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*Merry Christmas
and
a
Happy
New
Year*



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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NZ (Inc.)

President: Don Bell
Annat Apiaries
Frasers Rd, RD, Sheffield 8173
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Vice President: Jane Lorimer
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Bennies Honey
PO Box 34, Ranfurly 9071
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Fax: (03) 444-9250
Mobile: 027 435 7970
Email: lin.mckenzie@xtra.co.nz

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RD 2, Nelson
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Mobile: 025 829 143
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Mobile: 021 544-070
Email: tleslie@fedfarm.org.nz

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48 Stafford Street, P.O. Box 5002, Dunedin.

Editor: Angela Crompton 03-478 0357 (EVENINGS)

Email: angela.crompton@actrix.co.nz

Advertising: Allan Middlemiss: Telephone: 03-477 8109

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Email: ckp@xtra.co.nz

Life with the NBA – bad or worse?

The time for some “straight and clear talking” has probably passed, National Beekeepers Association executive LIN MCKENZIE wrote in the New Zealand Beekeepers Web page last month. Below is and edited version of the rest of his report.

Until now, I have been constrained by the rules of good governance and collective responsibility but I cannot see a way ahead while members of the National Beekeepers executive are so indecisive.

A major factor here is the pressure on some by those wishing to impose their personal agenda on the membership and the beekeeping industry. Above all else, the future of the pest management strategy is at issue. With all its warts, it is all we have between our beehives and rampant American foulbrood. The outbreaks this year do not indicate to me that the PMS is not working. Rather, the question must be: “How much worse without the PMS?”

If the NBA does not have a structure in place pretty quickly, I understand the PMS management agency will pass to another body. Perhaps we will then find out just what a PMS can cost.

At the 1999 annual conference in Ashburton, a remit from the Canterbury branch called for the NBA to use Federated Farmers (or a like organisation) as an umbrella organisation. It was passed 11 votes to four.

In Gisborne the following year, a similar remit by Otago had to be withdrawn because of an error in terminology, but I was certainly aware the support was there. In Queenstown, 2001, Auckland called for the co-ordination of the Rural Industries so they spoke with one voice. That was supported 14 votes to one.

At this year’s conference in Auckland, there were two remits calling for the NBA to move towards becoming a full Industry Sector group of Federated Farmers. Hawkes Bay withdrew their remit in favour of Otago’s, which was passed 13 to 1.

As a result of the negative vote regarding the compulsory commodity levy and in response to remit seven at this year’s conference, calling for the executive to investigate restructuring, the NBA executive appointed a task group headed by Steve Lytle to seek members’ views.

Two hundred members attended the meetings. Eight branches supported becoming a sector group of an umbrella organisation and six branches named Federated Farmers as that organisation. Two other branches indicated they supported joining Federated Farmers. (On a personal note, I have been accused of influencing the four South Island meetings I attended. I am taking legal advice on how I can address this slur on my integrity.)

It was the intention of the executive to report to a special meeting in November, but members consulted indicated they had no chance of attending at that time.

Legal advice is that the commercial member segment of the NBA membership disappears at the end of the year, in conjunction with the ability to set compulsory levies. A suggestion that commercial membership extends until March 30, the final date for levy payment in the past, has been refuted by our legal advisor.

One branch suggested that notice for the task group meetings was too short; and the necessary 14-days’ notice called for in our rules was not given. I can find no such requirement in the rules.

A branch secretary said the task group’s letter was not sent. Other members around the country received theirs with their journals.

A North Island beekeeper wrote a letter, querying whether there were two factions within the current executive and calling for a postal vote.

I don’t believe ‘democracy’ is about endless and repetitive consultation without actually doing anything. Members have voted consistently and clearly that they wish to move into a sector group structure.

The Canterbury branch decided it had waited enough for remits to be honoured and has requested Federated Farmers to set up a sector group for its beekeepers.

— Lin McKenzie, Ranfurly

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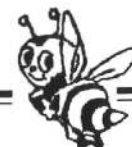
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Biosecurity laws keep NZ behind world trade, Jim Sutton told

When the Minister of Biosecurity Jim Sutton called for public submissions on the development of a National Biosecurity Strategy, vice-president LIN MCKENZIE prepared and submitted a paper on behalf of the National Beekeepers Association. Below is an edited version.

