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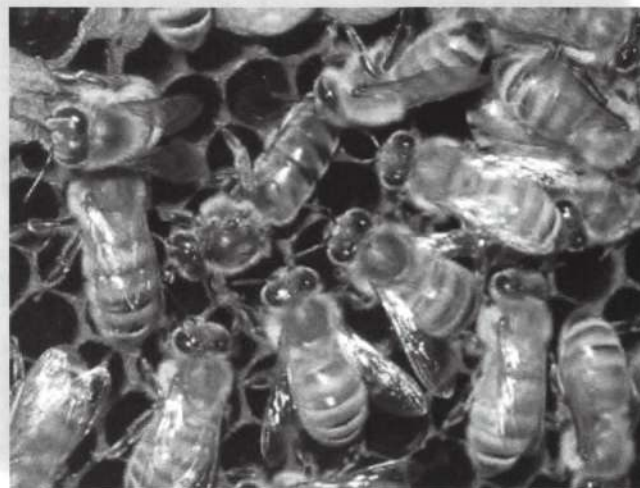
The New Zealand

BeeKeeper

New Zealand
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Four Legged Queen



*Photo: Frank Lindsay
(caption on back cover)*

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President's Report

Like everyone, I am getting sick of having to work hives in the rain. Ironically, I have decided to have today off to do some paperwork and the weather is brilliantly fine. Let's hope it stays that way for a few days so the paddocks dry out a little bit and the queens can get out for a mating flight and return safely to their hives, rather than finding them hanging off posts and trees due to another rain squall coming through.

Working with the new Executive Council is beginning to settle down, and I am enjoying working with the new team. Having an Executive Officer on hand to deal with many of the day-to-day queries, and finding background material for the various projects we have outlined to do this year, has been fantastic for me. I now have a bit of time to myself and can begin to indulge my other interests that I've neglected in the past couple of years. Our challenge for the future is to ensure that we give members sufficient benefits that they will increase their subscription to the Association to enable us to give the Executive Officer a reasonable amount of job security.

I believe we are in good heart as an Association: the Executive Council is stable and we have many members helping to achieve our many goals.

Updating New Zealand beekeeping books

At recent meetings we have agreed to fund the updating of the manuals *Control of Varroa* (MAF) and *Elimination of American foulbrood without the use of drugs*, by Mark Goodwin and Cliff Van Eaton. The varroa manual currently is out of stock, and we have negotiated with MAF for their approval to get the book updated.

We've also discussed the possibility of updating the book written by Andrew Matheson, *Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand*, which is currently out of print. We've contacted Andrew and learned that he is already doing an update, which is likely to be out next year.

The Executive Council has also discussed our desire to get research work conducted on our native pollens to obtain their nutritional value. If this is done, we would like to also get a new book written that will supersede R S Walsh's book, *Pollen and Nectar Sources of New Zealand*.

Portfolio responsibilities

As President I am overseeing a number of the various portfolios for which the Executive Council is responsible. These include:

Lobbying/Profile/Alliances

This function is vital to our industry. Without effective alliances and lobbying with central and regional government and other allied industries, our ability to keep bees may be compromised at any stage.

One of the issues mentioned in the Executive Council strategic

planning day on 11 September 2005 was our diminishing pollen resources and how this situation is affecting the ability of beekeepers to get hives up to pollination and honey gathering strength. It's vital to communicate to everyone that if they are removing weed species, to consider replacing these with plants that provide pollen and nectar sources. Leaving a few steep hillsides with broom and gorse will not affect farm production, but will help to eliminate erosion and provide shade for stock — and of course, provide that very necessary source for our bees.

For effective lobbying, we have determined that it is necessary to update our industry profile document that had been updated by Nick Wallingford in 1995. This document now needs a substantial rewrite to include a great deal of additional information; e.g., how varroa is affecting the industry and its costs; a detailed outline on our industry's exports and our contribution in terms of the crops and seeds pollinated by our bees. New sections need to be included detailing bees' contribution to pollination of pastoral areas, and on research being conducted on behalf of the industry by the various research providers.

We envisage that this document would be lodged with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as being used when lobbying government and local bodies. It could also be used by beekeepers to take to bank managers when refinancing or needing to obtain a mortgage.

Compliance

This will involve working on increasing compliance with all areas where we as beekeepers need to submit forms, create paper trails and heed legislation that governs what we can and cannot do.

Much of this function is likely to be via education through writing articles in *The New Zealand Beekeeper*, but may also be accomplished by providing support systems to help beekeepers to comply.

Marketing

I am sharing this responsibility with Neil Farrer. We have not yet had a chance to discuss how we will go about the goal that has been set: to determine whether to establish branding (country of origin) of products.

Much discussion was had at the planning meeting over the perceived threats of importation of products in the near future. Our profitability lies in our marketers getting as much product as possible into niche markets. Other countries in the world have suffered when they have blended imported products with their own, which have subsequently been found to be contaminated with drugs/residues.

We need to capitalise on our clean green image and be able to specify that the product being sold is a product of New Zealand origin, before any product is imported.

We need to determine whether or not beekeepers want us to pursue this goal. If we are given the go ahead to proceed,

then we will need to have some commitment from members to enable us to fund the project.

AFB statistics

As the Management Agency we are concerned as to how many outbreaks have occurred this spring, around the North Island in particular. It may be that more people are complying with the 7-day reporting requirement, and so we are learning more quickly as to where the problems lie.

I am sure that the presence of varroa places increasing stress on hives, and if a hive has a high level of AFB spores it is more likely to show clinical symptoms. I can only stress to the South Island beekeepers to get on top of any AFB now, for once you have varroa you can be sure to experience outbreaks like we are currently having in the North Island.



It will take a concerted effort by all beekeepers to strive to eliminate AFB from New Zealand.

- Jane Lorimer

Deadline for Publications

December 2005 edition: 21 November 2005

NB: No issue in January 2006 — Happy Holidays!

February 2006 edition: 13 January 2006

(NB earlier deadline as the February issue will be published earlier in February)

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

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BK19

Resignation of David McMillan, Apiculture Officer, Mosgiel



David McMillan has resigned from his position as Apiculture Officer with AgriQuality Limited, effective 18 November 2005. David is taking up an appointment as Processing Manager with Woodlands Honey. David has worked with AgriQuality, and its predecessor MAF Quality

Management, for the last 13 years and over this time has held a number of roles within the apiculture business unit. David has been the Process Manager for exotic honey bee disease surveillance, exotic disease and pest response (EDPR), the apiary database and varroa surveillance, Strategy Manager for the Varroa Agency Incorporated (VAI) and local Apiculture Officer for Otago/Southland (the best part of the country, according to David).

AgriQuality Limited expects to fill the vacancy and hopefully will be advertising the position in due course. In the meantime, other Apiculture Officers will cover the roles formerly undertaken by David.

Tony Roper, who is based in Christchurch, will be taking over local Apiculture Officer duties for the South Island, which includes apiary registrations, reporting AFB, export certification and general enquiries. Tony will also be responsible for EDPR issues. Tony can be contacted at:

Tony Roper
AgriQuality Limited Ph (03) 358 1835
PO Box 4718 Fax (03) 358 6222
Christchurch E-mail: roper@agriquality.com

Carole Lassiter is the Registrar of Apiaries for the South Island and has recently relocated to Lincoln. Carole can be contacted at:

Carole Lassiter
AgriQuality Limited Ph (03) 358 1723
PO Box 6 Fax: (03) 325 7088
Lincoln University E-mail: lassiterc@agriquality.com

Murray Reid will be acting as Strategy Manager for the Varroa Agency Incorporated and can be contacted at:

Murray Reid
AgriQuality Limited Ph (07) 850 2881
Private Bag 3080 Fax (07) 850 2801
Hamilton Email reidm@agriquality.com

Both Murray and Tony can also be contacted via the AgriQuality Limited call centre on 0508 00 11 22. David's phone will be forwarded to Murray for VAI business only. Tony should be contacted for all other South Island-related apiculture business in the first instance.

David would like to extend his thanks to the members of the beekeeping industry whom he has worked with over the last 13 years. David says, "It has been a most enjoyable time and I have made many good friends, learnt a lot of interesting things and am very grateful for the opportunities I have had. The beekeeping industry is a great place to work and has so many neat people". He added, "although it is goodbye from AgriQuality, it is not goodbye from the industry and I look forward to meeting and working with many of you again in the future".

