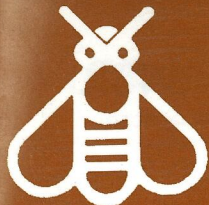


Volume 14 No. 7



August 2006

The New Zealand

BeeKeeper

New Zealand
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Photo supplied by Linda and Roger Bray.

Were these the warmest homes in Canterbury?

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Vice President's Report

The last month has been very hectic on a number of fronts. Varroa in Nelson has had a dramatic impact on Nelson beekeepers. Both Jim Edwards and Jane Lorimer have visited Nelson to assist the beekeepers down there. Those in the North Island will remember the impact, shock and horror of finding varroa in their hives for the first time. Now at least we know a lot about the parasite and how to treat it. In New Zealand we are indeed fortunate with the number of options for treatment. However, before Nelson beekeepers can make plans on how to cope, we have to wait for MAF and Biosecurity New Zealand to complete their assessment and make the decision for eradication, containment, or do nothing. Then the rest of the South Island will inevitably have to cope with varroa. Some hope for eradication; others feel that it has never worked overseas, so why try here? We wait. In the meantime, it is a great opportunity for those close to the problem to brush up their knowledge of how to deal with varroa, or visit some North Island beekeepers and see how they cope.

The Management Agency has been working with AgriQuality on the contract for the new year. This year we have built on the past documents and incorporated detail and information that the Management Agency needs to help implement the strategy. The final sign-off of the contract will be done in Hamilton around Conference time.

As we come up to Conference, it is an opportunity to recognise the work of Roger Bray from Canterbury. Roger is standing

down from Executive. During his time on the Council he has put great effort into ensuring that Executive and the Management Agency perform. Thanks, Roger for your work, but we know that as you and Linda pick up on managing the NBA Library you will ensure that the great asset of information will be available to all members.

Chris Taiaroa has passed the baton to Roger and Linda: details were in the annual report circulated to all members. Thanks, Chris, for all your work over the past six years.

The Waikato Branch Conference committee made all the final plans and details for this year's conference. Jane was also very involved with this planning. Those who attend will see the result: it promises to be a grand event. *[Editor's note: it was indeed a grand event. You can read about the launch of the improved NBA website on page 4, and read more about Conference in the September issue.]*

Remember to check the new format on our website www.nba.org.nz. Members can sign in and place a password for identification. Then Jim Edwards as website manager will check and approve access to the members-only area. We have endeavoured to make it simple to use and easy to locate the required information, especially if you are an NBA member. If members have items of interest, or interesting links, please let Jim Edwards know.

- Neil Farrer



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Varroa Agency Incorporated News

Update from Varroa Agency Chairman Duncan Butcher, 18 July 2006

Varroa surveillance work for 2006 in the South Island is almost complete at the time of writing; my thanks to the many people involved in making sure this was carried out swiftly.

The AP2 inspectors have responded well to the call to get the sticky boards from hives in the South Island surveillance programme in quickly for testing. This testing gives us a comprehensive picture of the varroa status of hives throughout the South Island.

The teams of beekeepers and AgriQuality staff working on the Biosecurity New Zealand varroa incursion response in the Nelson area have done an excellent job over the last month. To date there have been 41 confirmed sites infected with varroa — 39 within the 10km zone around Nelson and two at Tapawera, 30 kilometres from Nelson.

While the varroa incursion in Nelson is naturally very disappointing, it should be noted that it was this effective routine surveillance work that successfully detected the presence of varroa in a Nelson beehive, setting off the current varroa biosecurity response in the area.

At the point of press, we are awaiting the Minister of Agriculture's decision on how best to respond to the varroa incursion, with options of eradication or setting up control points in the South Island.

As far as the Varroa Agency Inc is concerned, we believe eradication can be achieved, and we're hoping the Minister will be approaching the incursion along these lines. If, as it currently appears, the incursion is confined to a relatively small area, it would seem now is the best chance we have of control.

If eradication is the approach, then our initial thinking about the options of surveillance in the future would be to look at more regular surveillance in and around port and airport areas. There is also an opportunity to install sentinel hives in these areas to monitor varroa, and we would also consider monitoring twice in one year in targeted areas.

If the decision is made to go to the control process, the role, if any, of the Varroa Agency would have to be looked at.

The Varroa Agency's website www.varroa.org.nz is up and running, and we're putting varroa incursion updates and news from Biosecurity New Zealand on the site regularly. Please telephone Biosecurity New Zealand on 0800 80 99 66 for information on the varroa incursion, and on movement controls and procedures.



New website launched

Jim Edwards launched the new website during the seminar at the annual conference in Hamilton. The address is the same as before: www.nba.org.nz.

The site has a new look and changed format that was developed by the Publications Committee. The information already loaded is quite comprehensive and more content is planned. If you know of information that could be there, please advise Jim and he will arrange for it to be included.

Our website is designed to give members access to information and facilities that are not available to people who are not members of the NBA. This can now therefore become another real benefit of your membership. The website has resources and news items that will not be available to the public.

The website is also the window into the NBA for the public, so it is important that there is good information exists to make it an interesting site to visit. We will use it to promote our Association and to attract people to beekeeping.



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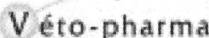
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About the apiary

Beekeepers and some growers are telling me there are indications that it's going to be an early spring, well, in the North Island at least. (Has the snow gone in the South yet?) It was quite remarkable, after days of gale force southerlies and constant rain that flooded parts of the lower North Island last month, to see the bees in my little nucs out flying in the beautiful days that followed.

Checking hives

At this time of the year, commercial beekeepers are going around their hives checking that they have sufficient food. They don't have a choice: they're working to a plan and have to get the work done.

Hobbyists, on the other hand, can pick their day to do a quick check of the hive. Pick a mild day when the bees are flying. Before lifting the roof, take a few minutes to observe the bees coming back into the hive. Are they carrying pollen? This is a sign that there is brood to feed. Is the bottom board dry so the bees land and can go straight in? Does the hive still gently slope forward so the rain runs off? Is the entrance obstructed by grass? What about the bees that are coming back a little chilled and land short: can they walk back into the hive or are they doomed to die in front of the hive? Put a board on an angle, leaning against the landing board, so those landing short can walk in.

Now we want to determine how much honey is stored in the hive. It's important that once the queen starts brood rearing,


building up the population towards the main flow, she should not be crammed in any way as this will reduce her laying and therefore affect the bee population available to bring in the nectar, so keep an eye on the food reserves. The ideal is to have a minimum of three frames of honey (three weeks' to a month's supply for a hive with two supers of bees) right through to the honey flow.

Feeding hives

At this time of the year most commercial beekeepers feed all hives, as they can't afford to make a mistake and lose any. (They also remove more honey from the hive in the autumn than hobby beekeepers). They may be on a three-weekly cycle of inspection, so they feed up to 15 litres of sugar syrup at a time.

For the hobby beekeeper, it's a matter of feeding only if it becomes necessary. The system we use to determine the hive's weight is called 'hefting'. Place your hand in the top super's handhold while standing beside the hive and gently lift. The hive should still be heavy with stored honey but if it lifts easily, you will have to investigate and start feeding if it's short. This is the equivalent of a week's food for a strong hive. The only way this procedure goes wrong is if the hive had an old queen going into winter and the hive is full of pollen. With an old queen in the hive in the late autumn, she may not have been producing enough brood to consume the majority of pollen so the bees store a lot more than normal. A super of pollen can weigh the same as honey, so this can

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give you a false impression of the weight of the hive. If you are not totally sure, lift the roof and look in the hive. Make sure you pull frames out to see what honey is there.

If you need to feed, use white sugar to make up a sugar syrup 1:1 by weight. Fill a container seven-eighths full with sugar and then slowly pour in boiling water to the top. Stir to dissolve all the sugar and you'll have a thick syrup. For a small hive, use an inverted feeder over the brood nest. Use an Agee jar or similar for a weak or small hive. For a strong hive, use a frame feeder to the side of the brood nest. Put in a lot of pig fern or gutter guard material so the bees don't drown in the trough. This is all that you need to do but if you wish you can lift the roof to check that the hive has adequate ventilation. The hive should be reasonably dry inside. If you are feeding, then perhaps more ventilation will be required, as the bees will be giving off more moisture converting the sugar syrup.

