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Well done, bees!

Photos by Frank Lindsay












IN THIS ISSUE: AFB and Varroa Information

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President's Report

Inaugural Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) meeting 17 March

I have just returned from this first council meeting held in Wellington. The agenda was a very full one with the three main groups in attendance: representatives from the NBA, Honey Packers and Exporters Association and the Bee Industry Group having to agree on the terms of reference for the BPSC and commit to its funding. It is disappointing to see that the Bee Industry Group is only agreeing in principle at this stage, as it means that it is difficult to move forward to get an industry viewpoint established on issues.

It was satisfying that the scope of this council has been set to enable it to be expanded to allow for discussions with other bodies other than the New Zealand Food Safety Authority, if the council finds that this forum is working well. We also see this council as needing to be involved in submissions.

The afternoon sessions included discussion on market access issues, the residue monitoring programme, cost recovery mechanisms and the Bee Products Code of Practice.

Market access issues

Most of the discussion centred round the submissions to the draft Bee Products Official Assurances Guide. The NBA, along with two other people, put in submissions to this draft. Althougn not many immediate changes will be made to the guide, the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) has agreed that some areas need to be looked at further which may result in an amendment to the Animal Products Act through a change by an Order in Council.

The guide will be published on the NZFSA website by 23 March and at this point it is a working document. If exporters find that there are problems with the guide, they will then be able to notify NZFSA to enable changes to be made. Everyone needs to be aware that these changes in official assurance to allow export certification may affect you, as listed below.

- Changes in the official assurance programme will mean that all premises that process product that will be destined for export will need to be listed with the NZFSA. To list you will need to go onto their website, and fill in the appropriate document.
- Beekeepers who get their product 'contract processed' and then take their product and store it for a period of time before sale, will also need to list their premises with the NZFSA. (This is one of the areas that we have indicated needs to be reviewed. We feel this is an unfair imposition on the apiarists concerned as the product is stored in a food safe container).
- Beekeepers will need to supply the harvest declaration to the first secondary processor only. The secondary processor will then have to supply an operator declaration to accompany the consignment to the exporter.

National Chemical Residues Programme

The residue programme is required for European Union (EU) market access. Honey samples have been collected annually since 2001 from producers exporting honey to the EU. All producers of product listed with NZFSA to export to the EU are eligible for sampling but may not be selected to supply samples.

The EU specifies the number of samples to be taken based on annual production. For 2005, 32 samples will be taken from randomly allocated producers based on the 968 tonnes of honey exported to the EU in 2004.

The EU specifies which chemicals the honey samples are tested for, including antibacterials or antibiotics, organophosphates, synthetic pyrethroids and carbamates.

In the period 2001–2005, 2618 individual tests have been performed on samples collected. Only five samples (0.191%) had detectable chemical residues, which is below the allowable limits. (Data supplied by NZFSA.)

Presentation on pyrrolizidine alkaloids

In recent weeks more discussion has occurred about this suite of chemicals called pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs). These PAs are causing some concern in Australia and are found in 3% of the world's plant population. The main plant species with PAs are Echium, Senecio, Crotolaria, Heliotrope and Eupatoria.

PAs are the largest cause of stock deaths worldwide, and some herbal preparations have also been responsible for severe illness and death. PAs are also detected in meat, milk and honey throughout the world where these plant species are present.

The NZFSA is conducting some research into PA levels, and which alkaloid suites are present in product. We look forward to hearing the outcomes of the research.

Cost recovery mechanisms

The Animal Products Act allows for full cost recovery. As our industry has been placed under this Act, we will eventually be required to pay for almost all costs associated with the NZFSA — export certification, registering for an Risk Management Programme, verification costs, as well as for the attendance of NZFSA staff at meetings.

Estimates given at this meeting were that it would be likely to cost the industry between $100,000 to $200,000 per annum. We will need to weigh the risks against the benefits before cutting back on what we want NZFSA to do.

The meat industry has put a levy in place; i.e., per lamb killed, which is probably a fair way for larger industries to recover the costs associated with ensuring continued market access. However, this is going to pose a huge problem for the beekeeping industry because of its small size. Ensuring market access for exports benefits not only the exporter of product but also has a flow-on effect to the domestic market. The greater amount of product exported means less competition for domestic sales, therefore allowing prices to be held at higher levels than might otherwise be achieved. This will be likely to change once bee product imports are allowed.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

It has been suggested that we may need to look at gaining alternative funding through some Government funding agencies, and that NZFSA would assist us through advice.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 5 May via teleconference. The next face-to-face meeting will be at the NBA Conference in July.

Editor's Note: Further information about the Bee Products Standards Council can be found in the article by Jim Edwards of the NZFSA on page 14.

Environmental Risk Management Agency applications to import substances

Vapormate

The Environmental Risk Management Agency (ERMA) has received an application to manufacture Vapormate fumigant, a non-flammable post-harvest fumigant for the control of insect pests in stored cereal grains, oilseeds, grain storage premises and equipment and horticultural produce. Vapormate, while a more costly treatment, is an alternative to the ozone-depleting methyl bromide.

Biosecurity magazine has an article entitled 'Use of methyl bromide in New Zealand for soil fumigation and biosecurity purposes' (Issue 58, 15 March 2005).

New Zealand ratified the Montreal Protocol in 1987 which was amended in 1992. The protocol states: "The philosophy has been to try to limit all methyl bromide use to 1991 levels in New Zealand but we will exceed the voluntary cap soon due to other countries' biosecurity requirements".

It is interesting to note that in 1991 only 15 tonnes of methyl bromide were used for quarantine and pre-shipment use, whereas non-quarantine and pre-shipment use was 150 tonnes. In 2003 this trend had been reversed, with most of the methyl bromide being used by quarantine (140.68 tonnes), versus other use (20.88 tonnes).

New Zealand's current use of approximately 160 tonnes is only 0.3% of the estimated 65,304 tonnes used worldwide.

The National Beekeepers' Association is likely to put in a letter of support for the registration of Vapormate.

Apilife Var

ERMA has also received an application to import and release Apilife Var. This product is a sealed plastic pouch of vermiculite strips impregnated with thymol and essential oils to control varroa mites on honeybees within beehives.

It is gratifying to know that another varroa control is close to being available for beekeepers' use. The greater number of options for varroa treatment the better, as with wise use we may be able to slow the resistance of mites to varroa treatments.

New Zealand Food Safety Authority progress on approval of the Code of Practice for Food Grade Mineral Oil (FGMO)

At the time of writing, the NZFSA has only just indicated to us some problems exist with the draft Code of Practice. As yet we have been unable to ascertain the amendments needed for the Code of Practice to be accepted by NZFSA. It is disappointing that it has taken them so long to get back to us, considering that they had the draft prior to Christmas 2004.

Commerce Commission prosecution

The *National Business Review* reported on 28 March that "The Commerce Commission announced today that 'Tomorrow Dream Line Limited' and its former director Sang Rae Kim were sentenced and fined $35,000 in the Auckland District Court today for breaching the Fair Trading Act by making false representations about the 'Unique Manuka Factor' (UMF) in honey sold through its Auckland Dream Line Souvenir shops and other tourist outlets and about who was packing the honey product supplied by the company. Judge Thorburn fined Tomorrow Dream Line and Mr Kim $20,000 and $15,000 respectively for breaching sections 13 and 16 of the Fair Trading Act, as well as total court costs of $520. Section 16 of the Act prohibits certain conduct in relation to trade marks, while section 13 deals with false or misleading representations."

This outcome may prompt others to think before taking similar action.

NBA Conference

Preparations for this year's conference are well underway. Once again there promises to be an excellent seminar series, not to be missed. We look forward to seeing all interested people in Christchurch.

Jane Lorimer

The Executive would like to remind you that the Roy Patterson Trophy will once again be contested. You are invited to bring along your gadget for judging. The trophy is awarded for innovation in beekeeping — from new equipment to new marketing ideas.

- Jane Lorimer

Deadline for Publications

May 2005 edition:	***21 April 2005***
June 2005 edition:	***23 May 2005***
July 2005 edition:	***22 June 2005***

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

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Executive Governance of the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy

For the past six months or more, the Executive of the AFB NPMS has taken over the governance role of the strategy rather than utilising the Pest Management Strategy Operations Committee.

This course of action for the running of the AFB NPMS has enabled responsibilities to be simplified resulting in a much faster reaction to areas needing attention and in the making of policy decisions.

James Driscoll continues to carry out the day-to-day running of the strategy and liaises with our service providers: AgriQuality and HortResearch. Mary-Ann Lindsay has taken over from Blue Mountain Apiaries to administer the AFB Competency tests.

James has recently supplied the Management Agency with a 'budgeted versus actual' expenditure update for the running of the strategy. At the moment we are running under budget, but our projected expenditure by the end of the financial year (31 May) looks to be close to the budgeted amount. Once a full operational year has been run with the Manager in place, we should get a much better feel for how the strategy is being run, and where further improvements are needed.

James and the Executive are currently working on the Operational Plan to ensure that policies and procedures are in place that will cover the whole strategy so that in the future, reviews of our progress should only be all that is required. This will enable a full tendering process to be taken if the need arises to do so, as the various jobs that need to be tendered will have detailed specifications. It should also mean that no matter who is on the Executive in the future, the strategy should almost be able to run almost on its own.

The Executive is currently meeting on AFB NPMS matters in the third week of each month, either on a Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on the availability of personnel. National Beekeepers' Association meetings are being held in the first week of each month. If, however, there are urgent matters to discuss in either of these times, they can be discussed at the end of the scheduled meeting. Running the meetings separately is helpful for the auditors of the AFB NPMS, so that they do not have to wade through irrelevant minutes.

The AFB PMS review needs to be progressed. The Manager and the Management Agency will now make this review a matter of urgency.

- Jane Lorimer on behalf of the Executive

Management Agency report on the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS)

In writing this report I want to do more than just report on outcomes; I also want to outline the significance of the context of what the AFB NPMS is aiming to do. Fundamentally, it is about the eradication of AFB from New Zealand. An ambitious aim, but one that is achievable with ongoing industry support.

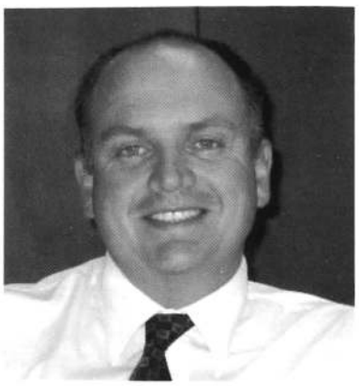
Looking at the strategy holistically I see the following significant components:

1. information gathering
2. learning and understanding
3. testing and searching
4. finances and budgeting
5. reporting and communication
6. management.

Information gathering is about the National Apiary Database and the ways we collect information to keep it up-to-date; that is, the Annual Disease Return (ADR) and Certificates of Inspection (COIs). ADRs and COIs provide information about disease trends and beekeepers' holdings. Understanding disease trends is a vital process in the fight to eradicate AFB. Without good intelligence it is hard to make informed decisions. However, to date a number of beekeepers have chosen not to return their ADRs and COIs. At last count there were close to 550 defaulting ADR beekeepers and 650 defaulting COI beekeepers in relation to this issue. It may be that both the ADR and COI defaulting beekeepers are a similar group of beekeepers but the trend is disappointing. We have 3000 registered beekeepers in New Zealand. From a percentage point of view, if we estimate the number of ADR and COI beekeepers to be at 650, then 22% are defaulting beekeepers. This is a disappointing outcome. Interestingly, it's a similar percentage figure for beekeepers with overdue levies.