David also remarked, "I would like to thank my colleagues with whom I have been associated for the last 13 years. You could not hope to work with a better bunch of people. These guys have given me so much and been instrumental in my personal growth within the job. I have learnt so many things from the team and I would like to wish you all the best for the future."

On behalf of the apiculture team I would like to thank David for all his work, his skill set and inputs into the business unit and his friendship over the years. It is going to be a mission to replace him but we wish him well in his new career.

Murray Reid
National Manager Apiculture
AgriQuality Limited
Hamilton

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BK263



Varroa Agency Incorporated News

An update from chairman Duncan Butcher, October 2005

AGM and Consultation Round

South Island beekeepers are invited to take part in the annual Varroa Agency Incorporated (VAI) consultation with the bee industry.

The aim of this consultation round is to set the Varroa Agency Incorporated budget, and we would also like to discuss a proposed change to the levy date.

Meetings are being held in various centres around the South Island in November. Members of the VAI Board will be present at each of the meetings.

Items on the Consultation Meeting agenda are: Duncan Butcher, Chairman: A progress report on the Varroa Agency Incorporated; a report on the proposed surveillance programme; the proposed budget for 2006-2007; the proposed levy for 2006-2007; a possible date change for the levy.

Come along to a meeting near you — we'd like your comments on the budget.

Beekeepers unable to attend meetings can put in a submission form by December 2, 2005 — contact Acting Strategy Manager Murray Reid for a copy of the submission form.

The consultation round follows on from the Varroa Agency Incorporated's first annual meeting held in Christchurch in September.

The meeting was a good opportunity for bee industry people and council representatives to hear about Board progress, and to have input on the plans set by the Agency on its Varroa-Free South strategy for 2005-2006.

The Agency farewelled board member David Horn (Chief Executive Officer West Coast Regional Council), who has moved to the North Island, and appointed Andrew Besley, chief executive of the Marlborough District Council. Board members are:

Chairman: Duncan Butcher, Councillor, Otago Regional Council

Ross Little, Councillor, Environment Canterbury

Andrew Besley, Chief Executive, Marlborough District Council

Steve Olds represents the two major bee industry groups.

The Agency's Acting Strategy Manager, Murray Reid, is based at AgriQuality, Hamilton.

Take the opportunity to have your say on the Agency budget during the consultation round and Keep the South Varroa Free.

Varroa Agency sorry to lose the services of its Strategy Manager

Varroa Agency Incorporated chairman Duncan Butcher is sorry to be losing the services of its Strategy Manager David McMillan, who is leaving AgriQuality to work in the private sector.

"David's help in getting the Varroa Agency up and running this year has been invaluable; his efforts have been much appreciated. He has assisted to get us to the point where the Agency is well positioned in managing the Varroa Pest Management Strategy into the future," Mr Butcher said.

The varroa surveillance programme, under Mr McMillan's expert guidance, has been very successful, and the Agency is working with AgriQuality to ensure that expertise will continue to be available. "We're confident that, with the Agency and AgriQuality's skills, the surveillance programme will continue and build on that success."

[Editor's note: see related article on page 5]

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BK12

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

News from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority

Changes to Human Consumption Specifications

The proposed changes to clause 108 of the Animal Products (Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption) 2004 that were consulted on earlier this year have now been finalised, and should be on the website by the time you read this. These can be found at: <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/legislation/notices/animal-material-products.htm>

A number of changes will affect beekeepers directly, some of which were made in response to industry submissions. These changes come into effect on 1 February 2006 and the Code of Practice for Bee Product Processing will also be updated by then to incorporate these changes.

Harvest Declarations

We have restricted the clause relating to plant toxins to apply only to Tutu. This is to encourage compliance with this requirement by making it more specific. If other plants need to be added, this clause will be amended.

The current harvest declaration statement which states: "From your knowledge of the bee foraging area, have any potentially harmful agricultural compounds been used on, or affected, any of the flowering crops or other nectar sources in that area?" is to be removed from the declaration. There is no evidence that New Zealand default Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) levels are being exceeded and it is clear that this requirement was somewhat impractical for beekeepers to comply with. The decision to no longer actively manage residues in this way will be reviewed if residues exceeding New Zealand limits are detected in monitoring undertaken by NZFSA.

The new harvest declaration forms will be available on the website and may be used from 1 December 2005. (The harvest declaration form is not part of the specification and is approved under a different mechanism. Because the new form does not conflict with the existing specification it can come into effect sooner than the specification.) However, if you have a supply of the old forms and wish to continue using them, they can be used until 30 April 2006.

Beehives

A new requirement has been added, making it clear that only approved veterinary medicines or agricultural compounds are used in beehives in accordance with label conditions. Hives are to be constructed of materials that will not be a hazard to the bee products. (For example, they should not be painted with a lead-based paint.)

Protecting the product

Honey supers and drums are to be stored and transported to minimise contamination. (That doesn't mean you cannot store drums outside, but you may need to cover them or take some

other precautions to keep them in good condition.) Storing honey supers after extraction under places where birds roost should also be avoided!

Potable water

There is a new potable water checklist for use if you are not on a town water supply.

Risk Management Programmes

The NZFSA has updated its Bee Products web pages to include more information on Risk Management Programmes. See: <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/subject/bee-products/index.htm>

If you are working on template RMPs based on the Code of Practice for Bee Product Processing, we would like to clarify that you only need to send in the following documents for registration:

- completed AP4 RMP registration form
- completed RMP Template (2 copies)
- site plan showing buildings and RMP boundary (2 copies)
- a letter confirming the details of your verifier (from your contracted verifier)
- \$100.00 fee

When your verifier visits you will need to show the following documents for checking. These documents must be in existence and be referenced in your template RMP before you submit your RMP:

- up-to-date version of the COP
- pre-season checklist
- cleaning schedule/records
- potable water checklist, if not on town supply
- water management plan (if required after completion of potable water checklist)
- approved chemicals list
- harvest declarations or equivalent records
- all other required records.

That's it from me. I hope you are all out there enjoying the sunshine — spare a thought for those of us who are stuck behind a desk!

- **Jim Sim**
Senior Programme Manager
Animal Products



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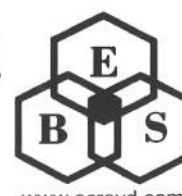
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BK260

Starting out in business? Don't miss out on the new tax discount!

The government has just introduced new laws to help people who begin earning self-employed income, or income from a partnership. If you qualify, you'll get a tax discount if you make voluntary income tax payments before you have to start paying provisional tax.

The Inland Revenue Department have sent the following for your information.

Why have a discount?

Paying your income tax "as you go" is easier on your pocket than paying it all at the end of the year.

That's why we pay provisional tax.

But when you're starting out in business, you may not have to pay provisional tax for the first year or so. That's because you don't start to pay provisional tax until your residual income tax (end-of-year tax) exceeds \$2,500. However, you are still required to pay income tax on the income you derive in your first year of business.

The new discount is to encourage people to make tax payments during a year when they're not obliged to pay provisional tax to get a "head start" on your tax payments.

If you haven't made any voluntary payments, you could find yourself in financial difficulty once you start paying provisional tax. You'll have to pay two years' worth of tax — your current year's provisional tax and your previous year's residual income tax — at around the same time.

Do you qualify for a discount?

You qualify if:

- you earn self-employed income, or income from a partnership. (You don't qualify if you use a company or trust in the conduct of your business), and
- your income comes mostly from a business (that is, your business income exceeds any investment, rental, beneficiary income or income from royalties), and
- you make voluntary income tax payments before the end of your tax year in which you intend to claim the discount (in most cases this is 31 March), and

- you don't have to pay provisional tax, and
- you've not been liable to pay provisional tax in the previous four years.

Note: To be eligible for the discount, you need to make the voluntary payments before the end of the tax year in which you claim the discount. You also need to keep the lesser of the amount of voluntary payments made or the amount of terminal tax for the year in your income tax account until the terminal tax date for the year (7 February or 7 April if you are a client of a tax agent).

How do you calculate the discount?

The discount is 6.7% of the smaller of:

- your total voluntary tax payments for the year,
- and 105% of your residual income tax for the year.

Example of a discount calculation

Maria has just started working as a self-employed taxi driver. During the year she makes voluntary payments totalling \$5,000. Her residual income tax liability comes to \$8,000. In Maria's case, the discount is 6.7% of the smaller of:

- \$5,000, and
- \$8,400 (105% of \$8,000).

So she is entitled to a discount of \$335 (6.7% of \$5,000).

Can you choose when you claim the discount?

