

## **AGRIQUALITY LIMITED REPORT TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND: DUNEDIN 5 JULY 2007**

### **1. PERSONNEL**

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#### **Registrar of Apiaries AgriQuality Limited**

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During the year the apiculture section lost the services of Carole Lasseter as Apiary Registrar based in Lincoln. Carole had taken on extra work in the Seeds Section within AgriQuality and did not have the time to undertake registrar duties for the apiary group. Carole's contribution over the years is much appreciated. She will continue to be available as Registrar in an exotic bee disease response. Bob Derry continues as Apiary Registrar based in Hamilton and he, or any of the Apiculture Officers, can assist with registrar enquiries

### **2. BEEKEEPER, APIARY AND HIVE NUMBERS**

There were 2602 beekeepers, 19228 apiaries and 313399 hives on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2007 (see Table 1). This compares to 2694 beekeepers owning 300728 hives on 18954 apiaries this time last year. The downward trend of beekeeper numbers appears to be leveling off with a net reduction of only 92 beekeepers in the last 12 months. This compares with 217 beekeepers in the previous 12 months period. By comparison, both apiary and hive numbers continue to rise with an increase of 274 apiaries and 12671 hives. Most of this increase happened in the North Island (92% of the hive increase).

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

May-00				June-07			
Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives	Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives
Blenheim	414	1741	28443	Blenheim	292	1874	26533
Canterbury	727	4748	60356	Canterbury	502	3783	52796
Hamilton	486	2800	49863	Hamilton	175	2207	41236
Otago/Southland	451	3495	50823	Otago/Southland	335	3325	51280
Palmerston North	1214	3655	43534	Palmerston North	576	3156	47724
Tauranga	496	2971	51008	Tauranga	249	2834	58408
Whangarei	1168	3033	36086	Whangarei	473	2049	35422
New Zealand	4956	22443	320113	New Zealand	2602	19228	313399

**\*Difference between bkprs, apiaries & hives from 2000 to 2007**

Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives	Loss '00-'07		
				Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives
Blenheim	-122	133	-1910			
Canterbury	-225	-965	-7560	North Island	1891	-2299
Hamilton	-311	-593	-8627	South Island	463	9013
Otago/Southland	-116	-170	457			
Palmerston North	-638	-499	4190			
Tauranga	-247	-137	7400			
Whangarei	-695	-984	-664			
New Zealand	-2354	-3215	-6714			

\* 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. The latter levy will not be collected in 2007 or future years following the establishment of varroa in Nelson..

Source: AgriQuality Limited

### 3. EXPORT OF LIVE BEES

Bulk bees are exported as “package bees”, which are cardboard and wire mesh units that contain between one and one and a half kilograms of bees, a queen bee and a food source. The demand from Canada for package bees reached a peak in 2003/04, with the orders for the last two years being well down. However, for the 2007 exporting season, orders increased by 68% and 15120 packages of bees weighing 1 kilogram each, and 4350 individual queen bees were exported. In comparison, 8988 packages and 10,172 queen bees were exported in 2006, 15711 packages in 2005, 27729 in 2004 and 25121 in 2003

In addition 670 queen bees were sent to the UK and 500 bumble bee queens went to Korea. Bumble bees are used mainly to pollinate greenhouse crops such as tomatoes.

### 4. HONEY CROP 2007

Similar to last year the nectar flow stalled after Christmas, following reasonable bush flows in late spring. The honey that was produced in many areas in early 2007 came in over a two-month period, as a rather long protracted flow. Despite this, average to above 6-year average crops were reported from the North Island. Below average crops were reported from the South Island, especially in Southland, parts of Central Otago and Marlborough. Just under 1000 hives were removed from Nelson city and surrounding areas and taken to the North Island in an attempt to eradicate varroa. This loss is reflected in the smaller crop reported from that area.

Some very good yields were recorded in parts of Northland, the Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay and the Manawatu. Yields in these areas ranged from 40 to 48 kilograms per hive with district averages of 36 to 40 kilograms per hive. The national average was 30.7 kilograms per hive. The New Zealand honey crop was calculated at 9666 tonnes, down 757 tonnes from the

2005/06 crop of 10423 tonnes (see Table 2). The six-year average is 9267 tonnes with a range from 4682 tonnes (2002) to 12252 tonnes (2003). Regional honey production data for the past six years are summarized in Table 2. 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. The six-year average is 9180 tonnes with a range from 4682 tonnes (2002) to 12,252 tonnes (2003).

**Table 2: New Zealand honey crop**

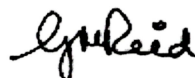
	2002 (tonnes)	2003 (tonnes)	2004 (tonnes)	2005 (tonnes)	2006 (tonnes)	2007 (tonnes)	6-year average (tonnes)
Northland, Auckland, Hauraki Plains	593	1 066	1 047	1 221	1337	1252	1086
Waikato, King Country, Taupo	708	2 210	1 164	1 095	1124	1270	1262
Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, Poverty Bay	319	2 064	2 052	1 498	1937	1897	1628
Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Manawatu, Wairarapa	750	1 607	1 330	1 440	1935	1912	1496
Marlborough, Nelson, Westland	300	1 350	550	800	690	675	728
Canterbury	921	2 400	1 500	1 500	2100	1620	1674
Otago, Southland	1 091	1 555	1 245	2 135	1300	1040	1394
New Zealand	4 682	12 252	8 888	9 689	10 423	9666	9267
Yield/hive (kg)	15.0	40.8	30.2	33.1	34.7	30.7	30.6

## 5. DISEASE REPORTS

Between June 1 2006 and June 20 2007, 952 cases of American foulbrood (AFB) were found by beekeepers and/or AgriQuality staff in 540 apiaries. This is an average disease rate of 0.30% of hives. Of these AFB reports 85 cases were found and reported in hives on 31 apiaries owned by beekeepers who are not DECA holders. This represents 0.007% of the total number of hives held by non-DECA holders.

## 6. EXOTIC HONEY BEE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

The inspection and sampling programme is split into the inspection and sampling of 350 apiaries in high-risk areas such as major cities, tourist centres and near ports and airports, plus the testing of bee samples from apiaries supplying bees for export. The target for the high-risk areas was almost completed with only a few apiaries still to be done. For the low risk surveillance sites, 375 samples were collected out of a target of 300 samples. No exotic bee diseases were reported. AgriQuality will prepare a more surveillance detailed report when the lab testing has been completed.



Murray Reid

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