Points of issue from the NBA

- The present fragmented approach to biosecurity is not sustainable. Any strategy, in whatever form it evolves, must not be yet another exhaustive, bureaucratic paper. It must have an identifiable and auditable end point.
- The concept of biosecurity is lagging behind world trade and as a nation, we must deal with the biosecurity risks involved in that trade.
- We do not accept a world economy should bring with it world ecology. There is a danger this philosophy may be seen as inevitable.
- There should be one biosecurity agency with final responsibility for the nation's biosecurity. It must not be sensitive to changes on the political scene, nor become another under-resourced government initiative.
- A recognition and appreciation of the "public good" is paramount to the development of a Biosecurity Strategy. Surely the whole reason for any biosecurity initiative is one of national interest, based around the community as a whole. Any other concept is realistic so there is no stronger justification for a Biosecurity Strategy.
- There must be "response plans" in place, ready to deal with incursions. Many years ago, our industry consulted with members then, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, drew up "game plans" to deal with incursions of one sort or another. In the face of the varroa incursion, these plans were nowhere in evidence.
- We note the reference on page eight to "leaving regional councils and/or industry groups to develop long term arrangements". While we accept the need for a focus on response to new incursions, government agencies should not walk away from what are the nation's challenges.
- Any strategy developed must be "in touch" with those at the coalface. On page 27, there is reference to "regional stakeholder workshops . . . for invited participants". Our industry recently faced an incursion with both a high

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profile and a major effect on the national primary production scene. How many of our industry leaders and/or those within the industry meeting this challenge were invited to these workshops?

There is a belief that "Government manages the risk but the stakeholders take the risk". This perception has to be removed and a sense of "partnership" developed, hence our belief that the stakeholder's input must carry more weight than it currently does.

- We agree there is a case for more "off shore" activity. It makes sense to keep the possible incursion beyond our borders, rather than hope our border protection systems will cope. Any organism reaching Oceania is a much greater risk to New Zealand. Mutually-beneficial responses can be developed with our South Pacific neighbours.
- It is accepted there is a cost and the higher the degree of protection, the higher the cost. This is why any strategy developed should be long-term and not at the whim of political expediency.
- Objectives set must go beyond the merely desirable, they must maximise the protection from risk. We must err in favour of the environment. Lack of scientific knowledge must not be a reason to postpone or minimise environmental protection. It is not good enough to state "there is no evidence of a risk". It is well accepted that it is difficult in the extreme to prove a negative.
- We are a trading nation and that trade must not be placed in jeopardy. However, if our productive capacity is reduced because of the presence of an undesirable organism, the trading opportunity will also be reduced. This applies equally to most areas of trade, e.g. the presence of venomous snakes would do nothing for our eco-tourist trade.
- Education is the way forward in the biosecurity challenge but there is a need for robust and enforceable legislation. In the current legislation, there needs to be a will and an intent to enforce the provisions of the biosecurity and HSNO Acts. We have little confidence there is and believe evidence points the opposite is the norm. Perhaps the burden of proof is indeed too high.
- The two Acts do not always seem to complement each other and the plethora of chief technical officers can only lead to a dilution of effectiveness.
- One biosecurity entity would be desirable over the current multi-agency system, which is too fragmented and produces a scattered approach we have little confidence in.
- Any entity to be set up should include stakeholders in the decision-making process. The need for all parties to listen includes stakeholders taking note of agency

representatives, but the input of those same stakeholders must be given credence. Our experience during the varroa incursion does not lead us to believe this happens. It must be made to happen!

- There is a perception that the national biosecurity agency wishes to abdicate responsibility to regional authorities with almost indecent haste. This may be open to debate, but that is the perception and the perception often becomes the reality.
- The existence of a commercial "applier of the regulations" serves to further muddy the water. The application of regulations is too much part of government responsibility to accord commercial gain to any third party. There are also the questions of separation between applying the regulations and interpreting them and of a focus on cost of delivery, as opposed to a focus on the effectiveness of delivery.
- In conclusion, the NBA believes that biosecurity is too important to our country to be left with the fragmented approach in place at present. We believe:
 - 1 There should be one national office administered by a board or authority.
 - 2 Stakeholders must be identified and be part of that board or authority.
 - 3 The board must be accorded a vote.
 - 4 The board must recognise the concept of "public good" and all that term implies.
 - 5 Objectives must be carefully drawn up and then "set in stone", beyond political whim.
 - 6 There must be a clear end point or "grand objective", i.e. a "mission statement".

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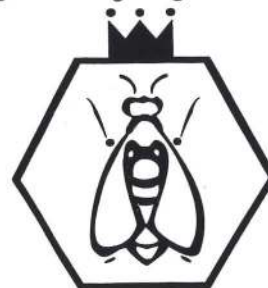
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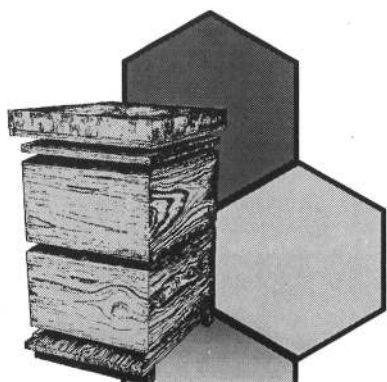
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Varroa slows down, but isn't stopped

The varroa control line across the North Island continues to slow the southward advance of the mite.

"The Ministry of Agriculture has now completed testing 450 apiaries in the lower North Island and the level of infestation remains very low at just 25 infested sites," said biosecurity officer Paul Bolger.

