

Volume 13 No. 2



March 2005

The New Zealand

# BeeKeeper

Permit Post 

Wellington, N.Z.

Permit No. 154506

*It pays to get good pollination!*



*Nelson beekeeper  
Merle Moffitt measuring  
up her prize sunflower:  
3 metres tall;  
the flower is half a  
metre in diameter.*

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ISSN 0110-63325

The Official Journal of The National Beekeepers'  
Association of New Zealand Inc.

Published by Crown Kerr Printing  
P.O. Box 5002  
Dunedin, New Zealand

# NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NZ (Inc.) EXECUTIVE

**President: Jane Lorimer**  
Hillcrest Apiaries  
"Kahurangi-o-Papa"  
RD 3, Hamilton 2021  
Ph: 07 856-9625  
Fax: 07 856-9241  
Mobile (1st) : 027 496 9889  
Mobile (2nd): 027 294 6559  
email: hunnybee@wave.co.nz

**Vice President: Don Stedman**  
Catlins Apiaries  
Pine Bush  
RD1  
Wyndham  
Ph/Fax: 03 246 9777  
email: dstedman@xtra.co.nz



**Executive Secretary: Pauline Bassett**  
National Beekeepers Association  
Box 234, Te Kuiti  
Ph/Fax: 07 878 7193  
email: waihon@actrix.co.nz

**Executive: Bruce Stanley**  
196 Fosters Rd  
RD 1, Whakatane 3080  
Ph/Fax: 07 312 9028  
email: honeybee@clear.net.nz

**Executive: Roger Bray**  
Braesby Farm  
RD1  
Ashburton  
Ph/Fax: 03 308 4964  
email: birdsnbees@xtra.co.nz

**Executive: Bob Blair**  
157 Carlisle Rd  
Browns Bay  
Auckland 1310  
Ph/Fax: 09 479 4354

**Executive: Philip Cropp**  
Nelson Apiaries, Motupiko  
RD 2, Nelson  
Ph: 03 522 4130  
(Wk) 03 522 4413  
Fax: 03 522 4513  
Mobile: 027 482 9143  
email: nectar@ts.co.nz

**Hon. Librarian: Chris Taiaroa**  
43 Princes Street  
Waikari, Nth Canterbury 8276  
Ph/Fax: 03 314 4569  
email: chris.tony.taiaroa@clear.net.nz

<a href="http://www.nba.org.nz">www.nba.org.nz</a>	<b>AgriQuality phone: 0508 00 11 22</b>	<b>James Driscoll</b> AFB NPMS Manager PO Box 9098, Hamilton james@driscoll.pn	<b>Magazine subscriptions:</b> — 11 Issues — NZ \$66.00 GST inc Overseas Airmail US \$55.00
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**BRANCHES: The first named person is the President/Chairperson. The second is the Secretary.**

**NORTHLAND**  
**Simon Peacey**  
76 Malone Rd, RD 9  
Whangarei 0121  
Ph/Fax: 09 434 6344  
Mobile: 025 270 8922  
email: peacey@paradise.net.nz  
**Terry Gavin**  
PDC, Titoki 0250  
Ph: 09 433 1891  
Fax 09 433 1895  
Mobile: 021 257 6457  
email: terry.gavin@xtra.co.nz

**AUCKLAND**  
**Ian Browning**  
1824 Great South Rd  
RD 3,  
Drury  
Ph: 09 2360764  
**Bob Russell**  
101 Kern Rd  
RD 3,  
Drury  
Home Ph/Fax: 09 2948656  
Work Mobile: 027 2848951  
email: bob.russell@paradise.net.nz

**WAIKATO**  
**Russell Berry**  
Arataki Honey,  
2488 SH5 Waitapu  
RD 3, Rotorua 3221  
Ph: 07 366 6111  
Fax: 07 366 6999  
email: russell@arataki-honey-rotorua.co.nz  
**Cameron Martin**  
Haumea Road  
RD 1  
Galatea  
Ph: 07 366 4804  
Fax: 07 366 4804  
email: busy-bee@xtra.co.nz

**BAY OF PLENTY**  
**Ross Carroll**  
78 Laurel Drive  
RD 6  
Tauranga  
ph 07 552 4585  
email: rcarroll@clear.net.nz  
**Gerrit Hyink**  
271 Lindemann Rd  
RD 1  
Katikati  
Ph 07 549 1223  
Fax 07 549 3290  
email: hyink@xtra.co.nz

**POVERTY BAY**  
**Peter Burt**  
725 Back Ormond Road  
RD 1  
Gisborne 3801  
Ph: 06 868 4771  
email: pwburt@xtra.co.nz  
**Barry Foster**  
695 Aberdeen Road, Gisborne 3801  
Ph: 06 867 4591  
Fax: 06 867 4508  
email: bjfoster@xtra.co.nz

**SOUTHERN NORTH ISLAND**  
**RN (Neil ) Farrer**  
7 Nixon Street  
Wanganui  
Ph: 06 343.6248  
Fax: 06343.3275  
email: farrer@infogen.net.nz  
**Frank Lindsay**  
26 Cunliffe Street,  
Johnsonville,  
Wellington 6004.  
Ph/Fax: 04 478 3367  
email: lindsays.apiaries@xtra.co.nz

**MARLBOROUGH**  
**Will Trollope**  
RD 3, Blenheim 7321  
Ph: 03 570 5633  
**Tony Mulligan**  
Grazengrove  
Hammericks Rd  
RD 2, Blenheim 7321  
Ph: 03 578 2317

**NELSON**  
**Glenn Kelly**  
PO Box 421, Motueka  
Ph/Fax 03 528 8174  
email: glennkelly@xtra.co.nz  
**Michael Wraight**  
15 Titoki Place, Motueka 7161  
Ph/Fax: 03 528 6010  
email: wraight@xtra.co.nz

**CANTERBURY**  
**Roger Bray**  
Braesby Farm  
RD1  
Ashburton  
Ph/Fax: 03 308 4964  
email: birdsnbees@xtra.co.nz  
**Paul West (Pav)**  
Box 57, Ahaura  
Mobile: 025 748 466  
email: pav@badassbees.com

**HAWKE'S BAY**  
**John Berry**  
46 Arataki Rd,  
Havelock North  
Ph. 06 877-6205  
Fax: 06 877-4200  
email: jrberry@ihug.co.nz  
**Ron Morison**  
31 Puketapu Road,  
Taradale, 4001,  
Hawkes Bay  
Ph/Fax: 06 844 9493  
email: rmorison@clear.net.nz

**OTAGO**  
**Brian Pilley**  
45 Elwyn Crescent  
Green Island  
Dunedin  
Ph: 03 488 0151  
Fax: 03 488 0152  
email: beeline@free.net.nz  
**Peter Sales**  
"Te Ora", RD1, Port Chalmers  
Dunedin 9030  
Ph: 03 472 7220  
email: foxglove@paradise.net.nz

**SOUTHLAND**  
**Doug Lomax**  
81 Quintin Drive  
Te Anau  
Ph: 03 249 9099  
Fax: 03 249 9068  
**Don Stedman**, Catlins Apiaries  
Pine Bush RD1, Wyndham 9758  
Ph/Fax: 03 246 9777  
email: dstedman@xtra.co.nz

**NZ Beekeeper Printed & Published by:**  
**Crown Kerr Printing Ltd**  
48 Stafford Street, P.O. Box 5002, Dunedin.  
**Advertising:**  
Allan Middlemiss  
Telephone: 03 477 8109 Fax: 03 479 0753  
email: ckp@xtra.co.nz

**NBA membership & Magazine Subscriptions:**  
**Pauline Bassett**  
National Beekeepers Association  
Box 234, Te Kuiti  
Ph/Fax: 07 878 7193  
email: waihon@actrix.co.nz  
**Editorial/Publication:**  
**Nancy Fithian**  
8A Awa Road, Miramar, Wellington 6003  
Ph: 04 380 8801 Fax: 04 380 7197  
Mobile 027 238 2915  
email: fithian.jones@xtra.co.nz

# President's Report

January and February have indeed been very busy for your Executive, with almost all members being required to attend one or more meetings on behalf of our association.

## Market access

Probably one of the most crucial meetings was held in Christchurch on 17 February, to work with the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) over access to European Union (EU) markets. This access is crucial for our industry, as a significant portion of our bee product exports is destined for this area. The urgent need for this meeting had become apparent as several exporters were shortly due to begin their export season. If no product were to make it offshore due to certification issues, it would have had dire consequences on the prices for domestically sold product, greatly suppressing beekeeper returns. Roger Bray attended this meeting on your behalf. It sounds as though the meeting had a positive outcome, with the NZFSA announcing that they have negotiated new export certificates for the UK and Germany.

## Bee Products Standards Council

A Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) has been formed with representation from the New Zealand Honey Packers and Exporters Association, National Beekeepers Association, and the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group. The BPSC will have its inaugural meeting later in February or early March. Your NBA representatives will be Philip Cropp, Young Mee Yoon (from Comvita) and me. The BPSC will work with the NZFSA on market access issues: hoping to renegotiate export certificate requirements, continuing to develop the code of practice with the current working group, and maintaining the residue monitoring programme.

