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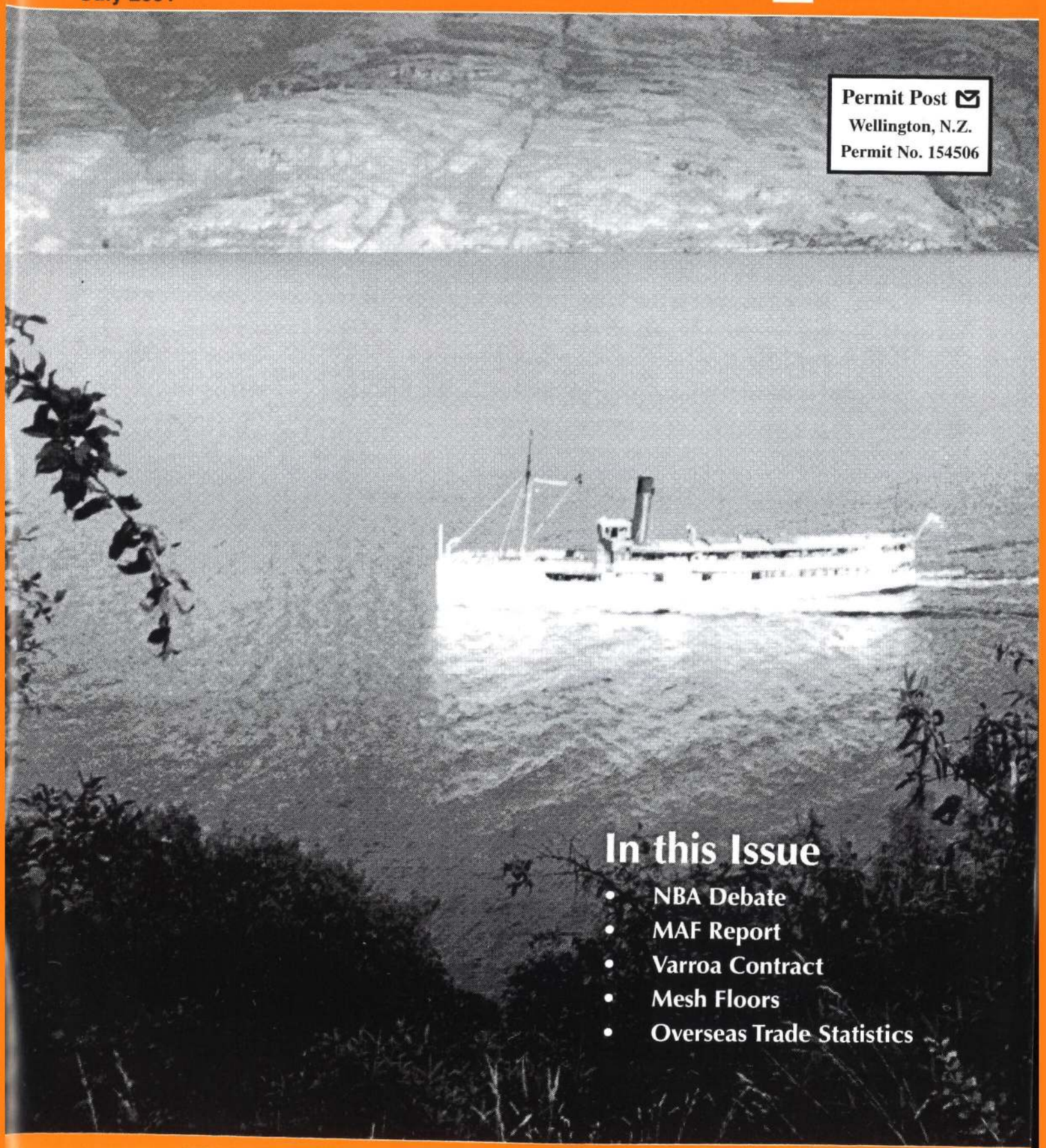

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NBA executive calls for debate

Future directions for the National Beekeepers Association were discussed by many current and intending executive members, plus former honey packaging supplier Steve Olds and past NBA president Mike Stuckey in a recent workshop meeting. LIN MCKENZIE prepared the following discussion paper to promote debate.

Governing body

Ways of restructuring the executive, so all association issues it addressed are governed effectively, will be debated at the special meeting at this year's conference. (*It is important the changes are not left on the table for another year. They should be debated, fine-tuned if necessary, but a finality reached this year if we are to progress.)*

Where now?

In order to establish direction, a starting point must be established. In this case, we have an association of beekeepers funded by a compulsory commodity levy for the purposes of disease control, generic marketing and the administration of those two activities.

Most authorities regard the NBA as the body representing beekeepers in all matters. In reality, the association currently supplies the following services to members in a greater or lesser degree.

- Advocacy
- Legal
- Government lobbying
- Legislative
- Advice
- Guidance
- Policy
- Market framework

It must be recognised that these things happen in both a reactionary and fragmented mode. In particular, advocacy and government lobbying is only carried out at a very low level, an issue of ongoing concern to the current executive. There needs to be both financial commitment and support from the membership for these services to be carried out in a more pro-active manner.

Industry stakeholders

The workshop identified stakeholders in the industry as beekeepers and people dealing in products or supplying goods and services to those beekeepers.

- Commercial beekeepers
- Domestic or hobby beekeepers
- Product exporters
- Packers
- Equipment suppliers
- Legal advisors
- Institutions –
- Research – scientific
- Research and development
- Education, System development,
- Commercial opportunity development

If the association is to attract both these stakeholders and others who have not yet been identified, then "industry participation drivers" need to be identified. Some of these were seen as:

- An understanding by members that they, "as members of the industry" are the stakeholders.
- The need for a clear understanding that control of the industry and of the association is in the hands of the membership.
- All things must be performance based, whether they are legal or in the area of added value.

Accountability

In order to achieve a "performance based" measurement, the workshop saw a need to identify legal requirements being what is demanded, not just desirable.

Our pest management strategy is a legal requirement and is "compulsory," both in terms of delivery and of meeting the cost thereof. All else can be described as voluntary.

Therefore, it follows that the PMS cost should be compulsory and all else voluntary. In very approximate terms, the total levy collection budgeted for is $500,000 and the PMS costs are about $170,000. A logical argument could be to have one-third of the levy compulsory levy and two thirds voluntary.

