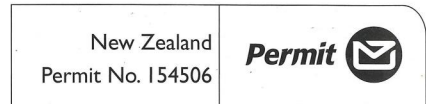


March 2006

# The New Zealand BeeKeeper



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Bees working thistle and Lotus Major.

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# President's Report

## Bee product imports

Jim Edwards and I have spent much of our time during February on issues relating to the imminent importation of bee products. Initially these imports are likely to be from Australia, but in the future could come from all over the world.



Work on these issues has included:

- a meeting with Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ/MAF), regarding technical issues we felt had not been appropriately dealt with by the team writing the Risk Analysis
- preparing several media releases that covered these technical issues
- ascertaining the potential flow-on effects to the industry and the country should cheap product enter New Zealand.

Of huge concern to me is that during the writing of the Risk Analysis no research had been carried out on the economic effects to the industry and to the nation. What will happen should the viability of beekeeping diminish, and numerous hives die due to varroa or starvation when beekeepers can no longer afford to treat or feed their colonies?

Due to the unsatisfactory outcome of this meeting we have scheduled a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture on 20 February, where we will outline the differences of opinion on the technical issues as well as reinforcing the economic issues.

## RMPs

I recently received an email from Jim Sim stating that he had been along on the audit carried out on beekeepers who harvest honey in potential Tutan areas. He also talked to these beekeepers about their need for RMPs and asked about their progress on them. He found that some were unaware of the need for these documents.

It appears that many beekeepers are not reading this magazine or emails with regards to this information. If you know of any such beekeeper, please tell them that the deadline for these being done is looming. In reality, your RMP needs to be lodged with NZFSA by 1 April 2006, in order for NZFSA to process the application by the 1 July due date for products to be eligible for government certification. [Editor's note: see Jim Sim's article on page 6 for more information].

## Visit from Bayvarol marketer: what's on the horizon

Stuart Ecroyd visited the Waikato with a marketing person from Bayvarol who told us what the company was doing to provide alternative treatments for varroa. They are looking at

getting "checkmite" registered for use here in New Zealand, which surprised me somewhat, as I had been led to believe from a number of people that this product would be unlikely to be registered for use in New Zealand because of the nature of the chemical used in this product — an organophosphate.

We were also told, however, that this product is still in the very early stages for registration here, so is unlikely to be available for at least another 18 months. I would like to thank Stuart for the opportunity to meet with them and for the Haddrells for providing the venue.

It was good to hear from beekeepers that they are monitoring for resistant mites, and that they are taking on board the need to alternate treatments. The only thing we need to reinforce is that you cannot alternate Bayvarol and Apistan as they are in the same chemical family.

## AFB NPMS matters

I have also been spending several days meeting with Rex Baynes, our new AFB NPMS manager, to assist in the changeover of responsibilities to him from James Driscoll. Rex is bringing a huge enthusiasm to the strategy, as he wishes to learn all he can about the industry and beekeeping in general in order to help him to administer the strategy effectively.

We are looking to hold a one-day meeting in March to look at a couple of key aspects of the strategy, namely the surveillance and audit work and also the education component. Once this is done we will be able to distribute to branches our action plan for the 2006–2007 year. Watch this space for further developments.

- Jane Lorimer

## Deadline for Publications

**April 2006 edition: 10 March 2006**

(NB: this issue goes to all registered beekeepers in NZ).

**May 2006 edition: 10 April 2006**

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

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# Executive Officer's Report

## Fighting imports and preparing for a difficult future

While beekeepers have been working through their busiest season, we have had to counter proposals to allow the importation of bee products including honey. Jane Lorimer, Mark Goodwin and I had a meeting with Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) officials in early February to discuss the industry's outstanding concerns about the disease risks that remain even after submissions to the bee product risk analysis had been considered by BNZ.

The BNZ officials stood firmly by their conclusions with one minor exception: the issue of antibiotic use prior to export and the masking effect on signs of disease. BNZ agreed to revisit that risk and increase the pre-export period during which antibiotics must not be used.

We came away from the meeting knowing that the level of disease risk that BNZ is prepared to accept was still above that which beekeepers are prepared to live with.

The next step is, at the time of writing, an appointment with Minister of Agriculture Jim Anderton. At that meeting we will raise the NBA's concerns for the disease risks, the economic impact of honey imports and the future viability of beekeeping businesses.

If the Government persists and permits the importation of honey from Australia with its new import health standard, then we as an industry need to look very closely at strategies to ensure the beekeeping businesses will survive in the very tough operating environment. Most businesses already are having to contend with increased compliance costs for the risk management programmes required by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority to be implemented on 1 July this year for all premises that handle honey destined for the export market.

## Making better use of the NBA website

The website content and structure are under review. A working party of Gerrit Hyink, Fiona O'Brien, Frank Lindsay and I are reviewing the information gathered over the last year. We plan to call for providers to supply the website service to the NBA and launch the revised site at the conference.

I have been loading material onto the website and encourage you to visit the NBA website regularly. As we make the site more active, you will get news as it happens. For example, I am writing this about three weeks ahead of when you will get the first opportunity to read it. It will be at least that far out of date already. The website gives us the opportunity to keep up to date on a daily basis.

I will be pleased to receive news from around the country and especially from the Branches. Please send items (and

photos too) to me at [jimedwards@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jimedwards@xtra.co.nz) and I will load them at my first opportunity. As a guide, I update the NBA site and a few other sites that I manage on a daily basis when I have access to the Internet.

## Your support is needed for research funding

As an industry, we need to be making progress with the way we manage bees, improve their pollination and harvesting and develop the whole range of bee products. To survive, let alone be competitive in the face of increasing costs and potential competition from imported products, we need to have better information and techniques available to us.

The NBA has actively kept in touch with researchers and continues to support the work we need done. However, in the current Government approach to funding research, we as an industry need to invest funds before the Government will even consider co-funding research.

We are currently participating in research into pollination and safety of bees by the co-ordinated use of agricultural chemicals by orchardists. We continue to support research into varroa, to help those already affected in the North Island and to help the South Island prepare to deal with a varroa incursion. A new initiative is to look at better management of manuka and the optimal use of bees to collect manuka honey.

We are fortunate to have been receiving good support from the Sustainable Farming Fund. Other Government sources of funding are available to researchers, but these are proving hard to approach because of the difficulty of co-ordinating industry funding support. Individual businesses within the apiculture industry are, of course, also funding their own research. However, please respond positively to any request to contribute to research that will benefit you and your industry in the future.

- Jim Edwards

**NBA Members: Have you paid your subscription? Please pay by 31 March 2006 to keep your membership current. Contact Pam Edwards, Executive Secretary, NBA, 10 Nikau Lane, RD 1, Otaki. (Subscription details at bottom of page 2.)**

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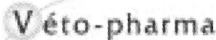
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# News from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority



## Risk Management Programmes

I met several beekeepers last week in the Coromandel who had no idea that they would need a risk management programme (RMP) by 1 July this year.

Hopefully this is not a widespread problem. We are going to look at how we can better publicise the need for RMPs and are investigating whether some more workshops should be held to help people get their heads around the paperwork. By now all packers and exporters should have contacted all their suppliers to ensure they have their RMPs well underway.

**Beekeepers are reminded that if they want to have their product eligible for government certification after 1 July 2006 you must either have a registered RMP or this season's crop must be held at a premises with a registered RMP after that date.** At the time of writing this article we had only received eight RMP applications so we are expecting to be swamped with RMP applications over the next couple of months. Because RMPs take time to process and NZFSA has finite resources, we cannot guarantee that RMP applications received after 1 April 2006 will be registered by 1 July 2006. RMPs will be processed strictly on a first come-first served basis so the sooner they come in to us the better.

On the positive side, most of the premises I saw would need little or no work to comply with the Code of Practice and one or two had quite good documented systems in place already.

## Code of Practice update

The Code of Practice (COP) is being updated to include changes made to the Human Consumption Specifications that came into force on 1 February 2006. This update should be available on the NZFSA Bee Products website by the time this is published (<http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/subject/bee-products/index.htm>). A key change is simplification of the Potable Water Checklist. A consolidation of the Human Consumption Specifications, incorporating all amendments to date, is also being published on the website.

## Verification of RMPs

NZFSA held a workshop with verifiers (AgriQuality and NZFSA Verification Agency) just prior to Christmas to ensure that there was a common understanding of the COP and to agree the approach that will be taken to verification. A verification checklist will be published for the use of verifiers and for the industry to be aware of so that there are "no surprises" for businesses when they are verified.

If you will require an RMP from 1 July 2006 you should give this your full attention now and get your systems and documentation in place to make sure you are registered in time.

- Jim Sim  
Senior Programme Manager  
Animal Products

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# Examples of cleaning schedules to help complete your Code of Practice

*These two schedules have been adapted from some developed by Frank Lindsay of Lindsay's Apiaries. You might find them helpful when preparing paperwork to complete your COPs.*

**NB: These schedules were originally developed for the Wellington City Council. They will need to be adjusted for your RMP.**

*The checklist on page 8 is signed off each week.*

## CLEANING SCHEDULE

### INITIAL CLEANING AT THE START OF THE SEASON:

- Complete cleaning items on pre-season checklist (Refer <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/publications/code-of-practice/Bee/part-2/bee-cop-app-1.pdf>).
- Remove dust covers.
- Clean down walls, floor and wash lights.
- Clean all external surfaces of equipment with hot water and allowable registered chemicals.
- Sanitise all surfaces.
- Check condition of nylon filters.

