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The New Zealand BeeKeeper

New Zealand National Agricultural Fieldays®: Mystery Creek, Hamilton, 15-18 June 2005

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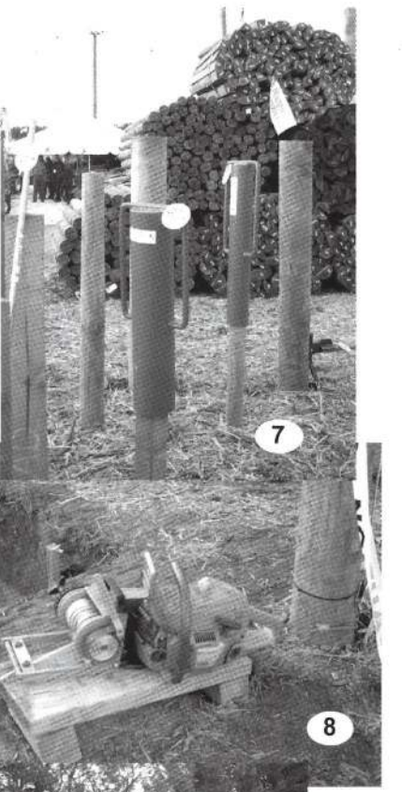

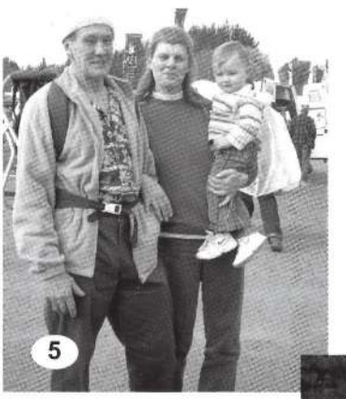

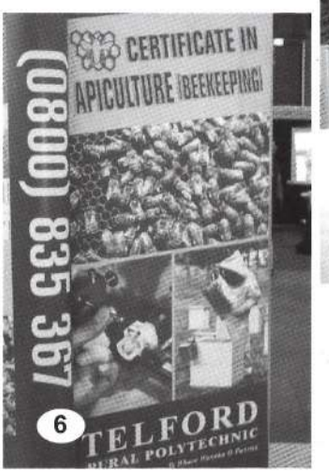

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President's Report

I am writing this towards the end of June, and I have just spent a day carrying out exotic disease surveillance. I had to go to three apiaries, two of which belonged to hobby beekeepers whom I had the pleasure of talking to while carrying out the task, and over a cup of tea.

It is this sort of interaction with people who are passionate about bees and beekeeping that makes my job worthwhile. Both of these beekeepers could not understand how I could have the time to do the NBA work, run my business and do this surveillance work. My answer to them is I do it because I care and am passionate about beekeeping too. I also am happy to carry out disease surveillance because diseased hives cost us money and I do not like to see bees put under stress. I had a great day and came home with a smile on my face!

So I now get back to the more mundane of my tasks with this column: reporting on what has been happening.

Exports

Over the last few days I have been in contact with an exporter who has been having difficulties getting export certification because not all of the necessary documentation was in place. The person concerned was justifiably unhappy as the previous shipment had been allowed with the same documentation. It would appear that there is a lack of consistency at the moment, but be warned that the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) is tightening up on the traceability of product.

The lesson to be learnt from this is to ensure that you have looked up the NZFSA website (http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/publications/omar/index.htm) to ensure that you have the most up-to-date Overseas Market Access Requirements (OMARs) for the country of destination.

Food grade mineral oil

We finally have some good news in that the Code of Practice for the use of this product as a varroa control has been approved.

The Executive will check to see if any changes were made to the draft submitted, and then make the Code of Practice available to members. I hope that some copies will be available at Conference, and that we will also put the COP onto the website for people to access.

The greater the number of varroa control products we have available the better, as this will enable us to promote the alternation of products to lessen the likelihood of resistance occurring.

Executive meeting in Hamilton

The Executive had two days of meetings on 8 and 9 June. On the 8th we looked at NBA matters and the meeting on the 9th was dedicated to the AFB NPMS.

The NBA meeting always deals with a large amount of correspondence that the Executive discusses and decides if further action is needed. It is not until one comes onto the Executive that one realises how much time is spent looking at correspondence to decide if it is an issue that the Association should be involved in and how to best progress it.

This meeting also had a presentation from the publications committee, which is looking at options to make the NBA website more attractive to users and more user friendly. We have asked that they look at what the costs might be to change their concepts into reality.

Some time was also spent looking at how we would go about the job of selecting the new Executive Officer. We have had 20 applications for the position, and I think that this bodes well for the future. A few of the Executive will be shortlisting the applicants so that the new Executive Council can then go about selecting and employing the person they think most suitable.

The day spent on the AFB NPMS was a very full day, with a presentation from HortResearch on the spore testing programme results from last year and how we could improve the system. AgriQuality also made a presentation on aspects of their contract from the past year's activities. As a result of these presentations some alterations are likely to be made to the contracts and the operational plan.

Much of the day was spent progressing the review of the operational plan, ensuring we have all policies and procedures in place. We also talked through the five-year review of the Order in Council with Ian Govey from MAF, who attended part of the meeting.

- Jane Lorimer

Deadline for Publications

September 2005 edition: ***22 August 2005***

October 2005 edition: ***20 September 2005***
(NB: Goes to all registered beekeepers in NZ).

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

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Secretarial snippets

I am writing this prior to Conference, which will be just a happy memory by the time this issue of *The New Zealand Beekeeper* is published. Therefore it seems rather premature to be talking about conference 2006, but that is exactly what the Waikato branch is doing. So along with all my paperwork and preparations for the Christchurch conference I have become involved in planning for Hamilton 2006.

The 2006 conference will be held in the centenary year for the Waikato branch and will also celebrate more than 100 years of beekeeping in New Zealand. And of course it is a celebration for the NBA.

I am hoping to display photographs and other written material that portrays this passage of beekeeping time. With this in mind I would appreciate hearing from anyone who could contribute material for the display. I am also aware that there are some amazing beekeeping business histories out there and I would like a display relating to these. My suggestion would be that businesses contribute their history in writing and photographs on a 60cm x 45cm sheet of white card (can be bought from any stationers). No matter how old or new your business, the 2006 conference would be an opportunity to record its history and special events.

Please start thinking about conference 2006 now. Any written or pictorial history that you can contribute would be much appreciated. As always, my contact details are in the front of this magazine.

- Pauline Bassett

VARROA AGENCY INC

Varroa Board takes next step

Surveillance
The surveillance programme put in place by the board has slowed down as the colder weather makes it more difficult to test hives. While it is disappointing not to have completed the entire programme, we have results from over half the targeted apiaries, and boards are still trickling in from the field. The remainder will be done in the spring.

The late setting up of the Board did not give us an enough time to get surveillance finished before winter, but thanks to the good work of the APs involved we have done most of the high risk areas, and so far the South Island is still varroa free.

Movement Controls
On 1 July 2005 the Varroa Agency Incorporated (VAI) took over Movement Control from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Some changes have been made to the previous controls, and also to the items that must have a permit to be brought into the South Island.

Information on these changes have been circulated and publicly advertised. If anyone is not sure please contact the VAI.

The main points are:

Prohibited:
- no live bees to be brought into or sent to the South Island, including
  - no queen bees
  - no hives of bees
  - no nucleus hives
  - no package bees.

Permits are required for:
- bee products shipped in bulk
- used beekeeping equipment
- beekeeping vehicles.

This list of controlled items is not exhaustive, so anyone involved in moving anything to the South Island should check out the Movement Order. Once again, if in doubt contact the VAI.

We are in the process of providing education material to all those industries that transport and send items to the South Island. It is quite a job but we are starting with the trucking industry.

It has been a busy six months for the Board but we are pleased with the co-operation we have had from the bee industry so far.