If you are reading this and have not returned your ADR in the past, please do so when you receive your next ADR return this April. It's about beating AFB.

Learning and understanding is about getting beekeepers to look at AFB in the same way. If we are all on the same page then we will have a much better chance of beating the disease. AFB is a spore-forming bacterial disease. The spores are highly efficient survival mechanisms capable of offsetting beekeepers' best intentions. However, this spore-forming bug can be overcome if we apply some simple strategies. In New Zealand these strategies are a combination of hive destruction and sterilisation, but not drug feeding. The Disease Elimination and Conformity Agreement (DECA) and an examination that is complementary work so we beekeepers can look at the AFB problem in the same light. These processes are not meant to tell 'old timers' how to suck eggs, but serve to ensure that we all approach the problem in the same manner. Some of our best recognised beekeepers in the country have, without argument or embarrassment, sat the AFB Competency Test for Beekeepers, enjoyed it, and most of all learnt from the overall experience. I congratulate the trainers, proctors, librarians, facilitators, and others who are providing beekeepers the opportunity to sit the AFB competency examination. Mary-Ann Lindsay recently took over the role of Competency Test Administrator. I look forward to Mary-Ann's influence on this course and feel confident she will do an excellent job in promoting and managing the testing process for the benefit of our industry.



James Driscoll

Testing and searching is about inspections and AFB spore testing. These processes identify potential risks, ultimately helping beekeepers in particular areas of the country to offset unnecessary disease outbreaks in their operations. Each year beekeepers are sent sample packs so that the spore testing sampling system may function effectively. Consequently, when beekeepers are slow to return the samples (or choose not to return the samples when requested), the result is not just a problem for the individual but potentially has an impact on many beekeepers in our industry.

Finances and budgeting, in relation to the AFB NPMS strategy (after 20 November 2003), is achieved through a biosecurity levy process. Since 20 November 2003, two levies have been applied after a process of communication and feedback with the industry. One levy was applied in 2003 and the other in 2004 (*NB: the next levy is due to be charged to beekeepers in April 2005*). Currently, the Management Agency is within its budget constraints but about 500 beekeepers still owe $60,000 to the Management Agency for administration of the strategy. Approximately $13,000 of the $60,000 owed is in late penalty charges. Fortunately the majority of the levies owed to the strategy by beekeepers have been paid. Thank you! In relation to the balance, the AFB NPMS Executive faces the unwelcome process of having to place the overdue levies with a professional debt collection service at the end of April 2005. This is unwelcome as it puts pressure on individuals' credit ratings and personal lives. Therefore, to the approximately 450 beekeepers (mainly hobbyist beekeepers) who still owe 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 levies, we ask that you please pay your overdue levies immediately. There has been plenty of opportunity to dispute the levy charges and now, regrettably, there is no argument!

Reporting and communication on outcomes and issues to Beekeepers is vital in maintaining a good focus on the AFB

issues we face as an industry. To this end, the Management Agency has promoted good communication processes over the past 18 months with the intention of keeping people well informed. Furthermore, strong system processes are now in place to report changes in beekeeper details to AgriQuality. To ensure the National Apiary Database is kept up to date, please let us or one of our contractors know of any changes in address, hive, or apiary details.

Management is about ensuring the process works. If I were asked if the AFB NPMS process was operating successfully I would say yes, for these reasons:

a. the AFB NPMS Executive meets regularly and provides industry with a sound level of governance

b. beekeepers receive information, requests and instructions in relation to the strategy on time and within the parameters of the Biosecurity Orders in Council

c. beekeeping branches and groups support the AFB NPMS and want it to work. This is continually demonstrated by a willingness to assist the Management Agency

d. contractors to the AFB NPMS are working effectively and are achieving the results they need to achieve

e. good coverage exists of Level Two Approved beekeepers (AP2s) throughout the country (although coverage can always be improved)

f. the National Apiary Database is effective and accurate and all beekeeper correspondence makes it to the data entry personnel

g. beekeepers representing the majority of hives and apiary holdings in New Zealand return their ADRs

h. given the ADR declarations received, a significant proportion of hive holdings owned by our industry are inspected each year

i. AFB is reported and these reports are consistent with previous years. In fact, we are now starting to see a downward trend of AFB levels

j. the levy process is working well and has strong financial management processes in place

k. operational objectives are being met and are being undertaken within budget.

Therefore in closing, I recommend that we continue to work together to eradicate AFB, in an effort to strive towards a better beekeeping industry.

- James Driscoll
AFB NPMS Manager
James@driscoll.pn

AFB competency testing for beekeepers — do you want to sit the AFB exam?

Have *you* signed an agreement with AgriQuality on how you will deal with AFB? Do you have the book *Elimination of American Foulbrood Without the Use of Drugs,* by Mark Goodwin and Cliff Van Eaton (known as the 'yellow book')? If not, you may wish to contact your AgriQuality Apiary Advisory Officer (phone: 0508 00 11 22) and request a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement (DECA) or download it from this website: www.nba.org.nz

By filling in the form and returning it to AgriQuality (and once they agree with the options you have chosen), they will send you the yellow book.

Preparation to do the test

After you have read the yellow book, and when you feel you have a complete understanding of it, then take time to understand and memorise the photographs from the brochure 'Diagnosis of Common Honey Bee Brood Diseases and Parasitic Mite Syndrome' by heart. Then, aim to know the basic requirements of the AFB NPMS. Now you should feel comfortable about applying to sit the American Foulbrood Disease Recognition and Destruction Competency Test; *or*

You can take a training course (approximately four hours) conducted by a qualified trainer by contacting the local NBA Branch Secretary. Tests are generally held during the winter months when beekeeping activity is at a low point. Dates are usually notified in *The New Zealand Beekeeper* or posted to the NBA website; *or*

You can organise your own test by contacting the Competency Test Administrator (Mary-Ann Lindsay), notifying Mary-Ann of the date it is to be undertaken, the place and the proctor. A proctor can be either a trainer or a suitably responsible person, even somebody not connected with beekeeping, such as a teacher, minister, or a librarian.

To sit the test you will need to provide the following:

1. a cheque for $25 made out to "MARY-ANN LINDSAY", and posted to Competency Test Administrator, Mary-Ann Lindsay, 26 Cunliffe Street, Johnsonville 6004, Wellington

2. the proctor's details: name, address and phone number

3. the candidate's details: name, address, beekeeper number, telephone number (work and home), and postal address, if different from home address.

NB: This information must be in the hands of the Competency Test Administrator at least 10 days before the date you have nominated to sit the test.

The Competency Test Administrator will then dispatch your receipt and notification to sit the test. A test paper is then posted to the proctor, enclosing details on how to conduct the test. The proctor must then return the completed paper(s) within 7 days for marking.

Competency test for beekeepers: the process

The process for completing the competency test is as follows:

1. decide on where and when you would like to take the test. Many of the NBA branches and local clubs arrange suitable venues and dates
2. fill out the form below. The proctor is an independent person who will administer the test on the day. Your local branch should be able to assist you with this if they are holding a course. If you are doing the test independently, send the form in to the address below with a cheque for $25. This is the fee for the test. Please send the form back not less than 10 working days before the intended date of the test
3. you will then receive confirmation of the test with a GST receipt
4. attend the test, where the proctor will provide you with all of the materials *except a pen*. The proctor will return the completed test
5. a computer will mark the tests and the pass or fail notices will be automatically generated. This will then be sent to you directly. AgriQuality and the Manager of the AFB NPMS will receive a list regularly of all of the successful candidates
6. if you fail the test, then you may be required to take a course approved by the AFB NPMS and register to take the exam again, upon payment of another $25 test fee. The training provider will supply you with a certificate that you must return with your resit application form. You can take the test as many times as you wish.

Confidentiality

All personal information remains confidential and will only be disclosed to AgriQuality and the AFB NPMS contractor. Personal information will be aggregated and depersonalised when reported for any other purpose.

You may request a copy of your personal information held by the Administrator by writing to the address below, enclosing a cheque for $10. You can have your information corrected by returning the form with the corrected personal information.

Components to the Application Form for competency test:

- name (full name with family name underlined) and title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr etc)
- beekeeper registration number (if allocated) and address for all correspondence, plus phone number and, if available, a fax number
- preferred test date and preferred location (address and, if training provider, give their name)

- proctor's name and address
- NB: if a retest, then registered training provider certificate to be enclosed
- the testing fee enclosed (cheque number and bank). Cheques to be made out to "Mary-Ann Lindsay" and crossed with "account payee only" and sent to: Competency Test Administrator, Mary-Ann Lindsay, 26 Cunliffe Street, Johnsonville, Wellington 6004.

You will receive confirmation within 10 days. NB: If you do not receive confirmation, please contract the Competency Test Administrator on (04) 478-3367.

Training courses

If you are a trainer and intend holding a training course and test, please apply to the AFB PMS Manager for permission: james@driscoll.pn or PO Box 9098, Hamilton. (This procedure is required for audit purposes.) *Also, please contact the Competency Test Administrator, Mary-Ann Lindsay, well in advance to give notice of your intentions to provide a training day.*

Organise a venue and arrange for the course to be advertised in *The New Zealand Beekeeper*, and in your local newspapers. Also, post details to the NBA website, www.nba.org.nz.

Minimum requirements: training notes, a copy of the trainer's certificate for *each* candidate, overheads or Powerpoint presentation, projector, super and frames for demonstration, frame of AFB, matches, etc.

NB: You may only hold AFB material if you have written permission from the Management Agency. Apply well in advance.

The test is not designed to be hard. However, the candidate must have a good understanding of everything in the 'yellow book'.

Training course fees are set by the individual training providers and therefore could be higher than the standard test fee to cover incidentals. The test itself should take approximately 15 minutes. It consists of 25 multiple-choice questions and must be conducted under strict supervision. Special needs candidates can arrange to have a reader who is someone not associated with beekeeping. Twenty questions answered correctly constitutes a passing grade, provided the five 'compulsory picture questions' are also answered correctly. If one of these compulsory questions is not answered correctly, the candidate will automatically receive a 'fail' grade. All candidates are notified of their results in writing by Mary-Ann Lindsay, Wellington, phone (04) 478 3367.

- James Driscoll
AFB NPMS Manager
James@driscoll.pn

Protecting the South Island from varroa

Duncan Butcher
Chair, Varroa Agency Incorporated

Keeping the South Island varroa free is the simple aim of the Varroa Agency Incorporated (VAI), now up and running, with the first surveillance programmes under way.

The Agency, funded through the support of the regional councils and the unitary authorities in the South Island, in partnership with the beekeeping industry, began surveillance activities through AgriQuality in March.

The support of local government — both in funding and staff resources — reflects the importance of the bee industry to the South Island primary sector and the commitment to keep this pest off our island.

So where did we come from? Born out of the National Pest Management Strategy Varroa Bee Mite, the VAI was formed through consultation between beekeepers and the regional councils and unitary authorities in the South Island.

A key to our success will be ensuring that we keep in contact with the industry as we further develop our work plan, which will include education programmes for the industry and the wider public as well as the surveillance programmes.

The board received invaluable support from the American Foulbrood Management Agency in its set-up phase.