Assembling gear safely

During inclement weather a lot of commercial beekeepers are making and assembling new or replacement gear. Some will be using saw-benches for hours at a time. At meetings I used to see beekeepers with the odd missing finger and thought how careless they must have been, but it can happen so easily.

You need to keep this sort of accident in mind all the time when using a saw-bench. I'm safety conscious: I use eye protection, earmuffs, push-sticks, guards in place and jigs to stop pieces of wood being flung backwards into my stomach, etc. You get into a rhythm, occasionally rechecking measurements as they can slowly creep out during the day. All the time you concentrate on the job and at the end of the day, the job is finished, you relax and flick your hand across the front of the saw blade on the way to turning off the saw, and the damage is done in less than a second. The saw has no brain, it doesn't decide if what is put in front of it is your thumb or a piece of wood, and your flesh doesn't offer much resistance.

Luckily when this happened to me a few years back, I only just ripped off the skin in a few places on my thumb, so a few stitches and about a week later I was back working again with a bit of plastic hose pipe covering the whole thumb. It's not until you have had this sort of accident that you realise just how much you bump your thumb in the course of a day's work.

The point is: don't work when you are tired. Take breaks at regular intervals during the day, and at all times watch that blade. If you have to put a little weight onto the wood to move it through the saw, your blade is blunt and should be changed for a sharp one. More accidents happen when the blade is blunt. Let's not have accidents this winter.

For the hobbyist beekeeper, it's easier and cheaper in the long run to purchase everything and assemble it a month ahead of when it's required.

Supers are generally made of untreated, kiln-dried pine but there are other timbers available if you look for them. Pine will only last five to seven years if put straight on the hive; it needs protecting with some kind of preservative. One of the best for the hobbyist is Metalex® (Copper Naphthalate), which is readily available and easy to use. Use one part Metalex® to five parts turpentine and soak for 24 hours so that it penetrates

right into the timber. Then the timber should be wrapped in plastic to prevent the turps evaporating, so that the Metalex® keeps going into the timber. Painting only, doesn't provide an effective long-lasting protection. After another week or so the supers should be nailed while still damp and left to dry for another six weeks before they are painted. This takes a lot of time, effort and material and can be costly if you are only preserving one or two supers; however, you end up with a super that will last for 15 years. Today some manufacturers are selling supers already protected. Another alternative for the small beekeeper is to contact a commercial beekeeper in your area who has a wax dipper and ask if you can put your supers through when he/she is dipping their supers. You can perhaps help them for a few hours for this service.

When assembling and nailing supers, it's important to use 50–60 mm flat head nails. Put at least six on each corner (three in the front and three on the sides) and if you can, slightly skew nail them; i.e., put them in at a slight angle to give greater strength. Use a square or a right angle corner to hold the super square while it's being nailed. Some glue the joints first but often this breaks down from the moisture given off by the hive.

Things to do this month

Prepare for new season's work: check queen-raising equipment, feeding systems, grass spraying gear, and foundation in extracting frames. Check that your hives aren't starving.

Monitor varroa natural fall. Estimates are not reliable at this time of the year but you can get an indication by multiplying the daily mite fall by 100 to get the total mite population. If greater than six mites per day, the colony is likely to collapse before the end of the season. Work out mite levels, when your crop comes on and when you should be treating. Try to not let the untreated period extend beyond 50 days.

Bad luck that varroa has been found in the South Island. Beekeepers there should have already been reviewing the handbook *Control of Varroa – a guide for New Zealand Beekeepers*, by Mark Goodwin and Cliff Van Eaton.

- Frank Lindsay



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Telford Rural Polytechnic Annual Report, July 2006

**Dr David Woodward, Head of Apiculture,
Telford Rural Polytechnic**

Courses delivered

Four students enrolled in the Telford Certificate in Apiculture Level 3 (includes National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 and 3) with four students graduating on 25 November 2005. Cory Rusbatch and Andrew Velman were awarded distinctions. David Beuke and Phillip Burgess were awarded a pass (4 enrolled, 4 completed). One student is enrolled in the full-year course and one in the National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 (half-year course) for 2006.

Four students started the Telford Certificate in Queen Bee Rearing Level 4 course in 2005 and four students graduated. Cory Rusbatch was awarded a distinction; Andrew Velman and David Beuke were awarded merits and Phillip Burgess a pass (four enrolled, four completed). This course is now an integral part of the Certificate in Apiculture programme. Three students enrolled in this course in 2006 and two students have completed the course requirements to date.

Four students started the second intake of the National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 at Tairāwhiti Polytechnic, Gisborne on 3 October 2005 and will complete their course requirements on 14 July 2006. One further student graduated from the first intake of nine students in 2004, making the completion rate 78% (nine enrolled, seven completed). Nine

students enrolled in the National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 at Ohura Prison during 2005. There have been no completions to date and given the closure of the Ohura Prison, completions seem unlikely (nine enrolled, no completions). Phil Logue tutored the inmates, but is no longer working for Correctional Services.

There were 32 students enrolled on the Certificate in Apiculture Knowledge Level 3, correspondence course, during 2005. Five students graduated from the new one-year programme during 2005 (32 enrolled, five completed in 2005, others may complete in 2006). Currently, there are 30 students enrolled in the course for 2006.

Four students enrolled on the Queen Bee Rearing Knowledge Level 4, correspondence course, during 2005. Four students completed the course over the last 12 months (four enrolled, four just completed).

Total enrolments

A total of 23.6 EFTS (Equivalent Full Time Students) was achieved across all apiculture courses for 2005.

Bursaries and Awards for 2005

Cory Rusbatch was awarded the NZ Honey Industry Trust bursary of \$3,200. David Beuke was awarded the Beeline Supplies bursary of \$300. Phillip Burgess was awarded the

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Airborne Honey bursary of \$500. Cory Rusbatch won the S.A. and R.H. Findlay cup for Telford's ideal trainee student. Cory Rusbatch and Andrew Velman were joint winners of the Graeme Clarke cup for the best queen bee breeder. Phillip Burgess won the Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies smoker for the most improved student.

Derek Sharp won the Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies bursary of \$200 worth of beekeeping equipment for the highest overall marks on the apiculture correspondence course. Shaun McQuillan won the Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies bursary of \$100 worth of beekeeping equipment for the second highest overall marks on the apiculture correspondence course.

Risk Management Programme

The risk management programme for the Telford Honey House has been approved by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority to comply with export requirements to the EU. Stu Craib from Fulton Hogan visited the honey house with a copy of the Code of Practice and undertook a preliminary assessment of the facility and equipment. An upgrade of some equipment will be required to meet the new Code of Practice.

DECA course

A successful DECA (disease elimination conformity agreement course) was run at Telford on Saturday 20 August 2005 with 40 in attendance; 38 passed the test. The Otago branch subsidised the cost of the mailout to all registered beekeepers in the province. Another DECA course ran in Gisborne, at Tairawhiti Polytechnic, on 13 July 2005 with 11 in attendance.

South Island varroa surveillance inspection

Inspection of 192 hives in the Puerua Valley and Clydevale areas was carried out over a four-day period in May–June 2006. A range of different beekeepers was targeted. Apistan strips were introduced at a rate of two strips per full-depth box of bees and sticky boards placed on the bottom board. The Apistan strips and sticky boards were removed after 24 hours and sent to AgriQuality for examination. No varroa have been detected to date.

Tairawhiti Polytechnic

Video conferencing facilities are being used to link with students at Tairawhiti Polytechnic to deliver theory classes by video. This facility has potential for distance training. Tairawhiti and Telford are looking at running a National Certificate in Apiculture Level 3 course starting in September 2006.

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BK301

E-learning

A number of new primary industry courses have been developed for upper secondary students to undertake short courses in a range of subjects by video conferencing. A 20-credit introductory apiculture course is being developed and should be available in late 2006.