You can choose to receive the early payment discount either in your first year of business or a subsequent income year. However, you must claim it by the year prior to the first year in which you are required to make provisional tax payments. You'll get the biggest benefit by claiming it in the year with the highest residual income tax.

Example of maximising the discount

Paul earns income from a partnership. His business results for the first four years are shown in the table below. Note that Paul becomes a provisional taxpayer in Year 3 (his residual income tax exceeds \$2,500) but he doesn't have to start paying provisional tax until Year 4.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Income	\$3,000	\$12,000	\$25,000	\$30,000
Residual income tax liability	\$450	\$1,950	\$4,680	\$5,730
Becomes a provisional taxpayer?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Liable to pay provisional tax?	No	No	No	Yes
Entitled to discount?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

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Paul can claim the discount in any of the first three years because at that stage he isn't paying provisional tax. He would maximise the discount by claiming it in Year 3.

Can you claim more than one discount?

In general, a discount is a "one-off" claim. However, if you stop earning partnership and self-employed income for a period of four years, you can claim a further discount if you start up again.

How do you make a claim?

From the 2006 tax year, the individual income tax return (IR 3) will have a tick box so you can indicate that you want to claim the discount in that year. The return guide will contain more information about the eligibility criteria.

When does the law take effect?

Any voluntary payments you make from 1 April 2005 can be used to calculate a discount. This means the 2006 tax year is the first year you can make a claim.

Do you need more information?

If you have any questions about discounts, please phone Inland Revenue (toll-free) on 0800 377 774.

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BK174

No grower game to test bee insecticide suspicion

By Richard Rennie



CHEMICAL EFFECT? Tolaga Bay, East Coast beekeeper Ian Stewart has not been able to conduct a field trial to find out if insecticide seed coating has been giving his bees what the French call “mad bee disease”.

Two East Coast beekeepers have been thwarted in their attempt to prove insecticide seed coatings are damaging their beehives.

Squash crops sown in the region have increasingly in recent years been coated with imidacloprid insecticides which act as neurotoxins against a wide variety of soil pests and sucking insects.

The most popular commercial brand is Gaucho, produced by the multinational Bayer company. It is used to coat numerous seed types, including maize, squash and grass seeds.

Anecdotal evidence suggests bee populations have been hit since the greater use of imidacloprids began.

Overseas beekeepers have already challenged Bayer in court on the issue.

For its part, Bayer firmly believes the evidence is not conclusive.

To prove imidacloprids were responsible for poor hive health here in New Zealand, it was necessary to conduct a field trial involving an area of untreated seed being isolated from treated seed, Tolaga Bay beekeeper Ian Stewart said.

After two years he and fellow beekeeper Barry Foster obtained the \$20,000 required to conduct the trial, with much of the cash being provided by the Sustainable Farming Fund.

However, they had been unable to find any squash farmers prepared to grow a crop without the seed coating, Stewart said.

Both beekeepers now avoid using their hives to pollinate squash crops on the Gisborne flats between November 2004 and January 2005.

They became concerned after had noticed a significant decline in honey production from hives used there, as well as unexplained bee deaths.

“This was at a time when we were already treating for varroa. If it were a neurotoxin affect from this treatment, it would have a similar effect to varroa, in that it does not kill them directly.”

Instead bees would not be able to find their way back to the hive, or if they did return, they were unable to perform their hygiene duties to help maintain hive health.

“The French call it mad bee disease, or disappearing bee disease because the bees go out, lose their way and don’t return.”

The beekeepers said they could afford to avoid the squash crops and concentrate on the higher value medicinal manuka honey market by placing hives in the hill country behind Gisborne instead.

Determining if it was the seed coating affecting bee numbers was not straightforward, Stewart said.

“To identify these imidacloprids as having an effect, you are required to measure very small quantities, in the nanograms and it requires special methods to ‘scale up’ the residue. You would be talking ground breaking work to do this.”

Stewart believed the best option might be to wait to see the outcome of a United States trial.

The issue is the subject of two international court cases – one in France and the other in the United States.

In the US beekeepers are taking chemical giant Bayer to court, alleging the treatment has had a massive impact on bee populations, hive health and honey production.

Meanwhile, French beekeepers have alleged the number of hives in France has declined markedly from 1.45 million in 1996 to about one million today.

They say this corresponds with the introduction of Gaucho as a seed treatment for sunflower crops.

Beekeepers maintain while the coating is on the seed only, it becomes systemic and affects the whole plant post-germination, affecting pollen well after the plant had flowered.

Studies by Bayer maintain the treatment is non-toxic.

Since the late 1990s there has been on-going dispute between beekeepers and the company about the effect of the treatment.

Other causes have been blamed for bee decline, including varroa mite.

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A French commission found in 2001 the imidacloprids do not accumulate in soils but residues may be found in plants.

In 2000 Bayer agreed the insecticide may cause disorientation of bees at level of 20ppb, but French research suggest this may occur between 3–16ppb.

The bitter dispute has continued, with the French minister for agriculture suspending the rights for Gaucho's use on maize in France, a move the company labelled as "astonishing" in May last year.

Bayer New Zealand's technical manager Max Moore said the company had made the effort of speaking to beekeepers across the country about Gaucho and hearing about their concerns.

"We were working with squash growers to come up with the trials, to see what happens when bees are exposed to squash flowers. However, last season when the bees died in Gisborne it was at a stage that the flowers had been gone for six to eight weeks, which makes allegations it was the Gaucho that caused it seem strange."

Given the huge land area in squash in Gisborne, it was easy to blame this particular crop when cross-contamination from other sprays could easily have occurred.

"We had a similar case with maize in southern Waikato where bees died seven months after the crop had flowered and Gaucho was blamed."

Moore said the ban on Gaucho continued in France for use on maize and sunflowers while further research went on.

It was an increasingly entrenched debate with little prospect of resolution.

"The data is not conclusive and from our point of view we really wish it were one way or the other. It becomes hard to argue or defend the case when there is doubt cast."

In New Zealand Gaucho had been used as a seed coating for 14 years on grasses and was also licenced for maize, sweetcorn and forage brassicas.

Reprinted from New Zealand Farmers Weekly, lead story, 31 October 2005. <http://www.country-wide.co.nz/a-man/view.php?content=cgi-bin/viewArticleExt.cgi&articleID=4035&emailLink=>

Oops!

Apologies to Vernon Gledstone-Brown for spelling his surname wrong in the October issue (back cover captions). We regret the error.

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So are you sick of fish and chips yet?

Before you all look to the bottom of this article to find out who wrote this and then subsequently pick yourself off the floor from laughing too hard, this article is not about weight loss. Rather, it's about getting through some of those tough days and nights and ensuring that you have enough fuel and energy to do the work.

As everyone so rightly tells me, food in and food out equals energy in and energy out. Sometimes we put too much energy in and don't burn enough up (excess), sometimes not enough energy in and wanting to wring more out than what is there (shortfall), and, strangely enough, other times we want to put the wrong fuel in and wonder why it doesn't run as efficiently. This is as much a problem for a truck or car as a problem for our bodies.

At this time of year you're working long hours, the body clock is out of sync, there doesn't appear to be enough food fuel stops and cheapest is not always the best. What foods are you topping up on? It only takes a couple of fish and chip meals to put you off. Maybe it's not even fish and chips but Chinese takeaways, or perhaps it's a pie from the 24-hour petrol station. Quite often you head for caffeine, which helps keep you awake but sugar often comes along with the caffeine. This lifestyle can lead to diabetes later in life, and in fact can put your health in a general position of vulnerability. Ultimately, it can affect your ability to produce an income.

What are the alternatives and options? As I have learnt during my life, things need to be planned, whether it's your business or you. We may be good at planning what beekeeping work needs to be done, whether it's winter, spring, summer or autumn. We may be better at the financial side, whether it's personal or business, budget or savings. Of course, any trip of a lifetime is easy to plan — or is it? It is all about working through a plan. So why not plan your personal fuel?

Talking about fuel

I remember attending a session with Jeni Pearce (one of New Zealand's leading health and sports dietitians and nutritionists). Jeni was commenting on a food diary that contained the good old New Zealand tradition: pies. Jeni told me that one pie was equal to five filled rolls (fat, energy etc). That was a few years ago, and pie fillings probably have only got worse with the addition of cheese. Some pastries have gotten healthier, but will those ones be available in the middle of the night? Filled rolls, however, are much more filling, and it would be a mammoth task to eat five filled rolls. I know sometimes you still want a pie and that's that. Many of you will not have a problem with fat but need to get the right fuel, therefore getting more energy in. An interesting exercise is to compare the nutritional value from one takeaway food place to another. I once compared the nutritional value of round bread rolls and long bread rolls.