Our board has four members:

- Cr Duncan Butcher (chair) Otago Regional Councillor, former Council chair, from Cromwell
- David Horn, chief executive of the West Coast Regional Council
- Steve Olds, representing beekeepers, from Nelson
- Cr Ross Little, Environment Canterbury

Our first priority was to get surveillance programmes in place for this autumn. AgriQuality has the contract for the programme with David McMillan as our strategy manager, and Tony Roper will manage the surveillance programme.

AgriQuality has experience in dealing with varroa incursions and has been involved in the delivery of the varroa management plan, including managing four rounds of varroa surveillance.

In this first year, we have put in place an intensive surveillance programme, particularly in high-risk areas such as ports. Apistan strips are being used this time around, because they were available and affordable, but other products will be evaluated in the future.

The programme is more intensive than last year's programme run by MAF, reflecting the board's desire to ensure good coverage of the South Island in this first year.

We will review the programme at its completion in July and consult again with the industry as we consider a proposal for next year's programme, and the effect this will have on the levy and the Councils' contributions.

Duncan Butcher

Our budgeted income for this year is $730,000, with $530,000 coming from the Councils and $200,000 from industry. The surveillance programme cost is approximately $585,450; the cost of border control and education $115,000, and board management, accounting and other administrative costs are $30,000.

Border control is an important issue, and may require more resources than we currently have available, which will be an issue for next year's round of consultation. Because of the set-up costs in the first year, the board is of the view that the levy may have to be set at the $2 maximum. This has to be reviewed every year.

VAI has received great support from the Canterbury Regional Council (Ecan) in this early stage of its work, as well as excellent input from the bee industry.

Work is also being progressed on a Memorandum of Understanding with MAF to set up the conditions, reasons and criteria if an incursion occurs. The board agrees that a swift response to any incursion is important, and we are working hard to ensure that happens.

We've been around for only two months, and some serious action is underway. Expect to be hearing more from us as the year progresses, and let's work together to keep this pest away from the South Island.

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A view from Steve Olds, beekeeping industry representative on the Varroa Agency Incorporated (VAI) Board

I am honoured to represent the beekeeping industry on the Varroa Agency Incorporated (VAI) Board. I can assure you I will do everything I can to represent the interests of the industry.

Thanks to the foresight of and management by some people, the South Island has remained free of the varroa mite, to the best of the beekeeping industry's knowledge. Through the efforts of a few, all but one of the South Island regional authorities has joined with the beekeeping industry to form a new entity, the VAI. The VAI Board has been appointed and we are implementing the strategy with a vision for keeping the South Island free of varroa, as well as managing the risk and eradication of varroa in the South Island. Our philosophy is that prevention is much better than cure. However, I have heard about and observed some issues relating to the industry and varroa that, as your representative, I feel I must comment on.

The topic of varroa mite has been on the industry's lips for the past four years. Many questions and problems have been raised because of the mite's infestation of New Zealand's bee population. Answers and solutions have not been coming forward at the same rate. The industry has been left divided on how to approach varroa and many other issues.

Three groups now exist: the two official groups (BIG and NBA) and those beekeepers that for whatever reason have become disenfranchised. I can carry out my role as your representative only if the industry is united on the South Island being kept free of the mite, and possibly other pests that may affect bees. Any change in the status of the South Island as varroa-free will be detrimental to the entire industry.

Some industry players obviously feel that because a funded body has been established to manage varroa, they need do nothing because it is the new agency's problem. It seems to some that the agency has been established as a matter of right rather than privilege. The extension of that is that if we do suffer an varroa incursion in the South Island, then it isn't the individual's fault but can be laid at the feet of the agency.

I see the reality as completely the reverse. Now that the public, through regional council ratepayers, have put their hands in their pockets, then the beekeepers of the South Island in particular (but not solely) have a much larger responsibility to ensure that they do everything possible to minimise the risk of an incursion or any sustained hive infestation. This is an enormous opportunity and responsibility for the New Zealand beekeeping industry. New Zealand has embarked on a world-first initiative: no other country has endeavoured to eradicate or stop the varroa infestation.

One of my major concerns is that the North Island beekeepers will see this as an injustice. Again the industry becomes divided over competitive forces that largely have little to do with the price of honey or services in the first place. It's all about how you look at it — is the glass half full or half empty? Some will say it is easy for me to see it as half full. In reality, any intervention must be seen as positive for all of us. This is a huge opportunity for the industry and the reputation of the New Zealand primary industry sector.

Steve Olds, taken at NBA Conference 2001

So what is the industry's commitment to ensuring that this strategy works? A hive levy is in place and due for payment soon. Can we make it work? I understand that MAF/AgriQuality will provide resources to train some beekeepers in methods of early detection and incursion management. So are you going to be the person that ignores the detection of varroa in your hives for the fear of ridicule, or the one who is trained and is able to deal with the problem urgently?

The VAI Board has met twice now and has begun contracting for supply of services. With a short timeframe to act on surveillance this year, we stuck with the status quo — at a price that we can afford. My aim is to sell to the Board a case for a widespread training programme to assist beekeepers in all aspects of detection and response procedures. New management procedures are being developed all the time. Let's benefit from the experience of the North Island.

I have proposed that each of the two industry groups set up a special three-person committee to hear and record from any beekeeper, registered or not, any issues regarding the varroa mite or the VAI. I have asked that these two committees vet any concerns to ensure they are real issues on which that the Board is able to act effectively. My role is one of governance and policy, not management, and that needs to be recognised in the industry as well. A contractor will manage the beekeeping industry Varroa Management Strategy.

There is no argument about the importance of the beekeeping industry to New Zealand. Now we have the support we wanted, let's make every opportunity a winner!

News from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority

Risk Management Programmes (RMPs)

To be eligible for official assurances (export certificates), businesses that extract, process or pack honey or other bee products must have an RMP registered in accordance with the Animal Products Act 1999 by 1 July 2006.

RMPs are written programmes designed to identify and manage hazards and other risks so that the resulting animal product is fit for its intended purpose. RMPs need to be submitted to NZFSA by 1 April 2006 to ensure that they are registered by 1 July 2006. Bee products processed, handled or stored in premises without an RMP after 1 July 2006 will not be eligible for official assurances but may be sold on the domestic market.

Verification of RMPs

RMPs will need to be verified (audited) at least annually by an accredited verifier. Accredited verifiers work for recognised agencies and are contracted directly by the business operator. Verification visits will be required more frequently if the premises is not operating to its programme. This system will replace the current system of inspections by local authority environmental health officers.

A helping hand

NZFSA recognises that the transition to RMPs presents some challenges for the bee products industry and has been working with a group of industry representatives to develop a Code of Practice (COP) and an RMP template to make the transition to risk management programmes as easy as possible. The COP and template have been trialled over this past summer in a number of businesses and will be finalised in May 2005. A draft of the COP and template document is available on the NZFSA website (see below).

The NZFSA is planning a series of interactive workshops for bee product processors to help them develop their RMPs from the template based on the COP. These workshops will be held through July and August 2005 and will be notified through industry publications.

Information for exporters

The NZFSA has produced the 'Bee Products Official Assurances Guide', which documents the certification system for the bee products industry. This guide is available from the NZFSA website below.

Requirement to list

Operators of businesses that will require an RMP from 1 July 2006 need to list with the NZFSA **now** as a transitional requirement. This is so NZFSA can begin verification of assurances provided and compliance with overseas market access requirements. This requirement to list and instructions on how to do it are found in the guide. NZFSA will also be able to send businesses information directly on risk management programmes, upcoming workshops etc. Premises already on the EU list will be automatically copied over to this new all-inclusive premises list. *Please note: There is a small charge for this listing.*

Jim Sim and Buzzy

Further information on the above topics can be found on the Bee Products pages on the NZFSA web site: http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/subject/bee-products/index.htm

- Jim Sim
Principal Advisor, Animal Products Standards
New Zealand Food Safety Authority

Bee Products Standards Council

The Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) had its first official meeting on 17 March in Wellington. The BPSC has been established in response to suggestions during New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) workshops to develop an industry code of practice.

The primary purpose of the BPSC is to be a consultative forum between the New Zealand bee product industries and government (mainly the NZFSA). The BPSC will provide leadership, analysis and advice that contributes to the development of cost-effective sustainable standards and risk-mitigating strategies that achieve best practice in risk management and consumer protection. The major focus will be to work with the NZFSA to establish food safety and other technical standards as well as protocols that are necessary for bee products.

The most important role will be to ensure efficient and practical strategic direction, policy formulation and priority setting that meets the needs of the bee product industries. By working in close collaboration with the bee products industry, the BPSC can assist in the establishment of industry standards, specifications and codes of practice that are based on full industry consultation and advice to decision-making bodies.

We need practical solutions to relevant technical issues, especially factors that impinge on processing costs and efficiency, and other regulatory requirements.

Jim Edwards

This will not work well without open communication with all members of the bee product industry and those exporters who really are only part of the industry because they sell New Zealand bee products overseas. I have encouraged the three parties who have representatives on the BPSC to consult and keep their members well informed with the work of the BPSC. The organisations represented are the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand, the New Zealand Honey Packers and Exporters Association and the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group.

- Jim Edwards
Chairman, Bee Products Standards Council

From the colonies

Hawkes Bay

Beekeepers are starting to wind down for the season, although a lot of hives will need supplementary feeding to see them through the winter. We have gone from very dry to rather wet, making it a bit difficult to work some hives but at least the farmers are happy. It appears that most beekeepers in Hawke's Bay will get about an average crop, with only a few areas being very good and a few very poor.

- John Berry

Southern North Island

Members are reporting reasonable crops around our area. Here's a summary:

Taranaki: Rewarewa was very poor but Kamahi flowered well for several weeks. Clover was okay but not as abundant as usual. Northern Taranaki reported a good Manuka harvest. Settled weather in January and February enabled most members to get a decent harvest. Requeening and good varroa mite control have been very important, but hive locality has been a key factor in getting a good harvest. A lot of small hobbyist beekeepers have folded up their tents, as the mites devastated hives that were not looked after.

Wanganui-Manawatu: Commercial beekeepers are reporting a reasonable harvest. Clover yields around the Marton/Bulls area have been good but other areas have been patchy.

Waimarino: Early in the season the rainfall led to poor Manuka yields, but the fine spells in January and February have provided a honey crop, although not the expected amount.

Wairarapa: Good crops from most areas; the coastal areas yielded good honey crops.

All in all, beekeepers are happy with crop yields, but many more hobbyists have fallen down and given up due to the impact of varroa. Regular visits and good recording of hive details are a constant challenge to us all.

Branch AGM: Monday 2 May 2005, AgriQuality, PN.

The Wellington Beekeepers' Association is holding a DECA course on Saturday 11 June 2005 in Johnsonville. Telephone Mary-Ann Lindsay on (04) 478-3367.

- Neil Farrer

Nelson Branch

Now that autumn is in the air, it is time to take account of how beekeepers feel about their harvest after a difficult spring and a late summer. The trees are colouring more from the lack of water than they are the cold as we continue to have very hot weather, the days often reaching 26–28 degrees as I write at the end of March (don't believe what you hear on the TV from the airport weather station!) No rain since last month.

There *should* have been a good late harvest of both honey dew and borage. *Should* is the key word, as neither of these harvests came to much. Nelson beekeepers are very disappointed with their harvest overall; really not much of any honey, especially Manuka.

Golden Bay has had a patchy harvest. There has been next to no honey in the Takaka Valley area, whereas the Aorere Valley and Western areas were average to better. Once again, the Manuka crop is only about 30 percent of an average year. The northern Rata crop has done well.