Student activities

From 3–7 July 2005, the students participated in a field trip that included: Pleasant Point Apiaries (Paul Bartrum), New Zealand Honey Producers Co-operative Ltd, Honey Valley NZ Ltd, NZ Beeswax Ltd, NBA Conference Christchurch (5–6 July), Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies, Leon Havill, Rangiora (Honey Mead Production), Dr Barry Donovan, Canterbury Agricultural and Science Centre, Lincoln (native and introduced bee species) and Airborne Honey Ltd.

Students completed two weeks' work experience with commercial beekeepers in September 2005. Student activities included beehive construction, plant collections, major projects, mechanics, Food Safety and Growsafe courses. Students removed honey from 100 hives from five apiary sites at Clydevale, using brush and bee blower methods. The honey was uncapped and extracted and students learnt the full operation of the honey house. At the end of the extraction season the plant was decommissioned involving cleaning and repairs. Honey samples from drums were taken to test for AFB and sent to Ruakura for testing.

Annual Disease Return (ADR)

Telford currently owns 321 hives on 16 apiary sites of which 290 are managed by Fergus McKenzie, a local commercial beekeeper. No AFB was detected in these hives, with the ADR forwarded to AgriQuality on 1 June 2006.

Agriculture students

All Certificate in Agriculture students were given two days of apiculture training both theory and practical, covering bee biology, hive equipment, agrichemicals and pollination. Students sat an assessment on these topics as part of their course requirement.

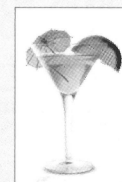


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Southern Cross Carniolan update

Since my last Carniolan update in *The New Zealand Beekeeper* (cover story May 2005), we have made an amazing amount of progress. We now have a 'closed population' with a very broad genetic base in appearance and in measurable physical characteristics (morphology) as Carniolan as the stock in Germany and Austria from which the semen was sourced.

This population still has to be seen as a 'New World' Carniolan population as it was created from carefully selected Italian foundation stock, using only successive semen importations from the 'Old World'. While the Italian foundation stock has been diluted by half with each of the four successive semen importations and further diluted with selections for carnica-type morphology, this Italian material will still influence the closed test population. It is almost Carniolan, but not quite, and still to a degree intermediate in behaviour between Italian and Carniolan. We see this as an advantage because it will increase the amount of genetic variation within the population: without variation, stock improvement is impossible. We have gone to extremes during the importation phase of this programme to maximise variation — using large numbers of breeders (a minimum of 15, maximum of 25) for each importation, bringing in large volumes of semen (150 doses each time) from as many sources as logistically possible. The semen was sourced from three different institutes: two in Germany and one in Austria. We made this effort because we knew it was crucial to the future viability of the programme that it built from as broad a genetic base as possible.

Getting this far has really only got us to the beginning when it comes to working with and improving this breeding population under New Zealand conditions. When we set up this programme with the help of the Sustainable Farming Fund, it was given the grand title of the 'Varroa Tolerance Improvement Project (VTIP)'. The name says it all. The aim of this project is to significantly improve the varroa tolerance of the bee stocks it works with. Carniolans are the vehicle we chose to achieve that aim. We chose Carniolans for several reasons: (1) we believed that existing commercial bee stocks lacked enough variation to allow for any significant improvement in varroa tolerance; (2) we believed that Carniolans were inherently more varroa tolerant; (3) we believed that through Carniolan semen importations we could create a closed breeding population with sufficient variation to allow for significant stock improvement; (4) we believed Carniolans would help future proof our bee stocks against the arrival of EFB and the Tracheal mite (Carniolans are tracheal mite proof and much more resistant to EFB — and AFB for that matter — than are our yellow bees); and

(5) we wanted to offer a grey alternative — there was far too much yellow about!

We think it is remarkable that in just over two years we have gone from yellow foundation stock to a population of beautiful grey bees. It really does feel like a dream come true for us. While the road from yellow to grey has been short, the going has not always been smooth. There have been surprises, good and bad, and times when self-doubt has threatened to get the upper hand. Last season we made the decision to go exclusively Carniolan and give up the yellow bees we had been breeding for over 20 years. It was a hard call, and that self-doubt I mentioned had us questioning the wisdom of the decision at times, but from where we stand now we feel confident we made the right decision. It was made easier by knowing that our yellow bees were not being lost, but instead, going to a new home down south. For the past two seasons I have been working with the BetaBees group in Otago/Southland, and they have put Daykel Italian semen over their foundation stock both seasons. So now their closed Italian population is 75 percent Daykel, and it will live on in their capable hands. This lets us concentrate solely on breeding better Carniolans.

We are really looking forward to working with this population under New Zealand conditions, and believe we will see rapid improvement. For us this is the exciting part as we are back in control. During the importation phase we had to take what we were given. We chose the institutes from where the semen was sourced, but then it was up to them, and as we crossed from Italian to Carniolan, the hybrids expressed extreme heterosis (hybrid vigour). Heterosis makes selection difficult because you do not know if what you are seeing is heritable or not, or just the result of heterosis. With the population closed off, we now get to choose and apply the selection criteria and the rampant heterosis is quickly subsiding, making the selections much more effective. We are not ruling out further semen importations, but if they do happen they will be smaller, and will be carried out to increase variation or take advantage of improved material overseas that has come to our attention.

I mentioned that the test population is now grey and beautiful. Not only are they beautiful to look at, but are a pleasure to work as well. They are as gentle, and definitely quieter on the comb, than my yellow bees ever were. I know some of you who have worked with some of the Carniolan hybrids might find this hard to believe. The nasty temperament of some of the hybrids was one of the surprises I mentioned earlier. I expected it in any outcrosses where mellifera (our black 'bush' bees) were involved, but some very nasty bees resulted in my test population where only Italians and Carniolans were involved. The first cross (F1s: 50 percent Italian and 50 percent Carniolan) was a very good commercial bee: vigorous, with an even temperament and very productive. The F2s and the F3s were a different story. They were still vigorous and productive but their temperament was all over the place: usually nasty, sometimes very nasty. This is when the self-doubt set in. Racial hybrids are generally more ill tempered, but I think that what was different here is that the heterosis was more rampant because the material being crossed was so unrelated — semen from the Old World being used to inseminate long-isolated New World Italians. This theory is backed up by the fact that now, having passed

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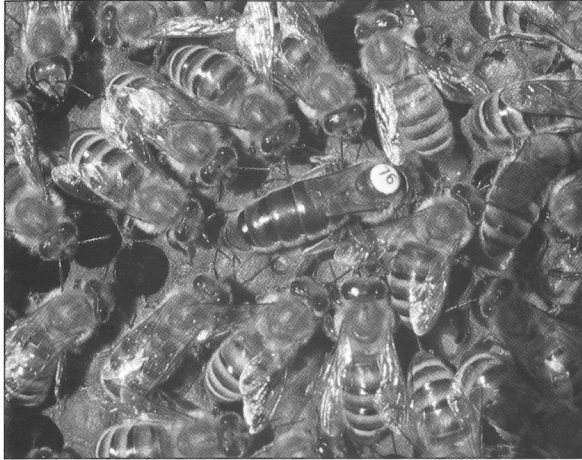
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BK12

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

through the hybrid phase to virtually pure Carniolan bees, their temperament has improved amazingly. It would have been easier to handle the nasty temperament surprise, and the self-doubt that came with it, if we hadn't released those F2s, F3s and F4s. We should have just stayed with producing F1s commercially until we got to the point we are at now. That was the original plan, but the excitement and pressure from beekeepers to release caused us to throw caution to the wind.

With hindsight, it was obviously a mistake to release those intermediate hybrids. It wasn't good public relations for



Southern Cross Carniolan queens and their workers.
Photos: David Yanke.

Carniolans, and it did give those irrationally opposed to Carniolans something to get their teeth into, but so far it is our only regret. It was interesting to watch the response to those nasty hybrids. Even though there were three races involved, it was a Carniolan problem. When our yellow bees hybridise with the black ferals (mellifera) to create very nasty bees it is never seen as an Italian problem, but instead the blame goes where it should, and that is to lay it at the feet of mellifera.