When I sat down to eat at both places and turned the tray table mat over to view the nutritional value I got a rather large fright, hence it changed where I bought my rolls. You too can check this out at any fast food outlet!

Many nutritionists will talk about fuelling the body correctly at breakfast, which can occur any time of the day because it is 'breaking the fast' of your main sleep, giving you enough fuel to kickstart your metabolism. Fuelling your body is about giving it everything that it needs to work and function so that it can cope with everything that you throw at it.

One of these ways is by eating low glycaemic index (GI) foods. These types of foods help to keep the body fuelled for longer. In layman's terms, low GI foods take longer for the fuel to be used in the body compared with high glycaemic foods. High GI foods trigger the release of large quantities of insulin. They cause a spike of energy as they are quickly absorbed, followed by a drop as the insulin causes the sugar to be taken up from the bloodstream and be converted to fat inside the cells of the body. This makes us feel hungry and more likely to overeat. When doing the long haul (like pollination), we often want food in the middle of the night when most people are wise and at home in bed. The options are limited and quite often we eat and overeat the wrong types of food.

Here's some more technical know-how about GI:¹

- GI is the measure of the speed at which the carbohydrates in our food are digested, absorbed and converted into the body's main energy supply — glucose — and therefore affect these levels of this in our bloodstream
- carbohydrates, and the glucose (or blood sugar) they break down into, are the primary energy source for the brain and the body
- pure glucose has one of the greatest effects on blood-sugar levels so it has a GI rating of 100 — all other carbohydrate foods are measured against this from 1 to 100.

Foods high in GI include cakes, biscuits, some breads, some types of rice and potatoes and some cereals. Low GI (considered to be under 55 — honey sits on 55) can include:

- wholegrains: note that it is only the whole grains and cracked grains that have a low GI (because they are very slowly digested). Most 'wholegrain' breads and cereals have finely milled grain that is rapidly digested
- beans
- most fruits (but not fruit juice)
- vegetables.

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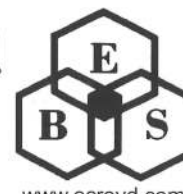
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By choosing these types of foods they will make us feel fuller for longer and help avoid the body crashing at the wrong time, from blood-sugar spikes, therefore keeping our bodies on a more even keel. Protein, which is slow to be digested, and then is slowly converted to glucose, keeps the blood glucose level functional for a long period.

A word of caution: there are some examples of low GI that are high in fat, e.g., ice cream and chocolate (which can be around 30% fat), so it's everything in moderation. It's also important to mix high and low GI foods together in a meal. Some foods are high in GI like 80 grams of pumpkin (GI rating of 75) but it only contains 4 grams of carbohydrates, therefore you would need to eat heaps of it to affect your blood sugar. This is where the glycaemic load (GL) comes in. GL is the GI multiplied by the amount of carbohydrate, divided by 100. GL measures both the type and amount of carbohydrate in food.

Enough talk. What are the contents of our fuel bag for riding out the long haul of pollination and honey pursuit? We all spend time away from our base, workers and bosses — the team! How can we keep those energy levels at a premium and stop the blood sugar spiking?

Fuel bag basics

The fuel bag basics are: the chilly bag, a couple of small coolie/slicker/ice pads (could be a frozen fruit juice or water), fluid and food.

Fluid: the recommended amount per day is eight glasses of water, and a small amount of this total can be made up of black tea and coffee. I have never known beekeepers to drink less in summer, often gallons more. What is not widely known is that often we may think that we are hungry, but in fact we are starting to dehydrate. So keep up the fluids. Our team makes it a rule to drink every hour, especially through the night while working. The quantity is up to you. The time will come that you will get sick of the taste of water, so we supplement this with flavoured or sports water. These waters come in various flavours, but beware of sports drinks that contain sugar.

Simply for health reasons I have not gone down the path of drinks that are highly caffeinated (I'm not talking soft drinks here) as some of these have guarana in them also. I remember going to one of the Waikato branch meetings and hearing the effects on beekeepers of the copious amounts that they had drunk of these types of drinks, and others clearing out a bucket of glass bottles from inside the truck after a night's pollination. At times I have used soft drinks to spike my blood sugar (energy), but the payback is that a can of soft drink could have 12 teaspoons of sugar in it. So now I will carry a 1.5 litre diet vanilla soft drink and use that for variety and a little caffeine. Of course, some beekeepers use honey to boost their blood sugar!

Food: some beekeepers work all night, some from midnight on, and some from early morning on. In our business we are in the 'midnight on' category when starting our day's work of putting hives into kiwifruit orchards, and so begin our shift with a honey and cheese sandwich on wholegrain bread that is consumed about half an hour after leaving home. Don't knock it until you try it; my niece didn't like honey and now enjoys a honey and 'thin slice of cheese' sandwich. Not so nice later in the day, as the honey soaks into the bread. We have been doing this for years now. Take time to chew, it's not a necessity to eat but the point is to build those energy levels to sustain you for the whole night/day's work.

The snack foods we travel with are:

- yoghurt and spoons: essential!
- fruit: around four to five servings for the day, such as apples, bananas, strawberries (pick them up as you travel around), kiwifruit. You can buy little boxes of raisins at the supermarket and I have also found little boxes called 'Snack n Go', that combine sultanas/raisins/apricots and sultanas/raisins/apples
- vegetables: about four to five servings for the day, such as carrots, lettuce, cucumber, gherkins, vegetable sticks of any sort (add in some hummus: pumpkin and kumara is our favourite, or salsa to go with them)
- nuts: raw or toasted seeds. Blanched almonds are nice and nuts don't have to be roasted
- wholegrain crackers with cheese and/or relish
- wholemeal snack bars, cereal bars: avoid ones sweetened with sugar or glucose, as these will give a blood sugar surge and insulin release. Honey-sweetened ones are better. Try the 10% or less fat, pick the ones with the Heart Foundation tick
- multigrain breads such as Lebanese and pita breads. Also if you like, bran muffins, but these are high GI. Bran is roughage, so all the carbohydrate is in the form of sugar or starch, which is rapidly digested
- sushi: gives variety, but it must be kept cool to avoid the risk of food poisoning.

Some suggestions for main meals: wholegrain filled rolls with protein and salad vegetables, quiche (disguises all the vegetables and cottage cheese in the world), small tins of tuna or salmon mixed with some low-fat mayonnaise and spread on cold toast/crackers, grainy crackers with vegemite or chutney. Mix tuna and pasta together with some salad greens, which can be picked from the garden or bought in a mixed mesclun bag in the vegetable aisle of the supermarket.

When bringing the hives home we start in the early evening, so before leaving home, something substantial is good — I think of it as breakfast again because we have probably slept the day away. Weetbix (throw in a handful of raisins), baked beans on toast or poached eggs on toast are good starters. It's not a fry up. But beans are one of the best sources of protein

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you can get without large amounts of fat. (For those who aren't concerned about the fat content, cheese contains 3–5 times more protein than baked beans, and is higher quality protein in terms of its content of essential amino acids.)

Another thing that we find is really good, and will probably suit many of you, is to get the barbecue going. Put some steak in a big marinade dish in the fridge (enough to last 3–4 days), and with a quick salad or vegetables cooked on the barbeque, you have a good alternative. Pop a few potatoes in the microwave for 10 minutes and whip them onto the barbeque to brown and finish off, and in 20 minutes you will be eating.

Our BBQ vegetables (picked out of the garden, hopefully, if we are able to plant in time) include courgettes, onion, tomato, beans, mushrooms (tinned), potato (cooked for 10 minutes in the microwave and then onto the BBQ, served with a little basil pesto or whatever) corn on the cob, and maybe half of a garlic pita bread.

Our salad may look something like this (picking lettuce leaves, beetroot leaves or spinach leaves out of the garden if possible):

- put a little pesto and olive oil in the bottom of a bowl, enough to only lightly coat the lettuce leaves you are putting in
- add some lettuce leaves and, using tongs, gently turn the lettuce over until it is lightly coated (don't stir).

