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beekeeper

DECEMBER 1981



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THE NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPER

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Cover photo:

Honey bee foraging on buttercup. Photo by the late Herman van Pufflen, courtesy Trevor Bryant

EDITORIAL

THE HONEY EXPORT Regulations are no longer with us. An NBA request that they should be put on ice for a trial year, while the industry was given a free hand to export at will, was not acceptable to the government.

This means that there are now no controls over the export of NZ honey. Though in the event of a crisis, government has the power to enact a special customs prohibition order virtually over night.

For beekeepers who suddenly find themselves subjected to the entreaties of private buyers, it is a new ball game. Suddenly, reports of changes in the value of the New Zealand dollar and overseas recessions have an impact on decisions which must be made by every beekeeper with a crop to sell.

- When the man in the smart suit says that he can only give you 10 per cent more than last years price because of a flood of Chinese honey on the European market, do you believe him?
- When your bank manager is screaming and your friendly private packer says hold on until prices firm overseas, who do you listen to?
- How do you compare the price offered by a private agent with a cheque book in his hand, to the advance and final payment system offered by a co-operative?

It's never easy to make such decisions, though in other primary industries many producers find that the best course of action is to sell through the same system or same mix of systems each year. In that way, the swings tend to cancel out the roundabouts and a certain buyer-seller loyalty develops.

In this industry, comb honey producers have already shown the power of informal price co-ordination. It's an example worth following: In other words, never sell without checking the price with a couple of other contacts, be they other buyers or sellers.

The man with the chequebook can afford to wait in the kitchen while you make a call from the lounge. There's too much at stake for everyone in the industry if weak selling results from beekeeper inexperience.

NBA president Tony Clissold emphasises that 20 per cent inflation has taken place since last year, and whatever your selling price, it should allow for this sort of margin on last year's price.

Volume of supply can also influence such calculations, of course, and Tony sees this as an important area for industry involvement. He would like to see the finance from the realisation of NBA assets to be used in an intervention fund to cream off a proportion of the national honey crop, in bumper harvest years.

Although he's a private packer himself, Tony is not keen to see all regulation removed from the industry. "A price smoothing scheme is what successive governments have wanted and this sort of operation would probably need legislative backing if it is to work."

At this stage, however, there is only a small sum available to the industry from the HMA, with the bulk of funds still tied up in assets or in the mortgage to the NZ Honey Producers' Coop. Whatever is done with these funds in the long-term will depend very much on their prudent investment in the short-term — a matter which is currently getting a lot of NBA executive attention.

However, balanced decisions usually take time and both NBA president Tony Clissold and HMA chairman Ivan Dickinson are in no panic. Both are happy to see the HMA structure sitting in the background for a while yet, to make sure that investment decisions made around board tables and marketing decisions made at kitchen tables are capable of meeting the future needs of beekeepers.

In between extracting all those swelling supers, it will pay to take five and ponder the future of the industry . . . to work out what you expect from your industry body in the years ahead. The NBA needs to know.

Meantime, on behalf of Tony and the NBA executive, Len Jones, Jean James and the Agpress editorial and production team, the "NZ Beekeeper" wishes you and your family a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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(per insertion)

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Commercial beekeepers: The NZ Beekeeper is distributed
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subject to payment of hive levy.

Others: Beekeepers with fewer than 50 hives and other
subscribers: \$12.50 a year. This includes (for New
Zealand subscribers only) membership of National
Beekeepers Association of New Zealand (Inc).

New secretary

The National Beekeepers Association has a new secretary. He is Mr Len Jones, accountant for the Pork Industry Council.

Mr Jones works closely with former secretary David Dobson who has resigned because of the pressure of his Pork Industry Council commitments. However David will be performing a "backstop" role and his services will not be entirely lost to the association. Secretarial services for the National Beekeepers Association have been provided on contract by the Pork Industry Council since 1975 when Mr Graham Beard became secretary.

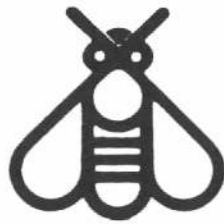
Mr Dobson told the September meeting of the NBA executive that Mr Jones' experience as an accountant would strengthen the services provided to the association by the council, particularly in view of the forthcoming involvement of the association with the taking over of the Honey Marketing Authority's funds and the formation of the new co-operative.

No junior membership

There will be no junior membership of the NBA. After fully discussing a conference remit that such a membership category should be introduced, the executive concluded that its limited benefits would be outweighed by the administrative problems which would be created by its introduction.

No HMA election

Commercial beekeepers have had their last opportunity to vote for representation on the Honey Marketing Authority. With the authority in the process of dissolution, the under secretary for agriculture, Rob Talbot, agreed with an NBA suggestion that it was unnecessary to hold another



KING BEE

(WHERE THE NBA HAS ITS STING)

election. The terms of office of existing members have been extended until January 31 1982.

Rail freight assistance

NBA secretary David Dobson has approached the Department of Trade and Industry asking for assistance under the Regional Development Programme to reduce the freight paid on honey travelling by rail between the North and South Islands.

No increase in hive levy

Despite an operating budget which is steadily going further into the red, the NBA executive is not going to ask for an increase in the hive levy paid by commercial beekeepers.

Instead, the executive has resolved to take a number of stringent cost control measures and to investigate possible better investments for its reserve funds.

The last big conference?

The 1982 Waitangi conference of the National Beekeepers Association may be the last of its kind. Considerable concern has been expressed by the executive about the cost of holding conferences in their present format.

At the September meeting of the executive, members agreed that the quality and value of the remits discus-

sed at conference were far outweighed by the costs involved.

Although the pros and cons of different conference formats were discussed, it was decided that any proposed changes to the present structure should be implemented after the next conference which is to be held at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands.

The secretary of the NBA has written to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries requesting that they organise a seminar at that conference.

Tracks on development blocks

It has been suggested to the Rural Bank that the development of farm blocks should include access tracks for beekeepers. Executive members of the NBA told Mr R.J. Chappel of the bank that such a move would be in the interests of the land owners when bees were required to pollinate pastures and crops.

Subscription increase

The annual subscription for the NZ Beekeeper magazine will be \$12.50 as from January 1982. On this basis, the magazine is budgeted to run at a small surplus when a contribution for the same amount from hive levy payers is deducted from the hive levy account.

When it considers the 1982 production contract, the executive will discuss the possibility of reducing paper quality and adopting different printing techniques as means of effecting economies.

Cassette librarian resigns

Chris Dawson, the previous NBA librarian is no longer in a position to handle his residual duties as the operator of the cassette library. He has been thanked by the NBA executive for his initiative and work involved in setting up the library.

CORRESPONDENTS

STING ALLERGIES CURE?

Sir,

I noted with interest an article in a back issue of "N.Z. Beekeeper" which stated research has shown spouses and children of beekeepers are 50 times more likely to become sensitive to bee stings than spouses and children of non-beekeepers.

As fate would have it, I am both the child and the wife of hobby beekeepers, and I have developed a very severe reaction to bee stings — my last sting putting me in hospital.

The fact that my father and husband are hobby beekeepers seems to be important.

The article mentioned dried bee venom in the beekeeper's overalls and gloves getting into dust in the air and

being inhaled by the beekeeper's family, as the most likely cause of this increased sensitivity. It also seems likely that dried squashed bees on frames and supers would contribute to this too, as bee protein is the specific substance that the body reacts to.

This is where the hobby beekeeper comes in. Most small-time beekeepers, lacking such equipment as honey houses and extracting plants, do most of their extracting and cleaning of frames and supers inside the house, thus exposing the family to bee venom and squashed bodies from the beekeepers gear and beehive equipment.

The beekeeper himself (or herself) is protected by regularly being stung therefore preventing the build-up of a sensitivity.

His family however, may go for long

periods without being stung, as was my case as a child.

Steps beekeepers could take to avoid this situation developing in their family, would be to keep overalls and gloves out of the house — preferably stored in an airtight drum or a plastic bag. Keep all bee gear away from the house and children away from the honey house or bee shed. Also if all members of the family are stung regularly, it will prevent any sensitivity building up to a dangerous level.

I hope my advice may help other beekeepers in avoiding the situation my husband finds himself in, where his much loved hobby is now seriously threatening the health of his family.

Yours,

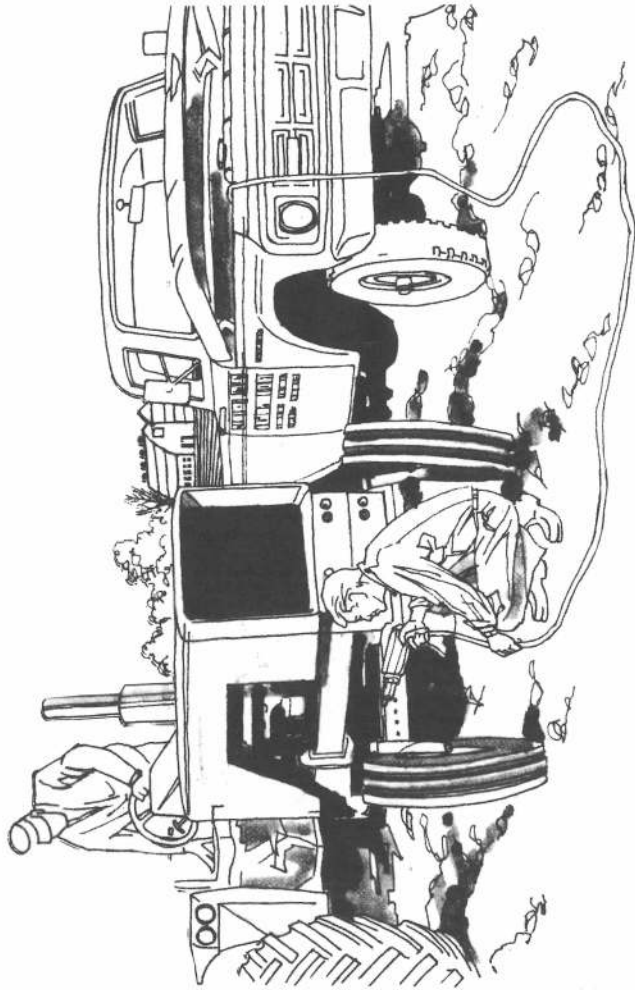
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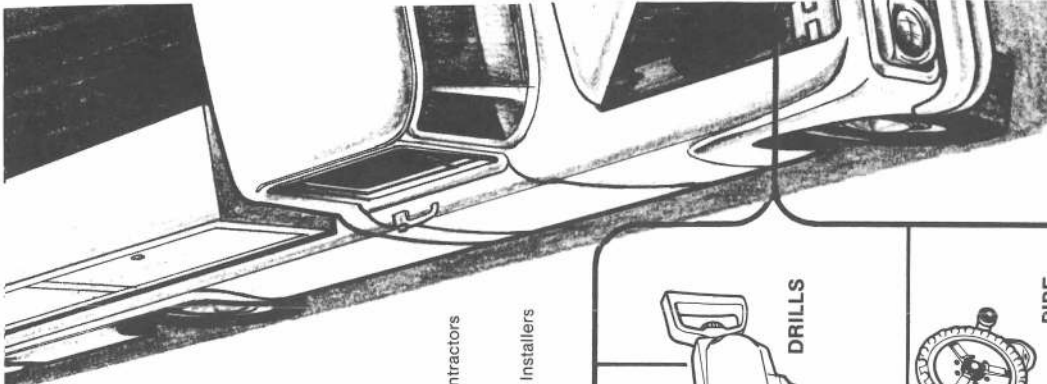
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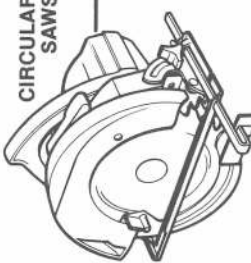
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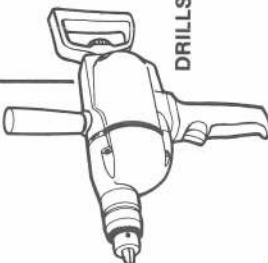


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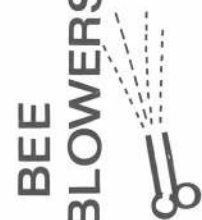
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NZ Honey Producers' Co-op in action

by Simon Mill

BARELY TWO months in operation, and the New Zealand Honey Producers' Co-operative Ltd, is already away to a flying start. Trading began on October 5.