If you are thinking about switching over to Carniolans and want to avoid the potential problem of nasty hybrids, we suggest you avoid buying a breeder and requeening with cells in areas where you have no control over what those Carniolan virgins will be mating with. Choose or create an area where you or a cooperating group of beekeepers can site your mating nucs and be assured good control over matings. Requeen all the drone sources in that area with daughters of a Carniolan breeder from the previous generation to the breeder or breeders that you will be using this time around. The queens heading the drone mother hives can have mated with anything, but as long as they are daughters of a pure Carniolan breeder, then the drones they produce will be pure Carniolan (drones develop from unfertilised eggs so their genes come only from the queen, not who she mated with). Before you inflict a wholesale racial transformation on your outfit, you should trial and become familiar and comfortable with running Carniolans. Carniolans are a different bee to manage, but they have the potential to make your beekeeping more profitable.

- David Yanke
Southern Cross Carniolans
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BK273

North Island Only

Level 3 beekeeping course for East Coast

Telford Rural Polytechnic and Tairāwhiti Polytechnic have again joined forces, this time to offer a Level 3 Beekeeping course to the Gisborne region. This follows on from two Level 2 courses over the past two years, which have resulted in 12 people from the East Coast completing the 'Beekeeper's Assistant' qualification.

The new course being offered is the higher-level National Certificate in Apiculture 'Leading Hand' qualification. This course is Unit Standard based and is suitable for anyone who has completed Level 2 studies, or has had sufficient practical experience in the beekeeping industry to commence their studies with the more theory-based Level 3 programme.

The programme is structured to allow people who are already employed to do the course, and those who live at a distance from Gisborne. "We are running the course in 12 blocks over an 11-month period, so most of the commitment for attendance is on weekends, with only one of those blocks being a five-day event," says course controller, Dr David Woodward from Telford Rural Polytechnic. "Students complete assignments and work on their own or their employer's hives between classes, and follow the natural cycle of the beehive throughout the year." The course starts with a weekend block on 9-10 September 2006, and finishes in July 2007.

The course covers such diverse topics as queen rearing, bee diseases, plant identification, managing a honey house,

food safety and computing. Further information is available from Dr David Woodward at Telford Rural Polytech (0800 TELFORD) or Nisbet Smith at Tairāwhiti Polytech (0508 POLYTECH).

- Nisbet Smith



Left to right: Paul Badger (Apiculture tutor, Tairāwhiti Polytechnic) and Dr David Woodward (Head of Apiculture Department, Telford Rural Polytechnic). Photo courtesy of the Gisborne Herald.



Tairāwhiti Polytechnic

te kuratini o te tairāwhiti

National Certificate in Apiculture

Level 3, Leading Hand

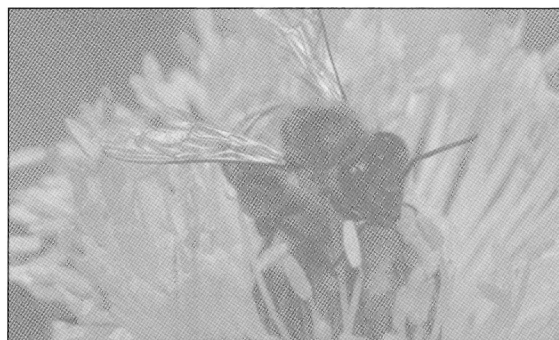
Tairāwhiti Polytechnic and Telford Rural Polytechnic

Part time course - includes 12 blocks (mainly weekends)

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Subjects

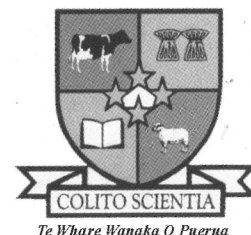
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For more details contact:

Nisbet Smith (Tairāwhiti Polytechnic)
Phone (06) 869 0836 or
0508 POLYTECH (765 983)
extn 736

or Dr David Woodward
(Telford Rural Polytechnic)
0800 TELFORD (835 3673)



Beekeeper's memoirs: New Zealand honeys

[This article was found amongst beekeeping memorabilia in preparation for Conference 2006, and was written by the late Ron Mossop.]



Ron Mossop (left) and Dudley Lorimer (right).

The Beekeeper's Journal has some excellent honey recipes but unfortunately I developed diabetes late in life and can now only drool over these recipes. There is no doubt that honey is good for most people, but it is not good for diabetics as it contains about 31 percent glucose, which happens to be the sugar that diabetics cannot handle.

One of the symptoms of diabetes is a thirst that no amount of water (or beer) will quench, and another is rapidly failing strength. These are complaints that many beekeepers experience after a hard day's work in the summer time. If you do decide to have a blood test and find that you have diabetes, I would advise you to take the matter seriously unless you want to become as blind as a bat and get about like Douglas Bader.

Women also get diabetes. One day when I was testing my blood my wife wandered into the room. I offered to give her a diabetes test. She declined my kind offer and no amount of persuasion would change her mind. There is probably a law against a man slapping a half-Nelson on his wife and taking a blood sample so I refrained from doing so; as a consequence she left the room hurriedly. Within five seconds she was back again and triumphantly told me to test some blood on her leg. I did so and found her blood sugar to be normal. She told me that after leaving the room she stopped to adjust some long curtains but our playful kitten thought she was having a game and leaped out and latched onto her leg, hence the five-second change of mind. I had heard that women change their minds a fair bit but five seconds must be some sort of record.

Beekeepers get a lot of free advertising for their honey. There must be dozens of romantic songs written about bees and honey. The word honey is a common term of endearment

in this and many other countries. When my wife calls me 'honey' I get very nervous and wonder what new scheme she has in mind this time.

There was a time when Rewarewa honey producers got considerably less for their honey than white clover producers — it became a North Island versus South Island thing. On one of my trips to the South Island we were enjoying buttered scones and a cup of tea at a white honey producer's home. I had the audacity to suggest that Rewarewa honey would one day be worth as much as clover. This was too much for my host, who choked on a piece of scone and if it hadn't been for his wife leaping forward and giving him the back-thumping treatment, he would have expired before our eyes. When he recovered I smartly changed the subject.

About 30 years ago Tauranga held a week-long Trade Fair. The Bay of Plenty Branch decided to participate and let the people of the Bay know about the many floral sources of honey produced in New Zealand. The Honey Marketing Board packed a large range of honey in glass jars. We did a deal with the HMA and were given the honey at wholesale rates, with the profit going to Branch funds. Not all honey was a pure line; when I questioned this I was told on several occasions that the honey was predominantly one type of honey as labelled. It could be composed of 51 percent of the labelled honey but the other 49 percent could be some other honeys that blended in well. We had Roy Patterson's ingenious mechanical beekeeper working: it seemed to draw children and their parents to our stall and helped sales. We used a wooden spatula to give everyone a taste of the various honeys. The beekeepers' wives did most of the work on the stall and seemed to enjoy themselves. When we tallied up our sales we were surprised to find that Kamahi was the top seller. The profit was one hundred pounds, eleven shillings and eleven pence, and for once our Branch had a healthy bank balance.

- Ron Mossop

[Editor's note: Ron Mossop (1921–2005), founder of Mossop's Honey, wrote this article some years ago. Ron was a long-time member of the NBA, starting with the Waikato Branch, and was a life member of the Bay of Plenty Branch. His obituary, written by his son Neil and daughter-in-law Wendy, is in the April 2006 issue of The New Zealand Beekeeper.]



From the colonies



Auckland Branch

Well, back to work again after a much-anticipated three-week holiday, the last week of it spent in the South Island. I must admit we did romanticise about keeping hives in the South amongst the snow and the picturesque lakes without the threat of varroa. That idea was somewhat tarnished as later that night the discovery of varroa was announced to be in the top of the 'mainland'. Talking of varroa, this time we'll be trying a third alternative treatment (Apiguard), with which various beekeepers have had mixed results.