The appointment of a paid PMS manager could give the PMS delivery some accountability, as well as relieving the day-to-day load on the management agency.

Participants then asked whether corporatising such services as PMS operation, exotic surveillance and residue testing could restore an element of ownership to the industry.

Compensation delays need attention

The National Beekeepers Association executive is aware of members' concerns that many compensation claims are not progressing towards any sort of conclusion.

In order to establish whether the association can take any action on behalf of members to expedite their claims, information is required on what has held things up and whether various claims have any commonality.

* If you or anyone you know is in this situation, please send a brief (no more than one page), written summary of your issues to: Compensation Issues, National Beekeepers' Association, P O Box 715 Wellington by 30 July 2001.

Potential major AFB outbreak in Waikato.

An extremely high incidence of American foulbrood was found on a site in the Waikato area on June 25, 2001.

Of 30 hives inspected, all showed visual signs of AFB. The beekeeper who found them reported his concerns. The NBA executive which oversees the pest management strategy agency,, recognised the potential of a major outbreak and chose to manage the situation.

Actions taken so far:

a. Terry Gavin has been appointed incident manager.
b. The management agency is closely monitoring the beekeeping operation concerned.
c. A meeting between the beekeeper and management agency, AgriQuality and the Pest Management Stragey committee representatives has taken place.
d.. The status of the site and all others belonging to the beekeeper concerned are under investigation.
e. A complete inspection of all hives owned by the beekeeper will be carried out. Authorised persons (AP2s) will be used for this operation.

Aware of the implications for other beekeepers in the area, the management agency will act in their best interests, within the terms of the pest management strategy.

Progress with organic treatments

By Paul Bolger

Formal applications to register formic acid, oxalic acid and thymol crystals as generic compounds for varroa control were lodged in June.

All three applications have now passed the pre-screening stage, an important step in making these products legal for New Zealand beekeepers to use. The applications were submitted by HortResearch, which was contracted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to assist with the registration of organic treatments.

Each application contains several hundred pages of supporting data, covering all aspects of the proposed use. The applications are now being assessed by the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) group of MAF but have been "fast-tracked", meaning they will go to the head of any queue.

All relevant criteria must be met, however, before they can be approved by the Minister.

MAF hopes to know before the beginning of August whether the applications submitted address all the registration criteria, or whether more data is needed.

South Island Surveillance

AgriQuality New Zealand reports the mailout of surveillance materials to South Island beekeepers was completed in early June. This mailout distributed sufficient material to test 29,000 hives on almost 1900 sites. To date, approximately 15,000 boards (around 50% of the total) have been returned to Ruakura. There, the contents of each package is counted and used strips are put aside for possible re-use. The database is updated and the boards are sent to the Lynfield laboratory for examination.

Results are returned to Ruakura several days later and entered into the apiary database. So far, no varroa have been detected.

Enquiries about South Island surveillance can be directed to Dave Grueber (021 515 633) or David McMillan (03 489 0066).

NBA library contributions

The NBA Library contains a large amount of information on many beekeeping topics, but has very little recent material on varroa. Following discussion with NBA librarian Chris Taiaroa, MAF has funded the purchase of several publications on varroa. A complete list will be printed in next month's NZ Beekeeper.

Purchase of this material was funded from the Varroa Education budget and it is hoped beekeepers will make use of it.

UK Researcher visits

A leading British bee researcher spent the latter part of June looking at bee viruses in Auckland. Dr Brenda Ball worked with HortResearch staff at Mount Albert to ascertain the viability of bee virus antisera, already held in New Zealand (produced by Dennis Anderson in the 1980s). They also worked to determine which viruses are present in bee hives held on the Mount Albert campus.

The antisera were found viable and will be an invaluable tool in determining the presence and distribution of bee viruses in New Zealand. Arrangements have also been made to carry out the testing of some New Zealand samples in England.

During her visit, Dr Ball also spoke at the Bay of Plenty Field Day on June 16, and met with the Auckland branch four days later. It is hoped she will be able to present a full report on her work in the next month's NZ Beekeeper.

MAF acknowledges the assistance of the C. Alma Baker Trust in supporting this visit.

Research contract signed

MAF has signed a contract with HortResearch to carry out a range of varroa management research projects. (See page 5 for more details about the projects approved.)

Southern North Island surveillance

Surveillance testing is continuing at high-risk points throughout the buffer zone. The first suspected find of varroa south of the movement control line has just been received. If this find is confirmed by laboratory examination of the sticky boards, it will be the first time varroa has been found outside the infected area.

Beekeepers carrying out surveillance testing south of the movement control line on the Central Plateau south of Raetihi report finding suspect varroa in an apiary approximately 1.2km south of the movement control line. Should the find be confirmed, MAF will discuss with the NBA any possible changes to movement control zones.

Varroa research contract signed

By Lucy Martinez

Research proposals submitted to the Varroa Management Group were evaluated by its Varroa Research Advisory Group (VRAG) and, following its recommendations, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry began negotiating with selected research providers.

Because funding was limited, not all proposals could be approved. However, VRAG members reached a consensus on which projects best addressed the immediate needs of the New Zealand beekeeping industry.

HortResearch submitted a range of research proposals with the ultimate aim of developing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programmes for varroa in New Zealand. Six components of its proposal were accepted for funding, and are described below.

Treatment thresholds
An important principle of an IPM programme is to only treat a pest when it reaches an economic threshold. Although thresholds for treatment of varroa have been established in some places overseas, the level varies depending on local factors such as climate and seasonal bee colony development. It is therefore necessary to establish thresholds relevant to New Zealand conditions. This project will determine thresholds for two different climate/colony development zones in the north half of the North Island.

Varroa sampling methods
Various sampling methods are reported in literature on how to estimate varroa numbers in beehives. Although many of the methods are well researched, others need further investigation to ensure they are reliable. It is also necessary to determine the ease of use and cost of each method so beekeepers can select the method that suits their workloads and information is provided so they can make good varroa-control decisions. This project will produce recommendations on a range of sampling methods.