### CLEANING DURING PROCESSING:

- Wipe up any honey spills immediately.
- Wipe external surfaces of equipment to remove honey residue as required. (Note that cloths used for wiping must be maintained in a clean and sound condition and buckets of water used for rinsing wiping cloths should have the water changed frequently.)
- Remove waste from processing area as required.
- Remove condensation from refrigerated rooms as required.

### DAILY, AT THE END OF A PROCESSING DAY:

- Remove or cover any products, packaging material and other materials that could be contaminated.
- Wipe down external surfaces of extractor, uncapper, spinner, and storage tanks and clean the filters.
- Wash drip trays.
- Wash floor (hose).
- Remove any visible contamination on walls.
- Clean hand basin, sink and door handles and sticky surfaces.
- Remove all cleaning cloths for laundering or disposal.
- Clear processing and storage area of dead and live bees.
- Remove and dispose of waste collected in processing areas.
- Wash and sanitise equipment where necessary.

### WEEKLY:

- Wash floor (mop with approved chemicals).
- Wipe down walls, switches and lights (or more frequently if required).
- Clean plastic under the lifter.
- Clean toilets/change areas.
- Sweep or vacuum dry stores.

### MONTHLY OR AS REQUIRED:

- Clean the chains on the uncapper.
- General cleanup of the storage area.

### END OF PROCESSING SEASON:

- Thoroughly clean facilities, walls, floors, ceiling, windows, doors, light fittings and switches, fans, bee escapes and other fixtures.
- Disassemble, if necessary, and clean and dry equipment; e.g.,
  - ◆ Remove all plastic pipes and wash out.
  - ◆ Dismantle flooring; clean and remove.
  - ◆ Wash the extractors, uncapper, spinner, sump tank, pumps and honey drums with cold water to remove honey and wax residue.
  - ◆ Clean all surfaces with hot water and allowable registered chemicals or steam clean.
  - ◆ Sanitise all surfaces.
- If not stainless steel, lubricate chains on the uncapper with vegetable oil and bearing surfaces with food grade grease.
- Cover all appliances to exclude dust.

### DRUM WASHING BEFORE FILLING:

- Clean with hot water and allowable registered chemicals. Scrub bungs.
- Rinse with hot water and allow to drain.
- Dry drums with a hot air gun.

### INSECT CONTROL:

- Wash out bug catcher as required.
- Put out roach glue traps for cockroaches. Monitor weekly.

### RODENT CONTROL:

- Put out bait stations around the outside of buildings and in storage areas.
- Record locations of bait stations and monitor bait removal.
- Regularly monitor and rebait mousetraps.

**PREMISES NAME:**

**WEEK ENDING:**

**DAILY / WEEKLY CLEANING SCHEDULE**

ITEM TO BE CLEANED	CLEANING PRODUCT	CLEANING METHOD	FREQUENCY	COMPLETED
Extractors, uncapper, spinner, tanks, stands & duct boards	Approved chemicals	Wipe down outside surfaces with hot water  Remove build-up of dead bees, wax etc from insides of extractors and spinner  Scrape out honey and other build-up of material from uncapper	Several times daily as required and at the end of day's work  Daily	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
Preparation benches, shelves & sink units, drip trays and hand basin	Approved chemicals	Hot water	Daily	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
Light fittings, switches & walls	Approved chemicals	Wipe with a damp (not wet) cloth.	Weekly or as required	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
Floors	Approved chemicals	Hose down  Mop with water (matting and floor)	Daily  Weekly	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
Hot room floor and boardwalks	Approved chemicals	Scrub and mop out	As required or weekly	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
Bug catcher	Approved chemicals	Empty, clean and dispose of insect catcher	As required or weekly	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
Drums	Approved chemicals	Wash, rinse and dry	As required	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

**Employee signature:** .....



## Varroa Agency Incorporated News

An update from chairman Duncan Butcher, February 2006

### Education

**December proved to be a busy month for us, as we swung into our pre-Christmas traveller education programme.**

Our major undertaking for the month was education at the ports. During the pre-Christmas and New Year period we handed out thousands of pamphlets at the Wellington ferry terminals to the drivers of trucks and domestic vehicles about to cross Cook Strait. Dressed in bright Varroa Agency vests to identify themselves, the students we employed for that time talked to travellers about biosecurity, and the risks of accidentally bringing North Island bees to the South. Not only did it seem to be a very worthwhile education process for improving awareness, we also know at least one traveller destroyed a stray bee on his vehicle. Our thanks to Frank and Mary-Ann Lindsay, of Lindsay's Apiaries in Wellington, for their role in co-ordinating this for us — their helpfulness and enthusiasm was great.

Those in the lower North Island may also have seen a reminder in the *Dominion Post* and other provincial newspapers to "Bee vigilant" for varroa. We successfully advertised several times in the three-week build-up to Christmas — and we know several of you spotted them. We also put out a media story, again reminding travellers to be aware of their obligations, and to be vigilant for bees that may be present on loads or vehicles crossing to the South Island, reiterating the risks of accidentally introducing varroa to the South Island. We managed to get some television time on the TV3 news.

We trust this was a timely reminder for the importance of taking every step possible to prevent bees from being taken from the North Island to the South — even one stray hitchhiker bee on a family vehicle crossing the Cook Strait.

Thanks for your help in 'Keeping the South Varroa Free' over Christmas, and into 2006.

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



Students Gustav van der Merwe and Allan Steele explaining about varroa biosecurity to passengers about to board the ferry from Wellington to Picton before Christmas, during part of the Varroa Agency's pre-Christmas education programme.

*Photo: Frank Lindsay.*

### Activities for 2006

The Agency has started to select apiary sites for surveillance for this year's programme. We will be doing more hives this year, and also targeting the main highways into the south.

AgriQuality New Zealand has been contracted to run three courses for the training of new AP2s to increase the pool available to the industry. We have requested help in funding these from Biosecurity New Zealand and the AFB management group.

After our 2005 round of consultation the Board has decided that the Levy will be \$1.38 plus GST this year, down from the \$2.00 plus GST of last year.

We are still waiting for Biosecurity New Zealand to confirm it has changed the levy date as was requested last year. If they have not done this we may have to continue with the original dates in the order.



# NBA history revisited

[Editor's note: This is the second of a series of historical articles about the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand. This series also commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Waikato and Southland branches of the NBA. Thanks to Fiona O'Brien for reproducing this article, which originally appeared in The New Zealand Beekeepers' Journal, July 1914.]

## National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand.

The object of the Association is the Improvement of the Beekeeping Industry and furthering the interests and the prosperity of the Beekeepers throughout the Dominion.

Membership is extended to any Beekeeper who is in accord with the aims and objects of the Association, on payment of a small fee.

Read the Report of Conference, and see what the first year's work has done for the Beekeeper. We shall be glad to have you as a member.

### DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS AFFILIATED.

Waikato Beekeepers' Association. Hon. Sec., W. Hooper Teed, Waihou, Thames Valley

Taranaki Beekeepers' Association. Hon. Sec., H. W. Warcup, Hawera

Canterbury Beekeepers' Association. Hon. Sec., Miss Mackay, Sockburn

Pahiatua Beekeepers' Association. Hon. Sec., G. Bentley, Pahiatua

Southland Beekeepers' Association. Hon. Sec., R. Gibb, West Plains.

### EXECUTIVE OF THE NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

President: Mr Jas Allan, "Oakleigh," Wyndham

Vice-Presidents: Messrs. J. S. Cotterell, Manawaru, Te Aroha; H. W. Gilling, Matapu, Taranaki; S. Hutchinson, Hamilton East; C. A. Jacobsen, Little River; A. Ireland, 24 Andover Street, Merivale, Christchurch.

General Secretary-Treasurer: Mr. R. W. Brickell, P.O. Box 572 Dunedin.

Applications for membership should be made to the Secretaries of the District Associations, or to the General Secretary.