Co-op chairman H.N. Dellow, in an interview with the "NZ Beekeeper" in mid November said that the response of beekeepers had been better than budgetted for.

"Initially we sent out a circular to every hive levy payer earlier this year to see how many would be interested in joining the co-op," said Mr Dellow. "One hundred and twenty replied that they would be interested.

"Then there was a bit of a hiatus while we were bogged down with the injunction. Once that matter was resolved we checked with the 120 who had indicated their initial interest, and back came the same number.

"We are working in close liaison with Mr David Kay. We had shown him as a criterion of the co-op's viability that we initially required a capital structure of \$100 000 for the co-op to work. Much to our gratitude we have so far had 100 paid-up capital subscriptions for a total of \$124 000, and more subscriptions are coming in each week. (This subscription is based on \$2 per hive in honey production). There were another three this morning – November 13.

"One of the heartening things is that we have about 15 North Island subscribers, which is more than we had thought we would get in the beginning. There are still about 20 of the initial 120 repliers who are swinging, so our immediate lists, on these expectations are still not filled – which could make our position even better.

Mr Dellow said the co-op was sending out a formal supply agreement to all subscribers before early December.

The directors of the N.Z. Honey Producers Co-op are: Mr H.N. Dellow, chairman; and Messrs Harry Cloake, Steve Lyttle, Bob Blair and Kevin Ecroyd. The secretary is Mr Paul Johnston, and the co-op's address is:

N.Z. Honey Producers' Co-op Ltd, P.O. Box 206, Timaru.

Mr Curtis Wicht has been appointed the co-op's marketing manager. The former HMA operations at Hornby and Pleasant Point have been absorbed as going concerns into the co-op with the purchase of the land, buildings and plant. All staff at these sites have also been retained.

Mr Warren Hutchinson, grader/analyst for the HMA has also transferred to the co-op and will be available through them to do outside grading at a chargeable rate, aside from his major function of grading and analysing the co-op's own honey.

The Pleasant Point (Timaru) and Hornby (Christchurch) land and buildings have cost the co-op a total of \$105 000. But the co-op has received assistance to the extent of about \$600 000 from the HMA.

This money has been lent to the co-op for a period of three years at a concessional interest rate of 3 per cent for the first \$300 000 and 9 per cent on the balance. (This is as proposed by Mr Kay as one of the hypothetical options in his report. He had considered such a concession desirable in the interests of the whole honey industry during such a major restructuring.)

In addition to the South Island facilities, the co-op is also buying some of the plant from the HMA packhouse in Auckland and this will be transferred to a contract packing house.

"In the North Island," said Mr Dellow, "we will not have our own packhouse and the honey from our North Island suppliers and the honey we send from the South Island for blending with the North Island honey will be all packed under contract.

"We will have a similar system to the HMA in handling bulk stocks – in fact we have taken over all bulk honey stocks, including drums. Suppliers will be charged for the drums supplied to them and get a full credit on their return to us, as was the case with supplies to the HMA.

"There is a lot of optimism about the whole venture," said Mr Dellow, "and with the impetus of our start we hope that we shall be able to extend more quickly than we had at first thought probable. The whole venture is proving most successful.

"There have been certain physical problems with the HMA, but these have been largely worked out amicably with the help of Mr Kay, and Mr Len Jones, secretary of the NBA."

Final resting place for HMA funds still unknown

by Simon Mill

ALTHOUGH THE new co-operative is away to a flying start – and to a large degree is assuming that the mantle of trading security the HMA formerly offered a sometimes bewildered and beleaguered industry – the HMA itself could only be said to be on a life support system.

The impetus for the one seems to be pushing ahead with confidence and enthusiasm, while the decision of the resting place of the other seems to be finding the going a little rougher and slower.

Mr M.D. Gould, government appointee on the HMA, said in mid November that there was no decision then to report as to how the funds of the HMA would be deployed.

Schemes, in particular a special report prepared by HMA assets arbitrator David Kay, were to be discussed at the

next HMA board meeting to be held in the first week of December. Len Jones (secretary of the NBA) was also to be present to put forward ideas.

Mr Gould could not realistically foresee any final decision being made until well into 1982. All were keen he said, to see the present impetus kept up, and urgency was uppermost in everyone's minds.

On the other hand, Ivan Dickinson, chairman of the HMA says he is at a bit of a loss to understand the great haste.

"After all Mr Kay in his report did recommend a firm timetable should be set for the agreed handing over period between the authority and the co-operative and then stated that he found it difficult 'to envisage an orderly transfer being possible in less than two years', so I think we have made remark-

able progress in the last eight months, with the co-op already underway in both Pleasant Point and Hornby – considerably within Mr Kay's hoped for time scale," he said.

"It is not for the HMA to tell the industry what it should do with its assets. But from the industry's point of view it is important that they should make the right decision, and one that reflects the most acceptable point of view."

Ivan Dickinson felt that the important thing was that the resolution to wind up the HMA was on the books, but he saw no great need for imprudent haste.

For instance should they give away the nearly \$½ million asset in land and buildings in Auckland merely to expedite a relatively unimportant desire for speed?

He felt it was better to make a wise and worthwhile sale even if it took a little longer.

The important things were that the co-operative was working; the HMA was being disbanded; and the authority was always ready to discuss with the NBA executive, as trustees, what they wished to do with the eventual funds.

The wind down of the HMA's Auckland plant was continuing fairly quickly and the building would be vacant by the end of December.

The tenders for its sale had been received and had been considered too low by the board, and all had therefore been rejected. However private negotiations were proceeding at press-time.

Some staff had been re-employed elsewhere and redundancy agreements were being implemented for others.

Mr Gould was pleased that the co-op had been able to take over the HMA's South Island packing facilities without disruption to the staff there.

But from there on in the tangled skein of the HMA affairs becomes more knotted. Not because of the lack of desire by anyone to see it unravelled, but because of the complexity of the threads, and because the implementation relies on the revoking of legislation which can only be done by an Order in Council.

And that requires a Cabinet.

Mike Gould said, however, that he had been able to reassure members of the NBA executive at their September meeting that the Sale of Honey (Export Control) Regulations 1971, were an unnecessary complication and could be dispensed with as soon as possible.

If the industry at some future date wished some form of export control they would be able to do this through bringing in a Customs Export Prohibition Order. So that revoking is at the

ready, although the export status quo still exists.

NBA secretary Len Jones, said that he too had nothing concrete to say when this issue of the "NZ Beekeeper" went to press. He said it wouldn't be until after the December meeting of the HMA board that there would be some idea of what could be done with HMA funds.

A brief synopsis by this bewildered scribe would seem to point to the following:

- That the HMA's funds are going to eventually have to find another home.
- That the industry wishes the funds to be administered from a non tax-paying source.
- That no one involved first hand with the industry has been able to convince all the others of the course this banker of the funds should pursue.
- That thumbing through past issues of the "NZ Beekeeper" there seem to be several repeatedly expressed beliefs. Those include:
 - ★ A trust fund for administering some form of apiary instruction for young would-be beekeepers.
 - ★ A similar trust for scientific research.
 - ★ Or, using the capital for providing intervention funds in times of depressed prices.



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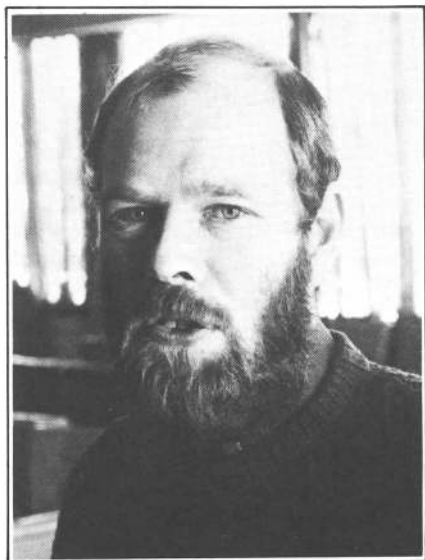
FMW 80-1



BURRCOMB

from the editor

Trevor transferring to Tauranga



Trevor Bryant, MAF's apicultural advisory officer in Gore, Southland, for the past eight years is to be transferred to Tauranga early in the New Year. He has returned recently from a year-long MAF exchange visit to Canada.

Trevor replaces industry stalwart Doug Briscoe.

Advertisements for the Gore vacancy have been published in the NZ Beekeeper and applications close on January 15, 1982.

Visitors from Papua New Guinea

Three officers of the Papua New Guinea Department of Primary Industry made a training visit to New Zealand in September, under our bilateral aid programme with that country. They examined a number of aspects related to bees, beekeeping and the servicing of a beekeeping industry.

New Zealand has had a close involvement with beekeeping in Papua New Guinea over the past six years. NZ beekeeper and former NBA executive member, Gavin McKenzie will

conclude next March his second two-year term in PNG.

PNG is most fortunate in that it is free of American and European Brood Diseases, Varroa, Acarine and Tropilaelaps mites, and the government of the country has been encouraged to adopt laws and systems to minimise the risk of bee disease introductions.

Volcanic ash fatal

If Mount Ruapehu decided to unleash its volcanic fury, beekeepers within a wide radius had better watch out!

The Mt St Helens eruption in the USA showed that the barbed hairs on a bee's body are just as good at collecting volcanic ash as pollen.

Millions of bees perished after they left their hives after the eruption, all because of the ash build up on their bodies. The bees were weighted down so heavily with ash that they could not fly, let alone gather pollen.

The volcanic ash clogged up the bees breathing passages and damaged the waxy coating on their body that normally guards against dehydration. As a result many bees suffocated or just dried up. Other bees wore out their wings trying to comb the ash off their body hair. The ash laden bees were also very irritable and much more likely to sting.

Beekeepers in the Mount St Helens area are estimated to have lost about \$2 million as a result of the eruption, though the ultimate impact this will have on the honey and fruit industries is not yet known.

Toxic honey cases

One person has been hospitalised in the Waikato recently, and another has been in the care of a doctor, possibly the results of eating toxic honey produced in the Coromandel. Tests are underway to confirm whether suspect honey is toxic, and if so whether the

A big step from the skep



Out of the historical files we find this delightful photo of the father of New Zealand beekeeping Isaac Hopkins at the 1907 Christchurch Empire Exposition.

His feminine assistants are no doubt there to lend emphasis to the ease of bee management using those new-fangled moveable frame hives he introduced to New Zealand. Isaac

Hopkins has been known as the father of NZ beekeeping for his many "firsts".

Among them, the first moveable frame hives; the country's first apiary instructor; the author of the country's first Apiaries Act.

The photo is courtesy of MAF head office, ex the Hopkins bequest to Cawthron Institute.

production and distribution of the honey was in breach of permit conditions covering beekeeping in a restricted area.

Quotable quotes

"The light came down, soft and honey-coloured. The light lay still and warm over them, murmuring like a hive of bees"

from "Under the Mountain"
by Maurice Gee

All the essence of the fine June morning seemed to pour down like dreamy honey from thick boughs of oak-flower, gold-green against a sky of deepest blue . . .

from H.E. Bates'
"Oh! To Be In England"

Extraction of bee stings

Immediately on being stung by a bee, place a hollow barrel of a key round the sting and press until it begins to hurt. On removing the key the sting will be found, laying outside the puncture it has made and inside the ring formed by the pressure of the key barrel. All pain ceases at once, no swelling takes place and in a few minutes it is difficult to find again where one has been stung.

The Christian Age,
November 12, 1884.

BEEKEEPERS TECHNICAL LIBRARY

We received a revised and updated copy of *Beekeeping In The Mid West* with the compliments of the author Professor Elbert R. Jaycox.

Mr Peter Jackson from Nelson has presented the library with a copy of his thesis: *New Zealand Beekeeping As An Export Earner* with a folder of background notes used in this study; and also the book *Major Markets For Honey*, a 1977 unctad/gatt publication.

Altogether the result of this very thorough study, should be of interest to anyone involved in the production and marketing of honey.

Mr Jackson is grateful for the help received from beekeepers (including the library), but is not able to give a copy of his thesis to all who asked for one. But the library copy will be available to anyone interested. Thank you Mr Jackson.

John Heineman,
Beekeepers' Technical Library,
P.O. Box 112, Milton.

