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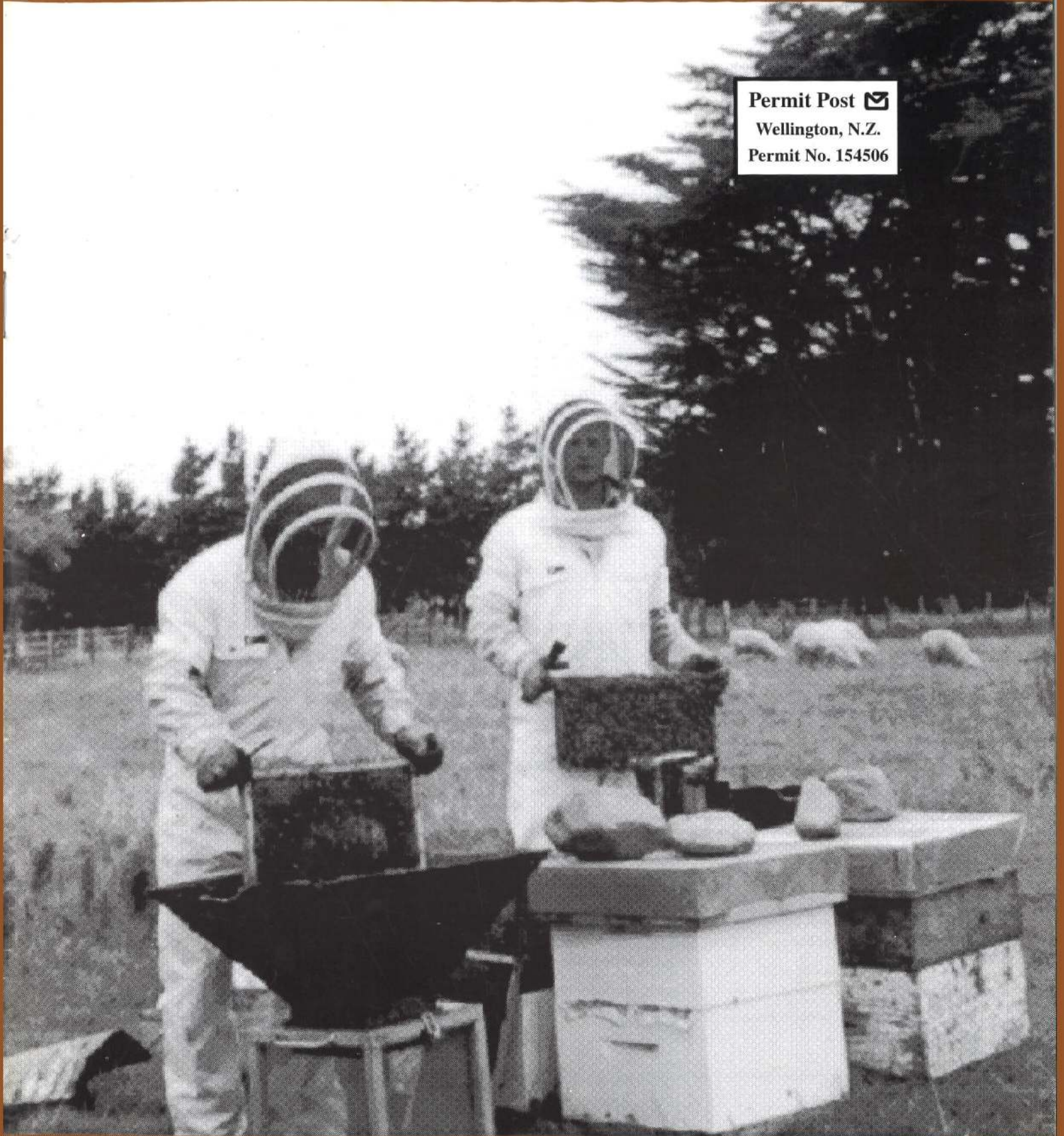


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President's Report

Feedback Wanted

For this month's Journal, I have decided to write an article that I hope will induce a response from those who have joined the National Beekeepers Association.

New Beekeepers - How do we encourage new people into beekeeping?

I have just received the new draft Charter from the Telford Rural Polytechnic. They are asking for comment on this charter and wish to encourage greater industry participation. Given that this Polytechnic is the only one that has an apicultural course that enables students to gain a formal qualification in apiculture, I think that it is time that we actively encourage students to enrol in the courses offered. Certainly, in the areas with Varroa now, beekeepers are facing extreme difficulty in employing any skilled people - they are in most cases not available. Gone are the days where you could get away with employing someone who knew nothing about bees, and train them on the job. If you are unable to identify when your Varroa mite levels are critical - and carry out the testing correctly, then you are destined to lose your production units. To compound this, we have got viruses in our beehives that in the presence of Varroa, will create symptoms that look very similar to American Foulbrood, but are not. An unskilled person has no hope of determining which is AFB, and which is Parasitic Mite Syndrome (PMS). In 2002, the Executive had talked with Judith Brown of AITO, to see if we could assist to get the Telford apicultural course to be a recognised course in their agricultural based units. This has been achieved. I understand that the course will now be changed to allow for more training to be carried out with the sponsored beekeeper, while the theory is done in block courses. This will allow for the course to be more commercially orientated.

Are you a beekeeper who would like to find and sponsor a student through this course?

Are you someone who would be willing to visit schools to encourage students into beekeeping, and tell them of what is available? If you know of anyone who would be willing to do this contact the Executive.

Conference

At the time of writing, we have set up a committee to organise conference. This team is headed by Bob Blair and Philip Cropp from the Executive. Already the opportunities for our Seminar/Workshop programme are looking fantastic. We promise you a great diversity of topics and an opportunity to learn from your attendance this year.

We are looking at expanding the Seminar/Workshops to cover both Tuesday and Wednesday of the week of the 21st-24th July. This means that Conference proper will occupy only one day - that being the Thursday of that week.

