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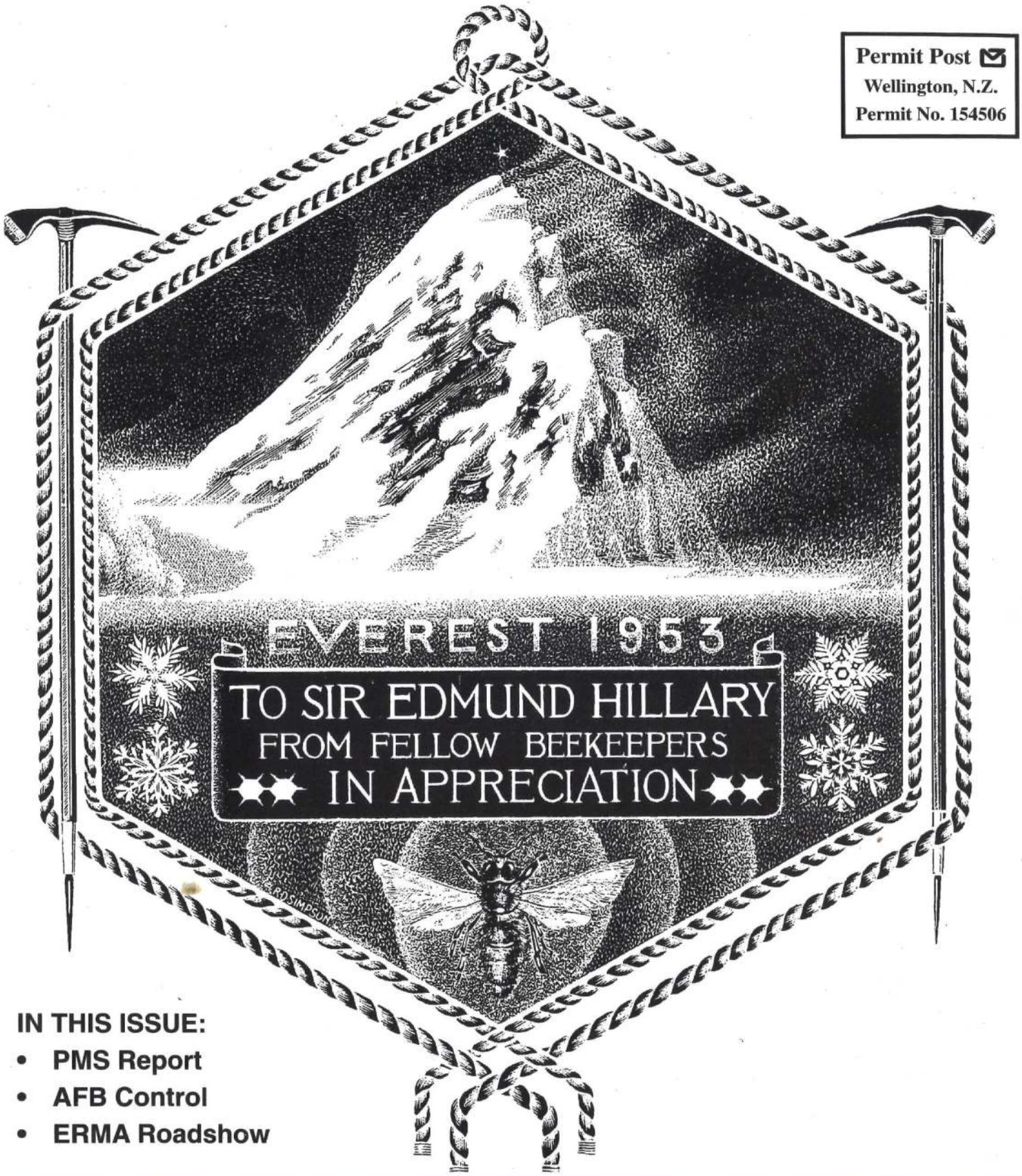

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President's Report

I have just returned from spending a weekend down in the Manawatu and Wanganui regions attending the Southern North Island Fieldday – 20th September. It was a most enjoyable day primarily because I had the opportunity to meet and socialise with commercial and hobbyist beekeepers. I was also very impressed as to how they ran the fieldday to cater for all beekeeper interests, with the emphasis on the sharing of knowledge between commercial and hobby beekeepers.

This is one area that I have the desire to participate in, as many branch Fieldday's as is possible, or failing that to have an Executive member in attendance.

Food Safety Issues – codes of practice, Risk Management Programme (RMP's)
As many of you will know, in 2002, we spent some time with MAF in starting to write a code of practice that would be part of a Risk Management Programme that has to be implemented by 2006.

I have just been in contact with Glen Neal, who has indicated that he would like to get this process re-activated. It would appear that they have re-looked at the requirements for beekeepers and have decided that the required document would only need to be approximately 10 pages in length (a much smaller document than the previous 60-70 page one drafted in 2002).

At the Southern North Island field day, it was expressed that beekeepers were keen to see a template developed that those who have to meet Food Safety requirements can access and use to draw up their own programme. The NBA is also keen that this happens.

AFB PMS issues
At the time of writing, the Order in council is in it's second draft, and while we have some concerns with wording used to define bee related topics, most will need to be bought up in the PMS review. Invoices for the funding of the AFB PMS are likely to go out in November of this year.

The PMS review process is different from what I had initially understood it to be. It has no specific timeline in which it has to be completed. Once the Ministerial review has been undertaken, I then understand that we will have the opportunity to make submissions at that point in time.

The PMS Operations committee is working well in making sure that we address as many of the issues as possible that were raised in the internal PMS review. I would like to thank them for the work to date.

Will there be sufficient hives for pollination this season?
In recent times the media has contacted me to find out if I think there will be sufficient hives for pollination this season. When asked the question in that light, you can only really answer – yes. The real question should be – will there be sufficient prepared hives to go into Kiwifruit and other pollination. To that question I would have to say that I do not think that there will be. I say this for several reasons. One is beekeepers choice – whether to chase a lucrative honey crop such as active Manuka or to carry out pollination. The second reason - is the number of hives that are being destroyed that have contracted American Foulbrood. I know many of these are not being reported as they should be, because of the tie in of the Apiary register being used for Export Certification and countries requiring area freedoms from American Foulbrood. The third reason is - the number of hives that are either queenless or have turned drone layer this year.