OVERSEAS RESEARCH

Attractant sprays do not improve pollination

by Elbert R. Jaycox, "Bees and Honey," University of Illinois

JUST PLACING colonies of bees within or beside a crop to be pollinated does not always mean that enough bees will visit the blossoms to produce a crop of the desired size. There may not be enough foraging bees, or they may fly to plants other than the ones close by. The most common reason for going to other plants is the relative quantity and quality of the nectar available in the blossoms. Poor-quality nectar, with a low sugar concentration, is deserted by the foraging bees, who then move to other crops or weeds that yield better returns.

The problem of getting more bees on to the plants to be pollinated has been approached in two ways: (1) by varying the management of the bees; and (2) by attempting to improve the attractiveness of the blossoms on the crop being pollinated.

Bee management can improve visitation by getting the colonies to the crop at the ideal time, when there is sufficient bloom to attract the bees but not so late that a quantity of seed or fruit from the early bloom is lost. The proper number and spacing of colonies can overcome the problems of too few foraging bees or a poor distribution of them. In crops difficult to pollinate, it may even be necessary to place new groups of colonies in the field in exchange for ones brought in earlier.

In attempts to make blossoms more attractive to bees, growers and research workers have had to concentrate on spraying plants with compounds that are attractive to bees and one of use to them as food. Sugar has always been the material selected because it is the primary ingredient in nectar. If the sugar could be applied selectively to the blossoms, we might see an increase in the number of bees visiting them. Instead, the sugar is applied to the entire plant. So the bees visit the plant surfaces to collect the sugar without visiting the flowers. Pollination is not improved by the sugar treatment; the sugar may even be detrimental if it serves as a medium for the growth of sooty mould on the plants.

In the United States there is a thriving industry based on sprays that are supposed to attract bees to the flowers of fruit trees and other insect-pollinated

crops. Basically, these "attractants" are sugar sprays that have been modified by adding compounds to increase their aroma and protein content. The bees will accept the added ingredients but will not be stimulated to visit the flowers of the crop on which "attractants" were sprayed. The claims made for the products have not been supported by research done in the United States.

Research results with "attractant" sprays have all been negative in tests on a variety of crops pollinated by honey bees. For example, tests on apples in Virginia showed no differences in the number of bees visiting the blossoms or in the amount of fruit set when trees were sprayed with a compound called Bee Lure. In melon fields in California, one test produced an increase in the number of bees foraging on the treated plants but not on the blossoms. A second trial produced no measurable effect on the number of foraging bees present.

A test of the "attractant" compounds on almonds in California provided a different result. The bee visitation, fruit set, and yield were all higher on the untreated trees. In a repeat test the following year, bee visitation was 4 per cent higher on the treated trees than on the untreated ones. Fruit set was essentially the same in the two treatments, but the yield was 6 per cent less on the treated trees.

Growers of red clover seed in Oregon have used a material called Beeline in their crop-management programme in an attempt to produce greater seed yields. When Beeline was tested in properly designed experiments during two seasons, there was no increase in pollinator activity, in the seed set per clover head, or in the overall yield when the attractant was applied.

The so-called "attractant" sprays may bring bees to the leaves of treated plants for a free snack. Unfortunately, according to all the research reports available, the attractants do not increase the set or yields of bee-pollinated crops to which they are applied. Growers and beekeepers who want to improve bee visitation should provide additional colonies of bees and should see that the bees are well distributed and placed on the crop at the proper time in relation to the stage of bloom.



Doug looks happy at the prospect of devoting himself to practical beekeeping after 25 years advising others. Here he checks one of his hives on an Ohauti farm.

Industry stalwart retires after 33 years with MAF

Adapted from an article first published in the Bay of Plenty Times.

BEEKEEPERS and orchardists have reason to be grateful for the work of Mr Doug Briscoe who retired in October after more than 28 years as apiary instructor and adviser for the Bay of Plenty and 33 years with MAF.

In that time Mr Briscoe enforced the regulations designed to protect the apiary industry and played a vital rôle in setting up and operating the kiwifruit pollination service as well as advising apiarists about how to improve production.

With an area now extending from the tip of Coromandel Peninsula to the northern boundary of Hawkes Bay county and inland almost to Taupo, Mr Briscoe has coped with a huge job.

Mr Briscoe became interested in beekeeping when he was a boy of six or seven. His brother acquired a hive and Mr Briscoe found he was "captivated" by the bees. They did not sting him and he enjoyed working with them.

When he left school he trained as a baker and pastrycook, retaining beekeeping as a hobby. He enjoyed baking, but the hours were long, always at night, and the work was hard.

Thirty-five years ago he decided to go full-time into beekeeping and accepted an offer to become an apiary instructor with the Department of Agriculture.

He has particularly enjoyed the

advisory work, and has received great satisfaction in seeing his advice put into action and giving good results.

The regulatory side of his work has not been as rewarding, though it has been necessary.

For his first seven years, Mr Briscoe was based at Greymouth, covering the West Coast, Nelson and Marlborough. The area had no apiary officer for a year before Mr Briscoe's arrival and disease was rife with 25 per cent of the hives infected.

During seven years of vigorous progress this level was reduced to 11 per cent and has been further reduced since.

"The beekeepers were co-operative in the main," he said. "They used to come

into the office and ask me to go and check their hives for disease.

"Whenever I called into a house I was offered a cup of tea and the family would be offended if I refused. One afternoon I counted up and I had drunk nine cups of tea."

Mr Briscoe said administering the regulations covering the restricted areas in Coromandel, and the Eastern Bay of Plenty had been one of the biggest tasks he faced during his 28½ years in Tauranga.

He has encouraged diversification so that not only honey is produced, but also pollen, propolis, queen bees and nucleus colonies.

Queen bees are sold within New Zealand and exported. Though a market in Iran has closed up since the revolution, big markets could be developed in North America.

"American brood disease is the only serious disease in New Zealand hives," Mr Briscoe said. "It is widespread throughout the world.

"If the New Zealand apiary industry can continue to maintain its disease-free situation it will have opportunities to develop exports of large numbers of queen bees and package bees.

"Overseas travellers should obey Customs regulations and not bring honey into New Zealand to assist in protecting the industry."

Toxic Honey

When Mr Briscoe came to Tauranga the cause of toxic honey being produced in some areas had been identified. For 80 years the occasional presence of honey toxic to humans had been known.

About 45 years ago it was identified by the DSIR as being caused by insects sucking the sap of the tutu and depositing toxic honey dew which bees took back to the hives.

The toxicity appeared only with hot dry conditions, an abundance of tutu and a heavy infestation of the insect, the passion vine hopper.

When Mr Briscoe came to Tauranga part of Eastern Bay of Plenty was a closed area to beekeeping. Since then Coromandel has been restricted and the boundaries of both areas redefined and made available for hives on a restricted basis.

In the Eastern Bay of Plenty, hives producing honey for human consumption may be moved in from May 1 to December 1 on a special permit and in Coromandel from May 1 to December 31.

"I have lost a lot of friends because of my duties, in these restricted areas," Mr Briscoe said.

"But I think I have been fair and impartial.

"The first priority has been to safe-

guard public health, and secondly to safeguard the bee industry.

"A firm line has been needed."

The incidence of American brood disease in the Bay of Plenty is one of the lowest in New Zealand because of the constant vigilance of the industry and of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

"Destroying hives by fire is the only safe way of combatting the disease," Mr Briscoe said.

"The responsibility for disease detection and eradication is the beekeeper's. Then the MAF can concentrate on spot checks to restrict the spread of the disease."

Beekeeping has become more profitable in the years Mr Briscoe has been associated with it. However, costs have increased and beekeepers have had to look after more hives to stay in business.

The industry is now in a buoyant condition with diversification broadening its base.

With hives now costing well over \$100 someone going into beekeeping and setting up an economic unit of 800 hives would be faced with an outlay of \$80,000.

But people are still going into beekeeping and Mr Briscoe is one of them. He plans to keep about 100 hives as a retirement hobby which will keep him busy for one or two days a week.

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Telford "tops" for beekeeping

Kerry Simpson, Oamaru advisory officer reports on the courses held at Telford this year.

MAF HAS TWO farm training institutes, Flock House and Telford. They provide a wide variety of agricultural training from broad practical year long farming training to young people, to short courses on such topics as shelter, forestry, wool, welding, blackcurrants and even preparation for retirement. Just about all aspects of primary industry get coverage.

This past year Telford made the running in beekeeper courses. In August another course aimed at new entrants to the industry was held. Called 'Expanding into Commercial Beekeeping' some late applications had to be turned down because of the demand to attend.

For the 28 participants, the aim of the course was not to try and teach beekeeping in four days, but to raise the many options and problems which confront a newcomer to the industry and enable them to make informed choices. The tutors were Trevor Bryant, Andrew Matheson, and myself, with outside speakers from Rural Bank, Inland Revenue and Lands & Survey invited for specialist sessions.

We were fortunate to have Ian Mopafi from the Papua New Guinea Department of Primary Industries at this course. Despite the chill of a South Otago winter, Ian enjoyed the course and gave an entertaining slide presentation of beekeeping and life in the highlands of New Guinea. Ian is the leader of the government apiary project in New Guinea which was pioneered by Vince Cook and with which Gavin McKenzie still assists.

Beginners course

The third course this year was 'Introduction to Beekeeping' organised by Mike McPhillips, a field officer with MAF, and himself a keen amateur beekeeper. Trevor Bryant and myself assisted with the tuition and there were some interesting visits to local apiaries.

Mr and Mrs Balch at Allanton have a small block which they planted with a wide variety of plants, particularly Ceanothus and Grevillia. Such is the extent of the planting that the bees had surplus honey and plenty of pollen on November 2. How many apiaries could we use for demonstration of removal and extraction of honey that early?

Alan McCaw of Milburn Apiaries showed us their commercial extracting plant and we had a look at pollen trapping in a nearby apiary. At Owaka Finlay Abernethy showed all present equipment of interest and we visited a yard



Finlay Abernethy and Trevor Bryant commenting on some autumn hives at Owaka.

of autumn nucs and saw that beekeeping in cold, pollen deficient areas is not without problems. These practical sessions were the highlight of the course and the group were very appreciative of the time and effort given so freely by their hosts.

Future courses

A course on 'Raising your own Queen

Bees' will be run at Telford in April of next year. But if North Island beekeepers feel the need for any particular type of course Flock House is there to be used if the demand is made known. The assistance offered to both tutors and course members at both farm training institutes is excellent and one of the few problems with the catering is the temptation to overeat.



Expanding into commercial beekeeping, Telford, August 1981.



At a recent NBA executive meeting Mr Grahame Walton, chief advisory officer (apiculture) discussed the ministry's proposed plan of operation if an outbreak of an exotic bee disease, such as European Brood Disease, Varroa or Acarine, occurred in New Zealand.

He mentioned that the ministry has had a long-established plan for the control of bee diseases and pests, should they ever be introduced from abroad. This plan is now being updated as a result of modified beekeeping legislation and new knowledge gained on overseas bee diseases, and their control.

Mr Walton emphasised that the ministry's exotic bee disease control programme was not designed for the ministry's sake, but for the benefit of the beekeeping industry. Any disease control programme adopted by the ministry required the support and active promotion by the association.

The executive gave some consideration to the drafted procedures put forward by Mr Walton and these will be again discussed by the executive at a further meeting.

The following article by Mr Grahame Walton is based substantially on his presentation and discussions with the NBA executive.

What happens if threats become realities?

MAF scheme is far more than a matter of compensation.

AN INSPECTOR under the Apiaries Act has at his disposal very wide powers controlling, confining, and eradicating bee disease, whether First, Second or Third Schedule. Measures available to the inspector may include the total destruction by fire of all bees, honey or appliances within apiaries or other measures approved by the director (see Sections 14 and 19 of the Apiaries Act 1969).

The director-general may declare a "disease control area" and having done so, no person can move any bees, honey or appliances, into, out of, or within a "disease control area" without the approval of an inspector. This provision

(Section 16) applies to all three schedules of bee diseases.

Inspectors have the power to enter at all reasonable times on any land, premises etc, for the purpose of carrying out the duties and functions imposed on him under the Apiaries Act (Section 37). Inspectors have the power to destroy bees, honey and comb if bees are established in other than frame hives (Sections 7 and 11); withhold permits to shift bees when bee diseases are suspected (Section 9); take action to destroy abandoned or neglected apiaries (Section 10); prevent the sale, barter, lend etc of bees or appliances infected with disease (Section 20) and

to prosecute persons who have introduced into New Zealand bees, appliances and bee products and to destroy these items (Sections 22 and 23).