How do we deal with remits from Branches?

Given the shortened time that will be available to discuss and debate remits, the Executive needs to get feedback from

members, as to how it proposes to deal with remits that come forward from the branches. Also we would like to have an opportunity to allow for remits to come forward from our workshops/seminars held on the previous days.

This I would feel allows for some more timely debate on current/new issues identified during the early part of conference. How we then allow input from those who do not attend conference will need to be thought through carefully. Maybe, if these related remits are passed by those who have attended conference, they then go back to the branches for discussion, and hopefully ratification from the branches.

Currently, remits from branches have to be in the hands of the Secretary 45 days prior to the Conference - that will be the 9th June 2003. We will probably require branches to have their remit voting meeting prior to the 4th July, so that branches can then forward their votes to the Executive. We would then identify those remits that were unanimously voted for, or unanimously voted against - and put them to the end of the remit paper. Where the voting was split we would ensure that the remit is debated at conference.

In order for this system to work, those who put up remits to conference, will need to word their remit carefully, and provide greater detail in the notes that accompany the remit.

There are several identifiable areas that would need to be covered:

Why have you put up this remit - what are your reasons - the rationale behind the remit?

Who would you like to see carry out what you have asked in the remit, and what actually needs to be done?

Who will fund the required work? Given that we are now a voluntary organisation with limited funds.

An opportunity to sound off and vent feelings may well be valuable but we need to focus our efforts, keep members positive and involved, while making the best use of our limited time together.

A possible workshop at conference

During our executive meeting, we have had discussions on what topics we could have seminars and workshops on. We have recently been dealing with the American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy and given that one of the areas that the Management Agency should be undertaking is education of beekeepers, we are wondering if there would be sufficient interest in running a disease recognition course during conference. This could be of value to new commercial beekeepers, hobbyists, or as a refresher course for experienced beekeepers. If you are interested in this being done, please contact the Executive.

Cover Photo:

Two Kintail beekeepers shaking the bees for export.

Generic Research vs Commercial Research

I am finding reluctance on the part of beekeepers to send in samples of honey for our research because they see that it is being done for the benefit of a company (Bee & Herbal) and not for the industry as a whole. I need to clarify the situation as there are obviously misconceptions, and these are causing impediment to research which I see as being of much benefit to all producers and marketers of honey in New Zealand.

As well as research funded by the Honey Industry Trust and grants from the Lotteries Commission (no longer available for science research) and AGMARDT, the Honey Research Unit has carried out research that has involved partnership with individual companies. This more "private" research is something universities are encouraged into by the government policy of providing funding mainly for research which has a contribution from companies or an identified end-user. But it is the university's usual practice that results from such research are published. (There are instances where completely private research is carried out as a service by the university, but this is charged for at commercial rates, and I personally will not do this sort of research anyway.) In return for their investment in this research the companies may be allowed a period of embargo of the results of usually one year to allow patents to be filed. etc., before the findings are published.

There have been two instances in the past where I have been involved in such research: the project with the Tatura Dairy Company on the combination of honey with lactoperoxidase as a food preservative, and the project with Bee & Herbal Ltd. to develop antibacterial confectionery from honey. Otherwise there is just the present project where Bee & Herbal Ltd. are providing half of the funding of a PhD scholarship under the government's Enterprise Scholarship scheme for Jon Stephens' study into why only some manuka honey is active. (Government funding requiring a 50% contribution from a company was the only source of funding that could be obtained to allow this project to be undertaken.)

As a separate issue, I have provided advice and help (for no payment) to many companies (in fact, any that have asked) to get honey products on the world market. But I have always made clear that I will not give any endorsement to any individual company or brand, and any company implying for marketing advantage that I have any special association with them has done so against my wishes. (My credibility as a scientist depends on my not being seen to have any commercial interests.) I need to clarify that the relationship that Bee & Herbal Ltd. has with the University of Waikato is a commercial relationship with the commercialisation arm of the university stemming from the university's licensing of its patent for a gelled honey wound dressing. (The university as my employer owns this patent and makes its own decisions on commercialisation.) I have in the past helped Bee & Herbal Ltd. with the development of products, as I have helped many other companies, but other than being the supervisor of the PhD student they are currently partly funding I am no longer involved with the company in any way.

Any samples of honey provided by beekeepers in the past or present, other than those manuka honey samples sought specifically for Jon Stephens' PhD project, have been used only for generic research which has been done for the public

good and the findings of which have been made freely and promptly available to anyone. The samples of honey currently being sought are for a survey of antioxidant activity being carried out for the NBA using joint funding from the government and that obtained by the NBA from the Honey Industry Trust. (The NBA has requested a delay in publishing the results from this survey to allow orderly marketing.)

The samples of manuka honey obtained for Jon Stephens' project have been obtained under a confidentiality agreement which does not allow the site of production to be revealed by Jon to anyone. The conclusions from the study (i.e. whether the variation in activity has an environmental or genetic cause, and how this can be manipulated to optimise production of active honey) will be published no later than a year after the completion of the PhD study.

With the cessation two years ago of funding of the Honey Research Unit by the NBA, and the lack of opportunities to obtain research funding that does not involve commercial sources, it is inevitable that for research on honey to continue there will in the future be various companies involved to some extent. And for research on honey to continue there will always be the need for assistance from beekeepers providing samples of honey. This leaves me with the responsibility of ensuring that advantage is not taken of the good will of helpful individuals. Having very strong feelings about companies which have done this to me, I can assure beekeepers that I would not myself allow it to be done to them.

Peter Molan

Dr. P.C. Molan

*Professor of Biological Sciences Director,
Honey Research Unit, University of Waikato*

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PROFILE – Roger Bray

My first taste of beekeeping was as a toddler when I picked a bee from the entrance of one of my Dad's beehives and ate it - I cannot remember the flavour of the bee nor the flavour of the bluebag my Mum liberally placed in and around my mouth, as a cure for the sting My Dad was not much of a beekeeper (hobby only) but I do remember the performance involved in robbing some honey from hives for household use.

