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December 2004

The New Zealand BeeKeeper

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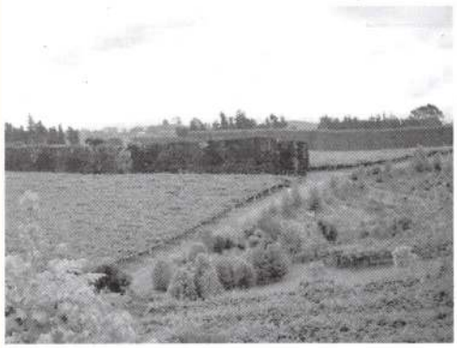
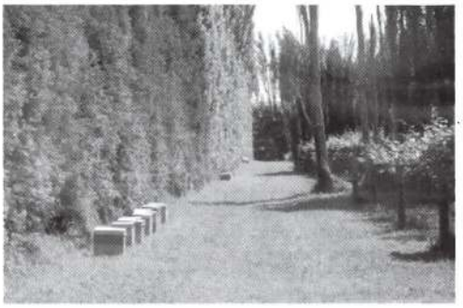
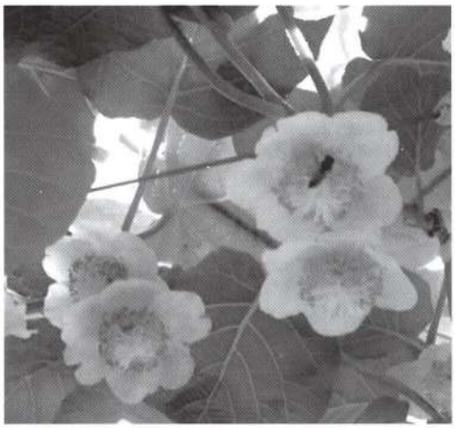
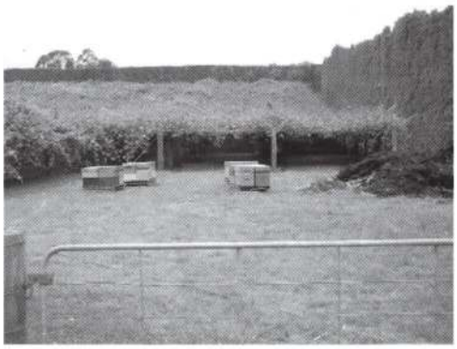
Merry Christmas

Around the Bay in 14 Days









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President's Report

New Zealand Food Safety Authority meeting 16 November 2004

On 16 November, I attended the Code of Practice (COP) meeting in Wellington with the other representatives of the industry. The drafting of this COP is progressing well, with NZFSA personnel listening to the feedback given by those attending the meeting. Hopefully at the conclusion of the process, the Code of Practice will be as practicable as possible while meeting the needs for the Risk Management programme.

About two-thirds of the sections have been drafted and comment has been made on these sections. Reproduced in the table below is part of the draft minutes from the meeting pertaining to what will be happening after all the sections have been drafted.

If you are a small-scale business, and are willing to look at implementing the draft COP as part of the proposed February–March 2005 trial, please contact me.

Agenda	Outcome of discussion	Action required
9. COP trials	Trial dates – Feb–March 2005 Participating operators should represent extractors and packers; different sizes of operation. All working group members have agreed to implement the draft COP or parts of it, and provide feedback. Some to be visited by NZFSA. Need to include businesses with small-scale operations.	Working group members to give names of small business operators from their area who would be willing to participate.
10. Summary	Timeframe for different stages of COP development unchanged. Target date for publication of draft COP is Dec 2004.	

New Zealand Food Safety Authority meeting 17 November 2004

This was an extremely important meeting with NZFSA personnel that covered many aspects of our industry in relation to food safety.

Discussions centred round export certification and assurance, and the many areas that contribute to this endeavour. These included:

- the use of the apiary database for declaring area freedoms, and issuing of export certificates
- how the Risk Management programme ties in with this
- the need and extent of the residue testing programme
- negotiations of Overseas Market Access requirements
- traceability
- cost recovery mechanisms
- how do dietary supplements fit into the current scheme.

Also of significance was the establishment of a beekeeping industry consultative forum (likely to be known as the Bee Products Standards Council), which will have representatives from the NBA, BIG and the Honey Packers and Exporters Association. We believe that this will be a good move; however, it comes at a cost to the industry. We will need to fund not only our representatives, but also pay for a chairman for the group who will be independent of NBA, BIG, honey packers and exporters and the NZFSA.

Editor's Note: A related article about the two-day meeting is on page 5.

Structure Review

The structure review committee (SRC) has continued to work well, and is managing to stick to the proposed timeline that was indicated at the Napier conference. At the end of November, you will have received the changes to the rules after the initial consultation. I hope that you have looked at these again and made any additional comments before we submit them for scrutiny though legal channels. Then, of course, there will be a vote on whether you as members wish to see these structural changes made.

From my position as President, I see the proposed alterations in a very positive light that will mean more timely action in the future, and more information spread out to the members.

My intentions have always been to be transparent, and to get as much information out to members as is possible, but time constraints and having a business to run have not always resulted in this happening. Through the magazine, however, I have tried to keep people informed as to what the Executive

has been involved in during the previous month and into the future.

Varroa PMS Board Beekeeper Representative

It is my understanding that Steve Olds, who has been associated with the industry for many years as a supplier of packaging material and now is a consultant, has been appointed as the beekeeper representative for the Varroa PMS board.

The NBA also pushed for a technical advisory group to be set up comprising beekeepers to enable the viewpoints of practical beekeepers to be heard so that the PMS is of benefit to the industry.

In closing for the year, I would like to extend Christmas wishes to everyone, and hope for a bountiful season ahead.

- Jane Lorimer

Deadline for Publications

(NB: No January 2005 edition)

February 2005 edition: 15 January 2005
March 2005 edition: 20 February 2005
April 2005 edition: 22 March 2005

All articles/letters/photos to be with the Editor via fax, email or post:

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NZFSA meetings highlight significant developments affecting all honey processing and exporting operations

Allen McCaw, Chairman, New Zealand Honey Packers Association Inc.

Representatives of the Honey Packers Association & Honey Exporters Group, the National Beekeepers' Association and the Bee Industry Group of Federated Farmers attended an important two-day meeting with the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) in Wellington on 16–17 November 2004.

During the first day of the meeting, work continued on key components of the model Code of Practice (COP) for the bee industry, which forms the basis of the Risk Management Programmes (RMP) that all processors of bee products are required to have in place by the end of June 2006. This task has almost been completed to the final draft stage, and honey extractors and packers can expect to have access to a copy of the draft COP in early December. There will be an opportunity to make submissions in response to the proposed COP, which will affect all of the industry eventually.

NZFSA intends to implement a trial application of the Code in February 2005 and are seeking volunteers from around the country to include their premises in the trial. This will be an excellent way of assessing your ability to comply with these regulatory requirements, and to receive valuable advice on where changes are required before they become compulsory. Members of the COP development group are currently seeking candidates in their home locations to take part in this trial.

The second day of the meeting saw a further significant development with agreement amongst the participants to form a Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) for the NZ industry. This is to be an independent consultative group specifically set up to provide liaison with NZFSA on matters of food safety and regulation, compliance, residue testing, and overseas market access requirements.

Nominations are being sought for membership of this new advisory group from the Honey Packers and Exporters Association, the National Beekeepers' Association and the Bee Industry Group of Federated Farmers (Inc.). It is also intended to appoint a representative of the Consumers' Institute to the council, which will also include an NZFSA representative.

Jim Edwards from Waikanae has been elected as independent Chairman to the BPSC. Formerly employed with MAF Regulatory section, Jim now works as a private consultant on market access issues, and is well respected within both the beekeeping industry and the NZFSA. Other nominees will join the Council as their respective organisations make the agreed appointments. Further information on the functioning of the Council will be provided as the concept develops and begins to function.

There is a lot of work to be done now, especially in the market access and compliance areas, where a complete review of overseas market access requirements is badly needed. One immediate and critical requirement in this respect is for full compliance of all producers to furnish compulsory Harvester Declarations for **all** their products being processed, whether by themselves or by a contract extractor.