Murchison and Maruia areas: the wasps are doing nicely, thank you. I personally have never seen so many wasps hovering on the ground. We saw gangs of them sitting at the base of a weak hive and gulping down their feast, our bees. Beekeepers in these areas are saying that many hives will be lost this year to these predators. The honey harvest in these areas has been disastrous.

Marlborough honey producers are disappointed that the borage harvest didn't happen but have ended up with some above-average clover crops. The Manuka harvest is down 80 percent.

Rumour has it that the West Coast Rata was average.

In the meantime, several people from the 'Top of The South' are broadening their beekeeping knowledge and experience. At least two beekeepers will be working in the Canadian honey season and we wish them well. Several others plan to attend Apimondia, the world bee conference being held in Dublin, Ireland from August 21–26. We wish them lots of good Guinness!

I haven't talked with any beekeepers who are doing autumn requeening this year. I wonder if all their energy has been zapped by the difficult year. Next season will, of course, be better.

- Merle Moffitt

Canterbury Branch

The clover harvest is over and by all reports it can be summed up as patchy at best. Hives appear to be in excellent health, with plenty of young bees and a lot of unintentional young queens and plenty of stores. With a mild autumn underway, wintering will at least be a breeze (fingers crossed).

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

NBA Conference

Planning is well underway and we have endeavoured to bring to you an informative and interesting seminar. For more information see our website or contact any of the following:

Anthony Taiaroa
chris.tony.taiaroa@clear.net.nz
03 314 4569

Stuart Ecroyd
stuart@beehealthy.co.nz 03 358 7498

Melanie Ecroyd
me@ beehealthy.co.nz

Brian Lancaster
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Richard Bensemann
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Trevor Corbett
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Paul West
pav@paradise.net.nz

Linda & Roger Bray
birdsnbees@xtra.co.nz 03 308 4964

- Brian Lancaster

Southland Branch

What a crazy mixed up year we've had. The plants can't work it out either. I politely argued with a beekeeper who reported dandelions flowering in autumn, until I found an ungrazed field a few days later: now I have to apologise.

It has been a good year for bumblebees, but many have come to a nasty end. This year it has not been uncommon to find twenty or thirty carcasses stuck on top of the excluder with no obvious means of entry; even so I was astonished to come across a lidless hive which had over four hundred bumblebee carcasses almost blocking the grille. There was plenty of honey both above and below. That must have had a severe impact on the local population.

In a recent beekeeper discussion mention was made of the robbing propensity of Italian bees, probably by a Carniolan enthusiast. A few days later I experienced an excellent example. Six hives in the apiary: one nice quiet Italian, five feisty 'hybrids' distinctly dark in colour. I was taking off honey and was amazed to note that nearly all the robbing was being carried out by yellow bees, to the extent that the ratios were more than reversed. Even the next day there were yellow bees fighting for entry to the black hives (without much success that I could see) but no black intruders for the Italian fortress.

One of the few success stories out of Southland this year has been the good results achieved by single brood box hives.

While double brood boxes have frequently been filled with honey, severely restricting the queen, with little honey placed above the excluder, reports from several users of the single brood box have been very favourable. Worth considering in a non-summer.

As extraction comes to an end in our lovely classic autumn it seems that, while the overall Southland crop is well down, there have been the odd gems where microclimates have produced very well. A few bright spots on a bleak horizon. Surely next season can't be as difficult.

- Don Stedman

Flowering Lacebark
Photo: Frank Lindsay

Varroa research programme update

R.M. Goodwin, M.A. Taylor, H.M. McBrydie and H.M. Cox
HortResearch
Ruakura

The following is a summary of the National Beekeepers' Association varroa research programme. Design and funding for the programme has been a joint effort from wide range of organisations and individuals. Financial contributions have been provided by the MAF Sustainable Farming Fund, HortResearch, Beekeeping Industry Trust Fund, Zespri and a group of 25 beekeepers and beekeeping businesses. Beekeepers have also contributed by making hives available, and in some cases by carrying out trials.

The programme started six months ago and will run for three years. A number of areas are being investigated, which include breeding bees that are resistant to varroa, methods for slowing the development to synthetic miticide use, improving the effectiveness of organic products and biological control of varroa. Progress on two of these projects are summarised in this article.

1) Effectiveness of different rates of Apistan®

The development of varroa resistant to the synthetic chemicals is a major problem overseas and will occur in New Zealand. One of the causes of resistance is beekeepers not following the instructions for the miticides they are using. For example, some beekeepers in New Zealand use Apistan® at rates less than that which is recommended on the Apistan® label.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether this practice was likely to increase the rate with which resistance develops. To answer this question we treated hives with different rates of Apistan®. We used the recommended number of strips but reduced the size of the individual strips. The smallest strips were only 3.1% of a full strip (Fig. 1). Because it was necessary to attach the strips to the frames with staples, the area of the strip exposed to bees was probably less than 2% of a full strip.

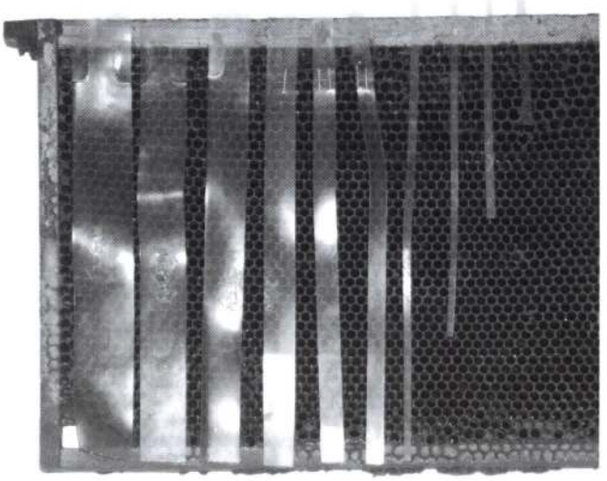

Fig 1. Different sized Apistan® strips

The percentage of varroa killed remained high regardless of the size of the strips. There wasn't any reduction in the kill rate until the strips were reduced to 12.5% of their original size.

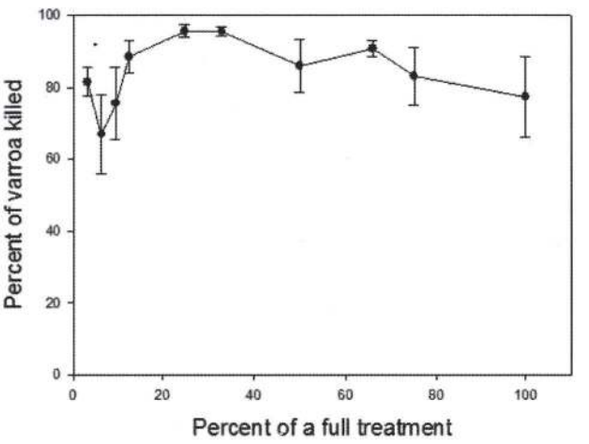

Fig 2. Percentage of mites killed by different sized Apistan® strips

These results suggest that the practice of using Apistan® at half the recommended rate will not lower the level of the active ingredient to such an extent that will dramatically speed up the rate with which resistance develops.

After removing the Apistan® we treated all the hives with Bayvarol® to determine the number of varroa that were still in the hives. What normally happens when you put miticide strips in a hive is that 50% of the mites are usually killed in the first week. The number of mites killed in the following weeks decreases as the number of varroa decrease. However, we got a small increase in the kill rate when we removed the Apistan® strips and replaced them with Bayvarol® strips. This is the first time we have observed this result. Although not proof, especially as the trial was not designed to test it, the results suggest that there might be a small amount of resistance developing to Apistan®.

We intend to carry our similar trials with Bayvarol® and Apivar®.

2) Biological control of varroa

Metarhizium is a fungus that can kill insects. It has been investigated overseas to determine whether it can control varroa. The aim of this investigation is to determine whether the *Metarhizium* isolates present in New Zealand can be used to control varroa. Because of difficulties in maintaining viable

Metarhizium in a hive, the initial approach taken has been to use it as a biological insecticide. That is, it is applied to hives during the spring and autumn.

Metarhizium isolates have been sourced from the AgResearch and Landcare collections. These were then grown up to provide sufficient material to test (Fig 3).

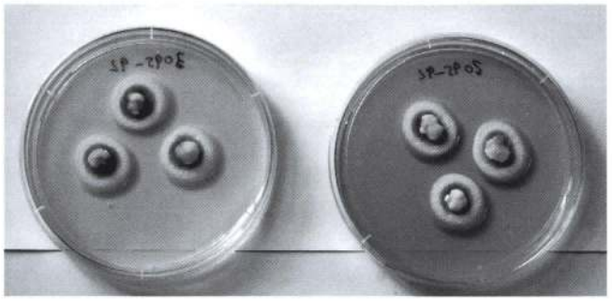

Fig 3. Metarhizium anisopliae growing on Agar

Once sufficient material had been produced it was tested against bees in cages. The isolates tested had no effect on adult survival, although we still have investigated whether they will affect larval survival.

The isolates were then tested against varroa. High concentrations of *Metarizium* were tested to prove the concept. Varroa were shaken up in a vial with *Metarizium* and then placed on pupae to determine their survival. Almost 100% of varroa died within 24 hours.

The next step in this project will be to test the *Metarhizium* on whole colonies.

Will varroa kill your hives this winter?

Mark Goodwin
HortResearch
Ruakura

Varroa has been in New Zealand long enough to expect that sometime soon, possibly as early as this winter, resistance to chemical control agents will develop to the extent that treatments will no longer be effective.

We can be sure of three things in this world: death, taxes and the development of varroa that are resistant to chemical control agents. Resistance occurs when varroa become more and more tolerant to the control products used.

The question is not whether it will happen but when it will happen. Resistance has been reported to occur in most of the control products overseas. Where it has occurred, the result has been the death of large numbers of colonies and a large amount of money spent in trying to overcome the problem.

The predictions made in 2000 were that it would take between five and 10 years for resistance to develop. Varroa has now been in New Zealand for five years so we can probably expect to find resistance sometime soon.

Unfortunately, we will probably discover resistance the hard way. I expect a phone call next spring, or in one of the following springs, from a beekeeper who has found that a large number of colonies have died during the winter for some unknown reason. This may be the first hint that we have a resistance problem.

To make sure you don't find out about resistance the hard way, don't go on holiday immediately after removing the varroa strips this autumn. From now on it is a good idea for everybody to check that the treatments have worked. The best way to do this is to do some sugar shakes after the varroa control strips are removed (page 35 of the MAF *Control of Varroa* manual). Do not use the Apistan® test (i.e., a full Apistan strip in a jar) as the varroa may be resistant to Apistan®.

Mark Goodwin

If you test your hives the same day as the strips are removed you should find no more than two varroa on 300 bees when a sugar shake is used. If you suspect resistance, contact one of the beekeeping organisations.