The VAI can be contacted at PO Box 304, Mosgiel, telephone 03 489 0066.

- Duncan Butcher
Chair, Varroa Agency Incorporated

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Response to Varroa NPMS article in June issue of NZ Beekeeper

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This article is in response to the article "Varroa Pest Management Strategy – another view" published in the June 2005 issue of this magazine. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry welcomes robust debate on any biosecurity issue, but disagrees with the conclusions reached in that article. When considering different views, it is important to ensure any argument is supported by the available facts. Many of the claims made in the article are either inaccurate or highly debatable. I will highlight a few of the more questionable points below.

Economic Impacts

The article opened by claiming that there is no competitive advantage to keeping varroa out of the South Island. Many North Island beekeepers I have spoken to disagree. These beekeepers have had thousands of colonies die, have cut back hive numbers, spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on treatment products, and those who had organic certification have lost it.

It is important to separate the generally prosperous state of the beekeeping industry (in both islands) from the impacts of varroa. I suggest that the North Island beekeeping industry is doing well primarily because of three factors:

1. Very high prices for all grades of honey (approx. double year 2000 prices.)
2. Exceptionally high prices for active manuka honey
3. Demand for well over 100,000 paid pollination hives, from industries that can absorb price increases.

Only the last of these factors is due in any way to varroa, and it is of little relevance to the majority of South Island beekeepers. In the South Island, beekeepers need to ask themselves how their businesses will cope with varroa control costs of $20-$50 per hive, if (when?) honey prices drop.

It is also worth asking why there are 22,000 (or 16%) fewer hives in the upper North Island than there were five years ago when varroa arrived, despite beekeepers 'importing' thousands of South Island hives to meet pollination contracts. Industries which are thriving normally expand; beekeeping in the North Island is shrinking.

MAF must also take into account the position of other industries. Given the rise in pollination charges in the North Island, the arable and horticultural industries have good reasons for wanting varroa kept out of the South Island.

MAF's Economic Impact Assessment was strongly criticised regarding impacts on pasture. It was claimed that this document states that 130,000 managed hives are responsible for pollinating all the pasture in the South Island. The Impact Assessment never makes this claim; it refers to the significant role of feral pollinators. The article also suggested that the lack of impact to date on North Island pasture undermines the argument that varroa will cause pastoral losses. The Economic Impact Assessment states that no pastoral losses are expected for around 10 years. Forecasting the impacts of a newly-arrived pest is challenging, as anyone who reads the Economic Impact Assessment will see. MAF discussed the best way to model pasture impacts at great length with the appropriate specialists, and their consensus view at the time is reported in the Economic Impact Assessment. Long-term forecasts are always open to debate, but the misinterpretation of key points of the Economic Impact Assessment casts doubt on the credibility of other comments about the varroa strategy . The Economic Impact Assessment and other documents can be viewed at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/varroa.

Movement Control

While it is claimed that there is no competitive advantage in keeping varroa out of the South Island, the third paragraph of the article suggests movement controls between the islands should be maintained. If varroa has no economic impact, then there is no rational basis for any controls whatsoever, and the sale of North Island queens to the South Island should resume immediately. The remainder of the article fails to mention movement controls at all, although that is one of the key activities of the varroa strategy.

Surveillance

It is suggested that beekeepers could carry out surveillance more cost-effectively themselves than the strategy. Throughout the lower North Island, a basic MAF surveillance programme detected varroa before local beekeepers found it, even when beekeepers knew there was a high risk of spread. MAF's surveillance programme for exotic pests and diseases has recently moved back to paying authorised persons to collect samples, as beekeepers did not submit enough voluntary samples for the programme to function. Voluntary surveillance does not appear to work effectively.

Varroa Levy

The article claimed that the levy to support the American foulbrood pest management strategy (AFB PMS) is more democratic than the varroa levy because it was put to a vote. Strangely, it is also suggested (p16, para 1) that the AFB levy is voluntary. In reality, the AFB levy is not voluntary, nor was it imposed following a vote.

When the original Commodity Levy on apiaries expired in 2002, the National Beekeepers' Association proposed a new levy to fund 'industry good' activities under the Commodity Levies Act 1990, which requires an industry ballot. The levy proposal did not pass the ballot. Following this, a levy to fund the AFB PMS was put in place under the Biosecurity Act 1993, using the same process as the varroa levy. Beekeepers are

entitled to object to levies being imposed without a popular vote, but it is inconsistent to claim the AFB levy imposed by this system is democratic while the varroa levy is not.

The description of the varroa levy collection letters is also similarly one-sided. The 'severe financial penalty' supposedly referred to in the varroa letter is exactly the same as the penalty provisions described in the AFB levy invoice, which passes without comment.

Eradication

Some South Island beekeepers believe eradication is feasible, but fear the government will not carry out an eradication attempt when varroa is found. Other beekeepers believe that eradication is not feasible, and fear the government will make an eradication attempt that either fails, or has unacceptably high impacts on the beekeeping industry. Both of these are perfectly valid positions, although it is somewhat confusing when one article appears to support both views. MAF's position is that the feasibility of eradicating incursions must be assessed on a case by case basis, depending on local circumstances and the degree of spread that has occurred.

Conclusion

There are many other statements made in last month's article challenging the basis of the varroa strategy which could be debated. However, I hope I have made my point.

Beekeepers must make up their own minds on the varroa national pest management strategy. In doing so, they should view any information with a healthy degree of scepticism, and I accept this includes information provided by MAF. Beekeepers need to ensure any information is factually accurate, is supported by evidence where possible, and is logically consistent. In my view, the article in the May 2005 edition of The New Zealand Beekeeper does not meet these standards.

MAF continues to believe that varroa will have a negative economic impact on the South Island, and accepts that the precise size of this impact is very difficult to measure. Varroa is expected to reduce the size of the South Island beekeeping industry (as in the North Island), increase pollination prices for the horticultural and arable industries (as in the North Island), and have a negative impact on pasture legume pollination. These potential impacts justify efforts to keep the South Island varroa-free.

The lengthy process of developing a national pest management strategy, cumulating in a Board of Inquiry, gave ample opportunity for these points to be debated. MAF is happy to provide the source of any information it holds, and to discuss the process whereby conclusions were reached. Any beekeeper who is uncertain about MAF's position on any point should feel free to contact me for clarification.

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News from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority

Risk Management Programme myths

As we have been visiting beekeepers over the past few months we have heard some interesting comments that I have likened to 'myths' as they seem to crop up in various forums and have a life of their own, so now it's time to do some 'myth-busting'.

Myth #1: "Bees are not animals"

This myth is spread by some who don't think that bee products should have been placed under the Animal Products Act. No doubt you will recall playing '20 Questions' and the first question was "Is it animal, vegetable or mineral?" Which one of these categories would you place bees under?

Scientists place bees in Class Insecta under Kingdom Animalia.

The Animal Products Act covers insect products.

Myth #2: "Bee products are just carried by bees so they shouldn't be under the Animal Products Act"

I originally thought this myth might have some merit with respect to pollen until it was pointed out to me that the bee sticks the pollen on with saliva and this enzymatically transforms at least some of what it sticks to its legs. The nectar that goes into a bee comes back out as honey — it's chemically transformed by the bee. Propolis contains wax which is a bee secretion. Royal Jelly is a bee secretion. These products are all therefore animal products just as milk is an animal product converted by a cow from grass.

Myth #3: "RMPs will cost so much they will put you out of business"

Some rumours have been going around that RMPs are going to cost beekeepers many thousands of dollars just to develop, never mind having to implement or verify them.

Most beekeepers who extract honey who need an RMP will be able to develop their own using the template based on the Bee Products Code of Practice put together by the industry working group. The cost to develop your RMP will be some of your time on some of those wet days when you can't be outside visiting your bees anyway. Any RMP based fully on the COP will not require independent evaluation — NZFSA will be gazetting an exemption to the requirement for evaluation for RMPs based on the COP and template once these are finalised. Approval costs for registration are $100.00 up front and $80.00 per hour GST inclusive, and I seriously doubt any RMP based on the template would take any more than 1–2 hours to process.