Another is the necessity to fulfil the legal obligations under the AFB PMS, with respect to reporting of any finding of AFB within the specified time frame. The NZFSA have made it very clear that the issuing of certification for bee products, especially to the European Union (EU), is dependent upon a high level of their certification systems.

For those who are involved in exporting to EU countries, or supplying exporters who do, the good news is that the EU Residue Monitoring Programme has been renewed for this year. Testing has been extended further to include fumagillin as well as other possible antibiotics and pesticides. Over the three or four years of this essential programme for EU market access we have so far enjoyed a clean bill of health for NZ honey, and we aim to continue this record for the future. Responsibility for the administration of this programme has now been taken on by the NZ Honey Packers and Exporters Association. Final decisions on sample collection, testing and fee collection will be made very soon.

Finally, a reminder that all processors (extractors and packers) **must** now register their premises with the NZFSA for inclusion in the EU listing if the product they are processing is destined for an EU market somewhere. Previously this list included only honey exporters, but now we are advised it must include all suppliers' processing premises. The contact person for this registration is:

Bryan Anderson, NZFSA Verification Agency,
PO Box 90-101, Invercargill.

Email: bryan.anderson@nzfsa.govt.nz Phone: 03 214 3590; Fax: 03 214 4325

The Honey Packers and Exporters Association has established a free e-mailing list called the HIPEA List, which will advise of further developments in these rapidly changing aspects of our industry. Anyone involved in processing bee products, such as extracting or packing, is welcome to join this list and receive the regular information updates as they are circulated. If you wish to subscribe, please e-mail Jim Edwards at jimedwards@xtra.co.nz.

Further information on the whole area of regulatory requirements, market access, and risk management programmes for bee products is available at the following NZFSA website address: http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/subject/bee-products/index.htm.

A Chilean experience

At the end of August and into early September, Tony and I travelled to Chile and then on to Argentina to do some presentations at their symposiums. Our trip came about because Dr Mark Goodwin was not able to attend. Mark forwarded on his email to me and asked if I would go in his place.

What began as a couple of presentations in Chile soon expanded to include Argentina. The presentations we gave in Chile included production models in New Zealand (presented by Tony Lorimer); best beekeeping practices in New Zealand; and management of varroa (both of which I presented).

The theme of the symposium in Argentina was co-operation between beekeeping associations. I gave two presentations, the first being about how our 91-year-old National Beekeepers' Association was facing change, followed by a presentation on how the Manuka honey story was achieved.

All presentations were well received. Our thanks must go to Dr Mark Goodwin and Dr Peter Molan for helping us to put together some of the presentations, and to the interpreters in Chile, who translated our presentations into Spanish and sent them back to me in New Zealand, so that the pictures could be re-inserted into the presentation. We then had to figure out how to keep track of the presentation, as our knowledge of Spanish was, at this stage, negligible.

We arrived in Chile early on 23 August in Santiago where we were met by Alberto, owner of one of the largest organic beekeeping enterprises, and Jeanette Danty, who works in the Departmento de Politicas Agrarias for Gobierno de Chile (ODEPA) — the equivalent of our MAF.

For that day, and the following one, Alberto took us to see parts of his operation. He was running 4,000 hives, but was trying to build it back up to where it had been in the past (6,000—7,000 hives). His honey production was between 50–70 kgs per colony, achieved through migratory beekeeping practices — moving from central Chile to the south. Alberto indicated to us that in order to keep varroa under control, he was likely to have to cut back on this hive movement so he was not treating when honey was coming into the colonies. Alberto employed around 15 staff to run these hives, who are paid the equivalent of NZ$340 per month.

Wax Foundation Mill

Alberto had set up his own wax foundation mill to produce foundation for his colonies, as he was not happy with the commercially produced foundation that had been found to have impurities such as added paraffin wax and residues. He was also in the process of setting up a new honey extraction facility with all stainless steel equipment and walls made of the coolstore panelling.

We visited one of Alberto's nucleus yards in the morning; it was 9 am and 20 degrees Celsius, according to his thermometer in his car. The stock he had were all Carniolan, and at this time of the day they were on a honey flow from the many Eucalypts in the area. Although they said that the stock were gentle we still managed to each get one sting from the colonies being worked. These yards were large with up to 200 colonies in each — all in rows, with all boxes painted the same colour. Our impression was that Alberto was a good beekeeper, with training and experience equivalent to many New Zealand beekeepers.

Nucleus Yard

Carniolan Bees

We understand that there are approximately 14,000 beekeepers in Chile and that the annual production of honey is around 10,000 tonnes, with 80 percent of this honey being exported. They do not have a registration system like ours, so these figures are only estimates. Like New Zealand, many beekeepers only keep a few colonies, and their annual production is 10–20 kgs per hive. From what we saw in the central part of Chile there is potential for increasing production.

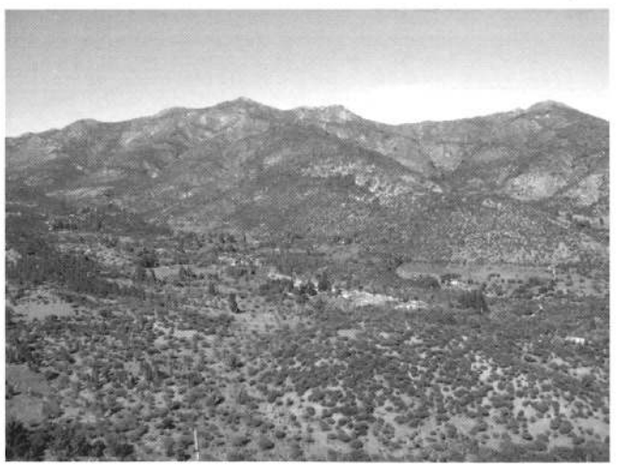
Continued on page 8

Continued from page 6

From Alberto's we continued to travel to Concepcion where the symposium was held. The auditorium was huge, as over 1,200 people attended. At the end of the symposium it was a moving experience to see and hear this number of people singing their national anthem with great gusto. We were told that 25 percent of these people did not yet have hives, but wanted to get into beekeeping. A number of beekeepers worked together in small co-operatives that ran approximately 400 hives and extracted their honey in a central shed. The extraction facility we saw was dirt and concrete floored with unlined walls: they were in the process of upgrading the facility as income would allow.

Between the symposium in Chile and the one in Argentina, we were treated to a homestay with the Vice President of the Red Nacional Apicola (equivalent of the National Beekeepers' Association) in Colliguay, a vast valley covered in open shrubs/small trees with pasture beneath — some clover but the rest of the pasture species were rough grasses more like tussock. In this region, their main honey flow was coming in while we were there, and they get a secondary flow in November if the region does not dry out too much. We walked up into the hills and could hear an immense hum in the air from the bees working the many nectar sources in the region. We were told that it was shaping up to be a good season.

Colliguay Valley



Top of Colliguay Valley

To get to the head of this valley was over an hour's drive up a dirt/metal dusty road. Once you get off the main six-lane highway and out of the small towns, most of the roads are of this nature. The six-lane highway was all tolled: after 50–60 kms you would reach another of these toll areas and have to pay the equivalent of US$2.00. This roading system was far superior to our state highway; not a potholed and forever-repaired roading network.

We also briefly visited a bee disease diagnostic lab. We were told that they do not have American foulbrood, or European foulbrood, but had found Tracheal mite (*Acarpis woodi*) in the central regions and like us they had *Varroa destructor*. They also do not have Africanised bees. There had been a small outbreak of American foulbrood in the north of the country, but they had destroyed the hives by burning.

After the weekend visit in Colliguay, we travelled back into Santiago where we did a bit of sightseeing, visiting the museum and art gallery. For us, learning to travel on the underground rail system was a real eye-opener. Trains arrive approximately every five minutes, so the substations never seemed to be very full even though Santiago has a population of seven million.

We were also taken to visit the Catholic University of Chile, the main university and the one that everyone wants their children to attend. There we met with Professor Gloria Montenegro, who has been heading a group looking at the native flora of Chile. She has produced an upmarket book on their flora, which I feel would be something we should do for our flora. So far their emphasis has been on pollen analysis of their flora and propolis analysis, but they are now starting to look at the honey that they produce — and looking at the special properties like antioxidant values. They want to be able to find something special so they can patent it. Everyone had heard of Dr Peter Molan and what he had done with Manuka honey, and they wished to emulate this success.

