Volume 14 No. 10

November 2006

# The New Zealand BeeKeeper

SPARE

New Zealand
Permit No. 154506

Permit

Otago Branch secretary Peter Sales (aka "Two Pistol Pete")
judging the smoker lighting competition, Otago Branch field day, 7 October 2006.
*Photo: Neil Andrews*

ISSN 0110-63325
The Official Journal of The National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand Inc.

Published by South City Print
P.O. Box 2494
South Dunedin, New Zealand

# NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSN OF NZ (Inc.) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**Jane Lorimer (President)**
Hillcrest Apiaries
'Kahurangi-o-Papa'
RD 3, Hamilton 3283
Ph 07 856 9625
Fax 07 856 9241
Mobile 027 294 6559
Email: hunnybee@wave.co.nz

**R Neil Farrer (Vice President)**
7 Nixon Street
Wanganui 4500
Ph 06 343 6248
Mobile 027 457 9634
Email: farrer@infogen.net.nz

**Brian Alexander**
Woodhaugh Apiaries
RD 3,
Kaukapakapa 0873
Ph/Fax 09 420 5028
Email: bee@xtra.co.nz (Attn:Brian)

**Barry Foster**
Tawari Apiaries Ltd
695 Aberdeen Road
Gisborne 4041
Ph 06 867 4591
Fax 06 867 4508
Mobile 027 449 7131
Email: bjfoster@xtra.co.nz

**Neil Mossop**
Mossop's Honey
1064 State Highway 29
RD 1, Tauranga 3171
Ph 07 543 0971
Email: info@
mossopshoney.co.nz

**Arthur Day**
Marlborough Apiaries Ltd
PO Box 307
Blenheim 7240
Ph/Fax 03 577 8143
Mobile 021 223 4790
Email: arthur@beekeepernz.com

**Frans Laas**
Wildlife Solutions Ltd
102 Gladstone Road
Mosgiel 9007
Ph 03 489 4597
Email: f-laas@xtra.co.nz

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:**
**Jim Edwards**
World Veterinary Consultants
10 Nikau Lane
Manakau Heights
RD 1, Otaki 5581
Ph 06 362 6301
Fax 06 362 6302
Mobile 021 631 447
Email: ceo@nba.org.nz

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:**
**Pam Edwards**
World Veterinary Consultants
10 Nikau Lane
Manakau Heights
RD 1, Otaki 5581
Ph 06 362 6301
Fax 06 362 6302
Email: secretary@nba.org.nz

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Roger and Linda Bray (Librarians)**<br>Braesby Farm, RD 1, Ashburton 7771<br>Ph/Fax 03 308 4964<br>Email: birdsnbees@xtra.co.nz | **AgriQuality phone:**<br>**0508 00 11 22** | **Rex Baynes**<br>**AFB NPMS Manager**<br>**PO Box 44282, Lower Hutt**<br>**rbaynes@ihug.co.nz** | **Magazine subscriptions:**<br>**— 11 Issues —**<br>**NZ $66.00 GST inc**<br>**Overseas Airmail**<br>**US $55.00** |

## BRANCHES: The first named person is the President/Chairperson. The second is the Secretary.

**NORTHLAND**
**Garry Goodwin**
57 Whangarei Heads School Rd
RD 4 Whangarei
Ph: 09 434 0118
**Jo Scott**
148 One Tree Point Rd
Ruakaka 0171
Ph: 09 432 7149
Fax 09 432 7144

**AUCKLAND**
**Ian Browning**
1824 Great South Rd
RD 3
Drury 2579
Ph: 09 236 0764
**Bob Russell**
101 Kern Rd
RD 3
Drury 2579
Home Ph/Fax: 09 294 8656
Work Mobile: 027 284 8951
email: bob.russell@paradise.net.nz

**WAIKATO**
**Russell Berry**
Arataki Honey
2488 SH5 Waiotapu
RD 3
Rotorua 3073
Ph: 07 366 6111
Fax: 07 366 6999
email:
russell@arataki-honey-rotorua.co.nz
**Cameron Martin**
Haumea Road
RD 1
Galatea 3079
Ph: 07 366 4804
Fax: 07 366 4804
email: busy-bee@xtra.co.nz