Alternative treatments
Currently, only Apistan (fluvalinate) and Bayvarol (flumethrin) are registered for varroa control in New Zealand. Both are synthetic pyrethroids. In several countries varroa has developed cross-resistance within this chemical class, as well as resistance to a range of other synthetics. A need to register in New Zealand other varroa control products, including low-residue 'organic' compounds, is recognised. This project proposes testing formic acid, oxalic acid and thymol under New Zealand conditions, with a provision to test other compounds if the funding agency believes it necessary.

Varroa tolerance
It has been demonstrated overseas that selection for the suppression of varroa reproduction can produce honey bee stocks with enhanced varroa tolerance. Selecting and breeding could therefore play a part in an IPM varroa-control programme in New Zealand. Enhanced varroa tolerance could be developed, either by selecting for worthwhile traits in New Zealand bee stocks, or by importing stock that has developed varroa tolerance in in overseas' breeding programmes. This project aims to measure the variability that currently exists in suppression of varroa reproduction in New Zealand honey bees.

Optimal usage of mite control products
A significant concern for New Zealand beekeepers is the cost of the two varroa control substances, Apistan and Bayvarol, currently registered in this country. Since the goal of a IPM programme is to reduce pesticide usage and only apply controls when potential damage outweighs the costs of control, there is scope to alter usage factors such as the amount of compound applied, the application time period, and strip placement in the hive.

Changes related to product usage could reduce varroa control costs, while at the same time still provide effective control. The objective of this project is to produce recommendations on the optimum use of the two currently registered products.

Testing model IPM programmes
The projects outlined above, along with information available in literature and the results of the population dynamics trial currently being conducted by HortResearch, should allow model IPM programmes be developed for varroa control.

This project will therefore develop three varroa IPM programmes tailored to the needs of beekeepers using different types of control substances (synthetic only, organic only, combination). The programmes will be implemented in a controlled manner in a range of commercial beekeeping operations. Varroa population will be measured to determine the programmes' effectiveness.

Before the second year of the trial begins, changes will be made to the model programmes, based on the results of the first year and data from other projects in this proposal. The changed programmes will then be tested for increased effectiveness.

- Lucy Martinez is a MAF BA Programme Advisor

Hive Construction in 20 easy steps

Obtaining Timber

The old beekeepers will tell you that "timber today ain't what it used to be". Some of our older beekeepers still have supers in use that are over 40 years old. I have seen them made out of oak and other imported timber. Most second-hand timber, provided it hasn't been treated, can be turned into beekeeping gear.

Treated timber is out because it contains materials that are toxic to bees. As the bees clean or suck up moisture from tanalized timber they gradually get poisoned and the hive dwindles. It can, however, be used for runners and any parts of the hive the bees don't have access to.

So why doesn't our woodware last as long today?

Basically there are two reasons: the type of timber used and the age the trees are being felled. No longer can we get kauri, kahikatea or other types of native hardwood as these trees have either all been milled or are in the conservation estate. We have been left with mostly pine and macrocarpa. Other types of timber are available but require a lot of investigation to find.

Things have changed again during the past few years. World demand for timber and wood pulp has seen more of the older forestry blocks, shelterbelts and wood lots milled. To keep up with constant demand, more forests were planted. Methods have also been found to stabilize the timber, allowing younger trees to be harvested.

Most of us are therefore stuck with pine. However, mature pine although classified as a soft wood, can be a very durable timber, is easy to work and holds a nail. Pine trees start to put on heartwood from the age of 24 years and for the timber to be used for bee supers, it should be at least 45 years old.

Hobby beekeepers usually purchase their requirements off the shelf. This timber is clear wood (no knots), beautifully prepared and machined. But, being mostly softwood, it requires protection or it will rot in 5 to 10 years, depending upon climate and the use. I prefer the "commercial" type supers as they are cheaper and quicker to assemble.

Commercial beekeepers, on the other hand, have a constant demand for timber and can plan ahead. As they travel around their district, they may see old scraggy shelterbelts and wood lots. To the timber merchants and farmers, they are only good for magpie nests and firewood but, many of these trees have straight, clear butt-wood suitable for beehive use.

Make an arrangement with a farmer and pick out one or two trees that would make suitable woodware. Pick straight, upright trees with few lateral branches. Trees on a lean of 10-15 degrees or more will produce compression wood that will warp. When the wood lot is being felled then arrange to have them milled on site. All that is required is to fillet and store the timber for a year under cover to air dry. The following winter it is machined into beehive parts.

Preserving your woodware

Commercial beekeepers have a lot of equipment to put together and preserve supers. They can be stapled together, paraffin wax dipped at 130 degrees centigrade for five minutes, lifted out of the wax dipper and immediately painted with a spray gun using cheap (tint rejects) water based paint. As the super cools, the wax and paint are drawn into the wood, providing a protective coating. These finished supers can be put on the hives the next day.

Unless they are close to a commercial beekeeper, hobbyists have to use different techniques to protect their woodware. There are many fungicides on the market. Some are easy to apply but usually need more treatments to keep up the protection. I want at least 20 years' services from my supers I use a mixture of mineral turpentine and metalex (copper naphthenate 5 - 1 mix).

Some beekeepers paint this mixture on to the supers, but I prefer to dip the unassembled parts in a bath. This requires quite a lot of solution and is expensive so try to get a number of beekeepers together and share the costs.

The actual amount of preservative required will depend upon the size of the container. Liqueur wholesalers have used 30 litre square plastic containers they either give away or sell for a few dollars.

With this type of container, you will need: 6 litres of coppernaphthenate (metalex), 24 litres of turps, a large heavy plastic bag, lots of thin fillet timber, rubber gloves and old cloths. Metalex stains everything, concrete, clothing, and hands, so be prepared.

Cut the top off one container, put in the woodware and carefully pour in the mixed preservative until almost full. Leave for a few hours or until all the bubbles stop coming out of the wood, then (using gloves) turn the timber end for end so the other end of the timber is submerged. Pop in the fillets and top up the preservative. When all bubbles cease, remove the woodware and allow to drain. Then take the large plastic bag and stack the wet woodware flat, inside the bag between the fillets (put a fillet at each end and in the middle of the sides). Seal the plastic bag and leave for another two to three weeks.

If the timbers is stacked outside in the air, the turps tends to evaporate quickly but if stored in a plastic bag, the preservative continues to be drawn into the timber, providing better protection.

Take the woodware out of the plastic bag after the prescribed period and allow another couple of weeks to completely dry. The supers and woodware can now be assembled or stacked, ready to be assembled later.