At the moment it looks as though the BPSC will be meeting face to face at least four times this year, as well as having up to six conference calls, as there is a huge amount of work to be done. Thankfully we will have the services of Jim Edwards as chairman, who has been involved in this area in the past when he worked for MAF. It will be the responsibility of the participant groups to meet the costs associated with this council. The possible cost involved has led to delays in getting it running, due to the Bee Industry Group's reluctance to commit to the group until the actual costs are known. The delay has proved very frustrating, as I see this council as a group that should be involved in putting in industry-backed submissions.

## Structure Review

It is pleasing to see that we have had a positive vote on the change to the Association Rules to allow for the setting up of a new ward structure. This was a weighted vote with the result of 350 votes for and 34 against. The return of envelopes sent out was reasonably high, indicating good membership response.

To move forward now, the draft rules will be referred to a solicitor for confirmation that nothing is out of order with

regards to meeting the Incorporated Society rules, and then they will be lodged with the Incorporated Society to become our rules. We can then proceed to set up ward voting and have representatives in place for this year's conference.

## Future bee research

On 3 February, Don Stedman and I attended a meeting at the University of Otago regarding discussion over future bee research and how we can ensure that bee research will continue. The New Zealand Apicultural Research Consortium has been agreed to, and the agreed mission statement is reproduced below.

### New Zealand Apicultural Research Consortium (NZARC)

#### Mission

To provide a comprehensive national approach to apicultural research — that encompasses pure, applied and new product discoveries.

#### Vision

To understand, protect, and promote the role of bees (and their products) in sustainable ecosystems whether they are natural or managed.

#### GOALS

- 1) Coordination of:
  - a. Bids for National and international funding for apicultural research
  - b. Honeybee research
  - c. Pollination research
  - d. Research into properties of bee products and pollination which may result in the development of commercial opportunities for the consortium or individual business.
- 2) Assessing National Research Priorities with regard to the:
  - a. Impacts and control of pests and diseases
  - b. Quantification of the importance and impacts of bees with respect to:
    - Conservation
    - Agriculture
    - Resource consent issues
- 3) Communication
  - a. Lobby local, national and international governments and organisation on issues relating to apiculture, bees and pollination.
  - b. Promote public awareness of issues relating to apiculture, bees and pollination.
- 4) Knowledge and Expertise
  - a. Assist the development of technical expertise and knowledge in apiculture, bees and pollination.
  - b. Develop the sharing of expertise and knowledge

A small committee has been set up to make sure this progresses, comprising me as an industry representative, Mark Goodwin as a Crown researcher, Peter Dearden as a University researcher, and David McMillan (who initiated this process with his talks with the University of Otago).

This committee will then need to discuss how wide a group this consortium should be, and make some suggestions as to how the consortium can work. This opportunity is an exciting one — especially if we can find ways to make it succeed. It will have spin-offs not only for the bee industry, but will also provide some stability for the researchers themselves if the group can secure ongoing funding.

### **Submission on the keeping of bees in urban areas**

A small group of beekeepers in Auckland and Southern North Island have been working on a submission on the keeping of bees in urban areas. This submission was sent to the Thames-Coromandel District Council as the council is reviewing its bylaws regarding the keeping of bees within town boundaries.

The group has put together a good submission that we believe we can amend slightly to become a briefing paper to other councils that will be reviewing their bylaws in the not-too-distant future. Within the submission we have included some guidelines for the keeping of bees on sections in town.

It is important to the NBA that the keeping of bees in urban areas continues due to the pollination benefits to urban gardens provided by the presence of bees. Many people are now realising that with the incursion of varroa, bees will disappear unless there are people willing to keep bees. It is in our association's interest to work with councils to ensure that the keeping of bees in urban areas is an allowable activity. We recognise the fact that many a hobbyist beekeeper goes on to become a semi-commercial or commercial beekeeper in the future — so we must help to protect this resource.

The Timaru District Council has also gone through the submission process and the Canterbury Branch of the NBA put in a submission in November 2004; the status quo has been maintained enabling bees to be kept in urban areas.

### **Apicultural Technical Workshop**

On 16 February, Frank Lindsay and Bob Blair (as our 'Biosecurity' person on the Executive) attended a workshop hosted by AgriQuality that reported on their trip to South Africa looking at the:

- Cape Honey bee — its biology and distribution
- spread of capensis bees into scutellata areas and its effect on commercial beekeeping, and the possible effects on NZ beekeeping
- the African Honey Bee and
- the small and large Hive Beetle.

By now you might have read Murray Reid's article 'Some other pests of honey bees of concern to New Zealand beekeepers' in the February issue of *The New Zealand Beekeeper*.

### **Bee Products Official Assurance guide**

The NBA Executive is in the process of drafting a response to this guide prepared by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority at the time of writing this article in mid-February. The deadline has been extended to 28 February, so we have time to get further input from others in the industry.

The NZFSA's proposal will add more paperwork to ensure complete traceability from the hive to the exporter, and possibly more costs for compliance and auditing. We have asked some questions to try to get clarification in these areas.

### **Code of Practice**

Members of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority who have been working with the industry are currently making their way around the country to get themselves more familiar with honey processing, and getting feedback from those involved in the trial of the COP. I hear via the grapevine that the NZFSA people may have got a little closer to the insect responsible than they may have liked! However, I am sure that the meetings have been invaluable for them to gain a good understanding of the different processes undertaken by many beekeepers in processing bee products.

### **Inaugural meeting of Varroa Agency Incorporated**

Roger Bray and Don Stedman both attended this meeting, where the organisation Varroa Agency Incorporated has been set up to manage the Varroa Pest Management Strategy. Steve Olds has been appointed to this board as the beekeepers' representative and Tony Tairaroa will be the substitute member for Steve's position on the board if Steve is unavailable. Steve is currently asking for an advisory beekeeper group to be formed that he can discuss practical beekeeping-related issues as the agency sets up the strategy.

The day after this meeting I had a phone call from Duncan Butcher, chairman of the board of Varroa Agency Incorporated, who was in Hamilton. He came out to meet and talk with me about the board and what they needed to achieve. I was heartened to hear him ask about our concerns over the Varroa PMS and our possible solutions that had largely been ignored by the board of inquiry. It appears that the board of Varroa Agency Incorporated will revisit issues like enhancing border control and the use of regularly monitored sentinel hives in high-risk areas, to see if opportunities exist to strengthen the strategy. If some of these things are done it may achieve better buy-in from South Island beekeepers to contribute to the strategy.

### **Complementary Medicines**

Philip Cropp attended a meeting in Christchurch in relation to which products will fall into the complementary medicines category. Medsafe has run these meetings throughout New Zealand. We will need to keep a close watch on what bee products may come under this regime and how it will affect production methods in order to sell products under this regime. Three consultation papers are up for discussion and submissions as part of the Trans-Tasman Therapeutic Products Agency Project (<http://www.jtaproject.com>).

### **Submissions due**

Two more submissions are due on 28 February — of greatest importance is the proposal on importation of bee products proposal from Biosecurity New Zealand/MAF. The other submission is on the domestic food review being undertaken by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority, which is likely to

bring domestic food producers into a similar regulatory framework as is being seen in the Risk Management Programme for those who export.

On 2 March submissions are due to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) on Novel Foods – P291. Some bee products may come into this category especially if used with other ingredients. The other submission due on 11 March relates to complementary medicines, as discussed in the section above.

- Jane Lorimer

## Secretarial Snippets

It is some time since I have written this column and now it is a new year. I am currently receiving the 2005 subscriptions from NBA members and as I write this some 100 subs have come in. Given that our membership is over 350 I expect a deluge of mail still to come. Perhaps it is timely to remind members that your membership will lapse if your sub is not paid by **31 March 2005**.

Recently I have sent invoices to those beekeepers who pledged funds towards the development of technologies for the control of varroa. I hope the funds will come in quickly. My thanks to Mark Goodwin for supplying a two-page summary of the project to date — I was able to send this summary with the invoices. Other beekeepers may wish to contribute to this project: please contact me if this is the case.

The NBA Executive has adopted a slightly different meeting pattern: still meeting once a fortnight, but every second meeting is specifically for the AFB Pest Management Strategy. Minutes of these meetings and the usual Executive meetings are posted on the NBA Website, available for reading by members only.

I am always receiving enquiries from New Zealand and overseas for subscriptions to *The New Zealand Beekeeper* magazine. Certainly this publication appears to be held in very high regard. At the AGM last year it was agreed to hold the rate for overseas subscribers at the current level of US\$55; however, the rate for New Zealand subscribers has been increased to NZ\$66.

Membership enquiries are probably the most regular everyday part of my work. While many queries are about the magazine or membership, I also receive a range of other queries relating to beekeeping activities for which I either need to know the answers or know who to contact. It is not an exacting task but I believe it is important for beekeepers to have someone answer these queries. In the revamp of the NBA it may be prudent to continue with a separate role of membership secretary. What do you think?