The bees at home are getting into the rocket in our garden. It's flowering heavily at present and growing like a weed as it spreads across the garden, which is all fine as it tastes good too. Our crop of gorse isn't looking too bad either.

Anyway, back at work and onto the table saw to crank out a few hundred boxes, scrape propolis, clean out gutters and work our way through the 'things to fix' list. We managed to get all sites wintered down before our holiday break and will probably start our first feeding round in late July after Conference is over.

We've been lucky enough to come back to a few new toys around the place; i.e., a brand new truck, quad bike and a shed to keep them in. So that put a smile on my dial, as the seat in the old truck had somewhat disintegrated beneath me, while the electric windows had a mind of their own — either permanently up, or jammed down.

- James Harrison

Hawkes Bay Branch

Like most places June was wetter and colder than normal. Unlike much of the South Island, the lower areas in Hawkes Bay have come off relatively unscathed, but unfortunately higher areas such as Pukititiri, Putere and Waikaremoana have suffered from extensive snow damage, with some farms without power for up to two weeks, and huge areas of bush broken and battered. Hopefully this will not have too great an effect on the Rewarewa and other bush flows but it is going to be a problem. I have had reports from one area that even the willow trees have been flattened.

- John Berry

Southern North Island Branch

Winter is really here with cold and very wet weather. Wanganui, Manawatu and Wairarapa have just had a hammering with rain, slips, blocked roads and the like, all of which makes beekeeping very difficult. I read in this morning's paper the update of closed roads and roads said to be accessible only by 4x4 wheel drive vehicles. I realised that I have been using some of these roads for the past four days in my light Toyota truck with no problems, just driving carefully through mud on the roads. I guess that many others are doing the same. I have not heard of any disasters with hives to date.

We are thinking of the Nelson beekeepers who are coming to terms with varroa incursion and have a lot of sympathy for them. The Chinese saying "may you live in interesting times" is very appropriate, with honey imports from Australia going to happen and varroa found in the South Island. We New Zealand beekeepers, especially from the South Island, will have to make a lot of changes to the management of our hives and our business structures to combat these developments.

Taranaki Report

Taranaki beekeepers report that "we discussed hive health. It seems that members with hives close to the coast had fresh nectar in their hives and the general stores look OK, while members with hives closer to the mountain reported there was no fresh nectar in the hives. Gorse has been flowering well, giving the bees a good source of pollen. No one reported any problems with varroa. We discussed ADRs and who was able to sign off the COI. There was a question if and when people without DECAs would no longer be able to sign off their own COI." (NB: beekeeper owners who receive a COI must get someone with a DECA to inspect the hives and certify no AFB was found.)

Interesting story from an ex-Auckland beekeeper

"Over thirty years ago when I brought two hives down from Auckland I had to obtain a permit to shift them. I had to examine the brood for foulbrood and to fill out the form sent that they were clear of foulbrood. When I returned this form and stated that they were clear of foulbrood, a permit was granted. It is the beekeeper who has the spores endemic in his gear who spreads it.

I am writing this thanks to a swarm of bees and the skill of the operating team. I was on the back lawn when I felt pain in my back. I took a couple of steps and went down on the concrete at the back door with excruciating pain in my stomach. My aorta had burst and my arterial blood was being pumped into my stomach cavity. I had no sooner gone down than my next-door neighbour, who had come home for lunch, came over with a cell phone on his belt and said the bees are swarming. I said that there was nothing that I could do now. The bees were a swarm that had taken up residence in his compost maker. He phoned St John and I struck a good ambulance crew who diagnosed what was wrong with me and who radioed the hospital. I went straight off the ambulance and onto the operating table. There was a surgical team of two doctors, two anaesthetists and a team of nurses. I was told that I would die if I was not operated on immediately, and that I had a 60% chance of recovering from the operation. I lost that swarm of bees but that is why I am back with bees — ex Auckland beekeeper, now Southern North Island."

- Neil Farrer

Nelson Branch

This is probably the hardest report I have ever had to write from Nelson. When varroa was discovered to be in two Nelson apiaries (Stoke) in June during routine surveillance, local beekeepers were more shocked by the timing of the

incursion rather than the fact that it had finally arrived. I think most of us secretly thought (hoped) that we had at least another two years before we would have an incursion. The irony of having paid our annual Varroa Pest Management Strategy hive levy (to keep the South Island free of varroa) just two weeks previously escaped few! To date 41 apiaries have tested positive for varroa in the Nelson area.

This past month following the varroa incursion has been full of surveillance and surmising: how far had the mite spread, what would the movement controls be, and would there be an eradication attempt.

Most North Island beekeepers will be able to identify with our experience as they were the guinea pigs in terms of testing the best techniques for treating varroa in New Zealand conditions, and we already appreciate your support.

At the time of writing, many Nelson beekeepers don't yet know what lies ahead in this beekeeping season. Despite lots of sunny days and a low rainfall, the exceptionally cold winter has hampered the surveillance process and also made a lot of our hives light on stores for this time of the year. We are now allowed to feed sugar (by permit) to hives within the movement control area, except when the hives fall within the 10-km radius of any of the mite incursions. Already beekeepers are wanting to move more hives and start queen rearing, especially for the early pollination that starts in September. By the time you read this, all of New Zealand is likely to know the recommendations that have been presented to Government and what support the Government will give. We recognise that it has been hard too for beekeepers in the rest of the South Island who want more information on what is happening here with the varroa incursion.

I have personally been disappointed by some of media reports related to our meetings. I know that it is not uncommon for individuals to be misquoted in the paper, but I have also felt that given the emotive nature of the eradication issue, no beekeeper has the right to publicly speak on behalf of the others, as the feelings on this issue are extremely diverse. It is interesting to note that of those beekeepers who do support an eradication attempt, I have not spoken to any who actually believe it would be successful! The emails of information and support on the New Zealand beekeepers list (NZBKprs) have been helpful. AgriQuality and Biosecurity New Zealand must be commended for their professional approach related to their media reports.

- Merle Moffitt

Canterbury Branch

June has turned out to contain all the winter we need this year: on 12 June in central Canterbury we awoke to 50 cm of snow and no power. There wasn't much to do except feed the firewood into the fire at a faster rate than usual. We had access back in two days and power back in three. We considered ourselves lucky compared to our southern neighbours, who were without power for a week and lost numerous sheds.

Once we could get around the following week, we took the time to check apiaries behind electric fences, which has turned out to be well worth the effort. Here's hoping that the worst

of the winter weather is behind us and everyone got off as lightly as we did. Still, I can't help comparing this winter with 1992 — a early June snowfall, cold weather, and then a large dump of snow in late August.

- Brian Lancaster



Completing the RMP

[After completing the template for Bulk Storage of Honey, I read the following Editorial from the New Zealand Beekeepers' Journal, April 1st 1918, and thought it might interest our readers. — Fiona O'Brien]

Benzine tins

Recently we made a few remarks relative to the use of benzine tins for the exporting of our honey to England, which we stated was a retrograde step, and one likely to do the industry a great deal of harm unless very great care was taken in getting the tins perfectly clean. Letters have appeared showing various methods adopted by different men. Some use dry heat and vaporise the spirit; some use hot water, others use cold, and they each or all may be effective. We do not know, but hope they are, for the sake of the suppliers, if not for the reputation of New Zealand honey on the Home market. The Editor has been accused of being a bit of an alarmist on the point, and in the present issue Mr. Luke puts in a plea for their extended use, and we feel it is necessary to go a little further in the matter.

We will grant that by taking great care you can rid the tin of any taint of benzine and a press lid has been fitted in at the top, and now what have you got? At the very best you have got a discarded benzine tin as a container for a first-class foodstuff, and to our thinking second-hand containers for selling any commodity is a very poor policy. Mr. Luke makes a point in the comparison of cost, which, if we were only getting the original guaranteed price of 4d. per lb., would hold good; but the first-class honey supplied last season has already received 7d. per lb. more for that honey, and will get 9d. per lb. advance this season, we are complaining because we have to spend about 1/4d. per lb. extra in providing a tin that is worthy of our produce.