Our overall impression of central Chile was that it was a beautiful place, second only to New Zealand. Many parts that we saw were similar to parts of New Zealand. The hospitality of the people in Chile was overwhelming — they would not allow us to pay for meals or wine. A professional driver was used to transport us around, and we were escorted to most places. Santiago itself is a city that seems to have managed to blend the old architecture with the new, and despite not having a welfare system, there were few beggars evident, other than at the entrances to the underground.

Lasting impressions of the country:

- you need to be used to long distance travel in order to get from one region to another. Chile is 2,604 miles long (over 4,000 kms)
- Pisco sour — their national drink — it's so refreshing
- the people just love to hear the sound of their voice — what we say in 10 words, they will take 25. It's no wonder that their symposiums always ran overtime!
- we should never complain about the length of the day when we run seminars: try a day that runs from 8.30 am to 11 pm — then going out for a meal
- Latin American people love to sing and dance, and are very proud of their heritage
- Chileans are so hospitable and love giving small gifts.

Both Tony and I want to go back, especially to visit the many friends we have made, but also to see the northern Atacama desert region as well as the southern region, including Patagonia, said to be similar to Fiordland in the South Island.

Chileans' reciprocal visit

On 19 November, ten Chileans ventured into Auckland. I was contacted to help to prepare an itinerary for the group, that consisted of three beekeepers, one exporter, several government officials, and one scientist who carried out diagnostic work.

They were based in Auckland, so we had to organise visits around this constraint. They had hoped to meet with MAF and New Zealand Food Safety Authority about exporting and our traceability system, but with the short timeframe we were unable to do this.

We organised several beekeeper visits so that they could talk to and learn from our beekeepers. I would like to thank them all for making time for this to happen at such a difficult time of the year.

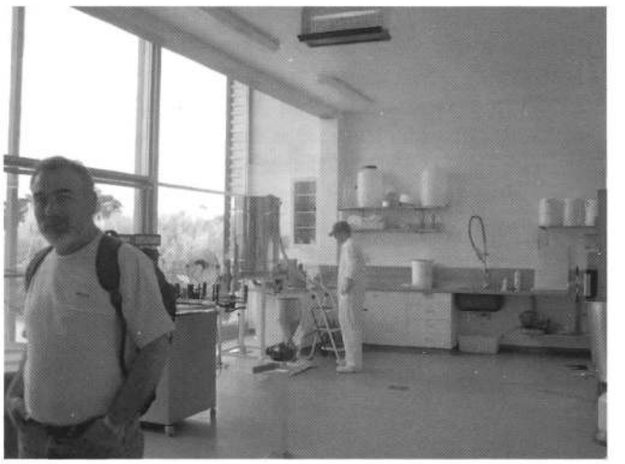
While we were in Chile, we realised that they did not have a very well developed domestic market: their per capita consumption is only around 200 grams compared to New Zealand's two kilograms per person. So we decided to take them to a company that does value-added product to show them what can be done to promote bee products.

For this we chose Maureen Maxwell's establishment BeesOnline at Waimauku, west of Auckland. Here we hosted them to lunch at the café that specialises in food prepared using different types of honey.

Entrance to BeesOnline Factory

The Chileans were blown away with what Maureen has achieved. They were impressed with the processing area that was set up with educating the public in mind, as well as the range of products BeesOnline produces and sells from the premises as well as to boutique outlets within New Zealand and overseas. The food and locally produced wines completed the overall first-class impression given to the group. We were treated to much singing and laughter on the way back to Auckland.

Maureen Maxwell talking to Chileans



Processing area at BeesOnline

We also arranged a meeting with James Driscoll, the Manager of our American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy, as they wanted to know how the NPMS works to determine if they can set up something similar in Chile to deal with unwanted diseases.

The programme ended with a visit to Dr Mark Goodwin at HortResearch, where he talked to them about varroa research, pollination, and American foulbrood.

Again, I would like to extend my appreciation to James and Mark for hosting the group. I believe this is the beginning of some important exchanges between the two countries that share so much in common, and can foster relations that could be mutually beneficial to both New Zealand and Chilean beekeepers.

- Jane Lorimer

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From the colonies

Hawkes Bay Branch

So far the weather in November has been quite warm although a bit of rain would be nice. Swarming has been exceptionally bad this year, with many hives leaving home for no apparent reason (poor mating in the autumn causing substandard queens may be part of the answer). Once again bees in the apple orchards have been poisoned; I did not have much of a problem but some of my colleagues have had poisoning so bad that not only the bees are poisoned but up to half the brood in the hives was also dead. We are in discussions with Pipfruit New Zealand at the moment and hope something can be worked out, but with the multitude of crops in this area, all of which have potential to poison hives, I sometimes wonder where it will all end. The banning of carbaryl would be a good start.

Varroa has spread to virtually all parts of Hawke's Bay, a few hives died last autumn and many that were not treated have such high mite loads they have either died this spring or will die soon. Some good news: on our local diseaseathon no AFB was found.

- John Berry

Canterbury Branch

After a slow start to the spring and poor matings to boot the last month has been a complete turnaround. With a 'bit' of extra effort things seem to be back on track and the season is looking like it could be OK.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year (i.e., two inches of rain on Christmas Day!)

The organisation for 2005 Conference is coming along well and we will be in a position to start revealing our programme in the new year. We have a link on the NBA website to keep punters up to date.

The date for conference this year is Monday 4 July to Thursday 7 July 2005 (inclusive). The venue is the 'Chateau on the Park', in central Christchurch.

- Brian Lancaster

Southland Branch

Southland has experienced its usual mixed weather bag this spring. Fortunately a spell of generally good weather has allowed good matings of young queens and produced a very good flow of hawthorn honey — incidentally another plant on the hitlist of the pure NZ conservation police. However, in general the bush is late, with the kamahi yet to show much.

I write this in late November with a return to winter — fresh snow on the hills, cold winds and intermittent hail, the 30 litres of syrup already consumed by many hives will need to be augmented. While some baleage has been made — not much use to us — many paddocks around the province are showing minimal grass cover and soil temperatures are hovering around 11 degrees.

Opposition to the proposed varroa PMS remains high but so is the degree of inertia and cynicism; by the time you read this no doubt we'll know what is to happen.

Generally there is a spirit of optimism in the South, with several businesses expanding and seeking ways to maximise returns from the various flows around the district.

The inclement weather has brought the Branch AFB audit to a temporary halt; just over half of the twenty selected apiaries have been checked and all will be completed before Christmas.

The Southland field day will be held in Te Anau on 5 February 2005. The venue is Doug and Barbara Lomax's new base at 61 William Stephen Road: turn off the Manapouri Rd 2 km from the township. As well as the usual interesting beekeeping programme, a number of friendly alpacas will be present for you and the family to meet. Programme details will be available on the NBA website in late January. Plan to arrive before 10 am. Bring your lunch: we provide refreshments and there will be a barbecue in the evening.

All NBA members are urged to attend; others are welcome.

- Don Stedman

Apicultural exotic disease surveillance report 2003–2004

David McMillan
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This report summarises the apicultural exotic disease surveillance activity for the year from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004.

Honey bee exotic disease surveillance is a multifaceted programme consisting of:

- hive inspection and sampling
- reporting on activities and findings
- maintaining records of beekeepers, apiaries, hives and bee diseases in an apiary database
- beekeeper extension and education
- screening of exotic disease enquiries.

Surveillance is conducted for the following exotic honey bee diseases, pests and undesirable genetic strains:

- European foulbrood (*Melissococcus plutonius*)
- Small Hive Beetle (*Aethina tumida*)
- the parasitic fly (*Braula coeca*)
- Tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*)
- Asian mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae*)
- *Tropilaelaps koenigerum*
- Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) in the South Island only, as varroa is present in the North Island
- *Varroa jacobsoni*
- *Varroa underwoodi*
- *Euvarroa sinhai*
- Africanised honey bee (*Apis mellifera scutellata*)
- Cape bee (*Apis mellifera capensis*)
- *Apis* species other than *mellifera*

Hive inspection and sampling

The hive inspection and sampling programme has four components:

1. high-risk area inspection and sampling
2. home apiaries inspection and sampling
3. export sampling
4. investigation of suspect exotic diseases.