"Our monitoring shows a completely different picture for the upper North Island where the spread of varroa was both rapid and extensive. In that sense, the current control measures have successfully stemmed the spread of varroa for a longer period than we expected two years ago."

Paul said a surveillance programme, testing more than 20,000 South Island hives for varroa, had so far confirmed the mite had not crossed Cook Strait.

Restrictions on the movement of bees and other high risk items from the North Island to the South Island were being maintained, he said, and beekeepers' trucks had been added to the list of risk goods needing a permit to be moved.

The ministry and industry groups are discussing long-term management for varroa and a discussion document was due out this month, presenting a range of options for continuing varroa movement control measures after the existing control programme ends.

— *Bee Culture Magazine*

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Exotic honeybee disease surveillance programme

By David McMillan

AgriQuality Ltd. Invermay

The first round of this season's exotic honeybee disease surveillance programme is underway.

Designed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the National Beekeepers Association and AgriQuality, the programme is designed to reaffirm the disease status of our bee stocks, to give an early warning of the arrival of an exotic honeybee pest or disease and to report to our trading partners.

Surveys are being carried out for the following pests, diseases and genetic types:

- European foulbrood
- Tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*)
- The parasitic fly (*Braula coeca*)
- Small hive beetle (recently found in Australia)
- Asian mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae*)
- Africanised honeybee
- Cape honeybee
- Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) South Island only

More information on these diseases can be found in the "Honey Bee Exotic Diseases and Pest" pamphlet, distributed to all beekeepers with the last Annual Disease Return. The pamphlet is also sent to all new beekeepers when they register. Anyone requiring another copy should contact his or her AgriQuality apicultural advisory officer.

The Cape honeybee and braula are not listed in the pamphlet. An update on the former is being produced and will be sent out with the next Annual Disease Returns. In the meantime, some information on the Cape honeybee can be found on the Web page <http://www.beesource.com/pov/ahb/apisoct98.htm>

Information on the parasitic fly or bee louse is at <http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/misc/bees/beelouse.htm> and <http://website.lineone.net/~dave.cushman/braula.html>

Inspection Programme Outline

High Risk Areas

MAF specification requires beekeepers to inspect and sample 400 apiaries in high-risk areas throughout New Zealand, 218 in the North Island and 182 in the South Island. High-risk areas are areas identified as most likely points of introduction and include:

- Seaports
- Airports
- Large population areas
- Tourist areas

The South Island high-risk sites will be inspected for exotic diseases in conjunction with the varroa surveillance programme, autumn 2003.

For North Island high-risk sites, beekeepers are asked to inspect their own hives now and use Authorised Persons to inspect the balance in the autumn. AgriQuality has sent out a comprehensive inspection kit to beekeepers who have indicated they wish to test their own hives. The completion date for inspections was Monday, December 16, 2002.

Beekeepers are inspecting all hives in a selected apiary and taking a sample of adult bees from each hive. The adult bee samples will be tested in the laboratory for:

- Tracheal mite
- Asian mite
- Varroa

Further samples, for testing for the diseases below, are taken if symptoms are present:

- European foulbrood – suspect larvae
- Small Hive Beetle – adult beetle or larvae
- Africanised Honey Bee – adult bees or brood comb

Beekeepers' home apiaries

This autumn we will ask 100 commercial beekeepers to inspect and test their home apiaries. The inspection and testing will be exactly the same as for the high-risk sites above. The NBA suggested this method, as a way of getting samples representing most of the hives in a beekeeper's outfit. The association reasoned that beekeepers bring home bees from all their apiaries through the course of a season, either in hives, or as passengers on vehicles or in honey boxes.

Exporter Bee Samples

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Retired honey grader dies

Bob Walsh saw many sides of honey Industry

Robert Walsh (Bob), who died aged 95 earlier this year, enjoyed honey by the spoonful, says friend Roy O'Brien.

Although a beekeeper between 1956 and 2001, he only met Mr Walsh four years ago, long after the older man had retired as head apiarist at the Department of Agriculture. Living at Grange House, Greymouth, the author of the reference book, *Nectar and Pollen Sources of New Zealand*, was always keen for a yarn about beekeeping, though.

Bob's introduction to the apiculture industry came when he was 20 and started working as a "cadet" for Pearson Brothers of Claudelands. For the next 13 years, he had various jobs with commercial beekeepers around the country and even did a stint with a merchandising firm, buying and packing honey.

The Department of Agriculture invited him to join its team in 1939 as a Christchurch apiary instructor. Three

years later he was transferred to Auckland which he used as a base for the next 10 years, travelling around the country, grading honey.

In those days, grading was divided into 18 categories of tasting – a task that could have long-term detriments to a taster's health. In fact, the honey grader Mr Walsh had replaced had been forced from the job through ill health, and Mr Walsh himself was absent for three months due to an excess of sugar intake.

Towards the end of his career, he worked as an agricultural advisory officer, looking into trials and experiments carried out on bees and honey. He also instructed young apiarists and, on his retirement in 1971, lamented the lack of trained people entering the industry.