Suspicion of an exotic bee disease

Where a beekeeper suspects an exotic bee disease he should immediately notify the apicultural advisory officer/apiary instructor for the district, who will then take responsibility for investigating the suspected disease, arranging samples for diagnosis, and taking initial steps to determine the extent of spread and likely means of entry of the suspected disease.

Where an exotic bee disease is strongly

Prevention is better than cure

THE BEST way of avoiding serious exotic bee diseases and pests, such as Varroa, Acarine, European Brood Disease, as well as undesirable genetic characteristics, is to prevent their entry into New Zealand. Every New Zealand beekeeper has a responsibility in this respect to prevent, or to report, the entry of unapproved bees, bee products, and used bee appliances.

For its part, the ministry, under the Apiaries Act 1969, and the 1978 amendment, prevents or restricts the introduction of apicultural products which could carry exotic diseases and pests. As an example, the importation of honey from all countries where

European Brood Disease exists is now prohibited. Australian honey has recently been added to this list. Some bee products and bee appliances are allowed entry under MAF permit.

- Successful control and eradication of any introduced bee disease or pest will depend on its early detection and reporting. To achieve this, beekeepers must have a reasonable working knowledge of the signs and symptoms of the major overseas bee diseases. MAF Aglink FPP 428 obtainable from most MAF offices, covers this subject.

It remains the beekeeper's responsibility, not MAF's, to examine hives for disease, to report this disease, and to

take the appropriate disease control measures. The legal obligations upon beekeepers to register apiary sites, to obtain permits to shift to new sites, to keep bees in movable-frame hives, and to furnish annual statements of hive inspections, are all designed to minimise the spread of bee diseases.

The ministry assists the beekeeping industry in controlling its bee diseases by providing, under legislation, an administrative service for the registration of apiaries and the processing of annual statements of hive inspection. The ministry also carries out hive and apiary inspections to ensure that beekeepers are indeed meeting their legal obligations.

suspected by an apiary officer, or when it is confirmed by diagnostic examination, he shall set in train a number of general steps:

- Contact controlling officers and head office;
- Determine the extent of spread of the disease infection;
- Minimise the further spread of the disease by restricting the movement of bees, honey and appliances;
- Take appropriate, approved, methods of controlling or eradicating the disease;
- Investigate the probable means of introduction of the disease.

To assist the apiary officer with this programme, he will be able to call on the services of other trained inspectors within his district, or where necessary recruit inspectors from other districts. The apiary registrar for the district will be expected to assist with apiary identification and the plotting on maps of registered apiaries and inspection progress.

First Schedule bee diseases

Where the confirmed bee disease is listed in the First Schedule of the Apiaries Act (i.e. the disease is either *Acarapis woodi* or *Varroa jacobsoni*), the director-general will take early steps to appoint a Bee Disease Advisory Committee in terms of Section 17 of the Apiaries Act 1969.

This committee will likely comprise the chief advisory officer (apiculture) as chairman, the apiary officer in the district where the disease has been confirmed, and the president of the National Beekeeper's Association Inc, or his nominee. The functions of this committee are to recommend to the director-general the measures necessary for the control and eradication of the outbreak of disease, and to assess the value of any bees, honey, or appliances destroyed.

It will be the responsibility of the permanent inspector for the district (the AAO/AI) to initiate appropriate measures to contain, confine, control and where necessary to eradicate, the exotic bee disease, within the policies and procedures established by the ministry. To initiate any measure for the eradication and control of First Schedule diseases each apiary where the disease has been identified must be within an "infected area" as defined and declared under the Apiaries Act 1969.

As policy the inspector will declare all land within a 3.2 km radius of an infected apiary to be an "infected area". He will arrange to give notice of that declaration to the beekeeper, to the occupier of the land on which the

apiary is situated, to every beekeeper within an infected area, and to every occupier of land within the infected area on which an apiary is situated (Section 13). Where declared, an "infected area" notice will be published in the New Zealand Gazette, and in local newspapers.

The director-general has power under Section 16 to declare any land to be a "disease control area" for any disease listed in the First, Second and Third Schedules. This declaration prohibits a beekeeper from removing from, introducing to, or transferring within, a disease control area, any bees, honey or appliances.

Where an inspector believes that the declaration of a "disease control area" is warranted he will make his recommendation to the Bee Disease Advisory Committee in the case of a First Schedule disease, or to chief advisory officer (apiculture) in the case of Second or Third Schedule diseases.

Where *Varroa jacobsoni* or *Acarapis woodi* has been confirmed within a registered apiary, and is within a declared "infected area", the proposed policy is to destroy all bees, brood, and brood comb within an infected apiary. This destruction is to be carried out by the ministry inspector or under his direct supervision.



Pieces of acarine infected bee thorax prepared for analysis.

USDA photo.

It may be possible for the owner to retain hive lids, bottom boards, hive boxes, combs of honey and empty comb (but no bees, brood or brood comb) provided that this equipment is held in quarantine (in isolation from bees and beekeepers) for an approved period. The inspector will determine the most appropriate place where this equipment will be held in quarantine and shall apply any approved method (e.g. refrigeration or heating) to destroy any mites.

Where *Varroa jacobsoni* or *Acarapis woodi* has been confirmed, or suspected in unregistered apiaries or in feral hives the inspector has power to destroy such hives (Sections 7, 10, 11, 14, 37).

The Bee Disease Advisory Committee may review these control measures and may recommend to the director-general alternative or additional methods of control or eradication.

Second and Third Schedule diseases

Section 19 of the Apiaries Act provides the legislative basis under which exotic bee diseases listed in the Second Schedule (serious bee diseases for which no compensation is payable) and the Third Schedule may be controlled.

Where an exotic Second or Third Schedule disease has been confirmed within an apiary district the district apiary officer will be required to notify his controlling officer and head office. The apiary officer will have responsibility for organising a control/eradication programme within his district, and within the policies laid down. Control measures will vary depending upon the disease in question.

European Brood Disease, caused by *Streptococcus pluton*, is the most serious disease in the category. Judging from overseas experience it would be an almost impossible task to confine and eradicate European Brood Disease, should it ever be confirmed in New Zealand.

However, if this disease can be detected at an early stage it will be the ministry's policy to endeavour to do just that. The proposed disease control procedure to be adopted is similar to that for American Brood Disease, that is, the burning of all infected hives, or, under approved conditions, the paraffin dipping of hive bodies, lids and bottom boards.

In order to stop the wider distribution of the disease a "disease control area" may be declared under Section 16 of the Apiaries Act. This could confine the movement of bees, honey or appliances within particular localities, regions, or to an Island.

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from previous page.

Conclusions

This article has endeavoured to outline the major elements of an exotic bee

disease control programme. Further discussions on the details of this programme have still to take place with MAF staff, and with the NBA execu-

tive. To be of real value the MAF exotic bee disease control programme must have the support of the representatives of the beekeeping industry.

Nosema - is there a virus connection?

Dr L. Bailey of the Rothamsted Experimental Station in England is a distinguished research scientist who studies the diseases of bees, including the foulbroods, Nosema, and the viruses. In 1967 we knew of only three virus diseases of bees. Now because of Dr Bailey's painstaking studies, an additional 14 viruses affecting bees have been identified since then.

Dr Bailey has recently studied the prevalence of viruses of honey bees in Great Britain. The viruses have not been cultivated other than in the bodies of live bees, and individual bees, may be infected with several different viruses without showing any apparent symptoms. Because of the difficulty of separating and identifying the viruses, the commonest ones were among those discovered last.

The commonest viruses found among the bees in Britain are bee virus Y and the black queen cell virus. The latter name relates to its original discovery, not to its usual site of infection. These viruses are found most frequently in June together with *Nosema apis*, the organism responsible for Nosema disease of adult bees.

Dr Bailey cannot readily explain the close association of the viruses with Nosema. Bee virus Y will multiply when fed to adult bees in the laboratory, but in nature it seems only to multiply readily in the presence of *Nosema apis*. Infections of black queen cell virus are rare except where there is also Nosema infection.

These findings should be of interest to the average beekeeper because the presence or absence of the viruses with Nosema may explain some of the variations in the severity of the effects of Nosema on honey bee colonies. Control of the one infection may also control the two viruses.

Bailey's studies of viruses are of great value because some of the viruses he has isolated with such difficulty could he says, "well be important factors or even prime agents of losses that are usually left as inexplicable or are still attributed to well-known parasitic organisms."

— "Bees and Honey"

Beekeeper needed to expand Fiji's honey industry



VSA volunteer Arthur Smith of Waiheke Island checking new hives he is helping to establish on the Uluisaivou project near Raki Raki, on the northeast of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu. VSA has been asked by the Fijian Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for an apiarist to help expand the industry.

BEEKEEPING in Fiji is in the process of becoming established as an important small industry, and it is one with room for expansion.

New Zealand's expertise in this area is recognised by the Fijian Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries which is keen to spread an interest in beekeeping among village farmers.

Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA), the New Zealand development agency, has co-operated with the ministry in the past to help organise an extension programme and spread knowledge and techniques to potential Fijian apiarists. Following a successful VSA apiary adviser from Auckland working on the main island of Viti Levu, the ministry asked VSA to supply another beekeeper to help expand their programme.

A survey of the honey potential of Fiji was undertaken by an apiarist from the University of the South Pacific at Suva, which showed preliminary yield figures of up to 200

pounds of honey a year from each hive in the drier, northern zones of the island. Following this VSA apiarist Mrs Peggy Chandler began her assignment, and currently VSA volunteer Arthur Smith from Waiheke Island, is assisting in establishing hives at Uluisaivou, in North-east Viti Levu.

It is work similar to this which the new VSA beekeeper would undertake with the ministry in its aim to reduce dependence on overseas supplies, save foreign exchange and provide a new commercial food line.

A New Zealand VSA apiary adviser would work with farmers and villagers to establish networks of hives which could produce honey for local commercial outlets. Some administrative planning and organisation would also be involved.

New Zealand beekeepers interested in helping to further develop a honey industry in Fiji should contact Volunteer Service Abroad, P.O. Box 12 246, Wellington.



The "cage". This is the most common method of first testing insecticides in the field. A single storey hive is placed inside this structure and the bees left to tend the sprayed white clover inside.

by Bronwyn Falconer

VIEWING THE tree lined boundaries and grassy farmland from the top of Wallaceville's oldest building, one would think that this Animal Research Centre is set in the heart of rural country, not in an industrious city – of which the centre is only five minutes away.

An ideal setting for Wallaceville's bustling community of some 200 workers engaged in solving problems to do with important diseases of livestock, and second home of Pat Clinch, leader of Wallaceville's apicultural research team.

In two rooms at the bottom storey of Wallaceville's newest building, Pat Clinch and technician Trudy Visser, work on research problems affecting apiculture in New Zealand. The two members of the team are charged with researching the optimum number of hives for crop pollination, the best means of pest control without harming bees and researching any economically important diseases of the honey bee.

Because of winter weather conditions Pat and Trudy are confined to the laboratory to carry out tests during most of the year. During the finer summer months, the Wallaceville team carry out most of their field experiments – a time consuming task for the two workers because of the nature of the work and the current staffing situation.

Cut backs in staff have meant that time has to be carefully allocated, and the time consuming tasks of counting bees on crops cut back to a minimum. Afternoon tea break at Wallaceville cafeteria, invariably finds Pat Clinch missing, nor will his time card be clicked dead on the dot of closing time either. Longer hours than normal are just part of Pat's dedication to his work and though he can see the restrictiveness of the present staffing situation, he is philosophical that it will eventually improve, and makes do with the present resources.

He admits that even if he was commanding a staff of 20 he would feel there was much more they could be doing.

To assist visitors in their understanding of Wallaceville, a

Pat Clinch lead from Wal

series of colourful display boards have been prepared that outline in lay terms the different kinds of research that each unit carries out.

Pat fills the gaps in the display board information with a few details about the general laboratory and field routines that are carried out by the apicultural research section.

When testing new insecticides for their toxicity to honey bees, a standard set of lab tests are normally carried out. These are:

- Flying bees are sprayed directly with the insecticide to test for "direct contact."
- Bees are put into cages containing white clover that has been sprayed with the insecticide to test for "residual contact."
- Cages containing white clover are sprayed with the insecticide and then bees are placed over the top to test for any toxic fumes.