## Annual Conference 1914 – Wellington

*The Conference was opened by the Hon. R. Heaton Rhodes.* He mentions that the Apiaries Amendment Act was passed by Parliament. "It was as you know, a session that was crowded with much business — there were little things that hung up business from time to time — (laughter) — there were certain delays that prevented our dealing as quickly as we

wished with legislation. However, in spite of the crowded legislation, Mr. Massey was able to find time to provide for the Apiaries Bill. — ("Hear, hear.") That Act contains most of the suggestions advanced by your Conference. It provides for regulations being gazetted dealing with the prevention of disease and control of disease, the registration of apiaries, and particularly the grading of your export honey." .... And .... "The value of grading is evident to all when you look back to the time before grading was the practice here and the price you obtained then in the Home market. That price, I am told, was 37/6 per cwt. Under the grading in practice you obtain for your honey 45/- per cwt., and up to 50/- has been obtained. This, to my mind, marks at once the benefit of grading to the export industry." .... And .... "Your prospects for the year are good, and these figures may be of interest to you as showing the advance that has been made in the export trade. The export of honey for the year ended March 31, 1913, was 586 cwt., valued at £1,182. For the nine months ended December 31, 1913, the export was 1,690 cwt., valued at £3,293. It will be of interest to you to know that since April 1, 1913, 1200 cwt. had been graded by the Government graders, and a further increase is looked for by March 31 next year. It was interesting to note that the estimated value of honey produced in the Dominion this year is just over £50,000. One result of grading, I am told has been to steady the local market. There has been no glut and generally better prices for honey have ruled in the local markets. Your honey, owing to the advice given by the instructors being followed, has been better packed, and has generally been placed on the market in a very much better condition." .... And .... about the Taranaki Association co-operative .... "Those of you who are interested in dairying, as I expect some of you are, know what co-operation has been to the dairy industry in this country. You know the value of a good, well-known brand to that industry. So it must follow that with honey, when a well established brand is marked and known, it will be recognised and command a price at once. I am told that Canterbury also is following on the same lines and establishing a co-operative honey producers' association." .... And .... "I am glad to know, too, that beekeepers generally appreciate the regulations under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act. — ("Hear, hear") You recognise that it is to your benefit as well as to the benefit of the public that there should be no adulteration of the honey placed on the market. — ("Hear, hear")."

*The president's Mr. Jas Allen, opening address "A plea for unity" — "Looking over the past year we started away from our conference in great hope, and although we have had a wonderfully good year, still I have a feeling that it might have been somewhat better. We expected to meet you again at the beginning of this year with a least double the number of members that we have got now, but difficulties cropped up — difficulties that we did not anticipate — and as a consequence of these difficulties some of our District Associations were not able to join hands. Now I just want to say my few words for one purpose and that is that we as beekeepers in this Dominion, if we want to be united, must for the future make up our minds that when we have a personal or district difficulty we are going to sink it all for the good of union. I want to give you a just a wee bit of past history. I am pleased that my old friend Mr. Hopkins is sitting in front of me, because he will recognise the truth of what I am going to say. When the battle was begun fought for*

the Apiaries Act, Southland formed a District Association, the first Association of the kind, and do you know I think it gave Mr. Hopkins the push that got us the Apiaries Act! Isn't that so, Mr. Hopkins?"

- Mr. Hopkins: "Your Association helped, but, by heavens! I was pushed long before that — by the box hive man."
- Mr. Allan: "Seven or eight months ago an amendment to the Apiaries Act was in some danger owing to those little difficulties that Mr. Rhodes told us about. Just at the right time the secretary gave it a push, and it was the National Association behind his back that got us our amendment, this year. I am just giving you these facts to show the advantage of union: it spells something every time, and helps us every time. I must take you back a bit further — I don't know how many years ago, Mr. Ward can tell you — there was an abundant amount of common-sense in Canterbury —."
- Mr. Ward: "There is a little left now."
- Mr. Allan: "As a result of that common-sense the National was established and set going, and somehow last year they lost it."
- Mr. Ward: "Rub it in!"
- Mr. Allan: "But do you know the National was very nearly wrecked. I believe that we were in a pretty severe difficulty for some time. Our secretary-treasurer here, he is a great man for push. He wrote me — I think I had better not tell. Well now, up in Auckland somewhere we have Waikato — (Laughter.) They have got push up there, and they have got organisation. They have got Mr. Cotterell and Mr. Teed, and I believe the three of them have averted a wreck, and got us out into the middle of the ocean again and going all right, with Canterbury installed as pilot of the organisation. You see where I am as far as the boat is concerned. I am going to sink everything I have got in order that we may keep her afloat and all on board (Applause)."

*Adoption of the Annual Report and Balance Sheet....* Your Executive have pleasure in submitting their first Annual Report since the reconstruction of the constitution at the conference held last June. Owing to the smallness of our funds (£81/11/7) and the difficulty of standardising honey, your Executive so far have not been able to carry out any work in connection with the advertising of honey in the local markets. We trust however, that this will be undertaken during the coming year.

*Export.* — An arrangement was made very early in the year with the Farmers' Co-operative Society whereby every beekeeper in the Dominion could export his honey on particularly advantageous terms. The arrangement has been taken advantage of by a large number of beekeepers. It is to be desired that every member of this Association will use his endeavour to induce every beekeeper to export through this firm in the following years. It is only by concentrating our exports that we can eliminate competition and get good returns.

*Legislation.* — Early in the year the Executive asked the Minister of Lands, through the Agricultural Department, to consider the advisability of reserving ten-acre blocks at about three mile centres as apiary sites on all suitable lands which are cut up from time to time. The Minister approved of the suggestion, and the apiary sites are now being reserved as

opportunity offers.

*Apiaries Act.* — It is particularly gratifying to be able to report that the very important amendments which were approved of at Conference are now law.

*Pure Foods Act.* — The regulations under this Act are very stringent, and in more than one instance are so unreasonable that they cannot be enforced. Conference no doubt will have something to say on these matters.

Membership now stands at 256, and as the organisation and its work become known, it is anticipated that this number will be at least doubled during the coming year.



## Dabur honey becomes sticky

In late 2004 the Auckland Beekeepers' Club journal reported the interception of an undeclared commercial consignment of Indian honey into New Zealand. The defendants appeared in court in November 2005 for sentencing on charges relating to these importations.

After earlier pleading guilty to charges relating to the illegal importation of honey from India into New Zealand, Singh's International Foods, together with Gurmail Bahadur Singh, were sentenced on 25 November 2005 in the Manukau District Court. The company and Mr. Singh were charged with knowingly possessing unauthorised goods and disposal of unauthorised goods, knowing that they were unauthorised goods.

Judge Johns convicted both defendants and ordered each to pay a \$2,000 fine for each infraction, a total of \$8,000. The defendant was also ordered to pay a further \$130 court costs on each infraction.

*Source:* Auckland Beekeepers' Club Inc. Journal, February 2006

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BK01

# Beekeeping for medicinal purposes

I assume that readers will be interested to learn that besides two common ways of bees' existence — the wild life of bees in nature and commercial beekeeping, there is also a different way of beekeeping: beekeeping for medicinal purposes.



Iryna Kirichuk at her home apiary in Puhoi. Iryna and her husband Alex recently arrived in New Zealand from Ukraine. Iryna has a master's degree in Apitherapy.

*Photos: Alex Kirichuk.*



For their practice, apitherapists need to have highly effective natural medications that they source directly from beehives. Honey is far from holding a leading position in the list of those medications. The most important are: bee stings, royal jelly, bee bread (not to be confused with bee pollen), propolis, unprocessed white wax, drone larvae, and air from a hive. And even bee parasites are successfully used in curing human diseases. For instance, wax moth, which causes so many troubles to beekeepers, is a valuable apitherapist's weapon for fighting such dreadful diseases as tuberculosis, cancer, multiple sclerosis and many others.

Modern technologies of commercial beekeeping tend to destroy many of those fragile components of bee products that contain healing properties critical for the Apitherapy. Unfortunately, even the technology known as 'organic' is not quite acceptable for production of high-quality ingredients suitable for medicinal purposes. The best option would be

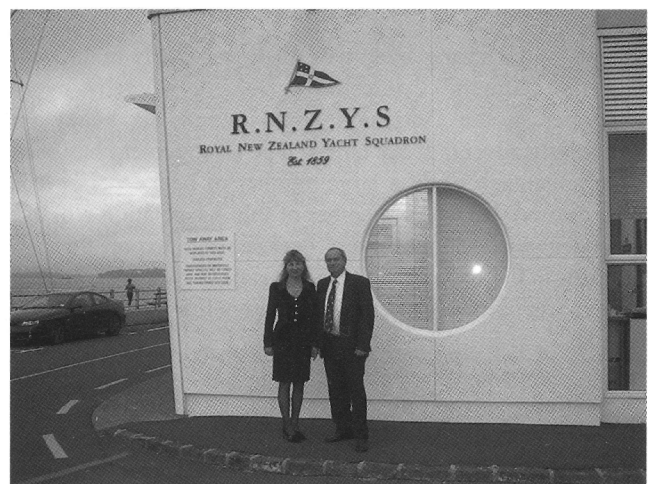
to use wild bees, but this is not practical or achievable as an apitherapist needs to have constant access to the beehive. Beekeeping for medicinal purposes excludes such practices as application of smoke or any chemicals, feeding sugar to the bees, frequent transportation of beehives from one spot to another, using electric irritation for bee venom collection and other similar technologies.

The location of the beehives is critical too. The area should be clean, quiet and not too windy. A great variety of plants and flowing water (such as pure streams) must be available. It is not an easy task to provide all these conditions.

But that is not all. The frequent change of queens recommended for commercial beekeeping is unacceptable in Apitherapy. The bees kept by an apitherapist must lead a happy life, and only then they will achieve sufficient immunity. Only those bees that have been changing naturally (without any interference from the beekeeper) during seven generations of their queens are considered to be healthy enough for medicinal purposes.