"If the price of honey [was] higher, there would also be greater incentive to join the industry," he had said."

NBA inequity left Hatfield easy scapegoat



Richard Hatfield . . . appointed to a task, which he carried out satisfactorily.

As the year ends and the future of the National Beekeepers Association is decided, executive member LIN MCKENZIE pays tribute to former president Richard Hatfield, who received a "public execution" at the 2002 annual conference in Auckland.

The National Beekeepers Association contracted Richard Hatfield to manage the two-part consultation process for:

- The establishment of a bio-security levy for the pest management strategy.
- The re-establishment of a commodity levy for the funding of activities described as being "industry good".

In the event, the members voted to discontinue support for the commodity levy and the debate continues as to where the way ahead lies.

Bio-security funding

The establishment of a bio-security levy for the PMS was not an issue members were able to vote on. The PMS is law under the Bio-security Act and the funding of it is the Minister's responsibility. The NBA put out for consultation an application it could make to the Minister to obtain funding under the Bio-security Act through a compulsory levy. This was a major part of the job Richard was contracted for.

The executive appointed a "project management committee", consisting of Catherine Petrey (Federated Farmers,) Richard Hatfield and me, Lin McKenzie, to develop and drive the project.

At the March 5-6, 2002 executive meeting, the following two action points were agreed to and, to quote directly from the executive minutes:

Action – 08: Research and Development

Jane Lorimer to work with the R&D committee to broadly map the R&D priorities of the NBA for the next 5-6 years.

Action – 09: PMS 5 year Direction

Philip Cropp to work with the PMS operations committee to broadly map the NBA's PMS priorities for the management of the PMS e.g. education, auditing and enforcement.

In the May 7 and 8 executive minutes, the following appears:

Action – 08: Research & Development

Signed Off as proceeding.

Jane Lorimer to work with the R&D committee to broadly map the R&D priorities of the NBA for the next 5-6 years.

Action – 09: PMS 5 year Direction

Signed Off as proceeding.

Philip Cropp to work with the PMS operations committee to broadly map the NBA's priorities for the management of the PMS e.g. education, auditing and enforcement.

The research and development paper was part of the commodity levy (industry good) presentation, while the "PMS direction" paper was written for the PMS Bio-security Levy application.

Sometime later, I fielded a request from Richard Hatfield for information resulting from the above action points. I advised him it had not been forthcoming and, as there was by then some urgency, he should proceed with developing the papers himself. This would be an add-on to his contract. He carried out the tasks, as requested.

I do not know whether the PMS committee was asked to "broadly map the NBA's PMS priorities for the management of the PMS, e.g. education, auditing and enforcement". If it was, why didn't it happen? If it was not asked, then why not?

Education and R & D content of the PMS

It was proposed there should be provision to fund education and research and development, three requirements of the PMS. At the Auckland conference, members decided these should be dispensed with in the budget to be submitted to the Minister. I believe we are in breach!

We have done little training since the PMS has been in force and the strategy is all about educating beekeepers to manage American foulbrood.

The research and development part of the PMS budget is specific to the strategy and entirely separate from the R & D committee's work, as referred to in the quote from the minutes.

Considerable research and development was included in the original bio-security levy document presented to beekeepers during the consultation process. I will outline one part.

Comments are regularly made about the lack of government finance for beekeepers' strategy, while other national strategies, e.g., the one dealing with bovine tuberculosis, receive assistance. The reality is possums are a recognised TB vector and the state acknowledges their presence in Crown estate by financially contributing towards their control.

The PMS paper developed and presented to beekeepers had a proposal to fund research into whether feral bees on Crown estate were AFB vectors. If they were, a good argument could be raised for state support. The NBA decided to walk away from any research.

Cost of the consultation

There was an assertion at the Auckland conference that the project team was overpaid. In fact, the rate charged was 50% of the normal. Federated Farmers only charged for Jacob Haronga's input, no one else. The project was actually below the budget agreed on by the executive.

Other industries that have run similar consultations say our costs were on the conservative side of what is generally the norm. Certainly, any suggestion that Richard Hatfield overcharged is completely without foundation.

Shabby treatment

I feel the treatment dealt to Richard Hatfield at the conference was shabby in the extreme. This man was seen as

a fit and proper person to lead our association two years previously. The executive appointed him to a task, he carried it out satisfactorily and was virtually hounded out of the conference, and mostly at the behest of those who had themselves not performed.

I have not spoken until now in the hope that someone else, perhaps more distant from the process, would raise it. Some members uncomfortable with the treatment dealt to Richard, and who felt his side should be put, have approached me personally on the issue. I have no brief to apologise to Richard on anyone's behalf but my own.

I offer that apology unreservedly.