- Pauline Bassett

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\*web address: [www.carricell.com](http://www.carricell.com) [www.beezone.co.nz](http://www.beezone.co.nz)

BK12

**Queens available for delivery throughout  
the North Island**

**NBA Members: Have you paid your subscription? Subscriptions will lapse if not paid by 31 March 2005. Please contact Pauline Bassett, Executive Secretary, NBA, Box 234, Te Kuiti. Subscription details on page 2.**

## Deadline for Publications

**April 2005 edition: 22 March 2005**

*(NB: the April issue goes to all registered beekeepers)*

**May 2005 edition: 21 April 2005**

**June 2005 edition: 23 May 2005**

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

Nancy Fithian  
8A Awa Road  
Miramar  
Wellington 6003  
Phone 04 380 8801  
Fax 04 380 7197  
email [fithian.jones@xtra.co.nz](mailto:fithian.jones@xtra.co.nz)

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BK203

# NSW Beekeepers Field Day, 28 May 2005

Following the NSWAA State Conference, which will be held in Orange on 26–27 May 2005, the Central Tablelands Branch of the NSW Apiarists Association will be hosting a Field Day on Saturday 28 May. All activities will be at the Australian National Field Day Site at Borenore, just 10 minutes drive from Orange.

The Central Tablelands of NSW is an important part of the apiary industry, with major beekeeping and queen bee rearing enterprises based in the area.

The City of Orange (and no, we do not grow oranges here; the area was named after Prince William of Orange) is approximately four hours' drive from Sydney, traveling through the Blue Mountains. The population is about 35,000. The main industries are rural, including orchards, cropping (Orange is a major canola-growing area) and award-winning wineries. Gold mining has in recent years become a major contributor to the local economy with Cadia Mines located nearby, now the largest open-cut gold mine in Southern Hemisphere.

Shopping is good and we boast some excellent cafes and restaurants. Orange has become very popular with Sydneysiders as a 'food and wine experience' destination, which perhaps accounts for the high demand for accommodation at any time of the year. So if you're thinking of coming to the Conference and Field Day it would be a good idea to book very soon, despite the abundance of hotels, motels, B&Bs and caravan parks in the area.

Entry to the Field Day is \$5 per person; children admitted free.

## Field Day features

Seminars on:

- Bee Nutrition
- Beginning in Bees
- Nosema

Demonstrations on:

- Equipping Bee Trucks
- Bee Loaders
- Removing Honey – Safely
- Manual Lifting – Safely
- OH & S – Signage

Competition for best invention — tool or equipment for beekeepers

Auction of second-hand equipment

Displays:

- Beekeeping – Then and Now, a photographic display
- Vintage & Antique Cars (and trucks we hope)

Some local artisans also will be present to display their work, with demonstrations and workshops (latter to be confirmed).

## Other activities and information

Wednesday 25 May: Pre-conference coach trip to Cadia Mines – early bookings absolutely essential, cost \$25pp (and the coach is filling fast)

Friday 27 May: Coach trip (for those all conferenced out) to local points of interest – including lunch at a winery. Cost is \$35 including lunch.

The weather in May and June can be difficult to predict: we sometimes get cold frosty nights, followed by magic days, but it can also be wet and cold. Temperatures can range from lows of zero to highs of 18 or 19 degrees, very pleasant. Come prepared with warm clothes that can be peeled off and/or pack a parka.

## - Pearl Butcher

For further details, contact Branch Secretary, Pearl Butcher, 00612 6365 8475; email: [cabonnehoney@bigpond.com](mailto:cabonnehoney@bigpond.com)

## AT LAST!!

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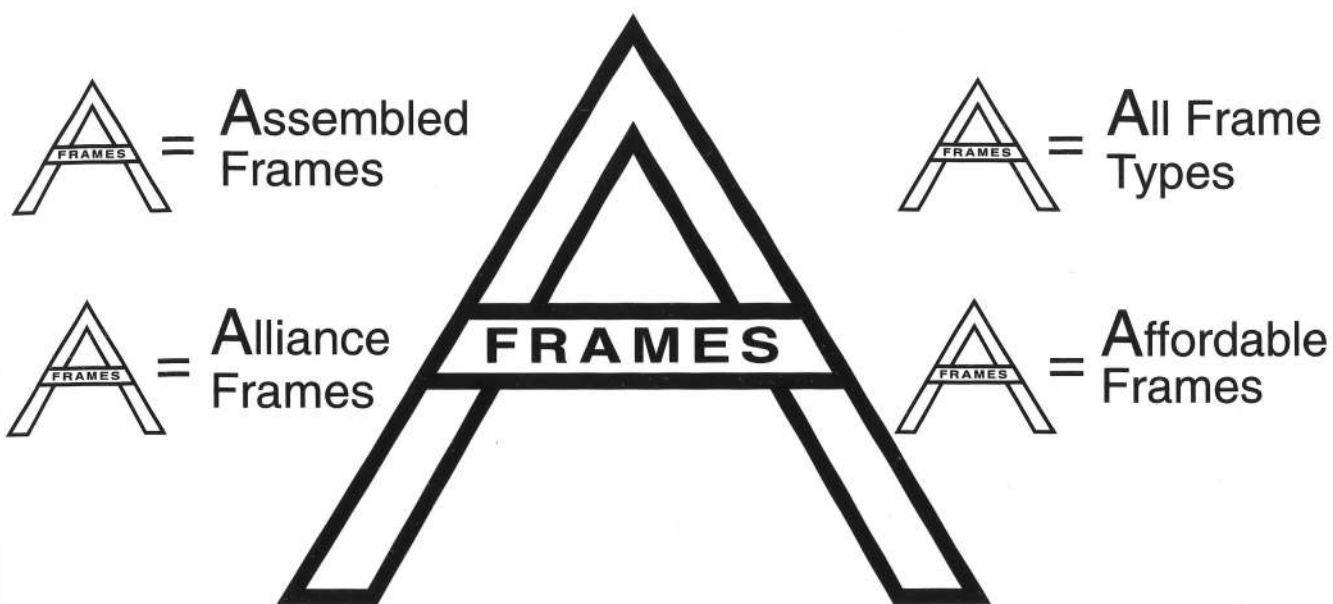
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## From the colonies



### Hawkes Bay Branch

Now that everything has finished flowering the weather is really beautiful; still, most of Hawkes Bay seems to have done an average crop. Not too bad, considering the extremes of climate we have had this year. Varroa has been extremely bad in some areas, with some hives being badly affected within 10 weeks of their last treatment! The invasion problem at the moment is massive but we hope it will settle down soon.

At our branch meeting we had a long and fruitful discussion about alternating treatments for varroa. It is obvious that we need treatments such as Bayvarol for summer use at least until the invasion period is over, and the best way we could see to prolong the usefulness of these sorts of products is for everybody in the area to use an alternative treatment, probably in the spring. To my mind it is unfortunate that using alternate treatments is not compulsory, but I believe that if we can show the benefits to people here in Hawkes Bay most of them will be willing to go along with the plan. Resistant mites will spread throughout the country almost as quickly as varroa did in the first place. What they would do to the South Island should they get there, with no reasonably easy way of treating them in the invasion stage, does not bear thinking about. It is up to all of us to use these products properly, according to label and to ensure their usefulness for as long as possible. We welcome comment on alternative treatments and the timing of said treatments. Mark Goodwin and his team are still working on breeding resistant bees: this is probably the only long-term solution for beekeeping in New Zealand, so please support them in any way you can.

- John Berry

**The Hawkes Bay Branch will be holding its AGM on 11 April at 7.30pm in the new building at Arataki. All members are welcome and urged to attend. It won't be long before we get chemical resistance among the mites so we have to all work together to be ready to apply alternative treatment at the same time.**

### Southern North Island Branch

Harvests have proved to be a mixed bag: some areas have had poor yields and Manuka has been very patchy, but the clover yields around Rangitikei, Manawatu, and Wairarapa have been up to budget. In most cases it was a short but fast flow in.

Hobbyists are reporting good yields — the best so far is 80kg off one hive — almost a continuous flow in that he kept harvesting as the boxes were filled. In Wellington yields were up to 50kg per hive. Most commercial beekeepers have reported satisfactory harvests so far, except for Manuka.

The branch met on 22 February and looked at the proposed Code of Practice and the problems that may be caused by the

new New Zealand Food Safety Authority considerations regarding equipment. Older equipment (e.g., honey pumps with brass fittings) may not be acceptable under the proposals. Many honey houses may have to upgrade equipment and that capital cost could be prohibitive for smaller commercial beekeepers. The internet address for the proposals was handed out for members to look up: the reports are large and will use up a lot of paper! Addresses were also advised earlier by Jane Lorimer and published in *The New Zealand Beekeeper*— we all need to be aware of what is proposed and respond to them; otherwise members may have rules forced upon them.

- Neil Farrer

### Nelson Branch

Since I last wrote in mid-January, Nelson continued to get four weeks of *very* good summer days; in fact, the heat of the sun was intense. Bees were hanging in clusters outside hive entrances and they really got into gear to get the last of the nectar. Soon it was the end of January and we started getting water restrictions and people were talking “drought” and the clover dried up. After a spring with far too much rain, we were reminded that we always complain no matter what weather we get.