If you have a significant number of hives that have succumbed to either AFB, queenlessness or become drone layers – it makes for an extremely difficult task to maintain hive numbers at the desired strength to carry out pollination and later to collect honey.

Library
One of the advantages of belonging to the NBA is gaining access to the library at reasonable cost to the member ie only having to pay for the cost of postage of the books etc.

At one of our recent Executive meetings, we passed a policy that non-NBA members would be required to pay $100 per annum to gain access to the library, and then pay the normal borrowing fees. To some this may seem excessive, but the NBA does pay the librarian an honorarium, plus some money for the maintenance of books and for the purchase of some new material.

The library is a huge asset – one very worthy of having access to. Chris Taiaroa does a fantastic job as our Librarian.

- Jane Lorimer

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Bookplate courtesy IBRA - see letter to the Editor.

Secretarial Snippets

By now many of you will have realised that I am continuing as Executive Secretary to the NBA. I understand that there will be a Manager appointed for the AFB Pest Management Strategy – thus the PMS issues will no longer be part of my portfolio and hopefully I can provide a more effective and efficient secretarial service. However it has not happened yet, which means I am currently involved in collating beekeeper information for the renewal of Instruments of Appointment (AP2's) for the AFB PMS. I have sent a memo to each of the branches believing that this would be the best way to disseminate the information, also the fastest way to get Police consent forms signed. Responses to me have been spasmodic so far. The current appointments mostly expired on 30 September so there may have to be some provisional appointments made to ensure there is coverage for the PMS in the short term.

Among the screeds of correspondence that I have dealt with in the last month there was a delightful letter from a seven year old aspiring beekeeper from Auckland. He had already researched beekeeping using a popular New Zealand text and was wanting to meet a beekeeper before getting his own hive. I am sure the Auckland Hobbyist group enjoyed helping him. Hopefully there are other young people out there with similar aspirations – they should be encouraged.

In the past few days I have received a number of letters from MP's acknowledging the NBA support for extending the GM Moratorium. Time will tell how effective we have been.

"A reminder that I require the Police consent forms for AP2's back" Thankyou - Pauline

I have recently received a letter from Sir Edmund Hillary, which said: "It was indeed a great surprise to receive the cheque for $2,040 from the National Beekeepers Association. It is a magnificent contribution for our activities with the Sherpas in the Himalayas. Would you be good enough to convey our appreciation to the beekeepers who made such a generous contribution possible."

- Pauline Bassett

Do you wish to be involved in helping our Organisation move forward to a brighter and better future?

To be involved in shaping our future, we need your input. If you have a specific area of interest, then please let the Executive of the NBA know!

Areas of interest:

- Future Structure of the NBA/Strategic Planning
- Product Standards
- Exotic Pests and Diseases/Biosecurity
- Environment (includes GM/GE and spray poisoning issues etc.)
- Publications and Promotions
- Product Research
- Bee Research
- Membership/PR
- Varroa issues
- PMS Operations
- PMS Review

The most crucial of these is the "Future Structure of the NBA/Strategic Planning" committee, and names need to forwarded to your Executive by the 7th November 2003

Email: Executive Secretary: Pauline Bassett, waihon@actix.co.nz or phone (07) 878 7193.

Perhaps you can not commit 11 months of the year. We still need you!

We would like to form groups of like-minded people together, utilising their skills on occasions when the need arises. Do you have an interest but do not have the time to commit to a regular committee, but would be willing to do your bit once a year?

If this is you – contact us NOW!

PMS Report

The PMS Committee and our adviser Dr Mark Goodwin have had one conference call this month. We are working on developing policies together with putting a budget for the activities in this year's management plan in place.

The Executive has advanced money for these activities.

Currently work is being undertaken on the list of offences punishable under the PMS, and a DECA holder and ADR defaulter policy. It might be a surprise to many that the PMS does have teeth when it's not possible to work with a beekeeper to achieve compliance. The lists of offences and penalties are still to be ratified by the Executive and hopefully will be published in the November magazine.

A major clean-up exercise was conducted by the Bay Of Plenty Branch last month and the committee is awaiting a detailed report so further action can considered. We have an indication that a number of beekeepers hives were affected. One unregistered apiary was also found. Good team work but a pity the situation had developed so far before being identified.

The PMS committee will be taking a more active approach to the PMS management once the new position of PMS Manager is filled.

Beekeepers are reminded of their obligation to report AFB within 7 days of finding it.

Ian Spence.
Chairman PMS operations committee
Phone /fax: 03 202 7804

Burning an AFB hive.

American Foulbrood Control

This is the first article of a series that has been written for the Management Agency for the American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy. These monthly articles will cover a range of aspects of American foulbrood control, including how to inspect for and identify diseased colonies, the management of colonies to prevent American foulbrood and a beekeeper's legal obligation with regard to American foulbrood.

Inspecting Honey Bee Colonies For American Foulbrood Disease

Dr Mark Goodwin
Apicultural Research Unit, HortResearch

The most common reason why beekeepers have an American Foulbrood disease (AFB) problem is because they, or their staff, use incorrect techniques for carrying out disease inspections on their colonies. This article deals with how to inspect colonies.

Although not a reliable diagnostic method, be particularly suspicious of any colony that has not been performing as well as the other colonies in the apiary. Their poor performance may be due to one of a number of other causes but may be due to a large number of larvae having been killed by American foulbrood disease.

When inspecting a colony for AFB it is important that the method used is capable of detecting a single infected larva or pupa if it is present. The presence of a single diseased larva in a colony means that the colony is infected with American foulbrood disease and legally must be destroyed. The Management Agency for the AFB Pest Management Strategy must be notified within 7 days. More importantly a single diseased larva contains enough spores to infect up to 500 hundred other colonies. For this reason it is important to check each brood cell in a hive. The risk of failing to find the diseases by only inspecting a few brood cells within the hive can be estimated quite easily. Assuming a hive has 10 frames containing brood and one diseased larva, an inspection of one frame means there is a 90% probability of missing the diseased larva and not recognizing that the colony is infected. Inspecting 3 frames still means there is a 70% chance of missing a diseased larva.

