

The New Zealand

BeeKeeper



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NZ Beekeeper

or Kerry Stevens

Published by:

Crown Kerr Printing Ltd

P.O. Box 5002, Dunedin.

Printed by: Crown Kerr Printing Ltd

48 Stafford Street

Dunedin 03-477 8109

03-479 0753

ckp@xtra.co.nz

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December Varroa Update

Mark Goodwin, HortResearch

By now, in areas with varroa, all Apistan and Bayvarol treatments in hives should have been completed, the strips removed, and honey supers added.

Removing strips

Many beekeepers will have already found, or will do so in the autumn, that it is not as easy to remove strips as it sounds. Strips often slip down between frames so the tops can't be seen, get propolised to the base of the super above, or slide all the way through on to the floorboard. Because of this, it is very easy to leave strips in hives. We have already seen a number of hives with one or two strips left in by mistake even in our research apiary.

In one trial, we had carefully recorded the number of strips we put into each hive. In most hives we could find and remove the strips easily. For a few, we had to remove every frame from each of the two boxes to find them all. Moving frames around while doing a disease check and requeening hadn't helped matters. One strip had even managed to escape from a hive. I assume it dropped out when we lifted off the second box in the brood super to access the frames below.

The concern with leaving strips in a hive is of course the problems of residues and resistance, as the strips loose their effectiveness and varroa are exposed to very low levels of the chemical

Beekeepers have, however, already come up with some good suggestions for solving the problem. The first is a beekeeper who uses a staple gun to fix the strip tops to the top of the frame so they cannot disappear down between frames. Another uses a felt pen to record on the lid of the hive the number of strips used. This number is crossed out when the strips are removed.

Disposal of used strips

When disposing the strips, it is important to follow instructions in the precaution box on the label. The Bayvarol label directs that unused strips (I assume this also means used ones) be wrapped in paper and placed in the domestic refuse. The Apistan label advises the strips be burnt if circumstances permit, especially wind direction, or alternatively buy them with the empty packaging in a suitable landfill. I assume the comment on wind direction is to ensure the fumes given off are not blown where they might cause a problem for people.

Both labels warn users to ensure waterways are not contaminated with the strips or the wrapping. This is because synthetic pyrethroids are very toxic to fish.

Sampling during the summer

The varroa manual recommends that during the first few years the varroa mite is in an area (i.e. the acute phase), beekeepers need to check on contamination levels in the middle of summer. I can imagine most beekeepers not wanting to do this because of the time and expense involved, but it was one of the points beekeepers in Canada highlighted as being important to do, based on their experience. It would not need to be done in later years when things settle down and varroa

levels become more predictable (i.e. the chronic phase). If nothing else, you will be able to sleep better.

We are following the development of mite levels as part of our threshold trial. We shifted 120 hives to the Kaimai Ranges and left 120 on their sites in South Auckland. Even though all hives started with few mites, and we added 50 mites to each of the Kaimai hives, those in South Auckland now have 10 times as many varroa as the Kaimai hives. This is probably due to invasion that has occurred in the spring. It is important to remember that although most invasions occurs in the autumn, some still occurs in the spring and summer. Some of these South Auckland hives may need to be treated before the autumn

When sampling, it is probably not necessary to do every hive, but do enough so you can be sure that there will be no surprises when you visit your hives to remove honey in the autumn. If varroa levels are high, you will need to retreat before autumn even while the supers are still on hives.



Bees can be sampled for varroa by washing them in soapy water

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Honey flow

Treating hives during the honey flow his should be avoided wherever possible. However, according to the labels, Bayvarol can be used in an emergency if the hives' survival is threatened, even if this occurs during the honey flow. Apistan should not be used during a honey flow.

Beekeepers in varroa-free areas

I was contacted from a beekeeper in the South Island who noticed a problem with an apiary in the early spring (two months previously). Although all the hives had plenty of honey, they had dwindled to a queen and a cup full of bees. At first he wondered whether it could be varroa, but decided it couldn't be as there is no varroa in the South Island. He didn't think any more about it until he contacted me to see if I could offer an explanation concerning the dwindling. Based on the symptoms, I encouraged him to ring the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on its 0800 809 966 number.