The year I left primary school my Dad decided that I needed some responsibility in life and I was given the 3 hives. He also arranged a school holiday job with Bray & Cessett Ltd. Leeston. For the next 5 years, while at secondary school, I used to phone the late Jasper Bray (no relation) whenever holidays came around for a job - to earn money and to learn the craft. If they had no work they referred me to other beekeepers who needed a helping hand.

I am indebted to Jasper Bray and Arthur Goesett and the many beekeepers, including overseas work experience in California and Canada, who took the trouble to encourage a young whippersnapper into the beekeeping ranks with sound advice and guidance in responsible beekeeping.

Since 1965, when I inherited my hives, I have witnessed many changes in the beekeeping industry From the days of the Honey Marketing Authority and a 'voluntary' NBA. through a 'compulsory' NBA and back again, the beekeeping industry/group has had one organisation as a representative of all beekeepers. It is a concern of mine that this Industry is too small to sustain two organisations especially when they both have common interests and goals. Hopefully down the track there will evolve a way for both organisations to unite for the collective good of beekeeping.

At present my wife Linda and I operate approximately 750 hives in the Ashburton area (we say approximately because we have never put them all in one paddock to count them). We are 'self contained' beekeepers and do our own queen raising, hive manufacture etc. We produce mainly bulk honey with a small amount of cut-comb and pollination. Last season we considered becoming an incorporated society (because of our nonprofit status) but at this stage we are looking at beekeeping in a positive light because of a better crop and prices which are more in keeping with giving us a fair return on our investment, risk, and input of labour and expenses.

Both Linda and I are concerned about maintaining our environment (we are not tree huggers) and we are unfortunately in an area which is becoming more bee unfriendly each year with changes away from a pastoral farming situation The lack of pollen and the decrease of bee tucker are problems of an intensive agricultural area, together with the increasing use of insecticides and the ride-on mower (to keep roadside clover from flowering) all adding to the peril of the bees.

Internationally the NZ beekeeping industry is held in very high esteem because of our ability as beekeepers and also the statutory controls on our industry. As beekeepers, I believe we have a responsibility to maintain these controls (e.g PMS) for the future well-being of our industry and to participants To maintain the controls requires a commitment by the beekeepers to support the organisation which has the interest of beekeepers at heart.

National Beekeeper Inc Project Expanding Options For New Zealand Beekeepers

The overall goal of the project is for beekeepers to strengthen their businesses by improving their business skills and if appropriate develop an expanded range of income streams so that they can survive and prosper into the future. Healthy businesses will be able to offer better employment opportunities and continue to provide the pollination services that underpin the New Zealand agricultural economy.

Beekeeping Business Skills Workshop

The aim of this workshop is for beekeepers to understand and to have adopted competent business skills that enhance the quality of their business management and the quality of their decision making. This will enable them to identify, develop and implement appropriate responses to significant issues and opportunities.

Eric Livingstone - NZIM Business Consultant, will lead this exciting new one day training opportunity. Content will include Business and Strategic Planning, Financial Analysis, Project Management, Staff Employment and Motivation.

Please contact your branch for dates and time, or alternatively Polly Foster on 03 374 8530, or Jon Manhire 03 365 6806

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Profile – Jane Lorimer

I have been involved in the beekeeping Industry since 1985. Prior to that I had worked at Ruakura Research Station as a technician. While there, I worked for the Animal management group and had several different areas of research involvement. I initially worked with the sheep and goat unit on breeding programmes, production and growth stimulants. I also spent time learning Semen processing for Artificial Insemination work. While there, I also spent some time with the possum unit where they were trying to work out how to get the possum to breed more frequently to enable breeders to supply markets for the then lucrative possum fur trade – especially with some of the less common fur colours.

Prior to that, I had spent three years at the University of Waikato gaining my BSc degree in Biology and Earth Science. It was while I was at University undertaking a Physiology paper, that I became interested in bees. During one of the lectures, the lecturer was telling us about the compound eye, and how insects that have this compound eye can 'see colours'. Then later, I met this beekeeper Tony, who dared me to look into a nucleus colony – my fascination with bees began. The only misgiving is that I entered beekeeping as a commercial beekeeper, never having the time to just sit and observe the bees at work, as a hobbyist does.

The first job Tony gave me to do (while I still worked part time at Ruakura), was to raise queen cells. He gave me instructions as to what to do, and basically left me to it. After several days of frustration, I finally learnt the technique to transfer young larvae to the queen cell cups. That spring, I managed to raise 1000 queen cells. I now have the knowledge to undertake all facets of beekeeping, other than the rendering of old combs – and that is one job I never want to learn!!

Since my beekeeping involvement, I have served time on the Marketing committee, and I am still interested in getting

further generic research carried out on all bee products, so that more companies can become involved in niche marketing, and have a wider range of products that can be marketed in this category.



I look forward to the challenge of leading the industry into the future in a voluntary regime. The Association needs to concentrate on ensuring promotion that will help the whole industry, with emphasis on the producer beekeeper.

What will happen with future Varroa control concerns me very greatly. I think that Government should still be contributing a portion of funding towards Varroa control, primarily because the success or failure of our industry will have far greater affect on the other agricultural and horticultural based industries – particularly in the long term.

Ensuring funding for research is another must – not only on Varroa, but on product development as well.

What we (the members of the NBA) will be able to undertake in the future is largely dependent on not only the number of members who join the Association, but also on those members commitment to the organisation. I thank those who have already shown support for the Voluntary organisation by offering to undertake some role or specific job, and I would encourage those who have not yet joined us, to do so and offer your services. As in the old saying – many hands make light work. I believe that in sharing responsibility, this will strengthen the organisation by having many different skillsets available to call on in times of need. Together we can build a strong and vibrant organisation.