**BAY OF PLENTY**
**Dennis Crowley**
PO Box 9170
Greerton
Tauranga 3142
Ph: 07 541 3323
email: crowleys@slingshot.co.nz
**Barbara Pimm**
448 Woodlands Road
RD 2, Opotiki 3198
Ph 07 315 7650
email:hikuhoney@xtra.co.nz

**POVERTY BAY**
**Don Simm**
2 Walsh St
Gisborne 4041
Ph: 06 868 3866
Mobile: 021 150 3041
email: donsim1@xtra.co.nz
**Barry Foster**
695 Aberdeen Road
Gisborne 4041
Ph: 06 867 4591
Fax: 06 867 4508
email: bjfoster@xtra.co.nz

**HAWKE'S BAY**
**John Berry**
46 Arataki Rd
Havelock North 4130
Ph. 06 877 6205
Fax: 06 877 4200
email: jrberry@ihug.co.nz
**Ron Morison**
31 Puketapu Road
Taradale 4112
Hawkes Bay
Ph/Fax: 06 844 9493
email: rmorison@clear.net.nz

**SOUTHERN NORTH ISLAND**
**RN (Neil) Farrer**
7 Nixon Street
Wanganui 4500
Ph: 06 343 6248
Fax: 06343 3275
email: farrer@infogen.net.nz
**Frank Lindsay**
26 Cunliffe Street
Johnsonville
Wellington 6037
Ph/Fax: 04 478 3367
email: lindsays.apiaries@xtra.co.nz

**NELSON**
**Glenn Kelly**
PO Box 421
Motueka
Ph/Fax 03 528 8174
email: glennjkelly@yahoo.co.nz
**Michael Wraight**
15 Titoki Place
Motueka 7120
Ph/Fax: 03 528 6010
email: wraight@xtra.co.nz

www.nba.org.nz

**CANTERBURY**
**Roger Bray**
Braesby Farm
RD1
Ashburton 7771
Ph/Fax: 03 308 4964
email: birdsnbees@xtra.co.nz
**Trevor Corbett**
PO Box 20
Waipara, North Canterbury
Ph: 027 450 4567
email: beeworks@xtra.co.nz

**OTAGO**
**Blair Dale**
Strathdale Honey
Olive Ave, Box 23
Middlemarch, Otago
Ph: 03 464 3122
Fax: 03 464 3796
Mobile: 027 464 3125
email: blair@strathdalehoney.com
**Peter Sales**
"Te Ora", RD1, Port Chalmers
Dunedin 9081
Ph: 03 472 7220
email: foxglove@paradise.net.nz

**SOUTHLAND**
**Doug Lomax**
61 William Stephen Rd
Te Anau
Ph: 03 249 9099
Fax: 03 249 9068
email: dougandbarbara@xtra.co.nz

**NZ Beekeeper Printed & Published by:**
**South City Print**
**P.O. Box 2494, South Dunedin.**
**Advertising: Allan Middlemiss**
Telephone: 03 455 4486 Fax: 03 455 7286
email: ckp@xtra.co.nz
**NBA membership & Magazine Subscriptions:**
**Pam Edwards**
World Veterinary Consultants
10 Nikau Lane
Manakau Heights, RD 1, Otaki
Ph 06 362 6301 Fax 06 362 6302
Email:secretary@nba.org.nz
**Editorial/Publication:**
**Nancy Fithian**
8A Awa Road, Miramar, Wellington 6022
Ph: 04 380 8801 Fax: 04 380 7197
Mobile 027 238 2915
email: editor@nba.org.nz

# Table of Contents



## Deadline for articles and advertising

**10th of each month for insertion in the following month**

***NB: No magazine in January***

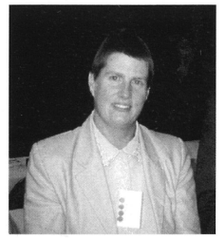
All articles/letters/photos to be with the Editor via fax, email or post:

Nancy Fithian
Email editor@nba.org.nz

(See page 2 for full details)

**Please direct advertising inquiries to: Allan Middlemiss, South City Print Ltd, PO Box 2494, Dunedin. Phone 03 455 4486, fax 03 455 7286, email ckp@xtra.co.nz**

# President's Report



This last month has gone very quiet. Like all of you, the members of the Executive have been busy looking after hives, splitting them to prevent swarming and doing other related beekeeping activities required at this time of year.