INVITATION

NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NZ (INC)
SEMINARS & CONFERENCE 2005

'The Chateau on the Park'
CHRISTCHURCH

4th JULY – 7th JULY 2005

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TUESDAY 5th

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WEDNESDAY 6th

Seminars with various Speakers
Dinner and Dance

THURSDAY 7th

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Richard Bensemann	Phone 03 324 3569	richard@airborne.co.nz
Trevor Corbett	Phone 03 314 6836	beeworks@xtra.co.nz

NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)
SEMINAR & CONFERENCE - CANTERBURY
4TH JULY – 7TH JULY 2005

'The Chateau on the Park' - Christchurch

REGISTRATION FORM

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SEMINAR & CONFERENCE 2005				
EVENT	NUMBER ATTENDING	NBA MEMBER	NON MEMBER	TOTAL
Full Registration		$30	$30	
One Day Seminar only Registration		$20	$20	
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Seminar Day – Tuesday 5th July		$40	$50	
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Controlling varroa mites

Some beekeepers have now 'celebrated' their fifth anniversary with mites. Not a thing to celebrate, perhaps, but we have come a long way since it was first discovered.

Looking back we must be thankful for the farsightedness of our Apicultural Advisors and our researchers, and to MAF and the government for funding so many alternative varroa treatments and for producing the book *Control of Varroa – A Guide for New Zealand Beekeepers*. The guide is now unfortunately out of print but is still available on the MAF website. Go to the home page and search for 'varroa', which should take you to the downloadable version. We were also lucky enough to have a video produced that demonstrates all the methods and their reliability. Branch secretaries or the NBA library should still have a copy.

A number of countries have only registered one or two products and within 10 years have struck resistance problems; i.e., the success when using a single chemical treatment declines.

Since varroa hit the USA they have had three massive kill-offs of hives — initially as varroa spread and then as mites became less sensitive to each chemical treatment. Last winter they estimated that up to 40 percent of all hives might have died.

New Zealand is in the happy position of learning from everyone else's mistakes, but our time is coming. It's easy to control mites now provided we follow instructions, but by far the most important thing to do is to monitor hives *after* you have finished a treatment to ensure that it worked.

Mites will now be starting to affect hives in some parts of the lower North Island. For those in the South Island, cross your fingers — varroa is coming but the longer you have to wait, the better.

Varroa is something that we try to prepare for but until you actually see mites, we tend to just leave everything in that 'preparation' stage. The problem is that you don't see mites until just before the hive dies, so if you rely on 'seeing' mites you'll soon be out of beekeeping. You have to monitor a number of hives regularly, using chemical strips and a sticky board of some kind. We tried the sugar shake method of monitoring hives for a number of months in our area without finding them, but after putting in strips, mites fell off the bees. The problem with the cheap, quick methods is that they don't work because your sample size is too small. You need to use the sugar shake, ether roll, or the strip-in-a-jar methods four or five times to a different lot of bees within the same hive to get a good sample of bees. Once you have mites, however, these methods give a reasonable indication of mite levels.

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

My experience with varroa

I have been asked to give an explanation of my experience. I had been on the exotic disease committee of the NBA for a number of years so had been collecting information on all sorts of diseases for some time; for example, the 1977 Apimondia book on Varroasis and a number of printouts from magazines.

I was also fortunate to be in contact with Paul Brown of Auckland when he first got mites. He started recording mite drop in his hives before and after treatment. It was estimated that he had 22,000 mites at the time they were treated. Thanks to MAF, which provided free initial treatments for infested hives, all of Paul's hives survived. This gave me a good understanding on how the chemical strips worked.

Unfortunately I needed to put this knowledge into practice when a log was moved down the North Island to a sawmill within a mile of some of my apiaries. MAF Biosecurity placed all sorts of restrictions to stop its spread. At the time it was estimated that there had only been four bee-flying days before the feral hives' destruction, so it would have been unrealistic to try and eliminate mites from the area, as the number of feral hives in the area and their location was unknown. However I thought I'd try anyway just for fun. It would also be an advantage to me in the long run, as it would save money for treatments if I could reduce reinvasion if there were no feral hives around.

So I spent time on a letter drop to all residents in the area and then started putting out bait combs and tracking (bee-lining) bees back to hives. This procedure was very successful but took months. I eventually found it easier to walk up and down roads spotting bees flying and physically tracing them back to their hives, and sealing them in with foam so the cavities couldn't be reused again.

What surprised me was the amount of feral hives I located. What I thought was a poor beekeeping area was poor because there were so many feral hives, located in groups of three to five every kilometre: far more than the number of managed hives in the area.

Was I successful? No, because I couldn't find and kill them all, but it did slow down their spread considerably. But it was a good exercise to attempt, and in talking to other beekeepers with mites I found out the following facts:

1. not all hives get varroa at the same time. A hive requeening itself generally will attract drones so that it might get varroa before the others. A single hive in an isolated area could go another two years before getting mites, even where there's an infested apiary 700 metres away across the valley
2. in an apiary one or two hives generally will get varroa well before the rest, and mite levels will get high before they infest other hives in the apiary. The problem is spotting which hive has high mite numbers
3. bees fly over hills even when there's wind. Isolated valleys are not really isolated from mite invasion
4. treat all hives once you find one mite in an area. Some commercial beekeepers have done this and so far haven't lost a hive to mites
5. don't rely on your nearest beekeeper to treat his hives when you treat yours. Work together in groups, giving each other a hand especially during the acute phase, so all hives in a given area are treated at the same time
6. bees in my area have brood year round and forage year round in the lowland bush. I got reinvasion during the winter when strips were out, as I wasn't monitoring the hives
7. develop an easy method to monitor hives any time you're passing: I prefer mesh bottom boards, which give you a quick indication of mite levels without opening the hives
8. sometimes the bees cluster away from the strips in late autumn/early winter, another reason why post-treatment monitoring is vital
9. you have to develop alternative methods of control. I tested an oxalic acid fumigator from Canada, which worked extremely well, and there were no mites in the spring after testing with strips. The only problems were:
   - it was slow to use: four minutes per hive and had to be repeated every 16 days
   - you need a good respirator as it can be dangerous. I found I couldn't use it in windy conditions or during a fire ban as it was heated using a gas bottle. There are now other devices available that don't need a gas bottle. Others have used formic acid (MiteGone) with excellent results once local humidity conditions are known
   - try out alternative methods well ahead of the time you need to use them. Some may not fit into your operation
10. if you do not use mesh bottom boards, you have to be more observant entering an apiary. Look for deformed winged bees on the landing board or in front of the hive. Look for crawling drones and worker bees on the ground outside the hive ('the crawling death'). Not all hives have viruses, so if you see this your hives are full of mites. Pay closer attention to brood. Sacbrood during the summer is mite related. Some brood will be slightly open when it should be capped. Fork out the odd section of drone brood when inspecting hives for AFB
11. *read and reread the varroa guide*. If you don't treat on time, your losses will far outweigh the cost of the treatments.

Some advice for South Island beekeepers

- Save up for mite treatments now, as they are extremely expensive and you have to use a lot during the first two years or until the feral hives and 'leave-them-alone beekeepers' are gone.
- Have treatments available that you can use in an emergency when the honey is still on the hives. Carry some treatment strips in the truck with you at all times along with a fine-tipped crowbar so you can prise apart the brood super instead of lifting off all the honey supers.
- Visit some of the bigger beekeepers in the North Island when they are putting in strips — it's a good learning experience and they would appreciate you giving them a hand.
- Positive side: production has increased from 30 kg a hive to 65 kg in some areas.
- Negative side: more swarms. Bees seem to be stimulated earlier with all the extra nectar and pollen.

- Frank Lindsay

It is a scientific fact that continuous use of Varroa control products made from the same chemical family will lead to the premature development of resistance.

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About the Apiary

As I write these notes in late March, the bees are putting the last of a dribble of nectar around the brood nest or dragging honey from the top supers into the brood nest. The frames I wired and waxed in early February haven't been touched. At the time everything looked as though the flow would carry on and that extra storage room was required, as it either rained and cooled or just dried up.

There's very little robbing going on at the moment, which has made it easier to take honey supers than it normally would at this time of the year. Judging by the brood pattern it doesn't look as if many queens have superseded this autumn (although I'm still finding the odd capped queen cell), and I'll be in for a fairly intensive queen rearing and replacement operation in the spring.

While taking a quick look at the hives before starting work it's interesting to observe the occasional wax moth hanging just around the corner from the hive entrance. When all activity ceases in the evening, moths will try to make their way into the hives and lay eggs close to pollen frames where there's ample food for their larvae. It isn't until you have taken a few supers off and left them stored in a warm place for a week or two that you realise just how successful these moths are at getting into your hives. Left unprotected, the wax moth larvae quickly grow, mate and multiply at a very high rate. It also gives you an appreciation of just how successful the bees are at cleaning the moth eggs out when they hatch. Hence it's very important to protect your spare honey frames until they are required next season.

When extracting has been completed and the bees have dried the frames, the next job is to sort and store the dried honey frames ready for next season. Some beekeepers scrape the propolis off the frames as they do this task to provide a little additional income. Dark, heavy combs and frames with broken lugs are put in a pile to be melted down. Combs with pollen in them are stored separately as they tend to attract wax moth.

I generally sort the actual frames in the supers, putting foundation or newly drawn frames on the outside and darker ones in the middle. That way, if a wax moth lays eggs in the cracks between supers, the young larvae haven't much to feed on when they crawl into the super.

You can protect your stored frames in several ways. Generally, hobbyists store their supers in a shed or garage, which is ideal for attracting wax moths, so hobbyists use PDB crystals to protect their frames. Place half a dozen sheets of newsprint at the base of a stack of supers to make a good airtight seal. Stack the supers and seal any cracks between them with tape, paper or foam plastic. Place a small square of newsprint on the frames of the top super and add two tablespoons of PDB. Then add more newsprint and cover with an inner cover, a queen excluder or something similar that will prevent mice eating through the paper and getting into the stack of supers. The crystals turn into a gas that is heavier than air. This gas kills the larvae but not eggs, so it's important to place some more PDB into the supers a month later to give complete protection.

Overseas there's a swing away from using this product as it leaves a tiny amount of residue in the frames that can be detected in the honey (parts per billion). It's okay for hobbyists to use this chemical, provided they give their supers a good long airing before they go on the hives again, but I wouldn't recommend its use for commercial beekeepers who sell their honey.

Whatever you do, don't use mothballs, as this will slowly kill your bees when you put the supers back on the hives.

Other alternatives for storing supers

- Freezing the frames for 48 hours will kill all stages of wax moth including eggs. The supers can then be stacked up with a few sheets of newsprint between each one. However, there's still a chance that a moth could come along later, so check them in about three months' time.
- Leave your extracted honey supers on your hives until the frosts have killed off the flying moths and then stack the honey supers away. In the meantime, a strong colony of bees will look after your frames. The downside of this method is that bees give off moisture, so if there's insufficient top ventilation (25mm x 10mm) under the roof, the frames are likely to become damp and will need to be dried before being put into storage.
- Many commercial beekeepers stack their honey supers in open sheds well off the ground. Wax moths like dark, warm conditions to breed, so by putting the supers in a light airy place they cannot get established. The only problem with this method is that you must protect the supers from rodents: place queen excluders top and bottom of the supers and put out bait stations.
- Other beekeepers put the extracted supers away wet (sticky) inside their bee-proof sheds. The supers have to be kept an a dry environment to stop the small amount of honey in the supers from drawing in moisture and fermenting, but the beauty of this method is that wax moth can't live in a sticky environment, and when the supers are put on the hives they will stimulate the bees into working. One major downside to this method is that you cannot use it if you detect AFB in any of your hives, as it's a good way to spread AFB if you don't completely check your hives for diseases before taking off the honey.

