



**AGRIQUALITY LIMITED REPORT TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND: HAMILTON 20
JULY 2006**

1. PERSONNEL

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It was with regret that the apiculture section farewelled David McMillan from the team during the year. David joined in us in October 1992 and after 13 dedicated years of service decided to accept an offer from a honey company in the South Island. David's contribution over the years is very much appreciated but the good news is that his talents will not be lost to the beekeeping industry. We welcomed Marco Gonzalez to the team in May this year (see the July issue for a profile). Marco is a veterinarian from Paraguay, but has been in New Zealand for 4 years under taking post-graduate studies at Lincoln University.

2. BEEKEEPER, APIARY AND HIVE NUMBERS

There were 2694 beekeepers, 18954 apiaries and 300728 hives on the 14th of June 2006 (see Table 1). This compares to 2911 beekeepers owning 294886 hives on 19281 apiaries this time last year. Beekeeper numbers are continuing to track downwards with a net reduction of 217 beekeepers for the year ending June 2006. This compares with a net reduction of over 300 in the previous 12-month period. Hive numbers however, continue to increase (6000 over the past 12 months) indicating that existing beekeepers have a certain amount of confidence in the industry. 229 new beekeepers registered this season (up 50% on last year) while 446 deregistered.

Varroa mite was confirmed in the South Island on the 15th June 2006, which depending on the success of an eradication plan, could result in a significant reduction in the number of hives in the South Island over the next few years. The table below illustrates the net reduction in beekeeper, apiary and hive numbers over the last 6 years.

American foulbrood

American foulbrood, or AFB, is caused by the bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae*. This disease of honey bees has been regulated by an Apiaries Act since 1906. In October 1998 responsibility for controlling AFB passed to the National Beekeepers' Association Incorporated (NBA). The NBA developed a Pest Management Strategy (PMS), and became the management agency for the strategy. The PMS retained many of the provisions from the previous Apiaries Act 1969 plus some new ones. Key features of the PMS are:

- Every apiary must be registered and all hives inspected annually by an approved beekeeper, who must also report on the disease status of the hives.
- Any case of AFB must be reported within 7 days to the Management Agency
- To become "approved", beekeepers must submit a hive and AFB management plan to the management agency and agree to sit a competency test on AFB recognition and control.
- Beekeepers must submit samples of bees and/or honey for AFB testing if so requested.
- All hives with AFB symptoms must be destroyed although some equipment can be sterilised by heating in paraffin wax at 160 ° C for at least 10 minutes.
- Antibiotics cannot be used to control AFB in New Zealand.
- The AFB Strategy is funded by an apiary levy under the Biosecurity Act 1993. All beekeepers are required to contribute through a base fee of NZ\$20 plus \$8 per apiary (GST exclusive). Beekeepers with fewer than four apiaries, or fewer than 11 hives, pay the base fee plus one apiary fee. Those above the threshold pay the base fee plus \$8 for each apiary registered on the 31st March, the date the levy is struck.

Hive Inspection and Audit Programme to 30 June 2006

AgriQuality Limited collates beekeeping and AFB disease statistics at the end of June each year, which encompasses a full beekeeping season. For the year ending 30th June 2006, AFB was found and reported in 482 apiaries (2.5%) and 952 hives (0.32%). The corresponding figures for the 2004-05 year were 421 apiaries (2.2%) and 778 hives (0.26%).

There were 2117 beekeepers with an approved Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement or DECA, up 47 on the previous year. These are approved beekeepers and are able to inspect and report on the disease situation in their own hives. They can also inspect hives belonging to beekeepers who do not have a DECA and are therefore not approved beekeepers.