## Nelson eradication of feral hives

I have just received the media release from Biosecurity New Zealand saying that they are looking at alternative insecticides to kill the feral bee population left in the Nelson varroa-infested region. They have applied to the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) to get the product approved for this use. It is a pity that this was not progressed earlier to ensure that a product was ready for use when an eradication attempt was approved, as the South Island Varroa Control Group will now only have an autumn window of opportunity to do the job rather than a summer and autumn one. Knowing how long it takes to get chemicals approved for a specific use, this may be the final straw in the attempt to eradicate.

I applaud all of the beekeepers who have assisted in this task — only time will tell as to how successful you have all been. At least you may have slowed the spread significantly. And at best … who knows?

## NZFSA

I recently received a phone call from one exporter who is less than happy with the New Zealand Food Safety Authority and their handling of Export Certification — especially E-certs (Electronic Certifications). From all accounts he is just one of many who are unhappy with how this is being handled.

I emphasised to this person that if beekeepers have any specific concerns the Executive needs to know about it, so that we can further explore if it happens to be a widespread issue that requires a meeting to be set up with specific groups. The issue needs to be outlined in writing so that it can easily be circulated to the Executive Council — even if it is only as bullet points that state what is happening and why this is adversely affecting your business.

As a matter of course, I receive notification from the NZFSA website of changes being made to the Animal Products Act, Overseas Market Access changes and any other notified matters regarding food safety.

One such notification stated that all bee product premises would need to be listed with NZFSA, which may mean that all premises will need to have an RMP, including those who produce for the domestic market. If this change is indeed correct, it has been made without consultation with the industry. If this change is going to further increase compliance costs, then we need to do some lobbying for the industry. It may be that we are like the farmers who, according to newspaper reports, have twice the compliance costs of other businesses, making it more difficult for farmers to make a profit.

## American foulbrood

This year during spring inspections for AFB we have been finding that some hives have been showing atypical signs. I do not know whether this is due to us finding them at an earlier stage, or whether it is something that we need to be very careful about when checking for AFB.

One hive just had some capped cells that had a waxy sheen to the cappings — not perforated or sunken. In another couple of hives I saw some capped cells on their own with eggs and young larvae surrounding them. The capping was raised and of normal colour; yet when I took the cap off a coffee-coloured larval blob was underneath. When I did the matchstick test the larvae roped out, although not extensively.

I would like to know if many other beekeepers are finding more of these atypical signs of AFB. Make sure you look closely when making your

*Continued on page 4*

*Continued from page 3*

diagnosis, for if you split that hive and it happens to have the disease you have just doubled your number of hives to destroy: it is that easy to have your AFB levels get out of control.

### Working to improve beekeeper returns

We are currently working on two projects to increase beekeeper returns from their honey and bee products produced. One is to register a trademark that will identify New Zealand-produced product, so that consumers can readily differentiate between what is local produce (100%) and what is imported product.

Once we have registered the trademark, beekeepers who wish to use it must sign an agreement and pay a licence fee in order to be able to use the mark on their produce. Auditing will be carried out to ensure that those who are using the mark are abiding by the agreement to only use product grown/produced in New Zealand.

The other area is to progress the antioxidant value of certain types of honey produced in New Zealand. The antioxidant level would be given values in a similar manner to Active Manuka honey. We will also need to have a registered trademark to do this, but we do have some options as to how this may best be achieved.

What we would ultimately like to do is ensure that more than half our honey produced in New Zealand can be sold as value-added product.

**- Jane Lorimer**

For those thinking of purchasing or building a heat exchange (one of this year's projects), instead of purchasing a 230-volt re-circulating pump for $400, go to your local car wrecker and get a Subaru Boxer water pump. This is a 12-volt pump that can be obtained second-hand for about $25. All you need is a 12-volt transformer. This will be considerably cheaper than what I paid (unfortunately, this tip was given to me two weeks after I had already purchased a new pump). My pump works off the float switch from the honey sump, so only pumps hot water through the heat exchange when honey is being pumped to the filters. (That is after initially turning it on to preheat the exchange before commencing extraction for the day).