1. High-risk areas

Throughout New Zealand 23 geographic areas, 13 in the North Island and 10 in the South Island, have been classified as being at high risk because they have the greatest potential for entry of exotic bee diseases. These areas include ports, airports, cities and tourist destinations.

The target is to inspect and sample a total of 400 apiaries from the high-risk areas, which represents 26% of apiaries in each area. All hives in each apiary are:

- inspected for signs of exotic bee disease, and any suspicious bees or larvae are sampled
- sampled by taking at least 50 bees from each hive and testing them for internal mites using the tracheal sectioning method
- tested for external mites using a 24-hour miticide and sticky board.

This season 313 high-risk apiaries were inspected, which is 87 apiaries short of the target.

2. Home apiaries

Because an exotic disease may not appear first in one of the high-risk areas, commercial beekeepers' home apiaries are tested. Home apiaries are defined as those apiaries located at a beekeeper's base of operations, which typically contains storage sheds and a honey extraction plant. Because beekeepers frequently bring hives and equipment from other apiaries to the home apiary, it is likely that any exotic disease introduced into a beekeeping business will be transferred relatively quickly to the home apiary, making it a useful sampling point.

The target is to inspect and sample 100 home apiaries each year. All hives in each apiary are:

- inspected for signs of exotic bee disease, and any suspicious bees or larvae are sampled
- sampled by taking at least 50 bees from each hive and testing them for internal mites, using the tracheal sectioning method
- tested for external mites using a 24-hour miticide and sticky board.

This season 61 home apiaries were inspected, which is 39 apiaries short of the target.

3. Export apiaries

All apiaries that supply live bees or queens for export have a composite bee sample taken as a non-high-risk sample. The bees are tested for external and internal mites. The target is 300 samples.

This season 386 export apiaries were inspected and tested, which is 86 more than the target.

4. Investigation of suspected exotic honey bee diseases

Each year MAF and AgriQuality Limited receive a number of calls from beekeepers reporting suspected exotic diseases or unusual symptoms in hives. AgriQuality worked with

MAF's National Centre for Disease Investigation (NCDI) to screen these calls and determine whether sampling was justified. Of the calls received this year, 19 resulted in further investigation and sampling. There were three calls for internal mites, five for external mites, two for Small Hive Beetle, five for European Foulbrood and four swarm investigations.

As Table 1 and the preceding narrative shows, the target for number of apiaries inspected was not met. Beekeepers were asked to inspect their own hives on a voluntary basis. In the past, authorised apiary inspectors have been used on a paid basis to make up any shortfall. However, budgetary constraints prevented this during the 2003/2004 season.

Over and above this sampling programme, 402 apiaries containing 3,562 hives in the South Island, and 71 apiaries containing 700 hives from the lower North Island, have been sampled for varroa under a separate varroa surveillance programme. The South Island is believed to be varroa-free and a varroa surveillance programme, using a miticide and sticky boards, is in place to detect an incursion of varroa into the South Island. The spread of varroa into the south-eastern North Island was also monitored. All sticky boards collected in this programme were inspected for other exotic bee pests as well as varroa.

All hives inspected, sampled and tested for exotic bee diseases were negative except for two hives in the South Island, where a single varroa mite was found from each. The details for these findings are stated in the following two paragraphs.

South Island Varroa Situation

On 4 June 2004 a single *Varroa destructor* mite was found on the surface of a sticky board from an apiary near Oxford in Canterbury, as part of the apiculture exotic disease surveillance programme. An exotic pest response was initiated. On 7 June, again as part of the apiculture exotic disease surveillance program, a second *Varroa destructor* mite was found on the outside of the plastic wrapping of a sticky board from an apiary near Murchison on the West Coast.

During the exotic pest response over 15,500 hives associated with these apiaries in Oxford and Murchison were tested. No further mites were found, and as a result, the response was drawn to a close on 11 August 2004. On the basis of the negative test results, and the findings of audits of the varroa surveillance testing process, MAF concluded it was probable that the varroa finds at Oxford and Murchison were the result of cross-contamination either from North Island surveillance samples, or from equipment used in the testing process. However, the possibility also remains that there may be a low-level population of varroa somewhere in the South Island that was not detected by the extensive sampling in the two areas.

A further report detailing the investigation will be published in *Surveillance* at a later stage.

Table 1 Number of apiaries surveyed

Samples tested to 30 June 2004 for:	***Routine samples (apiaries)***	***Suspect samples***	***Total samples***	***MAF specification***
Internal parasites	760	3	763	800
External parasites	760	5	765	800
	Inspected (apiaries)	*Suspect samples*	*Total samples*	*MAF specification*
European foulbrood	374	5 containing 29 larvae	5 containing 29 larvae	500 inspections, with any suspect larvae sampled for laboratory diagnosis
Small Hive Beetle	374	2	2	500 inspections, with any suspect beetle or larvae sampled for laboratory diagnosis
Exotic bee species	374	0	0	500 inspections, with any suspect bees sampled for laboratory diagnosis
Swarms from ports	0	4	4	Swarms are tested for all exotic diseases and pests

Reports

Each year, surveillance activity is reported by AgriQuality Ltd for MAF and *The New Zealand Beekeeper* magazine. These reports are used to meet international reporting requirements of New Zealand's bee health status, and for keeping New Zealand beekeepers informed of surveillance activities.

Apiary database

During the year AgriQuality Limited continued to maintain an apiary database. It is a legal requirement that all beekeepers are registered and provide the location of their apiaries. Apiaries are geo-referenced, which allows planning of detailed disease surveys. Beekeepers are required to inspect their hives annually and report any cases of American foulbrood disease (*Paenibacillus larvae*) as well as suspect exotic diseases. Beekeepers must also furnish a return each year updating all apiary records.

Beekeeper extension and education

A series of articles have been written for beekeepers and submitted for publishing in *The New Zealand Beekeeper* magazine. These articles cover surveillance issues relating to exotic pests and diseases, and their relevance to the New Zealand beekeeping industry. During the 2003–2004 season, articles were published on the following subjects:

- Exotic honey bee disease surveillance programme
- A New Perspective On The Africanized Honey Bee in New Zealand
- Asian Mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae*)
- Inspecting Hives for Small Hive Beetle.

A pamphlet on exotic diseases was included with the registration pack for over 400 new beekeepers. The Exotic Honey Bee Disease website will soon be available on the World Wide Web.

Technical development

To ensure the technical robustness of the surveillance programme, the relevant national and international literature on exotic bee diseases and pests was reviewed. New surveillance techniques and potential new bee pests were also reviewed and risks of introduction to New Zealand were assessed. As part of this review process a surveillance technique for Small Hive Beetle was tested in an exotic bee disease response simulation. AgriQuality Limited maintained a group of apicultural technical experts who are competent in bee disease recognition and control.

About the Apiary

At this time of the year most beekeepers are very happy and on an emotional high. The honey flow is on and nectar is pouring into the hives. All the hard work of feeding, requeening and getting the hives to a strong population is now paying dividends.

At the time of writing this, most of my hives are five high; the last two supers being three-quarter depth honey supers with eight drawn frames evenly spaced. I'm on a 10-day rotation, checking to see if the hives need more supers and adding them to the ones where the bees have started storing honey in the middle of the top super. The idea is to give them enough comb space to store the honey before they have to start capping it. Just before adding more supers I check that the bees haven't started building brace comb between the frames. If they have it means the spacing between the frames is a little wide, so I break away the brace comb and reverse the frame (end to end) so that the bees don't have the foundation to rebuild the brace comb. I want fat, smooth-surfaced frames that are easy to extract.

Sometimes I'll come across a hive that hasn't moved upward into the honey supers but the third super is packed out and capped. These hives tend to store the honey from the top downwards and won't go up even if they are running out of storage space below. In this case I'll lift the third super up and add a new one underneath the fully capped super. At the same time, I'll add foundation frames into the middle of the brood nest to give the bees something to do. At this time of the year it's easy to get those old, broken-lugged drone brood frames out of the brood nest and into an upper super so they can be removed when the honey comes off. Once extracted, they will be out of the system and melted down or put aside for the winter fire.