Rats, mice and other unwanted visitors

Rats and mice are a real problem. You hardly see them at all during the summer when there's plenty of food around outside but once there's a hint of autumn in the air, they quickly come into buildings looking for winter quarters. I place baits in containers around our property and under the floorboard of a hive in each apiary but rely on traps inside the garage and workshop. Baits work well inside a building but not all mice go out of the building once poisoned. They are hard to find and you are only too aware they have been killed once they start to decompose, hence the use of traps.

Another thing beekeepers become aware of is that hives contain cockroaches — under the roofs, in the top feeder and in inaccessible cracks in the beehives. Cockroaches don't worry the bees as they scavenge on debris on the floorboards and around the hives at night. You won't find them in the honey supers when extracting, as they don't like movement, but are attracted to empty stacks of supers if these are protected in some way. You can use bait strips from a pest controller to monitor cockroaches indoors. Another method is to turn on lights at night and look around. I hardly ever see them inside my honey house and garage as I use Mortein barrier outdoor surface spray around the door and windows once a year to keep them out.

Cockroaches are harmless to bees but pose harm to humans. Apart from carrying every pestilence under the sun, they also excrete faeces. When faeces dry and go into the air in a confined space, they can cause an allergic reaction if breathed in over a long period, particularly in beekeepers' children.

It's essential to wash bee overalls separately from household washing, not to store dirty overalls in the house and not to use the family car to regularly carry bees and equipment. There is a high probability that children going through puberty will develop allergic reaction to bee venom. It's very important to control cockroaches for these same reasons.

Some evidence has emerged from Canada that beekeepers may be are reacting to varroa mites in the same way. British Columbia conducted a survey of beekeepers and about 30 percent have developed a cough since the arrival of varroa. New Zealand beekeepers need to be watchful in case these results manifest here.

Checking your hives before winter

Once robbing has finished and just before hives settle down for the winter, it's a good idea to check your hives. Here are a few things to check for:

- will hives stand up to winter storms? If not, perhaps a tie or a few more heavy stones are required
- are they positioned to get winter sun? If hives get only partial sun, perhaps add a board from the entrance to the ground so the bees have a larger landing area. In the North Island bees will often fly on a warm winter days, and a long landing board will provide any chilled bees landing short of the entrance a means to walk up into the hive
- do bees have a full super of honey to carry them through well into spring? It's not too late to feed

Continued on page 26

Continued from page 25

thick sugar syrup. Most hobbyists carry over a few frames of extra honey just in case the bees run short

- are hives still free of AFB after robbing? A quick three-frame brood check is usually all that's necessary to determine AFB status
- do hives have adequate top ventilation? It's important that hives remain relatively dry during the winter. I use a division board turned upside down on top of my hives. An entrance of 25mm x 10mm provides adequate ventilation. It pays to recheck how much moisture is in the hives after the first few frosty days. Damp top bars quickly lead to broken lugs in a few years. If the frames are slightly damp, put a 2mm twig between the super and the inner cover or roof to give more ventilation. If you provide too much ventilation, the bees will eat more honey to keep warm. It's a fine balance
- if you have mesh floorboards, seal off the top ventilation and rely on the open floor. I have found hives much drier with these floorboards.

Preparing for the DECA exam

Many beekeepers have taken the opportunity to gain their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement (DECA) with AgriQuality so they can inspect their own hives during the spring. Part of this agreement is that each beekeeper must sit and pass a test to demonstrate that they can identify AFB. Most NBA branches will be running courses through the winter, which will review most of the important information, but attending the course is not compulsory. If you have read, reread and understand the book *Elimination of American Foulbrood Without the Use of Drugs* by Dr Mark Goodwin and Cliff Van Eaton (the 'yellow book'), and if you have a copy of the pamphlet 'Diagnosis of Common Honey Bee Brood Diseases and Parasitic Mite Syndrome' by Dr Mark Goodwin and M A Taylor (from which the compulsory questions are set), you can arrange to sit the test independently. (See the information on page 8 of this issue.)

Things to do this month

Winter down hives: check feed, do AFB and varroa mite checks. Slope bottom boards for water drainage and fit mouse guards. Replace supers that are rotten or damaged. Attend to fences and control grass around the hives. Check for wasps and control for wax moth. Store extracted supers.

- Frank Lindsay

Greetings from the Editor

Now that I have settled in to my editorial duties (the April edition is my eighth issue — time does fly!), it's time to properly introduce myself and to give readers a taste of what happens behind the scenes at *The New Zealand Beekeeper*.

I was a hobbyist beekeeper for five years or so, working a hive on a friend's land just outside of Waikanae, about an hour north of Wellington. Frank Lindsay provided me with my first nuc. The queen had unusually light eyes (and Frank later described her as 'runty'), but the bees were very docile, productive and just right for a beginner. I kept bees until two years ago, when a bout of pneumonia and the impending onset of varroa convinced me it was time for a break.

When Frank told me that the publications committee was seeking an editor for *The New Zealand Beekeeper*, I was pleased to take up the position as I missed the challenge and the camaraderie associated with beekeeping. I have a diploma in publishing and this position is a great way to combine two sets of interests. I work at the National Library as an indexer for a periodicals database called Index New Zealand: one of the journals I index is *The New Zealand Beekeeper.* I juggle several other freelance editing and writing jobs with my work on the journal.

Frank Lindsay telling another of his tales to Nancy

Fiona O'Brien downloading her brain to an attentive but sleep-deprived Nancy

Photos: Jeremy O'Brien

The editor's role

Like any profession, the editor's job can be rather obscure to those who aren't familiar with it. Although editorial duties vary according to the size of the organisation, here's an idea of how things work to produce this journal.

I work from my home in Wellington and liaise by email and/or phone with contributors, the Publications Committee (Fiona O'Brien, Frank Lindsay and Serena Richards) and our printer, Crown Kerr Printing, located in Dunedin. I am responsible for:

- obtaining articles and other material from regular contributors. We are always happy to receive contributions and invite you to send letters, photos, articles and other information to me
- editing all material for typographic errors and ensuring it makes sense. I check any queries with the author
- emailing articles, photos and instructions to the printer for them to typeset and lay out into pages
- liaising with the Publications Committee to review the proof (mocked-up PDF version of the magazine) when it comes back from the printer, and providing corrections
- giving the go-ahead to print the journal.

Advertising and production

Crown Kerr Printing is responsible for obtaining advertising. Please contact Allan Middlemiss (details on page 2 and page 38 of the journal) if you wish to advertise. Advertising helps us to defray printing expenses and of course, supports the industry, so please support our advertisers and consider advertising your product or service in the journal.

We work to a rather tight production schedule. It takes me several working days (or longer, depending on the size of the issue) to edit all of the material received. This is why it is important for contributors to stick to the set deadlines (see the box in each issue). After Crown Kerr receives the material for the issue, usually on or before the first calendar day of each month, it takes about one working week to produce a proof, which includes advertising. I have a teleconference with the Publications Committee as soon as possible after receiving the proof to discuss each page, and then send corrections back to Crown Kerr. They produce an amended proof for me to review and approve, then it goes to print. Depending on where we are in the printing queue, the magazine is ready for mailing about 14 working days after copy is first received.

Mailing to subscribers

Crown Kerr is responsible for mailing the issue to subscribers (and to all registered beekeepers twice a year). Pauline Bassett, NBA Executive Secretary, maintains our mailing list and

Continued on page 28

Continued from page 27

subscriptions. Please contact Pauline if you wish to subscribe or if your address changes (see page 2).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Publications Committee for their support, particularly the previous editor, Fiona O'Brien, and Frank Lindsay, who, along with Jeremy O'Brien, spent a day with me last July teaching me the ropes. Jeremy took a few photos to document the process. Fiona was instrumental in setting up some very useful processes and she is now putting her considerable energy and talents into developing the NBA website: www.nba.org.nz

Ode to the typo

Mary-Ann Lindsay sent me the following poem. I did a Google search and found that it comes from the "Pacific Printer's Pilot", in a slightly different version. If you want your own copy, go to http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jeremy_condliffe/typo.htm

Ode To The Typical Typo

The typographic error
is a slippery thing and sly,
You can hunt it 'til you are dizzy,
but it somehow will get by.

'Til the plates are off the presses,
it is strange how still it keeps;
It shrinks down in a corner
and it never stirs or peeps.

The typographic error,
too small for human eyes,
'Til the ink is on the paper,
when it grows to mountain size.

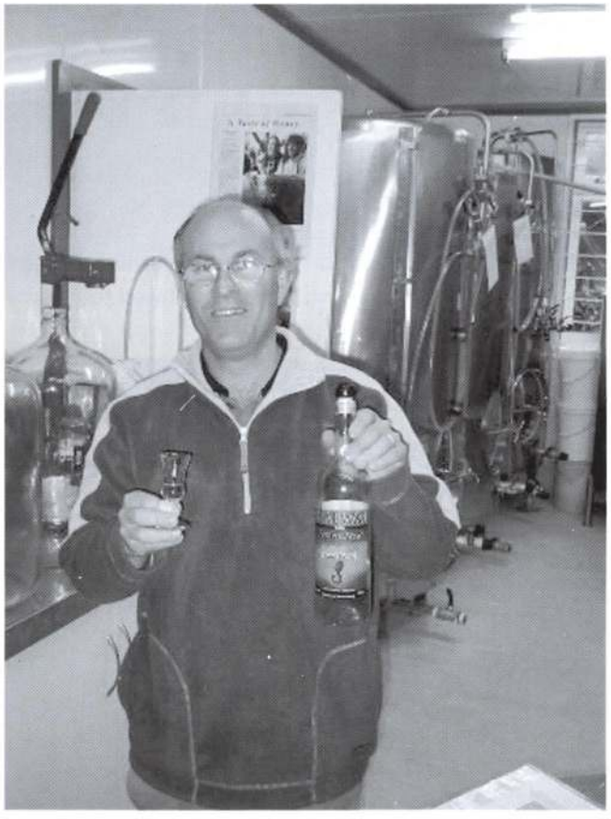
The boss, he stares with horror,
then grabs his hair and groans;
The copyreader drops his head
upon his hands and moans.

The remainder of the issue
may be clean as clean can be,
But that typographic error is
the only thing you see.

I look forward to working with and for you.