We should like a few gentlemen to have been with us when visiting one of the packing depots of the H.P.A. recently, and seen what some people's idea is of a slight easing of the regulations governing the export of honey. The tins were NOT entirely free from rust, and the cases—well, an attempt had been made to clean the ends, and they would have looked better had they been left entirely alone, as they had been scraped with some blunt tool, and the brand was half on and half off, and the whole package was a distinct failure as a container for a first-class foodstuff.

Editor: Mr Fred C Baines, Katikati



Obituary: Jim Thompson

8 May 1925—29 May 2006

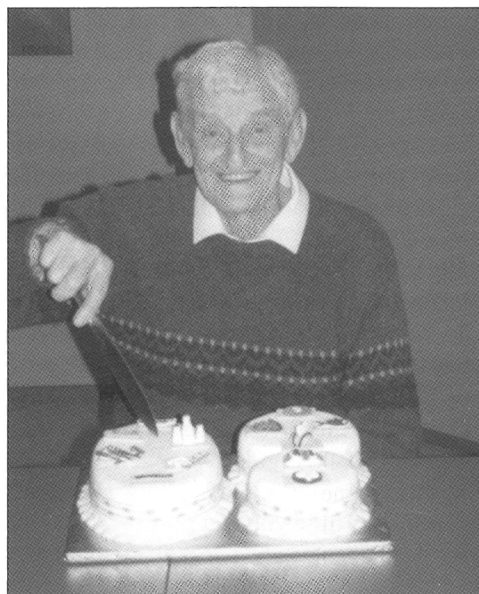
Jim Thompson was involved in many organisations and always gave his best, and was praised for his efforts. Among them was his interest in bees, which started over 20 years ago. His wife, Elsie, recalls that after listening to a radio broadcast about bees, Jim decided to become involved as a hobby and they became a large part of his life.

Jim's first hive came from a swarm in Tuakau and he gradually built up his hive numbers to 90. His hives were on sites on properties in Motion Road and Ostrich Farm Road. Jim's carpentry skills were a great help to him as he was able to construct his own bee boxes. Jim was described by those associated with him as being very thorough in his work.

Jim made many friends in the beekeeping world and became active in the Franklin Beekeepers Club. Over the years, he held all positions of responsibility. He often wrote articles for beekeeping publications and organised a stand at the Franklin A&P Show.

For seven years, Jim was secretary for the National Beekeepers' Association and was a life member of the Auckland Branch. Through the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Jim organised a bee survey for American foulbrood in the Waikato and Auckland areas. Jim attended the NBA conference in Auckland in 2001.

A long time friend, Ian Browning, was associated with him over a considerable period and said he was a pleasure to work with.



Jim on his 80th birthday.

Over the years, Jim assisted many beekeepers with advice and conducted night classes at the Pukekohe High School for four years. He also helped at the Papakura Field Days.

Throughout Jim's beekeeping days, Elsie always gave him 100 percent support, including collecting honey and assisting with his work for conferences and meetings.

- Ernie Alexander
Pukekohe

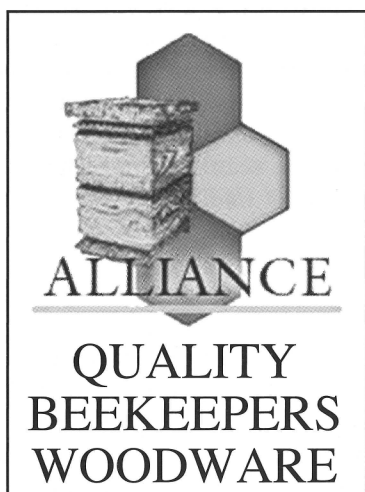


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Honeybee nutrition

John Black
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation,
Australia

Major review findings

- The productivity of honeybees within Australia can be affected adversely by three main issues relating to nutrition:
 - (i) The 'skinny bee' syndrome, which occurs particularly when honeybees work eucalyptus species with high nectar flows and small quantities or poor quality pollen. The number of bees within the colony and their vitality fall markedly with this syndrome.
 - (ii) The inability to exploit new honey flows due to inadequate colony size prior to flowering caused by a previous 'skinny bee' syndrome, prolonged periods without flowering plants or following winter.
 - (iii) The severity of bee diseases, particularly nosema, American and European foulbrood and the varroa mite is increased during periods of poor food supply and high hive activity.
- The nutritional status of a colony has a marked effect on the growth and development of individual bees, their lifespan, foraging capacity, brood rearing, sex differentiation and resistance to diseases. The protein content of individual bees has been recommended, particularly in Australia, as a means for assessing the nutritional status of individual colonies.
- There are many reports on the weight and protein contents of honeybees at different stages of development. The variation in published values for protein content is particularly large ranging from 21–76% when expressed on a dry matter basis and from 11–23% when expressed on a fresh bee basis. Factors contributing to the variation include water content of bees, pollen intake, maturity of the food glands, when the bee defecated, whether the alimentary tract was removed prior to analysis and the method of analysing for protein. The effects of nutritional status on the protein content of individual bees appear to be minor and the extremely wide range reported in the literature cannot be explained by differences in nutrition. Alternatively, there is strong evidence that the weight of bees, particularly at emergence, is influenced significantly by the nutritional status of the colony. However, weight of bees at emergence is also affected by the number of nurse bees per larva, which changes with season. Measurement of dry weight of emerging bees would appear to be a more reliable procedure than protein content for assessing the nutritional status of a colony, but some allowance may need to be made for the ratio of nurse bees to larvae, which increases towards the end of the brood rearing period.
- Longevity of honeybees, as measured by the time taken for 50% of caged bees to die, has been shown to vary from -4 to +41 days when different pollen sources were compared with diets of sugar alone. Longevity can be

influenced readily by altering the nutrition of young bees, but altering the nutrition of foraging bees appears not to affect their longevity. Worker bees have been observed to have lifespans from less than 20 days to greater than 200 days. Longevity of hive bees is determined primarily by the period the bees spend in the hive before commencing foraging. It has been hypothesised that a worker bee will die once it has flown a distance of 800 km, without a decline in the efficiency of flight performance prior to death.

- The brood rearing capacity of a colony is influenced substantially by nutrient availability. Development of ovaries and the number of ovarioles per ovary in larvae are reduced under conditions of poor nutrition. Similarly, the number of eggs laid by queen bees is reduced and the sex ratio of eggs laid swings significantly in favour of females in underfed colonies. Drones from colonies with low pollen stores take longer to reach sexual maturity and there is evidence from bumblebees that the production of spermatozoa declines in undernourished colonies. Overall larval survival is reduced in poorly fed colonies with increased cannibalism, particularly of eggs and three-day old male larvae. Furthermore, larvae are capped earlier and the emerging bees are of lighter weight.
- Nectar, honeydew and pollen are the major sources of nutrients for honeybees. Variations in the quantities, chemical composition and digestibility of components of these nutrient sources are described. A large number of studies, including several in Australia, have been conducted to determine the composition of pollens. The protein content of pollens ranges from 2.9 to 53.5% and there is at least a four-fold range in the proportion of individual essential amino acids in pollen proteins. The concentration of lipids varies from almost zero to over 20% and fatty acids with chain lengths from C8 to C22 have been observed. The predominant fatty acids in most pollen sources are linoleic, palmitic and linolenic. Pollens from eucalyptus species are particularly low in lipids with most having less than 2% total lipid. A variety of sterols are also found in pollens including cholesterol and 24 methylene cholesterol.
- The carbohydrates in pollen are predominantly fibrous materials with cellulose content ranging from 1.2 to 15% and sporopollenin from 1.8 to 23%. Approximately 2% of pollen carbohydrates are soluble hemicellulose material. The starch content of pollen ranges from 2 to 3% and sugars are around 0.5%. The mineral content of pollen ranges from 1 to 6.5% and covers the range of macro and micro-elements found in plant tissue. Potassium was the most abundant mineral representing over 50% of total ash in some pollen samples. The range in content of individual minerals found in Australian pollen samples was from 3 to 20-fold. Pollens are rich in water soluble vitamins, but contain only low concentrations of fat soluble vitamins. There is a wide range in the vitamin content of pollens and several vitamins including niacin,

folic acid, ascorbic acid and pyridoxine are not stable and deteriorate over time. Freezing of pollen slowed, but did not stop the loss of vitamin activity over time.