Unfortunately the summer came too late, certainly for the manuka crop, which was washed away in all the December rain. Some near the high country managed to get late-flowering Kanuka, but most beekeepers here are very disappointed with the small harvest and many are worried financially how to survive a *second* bad year. A small amount of honey dew is now coming in, but there are reports of large numbers of wasps (a month later than usual) stealing that crop too. The weather has stayed settled, the nights are now cool and the robbing and defensive behaviour of the bees indicates that the honey season is finished!

- Merle Moffitt

### West Coast

The season can be described as hectic. It started as perhaps the worst; wet from spring through to December. Queens didn't get mated, the Manuka flowered when it was wet and cold, Kanuka didn't flower, and Kamahi production is down 75 percent.

At the end of January, however, we had 15 days straight of fine weather — a heat wave for the West Coast. The beautiful weather coincided with the Rata (I haven't seen it flower this late before), which has given us a good average crop, and there's still a dribble coming in.

AFB inspections are a concern. We've had no response from fellow beekeepers to assist in inspections — simply no time. We need someone who is dedicated to doing this work.

- Lindsay Feary

### Canterbury Branch

The weather finally relented in late January and gave us some much-needed heat and sunshine. This enabled the hives that hadn't swarmed to gather a surplus. The crop in Canterbury



could probably be best described as patchy at best, with a huge variation in production between neighbouring apiaries.

Planning is well underway for conference 2005 in Christchurch. We are endeavouring to make this year's conference as informative as possible. It will be especially relevant to all beekeepers concerned with their risk management plan and code of practice. August 2006 is just around the corner and beekeepers not up to speed in these food safety areas may find that they cannot sell their hard-won products at any price. Before you spend any more money getting ready, come and hear it from the horse's mouth!

**Dates:** Monday 4 July–Thursday 7 July 2005  
**Venue:** 'Chateau on the Park', corner Deans Ave & Kilmarnock St, overlooking Hagley Park south.  
**Accommodation:** Special Room Rates available — phone 0800 808 999

**Contacts:**

Tony Taiaroa – Conference Chairman ph 03 314 4569;  
chris.tony.taiaroa@clear.net.nz

Stuart Ecroyd – Trades Display Co-ordinator ph 03 358 7498; stuart@beehealthy.co.nz

Linda Bray – Secretary/Registrar ph 03 308 4964;  
birdsnbees@xtra.co.nz

**The Roy Patterson Trophy**

Please give some thought to entering your favourite gadget/invention into the competition this year as we intend to award some exciting prizes. Remember it is these very gadgets that make day-to-day beekeeping so much easier, and this is got to be the best medium to get these ideas into the public arena. If we are all prepared to share our ideas then beekeeping can only go forward, and New Zealand will be able to stay at the front of the pack in an increasingly competitive world!

Please bring your gadget/invention along on the first day of seminar for display. A stand will be available. Judging will take place Wednesday afternoon, with a presentation to the winners at the dinner in the evening.

- **Brian Lancaster**

**Otago Branch**

It has been a 'yo-yo' season in Otago this year. I know time goes faster as you get older, but was this the shortest summer on record? Sure feels that way. I am always amazed how quickly hives can recover and bring in a crop when all seems lost.

November showed some promise after a slow start in the spring. Good Dandelion and Willow flows did wonders for bees struggling out of a long winter extended by several August snows. Then like the rest of the country, we had the worst of all Decembers. As a result bees quickly consumed any earlier stores and then some, sugar sales went through the roof and beekeepers worked night and day to keep hives alive right up to Christmas. Even in bush areas pollen shortages occurred. Earlier honey crops, Kamahi and Manuka for example, suffered and have been poor this year. An exception was the

Thyme flow in Central Otago, where better weather prevailed at the critical period.

But as it turned out, every cloud had a silver lining. The heavy early summer rains were a blessing for many areas as the weather finally warmed up in January. The inland droughts were banished, for this season at least. Those hives that survived the spring intact went on to harvest some excellent Clover and Vipers Bugloss crops, which was especially welcome for many dry land beekeepers who had little or no crop the previous summer. This fortune was shared with some beekeepers from further south who were able to float their hives north and share in the bounty. This co-operation has been growing in recent years, partly as a result of the Otago Southland Beekeepers Discussion group, which has fostered communication and trust.

Beekeepers will be busy requeening hives this autumn after such a difficult early summer. With the earlier inclement weather there was a lot of late swarming, poor matings and supersedures. Many of my own hives need work now before the winter comes and there is already an autumn feel in the air. Once the hive work is done and the crop is in, we will all relax a bit and get some branch activities underway. We will be involved in an Exotic Disease and Pest Response (EDPR) exercise based in Dunedin in March.

Keep your socks and prices up.

- **Peter Sales**

**Southland Branch**

About sixty beekeepers, families, friends and guests filled the Te Anau Yacht club on a scorching day in early February. Beekeepers are either eternal optimists or suffer memory loss, because the few days of summer we had experienced up till then was enough to erase the months of extra-difficult beekeeping we had survived. The emphasis for the day was keeping cool or finding a breeze while the current issues were discussed. A tremendous day among friends: a pity that summer ended soon after, with heavy cold rain which brought the promising flows to a rapid end.

While the final analysis is incomplete most agree that we've had the most difficult season for many years. Thousands of hives have been moved around and out of Southland, chasing flows that didn't always come to much. Hives left behind that were not worth shifting have, in some instances, found a couple of boxes, but would that have been the case if twenty-four rather than four were on site?

Costs for the season have been very high, with extra sugar and much extra fuel and mileage being consumed, so it is very disturbing that there seems to be an active campaign to talk down the price of our quality southern honeys.

I'm in close contact with my customers, both potential and actual, at my market stall twice a week. I hear far more comment about the reasonable prices and superior quality than complaints about the price of the day. I don't sell cheap honey and constantly reinforce the value of our New Zealand product.

I urge you all to be positive about the value of your product and keep the public aware of the inherent qualities you are promoting.

- **Don Stedman**

## Northern New South Wales

(A communiqué from the 'West Island'—Editor)

The season thus far on the East Coast of Australia, particularly the North Coast region, has been reasonable. With honey up until January, there was then a dry spell that stopped the honey through to mid-January, while the temperature dropped with cool recordings for this time of year: mid-20s and 10–15 degrees at night. Cool enough for the Tablelands to have frosts.

The bees are breeding rather well on spotted gum, ensuring good hives for further honey yields. Spotted gum yields a thin honey that also influences the bees' temper, providing for some unpleasurable moments. Further prospects may venture via the way of grey box, grey gum and tea tree. As for spring, it is too early to state, although most of the eucalypts have flowered this season and, being a bi-annual flowering, may not prove as good.

B-Qual is slowly seeping into the industry with audits being conducted. B-Qual consists of procedures and documentation that provide a risk management plan and/or food grade plan, as well as providing quality assurance of the product being produced. Having the system in place allows for trace back regarding diseases, honey types and ongoing individual apiary functions. The array of procedures virtually ensures that the final product is of the highest quality.

A leading honey packer is offering an incentive to beekeepers to become B-Qual certified. This incentive also depends on the design of extracting plant, whether it is an open or closed plant (a closed plant being a sealed room that only consists of an extracting plant), so certification is not just about record keeping.

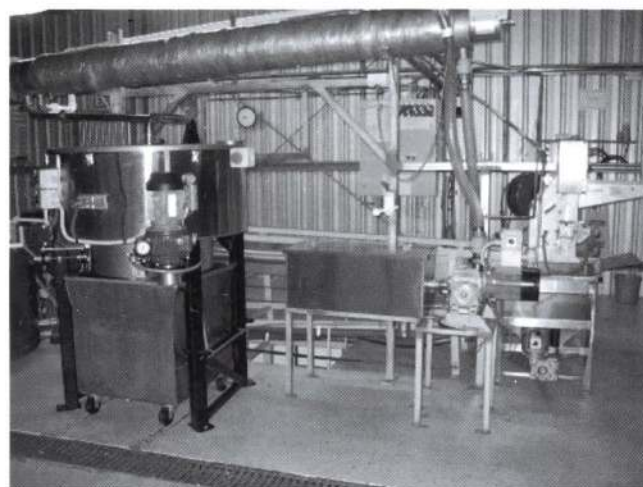
In concluding I would like to thank Frank Lindsay for allowing me the opportunity to share a small amount of the beekeepers' story thus far this season, extending the hope that the prospects are great for the rest of this season and beyond for all beekeepers.

- Wayne Fuller, Bee Services Australia

## STOP PRESS: TUTIN TOXIN

Reminder to beekeepers who keep hives in areas where the Tutu Plant is found.

This year is a high-risk dry year in many places — make sure you have done your evaluations of Passion Vine Hoppers before you cut comb or extract your honey. **If in doubt, do not sell or give away for human consumption — leave for bee feed.**



Wayne Fuller's New South Wales plant.  
Photos by Cathy Ellis of Bee Services Australia.