If you are in the South Island or in the lower North Island and think at any time that a colony might have varroa, please ring the 0800 number and get it checked out.

All beekeepers in areas without varroa should be checking a few hives in each apiary each year for varroa. When varroa gets to the South Island a decision will only be made to eradicate it if it has not spread too far. This means it needs to be found as early as possible.

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Letters to the Editor

Call for NBA calendar

To help further the interests of beekeeping, perhaps the National Beekeepers Association would consider publishing a calendar.

Since over half of all beekeepers in New Zealand are hobbyists and don't receive the NZ Beekeeper magazine, it would perhaps be a good way of getting all the relevant information to them. Information could be included like, who's who in the NBA, Disease Elimination Certification Accreditation procedures, conformity and compliance, disease information updates, etc.

There could be a nice photo for each month - like those on the *Beekeeper* magazine covers - and information provided on hive management activities for that time of year, along with the dates of any events coming up, like field days and conferences. With really good photos, the calendar could have a commercial value with the public!

Instead of NBA issuing the December *Beekeeper*, just make it a calendar instead and send it to all beekeepers in New Zealand. They would put it on the wall and use it for 12 months of the year.

With the advent of varroa and the implementation of the pest management strategy, all beekeepers should be fully informed and committed to having a disease-free and viable industry - even if it means hobbyists pay \$20 a year to cover the cost of getting information to them.

Varroa mites or American foulbrood don't worry whether they visit commercial or hobbyists' hives. Hives retail for about \$120, so \$20 isn't a lot to be a financial member. And, since it's our industry and we're now in the age of "no free lunch" and fully embracing user pays, every beekeeper should contribute to the NBA.

- Matt Menlove

Garston

(The idea has merit but producing such a calendar would require more than a couple of week's preparation. When contacted for comment, an NBA executive member said the viability of producing one next year, maybe even June 2002 to May 2003, would be looked into. In the meantime, a subscription for 11 issues of the *New Zealand Beekeeper* costs \$38. - Ed)

Beekeeping in the US

I'm a commercial beekeeper in the United States, keeping bees in Texas and North Dakota. Work is available for young men from New Zealand and other English-speaking countries, from March until October.

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Letters to the Editor continued

the migratory trip in May, trucking bees from Texas to North Dakota.

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- Gary Mackrill

Varroa costs and impact on South Island beekeepers

I am a Master of business administration student at the University of Canterbury and for my degree I need to undertake a 700 to 800-hour project. Bryan O'Neill, one of the two South Island representatives of the Varroa Oversight/Advisory Committee (VOAC), approached the university to have an independent study undertaken of the financial impact varroa will have on South Island beekeepers when it arrives. I have accepted this project, looking at the costs and impact the varroa mite will have on South Island beekeepers, on behalf of VOAC and the National Beekeepers Association.

I aim to establish, using financial and other quantitative methods, the costs involved per hive of controlling varroa when it enters the South Island. Secondly, I aim to establish the financial impact of varroa control on beekeepers. Finally, in light of the previous analysis, I aim to propose actions on the part of beekeepers and the NBA that best serve the interests of South Island beekeepers.

Shortly, I will be contacting some commercial beekeepers for financial and other information about their honey production operation. I am aware this information has previously been kept fairly private, but any financial information received about individual beekeeping operations will remain strictly confidential. The information will be used to extrapolate the relevant data required for the project. No individual financial information will form part of the project report.

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VOAC committee members know what I propose to ask South Island beekeepers and some have discussed it with their branches. Positive verbal backing has been received from beekeepers told about the information required.

The outcome of this project will be partly determined by the responses received from individual beekeepers.

- Kim van Vuuren.