Assembling supers

When assembling don't skimp on nails, 5 or 6.75 mm flat head galvanized nails should be driven into each corner.

Assemble on a square object or against a wall. Select two sides and two ends. Place an end on the flat surface against a 90-degree support. Run a bead of waterproof glue along the flat corner joints if you wish. Select two sides and look down at the end grain. Wide pieces of flat timber tend to warp away from the centre core of the tree so the grain lines straighten up. Place the sides on the end board with the centre grain of the tree facing out. (bow inwards). Then put a bead of glue along the top edge of the sides (optional) and place the other end of the super on top to form a square.

Take care to make sure the top bar grooves are facing in the same direction. It Seems fundamental, but try putting together 100 supers

and you will find one or two will have the top bar grove reversed. When this happens you need to router out a new groove as taking the super apart is not possible, unless you have a nail puller.

Hold the super square (you can use a clamp if you wish), drive a nail into each corner so the end and sides are held in place. Caution: on the top bar edge of the super, place the nail a little further away from the corner to stop splitting.

Flip over the super and nail the corners of the other end. Check that the super is square then drive in the rest of the nails working around the super. It you wish, the other nails can be angled a little so the nails are skewed in to give greater strength.

Paint the outside and edges of the super for weather protection. Supers can be put on a hive when the turps' smell has dissipated.

Saw Benches

Please be careful when making your own woodware. Many beekeepers get injured through careless use of power tools. A saw blade doesn't feel any pain so you have to take precautions. Use guards and aids. A moment's inattention can take months to heal. Keep saw blades sharp. Wood shouldn't need to be forced through a saw blade; it just needs a slight pressure with a push stick. When you are tired, accidents happen so don't work too long on a saw bench.

Have fun making and putting together your gear. Get together with a number of beekeepers and have a fun day.

- *Things to do this month: Render down old combs and make up gear for the coming season. Keep an eye out for mites.*

Frank Lindsay

Registrations due for Buzz Weekend

Registrations must be in by July 31 for the August 24-26 Camp Rangi Buzz Weekend in the Pohangina Valley.

Organised by the National Beekeepers Association's Southern North Island branch for hobbyist and small, commercial beekeepers, the course will cover ways of looking after hives and producing crops. If there is sufficient interest, a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement course and examination can be included in the programme for an additional $25 to the registration fee.

On its own, full registration with accommodation costs $80, or $50 for day-only participants. Send payments with contact details to: Peter Ferris, Camp Rangi Co-ordinator, Happy Ferris Apiaries, RD 11, Opaki, Masterton.

Breaking News

Sustainable beekeeping support

By Lin McKenzie

An application to the Sustainable Farming Fund for assistance to "Expand Options for New Zealand Beekeepers" has just been approved.

In approximate terms we have approval for funding of $291,000 over three years from the Sustainable Farming Fund. We are required to contribute to the project ourselves and have applied to the Industry Trust Fund trustees for $100,000 support over the three years.

We predict a further $98,000 will be contributed "in kind", that is, from industry members' input in the way of individual effort. We will also be talking to other primary sector groups.

Industry Trust Fund trustees Ivan Dickinson and Ian Berry wish to gauge support and look forward to discussing the proposal with NBA members, particularly at our conference.

It is intended a programme will run over three years. Because the challenges faced by beekeepers around the country are varied, this will need to be a regionally-based exercise with input from branches. The programme will address issues as diverse as offering courses to beekeepers so they may increase their business skills; identifying and accessing new business opportunities and income streams; working with other rural sectors to identify areas of common interest and finding ways to fund these; and generally finding means by which our "options can be expanded".

As an example, research to support the concept that honeybees are necessary to maintain clover presence in the sward in dry-land pastoral country has been carried out. It needs to be collected so we can present a case, showing the pollination services our bees currently bestow with no fiscal recognition.

People around the country have been approached to assist with this programme. Now we have initial approval, these people will be formed into a management group to develop and action the plan.

Communications

A complete restructuring of the web page "NBA.org.nz" is currently underway to allow easier navigation around the site for users. Dated information will be archived and the adding of information will be streamlined.

The NZ Beekeeper magazine is now printed and published on a commercial basis, leaving advertising revenue to pay for all costs except editorial and distribution. A professional journalist has been employed as editor and the NBA meets that cost. A favorable bulk postal rate has been negotiated. It is recognised that we need to attract articles of interest and a small committee has been established to assist the editor and supply technical expertise as required.

Publicity for the NBA continues in a low key, re-active mode.

Mesh floors divide mites from bees

Beehive floors (the bottom boards) have traditionally been made of solid timber. Variations have been tin or aluminium sheet, moulded concrete, sawn timber or plywood. Some beekeepers advocate slatted floors, others mesh of a size, perhaps 5mm-6mm, that bees cannot pass through. Open mesh floors are now being recommended by some beekeepers battling with the varroa mite. DONALD AITKEN from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, describes his use of them here in a report lifted off the Internet from *The Irish Beekeeper* magazine.

Advantages claimed for open mesh floors are:

- Mites falling from adult bees go through the mesh and are unable to reattach themselves..
- Brood rearing ends sooner in the autumn and starts later in the spring, providing a longer brood less period to aid in mite control..
- A space under the mesh is provided for easy installation of a sticky board for varroa testing.
- Upper entrances for wintering are not required..
- Entrance reducers are not required. The bottom board is provided with an 8mm x 75mm entrance, which is sufficient for bee passage during the honey flow and ventilation is provided via the screen.
- Bees do not cluster outside the hive in hot weather..
- Bees can be moved without providing extra ventilation..
- Wintering results are better, due to the prolonged brood-less period. The wintering bees are not stressed by having to keep brood warm and fed. More pollen is available for spring build up.
- Wet debris does not plug up the bottom boards at the end of winter.
- The bees are claimed to be nicer to work with, possibly due to there being continuous light through the screen.

The only downside mentioned is increased use of winter feed and, of course, the cost of building and installing the new boards.

I thought it would be good to try a few of the boards last autumn. Six were made and installed under fairly weak hives made up from late swarms and combined weak colonies. The results were encouraging, as all the screened hives' survived the winter..

After checking them in early April, I found the claim of late-spring brood rearing was justified. The hives with screened bottom boards had only one or two frames of largely unsealed brood, while comparable hives with solid bottom boards and top entrances had two or three frames with sealed brood.