Add in:

- some fruit: cut up a hard apple or pear, an orange or whatever you like (the firmer the better — crunch is great texture)
- some cheese, again to taste (e.g., shaved parmesan, feta, edam, camembert)
- some nuts: walnuts, pine nuts, almonds — your choice, just a few is all you need
- if you are not having a BBQ, then add in some protein such as chicken, beans, cold meats
- if you want to put some herbs in, again it's your choice. I don't because I use and enjoy the taste of basil pesto made at home from basil grown in the garden. If you don't like pesto, use a little oil, honey or lemon juice and/or balsamic vinegar, with seasonings — whatever you like to eat.

What I enjoy about this sort of food is that you are satisfied but not too full to get behind the wheel of a truck and/or begin lifting hives or whatever the task.

You can even make a salad by taking your dinner plate and putting little piles of vegetables like beetroot, gherkins,

lettuce, olives, egg, carrot, tomato, avocado, cucumber: it's all fuel. You can also use microwave dinners; however, I feel that you need to add vegetables/salad to them to add bulk to your meal.

Cooking with a crockpot or slow cooker

The other way of cooking that I regularly use is the crockpot or slow cooker. This is versatile and its uses include:

- using a 'cook in the pot' sachet and all its ingredients
- put potatoes, pumpkin, onion, kumara, in the bottom, add some meat on top, blade steak, topside (put holes in the meat and insert garlic, season), mince, add some fresh herbs, stock, and maybe any wine if you want and turn it on
- if you have no fresh vegetables or no time to prepare, a one kilo bag of frozen mixed vegetables with meat is great too
- rice, water, and with the flick of a switch a rice cooker can cook rice in 20 minutes to accompany a curry made in the crockpot, leaving you to enjoy a welcome hot shower.

When we come home tired at the end of the day, the smell that greets us is dinner. You can thicken a stew by taking the vegetables out, do your stuff and then dish up. Guys can work a crockpot too: I have two brothers who are testament to that and have others marvel at their combinations.

I am proud to be an NBA member and have enjoyed writing this article to share with you. Pay it forward: if this article has helped you or you have something that can help NBA members, then please respond. I have been writing this article using a laptop behind the wheel of this truck, stuck in an apiary in the rain, hail and sun. I think the next article should be about exercise.

- Fiona O'Brien

Reference

'New Zealand Healthy Food Guide, April 2005, www.healthyfood.co.nz

Acknowledgement

Grateful thanks are due to Dr Peter Molan, Professor of Biological Sciences and Director, Honey Research Unit, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Waikato,

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BK91

From the colonies



Auckland Branch

As we sit staring out the fogged windows of the truck, the reality of beekeeping full time becomes apparent. We break the first rule of Beekeeping 101: "open hives on a fine day". Opening hives between rainfalls is frustrating, but becomes standard practice to keep on top of our schedule. Between showers we crack into it. Work is starting to get more critical now as things start to get really busy.

Hives are desperately trying to swarm in some areas while getting low in stores in others (or both). Raw sugar is fed out more often, as the bees need it rather than storing it like syrup. We've split hives to reduce swarming and bring up hive numbers, as pollination time has arrived with the avocado and kiwifruit beginning to kick in. The Rewarewa and Manuka are out and hives in these areas are starting to bring it in. If the weather would just turn on some sun we'd be getting some decent nectar in, as bee numbers are high. The new 3/4 carnica queens seem to be laying like mad, and Brian's eyes light up as he pulls another slab of brood out of the box. The latest delivery of queens seems more pure in strain as they are a more definite grey colour. We gave them plenty of room, supered them earlier than usual and gave the strong ones two boxes. Most hives are in four or five boxes now, although some are in more and some less. The slower hives with scattered brood are marked up for requeening and will be assessed and possibly requeened on the next visit.

Well, my time in beekeeping as a full-time career has almost reached a full year, so all the different aspects of work over the seasons have been touched on although there's still lots to learn. When friends and family from town talk to me about it I think they have visions of us sitting around on tartan blankets with a thermos of hot coffee. Reality is stuffing down your lunch on the way to the next apiary, while carefully holding your sandwich to the side as Archie, the dog next to me, looks for an opening to snap it up.

So far my time in beekeeping has been very rewarding; I'm looking forward to a career based on the liquid gold. And as you know, if you don't like the weather in Auckland, just wait 15 minutes.

- James Harrison

Waikato Branch

Well, what a spring. The bush is now on the go and honey is raining in. By the time you read this it could have all changed though. Hives are on the move not to kiwifruit but to take advantage of the honey flow. Chatting around the Waikato with beekeepers has revealed similar threads of conversation. The sheds have been emptied of almost all lids, floors and boxes, and that was just to cope with a spring with copious amounts of bees, good buildup and strong queen matings.

I guess that all this gear moving from the sheds to the field might pose a risk that the last old box in the corner of the shed could have some undetected AFB spores. A box that was put away unintentionally and is now back in circulation may come back to haunt some beekeepers next year, wishing that they had dealt with it then and there.

Pollination has been doing a bit of a dance. Some beekeepers experienced a call for hives for gold kiwifruit early and then there was a slowdown as we had amazing amounts of rain. The green kiwifruit at this stage appears to be holding for about the first and second weeks in November.

With all the rain, the rivers ran high for some days and the silage could not be cut. The turnaround is incredible: every night the contractors are on the move and the air is full of the sweet smell of drying grass, ready to be wrapped.

- Fiona O'Brien

Hawkes Bay Branch

The wonderful weather of early spring has been replaced with rather indifferent weather including thunderstorms and heavy hail showers: some orcharding areas had hail 50 millimetres deep. All this rain has made shifting apple hives very difficult, with many beekeepers becoming stuck in paddocks. Hives are generally in good condition with some swarming problems. So far there has been very few problems with poisoning; Labour weekend is normally when this occurs and as I write it is only a few days away, so fingers crossed. Most crops seem to be flowering about 10 days early this year; it will be interesting to see if this applies for the rest of the season.

- John Berry



This nest was found intact in the Hawkes Bay after the shelterbelt was topped. We collected the firewood. Photo: Ron Morison

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Southern North Island Branch

As I put this report together the rain is pouring down and I have not been able to finish taking the last hives out of a pear orchard. Hopefully tomorrow will be better. It has been noticeable over the last three weeks that the boon of pollen and nectar has slowed, leaving hives with barely adequate stocks of food, so it's time to feed again. The hives that have been into pollination came out strong, but not all areas have been as fortunate as Wanganui and Manawatu.

Some beekeepers have reported drums of honey still in storage due to packers and others not buying or prices being too low. This is a concern.

Taranaki has had early swarming problems, then rain. Commercial beekeepers generally are coping with the variable season. Taranaki Beekeepers Club reports an increase in members after their field day, bringing a number of hobbyist beekeepers into membership. The Taranaki, Wanganui and Manawatu bee clubs are members of the NBA, which helps to involve hobbyist beekeepers in the wider work of NBA and assists NBA in passing on information that may help.

In the Waimarino a water shortage and cool temperatures meant that the hives were not developing as fast as preferred. Once the rain stopped and the sun boosted the temperatures the bees got into the willows. The strong hives became stronger and the weaker ones dwindled away. This trend has been seen

in other areas as well. Varroa build-up has been a problem and care is needed to treat and keep the varroa levels down.

Around the Wellington area the mixed weather has put things back to a normal year after an early spurt of development. Swarming has occurred and some beekeepers are splitting hives to control swarms and to increase hive numbers. Foundation frames are being put into hives and extra supers to make room.

A considerable number of AFB cases have been reported in the Southern North Island area. It seems that we may be following a trend that occurred in the more northern regions after varroa became a general problem. One theory is that varroa weakens hives that have had a slight amount of non-detectable AFB and when the hives weaken, the bees can no longer cope and the beekeeper then finds affected cells. Another theory is that beekeepers are better now at observing the rules and reporting AFB finds within the 7-day period and the Management Agency (and AgriQuality) are getting a true picture of the situation. Keep the reports of AFB finds coming in so that the true situation can be seen and appropriate action taken, or help given when needed.

So another challenging season is developing.

- Neil Farrer

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Nelson Branch

As I write this at the end of October, I always wonder what the situation will be by the time I read this in the *Beekeeper*. There have been times when I have written about feeding sugar and then we are in a honey flow by the time I read about the feeding.

However, I hope the following words remain true to printing time. This has been the best spring for beekeeping that we have ever had in our 30 years in the Nelson area. We've had barely any rain and the nectars of spring have all flowed freely and given strong hives adequate stores, overly abundant pollen, and queen-raising hives that are producing a 80–90% success rate. Having written that, I am sure everything will soon turn to custard. Please forgive me for writing this as a generality; I know that other parts of Nelson besides the Waimea plains have had more rain, namely the Marlborough Sounds, Golden Bay and Murchison area.