Verification costs are likely to be more than you are currently being charged by your local authority under the Food Hygiene Regulations. This is because you will be paying the full cost of the service provided, including mileage and time preparing for and documenting the audit. There is no facility to cross-subsidise this regulatory activity from ratepayer funds as some local councils do. The scope of what is audited is also broader than what is looked at under the Food Hygiene Regulations and we expect that audits will be carried out in a nationally consistent manner, which may incur a training overhead. The NZFSA Verification Agency costs are set in legislation. It is likely that other providers of services ("Recognised Agencies") costs will be similar.

RMPs will be verified annually unless operators are found not to be managing their own compliance and significant deficiencies are found, in which case more frequent visits will be necessary. While market forces will likely dictate charges, at a guess I'd say the cost is unlikely to exceed $800 per audit.

Those who are making products that fall outside the scope of the Code of Practice will need to either develop their own RMP or clip on a section that covers those aspects that are not covered by the COP and have that part of the RMP evaluated. Likewise if you wish to do something differently to how it is recommended in the COP. The cost of evaluation is negotiated between you and your evaluator.

Myth #4: "RMPs are just added bureaucratic costs"

All secondary processors of bee products that have come under the Animal Products Act have made a choice to provide bee products to the export market and want their products to be eligible for an "official assurance". New Zealand wants sustainable trade and to maintain the good reputation we have as exporters of agricultural products. The assurances the New Zealand government provides must be soundly based on robust standards and verification systems that will withstand audit by importing countries.

New Zealand consumers also have expectations — the last pot of honey I opened at home had identifiable bits of dead bee floating around on top of it. I won't be buying that brand of honey again ... and I will be looking out for that RMP when it comes through!

Myth #5: "This will stop the little guy who wants to extract honey on his kitchen floor"

Well, this one is interesting because under the Food Hygiene Regulations which have been in place since 1974 extracting honey for sale on your kitchen floor is illegal (unless your kitchen floor happens to be a registered food premises). I really can't see importing countries wanting to buy honey that has been extracted on someone's kitchen floor if they have

Continued on page 10

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a choice. Also worth pointing out is that if one is extracting honey for one's own use then one can keep doing that on the kitchen floor — just don't try and sell it (and make sure you clean up before the missus catches you!).

To sort out the myths from the reality we strongly recommend that you attend one of the risk management programme workshops being held in August, details of which follow in the next section.

Risk Management Programme (RMP) workshops

NZFSA staff are running a series of workshops in August to help secondary processors who need an RMP (that's those who extract, process, pack or store bee products who wish to have product eligible for export certification) get to grips with RMPs. The Bee Products Code of Practice and RMP Template will also hopefully have been published in its final form by the time you read this — or will be very close to it.

These workshops will build on the presentations that we have been giving at industry conferences over the past couple of months. The workshops cost nothing but your time to attend, and we will even feed you lunch, but you must register so we can send you some pre-reading and information on the exact venues as these are still being arranged as I type this. Knowing how many folks we need to feed will also help! We will put more information on our web site http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/subject/bee-products/index.htm as soon as it is available and will be direct mailing all those operators who are on our NZFSA premises list.

The seminars are as follows:

Venue	Date	Time	Register by:
Napier	3 August 2005	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	22 July
Palmerston North	4 August 2005	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	22 July
Nelson	9 August 2005	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	29 July
Christchurch	10 August 2005	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	29 July
Balclutha	11 August 2005	9.30am – 3.30 pm	29 July

To register for these workshops please contact Robyn Scully on 04 463 2548 or email her at robyn.scully@nzfsa.govt.nz no later than the dates given above.

- Jim Sim, Principal Advisor, Animal Products Standards

From the colonies

Bay of Plenty Branch

From a beekeeper's point of view the general worry about the effect of varroa on our hives has had an 'upside'. It has helped people to recognise pollination as the essential horticultural process it is, along with things like plant nutrition or irrigation. More growers have realised that pollination requires the right pollinator, in the right numbers, at the right time, and that this requires skilled management.

It isn't only varroa that could affect the availability of hives for pollination. A group formed from growers' representatives and beekeepers (including organisations like Zespri, Pipfruit NZ, the NBA and the Bee Industry Group, with the assistance of government authorities) is submitting a proposal to the Sustainable Farming Fund to finance the development of a strategic plan for the pollination needs of our horticultural crops. At its heart is the realisation that most of the exports produced by New Zealand's $2 billion industry are dependent on honeybee pollination.

Sandy Scarrow is the facilitator for the newly formed 'Strategic Pollination Group' and came along to describe the project to the Bay of Plenty beekeepers at our last branch meeting. If successful in their bid, as well as the impact varroa may have, the group intends to examine issues like spray poisoning, staff shortages, supply and demand forecasting, and improving best practice guides. The initial project work, lasting three years, will be based on the industry in the Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, and Gisborne, but is it hoped that the project will prove to be a model that can be applied elsewhere and eventually be the basis of a national strategic plan. One matter, which the group may decide to consider, is an emerging concern from local beekeepers over the availability of forage for 'off duty' colonies, and in particular early spring pollen sources.

The general business of the branch last month included preparations for the annual Field Day, the forthcoming DECA training, and the first of the biannual diseaseathons. All of these activities should be over by the time these notes are published. The role of our Ward Representative was explained and the election required in June considered. For the next monthly meeting the branch is looking forward to considering the Best Practice Guide published for avocado growers with its author Dr Jonathon Dixon.

- Dave Black

Hawkes Bay Branch

Winter has arrived with snow on the ranges and frost on the ground. To escape some of the worst of winter we had a family trip to Australia that included attending the New South Wales beekeepers' conference in Orange. We should have known that it was colder there than here; still, it was interesting to meet new people and hear different ideas on beekeeping. It was warmer when we moved up to Brisbane although just as dry; the drought in this part of Australia has to be seen to be believed, and I thought we had dry summers in Hawkes Bay.

Perhaps the most interesting thing for me at the conference was learning about the reports on recent research done by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). Much of their published research can be found on the Internet at http://www.rirdc.gov.au.

- John Berry

Waikato Branch

In fine Waikato tradition and the only ward to do so, two candidates made themselves available to represent the branch at the Executive Council level.

Existing NBA President Jane Lorimer and previous PMS committee member Lewis Olsen canvassed for votes using the different communication mediums of telephone and e-mail. It was a close vote; however, the branch chose to return existing Executive member Jane Lorimer to the new Council for a two-year period.

All present at the branch meeting were gifted a mated queen bee imported from the South Island by Russell Berry. Definitely a different colour to ones that currently seem to be invading the Waikato.

Hives appear to still have brood in them, although the weather is definitely winter-like. The final strips are being removed from apiaries, and honey extraction is being wound up.

Our delegates to Conference are Russell Berry and Lewis Olsen.

In May some branch AP2s were involved in checking hives within the terms of the AFB Pest Management Strategy. Discussion centred around the difference between Parasitic Mite Syndrome (PMS) and American foulbrood (AFB). It can be difficult to tell the difference. Placing a varroa treatment in the hive will clean up PMS, whereas AFB needs to be destroyed. AFB was found and dealt with. The AP2s chalked up many hundreds of kilometres in the process and were pleased with the low rate of AFB. Thank you to Roger King and his team for all their hard work.

- Fiona O'Brien

Southern North Island Branch

While the winter months bite we are checking hives: some have ample stocks of honey on hives so we are looking forward to spring. Maintenance of equipment and preparation of replacement boxes, frames, etc are in full swing.

Generally around our area commercial beekeepers have reported reasonable harvests; however some have unfortunately not maintained their average yield, with subsequent problems of cash flow that has not been helped by the lower prices paid for honey this year.