- Nancy Fithian

Nancy's brain download nearly complete
Photo: Jeremy O'Brien



What Jeremy and Frank got up to while the women were working!
Photo: Frank Lindsay

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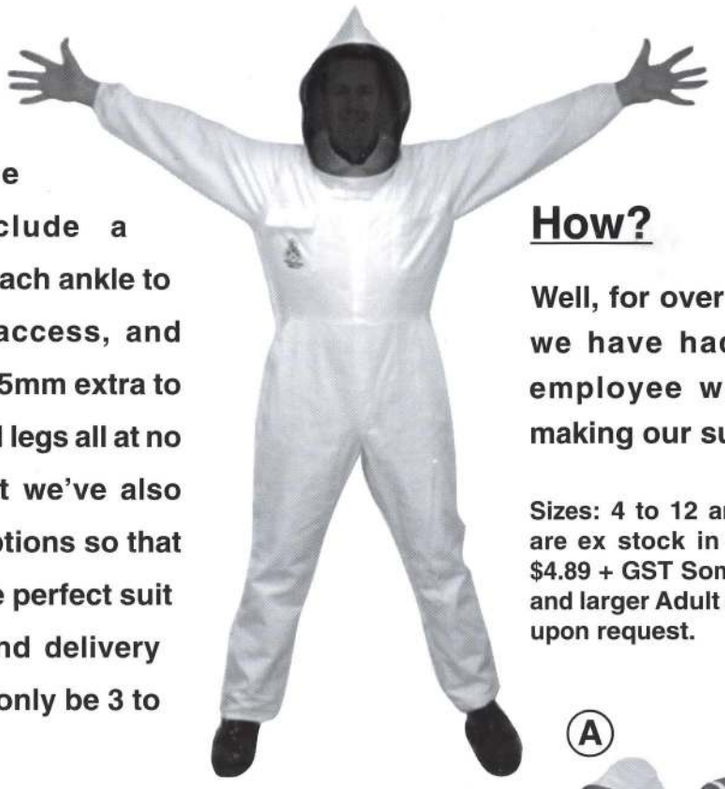

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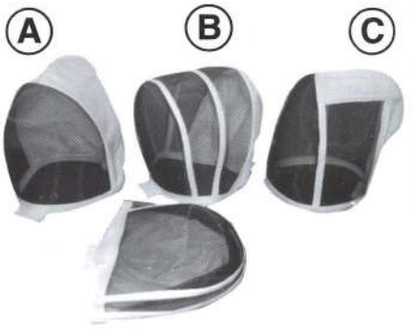
Sizes: 4 to 12 are standard. 13-15 are ex stock in Bruiji at an extra $4.89 + GST Some children's sizes and larger Adult sizes are available upon request.



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- (C) Rear view (for safe forklift operation) an extra $4.44 + GST

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Telford 40th Jubilee and 21st Anniversary of Apiculture Unit

Easter 2005 was a time to celebrate 40 years for Telford Rural Polytechnic as a primary industries' training institute (1965–2005) and 21 years as a National Apiculture Training Unit (1984–2005).

Telford history

William Telford was born in 1817 in the Cumberland District of Northern England. He left England in search of a new life and established a farm at Hindmarsh near Adelaide, South Australia. William married and convinced his brother from England to join him and farm a partnership. Unfortunately farming was not easy: wild dogs, drought, and transport problems all made life difficult.

Throughout the 1850's the province of Otago was developing rapidly, and in 1860 William Telford visited South Otago and filed two applications for land. In 1861 William, along with his wife, two sons and daughter, arrived on the S.S. *Pirate*. He purchased more land and in 1869 the landmark stone house was completed at a cost of £3000. William Telford managed the Otanomomo property until his death in 1888 at age 71. Over the years considerable development occurred on the Telford farm and in 1965, 77 years after William Telford's death, the Telford Farm Training Institute was opened.

Apiculture Training

Many associate Telford with farming training; however, in the early 1980's the Otago and Southland beekeepers approached Telford with a view to holding block courses for prospective beekeepers. These courses proved very successful and at this time the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand was looking for a site to establish a national training institute for young beekeepers. After lobbying by the Otago and Southland beekeepers, Telford was selected with the full support of the NBA and local beekeepers.

During this period Telford was run by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and with their support and with the approval of an $80,000 loan from the Rural Bank, 400 hives and apiary sites were acquired from local beekeepers and the National Apiculture Training Unit was established in 1984. Paul Marshall of Napier, an experienced apiarist, was appointed as the first beekeeping manager, and over the next few years he built the unit up from 400 to around 850 hives that ran as a commercial operation with a guarantee of training at least two students per year.

Gavin McKenzie took over the unit in the late 1980's and developed short courses for Pacific Island students. Nick McKenzie trained as a student in 1989–1990, becoming an assistant tutor soon after and took over the unit from Gavin in 1996. In 1997 Dr David Woodward became tutor and has continued until the present day. The Apiculture unit currently has 350 hives managed on- and off-campus. The unit also boasts a fully equipped honey house, an artificial insemination laboratory, workshop and queen bee rearing facilities.

Telford has developed a number of courses over the years and in November 2004 awarded two students the first National Certificates in Apiculture Level 2 and 3. Telford now offers seven different apiculture courses, both on- and off-campus.

Jubilee Reunion

The 40th Jubilee saw the return of many past students, including five previous apiculture students: Blair Dale (1985 student), commercial apiarist from Middlemarch; Alan Kilmister (1985), hobbyist beekeeper and artist from Lower Hutt; Nick McKenzie (1989–1990), commercial apiarist from Balclutha; Brian Dunckley (2001–2002 and 2004), currently undertaking a Bachelor of Commerce and Management at Lincoln University; and Krystal Davies (2002) who completed Certificates in Horticulture and Viticulture (2001–2003), and is now working on the family sheep and beef farm and running 150 beehives with her grandfather.

- Dr David Woodward
Head of Department, Apiculture

Left to right: Blair Dale, Dr David Woodward, Krystal Davies, Brian Dunckley, Nick McKenzie, Alan Kilmister.
Photo: Donald Lamont

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Maintaining your Bee-Equip uncapper™

Bee-Equip™ uncappers work very efficiently but require some maintenance from time to time. The cutting blades should be kept sharp with the aid of a small triangular file. The oil in the reduction box should be kept at the red line, and once every five years, all the bearings on the camshaft assembly should be changed as the continuous hammering wears them out.

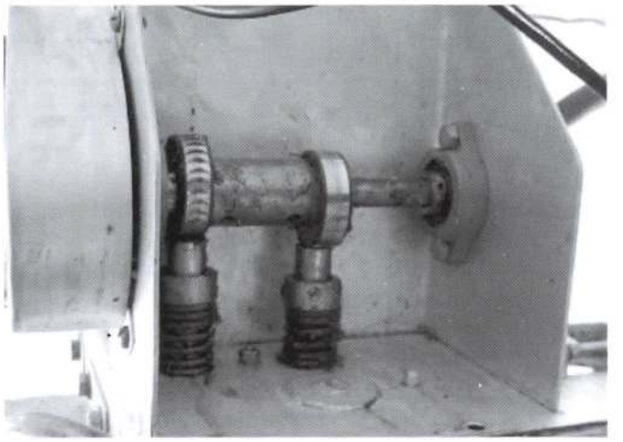
During your annual clean-up you should check the condition of the belts. One is a round one and is sometimes hard to get locally; however, if it snaps during extracting it can be temporarily replaced with a stocking until a replacement is sorted.

One thing that can go at any time is the return valve spring on the cutting shaft. When these go the machine really clatters and the tendency is to put up with it until you've finished; after all, the uncapper still works. I did this a few years ago but at the end of the season I was faced with a much higher repair bill. The hardened steel of the broken valve spring had worn a groove into the shaft, requiring an engineering firm to sweat a stainless steel sleeve over the damaged section of the shaft. This wouldn't have happened if I'd replaced the broken valve spring straight away.

To replace the valve spring you need a G-clamp, large screwdriver or a valve spring compressor, a couple of bits of wood and an Allen key. Remove the knife depth-adjusting arm return spring and the knife section from the shaft. Unscrew the two grub screws securing the valve spring and pull out the shaft. The broken valve spring and the collar securing this will drop off. Inspect it for wear. At this stage it's a good idea to mark the countersunk holes in the shaft by punching marks in the end of the shaft. This will make it a lot easier later on to line up the retaining spring collar.

Clean the shaft and the nylon bearings it runs on, and lubricate with food-grade grease. Put the shaft back into position and just before it's fully home, put on a new Holden 186 exhaust valve spring. Place a piece of wood on the end of the shaft and, with the G-clamp, compress the shaft so that the shaft is held against the short face of the offset cam bearing.

Then, with the large screwdriver or valve spring compressor, force the valve spring retaining collar away from the cam so that the valve spring is compressed. Line up the grub screws with the marks on the end of the shaft and slowly tighten one of the grub screws until it just grips the shaft. Then, while keeping the pressure on with the screwdriver or valve spring compressor, move the retaining collar along the shaft and you'll feel it go free when the grub screws drop into the countersunk holes. Tighten up the grub screws, remove the G-clamp, valve spring compressor and reassemble the knife section, and cutting depth arm spring. Check that the knives are still set equidistant to give the same depth cut on each side of the frame, and you're ready to go again. It takes me 15 to 30 minutes to change the valve spring, so it's worth replacing as soon as the valve spring breaks.



Underside of uncapped cam assembly. Note left-hand cam is showing signs of bearing wear.

Photos by Frank Lindsay

Tip: If you use Manley frames, unscrew the two bolts holding the frame guide and reposition them on the 'outside' of the frame.

-Frank Lindsay

Letters to the Editor

Tasmanian beekeeper seeking work in NZ

My name is Aidan Fleming. I am 20 years old and currently living in Longford, Tasmania. I have a passion for beekeeping, and have worked the past 2 seasons for Julian Wolfhagen at the Tasmanian Honey Company, telephone: (0061) 3 6398 2666. Julian runs an operation of approximately 1,500 hives. I am travelling to New Zealand in late August for approximately 12 months.

I am looking for work in the cooler parts of New Zealand to try and mimic as closely as possible the climate in Tasmania to apply already learned knowledge, and to further existing knowledge in the intricate art of cooler climate beekeeping.

Cheers,
Aidan

Aidan Fleming
(0061) 3 6391 3013
aidanf@postoffice.utas.edu.au
wu-wei@care2.com

Eighth Asian Australian Apiculture Conference, Perth 2006

A flyer is now available for the AAA conference to be held in Perth, Western Australia, 20–24 March 2006. The theme for the conference is 'Honey for Healthy Humans'. We would also welcome sponsors and trade exhibits for the conference; please email me if you have details of any companies or they can contact me directly: kfewster@iinet.net.au

Kind regards

Kim Fewster
Chairman 8th AAA conference Perth

Editor's note: A call for papers has been issued for the conference. Please contact Ben Oldroyd boldroyd@bio.usyd.edu.au for details of topics that relate to the conference theme. The deadline for submitting abstracts is 15 November 2005. Abstracts must be in English and you will be notified if your abstract has been accepted.

Bee book for children

Dear Bee Keepers,

I can't think of a better group of folks to contact about this new book! I guarantee that children's faces light up as they listen to the story of Chad and how he makes friends with a tiny bee!

Written in lyrical rhyme, it pairs with hand-painted illustrations to give parents and children a wonderful time together. Printed in full color on high quality paper, the book measures 7.5 x 10.5 inches — a great size for small hands!

What you have here is a unique gift item for your honey customers! *A Bee On Your Face* positions itself not only as a great read for kids, but also as a key marketing device for honey companies. Won't you please go to the website URL below? Contact me for more information.

As the author of three other books, I also write a weekly newspaper column and edit professionally. I hold a BA and two Master's Degrees. A mother and grandmother, I urge you to take a look at this adorable book!

One of my fondest memories is traveling about New Zealand. The Maori villages were mesmerizing, and I adored the countryside. I hope to hear from you soon! This little book would be perfect for an article in a newsletter or magazine targeting beekeepers. Take a good look at the book on the website. The URL is below! Any questions? Contact me! I'd be delighted to correspond with you!

Most Sincerely,

Hetty Gray, Author
Sugar Creek Publishing, Inc.
Fairland, IN 46126-9608 USA

hgray@iquest.net
www.sugarcreekpublishing.com

Another new book

Hello,

Attached is a press release for a new book published by the A.I. Root Company. We would be pleased if you would let your readers know of this new book, and of the information it contains. We feel it will be useful for every beekeeper in our industry. Thank you.