– Lin McKenzie

Canadian manufacturer investigates his product in NZ

More formic acid needed in high humidity

"An awful lot of new stuff to work through" is Bill Ruzicka's summary of his visit to New Zealand, where he has been investigating the varying success rates of his "MiteGone" formic acid dispensing system in this country.

Meeting beekeepers and holding workshops at centres from Balclutha to Whangarei, Bill noted conditions for apiaries were vastly different to those in British Columbia, Canada, where the system was designed. The professional aircraft engineer has lived there since leaving his home country, Czechoslovakia, after troops from the Warsaw Pact invaded it in 1968.

In 1980, Bill bought 100 beehives as a retirement saving programme then built it up to 500 pollination and breeding units. Each year he sells about 500 nucleus colonies and up to 2000 queens.

"Honey production is a side-line for me," he told the *NZ Beekeeper* in a telephone interview.

His daughter, Susanne Ruzicka, was in New Zealand earlier this year promoting the "MiteGone" product, one of two he has patented to control the varroa mite.

"She sold some of the stuff and then we got good and negative feedback [about] the product," Bill said.

"I came over here to find out the details of why it did not work."

In some cases, beekeepers weren't following the instructions on how to correctly use the product, he noted. But in others, the humidity levels in New Zealand hives were much higher than that experienced in Canada, meaning a different application of "MiteGone" was required.

In Canada, Bill said, humidity rarely rises about 50%. Recently visiting Waikino in the Coromandel, he measured humidity levels in hives as high as 90%. MiteGone could still be used at that rate, he said, but the measure of formic acid would need to be doubled.

"People have to perform the operation first, then they gauge how much acid they get out of a cup and their circumstances. Then they can figure out how much acid they [have] to provide for active treatment.

"With high [varroa] infestations, you'll need more," Bill added.

Asked to compare beekeeping practices he has observed in New Zealand with those in Canada, he said he had been interested to see the screens fitted in hives for collecting propolis – and the income that can be earned by selling it. The propolis industry was only starting in Canada, he said.

He was also interested to see the energies that went into honey production here and the different types that can be produced by the variety of flowers. In Canada, honey is mostly clover or canola.

Canadian bees don't have to fly very far, either, because hives were positioned near vast crops. "They just climb out of their hives and go to the flowers, 24 hours a day, too, in summer.

"There are no night hours for sleeping."

Twenty-four hour daylight makes the beekeeping season a fairly intense one for Canadian apiarists, Bill said. But it was shorter than in New Zealand, too.

At home, he is busy from mid-April until the first week of October. "Then I go skiing! Over here, guys have to tend to their hives for most of the year. They don't get as much free time as we do."



Bill Ruzicka advises beekeepers to adapt the MiteGone system to suit local conditions.

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MAF to release consultation documents

Honeybee genetic material import risk

An import-risk analysis for honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) genetic material is being conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Four forms of genetic material are being considered for importation from Germany:

- Honey bee queens
- Queen cells
- Semen collected from honey bee drones
- Eggs laid by mated queen bees

The honeybee genetic material risk analysis has undergone a process of internal review within MAF and scrutiny by international experts. This international review has led to changes being made to the draft document and delayed the development of the risk analysis. The risk analysis will now be available for public consultation from December 13 until January 24, 2003.

Also available for public consultation will be a draft import health standard for import of honeybee semen from Germany.

Honeybee semen poses substantially less biosecurity risk than importation of other forms of honeybee genetic material.

Providing MAF receives no objections to this import health standard (or to the relevant sections of the import risk analysis), this draft import health standard can be issued. If objections are raised, these will be considered before the import health standard is issued.

- The documents can be found on the MAF web site under consultation documents.
www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/consultation.htm from December 13.

This is an opportunity for those involved in the honeybee industry to have their say. The risk analysis will dictate what, if any, forms of honeybee genetic material will be allowed into New Zealand and what measures must be put in place to allow importation. It has the potential to affect all in the beekeeping industry.

The consultation document will be posted to the MAF Web site and notification will be sent to National Beekeepers Association regional branch secretaries.

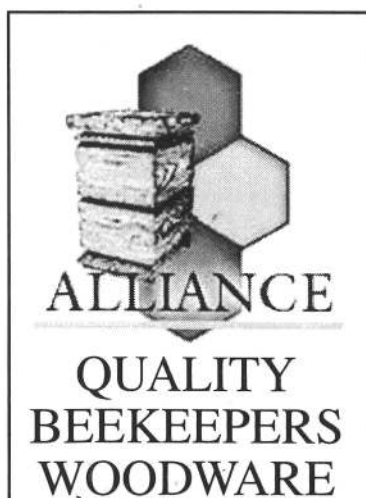
– **Helen Beban**
National Adviser
International Animal Trade

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MAF measures small hive beetle risk to New Zealand honeybees

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is investigating what risk the small hive beetle poses to New Zealand after the pests were discovered in Australia in October.

The primary means of transmission: honey bees, hive products and used beekeeping equipment, are already prohibited from entering New Zealand. As the beetle is only found in soil immediately adjacent to beehives, transmission by soil is considered unlikely while distribution of the beetle in Australia remains limited.