Some members are ready and booked to go to Christchurch for the annual NBA Conference, but many have decided not

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

to attend. However, at our annual general meeting, with the combination of proxies and attendance, we looked carefully at the motions proposed for discussion at conference. We look forward to the ongoing development of NBA under the new constitution.

- Neil Farrer

Nelson Branch

The branch held its AGM on 20 June and also discussed remits, as the rest of you have been doing.

We also held our first ward election, and came away hoping that in our next election year the guidelines will be a bit clearer. We also felt in hindsight that going through the voting process has made us a bit wiser for the next time!

The club would like to acknowledge the passing of our last branch Life Member, Fred Galea. You might remember we mentioned Fred recently in farewelling him and his wife for their move to Palmerston North. Unfortunately, Fred passed away only two weeks after his move north. He will be remembered for the vast range of support that he gave our club. Fred organised diseaseathons, field days, and our first DECA course. If a 'ticklish' job ever needed doing, Fred was often the one to do it.

Most of us have had to be diligent with the wintering down of our hives this autumn, particularly where the hives have been away from native bush. There was little or no late autumn honey to harvest, and any that did come in was needed for winter stores.

The local testing for the Varroa PMS is completed but concern was expressed that in many cases the kits arrived too late in the season. It would be ideal to get the kits in late February, not April, especially for the high country, where one can imagine the efficacy of trying to put strips into clustered bees!

The varroa hive levy has been paid by most, but some beekeepers with a bad season had to extend their overdraft to pay this levy of $2 per hive. This is the first year of the levy and it is already a burden to South Island beekeepers. We are alarmed to even imagine the implications if this levy were to increase next year.

As I am writing this on the shortest day of the year, I am reminded of what those queens are now beginning to do! Our grevillea and tree lucerne are already providing them with lots of pollen to do just that!

- Merle Moffitt

Canterbury Branch

We Cantabrians have been enjoying a marvellous extended autumn that is showing no signs of ending. (Not unlike our Crusaders franchise: five wins out of 10 must make us the kings of Super 12). By the time this is published Conference will have finished for another year.

Looking back on the 10 years since Canterbury last hosted the NBA Conference, it is interesting how much has changed (or hasn't):

- we didn't have e-mail and we bought the branch secretary a fax machine after the event with the profit as no one had one!
- seminar registration has increased by only $6
- dinner and dance has increased by only $4
- band price has more than doubled. It was the year I went commercial so I remember this well
- the price of honey was $2.20 kg the previous season and the local packers were predicting a fall to $1.80, which I found terrifying at the time. The price I received was $2.35 from the same packer. I have heard a different variation of this theme for the last nine years (I guess some things will never change!)
- Manuka was $1.20 per kg and considered as bee feed. A 50 cent/hive marketing levy paid by *all* beekeepers transformed this product, with the invaluable help of Prof Peter Molan, into the success that it is today. (Too bad this great success in the beekeeping industry floundered after benefiting a few)
- diesel was 42 cents a litre
- statutory levies were less than $1 per hive
- chocolate biscuits for the branch meeting was on the agenda
- varroa was something 'other' countries had
- we had yet to suffer 'reality' TV
- NZFSA didn't exist. I now wonder how people survived eating honey the last two millennia without their input
- government departments/civil servants existed to serve/protect the populace. Now they seem to exist to frustrate, and/or gather revenue, and/or become growth industries (am I becoming cynical??)

All in all, it has probably been an above-average decade; however, I can't shake this sinking feeling that when we look back in another 10 years that these will be considered the 'good old days'.

Good luck for the coming winter.

On behalf of the organising committee, thank you to all who made the effort to attend conference and we hope you enjoyed yourselves.

- Brian Lancaster

Selecting varroa-resistant bees (part 2)

Bob Russell

In my last article (June 2005), I mentioned that in a cross check using the drop board method, many mites were found to be falling naturally from a hive that had initially returned low levels of mites when brood bees were tested throughout the season after using the 'Apistan strip in a jar' test method. Many of the fallen mites were damaged. Not having an answer at the time, I shelved this observation until invited to follow up research carried out in the 1980s by Alois Wallner into the selection of varroa-resistant bees. During that time he examined some 17,000 mites with a 20x pocket hand magnifier. Those examinations followed an observation and I quote from his 168-page book *VARROA-RESISTENT,* published in 1994 and translated into English.

"In the first week of May 1989 I made a very interesting observation while working with my colonies. On controlling (inspecting) one colony I had removed the honey super and put aside. Between two frames I found some drone comb. This is not unusual. By moving the frames this construction became torn and several pupa of drones were exposed. There was one varroa mite on one pupa. The mite moved forth and back on the pupa. While I observed this mite, something special happened, I almost could not believe what I saw. There was a bee a few centimeters away from the pupa. Suddenly this bee ran wildly toward the pupa. I thought that the bee wanted to remove the uncovered pupa, but the bee grasped the mite with her mouth organ. I noticed that the bee caught the mite with her mandible in a horizontal way from the front. One third of the hind part of the mite was still visible in front of the mandible. Then, with the mite in her mouth, the bee took off. This was a unique observation I have not made again."

During the winter following this observation, when there was no bee flight, he checked and found injured mites on the floor board which showed leg damage under his hand magnifier. Ten of these were sent to Dr Ferdinand Rusicka, a professor at the University of Vienna, who took pictures of the damaged mites with his electron microscope. When Alois saw the pictures, he had no doubt that the damage was caused by the bees.

Realising this to be one of many factors in selecting for varroa-resistant bees, Alois Wallner named this factor VKF (varroa killer factor). Finding these injuries to mites in my New Zealand bees gave me reason to look further into the possible relationship to non-reproduction of varroa in the cell.

The following photos are of damaged mites from my New Zealand bees using a vintage Watson Barnet microscope.

In the next article I will cover observations, monitoring varroa infestation and selection of varroa-resistant breeder queens.

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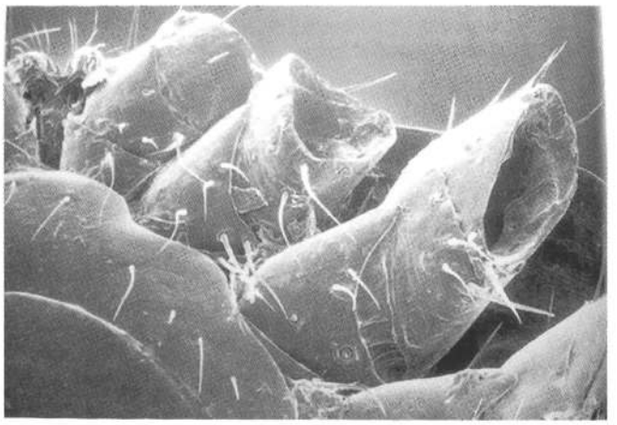
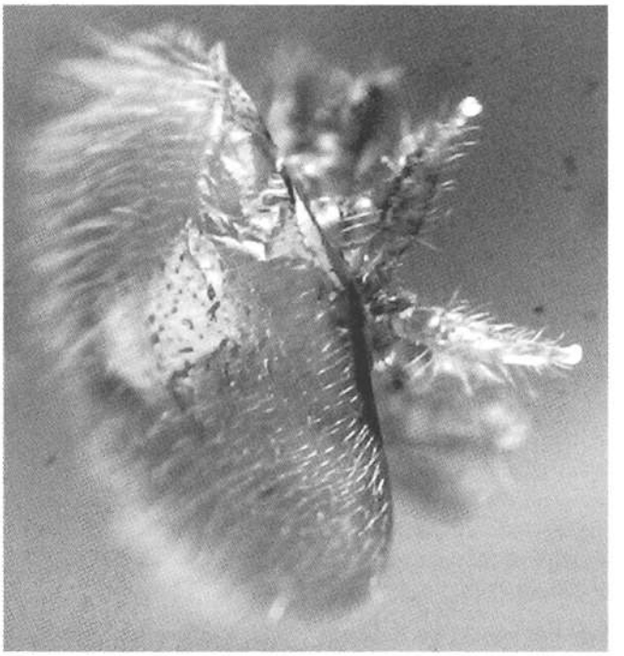
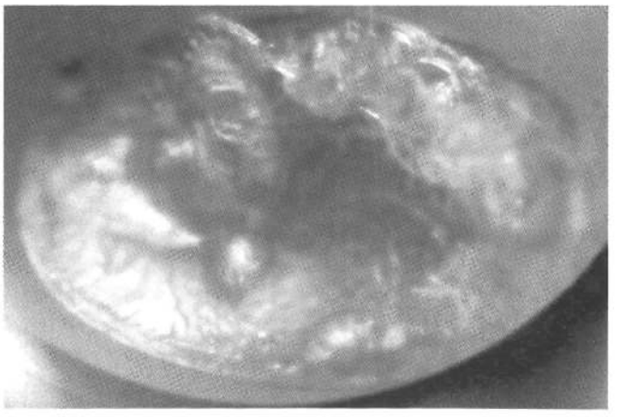