When inspecting hives inspect every brood frame

Most beekeepers do not inspect all frames when carrying out a disease inspection. Some only inspect one frame and many only three brood frames. The effect of an incomplete inspection depends on when the inspection is carried out and the disease status of the hives belonging to the beekeeper. If the inspection is carried out at a time when missing an AFB hive is unlikely to result in the disease spreading i.e. when there will be another inspection before any equipment is removed from a hive, then an incomplete inspection will have few consequences. Likewise, if a beekeeping outfit has no AFB then an incomplete inspection, even at a time when equipment is being exchanged between hives, will have few consequences. However, many beekeepers that report diseased hives each year remove frames from, and swap them between, colonies with incomplete brood checks. This is the main reason they have a continuing disease problem. Usually the reason full frame inspections are not conducted is because of the increased time required. This is however probably false economy as it is cheaper doing full frame inspections than having to burn hives due to an AFB outbreak. The change to full frame brood inspections can be painful at the start as more AFB hives are often found. However, there are many examples where beekeepers have made significant improvements in their disease status by changing to full frame inspections.

To carry out a full frame inspection, each frame containing brood needs to be removed from the hive and the bees shaken off. The comb then needs to be inspected for chewed/sunken cappings and larvae or pupae with disease symptoms. Isolated and healthy looking cells also need to be inspected as some colonies may have significant numbers of diseased larvae but no outward symptoms of AFB. I have seen several hives with brood infection rates exceeding 80%, where no diseased larvae or sunken cappings were evident but the apparently healthy cells contained diseased pupae. However, spotty brood patterns were present and the colonies were starting to become weak. For this reason it is important to always uncap some cells in healthy frames.

If less than full inspections are being carried out it is important to check frames in both brood supers. I saw one hive where the brood in the top super had no obvious AFB symptoms. However, the bees had deserted the bottom super that had an 80% brood infection.

Inspecting dead colonies for AFB is much more difficult than live colonies, especially if the colony has been dead for some time. Although a skilled observer should be able to detect AFB scale (the dried remains of diseased larvae) the condition of the comb often makes this difficult. Many beekeepers also lack the necessary experience, as they do not often come across scale. Dead colonies that have died of things other than AFB but were infected with AFB are often not diagnosed correctly. The consequences of failing to confirm that AFB was the cause of colony death are much more serious if the supers, floorboards and lids are stored in a shed and the equipment

split between a numbers of colonies the following spring. There have been some disastrous incidences where the empty frames themselves have been split between a large number of colonies resulting in a major disease outbreak. The best option for beekeepers with AFB problems is to be extra diligent and make sure colonies do not die. Where colonies have died and the cause has not been confirmed as AFB, the best action is to place a strap around the hive without removing equipment even if they still have honey supers in place. The hive can then be stored until it is restocked. If the new colony develops AFB, it and the equipment can be destroyed. Only the colony itself is lost as the equipment would have had to be destroyed in any case. Loosing a single colony is preferable to what would have happened if the equipment from a dead colony was split between a number of other colonies.

Dead hives should be strapped and restocked as a whole rather than spreading the equipment between hives
The timing of inspections is also very important. Inspections should be timed to occur before hive management activities are carried out that may spread the disease.

AFB problems can also occur where inspections are carried out by a number of different people. Staff need to be well trained and supervised, an issue that that will be covered in a later article. To keep everyone motivated to perform adequate AFB checks, a good approach is to issue everybody doing inspections with a felt pen and get them to write their initials and the date on the lid of each hive they inspect.

Harlan Cox

Did you know you have just passed the page that invites you to be involved in the NBA restructuring?

From the colonies

Canterbury Branch

Another month has passed. They seem to get faster. Here in Canterbury, August was off to an easy start. The bees have come out of the winter well, due to it being unusually mild. Towards the end of August the weather took a turn for the worse, and went cold. The cold started to interfere with the progress of the hives. With the ground being so dry this dramatically lowered the ground temperature.

It seems to defy logic that soil moisture is required to raise soil temperature. The theory is that soil is a poor conductor of heat, therefore moisture is required to transfer the suns warmth from the top 2 cm of soil to the lower layers. This is what stimulates plant growth.

However the first and second weeks of September brought a couple of weeks of rain which was very welcome. With the ground wet to saturation point, this should enable the soil temperature to rise significantly in the next couple of weeks and help set up good conditions for spring flowerings, especially dandelions.

-- Brian Lancaster.

North Canterbury Beekeepers Club.

We had a successful AGM, which re-appointed the same people to the same jobs. We decided to keep the annual subscriptions at the same rate of $10.00 per family, and to set special hive club days so that members had definite dates when they can come and help manage the hive and learn other people's ideas on the way to do things. The next will be early in November when we will be doing a swarming check. It was decided to continue pursuing ideas for our own paraffin waxer.

Olly Glintmeyer read his President's Report to the meeting, which included thanks to all for their year's support, comments on the ferment in the national bee organisations, and concluded with the words: "and may they keep the Varroa mite on the North Island".

Club Hive News:

The 1st of September is meant to be the beginning of spring. Although there was a very interesting comment in the Christchurch Press on Friday September the 5th called "Seasons". Equinoxes occur when the sun stands directly over the Equator 21 March and 22 September. The winter (21June) and summer (22 December) solstices mark the lowest and highest sun positions in the annual sky when the sun is over the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, respectively. These astronomical moments signal an "official" start to the weather seasons. For practical reasons, most meteorologists and climatologists define the primary seasons as beginning with the month in which the equinox solstice occurs plus the two following months. The year runs: December 1st - summer, March 1st - autumn, June 1st - winter, September 1st - spring. That may be so, but the bees are building early. This type of activity and weather would normally be a month or so away.

- Noeline and Sam Hobson

Hawkes Bay

Mites might be in Hawkes Bay and the Wairarapa. This is one of the assumptions that were used to dismiss the movement control line. True, we have a minor incursion along the Napier Taupo road with some hefty hills between there and the Bay proper. True, Arataki very correctly reported the finding of ***one*** mite at Havelock North but although they have searched diligently they have not been able to find one more! The Bay beekeepers who operate close to known infestations have been meticulously careful in their working, Perhaps those who have made the decision know of unauthorised movements but have no proof. Unfortunately we were not able to support the Wairarapa option, as it would have had too much impact on established apiaries in Southern Hawkes Bay and further south.