Apiary register and statistics

As at 30th June 2006, AgriQuality Limited recorded 2694 registered beekeepers with 18954 apiaries and 300728 hives, compared with 2906 beekeepers, 19281 apiaries and 294886 hives at 30th June 2005. The spread of the varroa bee mite throughout the North Island, and the decision by the AFB management agency to levy all beekeepers to pay for AFB control has resulted in a continuing reduction in the number of registered beekeepers. A National Varroa Pest Management Strategy came into law on 18 February 2005 and beekeepers, in the South Island only, were subjected to a per hive levy of \$1.38 in 2005-06, down from \$2 per hive the previous

Table 1 Changes in New Zealand beekeeper, apiary and hive statistics since varroa arrived in the North Island in 2000

May-2000				June 2006			
Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives	Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives
Blenheim	414	1741	28443	Blenheim	255	1628	25013
Canterbury	727	4748	60356	Canterbury	507	4051	55753
Hamilton	486	2800	49863	Hamilton	185	2193	39544
Otago/Southland	451	3495	50823	Otago/Southland	339	3243	48784
Palmerston North	1214	3655	43534	Palmerston North	655	3256	46468
Tauranga	496	2971	51008	Tauranga	257	2669	53630
Whangarei	1168	3033	36086	Whangarei	496	1914	31536
New Zealand	4956	22443	320113	New Zealand	2694	18954	300728

***Loss of beekeepers, apiaries & hives from 2000 to 2006**

Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives	Loss '00-'06		
				Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives
Blenheim	159	113	3430			
Canterbury	220	697	4603	North Island	1771	2427
Hamilton	301	607	10319	South Island	491	1062
Otago/Southland	112	252	2039			
Palmerston North	559	399	-2934			
Tauranga	239	302	-2622			
Whangarei	672	1119	4550			
New Zealand	2262	3489	22874			

* The varroa bee mite was discovered in NZ in April 2000, an apiary levy was introduced in 2003 for the American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy (PMS) and a hive levy was introduced (for South Island beekeepers only) in 2005 for the varroa PMS

Source: AgriQuality Limited

3. HONEY CROP 2006

The nectar flow stalled after Christmas, following the good flow in late spring and early summer from many bush sources. The honey that was produced in early 2006 came in over a two-month period, as a rather long protracted flow. Despite this, average to above average crops were reported from the North Island and below average crops in the South Island with the exception of Canterbury.

Some exceptionally good yields were recorded in Northland, the Coromandel, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki and Canterbury. Yields in these areas ranged from 36 to 95 kilograms per hive with district averages of 36 to 42 kilograms per hive. The national average was 34.7 kilograms per hive. The New Zealand honey crop was calculated at 10,423 tonnes, up 734 tonnes from the 2004/05 season of 9689 tonnes (see Table 2). The six-year average is 9180 tonnes with a range from 4682 tonnes (2002) to 12,252 tonnes (2003).

year. This also resulted in a number of beekeepers cancelling their registration. There was a net reduction of 217 beekeepers during the year ending June 30 2006 compared to 300 in 2004-05.

New beekeepers are still entering the industry with 229 registering in 2005-06. Prior to the varroa outbreak there were 4914 beekeepers, 21793 apiaries and 302988 hives (July 1999).

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Table 2 New Zealand Honey Crop (tonnes)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	6-year 2006 average	
Northland, Auckland, Hauraki Plains	869	593	1066	1047	1221	1337	1022
Waikato, King Country, Taupo	672	708	2210	1164	1095	1124	1162
Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, Poverty Bay	794	319	2064	2052	1498	1937	1444
Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Manawatu, Wairarapa	1735	750	1607	1330	1440	1935	1466
Marlborough, Nelson, Westland	606	300	1350	550	800	690	716
Canterbury, North Otago	2743	921	2400	1500	1500	2100	1861
South and Central Otago, Southland	1725	1091	1555	1245	2135	1300	1509
New Zealand	9144	4682	12252	8888	9689	10423	9180
Yield/Hive (kg)	29.4	15.0	40.8	30.2	33.1	34.7	31

Source: AgriQuality Limited

4. DISEASE REPORTS

Between June 1 2005 and May 31 2006, 952 cases of American foulbrood (AFB) were found by beekeepers and/or AgriQuality staff in 482 apiaries. This is an average disease rate of 0.32% of hives. Of these AFB reports only 18 cases were found and reported by beekeepers who are not DECA holders. This represents 0.002% of the total number of hives held by non-DECA holders.

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