, we allocate resources on a "best bet" basis.

At present about three percent of ASD's resources is directed to your industry, and I believe we would want some pretty strong evidence of growth in productivity to justify a change in this.

The planning exercise your Executive has initiated is certainly a move in this direction and I would look in particular at Goal No. six:

DEVELOP A LONG-TERM INDUSTRY PLAN

In conclusion, may I comment on a statement from Dr Shimanuki who said: "New Zealand beekeepers have a reputation second to none".

I urge you to preserve that reputation.

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LIFE MEMBER

John Heineman, our Honorary Librarian, is now a life member.

John arrived here from Gelderland, a province of the Netherlands, in 1952. Unlike so many of our immigrants, John did not come to bring civilisation to the colonials, he came to be a colonial. He immediately identified with his local community and was as immediately accepted by it. As soon as possible he became a New Zealand citizen, a citizenship of which he is most proud. Congratulations, and "Good on yer", John.