Letters to The Editor



Dear Beekeepers

Recently I have become a convert to the cause of beekeeping here in Suffolk, England. I maintain a hive at the top end of my back garden in the middle of the town of Beccles. I obtained and started this colony only last September, so at the moment things are very much in their early stages.

I am very interested in finding out about the exploits and experiences of beekeepers in other parts of the world and I am wondering if you, or any of your members, would be willing to write and tell me something about life as a beekeeper in New Zealand.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Peter Haward
Henstead, London Road
Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9TZ
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Sir

A few years ago I was working in an Apiary with a six foot bank beside it. As I moved about I could see the four legs of a sheep waving in the air. It was obvious to me that a sheep was cast on its back. When I had finished work on the hives, I thought I would be a good samaritan and stand the sheep up and save it from dying a miserable death. I took my veil off and climbed up the bank to do my good deed for the day. The sheep was jammed against a rock and had no chance of standing up without help. I lifted the sheep onto its feet several times until it could stand unaided. With my fingers still in her wool she chose to jump down the bank taking me with her. We rolled down the bank together and landed heavily with the sheep on top of me. The sheep got up first and wandered off and started eating grass. I was much slower getting up. I had no broken bones but had painful ribs for several days after. I have heard that sheep are very stupid animals, but you can also get some very stupid beekeepers.

- Ron Mossop

Beeswax Bolus

The Bioengineering group at HortResearch in collaboration with AgResearch use beeswax in combination with other materials to coat our "bolus" (so named because the shape resembles a bullet) to facilitate controlled release delivery of animal remedies. The animal remedies that can be delivered using our bolus include medicines to treat/prevent diseases or control animal parasites, nutritional compounds to promote animals' health/growth or to reduce green-house-gas production, or even biological agents for the same purposes. The TimeCapsule is an example of a bolus product we developed to deliver zinc oxide to farm animals to prevent facial eczema in NZ.

Dr. Danyang Ying
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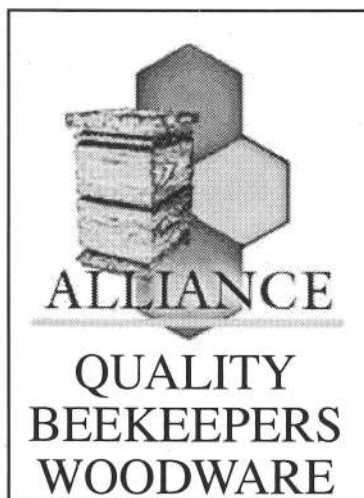
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From the colonies



Canterbury

The drought in Canterbury ended with a welcome rainfall (80-150mm), a dusting of snow on them tar hills and cooler temperatures have signalled the start to wintering with syrup without the fear of stimulating the bees.

The trial for poisoning of bees (ferals) assisted by Canterbury Branch in association with MAF and Hort Research has met with some success - a brief outline was given by Ross McCusker at our last meeting and at this stage the trial appears to be more successful than the spring trial when the weather was a lot cooler.

Honey is selling well with good prices for bulk honey and a firm market.

A further seminar on the Expanding Options for NZ Beekeepers is about to commence. This is a programme set up to assist beekeepers to cope with varroa, funded in part by MAF Sustainable Farming Fund and the Honey Industry Trust. The Canterbury area seminar is to be held at The NZIM Building, 367 Madras Street, Christchurch on Tuesday 6th May, 2003 from 9am to 5pm. The seminar is open and available to **ALL** Beekeepers.

As we now have a voluntary membership the future direction of the Canterbury branch and indeed the NBA is in the hands of its members. Any views are welcome to be expressed at our Annual General Meeting.

The branch Annual General Meeting is to be held at the Hornby Workingmens Club at 7pm on Tuesday 29th April 2003. You are welcome to have an informal meal in the Restaurant from 6pm.

- Roger Bray

Hawkes Bay

Would you believe that as late as 20 March in the coastal urban areas swarms were still being reported? These were not feral nests but genuine swarms. The bees must know something to be joining spring flowers at this time of year.

In these places continuing warm weather has seen a steady flow of nectar and pollen unlike the higher country, where feeding has been necessary in some apiaries.

The big local question concerns the future of the „line%. We are keen to see the present position retained with an East/West line as an alternative, realising that „user pays% is likely to be thrust upon us. At the Havelock North meeting convened to discuss submissions it was encouraging to have the backing of the fruit growers who are prepared to assist financially should this be found to be necessary.

We find it alarming that new pests are being discovered on quite a regular basis and that a government minister is relaxed enough to say on TV that we must expect this with the speed and volume of arrival of people and goods.

- Ron Morison

Bay of Plenty

It was a very busy season for most. Kiwifruit pollinations was a week to ten days late, followed by a rapid succession of flowering causing beekeepers to go into top gear during this time.

Some spray damage was noticed this year. With increase in orchards this may be a good time for the Kiwifruit industry and beekeepers to get together and talk about getting some awareness programmes in place. In another instance, and as a consequence of an orchard worker being stung, a large packhouse made a formal complaint to a contracted beekeepers about the need to advise the company of when beehives are being fed (interesting).

As expected, the El Nino weather pattern brought with it a hot dry summer resulting in good honey crops for most. After such a low last year, this season will be a relief for those struggling with varroa costs.

A.F.B. checks and varroa checks and treatments are under way. It appears that many beehives will have better stores going into Autumn this year, which should make sugar bills lighter.

- Jason Stanley

Far North

A good Northland Summer, attracting more rain than many other parts of New Zealand, some beekeepers even rethinking the option of 4 fwd capabilities. Some minor losses of hives due to flooding.

Honey has seen a better than average crop, with Manuka, and other late bush flows. Prices are still strong, and the ever circulating question as to whether to place hives on Manuka or Hayward Pollination is always on beekeeping minds. Avocado and Kiwifruit Pollination was later and longer.

There is a shortage of skilled beekeepers, and with the combination of Varroa on the increase, treatments going in late, there is the possibility that Varroa will catch beekeepers out.