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# Saving Bees: Fungus Found to Attack *Varroa* Mites

Parasites known as *Varroa* mites infest honey bee colonies, sucking blood from the bees and causing weight loss, deformities, diseases, and reduced lifespan. These mites, which can nearly destroy an entire colony within a few months, now infest honey bee colonies across most of North America.

The honey bee is critical to maintaining natural vegetation, transferring pollen between flowers as it collects the pollen and nectar for its hive. And more than 130 agricultural plants in the United States are pollinated by honey bees. Every year, beekeepers send their best bees throughout the country to help pollinate crops, one farm at a time. In 2003, the value they added to U.S. crops was estimated at \$10 billion, not including the honey, beeswax, and royal jelly also produced. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service reported more than 2.5 million honey bee colonies — up 1 percent from 2002 — and U.S. honey production increased 5 percent, to 181 million pounds.

Since 2000, scientists in the ARS Beneficial Insects Research Unit (BIRU) at Weslaco, Texas, have been looking for a disease-causing agent, or pathogen, that can stop *Varroa* mites. The mite has developed resistance to the only approved chemicals — fluvalinate and coumaphos — now used for control, and coumaphos is on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "hit list" for possible removal from the market. So the researchers have looked at various disease agents, tried different dosages and application methods, and conducted toxicity tests. Finally, they selected a strain of the fungus *Metarhizium anisopliae* that was highly pathogenic to *Varroa* mites.

This potent fungus, which also kills termites, doesn't harm bees or affect their queen's production. To test it, the scientists coated plastic strips with dry fungal spores and placed them inside the hives. Since bees naturally attack anything entering their hives, they tried to chew up the strips, spreading the spores throughout the colony.

In field trials, once the strips were inside the hives, several bees quickly made contact with the spores. Within 5 to 10 minutes, all the bees in the hive were exposed to the fungus, and most of the mites on them died within 3 to 5 days. The fungus provided excellent control of *Varroa* without impeding colony development or population size.

"We tried to find a pathogen of *Varroa*, and we did it!" says ARS entomologist Walker A. Jones, research leader of the BIRU. Tests showed that *Metarhizium* was as effective as fluvalinate, even 42 days after application. "Commercial beekeepers are very edgy about using fluvalinate and coumaphos and are eager to see this natural control get to market," Jones says.

This research was begun by Rosalind James, formerly with the Weslaco unit. Lambert H.B. Kanga, former BIRU research associate and now chair of the Entomology Department at

Florida A&M University at Tallahassee, continues to collaborate on the project. "While *Metarhizium* doesn't kill as fast as fluvalinate and coumaphos, the result is the same," Kanga says. "*Metarhizium* gets the job done, and we won't have to worry about *Varroa* becoming resistant to the fungus."

The scientific team is now fine-tuning the strategy for transfer to producers.

- **Alfredo Flores, Agricultural Research Service Information Staff**

*This research is part of Crop Production, an ARS National Program (#305) described on the World Wide Web at [www.nps.ars.usda.gov](http://www.nps.ars.usda.gov).*

Walker A. Jones is in the USDA-ARS Beneficial Insects Research Unit, 2413 E. Highway 83, Weslaco, TX 78596; phone (956) 969-4852, fax (956) 969-4888.

'Saving Bees: Fungus Found To Attack *Varroa* Mites' was published in the October 2004 issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine. Reprinted by *The New Zealand Beekeeper* from <http://www.beesource.com/news/article/fungus.htm>

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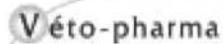
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# About the Apiary

Extraction continues as the season draws to an end. Summer is now showing signs of waning. The days are progressively shortening and the daytime temperatures are dropping. Most of the countryside is very dry; however, clover still is flowering in the river catchments and in areas where there has been rain.

The autumn sources are now starting to appear. Along streambeds, you can find Lotus Major (*Lotus pedunculatus*) and in the lower damp areas of paddocks, Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) is flowering. Lacebark (*Hoheria populnea*) and White Rata (*Metrosideros perforata*) are flowering in the bush, while Korimako (*Hebe stricta*) is flowering around the fringes. In the rough areas and along railway lines there's Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), and on poorly maintained farms Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) is flowering (winter feed for the bees as this is a dark and not very nice tasting honey). In the cities several gums are now flowering, especially Scarlet Gum (*Eucalyptus ficifolia*), which is a spectacular tree when in flower as well as being a good honey source. As the weather has been dry, the bees are collecting most nectar in the morning before it dries out.



**White Rata (*Metrosideros perforata*), flowering now.**

While the bees continue to be active, it's pleasant working in the apiary. Once the autumn sources stop, however, the bees' attitude quickly changes. They become defensive and will rob if hives are left open and honey is left exposed. At this time of the year it's important to close down the entrances to about 100mm and block off any holes in the supers, to stop mice entering the hives when it gets cooler and to help the bees to defend their hive.

It's also very important to keep the bees under control when hives are opened. Keep that smoker going and puff a very gentle stream of smoke over the top of the exposed frames every now and then when bees start massing. Give this process time to work before carrying out any operations.

If a hive is left open for too long and robbing starts, close down the entrance and put some grass in front of it. If you're in the garden, turn the sprinkler on for a while until the bees settle.

A trick that one beekeeper uses is to open all the hives in an apiary by removing the lids and exposing the frames. The bees are so busy defending their own hive that they don't start robbing.

## Lighting a smoker

Keeping the smoker alight and at hand is very important. I use dry pine needles in my smoker. You can't use them straight off the ground as they still contain too much moisture. Hang the pine needles in a sack in the garage for a week or two to dry and you'll find they burn better and are easier to light. One little gadget I've found handy to light the smoker is a butane barbeque lighter (you can buy one for about three dollars from The Warehouse). It's easy to light and produces a continuous flame well away from your hands.

To light a smoker, stuff a small amount of needles in the bottom of the smoker, then take a good handful of needles and light the bottom. Once a flame is established, lightly place the handful of needles halfway into the smoker and start gently working the bellows. The needles quickly smoke and when you have a fair volume of smoke or flames starting to come up the side, push the needles down into the smoker and then jam another handful on top. Work the bellows for another 30 seconds to keep it going, close the lid and the smoker should then be available to use for the next half an hour. If it goes out, the needles are either too wet or you haven't jammed enough in. Repack when they burn down.



**Northern Rata flowered in December. So lovely, so short a time.**

When you have finished, block off the smoker outlet with a cork or a bit of foam plastic. The smoker will quickly go out when it's starved of air. To re-ignite it, just lift the pine needles already in the smoker and light. Empty the smoker every other day so that the ash doesn't build up and block off the airflow. Dispose of warm ash carefully as it can quite easily start a fire.

### Autumn requeening

In my apiaries a few queens have superseded. One sure sign this has happened is that you'll notice there's only old brood and lots of empty comb full of eggs over the brood frames. If the brood is spotty and there are missed cells, or if you see brood of different ages in the cells spread evenly over the brood frames, order a new queen. Another sign of an old queen is finding a lot of pollen stored in the frames. This can be seen as a band of pollen 25 to 50mm wide above the brood, or lots of pollen cells scattered randomly throughout the brood. You need to go into the winter with a new queen or one-year-old queen, lots of young bees and plenty of stores.

A week before the new queen arrives, split the brood supers with a queen excluder. That way the old queen will be easier to find — she'll be in the one with eggs and young brood. Find her and make up a four-frame nuc using the frame she's on: place her in a box with one frame of honey, the frame she's on, another frame of emerging brood covered with bees and a frame of honey and pollen. Plug the entrance with fresh green grass to prevent field bees drifting back to the original hive. Place the nuc in a shady spot so that it doesn't overheat. When the grass dries out the bees should be able to chew their way out and will orientate to that site.

To assist in the acceptance of the new queen, sprinkle a little sugar syrup over the frames of brood — but be careful not to put in too much as this can cause robbing. Move the remaining brood frames to the centre of the super and place the cage containing the new queen between two brood frames with the exit hole slightly upwards (after releasing the tab covering the candy). Close and leave the hive alone for ten days, then inspect the hive. If you see eggs, she's been accepted and you can either find and kill the old queen in the nuc and replace the nuc frames back into the hive, or just add more drawn frames to the brood nest of the original hive and keep the nucs as a spare to winter over.

At this time of the year commercial beekeepers are putting in protected queen cells. This is a quick method of requeening and requires very little time as there's no need to find the old queen. This method relies on supersedure but is not always successful, so commercial beekeepers make up a few extra nucs or order mated queens to make up for losses.

Blue is the colour for this year's queens. I use an opaque water-based 'uni POSCA' poster coloured marker (made by Mitsubishi Pencil Co, Japan) to write abbreviations on top of the hive roofs and to also mark the new queens as they are found. These pens are quite hard to come by so you have to shop around for them, but they do last the whole season.

### Eradicating wasps

In some areas wasps are becoming a nuisance. It can be quite entertaining trying to track down nests, which are usually in

banks, in the stumps of rotting trees, toi toi bushes or other places that offer some sort of protection from the elements.