From the point of view of commercial beekeeping this way of keeping bees is wasteful and absolutely unprofitable. And that is true. This is why apitherapists who aim for their work to produce positive effects should take care of getting a few bee colonies from which they will source medications for their patients. And this little apiary should be under the apitherapist's direct control, ideally located beside his or her home. That is why I live in the spray-free rural zone in Puhoi, with no intensive farming or industrial production in the vicinity.

The year 2006 is the 20th anniversary of my beekeeping practice. All these years I have applied bees' secrets to strengthen the health of my patients. But those 20 years make only a moment in the history of the science of Apitherapy, which originates from the times of Egyptian pharaohs. By the way, historians consider Egyptian pharaohs to be some of the first apitherapists. Most of my victories over serious diseases I owe to my bees. Of course, my higher medical education helps me a lot, as well as my considerable experience of



Iryna and Alex Kirichuk. Alex is a hobbyist beekeeper, nuclear engineer and yachtsman. *Photos: Victoria Kirichuk.*

work as a physician in orthodox medicine. And, no doubt, I will never stop to appreciate the knowledge passed to me by my teacher, the colonel of medicine Boris Okhotskiy, an amazing doctor who was one of the first apitherapists in the USSR. He dedicated more than half of his life to Apitherapy and celebrates his 90th birthday this year.

New Zealand provides wonderful opportunities for Apitherapy. For example, my colleagues have scientifically proved that the bee venom of local bees has multiple advantages over the bee venom produced by bees in other countries. My confidence in this has been lately proved by my success in treatment of my patients from Australia. New Zealand bees can work wonders. Our objective is to give them such opportunity, and this is where the need for medicinal beekeeping arises.

**- Iryna Kirichuk**  
Apitherapist



Alex in his home distillery. Iryna reckons his medicinal vintage vodka is the best in the Southern Hemisphere.

Photo: Victoria Kirichuk.

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## Apicultural Opportunity

The New Zealand beekeeping industry is a dynamic industry faced with many challenges as well as opportunities. AgriQuality Limited provides a comprehensive service to all aspects of the industry 'from the hive to the home'. We boast world-class capability in our service delivery to customers, who are mostly in New Zealand, but we also work offshore in the South Pacific.

### Apiculture Officer Christchurch or Mosgiel

An exciting opportunity has arisen in the Apiary Business Unit, which is part of the Assurance Services Business within AgriQuality. As a member of a small apiculture team you will provide support to your colleagues and quickly take on process management responsibilities as you gain experience and accreditations. AgriQuality delivers an impressive array of apicultural and aligned business services including biosecurity, hive inspections, managing honey bee disease control programmes, surveying, auditing and verification. This position is challenging and fast paced. You will need to be a person who is focused on assisting the team to operate profitably, efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis, and taking a lead role for your areas of responsibility.

Location of this position is negotiable with the successful candidate based at either our Mosgiel or Christchurch offices. You will be responsible for co-ordinating and managing service delivery for your assigned area as well as for national delivery on specified projects. You will need to cement and grow existing business relationships and capture and develop new business especially in auditing processors, handlers, and exporters of bee products.

To succeed in this position you will need to possess:

- A good understanding of the beekeeping industry in New Zealand
- An ability to work beehives with no allergies to bee venom
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- An ability and willingness to travel within New Zealand and overseas sometimes for periods up to 4 weeks
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent writing and data recording skills and familiarity with word processing and data management software.

Experience in food safety, verification and auditing would be an advantage.

If you have an affinity with the beekeeping industry, are passionate about customer service and have the desire to continually improve service delivery, then this position could be just what you have been looking for.

A strong service ethic embraces AgriQuality. If you are looking to utilise your skills and expertise and want to join a remarkable business then we would like to hear from you!

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BK121

# From the colonies



**Reminder: Conference week starts 16 July 2006. Venue: Best Western Glenview International Hotel, Cnr Ohaupo Road and Resthills Crescent, Box 16083, Hamilton, telephone 07 843 6049.**

## Waikato Branch

While travelling around the Waikato over the last three weeks I've noticed that a lot of the pasture is still green for this time of the year. The rain still shows its presence every few days, with some regions receiving heavy downpours and flooding. Whilst the clover is browning off with the end of flowering, the Pennyroyal is showing. Along the roadsides, the seed heads of many pollinated plants are ready for disbursement along with the thistle fairies from the pasture. The temperatures are very hot (around 25–28°C), with 16–18°C being the overnight low. Probably next week will show a change. In some places the bees are still on a honey flow. At our recent branch meeting the reports from around the region indicate that the honey is very up and down within each beekeeping business. The ups and downs don't relate just to weather and temperature, but also falls back on the old adage of 'if you have bees then you have honey, if hive strength is down, it also reflects in honey'.

Discussion on the possible importation of bee products has certainly stirred beekeepers along. The branch concluded that we cannot afford another disease outbreak like varroa and there is no absolute certainty that EFB or any other honey transmitted disease will be stopped at the border by import health standards. Once again it appears that government is prepared for beekeepers to accept the risk. However, unlike when varroa was discovered, the agriculture and horticulture sectors are already well aware of the cost of a disease outbreak through increased cost of pollination. I wonder if they realise what further loss of bee numbers could happen with another disease outbreak? Two questions on many beekeepers' minds will be: "How much bacteria do you need in honey to create infection?" and "How do you know much bacteria will be in the honey?" after heat treatment or irradiation.

Conference planning is in full swing, with seminars being plotted. Tasks have been allocated as follows:

- Registration: Stephen Batters
- Sponsors/Trade displays: Lewis Olsen
- Social activities: Pauline Bassett
- Memorabilia: Pauline Bassett
- Seminar/speakers: Jane Lorimer
- Conference promotion and news media: Russell Berry

Each person listed is the spokesperson, and they also have a team of people working with them. So if you want to find anything out, please feel free to contact one of the team.

The branch is due to receive their AFB NPMS list soon and Roger King, our disease co-ordinator, will once again 'stir the troops' into action. Last year saw many kilometres travelled with a very low rate of disease being found, which is excellent!

So all in all, a busy time ahead for beekeepers in the Waikato.

- Fiona O'Brien

## Poverty Bay Branch

On 18 February local beekeepers met with Labour list MP Moana Mackey to discuss the honey import issue. Moana will be at the meeting with Jim Anderton on Monday 20 February and will take our concerns to him and get back to us. We will also have another meeting on Friday 24th February with Anne Tolley MP (National, East Coast) on this issue.

- Barry Foster



Left to right at back: Peter Burt (Poverty Bay Branch president), Bill Savage, Moana Mackey MP, Ian Stewart, Paul Badger. Front, from left: Wiremu Kaa and Peter Lamb. Photo: Barry Foster, taken at the home of Paul & Margaret Badger.

## Hawkes Bay Branch

We will be holding a field day at 46 Arataki Road, Havelock North on Saturday 18 March at 10.30 a.m. This will be a fairly low-key affair, and we don't expect to have any earth-shattering events happening on the day. It is primarily aimed at beginning beekeepers and hobbyists, but anybody who wishes to attend is more than welcome.

Wet unsettled weather has put an end to what has been a reasonable honey season, although we may get a little bit more if the sun ever comes out. Varroa is already quite bad in some areas, with many beekeepers rushing to put treatments into their hives.

- John Berry

... and from the Secretary of the Hawkes Bay Branch

### Using a smoker effectively

Some like to get up early to move hives before the bees start their day's foraging. During warm summer days, however, some bees just sleep clustered on the front of the hive. Here is

**Continued on page 16**

where the smoker comes into its own. With gentle persistent smoking most of the bees will move inside for the hive to be closed for moving. Of course this condition cannot be maintained for too long or the trapped bees will overheat and die. This same method can be used if a swarm box has been left with a small opening to encourage the flying bees to join the queen in the box in the evening.

Sometimes bees have no sense of the right thing to do. Recently I dumped a swarm in front of a hive and instead of trooping into the box of drawn combs they went under, starting to draw out their own foundation below the mesh floor. They were just keeping in touch with those above as well as keeping cool. Inspection revealed that there were only a few in the box. Maybe the hive is queenless, but time will tell.

After New Year it is nearly impossible to get bees to draw out foundation. If your hives are full of honey and there's not enough room inside during this time of hot weather, bees will cluster around the front of the hive. Put on another box if you have frames of drawn comb. If not, take some capped frames off, extract and return the 'wets' for the bees to refill with nectar. ('Wets' are those frames that have been extracted but are still wet with the remnants of the honey crop.) Why is it that bees will build up a section of comb between frames if the gap is left too big, yet they won't draw out foundation? I guess the answer is to have the new frames ready early in the season!

#### Combatting varroa

We still have varroa! What are you doing to combat these mites?

Check your hives. The simplest way is to insert, above the floorboards, a sticky board smeared with a 50/50 mix of petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) and vegetable oil, then after 24 hours remove and visually check for mites. Remember to have a cut-away V in the front of the sticky board to ensure a gap is maintained for foraging bees. Real estate signboards make ideal sticky boards. It is getting a bit late in the season for the alternative of checking drone brood with a cappings scratcher.