Thanks to Bruce Stevenson and Malcolm Haines for their combined contribution for this report.

Auckland

With a higher overseas demand for Package bees from New Zealand more beekeepers are starting to drive the highways south with excess bees. Better prices have also been a good incentive.

Honey is still being extracted, although most beekeepers are over the biggest hurdle. Big demand from Australia, which has helped to keep the prices firm, From \$4 to \$5 depending on the crop, blend, or speciality.

Varroa levels seem to be on the lower side, however this does not allow for complacency, as previous years remind us.

The last month has seen a lot of rain, with good grass growth for the farmers. Happy but tired beekeepers. looking forward to a winter holiday. 23rd of April is our Branch meeting, and we are looking forward to good attendance.

Thanks to Brian Alexander and Graham Cammell for their combined contribution for this report.

Waikato

Tired/Exhausted beekeepers are looking forward to the close of the season. For Beekeepers there seems to have been no breaks from the late kiwifruit season, to the speed at which the honey flow turned on, turning and extracting and lastly the opportunity to earn extra income from hives still strong with bees, with packages for overseas markets.

Honey is still being extracted, Honey houses are yet to think about winding down, as every effort is put into removal and extraction to allow for the Varroa treatments to begin. In some areas Varroa Mite numbers are climbing, and treatments are a must to ensure dying hives don't catch you out.

The grass is long, and lush in the North Waikato, short and green in most other places, with some hills very brown. Lake Taupo is very low with water. Plenty of good winter stores on hives, plenty of bees and good pollen reserves. An all round end to a good season.

Thanks to Lewis Olsen, Moira Haddrell, and Dave West for their combined contribution for this report.

Southern North Island

Branch activities have been at a standstill while beekeepers bring in honey and winter down hives. Our AGM will be held on the 28th April in the Wanganui Croquet Rooms. All beekeepers are welcome. We now have to plan field days and other educational activities for the forth-coming year.

Taranaki Hobby group are going through a management change as long term committee retire to give new blood a go.

Wanganui beekeepers hosted the Palmerston North and Raetihi beekeepers to their honey competition evening on the 9th April.

The Palmerston North Hobby Club assisted by a few commercial beekeepers have just completed a Diseaseathon in the Bunnythorpe area. The main cause of the AFB outbreak was identified last year and now a mopping up operation is in process to clean up this area. AFB was found in two apiaries and another two were considered neglected. Information has been passed on to AgriQuality for their action. Well done.

Beekeepers are looking forward to the distribution of surveillance material to establish just how far Varroa has spread into the Wanganui/ Marton district and the rest of the Southern North Island.

All hives within 5 km of the "Mill" in the Paramata / Judgeford (Wellington) area now have mites and are being treated. Numbers vary from approx 800 to 5000 per hive.

- Frank Lindsay.

Southland Branch Report

Southland beekeepers are determined to maintain a local forum for discussion and collaboration. NBA membership is down but so are beekeeper numbers with retirements and retrenchments. Hive numbers remain static and the variable season we've had doesn't encourage much expansion. While a fair portion is yet to be harvested, overall crops are averaging 30 - 35 kg/hive but there has been a lot of variation within the region. Kamahi and clover flows overlapped and when summer eventually arrived only thistles and catsear were prolific. Some beekeepers are working hives intensively to maximise revenue by producing kamahi, white clover comb and extracted honey, extra queens and bees for sale to the North Island. Others are finding better income opportunities

outside the industry. Virtually no paid pollination was available in Southland this year. The vision we had of hundreds of hectares of meadowfoam needing thousands of pollination hives looks to be turning into a mirage. Next Southland NBA Branch meeting is on May 16, 4pm at Gore RSA.

- Don Stedman

North Otago.

Branch activities are quiet at the moment while beekeepers concentrate on their bee hives. Members are waiting to see what happens between the two factions but tend to be siding with Fed Farmers. They are interested in finding out what is going to happen to the Movement Control Line and are looking at inexpensive ways of treating mites as the environment didn't allow for the funding of strips.

President Graeme McCallum

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From reports I am receiving from owners of machines around the country, production has generally been good this past season. Prices have hit all time highs. May I suggest that this should be the year to upgrade your old Penrose Uncapper to a virtual new one by having it overhauled and brought up to 2003 specifications. The cost of a new machine (if we were still making them!) would be around 3 tonne of honey (15% less than it was in 1970) but to have a complete upgrade would be around half that. All costs totally deductible under your R and M programme. Following this upgrade you would be able to add one of our 'Top Stop' deboxers, and maybe a "super" lifter and really set yourself up for the next 25 years! Also spares for all of our products are always available.

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Library News

Rosemary Webby has donated two copies of her Research Report (No. 1122) to the library.

The report is entitled: "The identification from flavonoid profiles, of floral pollens collected by the honeybee (*apis mellifera* L.) from hives sited throughout New Zealand"

These will not be a loan fee for borrowing these; only the postage to reimburse.

In response to requests for material to support talks being given to school classes, a number of posters have been purchased for the library. There will be a loan fee of fifty cents per poster, plus reimbursement of postage. If you wish to borrow any, please indicate the focus of the talk, and the age level of the class/es.

In July, 2001 the library was given a large number of blue plastic folders by the Otago conference committee and these have been very useful for sending out the postings of magazines. However, not many are left so if you have any at your place please send them back. The library has a small operating grant but it will not go far if a lot more posting packets have to be purchased.

Thanks are extended to Rosemary Webby, and to Dr. Peter Molan for the papers and reports donated to the library. Peter Molan has made many of his papers available to the library and they have been listed either directly in the catalogue or in the magazine for members information.

Access and usage of the library is currently under review.

- Chris Tairoa, Honorary Librarian

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Magazines recently received by the library

Northern hemisphere magazines take a month or two to get here but the information in them is timely as articles allow us to plan ahead.