The risk of introduction of the beetle in rotting fruit is considered to be adequately covered, by current border systems, but MAF is seeking more information on the risk of infested fruit from Australia.

The beetle (*Aethina tumida*) was found in New South Wales and in Queensland. The route of its introduction to Australia is currently unknown, but Australian beekeepers say the site where the pest was first found, Richmond, is near a Royal Australian Air Force base. Richmond was used for storing shipping containers associated with the 2000 Olympic games.

Endemic to southern Africa, the beetle is a significant pest of stored honey boxes there, but does not normally cause problems in strong bee colonies.

The first reports of the beetle killing large numbers of bee colonies came from the United States, where it was first detected in Florida, in 1998. Some beekeepers in Florida consider it to be just as serious a pest as the varroa mite. Because bees bred in Australia and New Zealand are similar to those found in the US, it is likely the beetle's impact would be similarly destructive here.

The beetle is primarily found in honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies but in the absence of those, it can live in bumblebee nests, possibly the nests of other social bees, and in some types of fruit.

It can destroy honeybee colonies, with both larval and adult forms of the beetle eating honeybee brood. The larval stages tunnel in the honey and cause extensive damage, rendering the honey useless for bees and human consumption.

The beetle is believed to be mainly spread by the movement of bees and beehives by beekeepers. Because the adults are strong flyers, however, they can also spread between beehives by free flight. The larval stage can be carried in comb honey and is spread in soil (where it pupates) and rotting fruit (it can complete its lifecycle on fruit).

Adult beetles can survive about five days without food, so the pest could be introduced to New Zealand as free-flying "hitch-hikers" in air cargo – although the chances of adult beetles surviving transport by sea appears relatively low.

Adult beetles are dark brown-black, about 5mm long and move quickly when exposed to light. They are found in the dark areas of the hive and on the debris on the hive floor. They can be difficult to detect.

Since first being detected near Richmond, New South Wales, in late October 2002, 61 infested apiaries and seven feral colonies had been detected early last month. Restricted zones have been put in place, but a second area of infestation was found in South-East Queensland, traced back to two apiaries being shifted there from the Richmond area in April 2002. At the time of writing, five apiaries in Queensland had been reported as infested with SHB.

Australia's Exotic Animal Diseases consultative committee was still to decide whether the beetle could be eradicated or controlled

- Helen Beban

National adviser
MAF Biosecurity International Animal Trade

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GM honey ban — or just low honey production years in Canada?

The European Union's ban on Canadian honey is not true, writes Peter Bray to the NZ Beekeeper. He finds a report by HEATHER CLAY from the Canadian Honey Council.

Stories about a European Union ban on Canadian honey due to genetic modification practices, as reported in the *Beekeeper's Quarterly*, are false.

News about a European Union ban on Canadian honey has been circulating on the Internet for a couple of years. It is not true and none of the packers or exporters have encountered problems with the European Union.

The statistics from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (<http://www.honeycouncil.ca/stats/exports.htm>) show the value of exports for the United Kingdom has doubled (from \$451,000 to \$700,000) between 1999 and 2001.

France increased its purchases by \$22,000 and Belgium by \$51,000 during the same period. If there was a ban, this would not have happened.

Total export of Canadian honey has dropped by 2 million kilogram since 1999 because 2000 and 2001 were lower production years (see www.honeycouncil.ca/beestats.html).

As a direct result of lower production and higher prices, less honey was exported in 2001 to the two top trading partners, the United States and Germany, compared with 1999. It has nothing to do with GM concerns and everything to do with supply and demand.

About 44% (15 million kilogram) of the Canadian honey crop (34 million kilogram) is exported, with the majority going to the United States (13 million kilogram).

The European Union accounts for less than 10% of Canadian export honey and the suggestion that domestic prices in Canada have been driven down by any EU decision is nonsense. In fact, the Canadian prices are directly linked to US prices. The quote from the *UK Beekeepers Quarterly* is taken from a University of Saskatchewan consultant report (<http://www.mindfully.org/GE/GE4/Liabilities-EconomicsGMOsJun02.htm>).

Its quote has been reported in newspapers and on Internet chat lines, so the information about the "EU ban" has become "fact". I checked the two references at the bottom of the article. They are not primary sources and neither backs up the information quoted.

For more information, go to: <http://www.honeycouncil.ca/gmo/html>

Letter to the Editor

Cover bees in motion

With the impending removal of the movement control line in April 2003, the problem of varroa-infected bees drifting off beekeepers' vehicles into non-infected hives was discussed by the Wellington Beekeepers Association last month.

Members are aware how quickly varroa spread through the Waikato once the initial restrictions were removed and several recent outbreaks of varroa south of the line have probably been caused by infected bees being carried over on beekeeping trucks.