Photo from *VARROA-RESISTENT,* page 28. Varroa mite with severe injuries on her legs caused by the bees.



Top view of damage.



Many legs missing. **Photos: Bob Russell**

Advancing honey bee virus research in New Zealand

Jacqui Todd, HortResearch, New Zealand
Joachim de Miranda, Penn State University, USA

In March 2005, Dr Joachim de Miranda, who has been studying honey bee viruses in the USA, visited Jacqui Todd at HortResearch, thanks to funding by the International Science and Technology (ISAT) Linkages Fund and a 2005 C. Alma Baker Trust Research Award.

The main objective of this collaboration was to establish a new testing system for diagnosing virus infections in New Zealand honey bees. The system uses a reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) technique to detect virus gene sequences in samples of bees, mites or bee products. It is a highly sensitive test that is capable of detecting very low levels of infection and has not previously been available for honey bee virus diagnostics in this country. Dr de Miranda's visit was instrumental to its development here and has resulted in a rapid improvement in our ability to diagnose honey bee virus infections. Dr de Miranda has conducted significant research with bee virus infections in the USA, recently sequencing the entire genomes of both deformed wing virus (DWV) and Kashmir bee virus (KBV). This has advanced the development of the RT-PCR diagnostic test for these two viruses.

During Dr de Miranda's visit we were able to optimise the technique so that we could detect both DWV and KBV if present in New Zealand honey bees. Both of these viruses have been implicated in varroa-induced colony losses in other countries and, therefore, are also of interest to us here in New Zealand. Both viruses have been shown to be transmitted by *Varroa destructor* to pupal honey bees as the mites feed, resulting in the death or deformation of the bees (Bowen-Walker *et al.*, 1999; Nordström *et al.*, 1999; Martin, 2001; Chen *et al.*, 2004). Consequently, the presence of these viruses in dying, mite-infested colonies in New Zealand is likely to indicate that they are also involved in the collapse of honey bee colonies here.

DWV has not yet been detected in New Zealand. Previous tests, performed overseas using a number of diagnostic techniques, have failed to locate the virus in samples of New Zealand honey bees (Todd *et al.*, 2004). Until the development of the RT-PCR testing system, no diagnostic test was available for this virus in New Zealand. During Dr de Miranda's visit we used the RT-PCR technique to test samples of adult honey bees that had been collected from 22 colonies spread over five different apiary sites in Auckland and the Waikato. Half the colonies had their mite population controlled using Apistan® or Bayvarol®, and the other half were untreated. To assess the success of the treatments, we made a count of the number of mites on a sample of 300 bees from each of the study colonies in March 2005. This showed that the colonies receiving miticide treatments had little or no mite population (average of 0.6 mites on 300 bees), whereas the mite population in each of the untreated colonies remained high (average of 86.7 mites per 300 bees). We did not detect DWV in any of the bee samples that had been collected from the 22 colonies. This provides further evidence that this virus is not present here. A full survey for this virus using the RT-PCR based test could now be initiated and, if it is not found here, strategies could be developed to prevent its entry to New Zealand.

We also tested the bee samples from the 22 colonies for the presence of KBV. Previous studies in New Zealand have suggested that this virus is at least partially responsible for the colony losses that have occurred since *V. destructor* became established here (Todd *et al.*, 2004). Of the samples from the 11 untreated colonies, six were positive for KBV. Each of these six colonies was observed to have dead brood and other signs of ill health, and by March 2005, two of these colonies had died. Only one other untreated colony, in which we had not detected KBV, had died in March. It is possible that this colony died from non-virus related factors or there may have been a different virus present for which we did not test. None of the colonies that received miticide treatments were positive for KBV, or died during the course of the study. These results suggest that controlling the mite population prevents the outbreak of detectable KBV infections in the bee population, and that there may be a link between KBV infection and death of varroa-infested colonies. Further investigation is required to determine whether or not this is the case.

Jacqui Todd will continue to study the impacts of KBV on New Zealand honey bees as part of the research funded by her 2005 C. Alma Baker Trust Research Award. We would like to thank both Mark Goodwin and Heather McBrydie for providing the Waikato study colonies and conducting mite counts on these colonies, and Bob Blair for providing the Auckland study colonies.

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Book review: *Fat Bees Skinny Bees*

***Fat Bees Skinny Bees – a manual on honeybee nutrition for beekeepers*, by Doug Somerville**

A fascinating read, I found this book well written and well researched. Although written for Australian conditions, it has some relevance in New Zealand as it provides an insight into Australian beekeeping and some of their problems.

The book goes into some depth on the nutritional requirements of bees with a lot of information on the feeding of both sugar syrup and pollen and pollen substitutes. It also covers the nutritional values of a large number of flowering plant and tree pollens. Not surprisingly, many of the species listed are found mostly in Australia but many are found in New Zealand; for instance, Pinus radiata has a crude protein (CP) percentage around 9 (anything under 20 is probably inadequate for bees' needs) and Gorse has a CP percentage of 28. Nodding Thistle's CP percentage is 15, which might explain why hives dwindle on this crop. It doesn't explain, however, why bees thrive on Crack Willow (CP percentage of 15): perhaps it's just the sheer volume of this pollen that gets bees through.

The book also has some interesting comments to make on stress and its effect on beehives. At the back of the book are 44 case studies of beekeepers from every State in Australia and two case studies from New Zealand. Although short, they make very interesting reading.

Please note one of the methods described for feeding sugar syrup in this book is to squirt sugar into drawn frames, with the runoff going into a sump and then being reused. This is one of the best methods of spreading American foulbrood yet devised and cannot be recommended.

Fat Bees Skinny Bees can be bought from www.rirdc.gov.au for $30 Australian, including postage and GST, but may cost more for New Zealand purchasers. This publication, as well as many other publications to do with beekeeping, can be downloaded for free from their web site (the summary report can be found http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/HBE/05-054sum.html, and you can also download the full report from this link). A worthwhile and interesting read.

- John Berry

MAF
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Te Manatu Ahuwhenua, Ngaherehere

VARROA AGENCY INC

Change to Varroa Movement Controls

From 1 July 2005, responsibility for movement controls for varroa (a parasitic mite of honeybees) will pass from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) to the Varroa Agency Incorporated, as management agency for the National (South Island) Varroa Pest Management Strategy. These changes have been made by way of formal notices mailed to all registered beekeepers in New Zealand.

On 30 June 2005 MAF will revoke the Controlled Area Notice that has been in force since 24 September 2003, issued under section 131 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. This will remove all internal movement controls for varroa in the North Island.

MAF's Controlled Area Notice will be immediately replaced by a new Controlled Area Notice effective from 1 July 2005, under the authority of the Varroa Agency Incorporated.