That is all history now and we can only ask northern beekeepers to honour the new restrictions by limiting the number of hives that they move south plus treating any hives before they do move them.

We certainly appreciate the sharing of knowledge from those who were first to have to learn to live with this scourge.

In spite of some cold wet weather pollination is now in full swing although some orchards still offer a risk to vehicular travel. Hives in the backcountry have required feeding although those closer to the coast and urban centres are quite strong.

Saturday 8 November will see a bevy of beekeepers thronging to Arataki at 9am for our annual "diseaseathon" even if I am not sure that the word has reached the Concise Oxford yet. On that day we expect to have 14 teams, each led by an AP2 scouring those apiaries that are near to known past AFB findings. All are welcome to bring protective clothing plus a hive tool and join in to get the chance to see how to check hives. Owners of hives being done over will be advised for two reasons. First to give them the chance to be involved and second to let us know the exact location of their hives, hoping they are not among those who are still on the register in spite of being out of beekeeping. You don't have to be strong as there has to be someone to do the paper work. This last paragraph is a repeat of last month's but I offer no apology.

- Ron Morison

Have you considered putting your name forward for the "Future Structure of the NBA/Strategic Planning committee"?

Southland

Southland beekeepers on their first rounds have appreciated being able to drive across paddocks without getting stuck as we've had a very dry spring so far, though listening to the rain driving in from the north west as I write, the situation may be about to change.

Increasing farmer prosperity has almost eliminated that wonderful yellow spring flower from the Southland plains but fortunately around the hills there are still some very colourful patches. The surviving gorse colour does seem unusually dense this spring. The pussy willows are flowering well with the crack willows yet to start.

In the last sixteen years, large areas of hill country in Eastern Southland have been removed from pasture and planted in eucalyptus, mostly nitens, for a short term rotation destined to produce high quality pulp for the Japanese paper industry. While there was some hope that these large plantings would produce useful amounts of nectar, that did not occur. Plenty of flowers appeared but the bees took very little interest. Harvesting of the oldest blocks has now begun, a highly mechanised low manpower job leaving long orderly lines of stripped trunks awaiting removal.

Recent beekeeper discussions have shown little enthusiasm for the proposed Varroa PMS. We all realise that we'll have to cope with the mite eventually but can see better immediate uses for our money than paying for an inspection programme with its attendant bureaucracy.

With a deadline approaching for all beekeepers to pass their DECA test we are offering an American Foulbrood Disease recognition and elimination course in Gore on November 22nd. Contact Don Stedman for details.

The Southland NBA Field Day this season will be held in Otago - at Momona on February 14 2004 hosted by Murray Ballantyne. All beekeepers are of course welcome so mark your diaries now. Further details later.

- Don Stedman

Auckland

I am writing this at the start of the last week in September. The hives opened up this season very slow and sluggish. Bee numbers were down and brood areas were smaller and later. Hives were generally slower to get started, although pollen stores have always been good. Lower temperatures and a very wet August probably caused this. The wet up here is unbelievable – we simply have water on water. Last week, things seemed to be drying up a bit but a wet weekend has put paid to that. I am finishing my second round and basically all the beekeeping is being done off the quad. I can now carry ten boxes on the quad per trip. A lot of the apiaries are still too wet to tow a trailer behind the quad. Consequently, it is taking a lot longer to get bee work done.

The hives are now responding well to the warmer temperatures and the longer day hours. Small nectar and good pollen flows are helping. Mite levels are building up and I have just started the first treatments on the early honey yards.

- Brian Alexander

7th November is the deadline for names for the "Future Structure of the NBA/Strategic Planning committee"

About the Apiary

September has been a mild month except for a few fierce windstorms of over 100 km per hour that signaled the beginning of the equinox. These have caused a problem for a few, scattering roofs and upending hives. Just some of the problems, beekeepers in the windier parts of these Isles have to handle.

All this good spring weather has seen the bees working good willow and dandelion flows, which have boosted brood production. Strong hives are now filling three supers with bees, with brood in at least 8 frames and will need attention to prevent them from swarming. Good budding has been reported on Rewarewa and Mingimingi, and with ample rainfall, prospects for the honey flow look promising.

Most beekeepers are now into a 10-day or 15-day cycle; checking hives and feeding them to keep brood production at a high level.

When checking hives it often pays to observe the landing board for a minute and this will give an indication of what's going on in the hive. Are the bees flying well? Is there pollen coming into the hive? Are there a lot of guard bees, intercepting all the bees coming home? (A sign of drifting which may mean the hive should be turned slightly to alter the bee's orientation).

A quick check inside the hive will confirm any suspicions. When you first open the hive, is the underside of the mat damp? It may need more ventilation. Are the bees covering all frames down to the floorboards? If so it may need supering.

Up end the top super and look along the bottom bars for queen cells. Check the buds to see if they have eggs in them. If they have you will have to artificially swarm the hive. At the same time observe the weight of the super to determine the amount of honey stores left in the hive.

Remove the outside frame and ease the others across until you can comfortably take out the middle frames without rolling any bees off. Look at the frame. Does it have a band of honey and pollen around the top edge? Look at the new brood around the outside edges. Are there any cells missed? Are there different aged larva in the same area - a sign of an old or failing queen? In a patch of emerging brood, flick off the caps and look at the larvae underneath. Just late emerging or is it chalkbrood, sacbrood or AFB. Sometimes during periods of bad weather when bees are confined, Sac and Chalk brood will show up. One or two cells do not matter but if numbers are high and there's ample pollen in the hive, consider changing the queen.

Check the rest of the hive. At this time of the year the brood is mostly in the second super and is expanding down into the bottom super. A quick method to give the bees room to expand upwards is to reverse the first and second supers, so the majority of the brood is in the lower super.

Queen cell buds are now appearing and will be used when conditions are right for swarming. Once the bees start producing queen cells, constantly cutting them out doesn't really work. If the bees get frustrated enough, they will select an older larva and this will be developed into a queen and the hive will swarm before the next 10-day check.