The best time to find nests is at the end of the day after bee activity has ceased. Wasps fly later and it's quite easy to see them as the light reflects off their wings as they fly directly home. Most will be within 500 metres of your hives.

Another method is to lightly tie a piece of cotton around a wasp's abdomen. If the cotton is too long the wasp won't be able to fly, so you trim a little off at a time until the wasp gets airborne. It will fly very slowly and is quite easy to track. Another method is to capture some wasps in a jar and coat them with caster sugar. Release them one at a time. They will partly clean themselves and can easily be seen as they fly.

If the wasps are particularly bad and you can't be bothered with the methods described above, consider poisoning them. Put out a spare hive with a little jam in a jar inside. The wasps will quickly find it and will start feeding. A few days later, when the wasps are feeding well, add a little poison to the jam. Not too much, as this could change the odour of the jam and put the wasps off. The idea is for the wasps to take the poison back to the nests, not to kill the feeding wasps outright. If you're successful, you'll notice the difference in a day or two: no wasps around. Dispose of the unused poisoned jam in an environmentally friendly manner away from other insects and animals. Don't leave it on the shelf for next year!

### Controlling varroa and rodents

I've done one round of my apiaries, observing the natural fall of mites through the mesh bottom boards. Some apiaries have only a few mites dropping over a week, while other 'hot spots' have plenty on the plastic coreboard slide under the mesh floorboard. Some individual hives in these apiaries were already showing the first stages of parasitic mite syndrome: small bees, deformed wings, open cells and mites observed running across the frame. A good reminder of just how quickly the mites can kill a hive. With luck these hives should recover enough to produce two generations of healthy bees before winter. If you find a hive that is badly affected, give them a few frames of emerging brood from a hive that is free of mites and diseases. Replace the hives with honey frames from the



Coreboard slide on the bottom board picks up varroa mite fall 'hot spots'

infested hive. Don't swap brood frames, as you will end up with two seriously infested hives. The extra brood will help the hive to recover quicker.

From now on every time I visit an apiary I put out rat baits in a plastic container under a hive stand. It's been quite a good breeding year and I want to knock off as many as possible before they start chewing their way into my hives. This little bit of effort can pay handsome dividends in the spring — no mice or rat damage.

### Things to do this month

Check all hives for BL before removing honey, extract honey, requeen, close entrances and winter down hives, check wasps, remove comb honey supers off hives, clean up the apiary sites and put out rat baits, and check hives for varroa mite levels.

- Frank Lindsay



Bees bringing in propolis. A sign that winter is coming?

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# GM canola may contaminate: Greenpeace

Environmental concerns a biotechnology company was mismanaging a crop trial have been dismissed by authorities.

Greenpeace was concerned Bayer CropScience's trial could result in genetically modified canola contaminating nearby crops in South Australia, after producing photographs taken by farmers of bee hives next to a GM canola field in the state's south east, and cows feeding next to it.

Jeremy Tager, a genetic engineering campaigner for Greenpeace, said the GM canola could end up in the food chain.

"Bees can regularly travel six kilometres and have been reported to pollinate plants as far away as 26 kilometres," Mr Tager said.

"Both the bees that are being used to pollinate the GM crops and the bees that are being used to pollinate non-GM crops may well cross over.

"While there is no evidence that this breaches South Australian law, it nonetheless totally violates the spirit of the moratorium, put in place to protect Australia's markets and food producers."

Australia's Gene Technology Regulator and Food Standards Australia New Zealand have approved genetically modified canola for commercial release into the environment and for food use.

However, state and territory governments have moratoria on the commercial release of GM canola while they investigate possible trade and marketing risks.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator said the way the South Australian crop was managed posed no risks to human health or the environment.

"While cows are not recognised as pollinators for canola, bees can pollinate other canola plants at significant distances, but at extremely low levels," said Dr Sue Meek, a spokeswoman for the regulator.

"The trials are simply designed to answer whether this level of contamination will impact on economic markets.

"Any low level contamination of natural canola crops from bees or cows that may occur will not lead to any impacts on human health and safety or the environment."

South Australia's Primary Industry and Resources department, which monitors the canola trial, said it appeared Greenpeace's concerns were overstated.

"The beehives are contracted by the company concerned to pollinate those particular GM trial sites," department spokesman Peter Carr told ABC radio.

"The honey from those sites does not enter the commercial honey chain, it's simply a contracted pollination service that ensures they get a productive seed set."

Bayer's general manager of bioscience, Susie O'Neill, said there was no risk for markets and trade, or for neighbouring farms.

"There is no evidence that our small scale, strictly regulated, research and innovation trials of GM canola are cause for concern for neighbours, the grains, dairy or honey industries or the general public," she said.

Meanwhile, Bayer CropScience has applied for a controlled release of genetically modified, herbicide tolerant Indian mustard — a plant related to canola.

If approved, the release would go ahead in the winter and summer growing seasons of 2005–2008 on small sites in a total of 17 shires in Victoria, South Australia and NSW.

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Reprinted from the Sydney Morning Herald, February 2, 2005.

Web version on <http://www.smh.com.au/news/Breaking-News/GM-canola-may-contaminate-Greenpeace/2005/02/02/1107228764073.html>

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BK174

# Grow-slow potion: pheromone keeps bee youngsters youthful

After more than 10 years of searching, researchers have identified a compound produced by the senior workers in a honey bee colony that prolongs the time that teenage bees stay home babysitting.

Honey bee workers spend their first few weeks as young adults tending the colony's brood and then shift jobs to foraging for food outside the colony. Studies have predicted that established foragers pass along a pheromone that slows their younger sisters' career change, according to Gene E Robinson of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

That pheromone turns out to include ethyl oleate, possibly conveyed to the teens during mouth-to-mouth food transfer, Robinson and an international team of colleagues report in an upcoming *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*.

The pheromone guides the division of labour. "When we think about this with a human bias, it seems like a problem that requires centralized control. But it's decentralized," says Robinson. Should the colony run low on mature foragers, the supply of grow-slow pheromone dwindles, and young bees mature rapidly to fill the ranks. When foragers abound, an abundance of the pheromone slows the replacement process.

Bee researcher Francis Ratnieks of the University of Sheffield in England compares organizing colony tasks to "directing traffic through New York City. It's a never-ending challenge, and weird things are always happening." Commenting on the new study, he notes that more than 20 previously identified bee-to-bee signals transfer information chemically or mechanically. Bee dances are famous, but another signal is "a bee standing on top of another bee and giving it a good shaking," he adds.

The earlier tests that had predicted a grow-slow pheromone included, for example, one study finding fast maturation of youngsters within a colony stripped of its foragers. Other experiments that separated younger and older workers with screens suggested that the pheromone spreads by contact rather than airflow.

At least five lines of chemical inquiry dead-ended before the researchers focused on ethyl oleate as a potential pheromone component, Robinson says. They eventually noted that foragers carry some 30 times as much of the chemical as younger bees do.

The researchers fed candy laced with ethyl oleate to bees from two of three age-matched colonies. Young bees eating spiked candy turned to foraging later than those eating plain candy did.

Ben Oldroyd, a bee specialist at the University of Sydney in Australia, calls the work "a step forward, mainly because of the experimental opportunities it offers." He says he'd like to find out how ethyl oleate influences gene expression and hormone activity.

Robinson and other scientists note that the grow-slow pheromone probably contains ingredients besides ethyl oleate. Tanya Pankiw of Texas A&M University in College Station says that experiments in her lab indicate that at least four

compounds from foragers affect maturation of other bees. She cautions that genetic makeup and environmental factors also influence foraging.

- Susan Milius

Reprinted from *Science News*, December 4, 2004, p. 355; <http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20041204/fob2.asp>

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## What are geographical indications?

According to the Ministry of Economic Development, "a geographical indication is used to identify goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess a quality, reputation or other characteristic that is essentially due to that place of origin. Geographical indications perform a similar function to trade marks in that they help to 'brand' a product, providing information to consumers about the source, quality or other characteristics of the goods concerned."

The Ministry has published a fact sheet entitled 'What are Geographical Indications?', covering topics including international and New Zealand law on geographical indications and recent international developments.

The Ministry points out that New Zealand is a party to the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (the TRIPS Agreement). This agreement sets the minimum requirements for the protection of intellectual property to be provided by WTO Members. Basically TRIPS provides that producers in other regions may use terms protected as geographical indications, provided that the use of the geographical indication does not mislead the consumer or constitute an act of unfair competition.

Geographical indications are generally collectively owned intellectual property rights and are most often applied to primary products, such as wine, cheese and meat products.

In New Zealand protection of geographical indications is provided by the Fair Trading Act 1986, the common law tort of "passing off", the Trade Marks Act 2002 and the Geographic Indications Act 1994 (not currently in force).

The issue of geographical indications is highly controversial internationally and there is wide disagreement about the appropriate level of protection that should be given to geographical indications, compared with other forms of intellectual property rights, such as trade marks.

Further information on international geographic indication-related issues can be found on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade ([www.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.mfat.govt.nz)).

For more information about geographical indications, call free 0508 447 669, or visit [www.med.govt.nz](http://www.med.govt.nz) or [www.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.mfat.govt.nz).