Kim Flottum
Editor, BeeCulture
623 West Liberty Street
Medina, Ohio 44256

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Fax: 330.725.5624
Kim@BeeCulture.com
www.BeeCulture.com

Editor's Note: The book is called Bees Besieged: one beekeeper's bittersweet journey to understanding, *by Bill Mares. It explores the experiences of a hobbyist beekeeper from Vermont who lost all of his bees from a tiny exotic pest and how he travelled to various parts of the US in search of answers to the troubles faced by the beekeeping industry. It describes how his research proved useful when the pest re-emerged in the northern spring of 2005, threatening almond, fruit and vegetable crops in California and across the United States.*

The nectar collectors

There is nothing more reminiscent of summer than the dense yellow texture of honey. Finishing a jar this morning, I cast my mind back to the occasion on which I'd found it, an afternoon in the middle of a simmering Cypriot heatwave.

I arrived in Omodhos as the sun was reaching its zenith. The locals were clustered around their usual tables, hugging the cool pockets of shade. Noticing me, my beekeeper friend, Panikos Leandrou, gestured me over, and signalled for another glass to be brought to the table. It is at moments like this that I feel most at peace on this unique island. In the inland villages, even total strangers will still beckon you over with the traditional Cypriot greeting: "Kopiaste" — "Come and sit with us".

Some of Panikos's friends were also in the honey business and the conversation I had interrupted was about the dishonest habits adopted by some of the big commercial beekeepers. Panikos explained to me how, by feeding bees large quantities of white sugar, it is possible to generate huge quantities of honey within a very short time.

"The bees don't bother to fly for nectar," he said, "when there's sugar provided for them. But sugar is very bad for bees — it shortens their life, makes them weak. And the honey!" He threw up his hands in disgust. "Well, it's not honey — it's sugar. But the tourists buy it because they do not know the difference."

There was a collective tut of agreement from around the table. "So who makes the best honey on the island then?" I asked. "Panikos makes the best honey," said one of the old fellows at the end of the table, with obvious pride. "Tell him Panikos."

Panikos grinned broadly. "Well my honey did recently win a competition. Some scientists came and tested the honey on the island for purity. Mine came out number one." He hesitated for a moment. "There is also Kyriakos Psaras. He is one of the very last to use the traditional method which we call tzivertia. A real character. Perhaps you would like to meet him?"

Some time later I was thundering along in Panikos's ancient truck, wedged between a box of beekeeping equipment and a five-litre tin of thyme honey. Our destination was a village in the hills above Evdhimou. Psaras, now almost 80 years old, was relaxing under a mulberry tree when we arrived, enjoying a cigarette.

"We've come to see your bees," said Panikos. "And me too, I hope," said the old man, his blue eyes squinting with laughter. "But of course," said Panikos. "This English fellow wanted to meet you and to hear about your special tzivertia."

"Well I am almost a museum now," said Psaras. "My bees and I both. But I'll be open for a few more seasons yet," he cackled. "Well, young man, once the tzivertia was the standard way to keep bees on this island. It's a kind of long cylinder made from mud and straw — the same material as our houses used to be made of. Keeps you cool in summer, warm in winter. That's why it's good for bees too."

What makes Kyriakos Psaras's tzivertia unusual is that more than 100 of the cylinders have been incorporated into a clay wall. The bees enter through tiny openings in the front, constructing their honeycombs lengthways along the pipe. Once a year, on exactly the same day, Psaras dons his beekeeping garb, removes the disc of clay which seals up the rear of the pipe, and smokes out the bees. After gauging how much honey to leave for the bees' winter food, he collects his harvest and suspends the combs in a basket over a copper pan. The honey drips through the weave of the basket, leaving behind a waxy residue. To goad the last of the honey from its comb, he uses a feather from a griffon vulture.

We sampled the honey, a dark, smoky explosion of sweetness, beneath the mulberry tree. Its taste conjures up the island in my mind like no other food I can think of. It speaks of roasting summer days under the almost Middle Eastern sun, of wild thyme, rosemary, eucalyptus and pine. Coming from Kyriakos Psaras's ancient tzivertia, it also reflects the myriad traditions of Cyprus.

"Amazing honey," I said to Psaras, helping myself to another spoonful. "And you, Panikos," asked the old man, "how do you like my honey?" Panikos nodded enthusiastically, before slapping his friend on the back. "Not bad at all," he said with a barely disguised grin. "Almost as good as mine."

- Piers Moore Ede

Reprinted from highlife, *June 2004 (British Airways magazine)*

Editor's Note: This article was scheduled to run in the December 2004 issue, but was pulled at the last minute due to space considerations, and was erroneously listed in the 2004 index.

Acrylamide in food — Update

March 2005

In February 2005, the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) reviewed the available data on the safety of acrylamide and concluded that its presence in food may be a health concern. A FSANZ scientist participated in the JECFA meeting.

Acrylamide is a chemical that forms in certain foods when cooked at high temperatures (greater than 120^{O}C). The major foods in which acrylamide has been detected are fried or roasted potato products, coffee and cereal-based products (sweet biscuits, bread, rolls and toast).

Acrylamide has been shown to cause cancer in some studies in experimental animals although further studies are underway to better understand the significance of these results in relation to human health. These studies will be evaluated by JECFA when available in 2–3 years. There is no direct evidence that acrylamide causes cancer in humans.

Since the discovery of acrylamide in food, there has been worldwide research into the mechanism of its formation as well as into methods to reduce the levels in specific foods. This work will continue and may lead to some reductions in consumer exposure in the future as a result of changes to food processing.

FSANZ has kept a watching brief on international developments regarding acrylamide and has undertaken a limited assessment of the dietary exposure of Australian consumers to acrylamide. FSANZ will continue to work with other national governments to better understand the potential health risk from exposure to acrylamide in the diet.

FSANZ continues to recommend that consumers should eat a balanced diet containing a range of healthy foods (including a broad range of fruit and vegetables), and to limit high fat-containing and fried foods, as much as possible.

FSANZ is liaising with the Australian food industry to encourage and support them to examine ways in which manufacturing practices might be changed to reduce acrylamide formation in foods.

For background see http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/mediareleasespublications/factsheets/factsheets2003/acrylamideandfoodupd1901.cfm

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GM weedkiller use increases

By *Farmers Weekly* staff Source: FWi-Agworldwide, 28 October 2004

A new study reveals that while US pesticide use dropped during the three first years of commercial GM crop cultivation, it has increased sharply thereafter.

GM maize, soybeans and cotton have led to a 55,000 tonnes increased in pesticide use since 1996, according to the study published by the Northwest Science and Environmental Policy Center.

The study, conducted by Charles Benbrook, a former Executive Director of the Board on Agriculture of the US National Academy of Science, therefore concludes the biotech industry's claims that GM crops help reduce the use of pesticides are unfounded.

But the study differentiates between herbicide tolerant crops (HT) and crops genetically engineered to express the bacterial toxin *Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)*, which is toxic to many insects, and it shows that on the latter crops pesticide use has dropped.

Bt crops have helped reduce insecticide use by 7,000 tonnes from 1996, while herbicide use on HT crops has increased by 62,000 tonnes.

The overall pesticide use has risen by about 4.1% on the US GM acreage, according to the study.

Reliance on a single herbicide, glyphosate, as the primary method for managing weeds on millions of acres planted to HT varieties is said to be the main factor that has led to the need to apply more herbicides per acre to achieve the same level of weed control.

Average application rates of glyphosate in HT weed management systems have jumped sharply in the last few years, the report says, because of:

- the spread of glyphosate-tolerant or resistant marestail (also known as horseweed)
- shifts in the composition of weed communities
- substantial price reductions and volume-based marketing incentives from competing manufacturers of glyphosate-based herbicides.

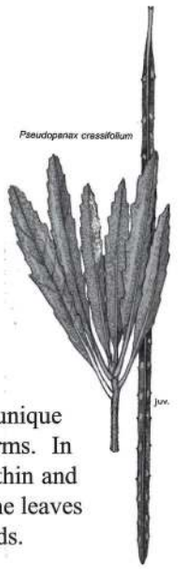
The study predicts that for the foreseeable future, HT crops will increase pesticide use more than *Bt* crops will reduce it, in part because HT crops are grown on a much larger area than *Bt* crops.

The study is based on official US Department of Agriculture data on pesticide use over 670m acres of GM maize, soya and cotton.

The study is available for download at www.biotech-info.net http://www.fwi.co.uk article.asp?con=16456&sec=22&hier=22

- Reprinted from the *Scottish Beekeeper*, February 2005

Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand



Pseudopanax crassifolium
Common name: Lancewood
Maori name: Horoeka

The Lancewood is one of New Zealand's unique trees, having juvenile and adult foliage forms. In its juvenile form, the leaves are long and thin and hang downwards, but as the tree matures the leaves become shorter and fatter and stand upwards.

The tree in its adult form can be over six metres to 20 metres in height and branched, whereas in its juvenile state it has one slender stem. This difference led the early botanists on Captain James Cook's voyage to call them two distinct trees, even though the Maori tried to explain they were one tree.

The flowers are small and whitish green, flowering between January and April. Honey produced is light in colour and heavy bodied.

The young stems of the Lancewood were used as pigeon spears by the Maori. The end of the stem was sharpened and then hardened in a fire.

Maori ate the inner bark for the gum-like fluid it contained to help rehydrate after the effects of diarrhoea had passed.

-Tony Lorimer

Flowering Lancewood
Photo: Dr Michael L. Becker

Reminder: the deadline for the June issue is 23 May 2005. Articles, graphics and ads welcome! Send to Nancy Fithian, Editor (details on page 2)

NIWA's climate outlook: March to May 2005

Below average sea-level pressures are expected over the New Zealand and Tasman Sea region, with slightly enhanced southwesterly air flows across the country.

Air temperatures are expected to be average or below average in the North Island and near average in the South Island.

Rainfalls are likely to be normal or below normal in the north and east of the North Island and near normal elsewhere. Normal soil moisture conditions are expected throughout the country apart from normal or below normal in the east of the North Island. Normal streamflows are expected throughout the South Island, with a tendency to normal or below normal in the north and west of the North Island, and to below normal in the east of the North Island.

The tropical Pacific is in a weak El Niño state, but should ease to neutral conditions by May.

Review Of Beekeeping Bylaws

Local Government authorities are now undertaking a general review of their bylaws, including beekeeping bylaws. Beekeepers should keep an eye on public notices in their local newspapers. The Auckland Branch of the NBA and the Auckland and Franklin Beekeeping Clubs formed a Beekeeping Bylaw Group (BBG) to work with the NBA to develop a submission to the Thames-Coromandel District Council (which apparently was well received). The BBG is trying to contact all councils to influence their drafting of bylaws, but urge beekeepers, branches, gardeners and others to write individual submissions as soon as possible.

National Beekeepers' Association can provide beekeepers with copies of its submissions to councils to assist you in making a submission to your local council. Contact the NBA Executive Secretary, Pauline Bassett, PO Box 234, Te Kuiti, or email waihon@actrix.co.nz.

The BBG would like to work with councils undergoing a beekeeping bylaw review early in the process so bylaws favourable to beekeeping can be drafted. Please contact Paul D Brown, email paul@ww.co.nz if you have information on your council's review process or could use advice or assistance in writing a submission.

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 generally on the second Monday of every second month at 7.30pm at Arataki, 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.

Varroa infestation in a lower North Island hive

Photos by Frank Lindsay

In the May 2004 issue, David Yanke writes about carnica queens.
Photo by David Yanke.