Better to reduce the pressure on the hive that has started queen cell development by artificially swarming the hive before it swarms. Remove three of four frames of capped and emerging brood with adhering bees, (check that the queen is not on the frames) and place these into "a spare super". Position the remaining frames back into the centre and put in additional frames. Having put the removed brood frames into "a spare super" along with one queen cell or a caged queen, place this on the bottom board with the original hive on the top, separated with a split board. The field bees will drift to the lower entrance which will immediately reduce the hive's swarming instinct. An alternative method would be to spray the frames with a light solution of sugar and water. They can then be added to frames from another strong hive to either combine them into a strong unit (just add a caged queen) or unite them on top of a hive that is struggling to expand with two sheets of newsprint, (this hive probably needs a new queen also).

When to Super? Using top feeders, it is easy to determine. Once bees start staying in the feeder, it's time to add another super to the hive. For those without such easy indicators, when the bees in the bottom super are covering 80% of the frames and all the frames in the top super, its time to add another super. To encourage the bees up into the new super or if one uses queen excluders, move a frame of honey up into the new super and place it in the centre.

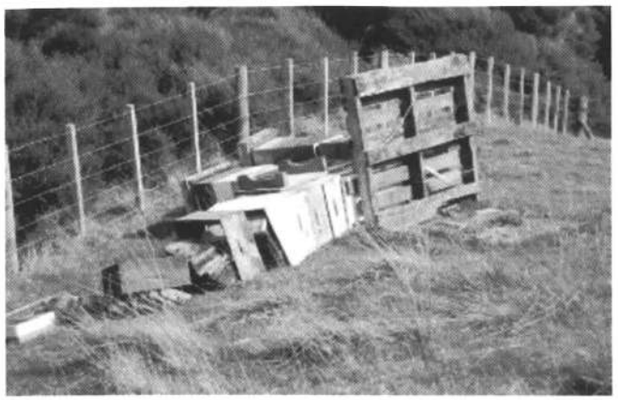
For those with only foundation frames, it's best if these are inter-spaced with drawn frames above the brood nest (in the second or third super). Only a very strong hive will draw out foundation in the spring and these hives will have to be continuously fed to make the bees work on the new frames. Once the main honey flow starts it's easy to get foundation drawn as the bee's natural instinct takes over when they run out of space to store honey.

MITES

For those in the North Island strips are either being put in or for those on early flows, are now being removed from the hives. If you haven't already done so, use the sugar-shake method to determine mite levels. Monitor all hives as one hive is generally higher in mite numbers than the others.

We, in the south of the North Island are learning just how quickly mite numbers build up. The message from the SNI field day was to monitor all hives if your are not blanket treating. Although it's against one's own pocket, it's better to treat hives you think have mites rather than try to resurrect a hive with high mite numbers. Any hives with high mite numbers needs a full 6 week treatment to get rid of virus affected bees so that you have healthy bees for the flow.

For those who want to remain organic, formic acid works. Although it requires a little more protective gear, MiteGone®



Windy Wellington

pads look easy to work. Better results have been obtained since the inventor's visit, last year. We know now that we need to monitor evaporation levels and to block the front of the hive with a triangular piece of wood to provide a pool of gas to kill the mites that initially drop off the bees.

Drone brood removal in the spring, every 7 days provides another alternative. If you can't manage every 7 days, once every 15 days will also work provided all the drone comb is cut away. This system won't work if there is more than 5% drone comb else where in the hive. Hence if you want to use this method in the future, its important to work comb containing drone brood out to the outside of the brood nest and eventually out of the hive.

Before reassembling the hive physically check the amount of stored honey frames. Food is important - a strong hive can chew through three or four frames of honey in a week of wet weather so its important to keep the bees well fed. If they look to be running short of stored honey feed thick sugar syrup, (2 to one of water by volume). Select a container, 7/8 full with sugar and then add hot water stirring all the time until the sugar is dissolved and the water level is at the top of the container. Feed out to the bees when it has cooled enough to be comfortably warm.

I have dry sugar feeders on most of my hives and put two scoops (using a 2kg honey pot) of raw sugar in the feeders as insurance, to carry them through periods of wet weather.

Raw sugar requires a lot of work to convert into honey and is not recommended for small colonies. The bees need to bring in water, moisten the sugar and then invert it so they can use it. This has the effect of slowing hive activity and is used for holding strong hives during bad weather. When the weather warms up again, the bees quickly switch back to natural sources.

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH: Check brood, check pollen, check for AFB, check mite levels. Treat all hives if one hive has high numbers or you think will reach the 1000 threshold by February. Raise queen cells, re-queen hives with mated queens, introduce nuclei, swarm control, cull out old frames and those frames with high numbers of drone cells, super hives, remove entrance reducers in the warmer areas and check stored supers for wax moth. Supers treated with PDB will need to be aired for a week before they are put on to the hives.

- Frank Lindsay

Fielddays

Bay of Plenty - 13 September 2003

A wonderful sunny day kept a few of the normal crowd away from the Papamoa school Hall, the regular venue for the Bay of Plenty Fieldday. The program included; Murray Reid and Byron Taylor - AgriQuality report & the recent AFB diseaseathon, Dr Mark Goodwin – PMS & Toxic honey, Geoff Willacy & the beeFORCE Units, John Bassett & Selection of Breeder Queens, An Avocado Industry update (more November issue). Outside the group pondered the use of Polystyrene Mating Nuc Boxes.

Southern North Island - 20 September 2003

An extremely windy day at Gary and Helen Tweeddale's, saw an excellent turnout from Hobbyist and Commercial beekeepers alike. Topics included; the various methods of Varroa Control, Chemical – Bayvarol & Apistan and Organic – MiteGone Pads & FGMO (Not yet registered for use in NZ), with demonstrations, and armed with the "Control of Varroa" Guide, the "How to use them correctly".

After a barbecue lunch, the donning on of beekeeper gear, saw us outback to look at a few hives.

We are the NBA, Bee involved - Use it or Lose it!

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to make a few comments and cautions to beekeepers who are considering allowing orchardists to place beeFORCE units on their hives.