- The composition of pollen is not constant for any plant species, but varies from site to site and year to year with many factors affecting growing conditions including soil moisture, fertility and ambient temperature.
- Adult bees commence consuming pollen within 6–10 hours from emergence. Pollen consumption reaches a peak around day 9 and falls to extremely low amounts in foraging bees. The pattern of pollen consumption follows the need for protein and other nutrients during growth and for hypopharyngeal gland activity. The weight of pollen in the midgut of worker bees increases from around 1 mg/bee at day 1 to 4 mg/bee 8–10 days after emergence. Pollen grains are digested by removal of the pollenkitt and the protoplasm, through the germination pores and by disruption of the solid wall with osmotic shock. Release of the inner protoplasm of pollen grains depends on the extent of wall disruption and results in dry matter digestibility ranging from 30 to 90%. The few measurements of pollen protein digestibility indicate that, within any pollen sample, it is less than for dry matter.
- No lipases are found in newly emerged honeybees, but the concentrations increase to reach a maximum in 8-day old bees. Substantial amounts of fatty acids, sterols and waxes are found in the faeces of bees with concentrations of oleic, palmitic, linoleic and linolenic acids being

particularly high in bee excreta. The most common sugars in pollen, fructose, glucose and sucrose are highly digested, but many other sugars are either not digested or are toxic to bees. The fibrous components of pollen are not digested and are excreted. Foraging bees, but not younger bees, possess starch digesting enzymes. Thus, starches can be utilised successfully only by foraging bees.

- The nutritional value of pollens for honeybees varies widely with floral source and between years, particularly due to variation in the amount consumed. However, some pollen sources may lack sufficient protein, individual amino acids, minerals, vitamins or lipids for maximum productivity. Other pollens may be toxic because of excess minerals, amino acids or other compounds. Visual, aromatic, tactile and metabolic cues influence the attractiveness of pollens to honeybees. Pollens in the yellow colour range are most preferred. Bees are also attracted to some portions of the acetone soluble lipid fraction of pollen and several chemical attractants have been identified. However, bees are not attracted to the volatile compounds released from pollen. Pollen aggregates that are too large are not attractive. Honeybees also demonstrate a 'nutritional wisdom' and avoid pollens that will result in a marked imbalance of metabolites in the haemolymph.
- An attempt was made within the review to quantify the nutrient requirements of honeybees. Energy requirements, expressed as requirements for glucose, were estimated



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for maintenance, hive activity, flying, thermoregulation and comb building. Based on measurements of oxygen consumption by individual bees or small groups of bees, the glucose requirement for a 40,000 bee breeding colony was estimated to be 2 kg/day and for a non-breeding colony 0.5 kg/day. These values equate to a total glucose requirement of approximately 240 kg/year for maintenance of the colony. This estimate is considerably higher than those in the published literature of 70–80 kg of honey/year. The estimate made in this review may have been high because of poor assumptions of colony dynamics, measurements of oxygen consumption being made on small groups of bees or literature values not considering the nectar metabolised by foraging bees during flight.

- Protein requirements for each stage of growth were estimated. The requirement for growth and maintenance of young nurse bees was estimated to be approximately 0.5 mg ideal protein/day and this increased to greater than 1 mg/day when food gland secretions and the efficiency of digestion and metabolism were included. Approximately 4 mg/day of good quality pollen would be required to satisfy the requirement of nurse bees. Literature estimates of colony pollen consumption vary widely from 6 to 55 kg/year. Honeybees require the same essential amino acids as mammals, but have a lower requirement of sulphur containing amino acids because of the small amount of keratin synthesised. The amino acid pattern of protein required by honeybees suggested by de Groot (1953) appears to be satisfactory, but could not be independently verified. Nevertheless, the concentration of essential amino acids suggested by de Groot (1953) added to only 28% of total protein requirements. Comparison of the amino acid pattern in pollen compared with the de Groot estimates is not satisfactory for assessing the adequacy of a specific pollen type. Estimates of the protein content of the pollen, its intake by bees and amino acid digestibility are required to determine whether daily amino acid requirements are being met.
- Honeybees have specific requirements for linoleic acid, linolenic acid and sterols. Although no estimates of requirements for the essential fatty acids could be found in the literature, the requirement for growth of bees was estimated to be 1.6 mg/g pollen for linoleic acid and 5.5 mg/g pollen for linolenic acid. However, the values need to be increased when accounting for the large amounts of these fatty acids excreted by adult bees. Sterol requirements can be met by 0.1% of either cholesterol or 24-methylene cholesterol in the diet.
- Honeybees have requirements for a large number of macro and micro minerals. However their requirements

for calcium and sodium are substantially less and their requirement for potassium substantially greater than for mammals and birds. The lower requirement for calcium results from the lack of a skeleton and the lower requirement for sodium from the lack of a sodium pump used for maintenance of body temperature in mammals. Estimates are made in the review for the individual mineral requirements of honeybees.

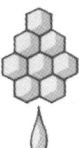
- The following vitamins have been shown to be essential for honeybees: biotin, choline, folic acid, inositol, niacin, pantothenic acid, pyridoxine, riboflavin, thiamine, vitamin B12, vitamin A and vitamin K. Although ascorbic acid can be synthesised by bees, a response in bee performance has been observed when this vitamin is added to supplements. Quantitative estimates of the requirements of bees for vitamins have not been established. However, except for the fat soluble vitamins A and K, others are easily excreted when fed in excess. Suggested vitamin concentrations required in a pollen substitute are presented in the review.

[Editor's note: excerpted from 'Honeybee Nutrition – review of research and practices', a report for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, written by John Black. The information above is from the Executive Summary, pages vii–x. The whole document can be purchased or downloaded from the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation: www.rirdc.gov.au]



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Regards to all
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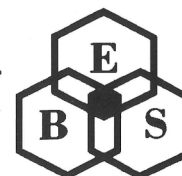


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Honey — there's more to it than you think

While honey has the reputation of being a healthy food to consume, nevertheless, some people choose not eat it because they consider it to be only a source of sugars that give no special health benefits.

Researchers in the Agriculture and Life Sciences Division at Lincoln University have recently completed the first study of the health promoting compounds of a range of honeys and honeydew produced in New Zealand. They discovered that some honeys contain health promoting compounds such as antioxidants and that the colour of the darker honeys may be an indication that they also contain high levels of minerals.

The work was carried out by Lisa Daginder, an exchange student from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Skara, Sweden who was studying at Lincoln University for three months under the supervision of Professor Geoffrey Savage of the Food Group at Lincoln University,

The honey studied all came from single varieties of flowers (mono-floral) and included manuka, clover, rata, vipers bugloss, kamahi, nodding thistle, honeydew, rewarewa, tawari and thyme provided by Airborne Honey Limited of Canterbury.

Lisa analysed the antioxidant content and activity and physical properties of the different honeys as part of her final industrial project for a Bachelor of Food Science Technology.

Because of the high quality of her work, Lisa was awarded first prize for the project by her university in Sweden.

Honeydew and thyme honey contained the highest levels of phenol compared to the other honeys, while thyme and rewarewa had the highest antioxidant activity of the ten honeys giving them the potential to play an important role in providing antioxidant to humans in a pleasant form.

"I had never heard about honeydew until I came to New Zealand," said Lisa.

Lisa said honeydew was interesting to study for several reasons, its relatively high antioxidant properties and phenol content which make it a rich source of antioxidants, its dark-red colour and its taste.

"Honeydew does not sell well in New Zealand shops despite its interesting and pleasant taste," said Lisa.

"My work with honeydew showed it would make a worthwhile contribution to a healthy diet and that aspect should aid Airborne Honey in marketing this product."


"I really enjoyed my time at Lincoln University. It was a really interesting project that gave me the opportunity to put into practice all the theoretical study from throughout my degree combined with the opportunity to study in a foreign country."