At all times an untreated "control" is carried out, to compare the natural mortalities with whatever is happening in the insecticide experiment.

Though there may not be any mortalities immediately after the experiment, the bees must be retained to test for any after effects the spray may have. If the insecticide passes all the lab tests, tests are carried out in the field.

Normal field practice is the "cage test". A cage is erected



A trap for dead bees at the entrance of the hive collects bee mortalities that may have resulted from insecticide.



Pat using another of his many gadgets to help speed up the time-consuming tasks associated with field work.

s bee research laceville

over an area of bee fodder that has been sprayed with the insecticide. The cage consists of a structure about the size of a small glasshouse, covered with material that prevents bees from escaping.

A single storey hive is placed in the cage, and because the bees are confined to a small area, the density is 10 times greater than on an open crop. It is a lengthy business to gather bees from a crop, comparing the natural mortality rate with the effects of the spray. Pat has tried to keep this chore to a minimum by inventing devices that aid in collection of the bees.

Large scale tests are only carried out if the compound looks safe. The disadvantages again with the large field test appear to be in the man hours that are needed to measure the results.

All experiments with insecticides are also viewed on the long term as it is possible the insecticides can be absorbed by the plant and appear again toxic in the pollen and nectar.

Field trials are not normally carried out at Wallaceville, instead Pat and Trudy go on location to carry out the tests. Fine weather here is an important consideration if the experiment is to succeed in a minimum of time.

Because of the obvious time involved in establishing a crop for a full scale experiment under ideal conditions, it is best that research takes place in an already suitable area. Up to

three months of the year can be taken up with field work away from the base at Wallaceville.

Overseas research

Reading a paper at this year's Apimondia in Acapulco gave Pat a chance to see the apicultural research being carried out overseas and the methods of research.

In general he says field studies are done on a larger scale overseas. Pat cites the Riverside University in California as one example of this. Because of the ideal weather conditions for field work in California, this does not restrict testing as in New Zealand.

The other factor against large scale field tests is of course the current staffing situation.

Pat keeps in touch with what is going on overseas, through correspondence, reports, magazines and resources in Wallaceville's up-to-date library. He was pleased to find while at Apimondia how well-known New Zealand is for its beekeeping industry.

Having visited two beekeeping enterprises in Mexico, both using New Zealand uncapping machines, he believes New Zealand is doing well for a place with a beekeeping industry only the size of California's. He believes the honey bee has a steady future in New Zealand. With the upsurge of the horticultural industry, the demands for bees are going to be much greater and therefore the demand for research will be much more necessary.

Though other pollinating insects have been half-heartedly considered as a future means of fulfilling the pollination demands, Pat thinks they will not have a large impact, as honey bees are still the proven "best" pollinators. The only cloud on the horizon is a small one, and that is in the form of artificial means of pollination.

Dr Murray Hopping at Ruakura has done some work with spray pollination in kiwifruit. While this technique showed

promise at the beginning, it now appears there are many hurdles to overcome.

Kiwifruit

All of the research topics that the apiculture section at Wallaceville investigate originally start out as projects that are submitted to the centre. It is then to decide what project warrants the most attention – according to the budget and the potential that the problem will have on New Zealand production and exports.

Kiwifruit is a priority area with approximately \$45 million earned in last years exports alone, and with the amount of kiwifruit planted and not yet yielding fruit likely to produce the same amount again, even a small problem with pollination would amount to losses of millions of dollars.

Already Wallaceville has ascertained that three hives an acre are essential to get export size fruit. They have also done experiments with pollen traps as it is hoped the lack of pollen in the hive, will cause the bees to work harder to collect more, thus pollinating more kiwifruit.

Back up in Tauranga in November, Pat hoped to test another variable in the kiwifruit pollination experiments – the placing of the male kiwifruit vine.

He thinks it is probable that this could also have a major bearing on determining the eventual goal of maximum kiwifruit pollination.

There are still many other variables that affect the changing successes of the kiwifruit seasons. The weather is still mystifying, as fine days may change the bees onto working the white clover, and then a subsequent change of conditions will have them back on to kiwifruit.

Normally when carrying out pollination experiments in the initial stages, sections (branches) of the crop are covered with netting material to stop any insects being able to get into carry out pollination. The honey bees are then put into



This bee collector was invented by Pat and gathers bees by sucking them into the cage.

the field to work the rest of the crop and then it is up to the Wallaceville team to find out the results.

Because of the large earnings from kiwifruit, it is one of the priority areas for pollination research at the moment, though past and present work with pollination of other crops has brought forward other useful information. For instance honey bees are vital for the pollination of apples (only one per cent of pollination takes place without them), but are very poor pollinators of lucerne. Pollination of oil seed rape is under investigation at the moment.

Red Clover

In his work as a pollination researcher Pat, along with Trevor Palmer-Jones and Ivor Forster, has been able to dispel the myth that honey bees are totally useless pollinators of red clover. He said too many people think that because they read something in a book it must be true – wrong!

The Wallaceville team, through experiments with red clover, have discovered the honey bee is the second best pollinator of the crop. While the long-tongued bumble bee takes first place, honey bees are still extremely good pollinators of red clover.

Smaller scale projects have been dealt with in the lab at Wallaceville – testing wood preservatives, developing a replacement for cynogas, disease diagnosis and work to determine the effects of the synthetic pyrethroids on honey bees.

Overall a diverse range of research is done at Wallaceville. Pat feels the progress being made is comparable with achievements overseas. The major difference is that Wallaceville is a “Jack of all trades” in apicultural research, where overseas larger staff resources enable specialisation. Each country must solve similar problems as they occur, though as different environments yield different results.

Some work has been done with *Acarapis externus* (a relation of *Acarapis woodi*, a mite that effects the health of the honey bee.)

Pat is proud to have pioneered a technique whereby a small concentration of pesticide is fed to the honey bee – not enough to cause it any damage – but fatal to the mite that sucks the haemolymph (blood) out of the bee. This technique, a first at Wallaceville, has been picked up overseas because of its obvious potential for the treatment of Varroa.

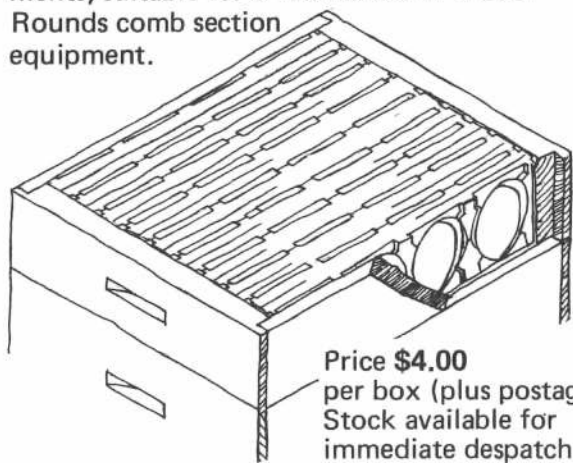
Groups like the NBA are responsible for some of the work that is carried out at Wallaceville. They asked for the research into spraying of lucerne. The research is hardly ever instigated by Pat or Trudy personally, unless they can see something that needs to be looked into as a result of something they have discovered through their research.

Liking the quite lifestyle that New Zealand has brought to him for some 18 years now, it is likely that Pat Clinch will lead apicultural research in this country for many more years. And hopefully he will finally get the assistance his dedication to this vital field of research deserves.



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FROM THE COLONIES

FAR NORTH

The first fortnight of October was tremendous weather for nectar and pollen gathering, being fine, hot and sunny. But this great start fell rather flat with the very cold windy period that followed. However, at the time of writing, things have picked up again although the bees could be short of pasture nectar sources with the present dry weather, unless we get some rain very soon.

The club hives came through the winter successfully and, in their particular location, were a good month ahead in progress from some of the rest of the Far North area. Our field days opened with a gathering for assembling gear at the end of August; we had another field day centred around swarm control in September but the October field day for supering for the honey flow had to be cancelled twice on account of inclement weather. However, we did manage to complete this on the last day of the month and the bees are well away to what we hope will be a happy and bountiful honey season.

We took a nucleus off the club hives in the autumn and this also came through the winter well. This was purchased by one of our new members who did not yet have a hive of bees and so it is a good way to help new beekeeping members set up their hives.

The field days are attended by an enthusiastic group of members as are our meetings. One of our members gave a talk, giving us a concise history of beekeeping. One of our very knowledgeable and enthusiastic local nurserymen gave an illustrated talk on nectar sources and we look forward to a talk on some aspects of beekeeping in Canada by one of our members who has recently returned from a trip there. The meetings are usually lively with a good amount of time devoted to discussion of members' problems and it is heartening to see new members coming along to learn how to keep bees according to healthy practices.

Wendy Macpherson
Kaitaia

WEST COAST

It is difficult, if not impossible to predict what the coming honey season will be like.

In most cases the bees came through the winter well, with sufficient stores, and a long fine spell in late winter and early spring. This ensured the hive population could build up in fine style, and set beekeepers preparing hives for queen rearing.

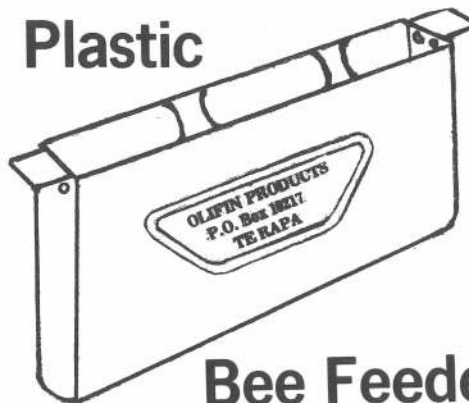
However the weather turned sour, cold drizzle prevailed for many weeks, culminating with a snow storm. Even strong hives went into a winter cluster thus putting a stop to queen rearing until later, almost too late in the southern half of the West Coast. Some beekeepers in the north were more successful.

The hives with ample stores before the weather broke are now very much on the borderline, but a few successive fine days should put them right as fuschia and lawyer vine are flowering, and other bush sources of nectar are due to bloom any day.

There are many predictions of a fine hot summer, so if these are correct there should be a fair to good crop coming up.

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HAWKES BAY

Everything is looking O.K. in Hawkes Bay for the season. We are having a good buildup with the bees and an early flow from the willow. With all the rain and subsequent growth in pasture, we should be in for a reasonable crop. The cabbage tree is starting to flower and we should go into a clover and manuka flow straight after.

Pollen has been trapped off the willow — a reasonable crop — even though we had six days of high winds in the middle of the season with the hives in sheltered areas really doing well. We have noticed those hives with traps on are a lot slower coming away, but with a good feed and the rising temperature, they will be up to strength by kiwifruit pollination.

A meeting of the kiwifruit growers and a member of our committee has paved the way for further liaison between both parties in the future.

We still have the usual amount of loss during the fruit-growing pollination due to insecticide sprays being used too early by some growers.

Our local staff from the ministry, under the direction of Bill Rodie, are doing a good job on inspection.

The final day of the Community College course for beginners was held at Walter Watt's apiary, with the new beekeepers being shown introduction of queens and cells by Paul Ashcroft. Good beekeeping all hobbyists.

Wishing all beekeepers a bumper crop for 1982.

**Keith Leadley
Hastings**

SOUTHLAND

Weather-wise a meteorologist aptly described September as a rather fluid month with 29 days of rain recorded at Invercargill. This resulted in a poor start to spring with the hives opening up small and short of pollen.

October was a little better but with strong winds. Better weather later in the month resulted in better pollen storage but no nectar from the willow.

The Southland field day will be held on January 30, 1982. The Woodlands programme includes displays, cut comb honey production, a visiting speaker Paul Pawlowski from Canada, as well as local speakers.

Mark your calendar for this popular entry.

**Alister Lee
Balfour**

OTAGO

November is here again and summer not so far away. The weather since early spring has had its ups and downs as usual. In and around Dunedin, in south and west Otago, many days have had very strong winds.

The catkins landed on the ground before the bees could get much benefit from them. It often happens. Overall colonies are in pretty good shape and here and there too strong for comfort.

A spring field day will be held this Saturday November 7, at Milburn, and the MAF will hold "disease clinics" in several centres throughout the province. A number of beekeepers have been asked to co-operate in a nosema research project.

**J. Heineman
Milton**

POVERTY BAY

On 15 and 16 October the local A & P show was held and our branch put on a display of beekeeping equipment and things related to beekeeping including an observation hive. Local businesses assisted with gear and hive products and we borrowed literature and posters from the NBA technical library.