Some beekeepers that have fed too much sugar are now having trouble with swarming, but by the low number of messages on our answer phone each night, I would say that there are not many swarms around for this time of the year.

After checking 60 hives today, we only had swarm cells in a couple of hives that were actually packed out with honey dew (early flow for this time of the year). Several hives had drawn 2–4 frames of foundation in just four days. A wonderful treat, but very difficult when trying to double and requeen the hives.

I am sure that by the next issue you will be able to read about the sorry state of affairs with the hives in Nelson. Stay tuned ...

- Merle Moffitt

Canterbury Branch

Another month has passed too quickly. I heard on the radio the other day that there are only 60-plus shopping days to Christmas. Now that is a scary thought.

The weather in Canterbury has cooled slightly in October with a few snow flurries and several wet days. This has been well received as it has curtailed brood rearing and hopefully averted a swarming crisis next month.

The lack of seasonal nor'west winds has left pasture lands looking good; however, the few days that it has blown has revealed the shortage of moisture in the ground. I am not at all worried about this as we are going tramping/camping during show week, so it is guaranteed to rain. With show week just around the corner hives will be starting to go self-sufficient within the next week, so food stores in strong hives will have to be watched. Nothing worse than opening a hive that only needed another frame to bring in a crop!

- Brian Lancaster

Otago Branch

Spring continues apace in the south, with some warmer weather now after a cooler few weeks. Most beekeepers are having better success this year with mating new queens as a result of a few superb days every week or so. Being an early season, many are splitting stronger hives to get some increase and in anticipation of a swarming year. Showers are keeping the country greenish but with few hot nor'westers yet it is a bit of an illusion. With low soil moisture levels in most areas, we are still vulnerable to a dry year. Personally, I will be waiting until I see the whites of the bees' eyes before I move too many yards about. Maybe it will be a year for the bush areas to do well. At the moment bees are having a good run on Hawthorne and native trees like fuchsia. Thyme areas are showing some promise, although most need some rain to flourish.

The Otago Branch hosted a meeting recently to look at ways to further reduce AFB incidence, which is at historically low levels now in the region. All present were enthusiastic and we have established a working group to prepare an 'area freedom plan'. Our aim is to identify and expand the areas that have been free for many years now, perhaps similar to the process with TB control. As the number of outbreaks reduces it is more realistic to treat each one in a thorough manner. For example, rather than just clean up or implement damage control, we could make stronger efforts to identify the source and so prevent further outbreaks occurring in the area. Another goal may be to get 100 percent of beekeepers attaining DECAs. With 75 percent with DECAs across the country now, this goal is probably attainable. It is timely that the AFB NPMS is under review at this time. There may be a case for approaching different areas in different ways, depending on the incidence.

On a sad note, the Branch has lost one of its most active members recently. Dorothy Lamsdale, a member of both the local NBA branch and the Dunedin Beekeepers' Club, passed away on 12 October. Dorothy was a member of the Otago Branch committee for many years and fostered communication between the local NBA and the Dunedin Beekeepers' Club. Many will remember her countless efforts for the Queenstown NBA conference. The 'Bungee Bees' were her creation. She was also the branch coordinator for the Otago AFB audit for many years. Dorothy assisted at Telford too, marking beekeeping correspondence exams. Her enthusiasm, 'can do' attitude, and cheerful ways were an inspiration and she will be sadly missed by all.

- Peter Sales

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About the Apiary

A few weeks of cool rainy weather and strong winds in the middle of October have set the season back to normal. Rewarewa (*Knightsia excelsa*) flowers are colouring up well and will be our first crop in the next few weeks. This flow is usually followed by Kamahi (*Weinmannia racemosa*), which is just starting to bud, then by Manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*), and, if farmers leave it flowering for long enough, we might even get some clover honey. Beekeepers should have all their honey supers ready for the flow and have the hives supered well ahead of the main flow. For some in the warmer north, the flow has already started but for those further south, the flow is a month or two away and something to look forward to.

In the meantime, November is an important time in the development of the beehive. It's important to have nectar and pollen coming into the hives so that the bees continue to build to populations capable of bringing in a decent honey crop. A swarm or a queen failure at this time will cause a break in the brood rearing, leading to a reduced number of field bees at the time of the honey flow.

In some pastoral areas we experience the equivalent of the 'June gap' of the northern hemisphere in November. Early pollen and nectar sources such as Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Willow (*Salix babylonica*), Hawthorn (*Crateagus oxyacantha*), Wild Turnip (*Brassicacampestris*), Barberry (*Berberis glaucocarpa*) and Cabbage Tree (*Cordyline australis*) have finished and there is very little that's flowering for the bees to visit. Some commercial beekeepers feed sugar syrup and pollen substitute to keep things going, while urban beekeepers have the opposite problem: hives are being stimulated by all the ornamentals flowering in suburban gardens and the problem is to keep the hives from swarming. Don't let the bees cramp the queen's laying space by putting nectar down in the brood chamber. Add another super and put most of the honey frames into the top super. If you only have foundation frames to add to the hives, try to intersperse drawn frames with foundation frames. This may mean lifting outside frames up into the next super and replacing them with foundation frames on the outside of the brood nest. The idea is to give the bees room so they can expand and something to do on the wet days; i.e., draw out the frames. If the flow stops and you want frames drawn, you'll have to feed the hives a thin sugar solution (2:1 water/sugar solution).

You should split the first and second super every 10 days, tilting it back so you can look along and between the bottom bars for developing queen cells. This doesn't always work, as I have found one hive produced three queen cells down the end of a frame and then proceeded to swarm — the buds along the bottom weren't used. By splitting hives that look like swarm preparations are under way and by adding a mated queen or a queen cell to the splits, we can stop most of the hives from swarming and can have a number of colonies with a new queen laying in all the frames covered by the bees. When this situation is reached it's a good idea to boost the bee numbers in these splits. You can do this either by taking a couple of frames of emerging brood from a strong hive, or physically

swapping the position of the split and main hive. The field bees will then return to their old location and go straight into the split, thus boosting the bee numbers.

The only problem with shifting brood around is the possibility of spreading American foulbrood (AFB). It's so easy just to take a couple of frames after only a cursory look as you remove them from the hive. You can't be too cautious when shifting brood around. You have to shake bees off frames to inspect them fully. This process is worth the time it takes, but does have its dangers when you shake bees from other frames in the main hive into the split, as you might also shake in the old queen. If you are not sure where the queen is, shake all the bees from the frames you want to use to boost the split and leave them in another super above a queen excluder on the original hive. After an hour or so the nurse bees will come up and cover the brood, then you can transfer these frames to the split in the certain knowledge that the queen is not on these frames.

What to do with small hives

A strong hive needs at least two full-depth supers boiling over with bees to produce a decent honey crop. Although your splits or nucs may be doing well, the objective is to produce a honey crop. The books will tell you that one large hive will produce more honey than two small hives. Unless it's your aim to increase hive numbers, it's no use taking a lot of small hives through to the main flow. Find half the queens in these small hives and make up four frame nucs with them. You can either leave them in a four- or five-frame nuc box or place them in the middle of a super surrounded by foundation frames. The bees will expand and should draw out the foundation and fill the super with honey by the end of the season. The bees and brood combs remaining can be added to other hives to boost their bee population. Either put all the frames with brood into the same super (raising the honey frames into the second super), or just push the remaining brood frames into the middle, add foundation or drawn frames to the outside and put this super directly on top of the weaker hive (making it two high). Young bees will be accepted by any hive but older bees will fight. To prevent fighting, you can either change the scent of the hive by spraying an air freshener over and under the frames of the hive, or sprinkle a little sugar syrup over the frames of both supers to give the bees something to clean up as they unite. Be careful not to use too much sugar syrup as this can cause robbing.

An alternative is to combine your weaker hives. Put the newer queen on top with two sheets of newspaper between the hives. The bees will eat through the newsprint within a day or so and will unite peacefully. Some beekeepers put a couple of slits in the newsprint, using the hive tool as a knife in hot weather, to speed up the uniting process and prevent the top hive from overheating, as it no longer has an entrance. The queens will fight and sort themselves out so that you have a strong colony headed by one queen. Sometimes both queens will be killed, so keep back a few nucs to cover this situation.