**- Frank Lindsay**

## *Work wanted*

Adlei Baldo
# 20 North Sanitary Camp, Baguio City 2600 Philippines
P.O. Box 1212 St. Isidore, Alberta T0H 3B0 Canada
Mobile 011639273292144 (Philippines), 001 780-512-8816 (Alberta)

**Do you believe that it is not worth alternating your treatment if your neighbours aren't as well?**
**Well it is actually very worthwhile to alternate because at least you will be killing any resistant mites in your own hives plus any invading resistant mites which come from your neighbours. While your neighbours treatments will be getting less effective, yours will still be highly effective and you won't run the risk of having to treat twice.**

Preserve the luxury of choice while we still have it!

Alternate your Varroa treatment to…

# Apivar®

The active ingredient in Apivar® is from a different chemical family to that used in the other two strip treatments. Apivar® has now been widely used by commercial beekeepers throughout the North Island for Autumn and Spring treatments and has proved to be highly effective in NZ conditions. Apivar® will not cause any residue problems, will not harm your queens or bees and is safe and easy to use.

| | |
|---|---|
| 10 – 90 strips | $3.75 each plus G.S.T. |
| 100 – 990 strips | $3.40 each plus G.S.T. |
| 1000 – 4990 strips | $3.10 each plus G.S.T. |
| 5000 plus strips | $2.85 each plus G.S.T. |

Dosage Rate: 2 Apivar strips per brood chamber.
Price includes delivery. Payment is required in advance by cheque or electronic banking.
Phone or email for an order form.

# N Z Beeswax Ltd

**Postal Address**
Private Bag
Geraldine 8751

**Factory Address**
44 Gladstone St
Orari
South Canterbury

**Phone:** 03 693 9189
**Fax:** 03 693 9780
**Email:** info@beeswax.co.nz
**Web:** www.beeswax.co.nz

Apivar© is the product and the registered trademark of:
Veto-pharma S.A. Véto-pharma
14, avenue du Quebec F-91945 Courtaboeuf Cedex France

BK236

Varroa Agency Incorporated
PO Box 304
Mosgiel

Ph +64 3 489 0066
Fax +64 3 489 0071
Web www.varroa.org.nz

VARROA AGENCY INC

# Varroa Agency Incorporated News

## Update from Varroa Agency Chairman Duncan Butcher

### Varroa fight not over

**The fight to keep the varroa bee mite from South Island beehives is not over.**

Excellent work by Nelson beekeepers has seen the South Island Varroa Control Group (SIVCG) plan and begin its varroa control programme. They have successfully collected up and exported to the North Island about 1000 hives from the varroa-infested area in the Nelson region. A small number of hives remained in the infested zone for pollination purposes and these will be destroyed in the next few weeks. All these hives tested free of varroa and have been under continuous treatment with miticides.

AgriQuality and local beekeepers have been busy eradicating feral hives and swarms reported by the public. To date over 300 ferals and swarms have been reported in the Nelson region and more than 170 destroyed.

Biosecurity New Zealand is making arrangements for a feral bee-poisoning programme in this area in the summer.

These programmes have reduced the chances of varroa still being in the South Island, or shifting further south, to very much less.

Changes are being made to this year's Varroa Agency surveillance programme in the South Island. The Agency is now well into planning a new surveillance programme, with more focus on entry points into the South Island. Selected hives in these zones will come under a more regular testing regime.

The Agency is also supporting Biosecurity New Zealand's surveillance programme in the Nelson incursion and control areas.

### Movement control reminder

Please remember that movement control regulations remain for the South Island. It is strictly prohibited for honey bees to enter the South Island from the North Island, and permits are required for honey and other bee products (unless packed for retail) and used beekeeping equipment and machinery. Please contact an AgriQuality apiary officer on freephone 0508-00-11-22 if you need more information.

We'd like to remind queen bee producers in the North Island to make sure there are NO consignments of queens to the South Island.

Movement control regulations also remain in the Nelson area — bees cannot be moved in or out of the incursion area without a permit. Call the AgriQuality movement control officer on (07) 850 2823 for permit conditions.

The Agency will continue its education programme to beekeepers, transport operators and those associated with port and airport entry into the South Island.

*Don't forget, the information on varroa control and other news from the Nelson area, along with reports on the surveillance programmes, will be posted regularly on the Varroa Agency's website www.varroa.org.nz*

These feral bees at this bait station were very yellow. Normally feral bees are very small and black, particularly in the bush areas.

Bait stations, jerry cans and honey supplied from the North Island being prepared by AgriQuality for the teams to take out.