A great deal of public interest was shown in the display and it was a first for the show. We plan now to put an even larger display in next years A & P show. Thanks to all those that assisted.

It's now under a month until the main honey flow and there seems to be no end of things to be done, gear to be made up and repaired, queens to be introduced and nuclei to be made up. There is almost it seems, as much activity outside the hive as inside.

A month ago things were just beginning to pick up for those of us with hives in the high country, and now they are well away, despite the cold, wasps and sometimes snow during the winter.

Down on the Poverty Bay flats, foothills and up the coast, the willows have finished and the main sources at present are the manuka, clover, and citrus.

We have had a few cases of brood disease this season and our problems are far from solved yet.

This month more hives than ever before will be going into kiwifruit orchards for pollination and the problems of disease and spray mortality will have to be watched closely. Let's hope that by the time this is published our hives are bursting with honey.

Barry Foster
Gisborne

BAY OF PLENTY

This season will possibly be as late as we are ever likely to get.

The build up in late winter — early spring failed completely for those people relying on five finger and consequently some sugar feeding was required. Those hives not fed were weakened severely and are only now picking up in a single box.

Hives on heath however, were able to get away to a good start and once onto the willow, barberry and hawthorn,

built up to great strength. These areas now have to deal with swarming problems like we haven't seen for many years.

Hives on early rewarewa have taken a good crop, later areas have nearly run out of time to collect their crop. Bad weather in early November destroyed a few beekeeper's hopes of a bumper bush crop.

Clover is well established in pasture this year and the signs are for an early and good crop, which may coincide with pollination.

Kiwifruit pollination hives requirement will be well up again. The going rate is around \$48.

Bruce Stanley
Whakatane

NELSON

After a cool winter, a rather drier than usual spring allowed many hives to gain strength early. A lack of wind during the willow flow helped a lot too, along with an abundance of heath in flower.

Most beekeepers in our area are closing up on pollination with the larger areas of kiwifruit being planted out, prospects of hive expansion in Nelson seem good.

The last meeting was interesting with Mr Grahame Walton speaking on MAF policy on beekeeping.

White clover is flowering well now and with the damp conditions of early November, a good flow may be on the way. The kamahi and manuka are flowering although it's a little early to assess their output this year.

One last point, many local orchardists have been careful not to spray with the "deadlies" (such as Gusathion) while the bees are working, so things are looking better in our relationships with them. Let's hope we can improve things even further. ... Best wishes for a golden harvest!

Jeff Lukey
Richmond

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Is it a good idea to run a large outfit with many thousands of hives, or is it better to stick to a smaller one or two-man business?

Thinking big in beekeeping

by Ian Berry, Arataki Honey, Havelock North.

IT HAS TAKEN 37 years to build up Arataki Honey from nothing to about 16 000 hives. During this period I have been able to observe many different beekeeping operations throughout the North Island and have been able to draw some conclusions as to where the strengths and weaknesses lie in both large and small beekeeping businesses.

As we bought out many other beekeepers, particularly during the 1950-1970 period, I have also been able to observe many reasons why beekeepers running both small and large numbers of hives, sell their bees and change their way of life.

Without doubt, the number one reason for selling out would have been lack of profits. Prices for honey were so low in this period (1950-1970) that if you built up a new hive and then tried to sell it, you were lucky to get half the price you paid for it.

Arataki made little new equipment for many years because it was cheaper to replace hives by buying from beekeepers going out of business.

To give an example of how things were, when one beekeeper we knew decided to give up beekeeping, he found it paid to gas his bees in the autumn, extract all the honey and then press out the combs and sell the wax. Then he sold the frames, boxes, lids and floors to other beekeepers.

Returned servicemen from the Second World War had to give up beekeeping because they lacked enough capital to acquire enough hives to keep a business and support a family. Many of them were started with enough capital to acquire about 300 hives and a vehicle, but there just wasn't a living in that number of hives. It was very difficult for them to get further capital to build up their hive numbers to an economic unit. Full marks to the few who battled on for years and finally developed successful enterprises.

Other beekeepers built up large and efficient units, but as they grew older and less fit they had to pass management of the hives over to people less motivated to making a success of beekeeping or to people with other interests which left insufficient time to give the business the necessary attention.

To make a success of beekeeping there are times when the bees, and indeed other aspects of the business, must come before everything else. At these



Larger outfits are better able to justify the expense of equipment such as forklifts. This four-wheel-drive forklift and tip trailer is used by Arataki Honey in Hawke's Bay, for shifting hives and for working the hives in wet apiaries.



BETTER BUSINESS

times sport, committees, other business interests and fishing must take second place.

Anyone thinking of taking up beekeeping as a business — hoping to work a five-day 40-hour week — would be wise to forget about it. There is no substitute for long hours of hard work during some periods of the year if your business is to be successful.

There are some specific advantages of a smaller beekeeping business running 500-1000 hives. Usually it is a one-man or family business which needs to employ little or no extra help. This means the owner has direct control over all aspects of the business and there is no need to delegate management to others. Should the owner decide to sell out, a business of this size would have more potential buyers than a larger one.

Provided the small business concentrated on producing bulk honey it should be possible to spend some time away from it during the off season, perhaps even take up outside employment in the event of a bad season.

Not everybody has the desire or the skills to employ staff and some beekeepers are happier working amongst their bees than becoming administrators spending most of their time in the office.

Motor vehicle running can be kept to

a low level with the smaller number of hives, provided your home and factory are situated close by. In some cases the furthest-out apiary could be only 50 kilometres from home.

More time and effort can be concentrated on producing more honey at less cost per kilogram. The management of the larger business has a much wider range of problems to handle, many of which seem rather remote from working bees.

There are advantages of a larger business running 2,000 or more hives, as well.

A larger business employing a reasonable number of staff is not as dependent on any one person in the event of sickness or accident. Working bees by oneself for long periods is not something I would recommend and most people enjoy working as a member of a team. For one thing it provides more opportunities for each member to use to greater effect any special skills they may have.

Crop fluctuations do not affect the larger business to the same extent because of the greater range of country in which its bigger number of hives must be placed.

Motor vehicles can be better utilised with more bees. Most smaller outfits have a 3-tonne truck plus a small truck. In the Hawke's Bay area of Arataki's

operations we farm 6 000 hives, place about 1 000 hives in orchards each spring and shift quite a number of other hives for spring flows, with two 3-tonne trucks and two 750-kg trucks.

Beekeepers with a lot of hives are normally not straight bulk honey producers but pack and market honey, render their own beeswax and make up their own woodware. This gives a much better spread of work during the off season and enables the employment of permanent rather than seasonal staff.

With more hives, capital expenditure for equipment such as forklifts can be justified, whereas it becomes very easy to over-capitalise a smaller business with expensive equipment which is lying idle for most of the year.

The potential profits are greater once the large number of hives has been obtained. By the same token, the potential losses are greater also. Size alone is no guarantee against financial difficulties, as can be seen by some of the large companies (not beekeeping) that have gone into receivership in New Zealand during the last few years.

For some, big beekeeping is beautiful but for others small is a much simpler and more satisfying way of making a living.

It all depends on the way of life one prefers.

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WHEN WAS the last time West Coast beekeepers got a good honey flow off the power poles down there?

Those of us who attended a retirement dinner for Doug Briscoe, heard all sorts of stories of beekeeping down the West Coast. Doug's early work in the Department of Agriculture took him to Greymouth and that part of the country, at a time before there was a road through the Haast and a time when Doug could be flagged down as he drove through a community simply because he was wearing a pair of white overalls. There was a time when he was stopped and given instructions for papering and painting a house, having been mistaken for a transient paper-hanger.

Pubs never closed down there in those days. Billeted in one of these unofficially 24 hour establishments, the young apiary instructor was given instructions to ring three times to regain entry after "closing" time. Out of curiosity he rang only once. Inside the sounds of scraping chairs and muffled voices faded into silence. When the proprietor opened the door at last, expecting to see someone other than Doug, he welcomed the young fellow back in "that polite way, known only to West Coasters" and suggested strongly that he go back to using the prearranged three rings.

Doug's experience with bees goes back to the pre-Depression days when his elder brother got a hive. Young Doug would sit watching the bees for hours. It wasn't long before he got some bees of his own. Semi-commercial beekeeping, part time apiary instructor at Palmerston North and finally full time work for the department followed.

His first posting to Greymouth, the different types of people and beekeeping he found there - still bring a light to his eye as he talks of his time there.

Even in little matters he found he had to modify his behaviour to suit the local customs and expectations. After wondering about several receptions he received when inspecting hives, he realised his polite turning down of the friendly offer of a cup of tea was responsible. Changing his style to accept all cups of tea, he remembers one afternoon with nine cups of tea and numerous other stops in addition to hive inspection.

Once while working with a beekeeper inspecting hives, they both gazed longingly toward the snow covered mountains towering over them. A race to the top was inevitable, and they stopped only long enough to close the

Tanging the swarm.
"The Beekeeper Book".



Some good West Coast yarns

by Nick Wallingford

hives and grab a sugar bag and rifle each.

Naturally by the time they got to the top, not having seen any deer, it was too late to return so they slept fitfully through the freezing night. Finally about four they lit a fire which combined with the stiff wind to form a burn-off visible from down below. Coming down themselves later in the morning they managed to express open-eyed amazement that such a fire could have started seemingly by itself.

Some of the old West Coast characters and their "gadgets" reflected the freshness and new approaches they still bring to New Zealand beekeeping. One story involved some distilled honey mead to be tasted after a day on the glacial ice. Before anyone had tasted it, a match intended to light a cigarette caused the fumes from the tumbler to ignite with a "poof!" testifying to the brew's strength, and startling the group considerably.

Yet another story was of a tall device

with a fan at the top and a bike chain down to the bench, which turned out to be a wind-powered table saw, but with no provision for a change in wind direction. When it did change the next day the machine blew to the ground with unfortunate results.

Another innovation involved a water and diesel mixture burning under a closed 44 gallon drum of water. Doug asked the inventor where the pressure relief valve was and was told there was none, that the steam pressure went through an uncapping knife. When it got too hot, the beekeeper just turned it off to let it cool down! Doug didn't say whether this beekeeper is still with us.

At this time, about 30 years ago, a lot of work had been done regarding the chemistry of plant fluids and its relationship to potential nectar secretion. Doug and one of the local beekeepers Ralph Glasson got interested in the exciting possibility of predicting a rata flow early on in the season. Extensive tests were made by the two, taking small core samples of a tree and treating it with an iodine solution to test for starches. The colour change toward blue indicated the sugar percentage of the plant and supposedly its potential nectar production.

Quite a file of material was gathered by the two as they sampled many varieties of trees and locales. They believed they were really coming up with something. How nice to be able to predict the rata flow ahead of time!

It wasn't until Ralph half-jokingly suggested to Doug that he try testing one of the roadside power poles that their hopes were dashed. According to their device and calculations, those power poles were due to give a honey flow that would put the rata to shame.

Thankyou, Doug.

The MAF, the industry, and especially the beekeepers of the Tauranga district will certainly view Doug's retirement with regret. But Doug is far from lost to our industry; he intends to put some of his advice into practice with hives of his own now.

I'm sure that the local beekeepers will still be able to take advantage of his vast store of beekeeping experiences. I understand that he and Ralph Glasson sat down a few years ago and taped a long night's talk of the ways of bees and beekeepers from the old days of the West Coast. I certainly hope Doug will find time soon to share with us some more of his stories.

I hope you all join me in wishing him well in retirement.