- **Abridged from the fact sheet 'What are Geographical Indications?', Ministry of Economic Development/Manatū Ōhanga**

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# Apitherapy – pollen and bee bread

Recently, several overseas magazines have made reference to apitherapy. They don't talk about any possible health benefits but only emphasise that there could be allergic reactions and that they should consult a doctor if anything like this happens. Good advice, but mostly this is just common sense.

I also have an interest in apitherapy – using hive products for health. In the past beekeepers with this interest have been looked upon as a little odd; however, it's a topic that has gained more publicity recently as more people search for alternative methods to assist them back to good health.

As a beekeeper, I often get asked questions about bees and bee products, and pollen is mentioned also as it's advertised widely on some radio stations. "Is pollen all that its cracked up to be?" "Does potentiated pollen really make a difference?" People assume that beekeepers know about pollen. Most of us don't have an in-depth knowledge of the subject but tend to encourage people to try it. Everybody's reaction is different and it depends upon how well they are as to whether they notice a benefit. So I thought I'd look into it.

If you read the literature from the Soviet Union and Baltic States where most of the alternative medicine research has been undertaken, pollen is the cure-all for everything. Well, that's a bit strong, as it's just one component used towards getting well.

Having read a little about pollen, I went down and visited the local health shop, looked at the display of bee products and asked a few questions:

"Do you sell much pollen?" "No, but a few people buy it."  
"Do you promote pollen?" "No, in fact we warn people off using it if they have any type of allergies."

Strange, I thought, as a little pollen generally helps most people with allergies like hay fever. Because we only touch on the subject in our beekeeping I have reproduced extracts from the CD-ROM *Treatise of Apitherapy*, produced by the Standing Commission of Apitherapy – Apimondia. ([www.api-ar.com](http://www.api-ar.com))

## Pollen

The medic(in)al uses of pollen are now the subject of extensive literature, within which the high-level scientific works are going along with the layman's ideas so much that it is necessary to evaluate the existing data. However, the daily consumption of pollen can provide the necessary vitamins, and cover certain nutritional deficiencies. Research conducted on laboratory animals shows its action can be important on reproduction and growth, which suggests the presence of a substance with a strong gonadotropic effect (which acts on the sexual glands), as well as of a growth accelerator not yet identified. In man, pollen plays the role of a regulator of the intestinal functions, which alternates between stimulating a 'lazy' transit, and the treatment of diarrhoea or enteritis, thanks to its natural antibiotic properties (mainly effective against certain strains of *Salmonella*). It would be equally active in cases of physical or psychic over-exertion, by its tonifying and stimulating action, and even a famous 'aphrodisiac'. Certain works even mention its good action in the treatment of hypertension, and hepatic disorders. Pollen is generally

acknowledged for its preventive action on the prostate.

Depending on its botanical origin, pollen has different tastes, which recall generally that of the dry wheat or hay straws, that is not always agreeable to all people. Nevertheless, it is still possible to find a taste that is acceptable to the palate, as pollen is available in many different trade forms, thus making it possible to be consumed diluted in a drink, or mixed with other food. For the most rebellious of us, there is a galenic form completely lacking any taste, and so is totally neutral. It can be consumed as pellets of pure pollen, powdered pellets, micro-crushed grains, extracts or dietetic mixtures. The latter formula, often on the basis of honey, is very agreeable to taste, and can be consumed as a food. In the adult, the average daily dose should range between 15 and 20 grams for pellets (two tablespoons), a small bag for extracts, and 4 to 6 gellules for the micro-crushed grains. The average duration of treatment is variable, according to the severity of the disorder, and the dosage used, but generally lasts one to three months. In France, an initial dose of 20 grams per day is recommended, for three months, followed by four- to six-weeks' treatment, at each and every season change.

Pollen is neither a miraculous product nor a panacea, but a natural food that is able to help us not only curatively, but also preventatively, in many cases, and especially in our daily striving for more 'vitality'. Pollen helps to alleviate the possible nutritional deficiencies of amino acids, minerals, vitamins, especially during physiologically high-demanding periods, such as pregnancy and nursing. It also provides increased physical and mental performance in normal or more intensive activities, such as sports trials and exam preparation. Finally, it strengthens the ground in the fight against aggressors in general, and particularly against the seasonal flu.

Pollen acts on the metabolism, as proved by experiments conducted on rats. The animals that received food supplemented with pollen consumed more food and water, and gained more weight than the controls. There are channels suggesting the role of some still-unidentified hormonal substances on the neuro-endocrine axis (hypothalamus, hypophysE [pituitary], adrenal gland), as well as effects on the hepatic metabolism of glucose.

The regular consumption of pollen enables fat people to eat more rationally, as it helps them to lose excessive weight. As for the slim ones, regular consumption of pollen helps them to eat better, and therefore they can experience some weight gain. It can be thus defined as a 'functional nourishment'.

Bee pollen collected in traps has a high water content. Two processing and preserving methods are co-existing. The first consists, on one hand, of drying pollen to decrease its humidity to about four percent (or five percent, maximal value); a value that corresponds to the water percentage allows its perfect, safe preservation (the yeasts and the moulds do not develop any more under such circumstances). For best preservation of its properties, drying must be carried out away from bright light, at a temperature that does not exceed 40–45 deg. C, under a gentle counter-current air flow, or at the infrared ray's light, during several hours, placing it on trays in thin layers. After drying, it must be stored in a cool and dry place, to

avoid the mite's development, as well as to prevent the occurrence of oxidative processes. Heat and light must equally be avoided, as they have a noxious action upon its active constituents, (vitamins, enzymes, proteins). This technique provides the market with a form of pollen that is easy to store and sell, but that has lost an important part of its therapeutic properties, mainly because of losing its volatile elements.

On the other hand, certain beekeepers, being aware of the therapeutic value of fresh pollen, freeze it on the day of harvesting. Then it will be manually or automatically sorted to eliminate impurities (wings, legs) and dust, before placing it under a neutral gas flow, which requires very exact parameters. This processing mode keeps pollen in a suitable condition very close to the natural one.

Under such circumstances its nutritive value remains excellent, as proved by the constant composition in nitrogen-containing compounds of pollen, which is one of the appraising criteria of its preservation, along with the vitamin C and pro-vitamin A content.

There are also other pollen processing methods, mainly used to prepare other pharmaceutical forms of pollen, such as tablets, granules, and even mixtures with honey.

### **Bee bread**

Bee bread globally has the same nutritional value as pollen. It is rich in high biological value proteins; that is to say, it supplies in proper ratio all the essential amino acids, so called because they cannot be synthesised by the organism. Also, it is an excellent source of potassium, as well as vitamins of the group B. Its enzymatic and pigmentary composition is equal to that of pollen, of which it is only different by its more advanced lactic fermentation, and a larger content in vitamin K (phytomenadione). Besides, the assimilation degree is improved by the activity of the enzymes, which transform the large molecule compounds into smaller molecular weight units (polysaccharides-monosaccharides; proteins, amino acids, etc.). Bee bread has an excellent tolerability. No adverse reaction is known except its taste for certain persons.

The natural transformations, able to alter the pollen stored in combs, are blocked by the selective activity of certain micro-organism groups that are present in the atmosphere of the hive, as well as in pollen. The process of pollen transforming into bee bread begins after its being stored by bees in the comb cells. These are then covered, or sealed by a thin wax layer, in an anaerobic environment, at 38 deg. C. The pollen becomes then a uniform and compact mass, perfectly adhering to the cell walls. The normal development of this process depends on this mass density, the diminishing of the contained gas quantity, as well as the water quantity, that is present under the wax layer. In cells, pollen is submitted to bio-chemical processes of fermentation by the action of certain bacteria belonging to the *Pseudomonas* and *Lactobacillus* genera, as well as of the *Saccharomyces* yeast.

According to the development of these three micro-organism types, the transformation of pollen into bee bread occurs in three phases: the first phase, which is not a fermentation process, regards the development of *Pseudomonas*, which, in its position of an aerobic bacterium, consumes all the available oxygen, and destroys itself by self-asphyxia at the end of the process. The second phase is a fermentation that occurs in the absence of oxygen. It allows development of *Lactobacilli*,

which use glucosides as an energy source in the absence of oxygen, thus producing lactic acid. During the third phase, the activity is developed by the yeasts of the *Saccharomyces* genus, which are currently using in their metabolic process the glucosides that were left in the transforming pollen mass. This last phase is truly completing the fermentation process of bee bread.

Therefore it may be said that the formation of bee bread has its starting point in the death of an aerobic bacterium to the benefit of an anaerobic one. By its activity, the latter makes pollen lose its germinating capacity, but changes it into a high nutritional value product, highly assimilable by bees, as well as by humans. The increased acidity ensures its better preservation. All the enzymatic processes of the anaerobic fermentation that begin after the death of the aerobic bacterium, are comparable to those largely used in the pharmaceutical and alimentary (food) industries, thus working to the great benefit of human health. In this sense, the hive is an actual natural model of a pharmaceutical unit.

Finally, if allergies to pollen are rare, they are absolutely unknown in bee bread.