*Photos supplied by Russell Berry.*

# South Island Varroa Control Group (SIVCG) eradication project, Nelson region

## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to inform all industry-affiliated members and stakeholders of the wider beekeeping fraternity of the genuine efforts of many who are trying to eliminate the 'very real invasion' of the varroa mite. Whilst this effort has been concentrated in the greater Nelson area where the first signs had been identified, the primary objective has always been to try and keep the South Island as a whole varroa free, protecting the longevity of an integral industry.

Judging by some of the comments and letters that have been published to date, it is clear that some may be misinformed on what these efforts have been and what the objective is. This article is designed to assist in understanding and hopefully to provide clarity as to why the extensive efforts of many have been engaged. The South Island Varroa Control Group Incorporated (SIVCG) was created because the New Zealand Government elected *not* to try and eradicate varroa when it was first discovered in the Upper South Island. This came as a real blow to many industry participants, with some standing up and taking proactive steps to change the imminent outcome.

Even if SIVCG does not achieve its aim, then it can be said SIVCG will still have significantly slowed the spread of varroa to the rest of the South Island and at least given it a good go. Efforts so far have allowed the wider industry to plan and take stock of what could be described as an 'industry catastrophe' affecting many affiliated businesses.

It is also intended that what has been learnt from this process be utilised in supporting any future varroa threats in the South Island, hopefully allowing others to be forearmed in the battle against the mite. It is fair to say that this effort will have helped add three to five years of productive business to many beekeepers. This feat would not have been possible with what the Government was originally proposing. It should also be acknowledged that there has been international interest in the adopted strategy, with Australia watching closely in the preparation of its own internal plans.

There has only ever been one objective of the SIVCG; that is, to proactively eradicate the invasion of the varroa mite in the South Island. This would prove to be a massive challenge and not easy for those who have given this their commitment.

## The facts

Varroa (type: *destructor*) was detected in Nelson on 15 June 2006. This parasitic mite affects both managed hives of bees owned by people, and wild colonies of bees or feral bees. The effect of parasitism is severe to honey bees: without treatment, affected managed and feral bee colonies will die. This was the first detection of a varroa infestation in the South Island; however, the parasite has been endemic in the North Island of New Zealand since the year 2000.

A controlled area involving the boundaries of the Territorial Authorities of Buller District, Marlborough District, Nelson City and Tasman District was declared on 16 June 2006, and a delimiting response by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) determined the extent of spread to managed beehives within the controlled area. Options for eradication and control were presented to Cabinet, and a decision not to attempt eradication but to control the rate of spread was given on 2 August 2006. At this time the infestation was known to affect 44 apiaries belonging to 30 beekeepers in three infested areas within the controlled area.

For beekeepers within the South Island this was a disappointing decision. Why wasn't there an attempt, with such a small infestation, to try and eradicate the mite?

And so this is where this project started. The beekeeping industry joined together and set up several meetings across the South Island, where various ideas and thoughts were shared. However, the key element that became apparent was that rather than controlling the varroa, the beekeeping industry wanted the government to reconsider and try to eradicate it. Beekeepers soon travelled from across the South Island to meet in Nelson at two public meetings. For those that took the time to attend it was clear what the beekeepers' intentions were. It was from these meetings that a group was formed to take on the Government and change the decision to control varroa.

On 8 August 2006 a meeting was held in Nelson, where five people were voted in as a committee to prepare a plan with a massive goal to attempt a varroa elimination plan and to change the Government's approach. Within the same week the South Island Varroa Control Group Incorporated (SIVCG) was formed. Their vision became clear. SIVCG now needed to convince the Government that this is what the industry wanted to do.

Matt Davidson, who led the SIVCG team, took the proposed plan to Jim Anderton. In late August 2006, Cabinet directed Biosecurity New Zealand to work with the beekeeping industry on a limited bee elimination programme in Nelson, including a Government-led feral baiting programme. SIVCG had achieved a major milestone, getting the Government to do a 'U-turn' on their decision.

Once SIVCG's plan had been accepted by Government, the painstaking process of coordinating the plan started to unfold. Hundreds of hours were spent speaking with local beekeepers and hobbyists to gain their consent to assist towards the plan. This involved countless hours of phoning and gaining consents from individuals, who generally were very supportive of the overall *aim* to eradicate varroa. SIVCG's goal was to support the industry and work with the affected parties, offering compensation or replacement beehives in July 2007. SIVCG received over 90 per cent compliance from the beekeepers in the infested zones and after several meetings with Biosecurity New Zealand, SIVCG was given the green light to remove beehives and action the plan. Biosecurity New Zealand would then handle the less than 10 per cent of beekeepers whose

*Continued on page 8*

*Continued from page 7*

hives were not given with the owner's consent: these hives were purchased or seized, then destroyed in Nelson.