In early May, the screened hives had an average of three frames of sealed brood. By the middle of that month, they had an average of six frames of sealed brood. The bottom boards did not require any clearing, while some of the solid ones were plugged with wet grunge.

The bees did not seem any nicer to work with than those with regular bottom boards. I have been using sticky boards for mites under the screened hives. They are easy to install and remove (no mites so far!)

When the honey was extracted, the over-wintered open screened bottom boards (osbb) hives produced about 10% less than conventional hives. I put three more hives on the osbb system in the spring and they produced about the same as the conventional ones. But with a sample size of only six and three, the honey figures probably don't mean much.

- **Has any New Zealand beekeeper done comparative trials of open mesh versus traditional floors? Write in and report your experiences.**

Varroa centre-stage at Bay of Plenty autumn field day

Rain happens on rare occasions in the Bay of Plenty but wet weather failed to put a damper on the autumn field day, held by the NBA's Bay of Plenty branch at the Papamoa School hall on June 16. Branch president GERRIT HYINK reports.

Prompt treatment of varroa and diversification to cover costs was the advice commercial beekeeper Brian Lipscombe offered to people at the Bay of Plenty autumn field day last month.

Based in Waiuku, south of Auckland, his beekeeping business is in pollination, honey (including manuka), pollen and propolis production. Operating in an area where the varroa mite has built up its numbers and "inward movement" (reinfestation) of mites is occurring, he emphasised the importance of treating hives in time. Beekeepers could diversify to cover the costs of treatments (he spends about $30 to $40 a year).

Brian's business falls in the "high input" category and subsequently "high turnover" bracket. To achieve this with the necessary diversification, Brian said beekeepers had to become "migratory". Extra staff may be necessary.

Requeening is more important in the presence of varroa, Bill believes, with a likelihood of queens developing an intolerance towards Apistan if over-used.

Auckland hobbyist beekeeper Paul Brown was the next speaker and he talked about his data collection on mite build-up in colonies.

Paul uses screen floors and relies on natural fall to estimate the varroa numbers in the colonies. It was interesting to see the rapid build-up of mites and also the curves when the hive is treated with Apistan. Clearly, the mite breeding cycle becomes visible from the time the Apistan is inserted.

Based on numbers doubling every two, two-and-a-half and three weeks, Paul made some varroa build-up predictions. He also experimented with drone brood removal.

Third speaker Graeme Cammell spoke about his experience with Apistan and the influx of mites occurring in the Auckland area. Reinfestation rates were approximately 1000 per hive per month initially, but he believed it had now dropped to around 200 per month.

Graeme, who chairs the Varroa Oversight and Advisory Committee and is a member of the Varroa Management Group, praised the voluntary time, commitment and efforts of beekeepers since varroa was identified in New Zealand.

Varroa Programme co-ordinator for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Paul Bolger, spoke before lunch and gave an update on varroa from the MAF perspective.

Currently, the two-year Phase II plan is underway and will run until the end of October 2002. It started after the Phase I plan (immediate assistance) was completed at the end of October 2000.

For treatments under the Phase I plan, 30,000 Apistan strips were distributed. For treatments under the Phase II plan, Paul gave the following figures.-

In November and December 2000, 100,000 Apistan strips were sent to 80 beekeepers. These were particularly for the treatment and prophylactic treatment during pollination and access to honey sites close to the movement control line.

In autumn 2001, about 130,000 Apistan strips were sent out to 350 beekeepers. Strips would be recalled in August, Paul said.

The Varroa Manual will be mailed to every registered beekeeper this month. Extension services under the Phase II plan will get underway in the infected areas, either this month or in August. Two-day workshops for commercial beekeepers and one-day workshops for hobbyist beekeepers will be run. Paul said the terms of reference of the extension programme were in line with the NBA education policy.

South Island surveillance

Approximately 30,000 sticky boards and 60,000 Apistan strips have been distributed, laboratory readings of sticky boards are underway and all results so far are clean.

North Island surveillance

At-risk areas south of the line are targeted and sticky board readings are coming back with no obvious cases of varroa reported.

Movement control line

Paul indicated that moving the line is an expensive process so it is unlikely to happen in small increments when varroa is found south of the line. The long term (Phase III) varroa management plan will come into effect after October 2002, he said.

Lunch time saw branch members keeping the hoards fed - food complemented by nice coffee from Comvita - and information was exchanged with sponsors and the trade display people who attended. Straight after lunch, Murray Reid from AgriQuality demonstrated practical varroa testing for people not familiar with it (yet).

Back inside, the afternoon programme started with sponsors' talks. Bee and Herbal NZ Ltd, Cambridge, was the field day's main sponsor with other assistance provided by Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies, Comvita and Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies.

Dr Brenda Ball from the Institute of Arable Crops Research, Rothamstead, United Kingdom, was the first afternoon speaker. She has specialised on interactions between varroa and bee viruses and observed how virtually harmless bee viruses become lethal after bees have been injected by varroa mites. Colonies in the UK can collapse from these viruses with infestations even lower than 3000 mites.

As varroa mite numbers increased in a colony, the incidence of active viruses in a hive also increased, she said. Hives were most likely to collapse when high levels of both mite and viruses occurred together, normally towards the end of the season when brood rearing diminished.

The Cloudy Wing Virus (CWV), Deformed Wing Virus (DWV) and the Slow Paralysis Virus (SPV) were prevalent in the UK, although the SPV was normally not apparent in hives until there were high infestations of varroa. As a result, broods die off with American foulbrood-like symptoms and colony-collapse follows.

Deformed Wing Virus is not normally apparent in brood, but incidence builds

over time when varroa is about and can cause colony collapse at lower mite infestations. Varroa does not seem to have an impact on the spread of CWV, Barbara said.

A video of Brenda's field day presentation was taken and readers can contact me if they would like to see the tape.

Mark Goodwin started his presentation by likening the addition of varroa management to an otherwise unchanged hive management scheme to the construction of a new machine by adding new bits to an existing one. Sometimes, he said, it is better to start from scratch.

Beekeepers needed to decide which treatment to use. Issues they should consider included economic factors like: labour costs, materials, residues, hive management and disposal costs.