Making a solar wax melter

With the warm weather now with us, the solar wax melter is working, cleaning up some of the frame scrapings. If the top edges of the melter are sealed with a little foam plastic, it can easily get up to 150 degrees centigrade (my digital thermometer doesn't go any higher than this). I've had a melter for over 20 years and it still works well, the only maintenance being a yearly squirt of oil on the wheels. We have a small lawn, so we need to move the melter around to keep it in the sun. If you are considering making a solar wax melter, bear in mind two important points: (1) the top sheet of glass should be safety glass, as you don't want it to smash if a child falls on to it (glass is easier to replace than a child); and (2) you should drill six evenly spaced 2-mm holes through the frame, from the outside into the air space between the sheets of glass. These holes prevent the inner sheet of glass from cracking when the air between the sheets of glass heats up.

Daily maintenance of the melter: all that's required is to add a little water to the bottom of the mould (an old baking tin), which makes it easy to remove the wax when it's cold, and the odd scrape to remove slumgum and old comb when it builds up. Slumgum contains a little wax, cocoons and other bits, so can be burned or used to make compost. When the weather is hot and the melter is working well, it's possible to refill it with old comb three times a day. Isn't the sun wonderful?

Swarm control and extracting

It's been a very busy spring but despite splitting almost half my hives and making strong nucs, I've still lost 20 swarms. Some of the splits I'd made have also swarmed (the two super-high ones). In talking to other beekeepers, they have had similar situations occur, especially in the year after the varroa mites had killed all the feral hives. Seems to me there isn't the competition for pollen and nectar and the hives get overstimulated and just take off. It's really disappointing when a hive swarms but even those that have swarmed are still very strong: the virgins have mated and the bees are working. I think it's going to be one of our better honey production years and it looks like I'll be starting to extract before Christmas if this warm weather continues.

Hobbyists should endeavour to get the honey supers off and extracted when the frames are fully capped. Don't let your hives get too high — it tends to draw attention to the fact that you have a hive in the garden, often followed by a nuisance report to the council. This sort of situation happened to us when new people moved in next door, so I moved the hive away but left a stack of supers in its place. The complaints continued until the council officer came up and inspected the empty supers. We didn't have any further problems after this. Now I keep a little nuc in the garden to pollinate the trees and strawberries but move it away as soon as we start extracting. If I don't, the bees would meet me whenever I brought a load of honey home. It's so much easier unloading when there aren't any bees around.

Clearing the bees out of the super during the summer can sometimes be difficult when using escape boards, especially if the hive is full of bees. I have found that escape boards work better if there is a spare super underneath the one to be removed. This allows most of the bees to clear overnight and the few that remain can be brushed or shaken out early in the morning when the super is removed. Remember that the bees will not leave brood. For those who do not use queen excluders, you might find a few cells of drone brood along the bottom edge of the honey frames. Scrape them flat or remove them before you put the escape under the super. The bees clean up the mess and will then leave the super. (Beekeepers who use excluders don't have this problem, as all the brood is confined to below the excluder.)

Try and extract the supers as soon as they come off the hive, while they are still warm, as the honey flows better than when the frames have cooled. If you want to store honey supers for a day or two, place a 60-watt incandescent bulb in an empty super, cover the super with a queen excluder, then place a sheet of oven foil on top so that the whole excluder is covered. Then place up to four supers of honey on top and cover with a lid. The foil dissipates the heat from the bulb, which stops the frames immediately under the bulb from melting.

After you finish extracting, don't put wet (extracted) supers back on the hive until after it's dark. If you do it during the day, the bees will be stimulated into looking for a nearby source of honey and will fly around your immediate neighbourhood looking for it. This tends to upset your neighbours.

Having a hive in the garden also has its advantages. You are so close by and notice things that a commercial beekeeper misses. I once noticed the hive beginning to swarm. The bees had just started pouring out of the hive so I immediately turned on the hose and had the sprinkler playing over the hive. The bees went back in again and that afternoon I was able to remove the queen cell I'd missed. I gave the hive another super and the bees settled down to gathering nectar.

'How much honey should you remove?' is a question new beekeepers always ask. Generally you want to have a full super of honey on the hive going into winter. This can be achieved by leaving at least one super on the hive for the bees and removing the rest; or removing most of the honey as it's ready and start feeding sugar syrup in March until the bees have a super of capped honey.

Looking after caged queens

I received a letter from Gary Jeffery, a queen breeder in the South Island, in response to my article on looking after caged queens in the October issue:

> *Reading your article on looking after caged queens, I felt that the recommendation to give cages 2 drops of water twice a day, should have been 1 drop every two days. Too much water can make the candy sticky with the loss of queens and escorts.*
>
> *I used to give water to caged queens before posting and also when held, but in recent years found that the bees did better if not given any water at all providing the candy was of good quality.*
>
> *We used to have trouble with the bees fouling the cages after a few days, but thanks to advice from Russell Berry, this has been reduced by keeping the queens a bit warmer than previously (not too hot). Nowadays I just wrap them in a towel and put in the linen cupboard. If only one or two queens, put them in my shirt pocket during the day as ideal temperature. If you have a tolerant wife you could use your pyjama pocket at night.*

Thanks, Gary. I must admit my mistake. I haven't held caged queens for longer than a day and I use different mailing cages (AZ-BZ cages). A queen is put in each cage and the queen cages are put into a small 'banking' transport cage. Young bees are then shaken into the banking cage to look after the queens. If the queens are not used that day, the sealed queen cages are placed on top of the frames of a queenless nuc overnight. The bees in the nuc look after the queens.

I also don't make up queen candy but use an alternative I found that works for me: half a Heards barley sugar, which is as sweet as queen cage candy. If a malted barley sugar is used, the queen is out in two days. Use a plain barley sugar and the queen is out in three days. The timing of the release also depends upon the moisture in the hive. Higher moisture levels allow the bees to eat the barley sugar away a little quicker.

Future beekeepers?

Apart from fieldwork this month, we have been answering beekeeping questions from a couple of classes of nine-year-old children. Mary-Ann discussed bees. The children sent us thank you cards they had made and they held a bee dance where all the children got dressed up as bees for a day. Apart from studying social insects, they are also learning to use computers and have been emailing questions to us.

Giving written answers takes a lot longer than a verbal answer and you have to make sure of your facts, so I have been using R A Grout's *The Hive and the Honey Bee* and Robert B Gulliford's *A Dictionary of Scientific and Practical Beekeeping* (an Australian publication) as reference guides.

One of the questions was 'how much nectar does a bee carry?' Answer: a bee's crop is capable of holding 100 millilitres, but the average load is 30–40 ml (a tiny amount). It took ages to find the answer in *The Hive and the Honey Bee*, as you have to search multiple references but only took a minute after working out what to look under 'honey sac'. We had to tell them that we just didn't have time to answer any more questions after devoting a wet day to answering them.

If you are ever asked to address a class of children, do it. An observation hive is essential and you'll be amazed at how much they know and you will have to choose your words carefully when the subject of sex comes up — which it always does. An interesting exercise, and maybe the seed could be sown towards producing a future beekeeper someday.

Things to do this month

Keep down the grass in front of the hives. Some beekeepers will still need to continue swarm control measures and hive feeding (those down south or inland where the flow is about to begin). Check for failing queens and have nucs on hand to requeen and boost the hive's population. Introduce nucs to any swarms you collect after treating them for mites (North Island only) and dispatching the swarm queen. Super hives, prepare the honey house, sanitise everything before you start as the equipment has been lying idle and could be slightly dusty. Extraction would have already started in some areas, but make sure to do an AFB check before removing any honey off a hive. Fit foundation to comb honey frames.

And take a break with your family over Christmas. The bees will survive a few days without you. Happy Christmas and have a prosperous New Year.

- Frank Lindsay

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First National Certificate in Apiculture (Beekeeping) graduates

Kieran Chisnall, from Havelock North, and Carl Lie, from Sweden, became the first-ever students to graduate with the two new National Certificates in Apiculture Level 2 and Level 3, at the Telford Rural Polytechnic graduation ceremony in Balclutha on 26 November 2004.