Attention manuka honey producers

Associate Prof. Peter Molan and PhD student Jon Stephens, from the Honey Research Unit at Waikato University, are starting a study on the UMF (unique manuka factor) in manuka honey. Producers have been contacted over the past few weeks, but anyone not yet telephoned and who is willing to provide small samples for testing is asked to telephone Jon at (07) 838-4466 ext, 8250, or e-mail jonmcstephens@hotmail.com

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From the colonies



Southland

Winter started off in May with two heavy snow falls covering Southland giving us a colder winter than the last two years.

Late winter the temperatures warmed and spring started early for the third time in a row. Ground conditions were good to get the first round of feeding done with warm days in September and October.

Bees have done well on willow, early bush sources and later hawthorn, flax, cabbage tree and early-flowering clover. Warm calm weather helped with the mating of virgins in October. Hives over all are in good condition.

The Southland Field Day will be held at Greenvale Apiaries, Waikaka, on Saturday February 9, 2002. Topics include: varroa, shifting bees, propolis collection methods, requeening, innovations and a hobbyist's session, together with the usual good fellowship and discussion culminating with a barbecue in the evening.

All beekeepers and interested persons welcome.

- Finlay Abernethy

Northland

The area is still varroa-free, although it's present in regions all around and beekeepers are expecting the worst for the coming year. Early this month, hives were spotted with no registration numbers and fears mounted that they had been brought in from the Bay of Plenty.

- Jim Sharpe Maungaturoto

Hawkes Bay

It was with regret that Tom Taylor's resignation as president was accepted by the branch. After leading the diseaseathon, he withdrew to give more time to his growing family but will remain active in the branch. Thank you Tom.

At a special meeting on November 8, Milton Jackson was confirmed the new Hawkes Bay president.

November 3 saw a good turnout of AP2s willing to lead teams of beekeepers searching for hives with American foulbrood.

Most owners were contacted, as a good public relations exercise - and also so the exact locations and numbers of hives could be determined. With few exceptions, owners were keen to have experienced apiarists go through their hives, often teaching them how to do their own inspections. From the 425 hives inspected during the morning, nine suspected samples were sent to the laboratory for confirmation. More hives have since been inspected by people unavailable that day.

While it was disappointing to have such a high percentage of suspect hives, it will be good to have them destroyed and, with follow-up checks, hopefully find AFB spore sources.

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At such a busy time, with hives coming out of pollination to be supered up for the main flow, it was decided to forgo the December branch meeting. The first gathering for 2002 will be on February 14.

The new branch president and branch members wish you all a stressless, festive season.

- Ron Morison

Taradale

Otago

The branch has been asked to take responsibility for the local inspections/auditing (PMS) programme of American foulbrood (AFB). Currently, members have opted not to take part - but if we don't, who will?

At a general meeting/Christmas barbecue on December 15 (after this issue went to press), members were to discuss how AFB levels can be checked in the region and whether export certification of local honey products could be compromised if the current policy continues.

The branch has funds to pay qualified beekeepers to carry out the inspections. Those looking for some paid work during the summer/autumn months should contact me, (03) 464-3122, for more information.

- Blair Dale

Middlemarch

Bay of Plenty

I was asked to comment on how the year went.

Overall, last season offered a poor honey crop, however beekeepers prepared to migrate their hives fared better.

I am unaware of any shortage of hives occurring for kiwifruit pollination.

Beekeepers are now gearing up for a better honey season than last year's.

Rewarewa was looking promising early on, but then the pollination season came early. Tawari has started to flow well, likewise manuka, but we desperately need a change in weather.

Overall, I think our industry is showing good promise for the future. The branch has been working well. Bay of Plenty organised a well-attended field day on varroa, with British scientist Brenda Ball speaking on how varroa increases the incidence of viruses.

As varroa is still the main topic, there are some very important issues to be understood on how to live with it, medium and long term.