You can also combine them without finding the queens but retaining a two-queen unit if you put a queen excluder between each hive. Make a second entrance for the top units by slipping the third super back a little. Generally after a while one of the queens will disappear; however, you can preserve the two-queen system a little longer by putting a piece of plastic (25 mm smaller all around) under the queen excluder. This prevents the queens from meeting through the excluder but still allows the workers to move freely between 'unites' (supers) by going up between the sides and the first and ninth/tenth frame, depending on how many frames you use.

Swarms

Usually there aren't as many swarms once varroa arrives. Collecting swarms can be fun but don't work over your head and don't go over three metres when working on a ladder. Swarms can also be heavy enough to bend branches down, so brace yourself and don't be surprised by their weight when they drop into a box you're holding. Generally I only wait half an hour after hiving a swarm on site to collect the field bees from a swarm, and I tell the homeowner to spray any remaining bees with soapy water at night to kill the lost bees. After half an hour, the swarm settles in and the field bees will start working. If you wish to collect all the bees, leave the swarm box close to the original swarm site and collect them in the evening when they are all home.

When you put the swarm in your home apiary, order a new queen if you want an additional hive or leave it for three weeks to make sure it's disease free and then find the queen, run her through with a hive tool before she disappears and unite the swarm with another hive.

If you want to combine two swarms, wait until evening then tip both swarms on top of each other at the entrance to a hive. Use a little smoke to encourage them back into the hive. You can't do this if one lot of bees are *Apis mellifera mellifera* (black bees), as they are a different race to the yellow bees and will fight. These bees need to be introduced slowly to other bees using the newspaper method described above.

Small swarms are generally headed by one to three virgins and are hard to hive. Put a frame of brood in the box and drop the swarm into it, so they won't take off again next day. Bees generally won't leave the brood.

I prefer to put out bait hives around my apiaries to pick up swarms. These consist of a super with three drawn frames interspersed with foundation frames. It's important to provide only a small entrance (25 mm diameter or equivalent) and the super must be at least two metres off the ground on a shed or something similar. **Never** put a frame of honey into a bait super to encourage swarms as this only creates robbing. There are pheromone strips you can put in these bait boxes to increase the chances of luring a swarm but these strips are not commonly used in New Zealand.

American foulbrood

AFB can be a problem for new beekeepers, particularly for those expanding their operation. A few find they have a major disease problem in their second or third year. Disease can be introduced in a number of ways. Old boxes and frames given to you by a downsizing or older beekeeper who's gone out of

Continued on page 22



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Continued from page 21

beekeeping can seem like a bonus, especially when money is short, but these can also be an AFB source. The beekeeper may have put away the odd dead-out in the shed without fully checking the frames and if you spread these frames out into your hives, the problem is exacerbated.

Some beekeepers when given equipment keep it separate from their own hives for a couple of years, as AFB can take 18 months to reach a stage where it is visible. Others take the gear, sterilise the supers by paraffin dipping and burn the frames, as these contain the most spores. Whatever you do, treat all second-hand equipment as a potential source of contamination and keep it separate until time has proved it to be safe.

I'm talking about AFB because I've had a major outbreak in my hives. Eleven so far out of 480 may seem a small number to some but it's a large problem for me. The first thing you do when you find AFB is to blame your neighbour, but sometimes you find s/he is also having the same problem and was looking at you and your beekeeping. My problem seems to stem from the major varroa kill I experienced last winter and spring and the subsequent robbing that occurred. Most beekeepers lost half their hives, and all the feral hives (a considerable number) were wiped out in this particular area. It didn't help that I moved another 30 hives into that area for pollination and now I'm finding some of these have also developed AFB.

Beekeepers can also experience AFB a year following extensive flooding. Immediately after flooding feral hives rob all the unprotected supers. Some of these will pick up AFB and start breaking down in the autumn, and will then be robbed by the managed hives. By spring some of these hives could be showing disease. It can be a never-ending cycle if the feral cavity is reinvaded by another swarm.

After you get over the 'stunned' stage that you have AFB and then the 'blame' stage, you can start analysing the situation: which hives have developed AFB? Is there a history of disease in the area? Can you trace back honey supers that came off these hives and trace the movements of these hives?

Quite often it's your best hives that get AFB, as they might have robbed weaker hives or a dead hive. Sometimes I have found that hives that have failed to develop the year before despite being requeened come down with AFB the following spring. The disease was there all the time but the bees had the situation under control and I hadn't seen any cells, just a spotty brood pattern. Years ago, I had a hive with major chalkbrood infection but it just didn't look right. The mummies were brown rather than black and came out easily. A lab test of a few larvae showed AFB. Apparently the chalkbrood was more rampant than the AFB and was disguising the infection.

I'm not alone in experiencing an increased AFB level. The AFB statistics show there is an increase in AFB levels a year after the varroa acute stage hits an area. You can trace this increased incidence in AFB as varroa moves down the North Island: Auckland had it first, then the Waikato, followed by the Bay of Plenty. Now the East Coast and the western side

of the southern North Island are finding more AFB. Next year it will hit the Hawkes Bay and the Wairarapa.

Beekeepers begin to find the odd diseased hive in their apiaries and wonder where this has come from. American research has shown that the bee's immunity to disease decreases when there are mites in the hive. So high mite levels and high spore numbers could mean more AFB showing itself. Follow the advice from other beekeepers to burn everything that looks like AFB.



Feral hives sealed in with expanding foam



I also believe the occasional diseased feral hive that gives you a diseased hive every three years should be given more prominence. Once varroa hits there are only managed hives left, and beekeepers suddenly notice that the bees are bringing in nectar where normally they would have had to be fed. There isn't the competition anymore and bees being bees, they prefer the easy way to collect nectar and will rob if they can. One robbed-out hive can produce many diseased hives but unfortunately some hives can take 18 months before the disease shows in the brood, and in the meantime we have removed a honey crop and put our honey supers into the shed. Without trace back it will take another year to weed AFB out of our outfits.

So I'm now stuck with an apiary quarantine system, more full brood inspections instead of just looking at a couple of frames each time I open a hive and a greater workload. Plus that sinking feeling in your stomach every time you find a

sunken cell, followed by a sigh of relief when it turns out to be sacbrood or chalkbrood.

So what to do? Inspect more thoroughly for a couple of years. Mark honey supers with the apiary ID and hive number so you have trace back and can remove those honey supers out of the system. Treat all dead-outs as suspicious, and perhaps melt down the frames instead of starting new hives with them. Institute a programme of replacing a third of your brood frames each year to reduce the spore levels in your hives. New brood frames also reduce the incidence of chalkbrood and nosema and give you healthier hives and more honey.

Make a note of the areas where you've had the occasional AFB hive and can't identify the source. Ask around or do a letter drop of all the farms within a two-kilometre radius and ask the farmers to tell you if they have noticed any feral hives or have had feral hives in sheds, trees, etc. When notified of these hives, seal them up with foam or something that will prevent the bees re-entering the cavity (see photos on previous page). If you have the time during the honey flow, walk along shelterbelts of old Poplar, Willow and Macrocarpa trees and where there aren't many trees, look under bridges for bees flying. Although it seems to be a lot of work, it will pay for itself in the long run and will help to eradicate AFB from your area. And for you personally, once you have cleaned up the problem, beekeeping becomes fun again.

Things to do this month

Check feed, check pollen, and do an AFB check. Raise queen cells and requeen hives with mated queens. Swarm control. Cull out old frames and replace with foundation in the second super: they should be drawn out to the bottom bar in the second super. Remove entrance reducers (however, I prefer to leave them on year round as the bees can regulate the hive better in windy situations). Fit foundation into comb honey frames and super hives with at least two supers when the main honey flow starts. Pull up a frame of honey into a super of foundation to encourage the bees to move up into it.

- Frank Lindsay

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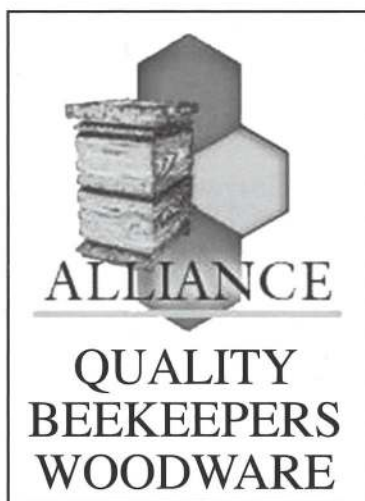
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Letters (Poetry) to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Recently I had the good fortune of spending some time listening to an Australian beekeeper from Freeman's Reach, New South Wales, Australia. His name is Frank, and he described in detail many of the complex social structures that the beehive operates within. I wrote this poem (below) inspired by his work to capture my sense of his beekeeping and wish to submit it for publication in *The New Zealand Beekeeper*.