This new Controlled Area Notice will declare the South Island (including Stewart Island) to be a controlled area, and will restrict the entry of a range of goods, including: varroa, bees, used beekeeping equipment, bee products shipped in bulk, beekeeping vehicles, bulk wine grapes, unprocessed logs and buildings. These items cannot be moved to the South Island without obtaining a movement permit.

Permit enquiries should be made to:
Phone 07 850 2867 or 07 850 2800
Fax 07 850 2801

The Revocation Notice and new Controlled Area Notice can be viewed at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/varroa, or copies can be obtained by calling 03 489 0066.

Editor's note: this notice appeared in newspapers throughout New Zealand on 29 June 2005.

About the Apiary

The other morning I woke up to the brilliant light from the full moon, still fairly high in the sky. Although conditions were calm at ground level, wispy clouds were slowly passing across the face of the moon, lighting up the edges of the clouds and giving a surreal appearance. It was the winter solstice, meaning that the sun will now start moving towards the southern hemisphere adding four minutes of extra sunlight per day — the beginning of a new beekeeping season.

It's been very mild around the western coastal strip of the southern North Island. Temperatures vary between seven and twelve degrees and on these warmer days the bees are flying and bringing in pollen from winter flowering shrubs: Black Wattle (*Acacia decurrens*), Tree Lucerne (*Cytisus proliferus*), Spanish Heath (*Erica lusitanica*) and many others. In the damp areas of the coastal forests (where possum numbers are under control), Kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*), a native cedar, has been flowering for a month. Kohekohe flowers are similar to Lily of the Valley flowers and are on long panicles up to 15 cm long. These panicles are unusual as they appear on the trunk of the tree or branches of the tree, rather than on new growth as with most trees. On warm days the bees are flying well (in their hundreds) queuing up to get back in through the restricted entrances.

Kohekohe **Photo: Frank Lindsay**

Inside most of my hives there's quite a lot of brood. Where little is flowering there are small patches of brood the size of your fist in two frames but in the areas where Kohekohe is flowering, the hives have the equivalent of three full frames of brood as well as drone brood. Apart from the pollen they're also collecting a lot of nectar and there's now three frames of unsealed nectar.

Normally I wouldn't be looking in hives at this time of the year but I was late putting in my miticide strips and so it's now time to remove them. Thank Heaven we haven't had a lot of rain so access is still fairly easy. My only problem with all this bee activity is that I'll have to keep monitoring mite fall every couple of months as all this brood will trigger mite reproduction. Also, as there are still a few feral hives alive, I can expect some more reinvasion as these feral hives break down.

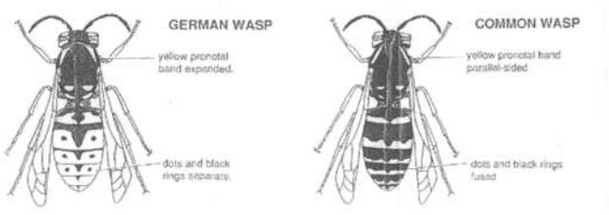
I also discovered one queenless hive, with no brood (a definite clue) and the bees 'roared' loudly (another clue) when I applied a little smoke across the top bars. It was a simple procedure to place a sheet of newspaper on the top super and then add a four-frame nuc into another super on top. The bees should chew through the paper within a day and this hive will soon be away again. It's also been easy to identify those hives with overly defensive progeny, so I've marked them for replacement queens in the spring.

Long term this brood stimulation could mean these hives might run short of stores in September so I'll be adding a couple of scoops of raw sugar to the top feeder on each hive. The idea is to wet the edge of the raw sugar so the bees get the idea that the sugar has to be dissolved before they can use it. It's a lot of work for the bees to collect water, bring it to the top feeder and then use it to make the sugar workable. Hence the bees will only work the dry sugar when nothing else is available and because so much work is involved, it doesn't act as a stimulant to trigger more brood rearing. The sugar in the top feeder also acts as a bit of an insulator. With luck the hives in colder areas won't need any further attention until spring.

Wasps

Several beekeepers in the eastern North Island have reported hives being wiped out by wasps. When I asked what species they were, they hadn't looked. Wasps are wasps to most beekeepers and are a nuisance to hives in the autumn until hard frosts wipe them out. There hadn't been any hard frosts to wipe them out.

However there's a great deal of difference between the German Wasp (*Vespula germanica*) and the Common Wasp (*Vespula vulgaris*), which was accidentally introduced in the 1970s. When Common Wasps first arrived, I observed that although there were just as many wasps around hives, nucs were no longer being robbed out. Also, when asked to get rid of a nest, I observed that a common wasp queen often took over nests that had been started by German queen wasps. You can see this in the difference in colour of the nest materials. German Wasps produce an insulation that has a slight pinky tinge, whereas the Common Wasp nest is light gray. This also depends upon what wood they were macerating to make their nest from.



Graphic from Ecology Division, DSIR, 1987.

Could it be that after twenty years of rather easy beekeeping, the German Wasp is now making a comeback? Beekeepers, start taking a look at the wasps visiting your hives!

The difference in species is easy to see. German Wasps have their dots separated from their bands while the Common Wasp's bands are wider and are joined to the band on the abdomen.

It would be interesting to know if the German Wasps are making a comeback.

Winter work

When the weather is wet, work inside carries on. I'm still extracting and cleaning up propolis from the supers and frames as I go. It's much easier to clean this off during winter, as it doesn't stick to your hands as much as it does when it's warm.

I'm also continuing to sort frames and supers. I'm going through a replacement patch, as it's now ten years since I made honey supers from old pallets. These are now starting to rot and several have done more than a year past their use-by date. Still, with these extra entrances I get a lot more propolis, as the bees try to fill the holes and the rotten bits.

Winter is a time to build replacement gear and carry out maintenance and other bits and pieces. As well as making more mesh bottom boards for my hives this winter, I'll also have to make more top dry sugar feeders (for the same reason as the supers). Dry sugar feeders are made to a basic frame design 50–75 mm high, the same size as a super, with a hardboard insert 10 mm up from the lower edge, and a hole in the centre. I fix a router to my saw bench and, with guilds in place, push all the precut pieces through so the hardboard is held tightly in place. An alternative is to put a number of holes or a slot towards one end (30 mm from the end), but a hole in the centre makes it easier for a strong colony to find the feed as the access hole is immediately above the brood nest. I intend to turn the feeders over in the autumn so I have airspace above the frames to place fume pads for varroa mite control. (Note: Dry sugar shouldn't be fed to weak colonies: it's only used on strong colonies that have enough bees to handle it).

Looks like I'm in for a busy winter.

Something else to make: propolis tincture

Winter is a time for colds and flu. Most commercial beekeepers don't have much contact with sick people as we tend to work alone, but our children do and they bring home all sorts of bugs.

As beekeepers we have a product that can be made to protect us when that 'tickle in the throat' appears. It's called propolis. We scrape it off frames and supers and sell it, but have you ever thought of using it yourself? It's rather easy.

I have 20 old Gera propolis mats that produce particularly resinous propolis. The scrapings from three mats are put into a one-litre bottle with 40% proof gin or vodka. Shake the bottle daily for a few weeks and less regularly after this. The tincture produced can be used within a couple of weeks but if left for eight weeks it's better. Filter off the tincture and bottle. The scum of the old propolis (it sticks to the inside of the bottle) can be cleaned out using Handy Andy®. Sterilise the bottle to remove any Handy Andy® residue.

Dosage: 5 ml with 10 ml of water, held in the mouth for a few minutes before swallowing. We give quite a lot of this away but also give one bit of advice: don't take it late at night as it tends to stimulate the brain and you don't sleep well — that's what it does to me, anyway. My son, a pharmacist, says it's the gin that does it but I believe it's the propolis.

Caution: some people can have an allergic reaction when taking bee products. Don't use propolis tincture if you have an allergic reaction, such as swelling of the tongue, red rash around the lips, feeling faint. Start with a tiny amount to test if you're not sure.