The next few steps were complex. SIVCG needed to find the money for purchasing the hives, find replacement hives and organise the collection and shipping of all the managed hives to the North Island. Only a small number remaining would be destroyed after pollination. This was a huge undertaking. The SIVCG team worked day and night to achieve the tasks assigned and managed to complete all of its responsibilities by the end of September.

The purpose of the elimination programme is to eliminate varroa by creating a bee-free area. Varroa are obligate parasites that cannot survive in the absence of a suitable host. The removal of the bees from a region for several months will eliminate varroa from within that region. To achieve the bee-free area all known managed colonies needed to be removed, leaving only unmanaged colonies and feral colonies of bees.

The feral baiting programme planned to run in September 2006 did not proceed. This delay has caused great concern and frustration from SIVCG and the industry. All the hard work and effort put into the project has now been put into jeopardy. The delay has been caused by the exclusion of a chemical called fipronil. The reason fipronil has been excluded is because the patent holder has denied permission for the product to be used for the purpose of poisoning bees.

MAF, with the assistance of HortResearch, is currently working on seeking provisional registration for up to four other known chemicals instead of fipronil. MAF will obtain permission to run trials in containment, with the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Group (ACVM) for the specific use of poisoning bees. ACVM approval is conditional upon approval from the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) to use a hazardous substance in the environment.

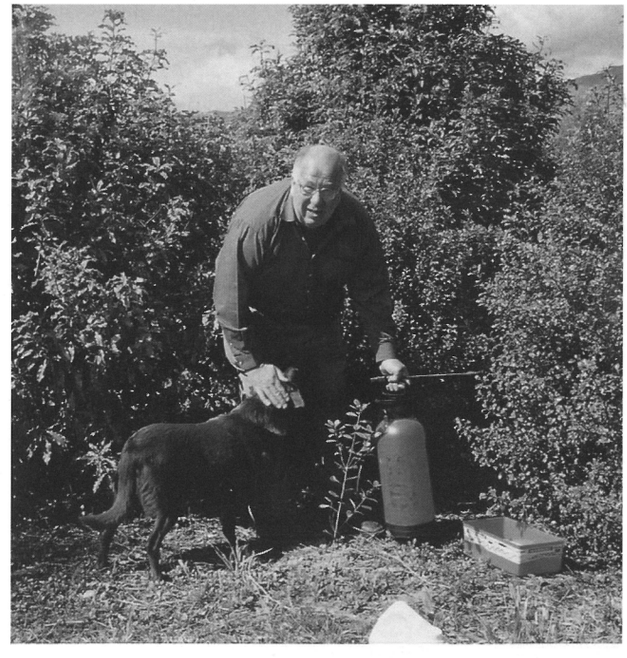
MAF currently have a "search and destroy" programme in place to eradicate feral colonies. With a comprehensive advertising campaign there have been just under 200 reports of feral bee colonies so far: 140 have been confirmed and destroyed. SIVCG will continue to monitor bee activity at bait stations within the infested area, using sugar and water until the chemical is confirmed and approved for use. This activity monitoring will help identify when a feral bee elimination attempt should be undertaken.

SIVCG has been working with MAF and will continue to work closely with them to ensure the baiting project successfully goes ahead.

SIVCG would like to congratulate everyone who has invested and continue to invest their personal time and resources, and acknowledges the sacrifices that have been made to see this important project through. SIVCG would also like to thank the hundreds of individual beekeepers and associated industries for their financial donations, and in particular the organisations that have given larger amounts. This commitment to the programme has been fantastic. Without all of this support the eradication attempt would not have been possible.

Going forward, SIVCG plans to work with the Varroa Agency Incorporated (VAI) to help improve the way in which varroa is detected in high-risk areas such as ports and airports throughout the South Island. SIVCG would like to ensure that what it has learnt and some of the effective processes it has adopted will be utilised to increase the chance of finding varroa incursions sooner, and hopefully eliminate any further outbreaks quickly and in a cost-effective manner. SIVCG believes that proactive steps taken quickly can ensure the South Island and the 'clean green' beekeeping image are retained as one of the last bastions which, today, can honestly and proudly make such a claim.