It won't be long before we start getting resistance to the fluvalinate strips such as Apistan and Bayvarol, so we have to be looking at what alternatives are available. Read the points for and against the different treatments and talk to your fellow beekeeper. Better yet, come to the meetings, listen to the discussion, and then decide for yourself what is best for your situation.

ApiLife VAR<sup>®</sup> is one organic treatment consisting of thymol, eucalyptus, menthol and camphor. Reuben Stanley and Don Simm came to our February meeting to extol its virtues. After listening and questioning the Branch decided to buy two boxes of wafers to on sell to members at cost. These will be available only at meetings.

**- Ron Morison**

## **Southern North Island**

Reports coming in suggest that the honey crop will be around average. Most members are flat out bringing in supers and enjoying the fruits of a year's labour. The variable weather over December and January has meant that the clover/pasture honeys have not been as great as anticipated, but the Lotus Major flow may help the bulk honey situation.

Our Branch is concerned over the filing for honey house approval under the new rules and this will be addressed at our next meeting on 27 February. Many are very worried about bee products imports, especially honey. The flow-on risks of disease and loss of hives could be crucial to many members, even more importantly the loss of pollination-ready hives. It is a constant talking point whenever two beekeepers meet. NBA is certainly actively doing its best with submissions and meetings with Biosecurity New Zealand, MAF and Government representatives.

**- Neil Farrer**

## **Nelson Branch**

There isn't a lot to report this month as the honey is still being harvested, perhaps a bit later this year. As I write this in early February, the top of the South Island has received a welcomed two-day drenching of rain in the middle of some very hot weather. We hope that the pasture crops will continue longer than usual, giving the hives a good source for winter stores.

Luckily the wasps aren't as bad as anticipated this year and the ones that are around have stopped hassling the bees and gone back to the bush.

Yes, the autumn dew is starting to appear in the high country, a sign that the best of summer is probably over.

The Wilsons from Golden Bay report that the Kamahi crop was good this year and there is a good-quality Manuka crop too. They don't get much dew in the Bay, but the late pasture may help them to accumulate winter stores.

The West Coast Manuka crop is small and got rained out right at a crucial time of flowering. Rikki says that many hives suffered from "squall loss". They got "some" honey, but were depleted of good crops as the bees got lost on sunny days when storms and squalls blew up. I think we may have got some of that too as we have similar symptoms and thought that we had late swarming (post-honey crop?) but inspection of the brood nest has proved that this was not the case.

The Nelson Lakes area, on the other hand, has this year produced a better Manuka crop than in many years.

Then there are the RMPs. Beekeepers have given me a range of responses when I have asked about their RMPs, from "not sure what to do" to "yes, it's all under control and we will be ready". [Editor's note: have a look at NZFSA's news update on page 6 and the cleaning schedule examples on pages 7 and 8 to help you meet the NZFSA deadline!]

**- Merle Moffitt**





Lunchtime 'catnapper' Daniel Iseli-Otto, a student from Alberta, Canada who featured on the front cover of the February 2006 issue.

## Canterbury Branch

The honey season is all but over as I write this. Talking to different beekeepers it appears to have been a patchy season at best in Canterbury, however, with an overall 'Joe Average' year. I would consider this an excellent result considering that the honey flow was totally obtained from timely rainfall, as there was never any substantial soil moisture to speak of. According to Ken Ring we are in for the start of a substantial drought, and looking out the window now it is hard not to believe him. Anyway the current hot, dry, windless conditions make for great beach holidays and excellent mating conditions. (For the bees!)

May this weather last until late autumn, which will make wintering as easy as the spring work was. Unbelievable!

- **Brian Lancaster**

## Otago Branch

In mid-February it is very hot in Otago still and very dry inland especially, so it is all over for the honey crop. Beekeepers are busy harvesting and extracting and it is too soon to know the final outcome of the season. It seems to have been good for some but barely average for others in the drier areas. Manuka and Kanuka flowered very well and coastal Otago produced a good crop through till early February. On the Taieri, bees flew right over good clover fields this year to gather Manuka honey instead.

The main concerns for many beekeepers are compliance costs and the falling prices offered for honey. Prior to prices increasing significantly a few years ago, the economics of beekeeping in the south had been marginal over recent decades. With steadily increasing costs of production it takes only a small downward movement in honey prices to put us back in a tenuous position. We can only hope this situation isn't made worse with a flood of cheap imports of 'Australian' honey, probably actually produced in China or South America! With our Government's recent decision to not make country of origin food labelling compulsory the New Zealand consumer will probably never know where it originated. Contrast this with the traceability and compliance hoops the New Zealand beekeepers and processors now have to jump through (and pay for) to export our product.

We can take a little comfort in that we are not alone in this situation. I talked to a Central Otago orchardist the other day who no longer exports fruit as it is just too expensive and too frustrating to comply with the regulations. Believe it or not, he even has to have a jewellery policy in his massive safety manual for his pickers. Oh dear, how bad does it have to get before some sanity returns?

- **Peter Sales**

P.S.

Beekeepers' new 'one sign fits all' health and safety warning: 'If you enter, bring your wits!'

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# Apimondia 2007

## Information Sheet no. 2

Melbourne, Australia, 9-14 September 2007

Welcome to the second in our series of Information Sheets. This time, I thought we might have a look at the venue, Melbourne.

For those of you who are in Commonwealth Countries, you will realise that the Commonwealth Games are being held in Melbourne in March this year. When you see some of the great venues on the television, remember Melbourne is the venue for Apimondia 2007 in September 2007.

There are many things to do in Melbourne and I am sure you will need to set aside some time either side of Apimondia 2007 to see these attractions. Have a look at our website, [www.apimondia2007.com](http://www.apimondia2007.com) and go to the "About Melbourne" section.

There is a great range of accommodation from luxury to backpackers and all types in between. The details will appear on the website at a later date.

From Melbourne, you can go out into the countryside and see beekeepers at work. If you know a beekeeper, line up a visit with them before or after Apimondia. They will give you a friendly Australian welcome and be only too pleased to show you how we keep bees in Australia.

We love our sport here in Australia. It will be too early for those wanting to see some cricket but Australian Rules football will be in semi-final mode in Melbourne in September. For those who prefer the round ball, there is soccer to see and remember Australia has qualified for the World Cup in Germany in June this year so our standard of play is high.

Apimondia 2007 will be an event that lives in your memory long after it finishes. So plan to be there.

**Contact: Trevor Weatherhead (Organising Committee)**  
Email: [queenbee@gil.com.au](mailto:queenbee@gil.com.au)

# Stolen honey in the Nelson region — can you help?

I wonder how many beekeepers have gone to their hives to take off honey and to find that someone has beaten them to it?

Oh, yes, we have had the odd frame taken from the top box, obviously from a curious (and hungry) hunter or fisherman passing by. But this time we were quite stunned to find that someone had even gone into the bottom honey box removing frames and leaving *uncapped* outer frames. Someone would almost think that the 'robber' (not a bee this time) knew what they were doing.

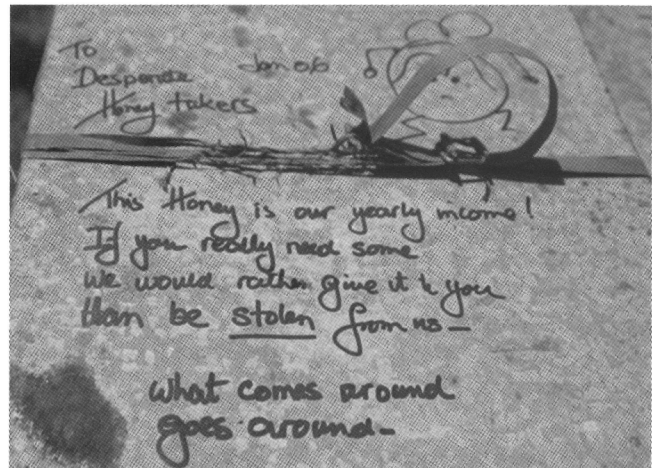
We have made a police report, having lost nearly three full boxes of honey with the frames missing from four hives.

Perhaps someone will just eat the comb honey and destroy the frames, but our bet is that it was targeted to be extracted. So would everyone in the Marlborough and Nelson areas please keep an eye open for any odd frames that don't fit into the beekeeper's registration number? The frames will have K93 written on them.

- Merle Moffitt

Aftermath of the theft and an appeal to conscience.

Photos: John Moffitt.



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# About the Apiary

It's March and I'm not really much further ahead — putting in a new kitchen has delayed progress. I was asked to do “just a few little jobs” that generally take much longer than planned because I'm not that experienced, plus I try to make a quality job seeing it's our own home. Being a beekeeper, any wood recovered can possibly be turned into nuc boxes, so I was fairly careful when taking things apart. After a few weeks at this go-slow pace it's very hard to get back into a beekeeper's working mode; however, things must be done otherwise there's no potential income. So it's back to the hard grind of removing honey and getting boxes through our small plant as quickly as possible.