[Reprinted from a press release from newsroom@parliament.newsroom.co.nz, Wednesday, 14 June 2006 12:58 pm.]



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Thoughts on getting out of beekeeping

I was talking to a beekeeper recently and he asked me to write something on getting out of beekeeping. Too many hold on to their hives for too long, the hives are not being worked regularly, woodwork deteriorates, and consequently the hives when finally sold are of little value.

It just so happens that I'm 60 this year and I'm slowing down. Originally I had enough hives so that I only needed to work one day out of two, so that I could at least work my bees in fine weather instead of having to go out every day in the spring no matter what. I'm no longer getting through my hives in a quick and efficient manner. I tend to look around and enjoy the bees instead of being head down all the time.

So I've made the decision to cut back my hive numbers over the next 12 months so I can enjoy my granddaughters and go out shooting more, as I now have only 10 years left of effective hunting (or walking with a rifle).

Now that I've made this decision, I have to work out which hives to cut back. I have been beekeeping for years and have hives on sites that give me a crop no matter what the weather conditions. They are split into two areas, so if one area is wet and cold the others are not, so half will produce honey. Some are in good build-up areas, and I'm putting more hives now into Manuka sites as this is the only honey that still gives me a good return. I have known the same farmers for years and quite enjoy talking to them when passing through. They like me on their farms as I'm part of the security service — another pair of eyes. Beekeeping is farming and you get to know what they are doing, and they like to know what you are doing (and also like the odd pot of honey).

So do I sell off all the hives in a few apiaries, or just take a few from each apiary and keep contact with the farmers? Having a relatively small number of hives and using crossbred bees that tend to supersede in the autumn, you get to know the hives and monitor how certain queens are performing. It's taken me years to breed a bee that performs in this windy damp climate. I look after them and they look after me. In general, nobody is interested in buying dud bees.

So now I understand why beekeepers are slow at selling a few hives — we are attached to them. As a young fellow I used to look after an old fellow's hive. He had cancer and his daughter would wheel him along to the hive and I'd show him the condition of the bees and how they were doing. He took great pleasure in his bees, and it was only a day before he died that his wife rang up and said I could have the hive. Basically the last thing a beekeeper does is get rid of his hives.

So getting out of beekeeping is a planned operation, something that we should be working towards over a 10-year

period. It could take this long to find and train somebody who is keen on taking over a few hives — and perhaps a few years later, taking over your business. It's a shame to just up and sell your hives and see them moved away. Better to train someone whom you can pass on the years of knowledge you have built up. (As someone once told me, when a beekeeper dies, a library has gone). By purchasing a going concern, the new beekeeper will then be in a better position to weather the bad seasons when the crop is light. Not like when I started and I asked Graham Walton, our MAF Apiary Officer, whether I should go into commercial beekeeping after about seven years as a hobbyist. His advice was to stay in my paid government job, keep my superannuation and keep bees as a sideline. The following two years were a wipe out as far as honey production was concerned, so I would have been bankrupt had I gone out and purchased a business. I have a lot to be thankful for to the people who have helped me and given me advice through the years. (Sounds like I'm writing my obituary but I'm not — just working through the process of downsizing).

Anyway, in those days banks didn't lend money on hives as they weren't seen as permanent. Today, with the returns from Manuka and New Zealand varietal honeys, new beekeepers should be on their feet again in five years. We all think we can build a business in two or three years. Split every hive three or four times and you have the numbers, but you also have to have drawn honey supers before you start to produce a profit in beekeeping. Drawn comb is your bank account — look after it. Actually, when planning it's a good idea to double the time you think you can build a business. Give yourself some leeway and account for two bad years in five.

Today with pollination prospects, varietal honeys, propolis and pollen, and the availability of cheap imported trucks, young beekeepers are in a much better situation to get into beekeeping than I was 37 years ago. Those days Manuka was used for feed honey.

So when you are planning to splice off some hives, spend time and money to replace everything so the hives are in top condition. I'm just burning supers that came with hives I purchased 15 years ago. They were in good order; the bees were good and produced a crop that year.

There are advantages to purchasing old hives. Sometimes you can get them for the cost of the bees. All the effort and new woodware that you put into bringing them up to a production unit is tax deductible, and like most new beekeepers you make everything, as your labour doesn't count for much initially, whereas dollars in the bank are often short. Don't overlook all that old gear: it could be packed with propolis and this can be turned into cash. So the advice is to plan ahead. Realise you need to cut down and cultivate beekeeping in your area so that eventually you have someone to pass the knowledge on to. Give them a hive and actually teach them how to manage it.

Why didn't any of my sons take on beekeeping? They saw how heavy the work was, all the long hours I put in, and

Continued on page 24

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<p>WAIKATO DOMESTIC BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION 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 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 Contact: Stephen Black 685 Uruti Road RD 48, Urenui Phone: 06 752 6860</p>
<p>WANGANUI BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets on the second Wednesday of the month.</p> <p>Contact: Neil Farrer Phone 06 343 6248</p>	<p>MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB 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 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 Meets every second Monday of the month (except January) in Johnsonville. All welcome.</p> <p>Contact: John Burnet 21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa, Wellington 5028 Phone: 04 232 7863 Email: johnburnet@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p>NELSON BEEKEEPERS CLUB Contact: Kevin Phone: 03 545 0122</p>	<p>NORTH CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets the second Monday of April, June, August and October</p> <p>Contact: Mrs Hobson Phone: 03 312 7587</p>
<p>CHRISTCHURCH HOBBYIST CLUB Meets on the first Saturday of each month, August to May, except in January for which it is the second Saturday. The site is at 681 Cashmere Road, commencing at 1.30pm</p> <p>Contact: Jeff Robinson 64 Cobra Street Christchurch 3. Phone: 03 322 5392</p>	<p>SOUTH CANTERBURY REGION Contact: Peter Lyttle Phone: 03 693 9189</p>	<p>DUNEDIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets on the first Saturday in the month September–April, (except January) at 1.30pm. The venue is at our club hive in Roslyn, Dunedin.</p> <p>Contact Club Secretary: Margaret Phone: 03 415-7256 Email: flour-mill@xtra.co.nz</p>
<p>ACTIVE MANUKA HONEY ASSOCIATION (INC) Contact: Moira Haddrell, Chairperson P O Box 862, Cambridge Phone: 64 7 827 3286 Email: info@haddrells.co.nz</p> <p>or</p> <p>Denise Tryer-Harding, brand manager P O Box 19-334, Hamilton Phone: (07) 957 9999 or 0800 747 377 Email: dharding@piperpat.com</p>	<p>NZ COMB PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION Contact: John Wright Phone: 09 236 0628</p>	<p>NZ HONEY BEE POLLINATION ASSOCIATION Contact: Russell Berry Phone: 07 366 6111</p>
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Front and back cover photos: scenes just outside Rakaia and Ashburton.



Photo supplied by Linda and Roger Bray.

Although we did not have any damage to our buildings, there were some in this area which were destroyed but I do not have any photos. I was in Canada for the first week of the snow. Our factory was without power for a week though. The snow took about four weeks to melt in the main areas, with some sheltered areas only just thawing out now.

- Peter Lyttle, NZ Beeswax Ltd

Thoughts on getting out of beekeeping from page 22

through my carelessness and ignorance (by leaving bee suits in the house unwashed), they developed allergic reactions to bee stings at puberty. Since then I always advise that bee gear be washed straight after use, and not with normal clothes. Better still if there is a separate washing machine just for bee suits and your work clothes.

Beekeeping should not be all hours all the time. Equipment is now available to reduce the heavy lifting. If you work long hours, be sure to schedule in quality time with your family. Often you are actually only working at half pace after eight hours in the field, so you're not all that productive working long hours.

So my plan is to continue to replace brood frames each spring and upgrade the last batch of supers. Then gradually sell off a few hives from each apiary, so I can still boast, "I did six yards today" when talking to some young fit beekeeper. It's not for them to know that I only have eight hives in each apiary.

- Frank Lindsay



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