To mention a few:

1.Understanding varroa population dynamics: Although I am very grateful for government assistance to our industry, I have to be critical and disagree with some of the contents of Chapter IV of the *Control of Varroa* book. Some of the information cannot be seen as being interpreted from overseas research. It is important to have a clear understanding on how the varroa population builds up. This should be basic knowledge and be used for the following.

2. Monitoring for treatable levels: If we are to be serious about possible residues, in particular propolis, we have to wonder how to limit the use of the synthetic pyrethrums.

3. The use of organic compounds for varroa control: The organic acids show promise but generally need a higher level of understanding on varroa and how to use the acids. This issue is very important once the acids become available for use.

To reflect on how the branch and NBA got on; some months ago I would have said "we struck rock bottom" and NBA has become purely a liability. But, without going into any detail, there seems a glimmer of understanding we need change. Recently an executive member used words like: "We need change in the way of changing a 'Social Club' into a true body representing our industry."

I wish everybody a prosperous season and 2002.

- Gerrit Hyinka Bay of Plenty

Re-growth of native vines pleases bees





Akakiore, left, and kaiku kaiwhiria are two re-generating native plants attracting bees.

With the increased possum control in Hawkes Bay, we are starting to see an increase in pollen and nectar flows from bush gullies and reserves.

Five Finger and pittosporum trees, in particular, are thrashed by the bees from dawn 'til dusk on any day warm enough for the bees to fly. But, to get back to the subject, we were working some hives in early November and they were doing quite a lot more than bees in the surrounding area.

The yard is next to an extremely attractive bush gully with kowhai, pittosporums and a little Five Finger, all of which were finished, but there was a lot of white or yellow-flowered vines growing over the trees so I went over for a look. The bees, despite the usual substandard spring weather, were thrashing them.

I was quite intrigued by this plant, as the leaves and flowers varied in size and colour between each vine and, standing in one spot, I collected five different specimens.. Some had wide leaves, some narrow. Some flowers were white or yellow and some even had pink on them. I put my collection on the seat of the truck and promptly forgot about them.

A week later, while driving into a yard with bush re-growth on the side of the road, I noticed more of this vine and sure enough, the bees were doing far better than any other hives in the area. So, after we had finished supering those few of our hives that hadn't starved, swarmed or gone drone-layer since we were last there, we stopped on the side of the road next to several vines smothered in white flowers. Lo and behold, they were also smothered in bees.

The vines had as many bees on them as I've ever seen on a flowering plant. None had pollen on their legs, so I don't know if it yields pollen or, if it does, what colour it is. But one thing's for sure - they weren't humming up there just because they'd forgotten the words.

Getting back home, I looked up some plant books and found the vine is two different but related vines: akakiore (*Parsonia capsular is*) or small New Zealand jasmine, and kaiku kaiwhiria (*Parsonia heterophylla*), another New Zealand jasmine.

The akakiore has narrow leaves and small, pink or yellow with protruding stamens. Kaiku kaiwhiria has wider leaves and stamens position low in larger, usually white but sometimes yellow or pink flowers. Both plants are attractive - even if they weren't honey plants - and it's nice to see our more palatable species recovering and not solely because many of them yield pollen and honey in the spring-dearth period.

- Peter Berry

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English apiaries show first case of pyrethroid-resistant varroa mites in UK

(A Defra press release)

Honeybee apiaries in South West England have been threatened by the first case of resistant varroa mites.

Laboratory tests conducted during the week beginning August 27, 2001, at the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) confirmed at least one apiary in Devon had mite populations resistant to pyrethroid..

The resistance found in Devon appears to be localised. Recent spot checks elsewhere in the country have revealed the continued high efficacy expected of Apistan and Bayvarol, the only two pyrethroid-based treatments authorised for use in the UK.

CSL's head of environmental biology group, Medwin Bew, urged beekeepers "most strongly" to carefully follow the label instructions on varroacide products. Misuse (e.g., prolonged application of the product or abuse of the active ingredient, or use of cheap, untested analogues) was the original cause of resistant varroa in Europe.