Talking to other beekeepers around the country, it appears some areas are doing well and boxes are still going on. It's dry in Wellington. The bees in some hives are still flying well and there's a little wet honey in the brood nest following the recent rains. Catsear is flowering again. It seems to burst into colour following each cycle of rain but then quickly dries off. In the swampy areas Pennyroyal is in full flower and there's still Lotus Major in the shady areas. The last of the Kanuka was flowering a few weeks ago and my bees visit this shrub so perhaps I do get a mixture of Kanuka and Manuka some years. The native bees were all over it too but they move off before the digital camera has time to focus so it's difficult to photograph them.

The first extraction of Kamahi proved a bit of a flop. The boxes were full but there's only a hint of Kamahi in the honey. It seems to be a mixture of Kamahi and bush sources but not unpleasant in flavour. Some beekeepers have reported similar occurrences. Generally once the bees are working Kamahi, they don't swap over to anything else until it has completely finished flowering. But this year the bees swapped on to manuka as soon as it started flowering, so some beekeepers will have smiles on their faces.

City areas aren't suffering these on-again, off-again honey flows. There's always something flowering as ornamentals and exotics are flowering. There's a good showing from the Orange Eucalyptus and Scarlet Eucalyptus.

There's also a hint that autumn is just around the corner. Several of us have noticed heavy dew on the cars in the early mornings and the evenings are now getting a little cooler. Perhaps the plants have noticed this also as the Koromiko is starting to flower. Generally this is one of the last bush sources in our area.

This dribble of late nectar has stimulated brood rearing. A few of my hives still have brood into the third super. Those beekeepers that have taken off too much honey could find the bees a little short of winter stores by May, so keep an eye on things and if you feel there isn't sufficient, feed sugar syrup early.

## Requeening

March is also one of the best times for requeening your hives. I've been going through the hives that didn't produce well in preparation for requeening and have been surprised

to find that quite a number have already superseded and are well on the way to building up a decent population to winter over on.

While travelling around checking the hives I have also been giving the hives a quick fogging with food grade mineral oil (FGMO). You can soon tell which hives need requeening by the number of bees that come out of the hive immediately after the fog is administered. Any hives that have only a few bees up the front are marked for investigation.

So if the timing is right, it's off with the honey and in with a protected queen cell, plus a few strong hives in each apiary are split, the honey divided and a protected cell placed in each. You might be wondering why I use queen cells. Murray Reid's research in the 1980s indicated that 80% of the new queens superseded the old and beekeepers have been using this system with very good results for the last 20 years or so. Also a queen cell costs less and you get a mixture of cross-fertilisation with your own drones, provided you have plenty in your hives. (As a guide there should be at least 100 drones produced in a hive for every queen that needs mating).

That's the theory I was using but things don't always happen to plan. A call that an order had been halved meant the queen cells were available a week earlier than planned. Next day (day 11 for the queen cells) was perfect for putting in queen cells, but I had to finish putting up the scotia so the painters could finish and paper the kitchen. Day 11 is also a vulnerable time for the queen's development, as the wing buds are just developing sitting against the sides of the cell so any bumping can damage the queens, which emerge without wings. So it was to be day 12 (the day the queens emerge) that I started putting out queen cells. It poured with rain and after doing one apiary, I was stung as the bees were upset and I was soaking wet, so I called it a day.

I mixed up some stored pollen from the freezer with honey and mashed it into a pulp and got out some queen cages in preparation for the queens to emerge. Most beekeepers have experienced a hive in the spring that had just swarmed and was full of emerging queen cells. You cage them but after an hour or so they are all dead. What they require immediately on emerging is a feed of nectar and pollen. Give this to them and they will last a number of days in a queen cage without escorts, provided they are kept warm and in reasonably humid conditions (use a slightly damp face cloth to replicate the conditions within the hive).

So every three hours I went down to the basement and checked each queen cell to see if it had emerged, and then popped each queen into a cage and smeared a little of the mixture of pollen and honey just inside the cage and over a little of the outside of the cage. I only lost one when I checked them again next morning at 5 am. It must have emerged soon after the last three-hour check and died before my next check. Afterwards I checked the tip of each cell for the cut the queen makes to open the cell, and when I saw this cut I assisted in opening the cell and no further queens were lost.

**Continued on page 20**

**Continued from page 19**

The next day the weather was better, so it was just a matter of identifying which hives needed requeening, checking the brood pattern on a few frames (plus a quick check for AFB), reassembling the hive, opening a queen cage and popping in the queen while puffing a little smoke in the hive, and closing everything up again. Virgin queens have no odour and are ignored by the bees, so they walk down into the hives. I always make sure she is well below the level of the top of the frame before closing the hive. That squashing sound you hear when you accidentally drop a frame into a hive or put a roof on roughly is generally that of a now-dead queen, so be cautious and use a little smoke to drive bees down before closing a hive.

Three apiaries later, after lifting off honey, checking hives, requeening and replacing everything again, I realised I wasn't going to complete everything in a day. As the sky was clouding over again, I went to my closest apiary and started filling mini nucs.

I have a number of hives in the apiary that are full-depth, half-width frames, which fit into a three-frame mating nuc. I put in two frames of honey and one of sealed brood, plus a shake of bees off another frame in with the virgin queen, and close the nuc hives until they are opened at the mating site. Generally if you leave the nucs in the same site they came from the bees will abscond back to the main hive again, so it's best to move them to another apiary or to a sheltered sunny spot more than two kilometres away.

During this operation (I made up 18 nucs), the bees from other hives started robbing the small honey frames because I had set them out first when making up the nucs. I have learned that a single burst of FGMO into each hive entrance and around the robbing area quickly stops robbing, as all the pheromone odours are destroyed and the robber bees have

to clean themselves. I then placed the nucs into sheltered apiaries on top of hives so I can use them when I take off the honey. In the meantime, hopefully, the queens will mate in a week and will return to the nuc hives.



Above: Nuc frame. Below: Nuc Hive



**Tips on requeening for hobbyists**

Not many hobbyist beekeepers use queen cells to requeen their hives, as they believe that it requires extra equipment to keep them warm and that it's too difficult. In fact, it's not. Queen cells in the last stages of development are quite resilient. A queen producer once told me he left a frame of queen cells on a hive over night. It rained during the night and was fairly cool so he thought that would be the end of them but when he went to recover the bar in the morning he noticed one of the queens emerging. On carefully opening a few more cells he found the queens to be in perfect condition ready to emerge, so he put them into nucs. In Australia queen cells have been packed in rice or dry sawdust and bussed 2000 miles without any damage.

So a group of hobbyists could get together, order some cells and put them into their hives or nuc hives the next day. (Make up the nucs a day or two ahead of time. On the day the queen cells arrive, check the brood frames and remove any queen cells that have been started). All that is needed is a small chilly bin, a kilo or so of dry rice or sawdust (microwave the rice or sawdust for two minutes on full power to dry it), and a means of getting the container to the queen producer and back. The queen producer gently pushed the cells upright into the rice or sawdust until they were completely covered.

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The bees' own internal heat and the insulating factor of the dry rice or sawdust allow the queens inside the cells to maintain an even temperature. Upon receipt, the cells are gently removed (if you drop one onto the ground or floor, discard it) and gently wrap the body of the cell in oven foil (leaving the end of the cell exposed so the queen can emerge) or push it into a piece of plastic electrical conduit so that the bees only have access to the end of the cell. Bees will only rip a cell down from the side so provided this is protected the queen will emerge. *Note: Don't try to clean the sawdust off the cells as you could damage the queen inside.*

If the worst happens and you can't put out the queen cells the next day, the container can be placed on top of an existing hive (put on a queen excluder, then empty the super — place in the opened container), and the heat from the hive will assist in keeping the cells warm. Unfortunately because you can't monitor the queens emerging, you might lose some of those that emerge early.

The queens usually mate within five to seven days and will begin laying a few days later. Don't disturb the hives for at least three weeks as the bees can ball new queens. After this time, and if the weather has been fine for a few days (temperatures of 20°C or above), you should have a laying queen. If not, check for further queen cells; if none, check whether there is a clean area of empty brood in the centre of the brood frame ready for a queen to lay in. If there is, you probably still have a queen in the hive so leave it alone for another week. If there is pollen through the centre of the frame and the bees roar when a little smoke is applied, they are queenless. Start again or just add a brood frame with eggs in it and allow the bees to build a queen of their own.



*Before*



*After*

Wind damage in the Wellington region, February 2006. Four hives blew over because they hadn't been tied after supering. Six supers of honey were robbed out. Photos: *Frank Lindsay.*

## Planning for next year

While working my hives, I'm also planning for next year. Queens and strips are going in and I'm noting what needs replacing before winter. I'm also leaving a little extra honey on the hives, as we are off to see a bit more of Canada and won't be back until September. I'm planning on losing a few hives as there are always some hives that bolt brood production and run out of stores. But during the last two years after the onset of varroa, the bees were able to collect a lot more early nectar as there isn't the competition from feral hives any more.

Then again, it's meant to be wetter in the spring according to Ken Ring's "Predict Weather" almanac. (If he'd put in the daytime temperature highs and wind speed, it would be a perfect reference for planning queen rearing and mating, etc.) Then again Wellington is easy to predict — usually windy. We just have to breed bees that fly at lower temperatures.

