

The President's Report

My second term as President has proved to be interesting, enjoyable, satisfying and a lot of work. Interesting, because of the new ground we have covered, enjoyable, because of the people I have met and worked with, and satisfying because of what we have accomplished.

Once again I would like to give special thanks to all those who have helped with the work load. To my wife Pat, the rest of the family and the staff of Arataki who had to look after our family and business while I have been attending to NBA matters. To Steuart Goodman, Olive Hebron, and the other staff of the Pork Industry Board. To Vice-President Allen McCaw and the other four members of the Executive. To Elisabeth and Michael Burgess; to Murray Reid and the other apicultural advisory officers; to Pat Clinch and the team from Wallaceville; to the many other people from the MAF and the DSIR and the Agricultural Quarantine Service; to the members of the branches and to the many others who have helped — Thank you.

The Honey Crop

After below-average honey crops for several years that for the 1984-85 season has been an improvement in many parts of New Zealand. Earlier indications suggested we were heading for a 10,000-tonne crop, but some areas

reported a poor finish so it is probably lower than this. I am very concerned at the lack of up-to-date information on the crop available to the NBA. "Better Marketing" is one of our responsibilities, but we are not able to advise on marketing strategies unless we have up-to-date estimates of what honey is available for sale. I suggest we address this problem through our Industry Plan. A monthly report from branches on honey crops, stocks, and prices may be an answer.

Honey Marketing

During the past few years rising costs have not been matched by increases in the price of honey. The 20% devaluation helped with our export prices, but beekeepers are finding that the price at which honey can be sold is not related to its production costs. The same applies to other agricultural and horticultural products although we do have the advantage of being able to store our honey for long periods at comparatively low rates. However, high interest is having a marked effect on the cost of storing honey. To keep a stable honey market in New Zealand we need to export sufficient to ensure the local market is not oversupplied while being careful not to over-export and leave the New Zealand market short. I am also concerned that the NBA does not have up-to-

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Conference '85 President's Report (cont)

date figures on the amount of honey being exported and suggest we must remedy this as soon as possible.

Cost Savings

While beekeepers can do little about cost increases they must still keep a close watch on them. The NBA has helped here with the deal of industrial raw sugar which means that beekeepers can buy sugar about 10% cheaper than last year in spite of the recent increase. Members will have noticed the Conference expenses this year were down \$9 thanks to the efforts of the West Coast Branch. Many members are buying low-cost, used 200-litre drums for holding their honey crop and others are taking advantage of the competition which exists in the transport and packaging industries to negotiate price reductions. The old saying "a dollar saved is a dollar earned" is very relevant today and it also helps keep honey prices competitive with other spreads.

Importation of Honey to New Zealand

Concern has been expressed that the recent removal of honey from import licencing control could result in imports of foreign honey into New Zealand. There have been some import licences for honey advertised for tender in recent years but virtually no honey has been imported because of the agricultural quarantine restrictions. The NBA was asked for its views before the removal of import control and we expressed strong opposition to the move. Unfortunately our opposition did not prevent the removal of import controls but for as long as New Zealand remains free from EFB I see no possibility of foreign honey being imported. There is in effect a virtual ban on importing bees, bee products, or used bee equipment into New Zealand because of the risk of importing exotic bee diseases which could have a devastating effect not only on our beekeeping industry but on horticultural and agricultural crops which depend on honeybees for pollination.

Pollination by Honey Bees

The number of hives used for kiwifruit pollination continues to grow rapidly and the income provided by pollination is becoming increasingly important to beekeepers. There are plenty of hives available to meet all pollination requirements and probably always will be provided returns are satisfactory to beekeepers, and provided disease doesn't become a problem with orchard hives. Kiwifruit is not the only crop needing pollination however, and I thought some figures from Mr John Paynter, Director of the Apple and Pear Board could be of interest. Production of apples in New Zealand this year was 14.3 million carton equivalents. By 1990 this will probably rise to 25 million and this could double again to 50 million by the year 2000. Apart from the large growth taking place in Hawke's Bay and Nelson we are also seeing a very keen interest in pipfruit plantings in South Auckland, Waikato, Gisborne, Wanganui, and Canterbury. In Canterbury, for example, where production is currently around 300,000 cartons a year, there are already enough trees in the ground to produce four million cartons by the early 1990's. To top off these figures, stone fruit production in New Zealand is forecast

to treble in the next five years. This adds up to a lot more pollination work for our bees.

Promotion

At present honey is being promoted heavily. Supermarket specials, often at low prices, are continually bringing honey before the public. Recently five different TV ads have featured or mentioned honey. Several firms have advertised New Zealand honey in publications to overseas buyers, and Trade and Industries have actively investigated possible overseas markets. The NBA has a policy of gradually building up a supply of reasonably-priced promotion material available to members through branches. Uncertainty about the availability of trust fund money has resulted in the supply of these materials being slower than many would have liked, but from now on we expect faster progress in this area. The West Coast branch had a sales table at Conference with the various promotion materials and publications available from the NBA.

Industry Trust Funds

These were established on 1 July 1984 and the three trustees, David Kay, Russell Berry, and Ivan Dickinson, recently held a meeting at which some trust money was allocated to projects which will benefit the industry. The main allocation was \$25,000 for Dr Denis Anderson's salary and expenses during the second year of his appointment as bee pathologist at the DSIR, Mt Albert. The accounts for the trust funds as at 31 December 1984 show a total of \$838,717. These two trust accounts should be of great benefit to our industry in the future.

The Industry Plan

This has proved a very worthwhile exercise and I have high hopes it will make a significant contribution to the future planning and efficiency of our industry and the NBA. Allen McCaw, who has handled much of the work associated with the industry plan has suggested we need an extra Executive meeting in May of each year. This sounds like a good idea as it will give us more time for industry planning before conference.

Beekeeper Education, Agriculture Quarantine, and the NZ Beekeeper

These are other important matters to which the executive have devoted much time this year. Agriculture Quarantine was discussed at the Industry Planning Workshop and we had reports on Beekeeper Education and the NZ Beekeeper.

The Future

Our motto "Better Beekeeping — Better Marketing" is what we must all strive for. That means more honey and beeswax production per hive at the lowest cost per kilogram; more hives put to pollinating the expanding horticultural crops; more queen and package-bee exports; more diversification wherever profitable markets can be found for such things as pollen, propolis, and royal jelly; more emphasis on achieving the maximum profits possible from each beehive, or to put it another way, producing the maximum return for capital invested.

Finally I suggest that the greatest single influence on the profitability of the beekeeping industry in this country is the ability of those within the industry. That is what Conference is all about — talking with each other and working together.

Ian Berry