The Devon beekeeper's colonies were first tested using a simple field kit developed by Vita (Europe) Ltd and CSL, as part of a routine screening programme to follow up reported cases of suspect resistance or check colonies of beekeepers believed to be misusing pyrethroid, Bew said.

In five apiaries belonging to the beekeeper screened by field tests, the effectiveness against varroa of the test Apistan strips was found to be as low as 2%. Apistan treatments are normally 95-100% effective. The beekeeper's apiaries were served standstill notices.

CSL started organising a resistance monitoring programme of neighbouring apiaries in the areas around resistant Devon colonies, although its success was limited by the onset of autumn and dependent upon local beekeepers' co- operation.

CSL has also stepped up its surveillance in other areas.

Varroa was introduced to the United Kingdom in 1992. Most beekeepers have now learned to live with the parasite, although the majority of feral colonies have collapsed. There is estimated to be about 1,900 beekeepers in Devon, managing approximately 12,000 colonies of bees. Devon is also a popular location for migratory beekeepers from other counties wishing to take advantage of moorland blossom. Many hundreds of beekeepers move colonies into Devon for about a month each August to crop honey from heather.

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Declarations for Honey and Bee Products

- Managing toxic honey and chemical residues

To assist industry manage risks associated with food for sale, the Animal Products (Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption) Notice was issued in December 2000.

Clause 108, which relates to honey and other bee products, came into force on 1 June 2001.

Requirements for commercial beekeepers

This law introduced the requirement for beekeepers to complete a declaration when selling honey or other bee products. This applies both to products sold directly for consumption and for further processing (e.g. blending/packing). A separate declaration is required for each consignment (or lot), which means a quantity of product that has been produced and handled under uniform conditions, within a limited period of time.

This declaration makes beekeepers directly responsible for ensuring their product is fit for purpose. The declaration document was discussed by MAF and the NBA at the August meeting of the Honey Code of Practice working group (see NZ Beekeeper October 2001 for further details). Changes suggested at this meeting have now been finalised and, with the publication of the amendment notice, became law on December 1 2001.

The declaration will be a key part of processor's Risk Management Programmes (see NZ Beekeeper October issue for further details), under the Animal Products Act. Exporters requiring certificates may be required to supply copies of declarations to the certifying officer, as further proof of the suitability of honey and other bee products for consumption.

Toxic honey

The declarations are an important tool in the prevention and management – not only of chemicals such as pesticide residues – but also toxic honey. All beekeepers with hives in areas associated with toxic honey should be familiar with this issue. An excellent summary of toxic honey, authored by AgriQuality NZ Ltd., is available from MAF Food (see contact details below for further information) upon request.

Beekeepers with hives in the Coromandel /Eastern Bay of Plenty and Marlborough Sounds areas will be written to shortly about toxic honey management this summer. The system of restricted areas and permits that has been in place since the mid-1970s has now ended. Restricted areas will not be gazetted, nor permits issued for the 2001-2002 beekeeping season. Beekeepers will be responsible for assessing the toxic honey risk and managing their hives accordingly.

The declaration-based approach will provide more flexibility to beekeepers. However, this flexibility is balanced by the extra responsibilities entailed in completing the legal declaration.

The full text of the specifications relevant to Beekeepers and a copy of the declaration follow.

Copies of the declaration are available from the MAF website (www.maf.govt.nz) http://www.maf.govt.nz/animalproducts/

<u>legislation/notices/ap-spec-am-honey.pdf</u> and via the NBA website (<u>www.nba.org.nz</u>).

If you do not have access to the Internet, contact your local NBA Branch, or the executive secretary of the NBA - Tim Leslie at Federated Farmers in Wellington (04) 473 7269.

Contact Glen Neal at MAF Food by email nealg@maf.govt.nz or by phone 04 498 9934 if you have any questions about this, or would like further information about toxic honey.