The February American Bee Journal had a letter from Erik Osterland of Sweden telling of high colony losses in Germany during the 2002 autumn.

I had an email from a German Beekeeper late last year telling me about this but hadn't seen or heard anything since. The German beekeepers have had years of successfully dealing with varroa and were at a loss to understand why so many hives were dying. It now appears that a wet summer and autumn put the hives under stress and this on top of mites caused losses of up to 50% by the following spring.

Just shows how important bee nutrition is and having young healthy bees in the hives going into winter. Short Spring Management by Roy Hendrickson was interesting especially his method of banking queens when they arrive. He doesn't requeen strong colonies in the spring anymore but uses excess bees to equalize colonies and make up splits. His opinion is that the greatest asset of a strong overwintered colony is its adult population.

Other articles include: The extraordinary honey bee mating strategy and a simple field dissection of the Spermatheca by Susan Cobey (a three part series), Comb Management by Carl Wenning, Honey production advice by Steve Taber, Wintering losses by Dewey M Caron and Josh Humber plus features on beekeepers and their businesses.

December and Februarys Bee Culture arrived together. There's a lot in these magazines - all good stuff: "New In 03" a stainless steel capping scratcher, cheaper refractometer, Api Life Var mite control (thymol, menthol, camphor and eucalyptol in a base of vermiculite), improved floor boards etc. Research, Science and Political Comment, and lots of how to articles - moving hives, making supers, requeening hives, observation hive set up. "Ah, Pollen" by Lloyd Spear and "Frame Management" and "Banking Queens" by James Tew are articles I latched on to. Tom Sanford's articles on "Beekeeping In The Digital Age" have provided great reference material. Learning just what's out there and how to get there has been most valuable. If you think you know something on bees and beekeeping, bring yourself down to earth by trying to answer Clarence Collison's "Do You Know" questions. Something for every beekeeper in an easy to read format.

The March Irish Beekeeper caters to the smaller beekeeper with timely tips and features. This month features an article by Michael Mac Giolla Coda on the "Galtee Bee Breeding Group". I spent two mornings with Michael when we visited Ireland a few years back and was most impressed with the dark European Bee. Very gently, productive and long lived. Some queens were 5 years old and were still very productive. We were working hives and checking nucs in "Soft Rain"

(Ireland's usual climate). The group is now 11 years old and consists of 40 beekeepers. They are selecting for disease resistance and using DNA and morphometric measurements to determine purity. They also spend a lot of time holding training session for beekeepers.

The Australasian Beekeeper Feb 03 lets us know what's happening across the ditch. Editor's notes give a good coverage of snippets. Features on the Small Hive Beetle and Heat Stress and Overheated Brood indicate the main problems beekeepers are facing. The drought has been hard on all farming pursuits. With drought come forest fires. NSW has really been hit hard during the last couple of years. Hives are often lost due to fires and then for the local beekeepers, there's a 13-year gap before the burnt area becomes productive again. It's hard beekeeping over there but when you get it right, you get an awful lot of honey.

An interesting adjunct to the drought. The AHBIC relies on a "production levy" for it's funding. They are showing a \$37,785 loss for the eight-month period up to 31 December 2002. Honey prices have increased because of the shortage. A change from the "take it or leave it" scenario. It also reminded beekeepers not to undersell their product to clear it. Dropping prices bring down the price of everyone's honey.

Most large beekeepers already subscribe to these magazines. For those who don't, they are available from the NBA library on a circulation list. Mary-Ann now hides the mail from me until the day's work is done otherwise all work stops for a couple of days.

- Frank Lindsay

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Refocussing the NBA

As a voluntary organization with about two hundred members at the time of writing there are some new realities we have to come to grips with. We have a limited budget and need to focus our effort and activities to achieve worthwhile results.

It is a long time since MAF Apiary Advisory officers, who did such sterling education and coordination work for beekeepers around the country, were disestablished. Nowadays anything for beekeepers has to be done, or at least paid for, by them.

I see the following as genuine and important areas of involvement for the NBA - AFB (& Varroa) PMS Management Agency. A two edged sword, maybe we should appoint and keep at arms length. - Interaction with Government and its agencies - MAF, OSH, etc. We need to be both reactive and proactive. - Representing beekeepers to the wider community. Reacting to issues promptly, appropriately and with authority. Initiating publicity or campaigns. - Promoting the Public Good aspect of bees and beekeeping. - Education both within and beyond the membership. Stewardship of our valuable library resource is most important. - Sharing information between members and providing them with a forum for discussion and debate. The NZ BeeKeeper, NBA website and Annual Conference have complementary roles. - Encouraging and sponsoring relevant research. - Facilitating camaraderie and social interaction between beekeepers

Our members are all voluntary so presumably see a personal or business advantage from their membership. We can still expect a variety of activity levels. Time, energy, skills and commitment will vary. Previously we had a few unwilling and resentful compulsory members, some of whom went to a lot of trouble to avoid their obligations and consequently caused a lot of strife. That can no longer be the case.

Our branch structure will remain the core of the NBA. Where beekeepers meet to share experiences in a supportive environment the branch will flourish. A lot of knowledge is held at a local level, more will be made available through our new website which I see acting as a portal with links to specific information that may be of relevance to beekeepers.

We can't expect to have full time professional administrative support on tap, our membership base simply isn't big enough. But even when we were contracting our administration out to a much larger organisation some things were not done, or were not done well, because the resources simply weren't available.

Running a national organisation costs money - lots! Even utilising computers, the internet, emails, teleconferencing (now via 3-way calling) there are times when people have to be flown around the country for face to face meetings with officials or toll calls have to be made at peak hours. Professional opinion or assistance is needed at times and it doesn't come cheaply. At least through our organisation we're paying collectively and effectively sharing the cost.

Beekeepers are a small widely spread often individualistic group. I'm sure I'm not the only one who always has to make a toll call to talk to another beekeeper. While we may be competitors in some aspects of our business we have many interests in common and need to cooperate. The National Beekeepers Association provides the best forum for this cooperation to occur.