Both students have completed the full one-year programme and will graduate with the Telford Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3) that includes the two national certificates and the Telford Certificate in Queen Bee Rearing (Level 4).

Telford Rural Polytechnic is the national training institute for beekeeping in New Zealand and runs full-time, correspondence and block courses in beekeeping.

The National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 and 3 courses are unit standard-based, with students gaining a total of 126 NZQA credits from both programmes. The two National Certificates in Apiculture were developed jointly with the Agriculture Institute Training Organisation (AgITO), Telford Rural Polytechnic and representatives of the commercial apiarists and AgriQuality NewZealand Ltd. The Level 2 qualification is for a beekeeper's assistant and aims at providing skills for beekeepers working under supervision in the commercial industry. The Level 3 qualification is for a leading hand and aims at providing skills for beekeepers that will take a supervisory role in a commercial beekeeping enterprise.

Kieran Chisnall was awarded the New Zealand Honey Industry Trust bursary of $3,200 and the Beeline Supplies bursary of $300, as well as the Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies award for effort and diligence. Carl Lie travelled from Sweden to undertake the course and was awarded the Airborne Honey bursary of $300, the Telford Certificate in Queen Bee Rearing with distinction and the Graeme Clark Cup for the best Queen Bee breeder.

The two students have also passed First Aid certificates, GrowSafe certificates, Food Safety certificates and passed the National Beekeepers' Association industry Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement exam (DECA).

Dr David Woodward
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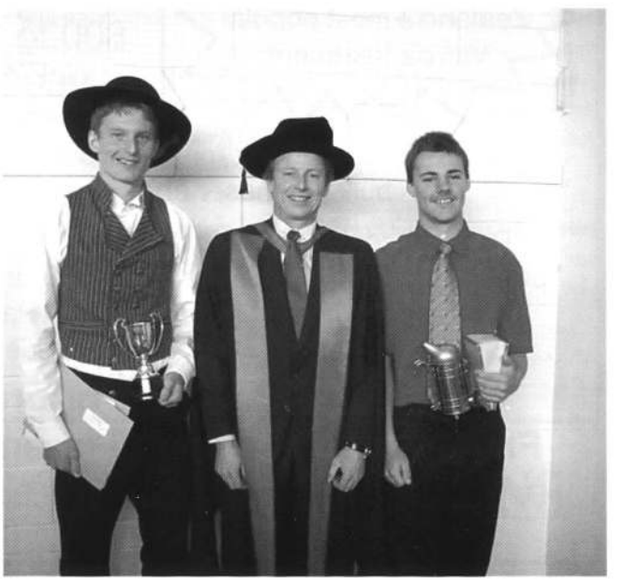

Left to Right: Carl Lie, Dr David Woodward and Kieran Chisnall

Photos: Telford Rural Polytechnic.

Trees and shrubs of New Zealand:

Cyathodes fraseri

Maori name: Patotora
Common name: Bronze Heath

The Patotara is a member of the Heath family. A small erect or prostrate struggling plant, the small leaves have a thorn-like tip.

The flowers are white and bell-shaped and are large in proportion to the rest of the plant. In large areas of Patotara the sweet scent from the flowers can fill a valley.

The orange berries are apricot-like in flavour and are often collected by Maori children.

This plant is extremely abundant in dry situations throughout New Zealand.

It yields a greenish nectar of a medium-amber colour. The flavour can often be detected in our clover honey. Although the flavour is not unpleasant, it can lower the grade of honey. It flowers from August to January depending on locality, and is often worked by bees for a yellow pollen.

The Maori used the roots of the plant along with other plant materials when making perfume. The Patotara root has a scent similar to clover.

- Tony Lorimer

Cyathodes fraseri

Wayward bees

On 9 March 2004, my friend and I were in the middle of taking off honey when we received a call reporting a swarm of bees in a central city carpark. When we arrived in town, there were no bees in sight so we thought that they had moved on. This hunch soon proved to be correct, as we found groups of people moving around talking about bees, but none in sight. Questioning revealed that they were the staff that had been evacuated from the second floor of an office building because of the danger posed by these stingers.

The swarm had drifted off but had left many bees that had moved in through the open windows on the northern side and were buzzily trying to find their way out. With a ladder provided by one brave staff member we quickly gave them all a taste of 'the powder'.

Then things warmed up as the smoke detectors set off the fire alarms. The few staff remaining quickly moved out of both floors as two fire engines arrived, with sirens blaring. We exterminators quietly disappeared, having decided that next time we would just use fly spray inside a building.

- Ron Morison

Editor's note: you can find more examples of wayward bees in the photo collage on page 28

Fungicides and Almonds

Fungicides used on almond crops during pollination periods were responsible for 100% brood mortality and some deaths of adult bees.

It is understood, although not confirmed, that the deaths took place over a few days and because the field force did not appear drastically affected, the poisoning went unnoticed.

The research proved that regular inspection of colonies and withholding of sprays or the withdrawal of colonies was essential during pollination periods.

- From the *Australasian Beekeeper*, October 2004

Why have a Pest Management Strategy for American foulbrood disease?

Mark Goodwin
HortResearch
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American foulbrood (AFB) disease of honey bees can be found in almost every country and is considered to be the worst disease of bees. Once the disease reaches a certain level it will always kill the colony. Any colony then introduced to the used equipment will also die. Unchecked incidences of the disease can reach 100%. In the 1900s AFB nearly destroyed the infant beekeeping industry in New Zealand.

Because of the severity of the disease every country uses one of two strategies for control.

1) Antibiotics

Most countries, e.g., USA and Canada, feed antibiotics to control AFB. This usually consists of feeding all colonies once or twice a year to prevent the disease, or just treating infected colonies. In the short term feeding antibiotics to honey bees is a cost-effective solution which allows management of the disease in a way that is compatible with normal beekeeping activities. However, in the long term there are problems associated with the use of antibiotics such as residues in bee products and treatment failure due to AFB developing resistance. Canada, USA and Argentina are struggling with the resistance problem at the moment.

2) Search and destroy

Some countries, e.g., Australia and England, have had a search and destroy strategy to manage AFB. This usually consists of some sort of government programme where officials inspect colonies and beekeepers have to destroy any hives with AFB. The use of antibiotics is usually forbidden. This system has the advantage that it is sustainable and there are no resistance or residue problems. However, this strategy can be more expensive than the use of antibiotics due to the need for inspections and destruction of diseased colonies. In addition, the bigger, and often unrecognised cost associated with this strategy are those resulting from hive management restrictions needed to prevent the spread of AFB between colonies.

New Zealand beekeepers have traditionally chosen the search and destroy approach to control AFB. However, for this to be successful all beekeepers need to carry it out and one of the ways to achieve/enforce this is through supportive and empowering legislation. Whereas most beekeepers will successfully control AFB without the need for legislation some will not, and their hives will be a source of infection for their neighbouring beekeepers' hives. Without legislation there is nothing to stop beekeepers exposing AFB-infected equipment

to robbing bees, keeping hives with AFB, extracting honey from infected hives, etc.

Historically, the legislation needed to control AFB in New Zealand was in the 1967 Apiaries Act and the AFB control programme was paid for by government. However, about 10 years ago the government told the beekeeping industry that it was no longer going to pay for AFB control and that the legislation controlling AFB was going to be removed. The industry was then given two choices:

1) to have no legislative control over AFB. The end result of this would have been New Zealand beekeepers having to resort to feeding antibiotics to control AFB.

2) for New Zealand beekeepers to write their own legislation to control AFB. This legislation had to be written in the form of a Pest Management Strategy (PMS) under the Biosecurity Act.

As most New Zealand beekeepers do not wish to feed antibiotics to control AFB, the only option was to write a PMS. However, it quickly became apparent that the legislation controlling pest management strategies (the Biosecurity Act) was complex and clearly not designed to make it easy for an industry as small as the beekeeping industry to write one. To make matters more complicated, the Biosecurity Act was new and nobody had written a PMS before. So not only was it a steep learning curve for beekeepers, but also for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries that controlled the legislation.