Things to do this month

Render down cappings and old combs. Make up new equipment for the coming season.

In the North Island, check varroa mite fall to see that treatments have been satisfactory. It should be below one per day if you were successful. Beekeepers should keep in mind that resistance to strips could be starting to build in some mite populations if alternative treatments have not been used.

- Frank Lindsay

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Bay of Plenty Field Day

On Saturday, 18 June, beekeepers flocked to Paengaroa to attend the Bay of Plenty Field Day. The local hall is an excellent venue for this event. Fortunately it was an all-indoor affair, as once again the weather was wet. More than 70 beekeepers attended, and the numbers from Bay of Plenty (BOP) and 'non-BOP' were about evenly balanced.

BOP Branch President Dave Black made everybody feel welcome, whereafter organiser Dennis Crowley got on with the order of the day.

The first speaker was Rueben Stanley, part-time beekeeper in Switzerland and the NZ distributor of ApilifeVar for control of varroa. ApilifeVar is a slow-release product in tablet form containing the four ethereal oils: Thymol, Eucalyptol, Camphor and Menthol. According to Rueben, this product, under EU regulations, is known to be safe, meaning there are no limits regarding safe components. Tablets evaporate slowly (15 to 25 days) when placed on the brood box, preferably in the corner. It works best when the daytime temperature does not drop below 12°C. The suggested use for a single brood box is one tablet (cut in equal parts), placed in the corners of the box on top of the frames. The tablet evaporates in about 15 days. For a double brood box, use the same procedure but use two tablets, which will last about 25 days. After treatment, remove what is left of the tablet and scrape propolis and wax in direct vicinity to prevent contamination. The product will store up to two years when kept in a cool place and out of sunlight.

The next speaker was Michelle Taylor, HortResearch, on 'Development of technologies for the control of varroa'. This research is being funded by Sustainable Farming Fund, Honey Industry Trust, individuals and Zespri. The following projects are under way:

1. Breeding programme: started with 65 genetic lines with the aim to select for SMR (suppressed mite reproduction), and in future to provide stock to the industry
2. Generic organic treatments:
   - Formic acid: why varying efficacy is happening and effectiveness at lower concentration (safer to use)
   - Thymol: efficacy over 80 percent; concerns about residues
   - Oxalic acid, trickling syrup: no impact was found on queen survival, even in broodless colonies; widely varying efficacy
3. Biological control: biomiticide Metarhizin (fungus)
4. Rate response curve for Apistan.

Todd Muller of GM Grower Services, Zespri International Ltd, talked about the performance of the kiwifruit industry. The 2004 export crop broke the NZ $1 billion mark for the first time, accounting for 35 percent of all horticultural exports. Bay of Plenty grows 80 percent of the total, and it is estimated the direct impact on the Bay of Plenty to be $1.5 billion, or approximately 20 percent of the region's GDP. The Zespri Green variety (Hayward) is expected to grow approximately 10 percent over the next five years; the moratorium is still in place for the Zespri Gold variety.

Zespri has about 25 percent of the world market share and 60 percent of the kiwifruit grown in the Southern Hemisphere. The 2005 crop is the same size as last year. Future challenges include: the higher exchange rate of NZ currency (expected to have an impact of a little over NZ $50 million); increased freight costs (NZ $5 million); and a very large northern hemisphere crop. Pollination results for Zespri Gold are good and for Zespri Green average/variable. Dry matter has become increasingly important, which is pollination related.

Heather McBrydie, HortResearch, looked at efficacy of varroa spring treatments with Bayvarol and Apistan by varying the length of the treatment. This was done to find a way of limiting residues by shortening exposure time. It was found that treatments of four weeks had similar efficacy to eight-week treatments. A two-week exposure time had considerably lower efficacy.

Byron Taylor of AgriQuality highlighted the export requirements and talked about compliance with OMAR, traceability and consumer protection. Product destined for export will have the paper trail of Harvest Declaration (beekeeper), Statement of Transfer between listed premises (extractor to packer), Eligibility Document (packer to exporter) and Export Certificate (exporter to customer).

Following these presentations there was a discussion on the 'ins and outs' of feeding partially inverted sugar. The author of this field day report explained in short why it is done, how it can be done and what it costs.

All in all, a very good field day. Many thanks to the organisers, in particular Dennis Crowley, Ross Carroll and everybody else who helped out on the day.

- Gerrit Hyink, Bay of Plenty Branch Secretary

A salute to Stuart Tweeddale

Photo: Frank Lindsay

Long-time beekeeper Stuart Tweeddale was presented with a birthday cake at the June meeting of the Southern North Island Branch. It was not only Stuart's 90th birthday, but he and his wife Thelma will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary at the end of July.

In his early years Stuart had "pushed" around on farms during the Depression and had worked for a couple of beekeepers around Palmerston North: Field's and Walworth's. During this time he collected swarms and took bees out of houses to start his own hives. His only mode of transport was a pushbike, and he used to move hives by balancing them on the crossbar while pushing the bike. Stuart ended up with 45 hives before the start of World War II.

He recalled that after coming back from the war, he was offered either Taihape or Central Otago to start up beekeeping. Stuart chose Taihape.

It was hard getting finance in those days. Some returned soldiers who were farmers could get finance under the government rehabilitation loans programme because they had land as security for further loans, but beekeepers, horticulturists and poultry farmers had difficulties — banks weren't interested in financing them.

Stuart bought the native trees for his house for £50, Totara and Rimu that sawmillers had left on the back of farms adjacent to the forests. He milled them and with the help of a carpenter and labour costs of £200, Stuart built the house himself for £2000.

Most commercial beekeepers had bee diseases in those early days. Stuart had to get bees from somewhere so bought hives when one beekeeper retired, but unfortunately the hives he bought turned out to be heavily infected with American foulbrood. Stuart remarked that he "paid for his mistakes with his cheque book in those early days". He wasn't the only one caught out by buying hives that were diseased, but it taught him a very valuable lesson.

He produced mainly bush honeys, Manuka, Rewarewa and Kowhai, but the Internal Marketing Board, the forerunner of the Honey Marketing Authority (HMA), only paid premium prices for light honeys. Manuka, being thixotropic and hard to extract, was used as winter bee feed.

Stuart said that over the years he had met some really nice people and a few ratbags. He praised his sons for all their help in the early days, extracting and packing honey, and is very proud of their achievements today.

We wish Stuart and Thelma many more happy years.

- Frank Lindsay

Letters to the Editor

New book available

(Editor's note: The following was received as a press release and has been abridged)

The publication *Honey: A modern wound management product*, edited by Richard White, Rose Cooper and Peter Molan (Professor, University of Waikato), is an edited collection of chapters on modern honey usage in wound care that includes reviews of the underlying science and clinical evidence to date. The book is promoted by the publisher as "the single, most comprehensive collection of data on honey extant". The book is available from Wounds UK Publishing, Suite 3.1, 36 Upperkirkgate, Aberdeen AB10, 1BA, Scotland, or online from www.wounds-uk.com, for a retail price of £24.99.

Filipino beekeeper seeking work

(Editor's note: the following letter was forwarded by a New Zealand beekeeper and has been abridged.)

Good day,

I'm Glen Yuson, 28 years old from the Philippines. I'm a 5 years beekeeper in the Philippines, with different knowledge with beekeeping management. Sir, I hope you can help me to get a job for a beekeeping job in New Zealand. I'm a hard working beekeeper. I will send my resume. I really need job. I can supervise too.

Thank you so much. I will follow my certification regarding beekeeping management.

God Bless,
Glen Yuson
glenyuson@yahoo.com

Uruguyan beekeeper seeking work

(Editor's note: this letter, sent widely to beekeepers in New Zealand, has been abridged and does not include several accompanying photos.)