The uses given to bee bread as a therapeutic tool offer wonderful results, after a few days only. It gives the same benefits as those indicated with pollen; that is, it is helpful for treatment of anaemia, coronary insufficiency, cerebral circulatory disorders, as well as cranial traumas, infarct, gastritis, hepatitis, gastro-duodenal ulcer, allergy, flu, loss of libido and male sterility, alcoholism ... all these are only a small part of the multiple medical indications, and the many historical successes of bee bread. This product can be absorbed by the mouth mucosa, as with any sweet. It is recommended to keep it in the mouth without swallowing it, and not drinking water or any other liquid during the following hour, to avoid it being diluted. The recommended dose is two grams/day in adults and 0.5 gram/day in children.

Bee bread contains an anti-anaemic factor, and this is why it is usable in the treatment of hypochrome anaemia. Similar to pollen, from which it comes, it is endowed with a strong antiseptic activity against a great many pathogenic species of bacteria. It is mainly the case of certain strains of *Staphylococcus* and *Escherichia coli*. Bee bread consumption can also be recommended for a limited period, and under medical supervision, to children suffering from endocrine disorders, such as diabetes, goitre, hypothyroidism, etc. In such circumstances, bee bread favours the improvement of the general condition of the young patient. Finally, bee bread helps memory disorders to get better in aged persons, corrects the potassium deficiencies, and shortens the duration of a coma condition. In these cases, the suffering person would receive one gram at a time, under his/her tongue, a procedure that has to be repeated four to five times a day. Various researchers have shown it could also be involved in curing certain benign tumours.

### **Examples of the medicinal uses of pollen**

Cristina Mateescu is the Biochemist and Director of Research in Medical Apitherapy Centre in Bucharest (Romania). She announced a series of recommendations in a presentation entitled 'Bee collected medical-pollen applications'. Pharmaceutical forms, among other things, have no incompatibilities with other therapeutics and are non-toxic

even at high doses. It should be noted that pollen used for medical purposes has to be correctly conditioned.

**Posology (dosage):**

Adults – Attack dose: 30–40 grams/day for one week  
Maintenance dose: 15–20 grams/day  
Children: 3–5 years old: 5–10 grams/day  
6–12 years old: 10–15 grams/day

Administration: usually in the morning at the beginning of breakfast

Duration: isolated cures: minimum six weeks;  
optimum: three months

Regularly renewed every six weeks in each three months

**Pollen use for healthy people:**

- reduces the potential deficient conditions
- creates a better physical and intellectual efficiency
- get better resistance during intensive activities
- strengthens general condition against aggression.

**Pollen for suffering people:**

- asthenias of physical, intellectual, psychological and sexual origin, convalescence
- neurasthenia
- anorexia – lack of appetite of any origin
- *weight loss, especially with children*
- various deficient disorders
- preventing premature aging processes.

**Possible harmless events:**

- unpleasant feeling of taste and flavour – nausea
- light intestinal disorders (meteorism, i.e., flatulent distension of the abdomen; light diarrhoea) during the first days
- gastric pains (when pellets are not dissolved).

**Example: Climateric disorders**

Product: complex containing 20 grams pollen +2 grams royal jelly + 250 grams honey

Treatment: 1–2 teaspoons/day

Duration: improvements after 5 days

Disappearance of symptoms: 15 days

Just a reminder: there is a notice on all pollen products alerting people to a possible allergic reaction. When in doubt, consult your doctor.

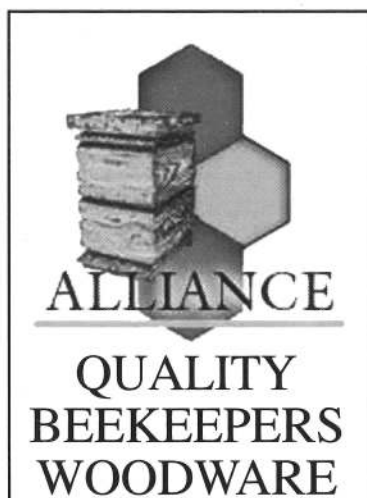
- Frank Lindsay

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# Club Contacts & Beekeeping Associates

<p><b>WHANGAREI BEE CLUB</b></p> <p>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)</p>	<p><b>AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC</b></p> <p>Meets 1st Saturday monthly at Unitec, Pt Chevalier, Auckland.</p> <p>Contact: Carol Downer, Secretary Phone: 09 376 6376 Email: fairy-angel-peewee@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p><b>FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB</b></p> <p>Meets second Sunday of each month at 10.00am for a cuppa and discussion. 10.30am open hives.</p> <p>Contact: Peter Biland Phone: 09 294 8365</p>
<p><b>HAWKES BAY BRANCH</b></p> <p>Meets on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm, Arataki cottage, Havelock North</p> <p>Contact: Ron Phone: 06 844-9493</p>	<p><b>TARANAKI AMATEUR BEEKEEPING CLUB</b></p> <p>Contact: Stephen Black 685 Uruti Road RD 48, Urenui Phone: 06 752 6860</p>	<p><b>WANGANUI BEEKEEPERS CLUB</b></p> <p>Meets on the second Wednesday of the month.</p> <p>Contact: Neil Farrer Phone 06 343 6248</p>
<p><b>MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB</b></p> <p>Meets every 4th Thursday in the month at Newbury Hall, SH3, Palmerston North</p> <p>Contact: Frances Beech 35 Whelans Road, RD 1 Levin Phone: 06 367 2617</p>	<p><b>WAIRARAPA HOBBYIST BEEKEEPERS CLUB</b></p> <p>Meet 3rd Sunday of month (except January) at Norfolk Road, Masterton at 1.30 pm.</p> <p>Contact: Arnold Esler Phone: 06 379 8648</p>	<p><b>WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSN</b></p> <p>Meets every second Monday of the month (except January) in Johnsonville. All welcome.</p> <p>Contact: John Burnet 21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa, Wellington 6006 Phone: 04 232 7863 Email: johnburnet@xtra.co.nz</p>
<p><b>NELSON BEEKEEPERS CLUB</b></p> <p>Contact: Kevin Phone: 03 545 0122</p>	<p><b>NORTH CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS CLUB</b></p> <p>Meets the second Monday of April, June, August and October</p> <p>Contact: Mrs Hobson Phone: 03 312 7587</p>	<p><b>CHRISTCHURCH HOBBYIST CLUB</b></p> <p>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</p> <p>Contact: Jeff Robinson 64 Cobra Street Christchurch 3. Phone: 03 322 5392</p>
<p><b>CANTERBURY BRANCH</b></p> <p>Meets the second Tuesday of every month, February to October</p> <p>Contact: Roger Bray Phone: 03 308 4964</p>	<p><b>SOUTH CANTERBURY BRANCH</b></p> <p>Contact: Peter Lyttle Phone: 03 693 9189</p>	<p><b>DUNEDIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Contact Club Secretary: Margaret Phone: 03 415-7256 Email: flour-mill@xtra.co.nz</p>
	<p><b>NZ QUEEN PRODUCERS ASSN</b></p> <p>Contact: Mary-Anne Phone: 06 855 8038</p>	

**Is your group or Branch missing from here?**

**Please contact the National Beekeepers Association – inside front cover.**

# Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand.



*Carpodetus serratus*

## *Carpodetus serratus*

Maori name: Putaputaweta

Common name: Marble leaf

The Putaputaweta is a flat-topped tree up to 10m. It is found in the North and South Islands as well as Stewart Island. The leaves alternate up the stem and are slightly downy, veined and marbled in appearance. The small creamy flowers are borne in flattened clusters hidden among the leaves.

The tree flowers from September to April depending on location. The honey is light amber in colour and mild flavoured. The pollen is pale yellow.

The fruit, the size of a pea, takes nearly 12 months to ripen; hence flowers and ripe fruit can often be seen together on the tree.

The tree is useless for wood as it is full of holes, often frequented by Weta. The holes are actually made by the larvae of a large moth.

- Tony Lorimer

**Reminder: the deadline for the April issue is 22 March 2005. The April issue is distributed to all registered beekeepers in New Zealand.**

**Articles, graphics and ads welcome!**

## *NIWA's climate outlook: February to April 2005*

Sea surface temperatures around the country are below average at present, but are expected to recover to near average for most of the period.

Air temperatures are expected to be average or below average in all regions.

Relatively dry conditions are expected, with rainfalls likely to be normal or below normal in all districts. Soil moisture levels are expected to be below normal in the north of the North Island, normal or below in the east of both islands, and near normal elsewhere.

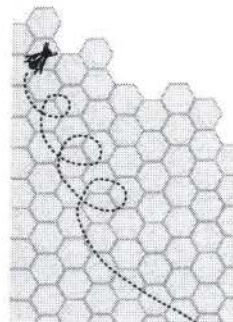
Stream flows are expected to be below normal in the north of the North Island and the east of the South Island, normal or below normal in the east of the North Island, and normal elsewhere.

Weak El Niño conditions are very likely to continue in the tropical Pacific through to the end of March, after which neutral conditions are likely.

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