The first requirement of the AFB strategy was to have a goal. A committee of beekeepers was formed which asked the industry for submissions. From these it was decided that the primary goal was to eradicate AFB from New Zealand.

The next step was to write how this would be achieved and explain why the approach taken was the best. After one year, seven drafts, 100 pages, 55,000 words, weeks of committee meetings and public meetings all over New Zealand, it was completed. The beekeeping industry had done which many thought was impossible for them: they had written a PMS.

The PMS is almost identical to the previous Apiaries Act, with only two major changes:

1) before the PMS, each year every registered beekeeper was sent a statement of inspection form under the Apiaries Act. This required beekeepers to provide a signed statement confirming that they had checked their hives for AFB. Unfortunately many forms were signed without the inspections being carried out, and many people signing forms were not competent at inspecting hives for AFB. The PMS changed this by requiring the inspections (certificate of inspections or COI) to be carried out by people (approved beekeepers or APs) who could prove they could recognise AFB. By being 'approved', beekeepers could also avoid having to provide a certificate of inspection for their own hives.

2) the PMS recognised that no outside agency could eradicate AFB. All it could do was help beekeepers to eradicate it by providing a free AFB testing service, counselling and an education programme.

So in conclusion, beekeepers probably had few other options but to have a PMS for AFB. AFB control has now been shifted from being a government responsibility to being a beekeeper responsibility. This is probably a good thing, although I am sure few beekeepers enjoy having to pay for the PMS. It is now left to beekeepers to make sure that the PMS works and eradication is achieved.

Italian beekeepers visit New Zealand (Gli apicoltori Italiani visitano Nuova Zelanda)

The week of 19–25 October saw the presence of three Italian beekeepers in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Daniela, Antonio and Andrea Lolacano were here on a short visit to get 'first hand' experience of New Zealand Kiwifruit pollination. These delightful and enthusiastic beekeepers got right amongst the bees, helping with all facets of Gold pollination. During their short stay, they worked hives to bring them to the New Zealand Standard, sugar-fed hives already on orchard, delivered hives and set them out in orchards and requeened non-Gold pollination hives.

New Zealand beekeeping is very different to Italy. Bees are not traditionally used in kiwifruit pollination in Italy, and where pollination is paid for the standards are lower. Opotiki Packing and Coolstore have developed a Gold Kiwifruit operation in the Latina area of Italy and want to use beehives of a similar standard to New Zealand for pollination, as they believe this will significantly increase crop loading, size and quality. The Lolacano boys were 'stunned' at the size and quality of the hives we produce and put into the orchards — quite beyond what they so far have managed to supply back home. They are taking back miles of video footage and many new and exciting ideas to try out. Italian beekeepers appear to be very traditional, with this family being the only ones in the Latina area willing to make the trip to learn how and what we do. Our ideas may or may not be applicable to beekeeping in Italy, but they are going to try.

A very enjoyable few days, with lots of laughter by all. Our back country roads and farm tracks were an experience in themselves for these boys from just outside Rome. A countryside empty of people, four-wheel drive tracks that looked like something out of Jurassic Park to Italians, and confined orchards to maneuver around caused many a nervous laugh. The parting feeling was that there will be a return visit by us and the boys are keen to return another day.

- Barbara and Allan Pimm

Daniela Lolacano (owner of an Italian beekeeping business), his dad Antonio, and brother Andrea. All three work in the business

Visiting Hikutaia Honey: Andrea Lolacano, Allan Pimm, Antonio, Daniela, Michael Woods. Michael is part of the Hikutaia honey team.

Letters to the Editor

NBA Executive's response to the Letter to the Editor regarding changes to the management of the AFB National Pest Management Strategy, November 2004 issue

As has been said in the letter from the former Operations Committee, there has been a significant move forward in the operation of the AFB NPMS, especially with the appointment of the Manager. James Driscoll will continue to carry out the day-to-day running of the NPMS in conjunction with our contractors, while the Executive moves more to its governance role.

It has been stated in other correspondence that those people who were on the Operations Committee will continue to be utilised as an advisory and resource group by James as and when needed to draft documents, carry out financial aspects of the NPMS, critique draft reports etc. This group is also likely to be expanded so that we have a greater resource available for giving feedback.

The Executive works well as a team and all realise that the responsibility of the management of the strategy ends with them. If a fault is identified after an audit has been undertaken it is the Management Agency; i.e., the Executive of the NBA, that is identified as being at fault — so if something has not been functioning in a timely manner to ensure that our duties as the Management Agency are met, we have to act. The change toward a resource group will mean that there is no confusion as to who is answerable to whom, and will mean that the operational aspects of the NPMS can be undertaken with little delay.

Note of interest to all Beekeepers

On 8 October 2004 legal history was made when a compensation ruling made under the Biosecurity Act by MAF was overturned in an arbitration ruling. A claim lodged in 2001 relating to having been disadvantaged by the implementation of the varroa control line was initially turned down. In a nutshell, after consultation with the Varroa Compensation Advisory Group, MAF had declined the claim lodged because of a breach under section 134(1)(b) of the Act. MAF's interpretation of section 162A(4)(c) was that any breach of the act was considered serious and significant and therefore no compensation was due.

We believed the breach was neither significant nor serious as our action did not contribute to the spread of varroa. We were therefore entitled to compensation due to lost income from the implementation of the 'line' and continued legal action under section 162A(4)(c) of the act.

In October 2004 the Arbitrator, Sir Ian Barker QC ruled against MAF, saying that the plaintiffs' breach was 'neither serious nor significant' in the sense that those words must be interpreted in Section 162A(4)(c) of the act. The result is that MAF pays full compensation costs and interest. Take note, beekeepers: this Act, like all others, is complex and legal advice is well worth the hassle. Our lawyer in this case was Glenn Dixon at Simpson Allan Law, Tauranga.

- Name withheld by request

NIWA's climate outlook: November 2004 to January 2005

Atmospheric pressure at mean sea level is expected to be lower than normal to the south and east of New Zealand, with stronger than normal west to southwest wind flows over the country. Sea surface temperatures around New Zealand are expected to be slightly below average (by as much as 0.5° C) over the next three months. Air temperatures are expected to be near average in the North Island and eastern South Island, and average or below average elsewhere. Rainfall is expected to be normal or below normal in the north and east of the North Island and the eastern South Island, and normal or above normal in western regions of both islands. Soil moisture levels and river flows are expected to be normal or above normal in the west of both islands and the south of the South Island, with normal or below normal soil moisture and streamflows in the north and east of the North Island and east of the South Island. Normal soil moisture and river flows are expected elsewhere. The tropical Pacific is currently in a weak El Niño state, which is likely to continue into early 2005.

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Danish honey retains its quality

It is becoming more and more difficult to import honey into Denmark because of the demands by the Danish Trading Standards and Food Authority. This is due to the demand that honey must not contain any residues of antibiotics. On the other hand it is not a problem for Danish honey to meet these demands, but it is beginning to become very difficult for foreign beekeepers to understand these standards of the Scandinavian market for honey.

This statement was made by Knud Hvam of Jakobsen & Hvam, of Aulumgaard Honey Farm, Denmark, who is Denmark's largest buyer of honey. Besides buying Danish honey Jakobsen and Hvam import 3000 tons of honey for use in the Danish and Scandinavian market every year.

But the demands of the Scandinavian consumers and health authorities, has now become so strict that it is almost impossible to import any foreign honey, says Knud Hvam.

A couple of years ago we ourselves enforced a ban on Chinese honey, followed by others around the world, due to the high concentration of residues of various medicines including antibiotics. We, therefore, started to import our honey from elsewhere. Now, however, the problem of our alternative source has become just as great as the problem we had with Chinese honey due to the residues of medicine, mostly antibiotics, in the honey. We are surviving on "old honey" which we have in our own store or buying in on the spot world market parcels of good quality honey, says Knud Hvam.

The problem with residues of medicines, chemicals, and antibiotics in honey is first and foremost due to the foreign beekeepers methods used to fight varroa mites, and both types of foulbrood American and European. It has become usual for some beekeepers to use a cocktail of antibiotics in countries outside of Denmark, to prevent diseases of various types in bees. These chemical, antibiotic or other medicines so called then remain in the honey. If these parcels of honey from outside of Denmark slip through the various countries veterinary food control system, then I can promise you the Danish food control authorities do not miss it. They pick it up in from the supermarket or shop shelves, trace it back to its source and ban its sale in Scandinavia.