From the Animal Products (Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption) Amendment Notice 2001:

108 Apiarist and beekeeper requirements

- (1) An apiarist or beekeeper must ensure that all honey or other bee products are harvested so that they
 - (a) meet the requirements of the apiarist and beekeeper statement for the harvest of honey or other bee products for human consumption set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 (Form 4); and
 - (b) are free from plant toxins, including phytotoxins of the native plant tutu (Coriaria spp); and
 - (c) do not exceed the permissible MRLs.
- (2) An apiarist or beekeeper must complete and sign the statement for each lot of honey or other bee products and keep a copy of every statement for a minimum of 2 years, except where subclause (5) applies.
- (3) An apiarist or beekeeper must provide a copy of the statement to the secondary processor with each consignment of honey or other bee products before processing by the secondary processor commences.
- (4) If the requirements listed in (a) to (c) cannot be met, the affected honey or other bee products must not be processed for human consumption, unless the apiarist or beekeeper or processor has obtained prior written approval from the Director-General. The Director-General may impose conditions on the approval, and the apiarist, beekeeper or processor must comply with those conditions.
- (5) Where an apiarist or beekeeper processes honey or other bee products themselves for trade intended for direct consumption without further processing, then the apiarist or beekeeper may keep records containing the information required by the statement, in accordance with the requirements of clause 34(2).

If the records kept under subclause (5) show that the honey or other bee products contain plant toxins, potentially harmful pesticides or other agricultural compounds, drugs or other licensed compounds, they must not be processed for human consumption or traded, unless prior written approval from the Director-General has been obtained. The Director-General may impose conditions on the approval and the apiarist or beekeeper must comply with those conditions.

APIARIST AND BEEKEEPER STATEMENT FOR THE HARVEST OF HONEY OR OTHER BEE PRODUCTS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

This statement is made under the Animal Products (Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption) Notice 2000.

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New Zealand Beekeepers December 2001

NZ honey needs clear identity, meeting decides

What is a definition for New Zealand honey?

At the end of November, a meeting was held in Wellington to work through the issues surrounding how and why a definition could be found. Attending were representatives from New Zealand's leading packers of honey, the Commerce Commission, Trade NZ, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

A presentation from the Commerce Commission focused on the Fair Trading Act, and packers' obligations under it to correctly label the honey being packed for the New Zealand market. Examples of some misleading labelling were given and court rulings over those labels explained.

Trade NZ's presentation focused on the benefits the industry stands to gain through international markets when New Zealand's unique honeys can be promoted with confidence.

After an open discussion, a unanimous agreement was reached for the need to have honey characterisation standards, although defining and selling these standards to the industry could prove difficult.

Honey characterisation was an emotional topic, agreed members of the National Beekeepers Association, and it was

important to provide an open forum for people to debate and work through some of the issues for the industry to progress. It was decided that people with the appropriate technical and working knowledge of New Zealand's honey would be selected to meet in February and confirm the existing data that fingerprints New Zealand honey types.

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Don't foul things for everyone - 'bee AFB alert', urges apiarist

Peering into a crystal ball, PETER BERRY forsees an AFB breakout if beekeepers lose their vigilance.

Rumour has it that there are four large outbreaks of American foulbrood (AFB) being dealt with at the moment. Certainly, I know of one major incidence and at least another moderate one.

I am made nervous by these reports and over the years I have seen AFB outbreaks in many outfits where an initial infection from an outside source has spread exponentially, causing a large degree of loss. I have also seen and experienced the opposite - you get an outbreak and deal to it, and after a year or two you have no more problems. Until you get another outside infection. I will now gaze into my crystal ball and make a prediction: "Our AFB rates are about to go up badly."

Why? Because AFB is spread by beekeepers and the type of beekeepers who spread it can be sorted into two camps.

- The not-intelligent-enough or not-trained enough beekeepers, who just don't know enough to control AFBS, and
- Beekeepers who are capable but have lost their drive and enthusiasm for beekeeping.