My name is Gabriel Torres, from Uruguay, [now] living in Florida with agricultural exchange visa. The purpose of my letter is [to] offer to you my services as a very experienced beekeeper with almost 11 years of practical experience. I learned how to [raise] queens with a very high grade of acceptance. I had the opportunity to participate in the annual insemination process of the breeders with Joseph Latshaw, from Ohio Queen Breeders, developer of the Latshaw instrument for instrumental insemination, and I'm proud to say that I did inseminate queens and actually one of them is being used as a breeder for this season. If you are interested or curious, write me back [with] questions or give me a call, I'll be more than glad to answer as soon as I can. Thank you very much for your time, I hope hear from you soon.

Gabriel Torres
105 Avalone Dr., Apopka, FL, 32703, U.S.A.
Phone (001) 407 884 8826 (best time to call after 5 pm East Coast time)

Invitation to International Beekeeping Congress, November 13–18, 2005, Bangalore, India (Organised by Century Foundation, Bangalore)

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the International Beekeeping Congress, it is our privilege and honor to extend a warm invitation to you to participate in the deliberations of the scheduled congress to be held from November 13–18, 2005. The main aim of the Congress is to bring together the beekeepers, honey traders and International Scientific Community involved in research and development of beekeeping for sustainable livelihoods and rural development. The proposed congress will disseminate advanced information on beekeeping for further improvement.

Bangalore is a beautiful city, the capital of Karnataka in India. Karnataka has unique flora and fauna including important honeybee species. This congress will be an opportunity for the delegates to visit various biodiversity hotspots in the country.

We are sure, the Congress will present a unique opportunity to share the recent trends in beekeeping and development. Also, you can enjoy the wonderful hospitality of Indian people. The local organizing committee and Century Foundation will try their best to make your stay comfortable and enjoyable during the congress.

Looking forward to meeting you during the Congress.

With warm regards,

Dr. V. Sivaram
Organizing Secretary

Dr. Anita, M
Chairperson – Scientific Committee

IBC Secretariat - # 35, 3rd Cross, Vignananagar, Bangalore – 560075, India
Telefax: 91-(080)-25244592 E.mail: info@cenfound.org
Web: www.cenfound.org/IBC-2005/indexpage.html

Rarotongan beekeeper urgently seeks queen bees from South Island

(Editor's note: the following letter was sent to Christchurch beekeeper Roger Bray.)

Dear Mr Bray

Please accept my handwritten note as I have yet to save enough money to buy a computer. I know at this time of the year the beekeepers' conference will occupy you for the next few weeks; however, I would appreciate if you could help me out with my bees.

I am desperately in need of Queens with the restrictions for export of the North Island, New Zealand. I am hoping to get some from the South Island. The Virgin Blue Brisbane-

Christchurch-Rarotonga service has now started, ideally suitable when the Queens are ready.

My last supply of Queens five years ago came from Matt Davidson, Nelson. Because of the many problems with bureaucracy, etc., he turned me down for my second request.

Please give me (1) a few addresses supplying Queens with the costs for 50 (fifty) Italian Queens with freight costs, etc., and six months ahead to December 2005 with monthly instalments. I would have covered the sum required ready for dispatch. The Agriculture clearance certificate will be forwarded in time.

Lastly, I see David Yanke's article on Carniolans in the May 2005 issue of the Beekeeper, (they're here to stay), the South Island will miss out.

Kindest regards
Koekoe John Mokotupu
PO Box 382
Rarotonga
COOK ISLANDS

DSL appoints new manager for New Zealand

(Editor's note: The following press release from DSL Packaging has been abridged slightly)

DSL Packaging has appointed Mr Paul Logan as the Business Manager to run its existing New Zealand operations. Operating from premises in Auckland, Mr Logan is set to service both the North and South Islands, as the company continues to expand into the growing Intermediate Bulk Container (IBC) market across New Zealand. Since establishing DSL Packaging NZ more than 12 months ago, the company has focused on meeting growing demand for its products, in response to the world wide industry trend to convert from the traditional 44 gallon steel drums, to more efficient forms of packaging, such as Schütz IBC's.

DSL Packaging's Managing Director Steve Johnston confirmed that New Zealand was "in a very good position to benefit from the Australian made Schütz units", which were previously imported from Europe. "By having a manufacturing capability for Schütz IBC's across the Tasman, New Zealand users will be able to access reliable supply, good service and competitive prices from DSL," Steve Johnston said.

Schütz IBC's measure approximately one cubic metre, are re-useable and designed for the packaging of liquid products. The units have UN approval for the packaging of dangerous goods in groups II and III. They consist a heavy duty polyethylene blow moulded inner bottle, surrounded by a steel cage, which is mounted on either a metal, plastic or wooden pallet for easy handling.

"Our sustainable IBC's offer the most efficient and environmental option for the packaging of most liquid products including lubricants, food, beverages, chemicals and many dangerous goods", said Steve Johnston. "All of these products are relevant to New Zealand, especially the food market," he added.

New Zealand DSL NZ manager, Paul Logan

Mr Logan who has already started working with DSL, has many years experience in the NZ packaging industry, as well as a good knowledge of Intermediate Bulk Containers. He may be contacted on 021 335 914 for anyone seeking further information; alternatively details on DSL can be found on www.dslpackaging.com

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Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand

Leptospermum scoparium

Maori Name: Manuka

Common Name: Tea Tree

Leptospermum scoparium

Three species of Manuka are found in New Zealand. Hybrid varieties of all three species may be found growing in areas occupied by one of the parent strains from which they originate. The red flowering Manuka grows naturally in areas north of Whangarei.

Both the white and red Manuka in the north of New Zealand can yield nectar in June and July, though a surplus is seldom gathered, but can stimulate colonies into brood rearing and heavy consumption of stores.

In Northland the main flow can occur in September in coastal areas and later inland in swamp lands with the hill country often being later still, with flowering periods varying in different parts of the country.

Manuka will secrete nectar under most conditions except during cold winds. The honey varies a good deal in flavour, colour and consistency, being influenced apparently by soil types and weather conditions.

Captain Cook gave it the name 'Tea Plant' and wrote of it: *"The leaves were used by many of us as tea, which has a very agreeable bitter taste and flavour when they are recent but loses some of both when they are dried. When the infusion was made strong, it proved emetic to some in the same manner as 'green tea'."*

To the Maori both Manuka and Kanuka have the same virtues, but the Maori people prepared Manuka using the leaves and bark in a variety of ways to cure their ailments.

Leaves were used for urinary complaints, and steam inhaled for colds. Bark and leaves were boiled and the warm liquid was rubbed on stiff backs and rheumatic joints.

Young shoots were chewed and swallowed for dysentery and seed pods were chewed and swallowed for diarrhoea — some claiming this worked better than Koromiko (Hebe).

There have been reports also of Manuka smoke being used to recover people who had drowned. The last instance was recorded in 1985 after artificial respiration had been tried and failed. "It is true about the cure for drowning. My father got hold of me, they had a big thing there at the Hui, where they hung the meat up you know. I was turned upside down and they made a tea tree fire. It was not the heat, but the smoke that made me cough, and all the water came out of my stomach. I still have my life." – Katherine

Quote from: *Maori Healing and Herbal, New Zealand Ethnobotanical Sourcebook.* Murdoch Riley. 1994, reprinted 2003.

- Tony Lorimer

APOLOGY TO SUBSCRIBERS AND ADVERTISERS

The Publications Committee of *The New Zealand Beekeeper* extends sincere apologies for the delayed mailout of the June issue, due to production problems with the firm that handles our mailing. We hope that you were not inconvenienced by this delay.

Front Cover Captions:

1. **Water cleaning**
2. **Winches from Super Winch**
3. **Bee Seal boot polish**
4. **Mr Bee**
5. **Beekeepers Kerry & Alexandra McCurdy and bub**
6. **Telford exhibit**
7. **Post hole rammer**
8. **Chainsaw winch from Super Winch**
9. **Separating hazardous chemicals**
10. **Brand new Honda generators**

Photos by Fiona O'Brien