After having units on my hives for the past two pollination seasons, the hives appeared to cope fine with no loss in honey production but there were a number of problems as follows:

1. During hot weather the entrance was insufficient for proper ventilation and there was excessive chewing of my bottom boards at the entrance and large clusters of bees outside of the hives.
2. I had two of the units block, resulting in two dead hives. Neither the orchardist or the owner checked the units to ensure they were working correctly.
3. There is a great concern that these units are not sterilised between use. I believe for obvious reasons they should be sterilised. The unit's owner does not seem concerned enough to make an effort to sterilise the units. I will not have them on my hives any more until they have been sterilised.
4. A number of us believe that we should be paid to have the units on our hives, after all they are using our hives to transport pollen to improve their returns, rather than using other more expensive methods. I am charging $40 per hive/ unit.
5. Unqualified people are fitting these units and this poses a risk to people through stings and failure to do the job correctly.

Last year I had units placed on hives without the orchardist informing me. They were placed on 3 out of 4 hives in 4 groups, resulting in the bees drifting badly to the hive with no unit on it.

Overall, I believe there has been little concern for the interest of the beekeeper, so beware out there. At the very least you should be monitoring and charging to have these units on your hive.

Steve Weenink
Apiflora NZ Ltd

Dear Editor,

As you know we receive NZ Beekeeper every month and it always provides me with an interesting read before it goes into our archives. Thank you.

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CARDIFF CF10 3DT
UNITED KINGDOM
TEL: 029 2037 2409
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mail@ibra.org.uk
DIRECTOR RICHARD JONES

It occurred to me that you might be interested in a couple of enclosures. Firstly some information about our most recent publication. This is indeed a lavish book and a must for beekeepers, bee scientists, indeed almost anyone with an interest in insect biology.

The other item is of specific NZ interest in that it is photocopy of the bookplate produced by International Bee Research Association (IBRA) for Sir Ed Hillary to mark his ascent of Everest in 1953. Sir Ed was for many years a member of IBRA and we have always been proud to be associated with him. I have a copy of the same bookplate framed above my desk so that if a day is particularly tough I can look at it and say "Don't complain, imagine climbing that"

Kind regards
Richard Jones
Director

Editor: I have been holding this letter to associate with one from Sir Ed Hillary re funds that was raised from Nelson – NBA conference. The bookplate is the feature front cover on this magazine, and I would like to thank Richard Jones for his enthusiasm in sending it to me.

Secondly "The Book" - Form and Function in the HoneyBee, is only available from the Publishers. For further information please contact: IBRA, 18 North Road, Cardiff, CF10 3DT. Phone 029-20372409 Fax 029 20665522

Email: books@ibra.org.uk, or www.ibra.org.uk approx 220 pages, 25.00 Pound Sterling, soft back, 55.00 Pound Sterling hard back

This beautiful lavishly illustrated 220-page book takes a detailed, fascinating and sublimely accurate look at the honeybee. The antennae, compound eyes, dorsal ocelli, the response to gravity, feeding respiration, flight, glands, and colony defence are all examined in detail in order to give the reader a comprehensive understanding of how the honeybee behaves. Honeybees, in relatively unchanged form, have been around for over 50 million years. Cave paintings dating from 10,000 BC depict the relationship between the human race and honeybees. This book offers the most comprehensive and readable explanation of these interesting and essential little creatures. No natural scientist, ecologist or beekeeper should be without a copy.

* * * * * * *

As mentioned in the Secretarial Snippets, a letter was received from Sir Ed Hillary thanking the NBA for their contribution for the Himalayan Trust.

HIMALAYAN TRUST

CHAIRMAN:
SIR EDMUND HILLARY,
278A REMUERA ROAD,
AUCKLAND 5, NEW ZEALAND.
TELEPHONE: 520-3169
FAX: 64-9-520-7847

September 18th, 2003

The Executive Secretary,
National Beekeepers Association of New Zealand (Inc.)
P.O. Box 234,
TE KUITI

Dear Pauline Bassett,

It was indeed a great surprise to receive the cheque for $2,040 from the National Beekeepers Association. It is a magnificent contribution for our activities with the Sherpas in the Himalayas. Would you be good enough to convey our appreciation to the beekeepers who made such a generous contribution possible.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Hillary

Ed Hillary

Dear Editor,
There seems to be some misunderstanding in the industry about the interpretation of results from testing for non-peroxide testing in Manuka honey. To help with understanding I shall point out the scientific issues involved, but it is up to producers, buyers, and the owners of the UMF trademark to make the commercial and/or political decisions.

The original testing method was devised when there was commercial interest only in Manuka honey with high levels of non-peroxide activity, and it is not suitable for assaying low levels of activity. To get reliably measurable zones of antibacterial activity with honeys that have activity greater than 10% phenol equivalent, the honey is diluted to a concentration of 25% before it is added to the test plate. To get reliably measurable zones of antibacterial activity with honeys that have low activity the honey needs to be less diluted, so to measure low-activity honeys a concentration of 50% honey is used when added to the test plate.

Simplistically it may be thought that the results from using a 50% solution would be double those obtained from using a 25% solution, but this is not what actually happens. The more viscous stronger honey solution slows the rate of diffusion of the antibacterial activity so the zone of activity is smaller than would be expected. Thus the activity calculated for the original honey from results obtained on plates with the honey at 25% is about 1.3 times higher than the activity calculated for the original honey if the same honey is tested at a concentration of 50%.

Thus to get the true value for the honey the value from testing at 50% needs to be multiplied by the 1.3 factor. If this is not done then a honey would be traded as having an activity that is less than its true activity, e.g. someone selling honey as having a non-peroxide activity of 5 would actually be selling honey with a true activity of 6.5; honey sold as 7 would actually be 9; honey sold as 9 would actually be 11.8.

If a low-activity honey is blended with an equal quantity of higher activity honeys for packing, the resulting mixture has an activity that is the average of activity of the two honeys. But note that it will be the average of the true activity, not of the incorrect low value that would be reported from testing at 50% without using the 1.3 multiplication factor. Thus a blend of honey with activity 7(uncorrected)/9(corrected) with honey with an activity of 11 would give a result on subsequent testing that would qualify it to be sold as UMF(TM) 10.