To reduce the risk of spreading varroa, we believe all beekeepers should ensure hive loads are adequately covered, preventing bees being blown off or absconding from the hives. This will reduce the spread of varroa into the lower North Island and help keep the South Island varroa-free for a few years longer.

— John Burnet
Secretary
Wellington Beekeepers Association

Buzzing News! Buzzing News!

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Varroa movement control line expands

All parts of New Zealand within the boundaries of local governments Northland, Auckland, Waitako, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Manawatu-Wanganui and Wellington are now controlled to limit the spread of varroa mite, it was announced last month.

Declared under the Biosecurity Act 1993 "Controlled Area and Movement Controls in Respect of Varroa Mite", the new zones came into effect on November 14, reported Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry chief technical officer Derek Belton.

Under the Act, the movement from the Controlled Area of honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) at any stage of their development is now prohibited, except with the permission of an inspector or authorised person appointed under the Biosecurity Act 1993. That prohibition also extends to the "Infected Zone", identified as Motutapu Island, Rangitoto Island, Waiheke Island.

Other things subject to movement control are: Used beehives or any part of a used beehive; unused beehives containing wax foundation; unprocessed beeswax, propolis and pollen or honey not packaged for retail sale; used beekeeping equipment (excluding protective clothing, smokers and hive tools); anything upon or within which the varroa mite is present; vehicles used to visit apiary sites and transport the above items.

Bee Eradication call to expel beetle

Sydney, Australia: Some beekeepers are suggesting that every bee colony in Sydney and its surrounding areas should be eradicated to wipe out the small hive beetle.

The drastic suggestion has been floated in an attempt to save exports. The beetle, from Southern Africa, is threatening a small but growing market for live bees in the northern hemisphere.

The eradication plan could also cover other parts of New South Wales and Queensland, where infected hives were found in late October.

The consultative committee on emergency animal diseases - which will advise the federal and state governments on what action to take - was given the eradication proposal but there was no detail on how it would be carried out. Once it had been, the area would have to be kept free of bees from between three to six months to ensure the beetle was wiped out. The area would then be restocked with bees from beetle-free areas of Australia.

Honey may reduce wound infection

A possible role for honey in the treatment of wounds colonised by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, was shown in research carried out by scientists at partner institutions UWIC (University of Wales Institute, Cardiff), University of Wales College of Medicine (UWCM) in Cardiff and the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Sensitivity to honey of wound infecting bacteria was identified in a report published in the November 2002 issue of *Journal of Applied Microbiology*. Dr Rose Cooper (UWIC), Prof Peter Molan MBE (University of Waikato) and Prof Keith Harding (UWCM) explain: "In laboratory tests, two New Zealand honeys and an artificial honey solution were tested for their ability to inhibit bacteria with the potential to cause wound infections.

"Eighteen strains of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), seven strains of vancomycin-sensitive enterococci (VSE) and 20 strains of vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) were tested.

For all of the strains tested, the lowest inhibitory concentrations of the two natural honeys were at least three times lower than that of the artificial honey, and sometimes 10 times lower. This showed the mode of inhibition was not exclusively due to the osmolarity of the sugars present. Comparison between the ability to inhibit antibiotic sensitive bacteria and antibiotic resistant bacteria showed no significant difference."

The committee estimated the cost would be more than A\$6 million (NZ\$6.6 million) in New South Wales with half paid by governments.

But Sydney University school of biological sciences senior lecturer Ben Oldroyd said eradication was impossible. His research has found there are between 50 and 150 feral bee colonies per square kilometer in the Sydney basin.

"Every feral colony anyone has looked at has been infested," he said. "Eradication is impossible. It's crazy, it can't be done. It's preposterous. If they were serious about eradicating every feral bee in the Sydney basin it would cost tens of millions and I don't think there's a hope in Hades of it working."

The committee failed to come to any conclusion and was due to meet again late last month.

- *Bee Culture Magazine*

MAF updates movement controls round New Zealand



Movement controls

A new Controlled Area Notice came into force on November 14, as advised in last month's issue of this magazine. This imposed additional requirements on beekeepers vehicles travelling to the South Island, and made minor changes to the movement control line in inland Taranaki, the Central Plateau, and East Cape. All North Island beekeepers were mailed a copy of the Controlled Area Notice, and additional copies can be requested from AgriQuality New Zealand on 0800 424 490. The map can also be viewed on the MAF website at: www.maf.govt.nz/varroa <<http://www.maf.govt.nz/varroa>>.

Great Barrier Island

Few beekeepers are aware of how New Zealand's offshore islands fit into varroa movement controls, nor is this a subject to which MAF has devoted much attention. Both Waiheke and Rangitoto Islands in the Hauraki Gulf are included in the Controlled Area Notice which legally defines the Infected Area. Varroa is known to be present on both of these islands.

The only other Hauraki Gulf island with substantial beekeeping activity is Great Barrier Island, which is believed to be varroa-free. Since Great Barrier is not part of the Infected Area, nor part of the South Island, it falls by default into the Buffer Zone category, which also includes the whole of the lower North Island.