There is only one group that represents only the beekeepers of New Zealand.

A too common question: "What will the NBA do for me?"
My response:

1. Inform you of matters that might affect your business or hobby.
2. Provide you with an opportunity to share ideas with other beekeepers.
3. Represent the consensus of your views forcefully and appropriately.
4. Whatever else the members collectively ask and resource it to do.

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About The Apiary

I had a letter from Will Goldsmith of Tauranga about his method of requeening. He takes nucs from the colonies to be requeened home and pops the queen in after 24 hours making sure its queenless first. The bees when queenless will usually roar when opened or a little smoke is wafted over the frames. He also provides the nuc with an empty frame close to the brood so the new queen has somewhere to lay.

He added that Doug Briscoe (his apiary inspector at that time) offered him advice on finding those dark runners. Use very little smoke, only enough to control the bees and if she is not found on the first look through the frames, place an additional floor on the ground, then an empty super covered by a queen excluder and then the hive's supers on top. Look carefully at the top of the original floor then underneath. He found quite a few under the floorboard. Thanks for your letter Will.

By now most hobbyist will have completed everything, and wintered down their hives. For some of us the work continues. However we all must protect our most valuable resource. The honey supers and frames. Our enemy here is the wax moth. It only takes a few months and all the dark frames turn into silk. This was demonstrated to me last year when I left the hot room full of supers and went away on holiday. When I checked it two months later it was full of wax moth cocoons. It took two days to clean down the frames and scrub out the hot room.

Most beekeepers stack their honey supers away immediately after extraction, treat with PDB and then forget about them.

I prefer to leave the supers on the hives until autumn, as the bees are far better at keeping wax moth under control. Once the colder weather arrives, supers are collected off the hives and placed in covered storage. The windier and colder the situation the better. Leaving supers in an enclosed space will only encourage wax moth development. If you have this situation then you will need to place about a tablespoon of PDB crystals on a piece of paper on top of five supers and cover. Plug cracks or holes with foam plastic so that the gas can't escape before doing its job. PDB does not kill wax moth eggs so about a month later repeat the PDB treatment. An alternative for those with only a few supers is to put them in plastic bags and treat.

I prefer to stack my supers on pallets with a queen excluder underneath to prevent mice damage. This allows air to circulate through the stacks inhibiting the development of moth eggs and lava.

When you winter down your hives it's important to check each hive. Cut the grass around the hive and make sure it's off the ground so there is a good airflow underneath it. Make sure that the landing board has a slight slope so that the rain runs out of the hive. Make sure the entrance is closed down



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to prevent mice getting in. Under the roof make sure there is a little top ventilation. The equivalent of a 25 mm entrance. This can either be cut into the crown board or the board can be lifted slightly by putting a twig under to one end. Heft the hive to check its weight. It should be difficult to lift off the stand using the top super's finger grip.

Lightweight hives should be fed sugar syrup. Weak hives (those with an old queen should be united with another small hive. Dispatch one of the queens and put the hives with the best queen on top the two sheets of newsprint between so there is a slow uniting. If you can't find the old queen, put the best one on top as before but there is a chance that both queens could be killed so you will need to check a month later. A puff of smoke over the bees will tell you if they are queenless or not.

One strong hive with plenty of young bees will winter better than two small hives. If you can, carry a few nucs through the winter to make up for any winter losses. These need little care but after June as brood production starts replace the outside frames with fully capped honey frames. Being a smaller unit they could require at least four honey frames to bring them through to October.

It's never too late to requeen a hive. Remember that queens are generally produced and accepted when there is a honey flow on. You can simulate this by feeding the hive with sugar syrup when the queen cage is put in the hive and for a few days after. Don't spill any syrup as this could cause robbing. If you do get robbing in your garden, cover the hive entrance

with grass and turn on the sprinkler for half an hour. This should settle down the bees.

Things to do this month: Winter down your hives - check food, check for BL. (This is most important, as hives could have picked this up by robbing weaker hives). Check hives for drainage and mouse guards, replace any rotten woodware. Worked old frames and broken frame to the outside of the super so they can be replaced in the spring. Check for mites. Strips are best but a sugar shake is quick and gives reasonable results. If in doubt about mite numbers, treat. Attend to long grass, mend fences around apiaries and keep an eye on stored honey supers.

I have about 100 hives in the restricted area north of Wellington. To take the honey out of these apiaries I have to either leave the honey stored for 30 days in a bee proof environment or gas the supers using methyl bromide. I cover the honey supers in plastic, weight down the edges and gas using scales to measure the correct quantity before coming home. The load is left overnight for the gas to do its thing. This is a lot of work, takes extra time plus can be dangerous. Before I leave the restricted area, the Ute gets the once over for hitchhiker bees.

Is it worth all this extra work? I checked a drip tray yesterday after removing about 40 dead bees and found a dead Varroa mite. It doesn't take much to spread Varroa. Just one passenger bee!

Frank Lindsay

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Submission on discussion Document: Pest Management Strategy for Varroa Bee Mite (Varroa Destructor)

This document represents the expressed views of a selection of Southland beekeepers, both commercial and hobbyist who have attended the Gore workshop, participated in discussion at the Otago / Southland Field day 2003 and have communicated with the writer, Don Stedman.

We agree that the impact, in Southland, of the arrival of varroa will be severe and in some cases devastating. This is because:

- a) very little paid pollination work is available in Southland
- b) long term average honey crops in this area are only around 30 kg/hive.
- c) late honey flows coupled with early autumn/cessation of brood rearing will make it very difficult to treat hives early enough to have overwintering bees raised in a near varroa free state.

We support keeping the South Island free of varroa for as long as possible, and agree that the proposed VPMS appears to offer the best chance of doing this.

While mindful of the imposition on the activities of our North Island colleagues we believe that slowing the spread of varroa in the North Island is desirable and both maintenance of a line / movement restrictions, and education are necessary. We have received communications from beekeepers in the Southern North Island supporting this view.