Deciding which substance or management to use was also important, he said. Beekeepers could consider resistance, operator safety, bee safety, efficacy, ease of use, consumer requirements, sustainability, philosophy and registration.

A decision had to be made whether organic or synthetic substances would be used. Organic substances could be defined as being found in nature, synthetic substances weren't. Lists of both will appear in the Varroa Manual and also in "A Review of Treatment Options for Control of Varroa Mite In New Zealand."

Cliff Van Eaton said the registration deadline for registering the generic products oxalic acid, formic acid and thymol was met and the substances would hopefully be available in the not so distant future. Organic substances were showing promise in the fight against varroa and Cliff compared the costs and efficacy of the most common treatments.

It was good to hear that organic substances could score highly, although their use could demand more skill from the beekeeper.

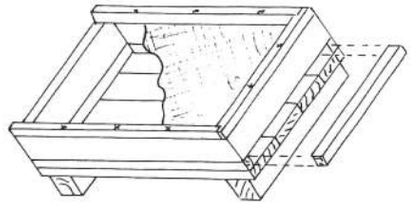
The day's final speaker, Michelle Taylor from HortResearch, spoke about the need to regularly monitor the presence of varroa. Different methods were available, some more sensitive but less reliable, some reliable but less sensitive and others both sensitive and reliable. They would all be outlined in the Varroa Manual.

From the colonies

Hawkes Bay

Now that the varroa mites are south of Taupo, thoughts are returning to mesh screens and the counting of mites.

In the August 2000 *Beekeeper,* Frank Lindsay described a mini-box to be placed directly above the base. I have decided this should be 50mm deep with risers screwed to allow mesh replacement, after reversing the base board and runners.



View from the rear

Fitting a loose entrance block in the old entrance allows me to slip a piece of real estate advertising card, marked in squares with or without the stickiness of 50/50 petroleum jelly and cooking oil.

The mesh, if you don't like paying for the stainless variety, is sold as "windbreak" for around $5 a metre, at 1.83m width. It looks almost as if it was knitted.

After 24 hours, count the natural fall then ask neighbouring beekeepers when they will be using Apistan or Bayvarol strips.

Blocking the entrance on the old base also limits mouse entry. If you want to make life easier for your bees, fasten a little landing at the top of your new mini box. This suggestion is aimed mainly at the hobbyist beekeeper. No doubt "The Book" will offer less-labour intensive methods.

John Dobson is hoping to learn more about formic acid treatment in Canada and Chris Robinson has those little grey cells working overtime.

Discovery Channel on Sky recently featured a medical programme, *Leeches, Maggots and Bees.* If viewers could get past the first two sections, the third was a fascinating expose of the American experience in subjecting multiple sclerosis sufferers to bee stings or bee venom injections. Allowing for Yankee overstating, this could be of some relief to those who have tried everything else.

• Remember Thursday, August 9, for our next meeting, with reports from the Queenstown conference and results of remits. How much do you think the rules will change?

- Ron Morison

Northland

Hives have low stores after the poor autumn flow. That, combined with a current market demand for honey, has prompted many beekeepers to feed their bees sugar supplements - a first for the region in about 20 years.

Hives are usually full of pollen in July, but this year there is a shortage, owing to the absence of autumn flowers. Until more pollen can be collected, queens will delay their laying.

The branch held its AGM recently and remits are to be compiled in time for the annual general meeting and conference in Queenstown.

Also recently, members visited Hokianga where the varroa mite is rampant, a frightening sight. It's clearly just a matter of time before it spreads throughout Northland. Methods of control are available, but beekeepers will need to weigh up the associated costs and time against any production profits.

- Don Hoole

Marlborough

Spirits are high around the region following the 74.5mm rainfall last month - the first above-average monthly measure since August last year.

Hives are still being checked for varroa and a common ponder is how to keep it out of the South Island. A film team from an agricultural television programme, TV3's *No. 8 Wired* on Sunday afternoons, visited the other week and asked if locals regarded Cook Strait as an effective biosecurity barrier.

People here believe it will slow the arrival of varroa, which will probably

require some human help to cross the stretch of sea. We all wish the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries could post an officer at Wellington departure points, checking cars and trucks before they are shipped over. The officers could combine that job with the inspection of livestock to ensure their transportation is safe and comfortable.

- Will Trollope

Waimarino club abuzz with enthusiasm

By Lois McLean

The Waimarino Beekeepers came together as a group when Mary Allen ran a beekeeping course at Raetihi in November, 1999.

Those of us who thought we could learn about beekeeping without actually keeping beehives were soon sorted out by Mary: "You will have hives - at least two, in case you lose one."

We were going to learn by doing - unlike the English lady in one instructional video who had attended classes for two years in preparation, we were being thrown in the at the deep end. We DID have Andrew Matheson's *Practical Beekeeping* as a guide but, as Mary gleefully informed us, "the bees haven't read the book!"

As so we began.

First, we made hive boxes and frames, which we wired and put foundation on. Andrew Allen came to help those of us with two left thumbs and Vaughan Kearn's two little girls were keen to "help" him at home.

Nucs were ordered from John Brandon at Wanganui, but we would have to collect them ourselves. Well, if the mountain will not come to Mohammed . . . Armed with enthusiasm and blissful ignorance, we made the 90km trek down the Parapara one evening to collect them.

The journey back to Raetihi was uneventful (ha), but delivering various nucs to various addresses in the dark did have its moments.

The highlight was probably at Vaughan's where one non-beekeeping husband who had been conned into helping, in spite of an aversion to buzzy bees, found himself trekking through the vegie garden under trees and over assorted obstacles, clutching a by-now-very-noisy box full of them. Once he realised some had escaped and were crawling over the front of his jersey, the nuc was unceremoniously dumped on the spot, while he retreated hastily, muttering about "b.... bees".

And so, from small beginnings we have grown. The previously hidden talents of some of our group have been revealed to amaze and astonish others among us:

Doctor Jim's video - a masterpiece of the small screen that revealed his chiselled profile and extolled his beekeeping prowess to those of us who may not have realised his skill. Vaughan (the Swarm) who roamed the Waimarino capturing swarms.

Waimarino beekeepers, from left, are Vaughan Kearns, Lois McLean, Mary Allen, Philip Sutton, Jean Dennis, Peter Deadman and Jim Corbett.