When a beekeeper in the lower North Island applied for a permit to move hives to Great Barrier, MAF approved the move subject to suitable conditions to ensure safe transit through the Infected Zone. Beekeepers on Great Barrier were very concerned to learn that a permit had been issued to move hives from the 'mainland', and lobbied MAF during November to change the permitting conditions.

After reviewing the existing permitting conditions, MAF revoked the permit, and has amended the movement permitting conditions to align with those applied to the South Island. This means live bees from any part of the North Island cannot be taken to Great Barrier, and used beekeeping equipment and other risk goods can only be taken there under permit, subject to conditions designed to minimise the risk of varroa spread. Live bees and other risk goods can still be taken to Great Barrier from the South Island, subject to stringent conditions on moving through the North Island.

Long Term varroa management

The beekeeping industry, along with industries reliant on honeybee pollination, is being asked for its views on how varroa should be managed when the existing programme concludes in mid-2003. A discussion document on long-term varroa management will be released around the time that this magazine goes to print. This discussion document has been developed by the Varroa Planning Group, which includes MAF, local government, and a range of industry groups such as the NBA, Federated Farmers and Zespri International.

As outlined in the November issue of this magazine, the document proposes a Pest Management Strategy with the objective of keeping the South Island free from varroa. The principal measures of the strategy would be maintenance of movement controls on risk goods, and surveillance to detect a South Island varroa incursion before a significant spread had occurred.

It is proposed that the strategy could also maintain movement controls in the North Island, should there be any significant regions largely free of varroa at the time the strategy takes effect.

Discussion encouraged

The annual cost of these measures is estimated at around \$700,000. The discussion highlights the issues which must be addressed in considering who should fund the proposed strategy. It is proposed that the costs of the strategy be largely funded by the beekeeping, pastoral, arable and horticultural industries in the South Island.

The discussion document is available on the MAF website (www.maf.govt.nz/varroa <<http://www.maf.govt.nz/varroa>>), or from the address below. The organisations that make up the Varroa Planning Group will also distribute the document to members using their own communication channels. In the case of the NBA, this is likely to involve placing the document on the NBA website (www.nba.org.nz <<http://www.nba.org.nz>>) and distributing copies to branch secretaries.

Following the release of the discussion document, the VPG will conduct public meetings in the South Island and lower North Island, beginning in late January 2003. Meeting dates and locations will be announced as soon as possible. The period for submissions will close on February 28 2003.

MAF recognises this is not an ideal time of year to consult with the beekeeping industry, or other rural stakeholders. Unfortunately, if a strategy is to be put in place by the middle of 2003, this initial round of consultation cannot be delayed.

Copies of the discussion document can be obtained from:

Jeffrey Stewart
MAF Biosecurity
PO Box 2526
Wellington

Ph 04 474 4199
Fax 04 474 4133
jeffery.stewart@maf.govt.nz

Seasons Greetings

MAF would like to extend the compliments of the season to all those in the beekeeping industry it has dealt with over the past year. It has been a challenging year for many beekeepers, especially in varroa-infested areas. We hope that the difficult spring will be followed by good honey flows throughout the country. There are a number of challenges ahead in 2003, and MAF looks forward to continuing a close working relationship with the industry.

NZ Beekeeping Web Page:
www.beekeeping.co.nz
Subscribe to mailing list:
www.beekeeping.co.nz/contacts/nzbkpr.htm
More information:
nickw@beekeeping.co.nz

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

Where to in 2003?

On behalf of the staff at Crown Kerr Printing Ltd, I wish all those involved in the Beekeeping Industry, the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

Thank you to all those advertisers, correspondents, and the executive who have so willingly supported the magazine.

As this issue goes to press we have been advised by the current executive that there will be a magazine distributed in early February 2003, but the future of the publication is obviously in doubt at present. As publishers we are certainly keen to continue to produce the magazine but until the future of the N.B.A. is determined, we can only sit and wait.

Kind regards
Bob Bannister
Managing Director

BRANCH CONTACTS AND MEETINGS

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

AUCKLAND BRANCH
24 Andromeda Crescent, East Tamaki
President: Brian Alexander
Phone/Fax: (09) 420-5028
Secretary: Chas Reade
Mobile: 025 772-502
Fax: (09) 634-4376

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 first Saturday each month, August to May, except January which it is the second Saturday, at 681 Cashmere Road,
Commencing at 1.30pm.
Contact: Linda Gardner
205 Trents Road
RD 6 Christchurch
Ph: (03) 344-1977
Fax: (03) 344-1974
Email: qtc@clear.net.nz

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 Monday 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

NELSON BRANCH
Phone: Michael (03) 528-6010
NELSON BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Contact: Kevin
Phone: (03) 545-0122

OTAGO BRANCH
Peter Sales
Phone: (03) 472-7220
Fax: (03) 472-7221

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
Annette: (07) 366-6111

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