Another issue is the interpretation of results reported as 'partial inhibition'. It is a problem that I have been aware of for many years, and I have tried to find an explanation for. But with the limited funding available there has not been sufficient research time to work out what causes it. (Had the levy from users of the UMF trademark to fund ongoing research been collected as originally planned then the situation today may be different.) Without an understanding of what is giving the partial inhibition of bacterial growth I could not say that honeys showing this type of activity have the same antibacterial component as honey sold with UMF(TM) activity. Reports of partial inhibition are given to help the traders of the honey make decisions on what to do with it, and are not in any way meant to imply that the honey has any particular level of non-peroxide activity. (Some people store such honeys, because the honey can mature to give a true clear non-peroxide activity later. Others get it re-tested at a concentration of 50% - I am of the view that a clear result from this is probably true UMF(TM)-type activity, as it gives proportional activity in blends with other honey, but I would like to do more testing on this.)

Dr. P.C. Molan Professor of Biological Sciences
Director, Honey Research Unit, University of Waikato

Dear Editor,
After launching beeFORCE commercially in 2002, where the system was received enthusiastically by the Kiwifruit industry and other fruit crop industries, we were hearing somewhat less than enthusiastic comments from some quarters in the beekeeping fraternity. We quickly realised that we had not given enough attention to, nor supplied sufficient information, to the beekeeping industry especially over the three years of initial trial work. In hindsight some of the criticisms were understandable.

While I have always believed that some beekeepers would choose not to get involved with beeFORCE, others would critically evaluate the benefits beeFORCE could deliver to orchards and orchardists and support the system.

For the benefit of those beekeepers who may not have had time to, or opportunity, to look at beeFORCE, I will briefly cover what our objectives are and the results of grower and scientific evaluation over the last four years.

For years now, scientists have experimented with troughs at the entrance to beehives where products such as pollen, beneficial fungi or bacteria etc, placed in those troughs could be picked up by honeybees as they exited the hive and delivered by those bees to flowering crops. The benefit of those products being delivered in such a target specific manner is obvious. Many of those trials were successful in their outcomes; it was proven that honeybees were reliable and consistent in delivering organisms to flowering crops.

The problems which prevented commercialisation of the process were however significant. Living organisms such as pollen, E Herbicola, Trichoderma etc degrade very quickly when exposed to sunlight and moisture, and in order for the organism to do it's job it must be fresh when delivered by the honeybees. Regular replacing of product at the hive entrance was the only practical option. This process in many of the scientific trials involved the orchardist or his worker getting fully kitted up to deliver fresh supplies every hour or so to the hive entrance. Not very practical for commercial users.

So what we set out to do at the inception stage of developing beeFORCE was to electronically deliver small volumes of beneficial organisms into a modified hive entrance, enabling the bees to consistently pick up a covering of beneficial product as they left the hive to visit flowers and to ensure that the beneficial product was not wasted in delivery, and the yet to be dispensed product was stored in such a way that it remained in good condition until it was delivered. Also important was an efficient system for replenishing supply of stored beneficial product, without disturbing the bees.

Other challenges to overcome if this concept was to become commercially viable was for beeFORCE to only deliver beneficial products to the bees when they were actually working the target crop. For beeFORCE to have *sensors* which would prevent delivery to the bees if conditions were

not right, eg if it was raining or too cold for bees to forage. We were also aware that male Kiwifruit pollen performed poorly when delivered to female flowers at temperatures below 14 degrees celsius.

Our most important challenge though, was presuming we could overcome all of the above problems successfully, how could we ensure that the beeFORCE unit fitted to a beehive would have no negative effect on the honeybees, brood, hive health, foraging activity, temperature in the hive drift etc.

Our research programme commenced in 1999 when we built one electronic dispenser and experimented with many variations of hive entrance modification, finally deciding on a particular unit, which the bees accepted and adjusted to very quickly. This was then left on an active hive for several weeks, and the hive evaluated frequently during that time, and the hive inspected afterwards. No variation in hive strength, behaviour etc was reported.

With a functional hive module looking promising, we proceeded in 2000 to build 50 electronic units and hive modules to trial in four Kiwifruit orchards. These trials were supervised by Pat Sale, an independent horticultural consultant. The purpose of the trials– To evaluate beeFORCE in assisting pollination in Kiwifruit orchards. Those trials were very successful.

Our final year of trials in 2001 required significant funding and we arranged to build 350 units. The purpose of those trials – for the fruit industry to evaluate beeFORCE and report back on results achieved. Some spectacular results were reported to us from beeFORCE trialists. Further trials were also undertaken by Dr Mark Goodwin at HortResearch on the effects of beeFORCE on hives and honeybees. His report found no negative effect. (see copy November edition or www.beeforce.co.nz)

More beneficial products are becoming available each year. Enabling orchardist to reduce the amount of toxic sprays used on crops, and in particular, whilst beehives are placed in orchards. This will reduce the risk of bee mortality at this time and improve the environment.

Concerns that beekeepers have brought to my attention:

- As was the case last year, before an order can be placed for hiring beeFORCE units, the grower must seek the beekeepers approval. No approval, no units, no exceptions.
- Units poorly fitted to hives, reducing access for bees, especially hives with very narrow exit or uneven baseboards. Contractors, trained by beeFORCE will put units on hives in most cases this season.
- Reduced ventilation. We have now redesigned the entrance to allow more air circulation.
- Drift. We strongly advocate to growers, put units on all hives, this eliminating drift as all the hives appear the same to the bees, not some with units and some without.
- Disease. Great concern was expressed and as a result of this, on the beekeeping industries request, we took the system to Hamilton to AgriQualtiy and Mr Murray Reid for evaluation. His conclusions supported Dr Mark Goodwin's findings – That beeFORCE had almost not potential to transfer beehive diseases such as AFB

Finally I would like to thank the National Beekeepers Association for the opportunity to talk at their annual fieldday (Bay of Plenty), and of course to present information on beeFORCE to your magazine.

- Geoff Willacy
beeFORCE Australasia Ltd, 129 Second Avenue Tauranga, Phone 07 578 8710, 0274 751 313

"Editor - 'The Coastland and Country' - October 2003 edition has more details on the beeFORCE units 10 day hireage for $160 + GST - Included in the article are close-up photos.

Library Report

Just a short report this month. The library gets busier and busier; nice to see the books, magazines and videos being used.

There is one new book:

"The small business book" by Leith OLIVER and John ENGLISH. If you have a catalogue please add this title to it. The book is written for New Zealand businesses.