Mary was keen to encourage this exercise, providing Vaughan with equipment (two left gloves) and instruction. Her first demonstration of live capture did leave something to be desired, though, as the swarm, shaken off the branch, missed the box underneath and hit the ground.

But Jean, who had the misfortune of having one hive die out, had a passing swarm arrive and move right in - now that's beekeeping skill.

And so a year and half has passed since our tentative beginnings. We have supered up hives (Jim Corbett more so than some of us), harvested honey, wintered-down hives, fed bees (except Jim, who is a firm believer in no social welfare) and requeened hives.

We have checked each other's hives and offered unsolicited advice to any who might listen. We have sat and passed our DECCA competency exams, even if we were a rowdy bunch and two of the group had to be tracked down to Turoa ski field.

Mary's enthusiasm and humour (above and beyond the role of teacher) make her a great ambassador for beekeeping. She has taught us a lot and we know there is still much to learn, but we are having a great time doing it.

Letter to the Editor

Let's have a levy vote

As a beekeeper with 20 years experience in both hobbyist and semi-commercial operations, I appreciate the practical wisdom of the present levy structure in not levying those beekeepers with 10 hives or less.

Hobbyist beekeepers seek the fascination and rewards of overseeing a few hives and possibly filling their larder with enough honey for the table.

Commercial/professional beekeepers are another breed. Their wealth and living are made from bees; they are beneficiaries of this "industry" and the association, research, magazine, etc. almost exclusively benefit and interest this group.

Our president says it best in his latest mail out - "over recent years the functions of the executive have changed from an operational body involved in the day-to-day administration of the NBA into a more strategically focused industry group".

If it is contemplated that hobbyist beekeepers be levied, I would appreciate a democratic vote be taken.

- Bob Coad, Upper Moutere

Overseas Trade Statistics
Prepared for National Beekeepers Association
Ref No: 4482901A

HS10 Items by Country of Destination for Exports, Otago

HS Items Code	Description	Country of Destination	Unit	Net Month of March 2001 Quantity	Net Month of March 2001 FOB ($NZ)	3 Months Ending March 2001 Quantity	3 Months Ending March 2001 FOB ($NZ)
0106.00.00.01	Bees; live, queen bees, in packages	Germany	NMB	1,898	72,960	1,898	72,960
0106.00.00.01	Bees; live, queen bees, in packages	Japan	NMB	2,300	46,000	2,360	53,750
0106.00.00.01	Bees; live, queen bees, in packages	Korea, Republic of	NMB	1,666	158,514	2,458	249,369
0106.00.00.01	Bees; live, queen bees, in packages	TOTAL HS ITEM	NMB	5,864	277,474	6,716	376,079
0106.00.00.09	Bees; live, queen bees, other than in packages	Japan	NMB	500	7,300	2,592	38,505
0106.00.00.09	Bees; live, queen bees, other than in packages	Jordan	NMB	150	2,300	150	2,300
0106.00.00.09	Bees; live, queen bees, other than in packages	TOTAL HS ITEM	NMB	650	9,600	2,742	40,805
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	Belgium	KGM			20,739	55,995
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	Germany	KGM	203,826	649,894	365,606	1,124,291
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	Japan	KGM	650	16,253	20,750	76,353
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	Malaysia	KGM			2,399	5,758
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	Singapore	KGM	600	3,115	600	3,115
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	South Africa	KGM			40,200	52,662
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	United Kingdom	KGM			25,600	132,000
0409.00.00.01	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in bulk	TOTAL HS ITEM	KGM	205,076	669,262	475,894	1,450,174
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Australia	KGM	16,824	175,365	42,978	389,112
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Canada	KGM	1,800	19,564	3,405	37,851
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Finland	KGM	216	2,677	216	2,677
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	French Polynesia	KGM	1,176	6,140	1,176	6,140
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Germany	KGM	27,935	117,237	51,466	198,505
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Hong Kong (Sp Admin Reg)	KGM	33,999	228,565	75,513	479,310
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Indonesia	KGM			252	1,984
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Israel	KGM	13,000	56,660	13,000	56,660
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Japan	KGM	6,280	64,395	15,127	150,550
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Korea, Republic of	KGM	1,800	18,545	2,715	27,581
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Kuwait	KGM			468	6,044
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Malaysia	KGM	1,429	11,983	1,429	11,983
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Netherlands	KGM			720	5,102
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Norfolk Island	KGM			161	876
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Philippines	KGM	240	940	240	940

0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Qatar	KGM			870	6,592
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Samoa, Western	KGM			8	72
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Saudi Arabia	KGM			201	4,011
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Singapore	KGM	2,100	10,937	15,241	92,610
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Sweden	KGM	12	159	12	159
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	Taiwan, Province of China	KGM	2,610	12,225	4,770	22,043
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	United Arab Emirates	KGM	583	15,641	3,223	31,191
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	United Kingdom	KGM	21,348	202,230	46,166	447,014
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	United States of America	KGM	4,149	34,971	25,137	259,037
0409.00.00.09	Honey; natural honey, extracted, in retail packs	TOTAL HS ITEM	KGM	135,501	978,234	304,494	2,238,044
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	Germany	KGM	4,896	47,000	5,846	54,498
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	Hong Kong (Sp Admin Reg)	KGM	288	4,379	691	10,610
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	Japan	KGM	3,463	43,849	6,314	87,046
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	Kuwait	KGM			82	1,240
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	Malaysia	KGM	408	5,318	778	10,638
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	Singapore	KGM			82	1,180
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	United Arab Emirates	KGM			230	3,144
0409.00.00.11	Honey; natural honey, in the comb	TOTAL HS ITEM	KGM	9,056	100,546	14,022	168,356
0409.00.00.15	Honey; natural honey, honeydew	Belgium	KGM			5,120	17,408
0409.00.00.15	Honey; natural honey, honeydew	Germany	KGM			40,795	116,655
0409.00.00.15	Honey; natural honey, honeydew	TOTAL HS ITEM	KGM			45,915	134,063
0409.00.00.18	Honey; natural honey, (other than extracted, comb or honeydew)	Cook Islands	KGM			49	450
0409.00.00.18	Honey; natural honey, (other than extracted, comb or honeydew)	Germany	KGM	540	5,600	540	5,600
0409.00.00.18	Honey; natural honey, (other than extracted, comb or honeydew)	Japan	KGM	650	6,296	891	12,602
0409.00.00.18	Honey; natural honey, (other than extracted, comb or honeydew)	Malaysia	KGM			42	393
0409.00.00.18	Honey; natural honey, (other than extracted, comb or honeydew)	Singapore	KGM			200	1,110
0409.00.00.18	Honey; natural honey, (other than extracted, comb or honeydew)	TOTAL HS ITEM	KGM	1,190	11,896	1,722	20,155
1521.90.01.00	Beeswax; whether or not refined or coloured	Australia	KGM			170	2,050
1521.90.01.00	Beeswax; whether or not refined or coloured	Finland	KGM			360	4,907
1521.90.01.00	Beeswax; whether or not refined or coloured	French Polynesia	KGM			113	1,220
1521.90.01.00	Beeswax; whether or not refined or coloured	New Caledonia	KGM			180	2,175
1521.90.01.00	Beeswax; whether or not refined or coloured	Singapore	KGM	600	5,493	600	5,493
1521.90.01.00	Beeswax; whether or not refined or coloured	Solomon Islands	KGM			300	3,255
1521.90.01.00	Beeswax; whether or not refined or coloured	TOTAL HS ITEM	KGM	600	5,493	1,723	19,100
TOTAL ALL CARGO			*	2,052,505*			4,446,776