**SIVCG Team**
**19 October 2006**
**South Island Varroa Control Group Inc**
**PO Box 33**
**Mapua**
**NELSON**
**Email: sivcg@hotmail.com**



Ideal location for a feral bee bait station. Russell Berry and Joss spraying the surrounding trees with aromatic Catlins Kamahi honey and water, to attract feral bees prior to poisoning.
*Photo supplied by Russell Berry.*

Got an old bee suit that has frayed a bit and now you are getting more stings than when it was new? Try using Scotchgard™. This product can give up to three months' extra wear before you have to spray the suit again.

# AFB NPMS Manager subjected to obscene and threatening phone call

One of the more unpleasant aspects of the AFB NPMS Manager's role is to follow up on outstanding levies and pass over the debt to a collection agency.

The Management Agency has a responsibility to both the beekeeping community and Government to ensure every effort is made to collect monies owing.

On 8 October 2006 (Sunday) I retrieved a voice message from my mobile phone left by a beekeeper, who as it happens is in default of both his levy and Annual Disease Return. The beekeeper has been identified.

The message (which has been saved) has been confirmed by Lower Hutt Police as requiring follow-up action.

My message to such people is that I take the Manager's responsibility seriously and will not be intimidated or deterred by people using so-called 'bully boy' tactics. I have been around too long to suffer fools like this and will not hesitate again to lay a complaint with the Police.

In regard to the above incident and the involvement of Police I am seeking a legal opinion (at my own cost) to ascertain whether I am legally entitled to publicly identify this person.

Regrettably, this incident occurred after the publishing deadline for the October issue of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* that goes out to all registered beekeepers. I acknowledge this current issue is only going to members of the National Beekeepers' Association and others who subscribe; however, I feel that members should be informed of this incident and what has subsequently taken place.

**- Rex Baynes**
**AFB NPMS Manager**

# *Diary of a disaster*

by 'Anonymous'

## Saturday

I put a drum of honey on to heat using our band heater and the temperature controller — set at a low heat this usually takes a week or two to melt a drum of honey. I timed it so it would be ready for my husband when he came home from working overseas. The drum is put inside an insulated wooden box, which is inside our insulated hot room in the storage bay of our honey house (separated from the extraction room by a wall).

## Sunday/Monday

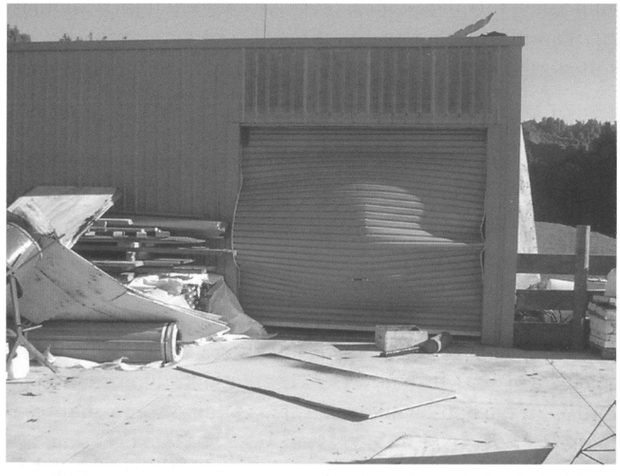
Storm caused power fluctuations/cuts during Monday morning.

## Tuesday

At home when thought I heard a truck coming up the driveway, then the noise stopped. Went down to honey house an hour later and found door looking strange and funny black stuff on the concrete. I thought the wind had blown the door and the word "bugger" went through my mind. Was this an insurance job or could I get it fixed before hubby got home?

Went into the other part of the honey house and smelt something funny: BURNT HONEY. Oh No!! Oh yes. Something had gone wrong and the drum of honey had exploded. How was I going to explain this?

Ran up to the house and grabbed the camera. Back down to the honey house and, thinking a bit more clearly now, decided I had better make sure the power and water were off as I didn't want a fire or a flood as well. Once everything secured, photos taken, then phoned insurance company. Assessor would be out on Saturday.