So the rounds start again: a quick spray of the grass around the hives, trim back any excess blackberries, growing near to the hives (collecting a few, for pudding and jam), mark all supers with the apiary code and hive number for traceback if required, check hives for disease, assess the brood pattern, the amount of brood and honey stores, remove the excess honey, extract honey, sort supers and frames for renewal, let the honey settle over night, drum it off, get rid of the wets to a yard close to home so they are cleaned out, then repeat the operation. And that's beekeeping for the month (and a few months to come).

## Extracting

If you are getting your honey extracted at registered processing premises, ask the beekeeper to clean the honey baskets before your frames go through. One hobbyist thought he'd do the right thing and extract legally instead of doing the job in his kitchen. He had the honey extracted elsewhere and his hives became infected with AFB the next spring, despite the area being relatively disease free and the beekeepers having a disease-free history. He suspected the frames became contaminated during the extraction process. If all hives are checked for disease before honey comes off and if absolutely no honey is extracted from a diseased hive (it's the law anyway), this wouldn't have happened. However, the contracting extractor relies upon the honesty and ethics of the beekeepers he extracts honey for. If one beekeeper makes a mistake, sometimes all beekeepers using that plant will pay the price. It pays to keep a honey sample and have it tested if you suspect this has happened to you.

## Things to do this month

AFB check, remove all comb honey as soon as it's capped, extract honey, requeen hives, winter down hives or at least restrict entrances (200 mm x 10 mm), check for wasps, and remove all combs before treating hives for varroa. It's important that all North Island hives be treated for varroa this month. You need two or three generations of bees that are clear of mites for hives to successfully over winter. Replenish your rodent bait stations.

**- Frank Lindsay**



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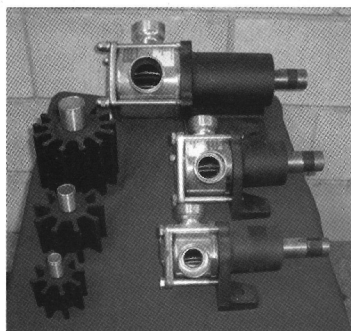
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# Letters to the Editor

## Apimondia symposium: Selection and Queen Breeding

The Apimondia Commission for Beekeeping Technology and Equipment, of which I am president, is organising the symposium for 'Selection and Queen Breeding' in Sofia, Bulgaria from 1-3 September 2006.

For further information visit the following website: [www.apimondia-symposium-bulgaria-2006.com](http://www.apimondia-symposium-bulgaria-2006.com).

Fellow beekeepers, please join us in making this event a success. As soon as you fill in the pre-registration form, you will receive a second circular with the complete scientific programme over the next couple of months.

Fellow scientists, please send abstracts of your papers as soon as possible to: [contact@apiservices.com](mailto:contact@apiservices.com)

We look forward to meeting you next September in Bulgaria, a country with a solid beekeeping tradition, which is preparing to join the European Union and in which the cost of life is very affordable.

### Gilles Ratia

President of the Apimondia Standing Commission on Beekeeping Technology and Equipment: <http://www.apimondia.org>

International Beekeeping Consultant: <http://www.apiservices.info>

Webmaster of the "Virtual Beekeeping Gallery": <http://www.beekeeping.com>

## Beekeeper seeks work

Hi,

I am a job seeker presently staying in Auckland. I have vast experience of more than 5 years in State Govt. department of India as a beekeeper. I have knowledge of extraction of honey, beekeeping, colonisation of bees etc. I am ready to work anywhere in New Zealand. I am looking for genuine job offer from someone who can recruit overseas people. Presently I am working as a welder but this is not my profession, it is for the time being to get a job in my respective field. I am ready to migrate to South Island even. I request you to please advise me how I can get a suitable job in this field. Waiting for your reply please.

Thanks and kind regards,

**Vijay**

Email: [raghavss07@hotmail.com](mailto:raghavss07@hotmail.com) (Surinder Raghav)

## Seeking work as beekeeper's assistant

I am a young German woman who has been working in agriculture for the last four years. Husbandry was my major area. But I have been working the fields as well.

One of my main subjects of interest has always been beekeeping. Since I am working in the Swiss Alps in the summer season, I don't find time to get involved with bees,

because that is the main beekeeping season in Europe as well. But the Alp-season is giving me the chance of free time in the rest of the year. I would like to use that time for learning beekeeping, so I have to take a look at the other side of the world. That suits me well, because I like travelling. So here I go.

I would like to spend half a year with a beekeeper and learn all major skills about beekeeping, schwärmen (swarming), honey production, simply, all there is to do, to do it myself... So I am looking for a beekeeper who could need some help and would like to let me work with him, and teach me about the secrets of beekeeping, for food and board.

The time I am thinking about is between October 2006 till the end of April 2007. If that sounds interesting for you, or you would like to help me, or you know somebody who could be interested, please let me know.

I speak good English, so there will be no language problems. I am used to work, so don't worry about that. I have been abroad for quite a while, so I won't become homesick. I found your web page on the Internet, so pardon me for being so frank to write this question to you. Please let me know, if you'd like to have some more information about me.

Thank you!

### Maïke Aselmeier

Andreas-Bopp-Str.3

55425 Waldalgesheim

Germany

0049-(0)163-7547376

E-mail: [Micahmaïke@aol.com](mailto:Micahmaïke@aol.com)

## Aloha from Hawaii!

Dear beekeeping friends, aloha from Hawaii! I am a hobby beekeeper on Kauai, Hawaii with 50 hives, collecting nectar from Kiawe (mesquite, algarroba), fruit trees (orange, banana, avocado, coconut, lychee), eucalyptus and wildflowers. I am producing natural raw honey, using no artificial sugars, antibiotics or chemical repellents. Wax moths, ants, toads and thieves are my only pests.

Stop by when you visit Hawaii, I'll be happy to show you our island and bees.

I would appreciate please a sample copy of your beekeeping magazine and details of subscription. Thank you very much, have a happy year in your beeyards.

Mahalo and aloha nui,

### David Maki

PO Box 1067

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Telephone 001 808 652 5993

*[Editor's note: a sample copy has been posted to you, David, and thank you for your interest and aloha.]*

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# German beekeeper visits NZ

In February, we spent the day with a visiting German commercial beekeeper and his wife, Reinhold and Heidi Pauly, from Mainz. Reinhold gave me a bundle of German and Austrian beekeeping magazines. Unfortunately I didn't have time to skim through them before he left, as some of the articles pose additional questions. Like why has EFB increased over the last five years to well over the levels experienced in the 1950s and 1960s?

From our conversation it appears we are still living in a dream world that the strips we are using to prevent varroa are providing all the protection that is necessary, provided we get them in on time and that we alternate our treatments. A body of research is growing that the chemicals we use in these strips affect the reproductive ability of the queens and drones. UK beekeepers have noticed this and so have some of our own hobbyists — queens are not lasting as long and some are superseding when the brood pattern is excellent. Hence commercial beekeepers in New Zealand now change queens yearly.

Europe has chemical-resistant varroa mites and treatments are now based on integrated pest management (IPM) systems and products that don't give residues. Unfortunately these treatments aren't as effective so beekeepers have to monitor conditions within the hive more closely. For instance, Reinhold is using a 15% formic acid bath (for four weeks) in the bottom of the hives as a late autumn treatment. This year their autumn was late. They were still having 20-degree days into November so brood rearing continued until the temperature dropped. Those who took the baths out early lost a number of hives during the winter because mite reproduction continued.

Reinhold also said that the mite threshold had dropped from 5000 mites to 2000 mites; that is, it only takes 2000 mites to kill a hive.

Their management systems are similar to ours: hives are moved for different crops but also there are differences; for example, the climate in Germany is more settled. In the spring, the temperature warms from 0–20°C in three days and once there's pollen and nectar the bees expand. They use carnica bees, which Reinhold considers to be "the best bee".

He removes pollen frames in the early spring to stop swarming. Apparently when the spring flowers, crocuses, etc., are blooming and the bees are able to fly, they pack out the hives with pollen. Asked why doesn't he trap the pollen, Reinhold replied that only one beekeeper does this, so perhaps there isn't a market for pollen.

Swarming is very predictable also, so he takes nuclei off his hives to stop swarming. They don't have the wind or the climate changes we experience from day to day in New Zealand.

Finding apiary sites close to home in Germany can be difficult. In the district where Reinhold lives, villages are just a kilometre apart — you can see the next village and

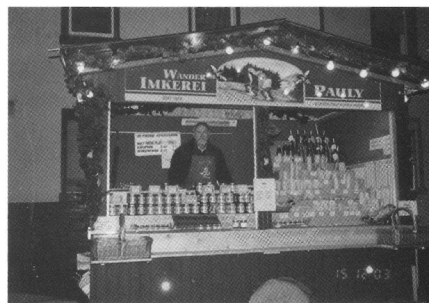
apiary sites have to be a kilometre away from the public. He smiled and said, "yet some beekeepers produce 'organic' honey".

Reinhold markets his honey himself (along with candles) during the winter, which means long hours manning a stand during market days.