Ongoing education of transport firms and their drivers directly is seen as essential if the inadvertent delivery of a feral hive or swarm to the South Island is to be prevented.

In addition to the outlined surveillance programme proposed we would suggest that methods of testing bees in contract extracting facilities be developed and suitable kits circulated. The largest extracting facility in Southland contains many bees at this time of year but the beekeeper does not keep any hives in the vicinity. We realise that as the recruitment of bees to the shed is from a wide area, which can only be identified in general terms, this would be of little use in identifying the source of a infestation but as an early warning it could be invaluable, particularly if testing was carried out weekly in the extraction season. We would also suggest that beekeeper input be solicited for targeted test sites. (I have an apiary 200m from a large transport yard where trucks regularly return from the North Island.)

Eradication of feral hives is essential if an incursion is to be dealt with. We understand that an experiment in Canterbury had some success, however funds need to be set aside for ongoing development - re South Island conditions.

Ten years is an appropriate duration for the strategy, with luck it will need to be extended for another ten years.

We agree with the concept of a specially constituted management agency as proposed. It must have beekeeper members representing the NBA.

We agree that compensation should not form part of the strategy noting that compensation would be payable in the response to a South Island incursion.

The costs of the strategy should be met by Government as

a public good. Whether or not budget decisions consciously took risk into account, the historic underfunding of our nation's biosecurity services implicitly binds the Government to pay for necessary reactions. If the fence is not at the top of the cliff then the ambulance must be at the bottom. We strongly believe that the biosecurity of New Zealand is one of our most precious assets.

Other funding proposals will involve setting up a new bureaucracy with their consequent administration costs which are inefficient and unnecessary. Collecting small sums is uneconomic so either an umbrella group with funds will have to be persuaded to come on board or realistic thresholds set. While Southland beekeepers are realistic and are not opposed to making a contribution there is concern about an additional overhead while our income is limited. We would of course have to contribute as taxpayers or through our regional council rates should those options be chosen.

Beekeepers locally feel that our share at \$2/hive is expensive if there is no guarantee of eradication of the first incursions. Effectively we are only purchasing a surveillance system and there is strong feeling that we might be better putting that money into a pot to prepare for the arrival of varroa unless the Government is prepared to guarantee an eradication attempt.

We would hope that efficiencies and cost saving might be obtained by co-operation with the operations and administration of the AFB PMS. We have serious concerns about the accuracy of the AgriQual administered Apiary Register and while some beekeepers choose to avoid their responsibilities by the under declaring of hives/apiaries much unproductive effort is expended chasing up incorrect listings.

The mechanism of any charge to beekeepers must parallel that of the AFB PMS, i.e. be on the same basis.

We see the maintenance of varroa free islands as an asset to the whole of New Zealand. Should restocking be necessary a reservoir of pest free bees - and ideally disease free bees - would be essential. Consideration should be given to the recognition and maintenance of such an "Ark". (South Island, Stewart Island, Chatham Islands, Great Barrier...)

Don Stedman for Southland NBA.

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All articles/letters to be with the Secretary Publications Committee via fax, email or post:

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The Publications Committee invite your comment

There has recently been a discussion on the beekeepers Internet list with regard to Swollen fingers/Infected Knuckles

We believe strongly that this should be widely distributed to all beekeepers. Below is a summary of this discussion.

Background.

It has become apparent that Nationwide at some time or other beekeepers have suffered with swollen fingers and or Infected Knuckles. Some beekeepers find that the swelling goes down in a couple of days, or with antibiotics, and some have even had to have surgery to clear the infections. The name of the infection is Pseudomonis. There is strong thinking that when working in gloves, fingers become swollen with repetitive work, and then due to gloves being a warm moist area, that the infection enters the finger or thumb.

What may have caused this?

Perhaps a number of factors. The type of Gloves that are being used - rubber or leather, cotton inserts or not. The repetitiveness nature of Beekeeping work: ie hives ready for

pollination - Lifting and Pivoting frames, honey removal, (Similar to OOS in office workers etc) Small cuts or wire holes on the hands It may not be isolated to just the Beekeeping industry. How Beekeeping attire is cleaned.

Antibiotic treatment

The antibiotic - Ciprofloxan 750mg is given for bone and joint infection. With this comes the information to keep fluid intake high, avoid alcohol, and the warning that it may impair driving ability. It is also important to take the antibiotics until the dose is finished. If antibiotics are not administered, and the infection gets worse, then surgery is possible.

Flow on effects to your business (especially with severe infections)

Long term downtime with staff away. With a shortage of skilled staff in the industry, difficulty in finding temporary staff to keep the business ticking along. The reality that some staff will not return to Beekeeping. Finding tasks to minimise the risk, ie: two days honey removal, 2 days extracting.

Disclaimer: This is in no way medical advice. Please contact your doctor for appropriate treatment.

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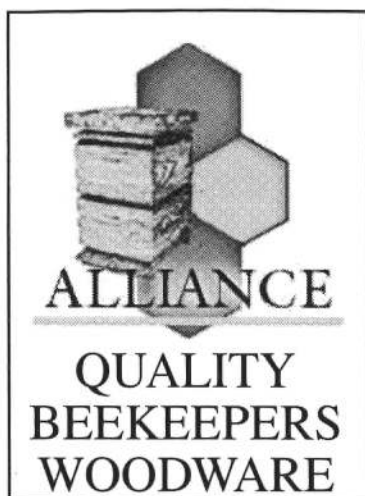
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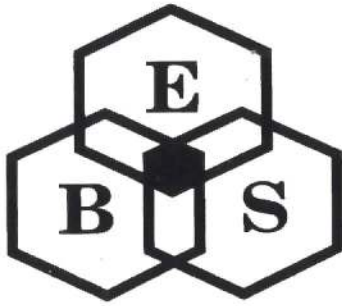
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