

20 June 2006

**COMMENTARY AND REPORT ON THE AFB PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY TO 20 JUNE 2006**

**1. BEEKEEPER, APIARY AND HIVE NUMBERS**

There were 2694 beekeepers, 18954 apiaries and 300728 hives on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2006 (see Table 2 and attached hard copy of district statistics). 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 that is almost a 50% increase on last year.

2911  
2694  

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217 net

Varroa mite was discovered in the South Island on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2006, which, depending on the decisions made by government 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.

229  
217  

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446 total loss

**Table 1 Changes in New Zealand Beekeeper, apiary and hive statistics since varroa arrived in 2000**

May-00				June-06			
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				
Hamilton	301	607	10319				
Otago/Southland	112	252	2039				
Palmerston North	559	399	-2934				
Tauranga	239	302	-2622				
Whangarei	672	1119	4550				
New Zealand	2262	3489	22874	North Island	1771	2427	9313
				South Island	491	1062	10072

\* 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

## 2. 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.

## 3. DISEASE CONFORMITY AGREEMENTS (DECA'S) & CERTIFICATE OF INSPECTION (COI)

As at the end of June 2005 there were 2117 beekeepers with DECA's and a Certificate of Inspection Exemption (79% of beekeepers). These beekeepers are able to inspect their own hives for AFB and make reports to AgriQuality on the authorised forms. One DECA was revoked in the reporting period and was subsequently reinstated. Of the beekeepers that are DECA holders, 1165 (55%) have yet to sit the AFB competency exam.

There were 577 beekeepers that owned 11465 hives on 1188 apiaries that required a COI on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2006. This category of beekeepers has decreased as a percentage of the total beekeepers over the last 12 months yet the average number of hives held per COI beekeeper remained stable at 20.

## 4. REPORTABLE STATISTICS

### 4.1 Total Registered Beekeepers / Hives / Apiaries

As at June 20<sup>th</sup> 2006 there were 2694 beekeepers that owned 300728 hives on 18954 apiaries. For the year ending June 2006 229 new beekeepers registered while 446 deregistered.

### 4.2 Total reported AFB *04-05 stats*

778 cases of AFB were reported by beekeepers or found by AgriQuality representing an infection level of 0.26%.

*117  
2170  
47*

### 4.3 DECA's

There are a total of 2117 beekeepers that currently hold DECA's. Of these, 167 were issued in this contract period. This means that 220 DECA holders exited the industry in the previous 12 months. There are 1165 beekeepers who hold DECA's that have not sat their exam. This is 55% of the total number of DECA holding beekeepers, a 2% improvement on last year.

### 4.4 Abnormal event summary

In addition to the events noted in the March report:

#### Disease Outbreak Auckland area

An AFB outbreak in the Auckland area resulted in the need to dispatch an AP2 into the area to determine the extent of the problem. The problem was eventually brought under control but resulted in the identification and destruction of 12 cases of AFB over 7 apiaries

#### Commercial beekeeper Coromandel

A commercial beekeeper complained that a fellow commercial beekeeper had placed hives beside 2 of his apiaries. In one case the new apiary was right on the roadside. The complainant stated that his bees were robbing some of the new hives very heavily. He subsequently found 2 suspect AFB cells in one of his hives.

He confronted the beekeeper who had 'dumped' hives near his apiaries and asked whether he had registered the new sites. The owner allegedly said he didn't register new sites as the last time he did that the 'government' came and inspected them and found a lot of AFB'. This beekeeper has not put in an ADR return since July 2002 and 8 cases of AFB are recorded in the 2003-04 season.

#### **Hobby beekeeper Auckland**

Hobby beekeeper Auckland had 2 cases of AFB in hives that were caught up in an outbreak involving a number of hobby beekeepers. She had shifted a nucleus hive to South Auckland before discovering AFB in her hives. This was subsequently inspected and found to be infected with AFB and was destroyed. The good news is that this hobby beekeeper is very keen and has obtained a DECA and passed her AFB competency test. She recognised AFB in all her hives at an early stage and called AgriQuality who arranged a second opinion to confirm her diagnosis.. She will get more beehives next season.

#### **Commercial Beekeeper Canterbury**

In the spring of 2005 a neighbouring beekeeper expressed concerns over the state of this beekeepers operation in light of their disease history. An apiary officer inspected three of his apiaries along with the beekeeper. The apiary officer determined that the beekeeper was competent in detecting AFB and went on to find that one apiary had six cases of AFB while the other two were clean. A Notice to Destroy the diseased hives was issued and acted upon.

Later in the spring another neighbouring beekeeper found disease in his hives and near this beekeeper and on checking some of this beekeepers hives (unofficially), found disease.

The beekeeper was then asked to complete a full disease inspection of his total outfit (similar to that required under a COI). As a result of this inspection 6 more cases of AFB were discovered.

Recently we have received further complaints from neighbouring beekeepers that may require further investigation.

#### **4.5 Total Number of DECA's Reviewed / Amended / Revoked**

21 DECA's have been formally reviewed with approximately another 20-30 informally reviewed as part of the counselling service. 3 DECA's were amended as a result of this process. Like last year, the DECA review process this year was focused on current problems rather than historic information, which made the process more useful from a disease management perspective.

#### **4.6 Beekeepers requiring Certificates of Inspection.**

There are 11465 hives on 1188 apiaries owned by 577 beekeepers that require a certificate of inspection. These beekeepers reported 18 cases of AFB.

#### **4.7 Number and Percentage of AFB found & reported by AgriQuality & AFB-PMS AP's**

AgriQuality and its contractors inspected 291 hives on 48 apiaries during the last year. 22 cases of AFB were found (7.5%).

#### **4.8 Number of unregistered apiaries found and instructions to register sent to the registrar**

5 unregistered apiaries were found and subsequently registered during this contract period.

**4.9 Number of abandoned apiaries found / destroyed by AgriQuality.**

Eleven abandoned apiaries have been found during this contract period. Most of these relate to an incident of gross neglect to the point of abandonment. Ten of these apiaries have been dealt with while the other one is currently being processed.

It is difficult to determine the number of hives that were abandoned on the nine sites belonging to one beekeeper as most hive equipment contained no active colonies and dilapidated equipment was spread throughout the sites. A number of these sites have now been vacated. However, 3 sites are still being used and contain approximately 20 active colonies.

One abandoned commercial apiary was reported in the Waihi area by a hobby beekeeper. This was eventually traced to its owner who claimed to be managing the site and it was registered. This appeared to be a case of a hobby beekeeper's impression of how an apiary should look although the owner said hive placement, access and grass control should be improved.

**4.10 Number of beehives infected with AFB destroyed on default of a notice issued**

The NBA or AgriQuality have not destroyed any hives on default of a notice during this reporting period. All beekeepers complied with notices issued.

**4.11 Number of restricted place notices sent to beekeepers under the AFB-PMS**

One restricted place notice was sent restricting movement of bees and bee equipment over an entire commercial operation. This was done so that AFB inspections could take place with minimum interference by the beekeeper.

**4.12 Number of apiaries and hives inspected on default of a notice**

No apiaries were inspected.

**4.13 Number of AFB robbed out hives found or reported**

4 hives reported to have AFB were robbed out and were noted in the abnormal events in the March 2006 report.

**4.14 ADR & COI defaulters**

There are currently 932 ADR defaulters (35%). This is a lot lower than the normal level of non-compliance expected. There are 472 COI defaulters (82%).

**4.15 Number of GNA's outstanding**

51 GNA's are currently outstanding.



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