

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HORTICULTURE DIVISION

Two years ago (season 1947-48) a survey was made by the Department to determine how much foul-brood was to be found in New Zealand apiaries. Reports covering the inspection of 128,708 hives showed a total of 1.7% of disease that season.

Another survey was made this year to see what results were being achieved under the present methods of control. Reports obtained from all Departmental Apiary Inspectors and from beekeepers covering a total of 136,915 colonies of bees inspected during the 1949-50 breeding season showed a total of 2.02% foul-brood.

Following are the figures for each Apiary Inspection district:—

District	No. of Inspected colonies	Percentage found of foul-brood
North Auckland	13,440	0.9%
Auckland	8,021	2.5%
Hamilton	23,643	1.2%
Palmerston North and Hawera	21,562	1.3%
Hastings	16,750	1.5%
Christchurch	15,634	3.5%
Oamaru	16,688	2.1%
Invercargill	13,049	2%
Greymouth-Nelson	8,128	4.8%

The two surveys and records going back ten years showed that under the present methods of disease control where beekeepers were allowed to use the shaking method in certain circumstances, the incidence of disease could not be reduced much below 2%. It would, therefore, appear necessary to alter our present methods of control a little if the disease situation is to be improved and foul-brood eventually eradicated in all settled beekeeping areas.

In future beekeepers will be required to destroy the contents of diseased hives found by Inspectors and to sterilise thoroughly any remaining hive equipment by approved methods. It is not considered necessary to burn good apiary equipment such as hive boxes, lids and floor boards provided these are sterilised thoroughly. A suitable pamphlet will be prepared by

the Department dealing with this subject for the guidance of beekeepers.

During the past two seasons the permanent Instructors personally destroyed a total of 1044 neglected and diseased hives.

It is not the intention of the Department, however, to give power to part-time Apiary Inspectors working solo, to burn diseased hives, but where beekeepers fail to clean up disease as directed the permanent Apiary Instructor will attend to the work assisted by a part-time worker where required.

Last year £789 was expended on part-time apiary inspection work. A sum of £1,000 has been placed on the Estimates for this work during the coming season, and this sum will be spent provided the number of competent beekeepers required to put the new disease control policy into operation, are available.

Registrations

Apiary registration figures to the end of June, 1950, completed since the Hon. Minister of Agriculture's address to Conference, show an increase of 196 beekeepers, 752 apiaries and 9,596 hives since 31st March, 1949.

Totals for New Zealand at present are:—Registered beekeepers, 6,683; apiaries, 12,121; hives, 183,982, made up as under:—

Hive Groups	No. of Beekeepers	No. of Apiaries	Hives
1 to 5	4,197	4,282	9,586
6 to 20	1,503	1,770	16,119
21 to 50	422	743	13,812
51 and over	561	5,326	144,465

Export of Bees

A trial shipment of queen bees from New Zealand to England was made by the Department early last April at the suggestion of the High Commissioner for New Zealand in London to test the feasibility of queen-breeders in this country developing a trade in this class of business with English beekeepers.

Special arrangements were made with Airways authorities for their safe carriage in a pressurised cabin. The bees left Auckland on a Tuesday afternoon and reached their destination in England the following Sunday. Advice has been received at Wallaceville from Dr. Butler at Rotheramsted Experimental Station, to whom the queens were addressed, that they arrived in good condition, were successfully introduced, and were doing well.

A trial shipment sent by a Canterbury beekeeper under similar arrangements about three weeks later to a queen-breeder in England also arrived in good condition.

Further tests will be necessary to find the lightest and most suitable queen-cages for future use in consignments by air overseas, to ensure minimum freight costs per queen, if there is a worthwhile market in the United Kingdom.

Any beekeeper who decides to export bees to the United Kingdom should first obtain a certificate of cleanliness from the Department of Agriculture to accompany the packages in accordance with overseas requirements before making application to the Customs Department for the necessary permit to export. A copy of the certificate may then be used by the beekeeper to support his application. Intending exporters should, however, apply direct to the local Apiary Instructor, Department of Agriculture, for full particulars of the procedure to be followed.

No authority would be granted for the importation of bees into New Zealand from the United Kingdom or any other country or State where Acarine disease of bees occurs.

Harvesting Honey

Once again I wish to draw the attention of producers to the danger of careless handling of Phenol boards used for the removal of surplus honey from the hives, also to the excessive use of creasote as a preservative for wooden hive parts.

The Department is concerned about the quality of tainted honey reaching the market this year.

Experience has shown that where Phenol boards are used carelessly or where wooden hive parts have been liberally treated with creasote, there

is danger of the honey becoming badly tainted.

Unfortunately, it has been necessary to reject several lines of tainted honey at the Grade Store this year.

T. S. WINTER,
Superintendent, Beekeeping Industry.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1950

TO MEMBERS:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The work of the Association during the year ended 31st May, 1950, was associated mainly in matters pertaining to marketing and although much effort has been expended little appears to have been achieved in effecting a solution of the Industry's problems on a long-term basis.

The cause of this lack of progress, which is probably more apparent than real, is undoubtedly due to the change in the political situation, brought about by the General Election in November last.

Following the Rotorua Conference, negotiations were immediately opened with the then Minister of Marketing and also with the Directors of the Dominion Producers' Co-operative Agency Ltd., in endeavours to effect an overall improvement in the honey-marketing position.

In so far as the Dominion Producers' Co-operative Agency was concerned however, it was found that little could be achieved unless the Industry was prepared in the first instance, to form a Co-operative Limited Liability Company of Honey Producers to be linked to the D.P.A. Organisation.

In view of past experiences, your Executive decided against any such move being taken by the Association.

On the other hand negotiations with the Minister of Marketing appeared to be progressing favourably and the Minister had stated his intention of calling a conference of representatives of the Marketing Department, the Honey Marketing Committee and your Executive, for the purpose of examining a proposal to institute a written agreement between the Government and the Industry in regard to the marketing of honey and possibly beeswax also.