He also has a pair of kiwifruit vines and was asking about pollination. Initially Reinhold was only getting a few fruit, but last year he got 150 kilograms off his one vine but wanted to increase the fruit size. He has the problem of the male and female flowers flowering at different times, meaning there are only two or three days when he gets effective pollination. Bumblebees visit the flowers but the honey bees aren't interested given other competing sources.

If you have the opportunity to host a visiting beekeeper, take it as it's a real learning experience. If anybody has the time, perhaps they could compile a list of the equivalent German/English beekeeping terms and expressions so we can understand each other better.

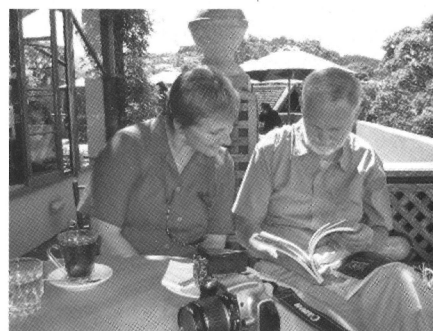
## - Frank Lindsay



Reinhold in his honey stand.



Migratory trailer. Photos supplied by Reinhold and Heidi Pauly.



Heidi and Reinhold Pauly. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

# Bayer CropScience breakthrough in control of lettuce aphids

Bayer CropScience New Zealand has achieved a breakthrough in the control of lettuce aphids with the granting of a new label claim for its systemic insecticide Confidor®.

Already a well known product for the control of thrips in onions and aphids in cabbages, Confidor can now be used for controlling lettuce aphids.

Bayer CropScience New Zealand marketing manager Peter Fisher says the granting of the new label claim for Confidor is a breakthrough for the lettuce industry.

“Since its detection in Christchurch in 2002, the lettuce aphid has spread throughout New Zealand and has become the biggest plant health issue facing lettuce growers.

“Contamination by the lettuce aphid basically makes the plant unsaleable. Heavy infestations of young lettuce plants can lead to stunting, yellowing and leaf distortion. The aphid is also a vector of several viruses.”

Fisher says control of lettuce aphid with current insecticides has proven difficult as aphids prefer the central leaves of the lettuce, making spray coverage difficult.

“What’s so great about Confidor is that it’s applied as a soil drench to lettuce seedlings the day before they are planted out. Once planted the active ingredient moves into the soil and protects the plant as it grows. The result is excellent season-long control against aphids.”

Fisher says trial work for Confidor use on lettuce originally started in New Zealand in 2003, shortly after the lettuce aphid became established. The trials were run as part of the Sustainable Farming Fund’s development of IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in lettuce.

**Source: Press release from Bayer New Zealand, 31 January 2006. See <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC0601/S00036.htm>**

*[Editor’s note: Confidor® is a synonym for Imidacloprid. Beekeepers overseas are very wary of this chemical but no proven link to bee deaths has been found. Thanks to Ian Stewart for sending this press release.]*



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## Two more items for your 'to do' lists ...

### Caution: fogging

Before using a fogger on your hives, put a call into your local fire station. Anything white looks like smoke and because conditions are dry, people report the slightest whiff of smoke fairly quickly.

I was working slightly off a highway the other day and within a few minutes of starting to fog some hives I heard the fire siren go off in the distance. A few minutes later I heard that familiar note of a Dennis fire engine coming up the hill with a full load of water. I waited around for the fire crew to arrive and although they were quite happy that it wasn't a fire, I was a little embarrassed.

Your call to the fire station won't stop an engine coming out but at least they know what to expect when they get there. Apparently I'm not alone when it comes to fire engines turning up at apiary sites.

### Rabbits

While Jim Edwards is fencing his rural property to keep them out, rabbits have a place in my books. Up until recently there have been plenty of rabbits in the regional parks to keep the grass down on the tracks, but this year there's hardly any to be seen.

I drive a three-tonne Nissan Atlas 4x4, which has a cab over the front wheels and a rubber scoop underneath to divert air on to the radiator. It's a little low for off-country running but provided I keep out of the wheel ruts it gets me comfortably to all my apiary sites. One of these sites is a kilometre into a regional park via a grassy track, and up until now there hadn't been any problems.

However, on returning from my last trip in to check the hives (a round trip of 30 kilometres) I found the water in the radiator was boiling. A quick panic check for water leaks revealed nothing so I left the vehicle to cool down on its own. On closer inspection I found the whole radiator clogged with grass seed that took quite a bit of hosing to remove (see photo). Now 'check radiator' has been put onto the checklist after off-road trips.

-Frank Lindsay

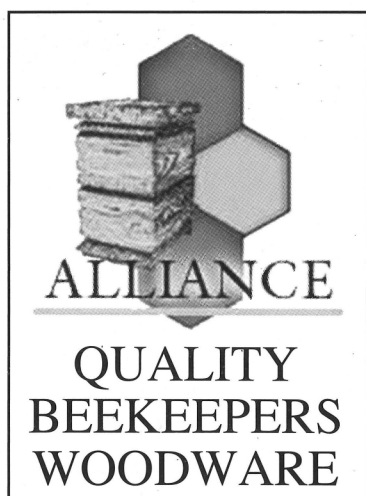


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*Paratropis banksii*

*Paratropis microphylla*

**Maori name: Turepo**

**Common name: Milk Tree**

The Turepo is a small tree reaching up to 12 metres, found in both the North and South islands. Nectar is produced from the female flowers, which occur in short spikes or clusters and are a whitish-green in colour, producing a pale nectar. The male flowers occur in catkins.

Flowering is from October to February and the berries are red. Bees sometimes collect a greenish-coloured pollen.

The early settlers often cut or bruised the trunk to obtain the sweet milky sap, which was used as a substitute for milk. Maori used this sap to aid in the recovery of someone who was weakened by sickness.

- Tony Lorimer

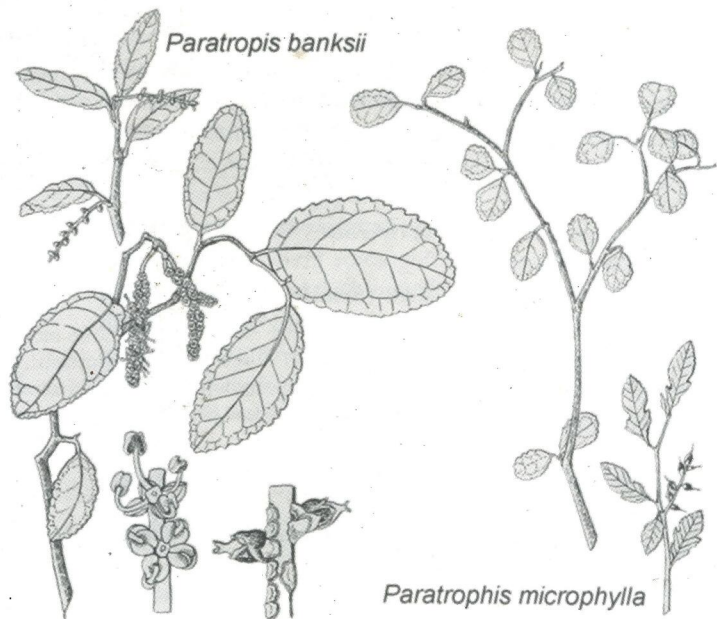
## New insecticide = bee poisoning

While checking my hives on the manuka one set of hives disappointed me. These came from a small kiwifruit block I have pollinated for more than twenty years and were bubbling over with bees when moved onto the manuka. A month later the population had diminished and the bees had only filled two of the three frames with honey, whereas comparable hives had filled a box and needed more room. These hives showed all of the signs of a definite 'brood-break'.

So what was different this year? The owner couldn't get his usual pre-blossom spray to control scale so used a new product the local stockist was calling "bee friendly". Unfortunately it was systemic, which means the poison can come out in the pollen in very tiny amounts — not enough to kill an adult bee but perhaps enough to kill larva. The spray went on fourteen days before the bees went in. The product was Calypso® and in February its HSNO designation was changed to with a warning "Harmful to terrestrial invertebrates".

I haven't talked to the owner yet to determine what amount he used, but generally he's very careful with this sort of thing and records everything for checking purposes. No matter what the cause, more and more of these systemic poisons are coming onto the market and in some way they are going to affect our bees.

New Zealand authorities approve all chemicals and they generally rubber-stamp the testing undertaken by the chemical companies that determine toxicity. The problem with insecticide testing is that they are tested only on adult bees



to determine the LD50 (the amount that kills 50%) — they are not tested on "day-old larva". We should be pushing our authorities to insist on a test that determines the toxicity on day-old larvae as well as adult bees. That way when they state it's "bee safe", we will be confident that it is safe for bees.

- Frank Lindsay

## NIWA's climate outlook until April 2006

Westerly wind patterns over New Zealand during February–April are likely to be weaker than normal. Air temperatures are expected to be average or above average in all districts. Rainfalls are expected to be near normal in most places, but normal or below normal in the southwest of the North Island and the east of the South Island. Normal or below normal soil moisture levels and below normal streamflows are expected in the southwest of the North Island and the east of the South Island, with mostly normal soil moisture and stream flow conditions elsewhere.

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