The latter lose their beekeeping spark for a variety of reasons - personal, financial, drugs, other pressing work commitments . . . If you don't believe my reasoning, have a discussion with some older commercial beekeepers and ask them if they've ever bought out a commercial outfit that didn't have a worse AFB record than it had, say, four or five seasons previously..

Sure, there are exceptions, but it goes with the territory that hives for sale are a greater than average AFB risk and it pays to be extremely careful.

Which brings me back to my prediction. Disheartened beekeepers spread AFB and varroa is stressing and disheartening beekeepers. Blimey, we personally haven't even found any yet, and I wake up wondering if it's worth painting the boxes or making up new frames, or putting in an extra hour's work at the end of the day.

The only thing worse than someone who doesn't look for AFB is a person who looks for it but refuses to see it. So please remember, as you fight AFB and now varroa, go at it with a will and do yourself and those around you a favour by keeping an eye out for your neighbouring beekeepers. Everyone is going to be under a lot of stress and those of us who succumb to it will not be helped much by having to burn half our hives.

The following are AFB control measures traditionally used by my family. Some have shown to have little scientific basis, but they don't cost much and I, for one, am reluctant to change a winning formula. And what the hell, if you've gone to the trouble of taking care of the major threats, it can't hurt to knock off some of the minor risks as well.

 Scorched boxes: These are boxes scorched on the inside to kill AFB; an ineffective practice decision tinned years ago. Boxes carry AFB and cause AFB, even 40 or 50

- years on. I know this in the very depths of my beekeeping soul. Finish the job of scorching them. Suffer not a scorched box to live.
- The ground: Turn over the ground in front of a diseased hive, burying the sod. If you have a yard with a recurring AFB problem, considering moving your hives to a fresh patch of ground. It doesn't always make a difference, but sometimes it does. "Theory" says I'm wrong on this one, but "practice" says I'm right (either that, or it's been pure coincidence on a number of occasions).
- Parrafin: Coating boxes with paraffin on a regular basis
 preserves the boxes and, while it's not supposed to kill
 AFB, when used normally I believe it probably locks the
 spores up. Having said that, I am a great believer in
 treating AFB gear in hot paraffin and for longer than the
 recommended time. Taking chances is expensive.
- Replacing combs: Combs replaced on a regular basis eventually reduces the spore loading in the hives to next to nothing - provided you don't get any more coming.
- Changing gear: If you buy some hives, change all the lids, floors and boxes (after first checking very carefully for AFB). Parrafin these and use them to change the gear on the next yard. Also, change a larger-than-normal percentage of brood frames for new ones - as many as possible, in fact, for a year or two. ALWAYS look a gift horse in the mouth!
- Bee suspicious: Be extremely suspicious when buying hives, particularly gear in sheds. Parrafin all boxes, melt out then burn all rough frames and, if there is more than a very low percentage of AFB in the hives, deal to the rest of the combs pretty harshly as well. Keep the boxes of original frames separate, but remember that it is often cheaper to "burn now, rather than later".
- Check often: Every time you take anything from a hive, it should be checked for AFB. Never break this rule. Every time you work a hive, you should check it for AFB. I consider it far more important to check the brood every time the hive is opened than it is to check thoroughly by going through the whole brood nest. But if there is a history of AFB in the yard, I do both.
- Matches! If you are in any doubt, burn it. I reckon it's cheaper. If they weren't my hives, I'd send off a sampler, but for myself, I reckon a match is one of the best prophylactics on the market.
- Peter Berry

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Branch mourns member's death

When returning from Christshurch to Tauranga in October former NBA Bay of Plenty branch sectary Karl Christopherson died at Taupo.

Karl was branch secretary when the late Dave Warr was president in the 1989/90 term, and for the following year under Peter Townsend, who describes Karl as an always pleasant person whose efficient secretarial duties made his own job much easier.

Dave Warr also appreciated Karl's input and in his final president's report he wrote: "In particular Karl Christopherson, as our secretary, has responded to the challenge and done a sterling job and the success of the field day was in no small way due to his efforts."

That field day was held at Karl and Julie's property in Walford Road and was a very good day.