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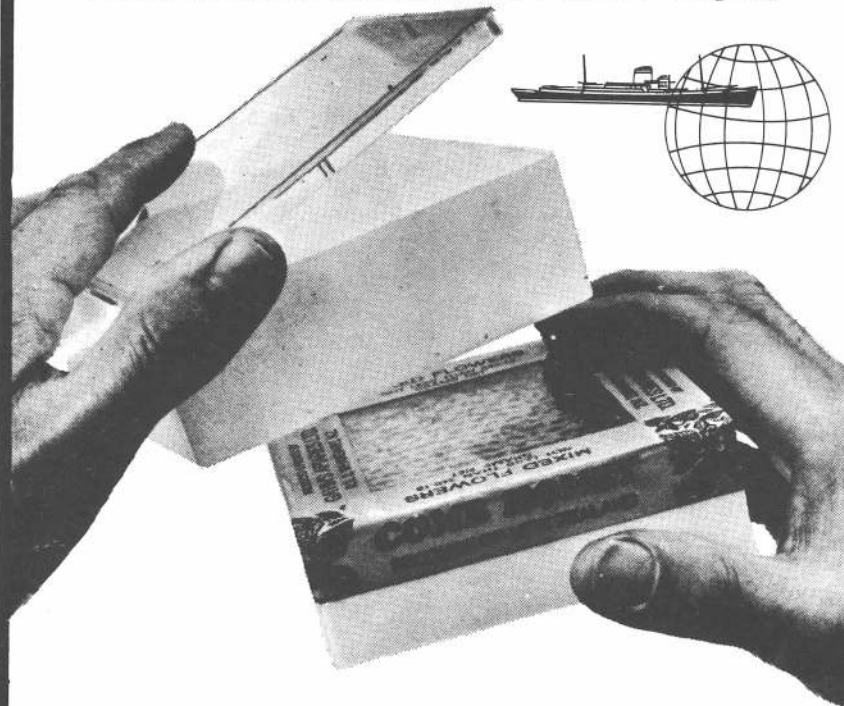
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The potential for bees in oversown tussock

Government loans don't extend as far as the bees the land development schemes need.

SINCE MOVING from the East Coast of the North Island to become adviser for South Canterbury, North and Central Otago, I have become much more involved in work with farmers and farm advisers. The main reason for this is the rapid expansion of pasture development of the tussock hill country of the South Island, especially in the pastoral lease blocks of Otago.

Hectares of browntop and tussock country are being oversown with clovers and top-dressed with superphosphate. The high altitude tussock country is being sown with Maku lotus especially bred by Grasslands scientists for these conditions. Fencing for subdividing the big, improved run blocks to enable the management of more productive pasture, is taking off at a great rate.

Government loans to encourage this change in land use are administered by Rural Bank under the Land Development Encouragement Loans scheme (LDEL). The scale of the changes is vast – over 300 000 ha of pasture is involved in the South Island and over \$50 million in loan money for this scheme alone, not counting other rural lending in this area.

No consideration at all had been given

to the role of honey bees in clover and lotus life cycle by the scheme's architects. So it was not surprising that I started to receive enquiries from high country runholders asking about bees, beekeepers and pollination. Much of the development has occurred way beyond the last apiary of the nearest beekeeper, and the farmers concerned wanted bees on their property, in some cases even if it meant that they (or their wives) had to become beekeepers.

by Kerry Simpson,
MAF,
Oamaru

With such a rapid (LDEL was a three year scheme ended last March) and sizeable scheme, there is no way in which the extra hives for this area could be instantly produced. The total figure for all beekeeper lending in the last year was short of half a million dollars, and much of this would have been for dwellings, honeyhouses and plant. Even if it had all been spent on hives it would only have enabled about five thousand to be established, a long way short of the extra that we probably require.

There are a lot of unknowns in the

management of improved tussock grassland and a workshop was held at Telford Farm Training Institute in July to identify the problems. Farmers, scientists and advisers got together for three days to sort out a grazing management system for oversown blocks. I was invited to contribute a paper for consideration by this group. So honey bees, or rather the pollination they carry out, is at least recognised by those responsible for advising and researching high country farming. It should be made clear that the precise need for re-seeding of legume species in oversown tussock hill country has not yet been the subject of research.

The paper "The role of honey bees in oversown tussock" presented at this workshop follows:

There are obviously a lot of unknowns in the management of developed tussock but it is certain that the change of pasture composition is not only a challenge to farmers, but also to beekeepers. At present farmers are requesting more apiaries, or even getting their own bees, but we need the answers to two questions.

- What is the role of bees in pollinating pasture species?
- Is high country beekeeping viable?

Bees and pasture legumes

The role of honey bees in the life cycle of red, white, alsike clover and Maku lotus is in effecting cross pollination. Insect visitation is essential before seed can be set. Pasture legumes in direct contrast to true grass species are not pollinated by wind at all.

These legumes have two modes of reproduction, vegetative and sexually by seeds. In good conditions of soil moisture, fertility and temperature, the plant mat grows by extension of rhizomes or stolons that expand the mat of vegetation from the original plant.

Unlike animals which can migrate in times of stress, plants have had to evolve a reproductive strategy to cope with adverse conditions that might be severe enough to kill the established plants. This is why when plants are under some stress such as drought, they quickly produce flowers, which under these conditions, secrete nectar to attract bees. In flying from flower to flower the bees provide a cross pollination service as they collect the sugary liquid.

The end result of the plants' sexual reproduction is a hard coated seed, resistant to drought, frost and digestion by cattle. The seed is the means by which the legumes can survive despite adverse events which may kill the adult plants.

The advantages of seeding

The obvious importance of having pollinating insects on oversown tussock is to ensure that the legumes can drop a quantity of hard seed onto the ground, some of which will become buried. This is not an insurance against drought but it will ensure the survival of the legume despite adult plants being killed by either drought or frost heave. The amount of re-seeding that is required is not known, but it would probably vary with the climate of the area.

Other advantages of allowing some seed production are the thickening of stands. In many cases oversowing does not produce as many plants as germination losses and seedling deaths are high. Survival rates of 7 per cent for sunny faces and 15 per cent for shady faces are mentioned as being about half what is required for good establishment.* The problem is more acute for Maku due to the cost of seed and low sowing rates. Seed production on site will result in the thickening of the stand as seeding will augment vegetative growth.

A similar situation occurs in missed areas when aerial oversowing has left strips. Cattle feeding on hard seed can pass the seed through the gut undamaged and assist in distribution within a block although this method is not suited to establishing new stands.

One of Bill Irving's apiaries near Omarama.



Beekeeping on oversown tussock

New Zealand's high country is very understocked with honey bees. The potential for newly oversown country at one hive for every 6 ha (half the rate that has been found practical) would add 50 000 hives to the 110 000 already in the South Island. The production from these hives could be worth \$4.5 million in additional exports using conservative crop and price figures. Beekeeping could be a worthwhile investment, even if there were no benefits to pastures.

There are problems, as this country is not the best for keeping bees all the year round. Harsh springs and shortages of spring forage could hamper the development of hives. The honey crop is brought into the hives within a very short period of only a few weeks. Any hive not up to full strength at the eve of the clover nectar flow will neither gather an adequate surplus or be a good pollination unit. Other problems of beekeeping expansion in the high country include:

- Unseasonal frosts curtailing the short honey flow.
- Access to sites in two wheel drive vehicles.
- Wind throw of hives and lack of shelter for foraging bees.
- Lack of research on management techniques.
- Difficulty of beekeepers to secure finance.
- Isolated nature of potential areas of production.

Human aspects

Beekeeping development in the high country could bring 60 families into rural areas at the conservative figures for development already advanced.

Established beekeepers are unlikely to expand very much as they have no incentive, either personal or financial (Livestock Incentive scheme [LIS] and LDEL have no apicultural equivalents). At present some conflict is beginning to occur as farmers requests for more apiaries on oversown blocks are met with beekeepers who are unable or unwilling to meet the demand.

There is a temptation for farmers to try and run their own hives. However, beekeeping is a specialist occupation in which the critical spring work to obtain the strong hives needed for summer corresponds with the main stock work period on the farm. Neglected hives will not do the jobs required of them and can result in attrition of capital outlay if disease is not controlled.

Beekeepers could possibly be employed but aspire to their own independent outfit just as a farmer wants to own his farm. Perhaps groups of farmers could finance experienced, competent beekeepers into an area on some kind of share-farming system if traditional rural lending cannot adapt fast enough to this new need.

I believe that scientists should be asked to investigate the role of pollination and seeding in pasture legume establishment, survival and spread, and find out optimum management techniques for honey bees in the high country. Advisers could promote shelter that includes spring bee forage as a part of well designed and landscaped windbreaks, promote better beekeeper/farmer understanding and seek finance for beekeeping development to keep pace with pasture development.

* *Oversown tussock workshop – Omarama 1980: Summary of papers compiled by G.R.L. Brown.*

Overalls, gumboots and cardboard boxes

Introduction

Part 1 in the September issue dealt with what equipment the beginner *must* have to start with and how to get bees. Part 2 will give a brief outline of suggestions on protective clothing and on the necessity for a beekeeping room, kept exclusively for that purpose.

Remember that you cannot be a beekeeper unless you have a hive or hives and you will not remain a beekeeper unless you feel safe and protected in your hobby.

Protective clothing

You may see amateurs wandering around in shorts and sandals amongst the hives, and even doing full hive examinations without veil or gloves; but you will never see commercial operators doing so, and no beginner should be so brave.

Commercial operators risk so many more stings than us that they cannot afford the risk of becoming overloaded with toxins. They look after themselves.

A beginner not only risks more stings through his inexperience but will not have built up any immunity.

In most cases the flesh swells alarmingly, the swelling feels hot and inflamed, and even when it goes down the site itches for three or four days.

This is normal, however unpleasant. Gradually the body's reaction to the injection of such poison becomes less and, while it is never pleasant to be stung, an experienced amateur gets stung less, gets less poison in him because he scrapes the sting off as soon as he feels it and reacts less.

A bee's sting will not stick in clothing. The cloth fails to hold the barbs and the bee will withdraw it and try again. Only when the sting sticks firmly in the flesh does the sting tear out of the bee's rear and the poison scent attract other bees to the spot.

Thus the bee will find flesh and then other bees will find the same area and do the same thing.

Obviously protection is needed. There are certain rules that should be followed here:

Nylon and other synthetics are hell to wear! Beekeeping is a hot, sticky job. Nylon retains all the heat inside so that you steam, then fails to retain it when you stop generating it so that you go all cold and clammy.



Alan Warren photo.

Bare legs and arms are only for experienced amateurs. Beginners should wear protective clothing to minimise stinging.

Many beginners find the best outfit is a pair of khaki overalls, tucked into two pairs of socks, leather gloves with sleeves reaching up to the elbow, veil tucked *inside* the neck and safety helmet to allow a little air circulation around the head. I know some purists say white overalls are best — I don't believe it and nor do the bees. Certainly white soon looks and stays yucky, while khaki is *supposed* to look yucky, so is perfectly suited to beekeeping.

Care of leather gloves is a never-ending argument, even though many of us wouldn't wear them from one year's end to another.

It is inevitable that they will immediately become smeared with wax and honey and glued with propolis. This soon forms a hard layer on the fingers of the gloves and is part of the glove.

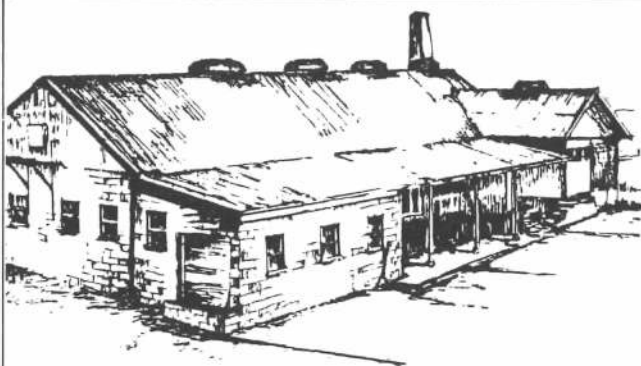
I did have some success with rinsing with methylated spirits, washing with warm water and detergent and then rubbing a little lanolin in.

Methylated spirits is also most useful for taking propolis off fingers, using a soaked cloth. Meths is clean, evaporable, and pleasant smelling.

Two favourite places bees like to attack are wrists and ankles. Even the leather gloves will not completely prevent stings on the hands, while stings easily get through even two pairs of socks at the ankles.

Gumboots are clumsy but may help the amateur in his early days but remember to tuck overalls or trousers down inside.

If you feel a bee crawling anywhere around your person, whether you are protectively clothed or not, do not try



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to remove it. You will merely annoy it sufficiently for it to sting you.

Whether the bee is in your hair, crawling up your sleeve or trouser leg, infiltrating through a gap in pocket or overall, simply slap it hard as soon as you feel it. That way both your and the bee's troubles are over.

A most important point, and one often forgotten by the amateur is that the scent of sting or squashed bee lingers on and may well arouse hostility the next time round. So wash or fumigate all affected articles before re-use.

Equipment, hives, honey and everything

It must be emphasised that the beekeeper needs a safe place in which to store all equipment and stores, stores

in this case meaning primarily capped frames of honey saved for spring feeding. This does not exclude full supers stored prior to extraction.