Yours sincerely,
Terese Hayward
15 Patrick St
Willoughby NSW
Australia, 2068

The Beekeeper's Flightpath

By: T A Hayward

(For Frank, September 2005)

In the valley springtime settles down on the ranges fringing the lease.

Sunlight capturing the perfect ninety degree corners of one hundred hives of sundancing bees,
Ever mapping honey flower destinations.
Each hive's Queen Bee labours while the Beekeeper plots,
New flightpaths against the contours of this land.
Twenty five new hives in the upper paddock.
A virgin Queen Bee waiting in each for release
Skywards with four drones in attendance,
That will return her to the hive fertilised.
The bees do their work into blossoming gum and Paterson's Curse.

While hives in a state of decrowned matriarchy have their succession plans,
Made by handmaidens supplying Royal Jelly to embryos,
Until a new Queen Bee is born to sting her rival sisters.
The Beekeeper rotates the hives and tends to their small citadels,
Enmeshed in white, fearing neither sting nor swarm,
For there is always more work to do,
A new flightpath of bees to plan, while,
Harvesting honeybees sweet gold.

And now for something completely different

Some years ago, I had a brother and sister team from California working in my extraction plant. Both these guys had just completed molecular genetics PhDs from UCLA — for a season I had the most highly qualified staff that any beekeeper has ever had. But (predictably) they were bored. They entertained themselves by writing haiku on the nature of bees and beekeeping. As a result of a few stings in the field, they were not particularly enamored of bees and their poetry tended to focus on retribution and death. I have left those out, but some of their others are amusing (reproduced with permission).

On discussion of the genetics of bees

**The life of a queen
Is not all it's cracked up to be
Haploid lovers — blah!**

On using aerosol scents to combine hives...

**You don't smell like me
Beguiled by air freshener
I crown you my queen**

On keeping the plant bee free...

**Yellow and black butt
Poised, ready to sting me
Hah, meet the vacuum**

On extracting...

**Tiny white pupae
Flung into amber thickness
Maggots in honey!**

And my favorite — on the boredom of extracting...

**Machinery hums
The same monotonous song
Hang on till smoko**

Robin McCammon
Pohangina Honey
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Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand

Aristotelia serrata

Maori Name: Makomako

Common Name: Wineberry, or New Zealand Currant

Aristotelia serrata is a shrub which grows up to 8m, found as far south as Stewart Island. It has a reddish bark and the underside of the leaves is a reddish-brown.

The flowers are produced in September to December in large clumps — at first they are rosy-red, changing to a deep claret colour. The blooms are worked by the bees for a reddish pollen, more often only during periods of pollen shortage, as Makomako has little appeal under normal conditions. A light-coloured nectar is often collected by the bees.

The early settlers made a red jelly or jam from the fruit, but the sweet taste was spoiled if the seeds were left in. Some made wine from the berries — hence its common name.

The white wood was used for conversion into charcoal in times of need to manufacture gunpowder.

The Maori obtained blue-black dye from the bruised bark. The leaves were boiled for use in treating burns or sore eyes and the water from these boiled leaves was drunk for painful and rheumatic joints.

- Tony Lorimer

Aristotelia serrata



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BK237

Club Contacts & Beekeeping Specialty Groups

<p>WHANGAREI BEE CLUB</p> <p>Meetings: 1st Saturday each month (except January) Time: 10 am, wet or fine (we are keen) Contact: Dave Trinder Phone: 09 433 8566 John Parsons Phone: 09 438 8766 Kevin Wallace Phone: 09 423 8642 (Wellsford)</p>	<p>AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC</p> <p>Meets 1st Saturday monthly at Unitec, Pt Chevalier, Auckland.</p> <p>Contact: Carol Downer, Secretary Phone: 09 376 6376 Email: fairy-angel-peewee@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p>FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB</p> <p>Meets second Sunday of each month at 10.00am for a cuppa and discussion. 10.30am open hives.</p> <p>Contact: Peter Biland Phone: 09 294 8365</p>
<p>WAIKATO DOMESTIC BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</p> <p>Meets every third Thursday at 7.30pm.</p> <p>Contact the Club President: Brian Fowles Phone: 07 8438 737 (evenings)</p>	<p>HAWKES BAY BRANCH</p> <p>Meets generally on the second Monday of the second month at 7.30pm, Arataki, Havelock North</p> <p>Contact: Ron Phone: 06 844 9493</p>	<p>TARANAKI BEEKEEPING CLUB</p> <p>Contact: Stephen Black 685 Uruti Road RD 48, Urenui Phone: 06 752 6860</p>
<p>WANGANUI BEEKEEPERS CLUB</p> <p>Meets on the second Wednesday of the month.</p> <p>Contact: Neil Farrer Phone 06 343 6248</p>	<p>MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB</p> <p>Meets every 4th Thursday in the month at Newbury Hall, SH3, Palmerston North</p> <p>Contact: Frances Beech 35 Whelans Road, RD 1 Levin Phone: 06 367 2617</p>	<p>WAIRARAPA HOBBYIST BEEKEEPERS CLUB</p> <p>Meet 3rd Sunday of month (except January) at Norfolk Road, Masterton at 1.30 pm.</p> <p>Contact: Arnold Esler Phone: 06 379 8648</p>
<p>WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSN</p> <p>Meets every second Monday of the month (except January) in Johnsonville. All welcome.</p> <p>Contact: John Burnet 21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa, Wellington 6006 Phone: 04 232 7863 Email: johnburnet@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p>NELSON BEEKEEPERS CLUB</p> <p>Contact: Kevin Phone: 03 545 0122</p>	<p>NORTH CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS CLUB</p> <p>Meets the second Monday of April, June, August and October</p> <p>Contact: Mrs Hobson Phone: 03 312 7587</p>
<p>CHRISTCHURCH HOBBYIST CLUB</p> <p>Meets on the first Saturday of each month, August to May, except in January for which it is the second Saturday. The site is at 681 Cashmere Road, commencing at 1.30pm</p> <p>Contact: Jeff Robinson 64 Cobra Street Christchurch 3. Phone: 03 322 5392</p>	<p>SOUTH CANTERBURY REGION</p> <p>Contact: Peter Lyttle Phone: 03 693 9189</p>	<p>DUNEDIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB</p> <p>Meets on the first Saturday in the month September–April, (except January) at 1.30pm. The venue is at our club hive in Roslyn, Dunedin.</p> <p>Contact Club Secretary: Margaret Phone: 03 415-7256 Email: flour-mill@xtra.co.nz</p>
<p>ACTIVE MANUKA HONEY ASSOCIATION (INC)</p> <p>Contact: John Rawcliffe Phone: 07 549 4085</p>	<p>NZ COMB PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION</p> <p>Contact: John Wright Phone: 09 236 0628</p>	<p>NZ HONEY BEE POLLINATION ASSOCIATION</p> <p>Contact: Russell Berry Phone: 07 366 6111</p>
<p>NZ HONEY PACKERS AND EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION INC</p> <p>Contact: Allen McCaw Phone: 03 417 7198 Contact: Mary-Anne Thomason Phone: 06 855 8038</p>	<p>NZ QUEEN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION</p> <p>Contact: Russell Berry Phone: 07 366 6111</p>	

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

NIWA's Climate Outlook: October to December 2005

Local atmospheric circulation patterns are likely to favour more northerly quarter airflow than usual over the country for October–December.

Air temperatures are expected to be above average in all regions, with an upper tercile probability of 50% or more.

Rainfalls are likely to be normal or above normal in the North Island and in Nelson–Marlborough, and normal further south.

Normal soil moisture levels and streamflows are expected in most areas, apart from the South Island east coast where there is a high probability of dry soil conditions and lower than normal flows (55% and 60% respectively).

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On the front cover: the old queen in a superseded hive. She had no wings and only four legs: the back two on one side were missing so she couldn't lay. She was crawling around on a 45-degree angle, yet was still being attended to by the bees. Perhaps retirement is imminent?

WANT TO ADVERTISE IN THE NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPER?

Your advertising reaches our subscription base. The normal print run is 700. The April and October issues go to all registered beekeepers in NZ and to some overseas beekeepers as well. If you would like to promote your product or service, please contact:

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South City Print,
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