We welcome Trevor Corbett to the library committee.

Chris Taiaroa (Hon. Librarian)

What? You were in favour of a change to the NBA, Lost the commitment, Ah!

New Organisms and Other Matters Bill Roadshow

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
ERMA New Zealand
NGĀ KAIWHAKATŪPATO WHAKARARU TAIAO

ERMA New Zealand is undertaking a national roadshow during the month of November, after the enactment of the New Organism and Other Matter Bill. This Act brings changes to the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act which is the key environmental law that regulates the introduction of new organisms (including genetically modified organisms) and hazardous substances into New Zealand. The legislative changes are in response to the 49 recommendations made in 2001 by the Royal Commission into Genetic Modification. During this time of research, consultation and legislative development a moratorium on the release of Genetically Modified Organisms has been in place. This expires on the 29 October 2003.

ERMA New Zealand's national roadshow, aims to ensure that all stakeholders with an interest in new organisms including scientists, researchers, industry groups, community and environmental groups, beekeepers, organic farmers, enforcement agencies, and other government agencies are well informed and understand the implications of the New Organisms and Other Matters Act.

The programme has two major focuses;

1. is to convey the new 'rules' to researchers, scientists and industry,
2. is to engage with members of the public to facilitate a better understanding of what ERMA New Zealand does, how we make decisions and to enable the community to talk directly to Authority members and staff.

Day one involves a 'workshop' style meeting aimed at informing all stakeholders with an active involvement in HSNO about new policy and procedures arising from the changes to legislation.

Members of the public are invited along to view the ERMA New Zealand Gallery which will consist of visual displays about ERMA New Zealand and its role as decision maker, and the interactive nature and roles of other government agencies. At 5.00pm a public discussion will be formally opened by a keynote speaker within each location. This will finish at 7.00pm. The public sessions will be hosted by ERMA New Zealand staff and aim to be informal to encourage open discussion.

Day two focuses on details associated with application and decision-making processes for low risk Genetically Modified Organisms, which is followed by a meeting with local iwi. These sessions are designed for IBSC members and applicants only.

For all enquiries and/or registrations please contact Tina Suter at ERMA New Zealand, PO Box 131, Wellington. Phone 04 918 4825 (DDI). Email to: roadshow@ermanz.govt.nz

ERMA New Zealand National Roadshow Timetable

Date	Day	Location	Session times	Venue
4 Nov	Tue	Hamilton	Session 1: 8.30am-3.00pm Session 2: 3.30-7.00pm (public session opened at 5.00pm)	Quality Hotel
5 Nov	Wed	Hamilton	IBSC workshop: 9.00am-12 noon Meeting with local iwi: 1.00-2.30pm	Quality Hotel
6 Nov	Thur	Auckland	Session 1: 8.30am-3.00pm Session 2: 3.30-7.00pm (public session opened at 5.00pm)	Centra
7 Nov	Fri	Auckland	IBSC workshop: 9.00am-12 noon Meeting with local iwi: 1.00-2.30pm	Centra
11 Nov	Tue	Palmerston North	Session 1: 8.30am-3.00pm Session 2: 3.30-7.00pm (public session opened at 5.00pm)	Quality Hotel
12 Nov	Wed	Palmerston North	IBSC workshop: 9.00am-12 noon Meeting with local iwi: 1.00-2.30pm	Quality Hotel
13 Nov	Thu	Wellington	Session 1: 8.30am-3.00pm Session 2: 3.30-7.00pm (public session opened at 5.00pm)	Wellington Convention Centre
14 Nov	Fri	Wellington	IBSC workshop: 9.00am-12 noon Meeting with local iwi: 1.00-2.30pm	Wellington Convention Centre
18 Nov	Tue	Christchurch	Session 1: 8.30am-3.00pm Session 2: 3.30-7.00pm (public session opened at 5.00pm)	Holiday Inn
19 Nov	Wed	Christchurch	IBSC workshop: 9.00am-12 noon Meeting with local iwi: 1.00-2.30pm	Holiday Inn
20 Nov	Thu	Dunedin	Session 1: 8.30am-3.00pm Session 2: 3.30-7.00pm (public session opened at 5.00pm)	Dunedin Public Art Gallery
21 Nov	Fri	Dunedin	IBSC workshop: 9.00am-12 noon Meeting with local iwi: 1.00-2.30pm	Dunedin Public Art Gallery

Branch and Club Contacts

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

AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC
Meets 1st Saturday monthly at Unitec,
Pt Chevalier, Auckland.
President: Ian Anderson
Phone: 09 480 8327
PO Box 214, Waimauku

AUCKLAND BRANCH - NBA
Held: 24 Andromeda Cres, East Tamaki

CANTERBURY BRANCH
Meets the last Tuesday of every month,
February to October
Contact: Roger Bray Phone: (03) 308-4964

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

CHRISTCHURCH HOBBYIST CLUB
Meets on the first Saturday of each month,
August to May, except in January for which it is
the second Saturday. The site is at 681 Cashmere Road,
Commencing at 1.30pm
Contact: Jeff Robinson, 64 Cobra Street Christchurch 3.
Phone: (03) 322-5392

TARANAKI AMATEUR BEEKEEPING CLUB
Phone: Stephen Black (06) 752-6860
685 Uruti Road RD 48, Urenui

HAWKES BAY BRANCH
meets on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm,
Arataki cottage, Havelock North
Phone: Ron (06) 844-9493

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

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,
Margaret, Phone: (03) 415-7256
Email: flour-mill@xtra.co.nz

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

SOUTHLAND BRANCH - NBA
Phone/Fax: Don Steadman (03) 246-9777

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

MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets every 4th Thursday in the month at Newbury
Hall, SH3, Palmerston North
Contact: Joan Leckie, Makahika Road, RD 1, Levin
Phone: (06) 368-1277

POVERTY BAY BRANCH - NBA
Phone: Barry (06) 867-4591

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

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

FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets second Sunday of each month at 10.00 am for
a cuppa and discussion. 10.30am open hives.
Secretary - Peter Biland
Phone: (09) 294-8365
President - Stuart Ward
Phone: (09) 238-1441

Is your group or Branch missing from here?

Please contact the Secretary