The storage area must be large, cool, well-ventilated, preferably on the dark side, and equipped with electricity and electric light. The area must be kept secure and solely for beekeeping, away from volatiles, paint fumes, insect spray, garden chemicals and internal combustion engines.

This is the place where you change in and out of your beekeeping uniform. All equipment is best stored in a super-sized cardboard box – mine seem to last at least five years a time, and these hold everything you need, everything you are likely to need, and everything you take off and put on. A quick

examination in my cardboard box shows overalls (which I never wear), gloves (which I never wear), 100mm clean paintbrush I use to get the last few bees off any frame I don't want to be too rough with, water spray, bottle of benzaldehyde, chisel I use as a hive tool, spare matches and sacking, helmet and veil, smoker, a couple of queen cages and a sheet of newspaper. Easy to carry, easy to store, easy to have out at the hives with you.

I will deal with smokers and smoking later, but remember you put a smoker out by stuffing its nozzle with green grass. By all means keep the smoker with your other gear – after it has cooled down a little.

READERS QUERIES

David Williams, our resident hobbyist adviser, is willing to answer reader's queries about problems they have with their hives. "My articles are designed to be both practical and provocative," he says. "There may be many points amateurs would wish to raise and would do so if told to write in. I would be happy to provide answers to the best of my limited ability and can always call on the literature or the experts for the really tricky ones."

Mail your questions to: "A Fresh Start", 26 Otonga Road, Rotorua. They will be answered by Mr Williams personally and suitable ones submitted for publication.

Dear Mr Williams,

A big "Thank you" for all the interesting and worthwhile articles you write that appear regularly in the N.Z. Beekeeper.

I have a question prompted by your review of "Beekeeping For Fun."

I have asked our local bookseller to procure a copy for me, but he has been unable to do so because I haven't been able to supply the name of the publisher – a very important requirement I believe for locating old and new books. My questions then are:

1. Who is the publisher of 'Beekeeping for Fun'?
2. When are you going to write a book on beekeeping? I have photocopied a number of your articles but this tends to become bulky and unmanageable and I'm sure you could produce a world beater.
3. Would follower boards as outlined in some American publications be of any great advantage under New Zealand conditions?
4. To obtain a good crop of honey – assuming it is a good season – what is the best plan of attack.

I bought five hives off a friend four seasons ago and the crop was over five hundred pounds of honey.

I haven't been able to get anywhere near that figure since, so it has either

been poor seasons or poor management. My friend said that he had no particular system of management other than ensuring that the bees had plenty of room.

He didn't inspect them regularly for queen cells as he said that there was a danger of killing a queen with over manipulation, and yet obviously he got results.

Thanks once again for your help via the pages of the "N.Z. Beekeeper."

Keep on with the good work.

Yours
Bill Arundel

Great to hear from you and thank you for the kind if undeserved words of praise.

In answer to your questions:

1. Beekeeping For Fun was published by the authors, I believe. Your most direct contact would be with

**Ray Chapman-Taylor,
64, Castor Bay Road,
Auckland 9.**

2. I think I'll leave book writing to experts like Ray! He tells me it cost \$11 000 to produce his book and was substantially re-written five times. Only he and Ivo would have that sort of dedication. I'll send him a copy of this letter and am sure the two of you

will somehow get together.

3. Follower boards are no help at all in normal New Zealand beekeeping. They are one of these concepts that odd people occasionally get enthusiastic about but that's all.

4. The seasons have not been the reason for your poor honey crops. I can't say specifically why the previous owner of your hives was more successful than you are.

The basic requirements for a good honey crop are

- a young queen
- swarm prevention
- large colonies at the honey flow.

These are inter-related. A colony headed by a young queen is less likely to swarm than one with an older one. A hive that does not swarm builds up steadily through spring and, if it has ample stores through this build-up period, will be set to take full advantage of the nectar flow from early summer on.

T.S. Winters said, in "Beekeeping In New Zealand," that any colony which did not completely fill two brood chambers at the start of the flow was too small to do it justice, or words to that effect.

Very true. Get that population and it is very difficult for them not to store a surplus. One hundred pounds per hive could not be regarded as exceptional for the Taumaranui area. Certainly they will need plenty of room to store honey but that is the end result, not the whole of the spring management plan.

I hope this is some help to you,

Regards
David Williams

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All replies to:
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Neville Bartrum,
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For further details contact:
Dick Hup,
Industrieweg 22, 8091 A.Z. Wezep.
The Netherlands.

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Accommodation, hospitality taken care of. January to April was the time mentioned but probably this period could be adjusted as need be to suit a volunteer.

In first instance please write to:
J R. Simpson, R.D.3, Gore for further details.
Phone Willowbank 880 Gore.

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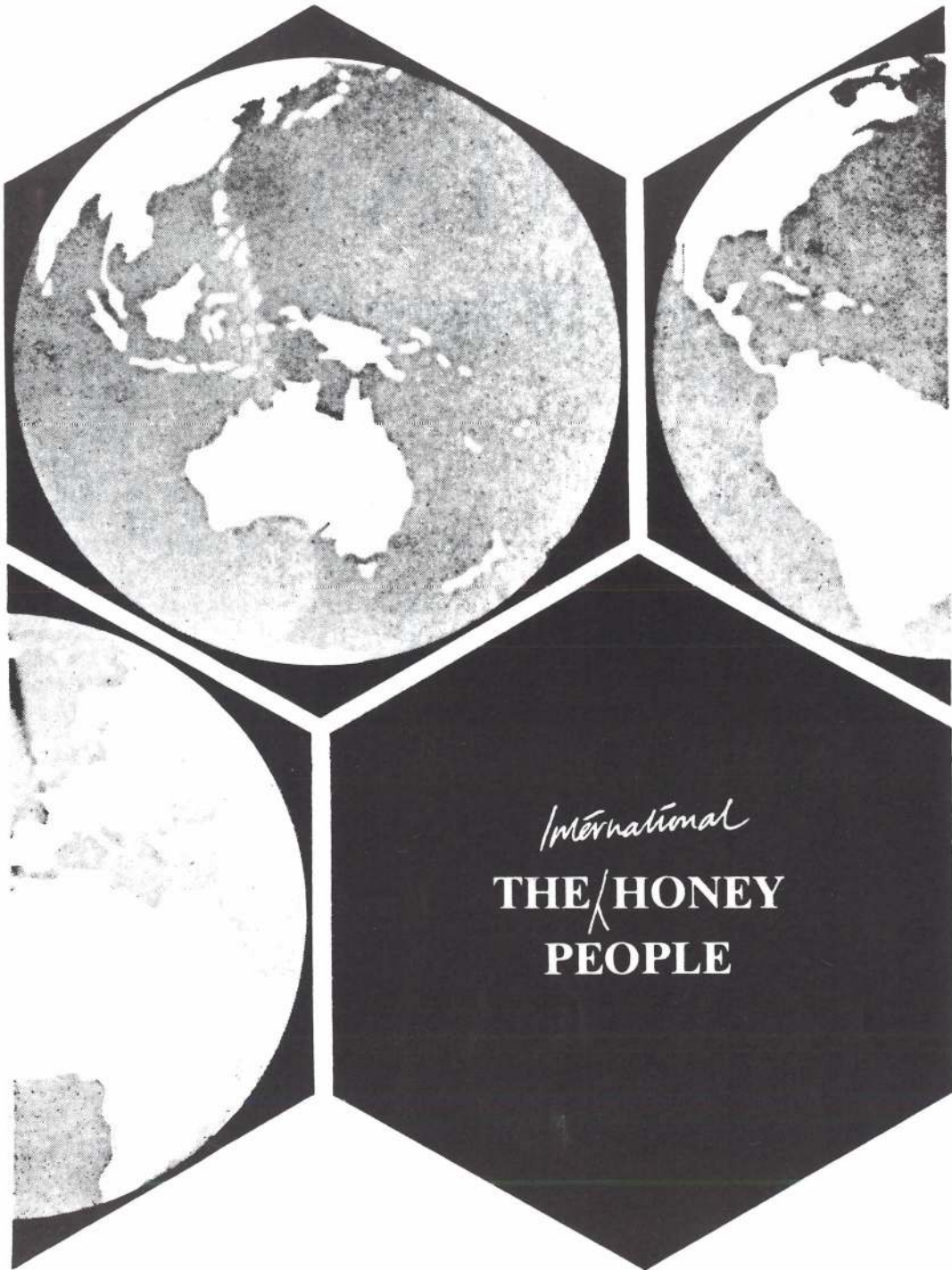
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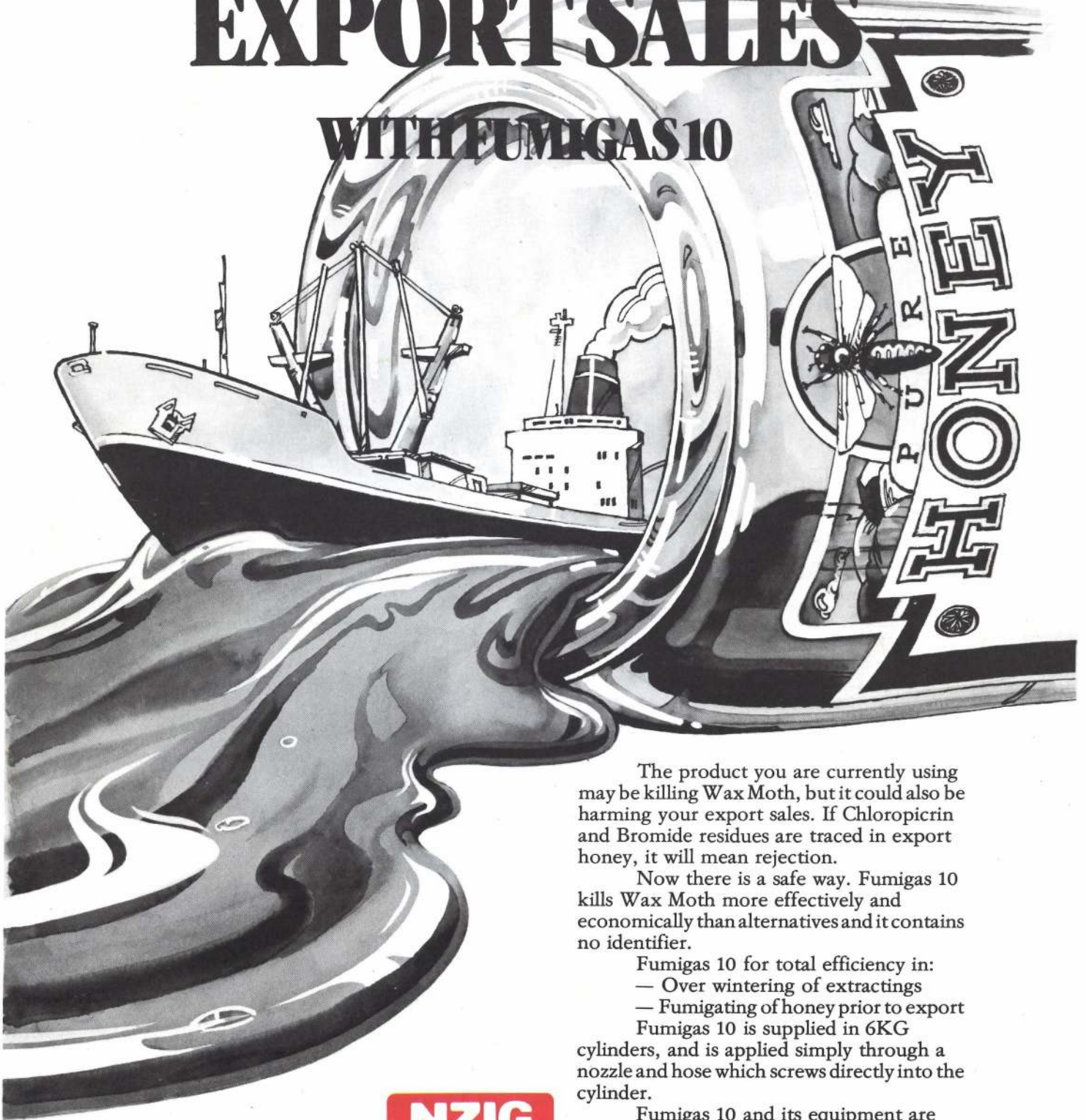
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