Other branch members praised Karl's sense of humour and organising skills, paying particular attention to details.

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P.O. Box 55, Westport Ph 03 789-6929 Evenings Fax 03 789-8869 When I joined the branch, I got to know Karl particularly well when he and I set up the 'BeeMantle' project. I still very much regret that I did not see Karl covered in bees, going for the record; he would have really been 'BIG BEE'. (Karl was known as 'Christo' and also, as his truck's number plate showed, 'BIG BEE'.)

The branch expresses sincere sympathy and appreciation for what Karl meant and did for it. He is survived by his wife Julie and their two sons.

- Gerrit Hyink, Katikati

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al-Qaeda smuggles weapons and agents through Middle

Eastern honey market

One branch of Osama bin Laden's terrorist network was a hive of activity, Judith Miller and Jeff Gerth reported in an October issue of *The New York Times*.

United States officials say there is evidence Osama bin Laden was using a network of shops selling honey - a staple of Middle Eastern life since biblical times - to generate income and secretly move drugs, weapons and agents throughout al-Qaeda, his terrorist network.

Bin Laden had control of a number of retail honey shops and some of his top associates, such the Palestinian director of external affairs for al-Qaeda, Abu Zubeidah, who controlled movement of recruits in and out of bin Laden's camps.

The honey trade also included less senior al-Qaeda members. US officials said one was Khalil al-Deek, a Palestinian American who had been jailed in Jordan over plots to blow up sites in the US and Jordan around New Year 2000. He was released earlier this year for lack of evidence.

Honey is deeply rooted in Middle Eastern culture, religion and trade. The Koran refers to its medicinal and healing properties. In Saudi Arabia, which produces relatively little honey, families consume an average 5kg a month, the US Department of Agriculture reported in 1998.

Honey shops are found throughout the Middle East and in Pakistan. One key location is Yemen, which produces some of the purest honey in the region and is home to many supporters of bin Laden. His father was born in Yemen.

A senior US administration official said honey ranked as one of al-Qaeda's most important business operations, less for the income generated than for the "operational assistance" it offered as a medium for the shipment of contraband such as money, weapons and drugs.

The smell and consistency of the honey made it easy to hide weapons and drugs in the shipments and it was "too messy" for inspectors to want to routinely check, one official said.

Honey is freely traded throughout the region. Pakistan, for example, is one of the biggest exporters to Saudi Arabia. Honey from Yemen, the 1998 report said, was the most expensive.

In 2000, US producers exported 1800 tonnes of honey to the Middle East. Most of it went through distributors, brokers and importers, the National Honey Board said. Bin Laden might have been introduced to the utility of honey in Sudan, where he lived and operated from 1991 until he was expelled in 1996.

A key bin Laden firm, the International al-Ikhlas Company, made honey at a factory in Kameen, Sudan, a former bin Laden associate testified in February at the New York trial of men convicted in the plot to bomb US embassies in East Africa in 1988

Bin Laden moved his operations base to Afghanistan, also famous for its honey.

Another terrorist group known to have used honey shops to support its operations is Egyptian Islamic Jihad, officials said. That group, headed by Ayman al-Zawahiri, one of bin Laden's key aides, merged with al-Qaeda.

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AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC.

PO Box 214, Waimauku, Auckland 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: Fiona Bellet "Oakwood"
Bradley Road, RD 5
Christchurch. Phone: (03) 347 9919

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
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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: Joan Leckie, Makahika Rd, RD 1 Levin Phone: (06) 368-1277

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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 Jonson 195 Carrington Street New Plymouth Email: honeyhouse@clear.net.nz Phone: (06) 753-3320

WAIKATO BRANCH

Contact Tony: (07) 856-9625 Jan Klausen: (07) 386-0111 Next meeting will be in 2001 (date yet to be confirmed).

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 Burnet, 21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa, Wellington 6006. Phone: (04) 232-7863 Email: johnburnet@xtra.co.nz