Source : Statistics New Zealand, Overseas Trade

SAR (Special Administrative Region)

ADVERTISING RATE

Current for all issues in 2001.

FULL PAGE	**(180 x 260mm)**
Two Colour	$480
Black & White	$400
HALF PAGE	**(180 x 125mm)**
Two Colour	$310
Black & White	$250
QUARTER PAGE	**(65 x 125mm)**
Two Colour	$185
Black & White	$150
Eighth Page	**(65 x 60mm)**
Black & White	$75
Sixteenth Page	**(65 x 40mm)**
Black & White	$40

A 20% discount on the quoted rates for 11 consecutive placements.

Rates for inserts and 4-colour advertisement along with specified positions are subject to negotiation.

Straightforward typesetting and layout for advertisements will be included as part of the insertion rate. Additional costs will be incurred where logos and graphics are required to be scanned.

Please contact Allan Middlemiss for clarification and costings. — All payments to be made to Crown Kerr Printing Ltd. P.O. Box 5002, Dunedin

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Articles published in the NZ Beekeeper Magazine are subject to scrutiny by the Associations publication committee but do not necessarily reflect the views of either the Association or the publisher.

BRANCH CONTACTS AND MEETINGS

NZ QUEEN PRODUCERS ASSN
Call: Mary-Anne (06) 855-8038

AUCKLAND BRANCH
Meets last Monday of the month at 7.30p.m.
at Ceracell BeeKeeping Supplies
24 Andromeda Crescent, East Tamaki
President: Brian Alexander
Phone/Fax: (09) 420-5028
Secretary
Chas Reade
Phone: (09) 634-4375
Fax: (09) 634-4376

AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC.
President: Ian Anderson
Phone: (09) 480-8327
Email: ianderson@clear.net.nz

NORTH CANTERBURY BEEKEEPING CLUB
Meets the second Monday of April, June, August and October.
Contact: Mrs Hobson
Phone: (03) 312-7587

SOUTH CANTERBURY BRANCH
Peter Lyttle
Phone: (03) 693-9189

CANTERBURY BRANCH
Meets the last Tuesday of every month.
February to October.
Field Day November.
Contact: Trevor Corbett
Phone: (03) 314-6836

CHRISTCHURCH HOBBYIST CLUB
Meets on the first Saturday each month, August to May, except in January for which it is the second Saturday.
The site is at 681 Cashmere Road, Commencing at 1.30pm.
Contact: Maggie James, 21 Humboldt St, Christchurch 8002. Phone: (03) 337-2421

DUNEDIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets on the first Saturday in the month September - April, (except January) at 1.30pm. The venue is at our club hive in Roslyn, Dunedin.
Enquiries welcome to club secretary, Dorothy, Phone (03) 488-4390

FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets second Sunday of each month at 10.00am for cuppa and discussion and at 10.30am open hives.
Secretary - Liz Brook
187E Clarks Beach Road,
R.D. 4, Pukekohe
Phone: (09) 232 1111
Mobile: 025 720 761
Fax: (09) 232 1112
Email: liz@pageset.co.nz

HAWKE'S BAY BRANCH
Meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm,
Arataki Cottage , Havelock North.
Phone: Ron (06) 844-9493

MARLBOROUGH BRANCH
contact Will: (03) 570-5633

MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets every 4th Thursday in the month at Newbury Hall, SH 3, Palmerston North.
Contact: Andrew MacKinnon
Phone: (06) 323-4346

NELSON BRANCH
Phone: Michael
(03) 528-6010

NELSON BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Contact: Kevin
Phone: (03) 545-0122

OTAGO BRANCH
Phone: Mike (03) 448-7811

POVERTY BAY BRANCH
Contact: Barry (06) 867-4591

WANGANUI BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets on the second Wednesday of the month.
Contact Secretary: Neil Farrer
Phone: (06) 343-6248

NORTH OTAGO BRANCH
Bryan O'Neil
Phone: (03) 431-1831

SOUTHERN NORTH ISLAND BRANCH
Contact: Frank
Phone: (04) 478-3367

SOUTHLAND BRANCH
Contact: Don Stedman
Ph/Fax: (03) 246-9777

TARANAKI AMATEUR BEEKEEPING CLUB
George Jonsen
195 Carrington Street
New Plymouth
Email: honeyhouse@clear.co.nz
Phone: (06) 753-3320

WAIKATO BRANCH
Contact Tony: (07) 856-9625
Secretary: Jan Klausen
Next meeting Friday 13th July 2001: 10 am
Venue: Green Room, Ruakura

WAIRARAPA HOBBYIST BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meet 3rd Sunday each month (except January) at Kites Woolstore, Norfolk Road, Masterton at 1.30pm.
Convenor: Arnold Esler.
Phone: (06) 379-8648

WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
Meets every second Monday of the month (except January) in Johnsonville. All welcome.
Contact: John Burnett,
21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa,
Wellington 6006. Phone: (04) 232-7863
Email: johnburnett@xtra.co.nz