On the other hand there is no problem with Danish honey, which shows that Danish beekeeping functions very effectively, due to Danish beekeepers not using antibiotics as preventative medicine, and also due to better hygiene in Danish beehives where all honeycombs are changed and replaced every year by all Danish beekeepers.

Therefore, in future, it will become more attractive to produce Danish honey. But he does not expect a price increase because of that. Danish honey needs to compete on the supermarket and shops shelves with marmalade, jam and other breakfast products. An increase in price will result in a reduction of sales of honey, believes Knud Hvam.

© Translation by David Ashton, from an article by journalist and beekeeper Benny Gade.

Honey Imports Under Review

The possibility of more honey and beehive products being allowed into New Zealand is a step closer to reality, with the completion and release of a new MAF import risk analysis on honey, pollen, royal jelly, propolis, beeswax and bee venom.

The risk analysis recommends safeguards that will enable the importation of honey and other bee products from more countries than at present. Currently, New Zealand allows the importation of honey and bee products from only a few Pacific Island nations.

The importation of bee products, especially honey, has been a contentious issue with Australia for over a decade, where the current ban is believed to be unjustified.

However, this risk analysis concludes that these products can be safely imported with appropriate safeguards to protect New Zealand from exotic pests and diseases, such as European foulbrood and small hive beetle.

The risk analysis is now out for public consultation.

The risk analysis can be viewed on the internet at http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests-diseases/animals/risk/index.htm

Or for a copy of the risk analysis, contact Martin Van Ginkel; PO Box 2526, Wellington. Phone: 04 470 2781. Email: Martin.van_Ginkel@maf.govt.nz .

Submissions and comments are invited until the end of February 2005.

Club Contacts & Beekeeping Associates

WHANGAREI BEE CLUB Meetings: 1st Saturday each month (except January) Time: 10 am, wet or fine (we are keen) Contact: Dave Trinder Phone: 09 433 8566 John Parsons Phone: 09 438 8766 Kevin Wallace Phone: 09 423 8642 (Wellsford)	**AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC** Meets 1st Saturday monthly at Unitec, Pt Chevalier, Auckland. Contact: Carol Downer, Secretary Phone: 09 376 6376 Email: fairy-angel-peewee@xtra.co.nz	**FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB** Meets second Sunday of each month at 10.00am for a cuppa and discussion. 10.30am open hives. Contact: Peter Biland Phone: 09 294 8365
HAWKES BAY BRANCH Meets on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm, Arataki cottage, Havelock North Contact: Ron Phone: 06 844-9493	**TARANAKI AMATEUR BEEKEEPING CLUB** Contact: Stephen Black 685 Uruti Road RD 48, Urenui Phone: 06 752 6860	**WANGANUI BEEKEEPERS CLUB** Meets on the second Wednesday of the month. Contact: Neil Farrer Phone 06 343 6248
MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets every 4th Thursday in the month at Newbury Hall, SH3, Palmerston North Contact: Frances Beech 35 Whelans Road, RD 1 Levin Phone: 06 367 2617	**WAIRARAPA HOBBYIST BEEKEEPERS CLUB** Meet 3rd Sunday of month (except January) at Norfolk Road, Masterton at 1.30 pm. Contact: Arnold Esler Phone: 06 379 8648	**WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSN** Meets every second Monday of the month (except January) in Johnsonville. All welcome. Contact: John Burnet 21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa, Wellington 6006 Phone: 04 232 7863 Email: johnburnet@xtra.co.nz
NELSON BEEKEEPERS CLUB Contact: Kevin Phone: 03 545 0122	**NORTH CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS CLUB** Meets the second Monday of April, June, August and October Contact: Mrs Hobson Phone: 03 312 7587	**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
CANTERBURY BRANCH Meets the second Tuesday of every month, February to October Contact: Roger Bray Phone: 03 308 4964	**SOUTH CANTERBURY BRANCH** Contact: Peter Lyttle Phone: 03 693 9189	**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. Contact Club Secretary: Margaret Phone: 03 415-7256 Email: flour-mill@xtra.co.nz
	NZ QUEEN PRODUCERS ASSN Contact: Mary-Anne Phone: 06 855 8038	

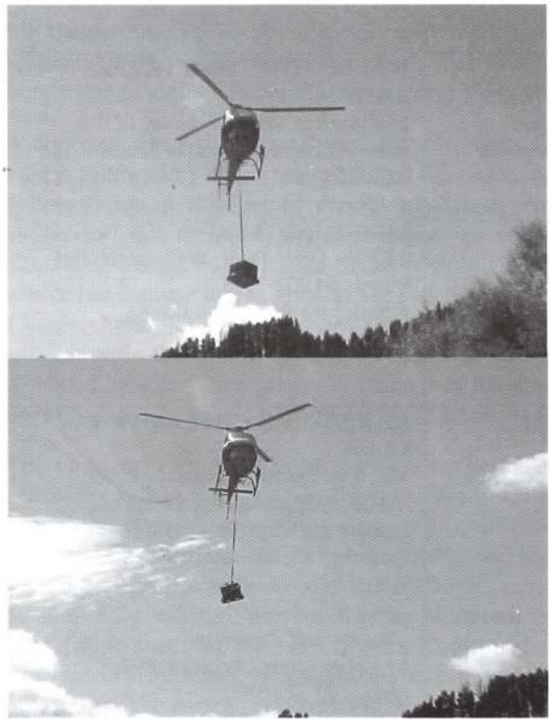
Is your group or Branch missing from here?
Please contact the National Beekeepers Association – inside front cover.

Photos you thought wouldn't make it to print!

Bees on a cliff in Napier

Photos: Ron Morison

Bees in a dogbox

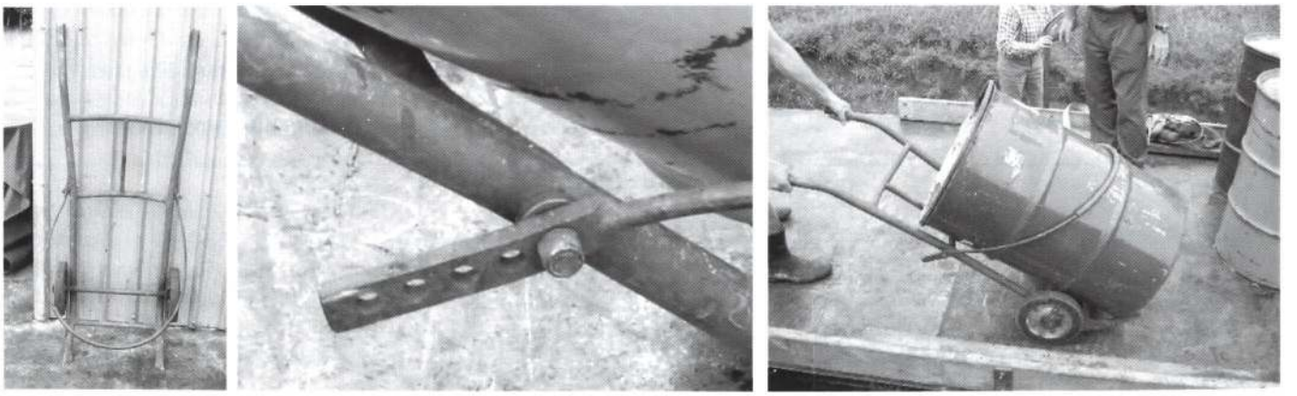


Bees being moved from a site in the Waitotara Valley. Allan Richards could not get a vehicle to the hives so had to chopper them out.

Photos: Ned Bates

Participants at an 'expanding options for New Zealand beekeepers' workshop, Hamilton, August 2004.

Photo: Bob Russell



I noticed the drum barrow while assisting to unload drums at Gary Tweeddales. It was an old type used for open top drums that used a round bar to hold the drum on while transporting. Very safe, I thought, and better than the attachment that just locks into the top of the drum rim.

Photos: Frank Lindsay