## Saturday

Assessor arrives at noon and declares cause was storm damage. Temperature controller had been blown by fluctuations in electricity and drum had heated and overheated. Neighbours came round and helped me open the big door. We pulled out everything in the bay and they lent me a petrol jet washer.

## Sunday

Not looking forward to a day of cleaning, when two carloads of friends from Playcentre turn up with buckets, cloths and enough food to feed us all and fill my freezer. "Where do we start?" they asked. It took us five hours to clean the place from top to bottom.

Shed roof was fixed this week and we are back to normal: now using a new, safer, jacket drum heater.

# A beekeeper abroad

I wrote this while Mary-Ann and I were staying in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on the south Atlantic coast of the United States. It was very hot (32°C at 6 pm) and the humidity was high. It was like stepping outside into a hot steamy shower, without getting rained on — lovely.

This was our retirement holiday (upon both of us reaching 60), planned 40 years ago when it only required £750 to travel around the world for a month. We hadn't planned to visit beekeepers but kept an eye out and talked to them when we came across them.

## Canada

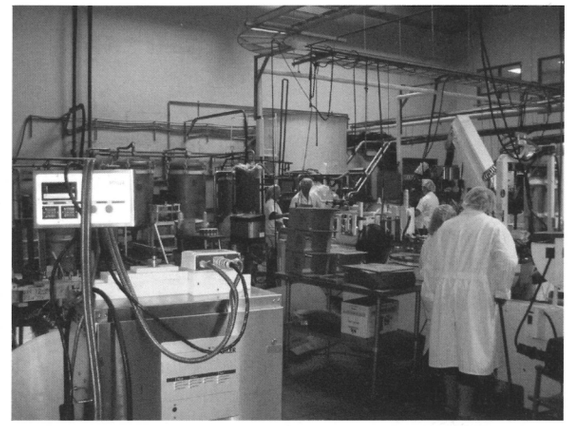
We visited the Granville Island Market in Vancouver. Three beekeepers share a honey sales stand there so we made sure we walked past it. The beekeeper on duty that day was Trudi Simonson of Purple Gold Apiaries, Surrey, British Columbia. They have nearly 500 hives and move the hives five times each season, mostly for pollination, but they also get honey to sell at the market.


Granville Island Market

The organised part of our holiday was the train and bus trip through the Canadian Rockies. We saw the green fields of the Fraser Valley, some full of clover (dairy cows are mostly kept in barns and the hay and silage is brought to them — you could smell the barns from the train). What looked good to us could have been mowed for hay the next day, just like in New Zealand. I spotted a number of apiaries from the railway line, and two yards being worked by beekeepers, but we were travelling too quickly to photograph them.

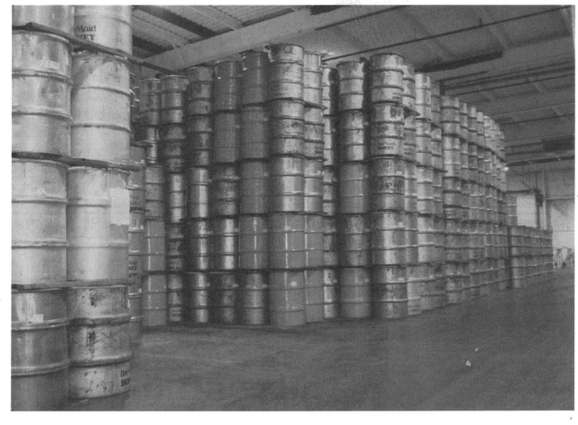
With time on our hands, we visited the BeeMaid Plant just outside Edmonton (www.beemaid.com). Actually it's quite a way outside Edmonton and getting there by taxi is not recommended unless you have plenty of money. We were made welcome and shown around the premises, even though





BeeMaid Factory

they were in the middle of finalising their yearly accounts. This plant was one of the first to get ISO accreditation and is rather an impressive place, with a well-equipped laboratory that does complete residue testing. Beekeepers pack all honey into open-top drums stacked five high in the storage area. After analysis the honey is stored by type, colour and moisture content. Drums when required are placed in a hot room for two days and emptied two at a time, using a



BeeMaid drum storage

BeeMaid Lab

forklift into a huge covered vat to drain. The honey is then heated and pumped to the packing lines. This process is quite remarkable as most of the plant has been designed and manufactured over the years by the staff. They were trialling a new plastic bottle while we were there and had made a cam

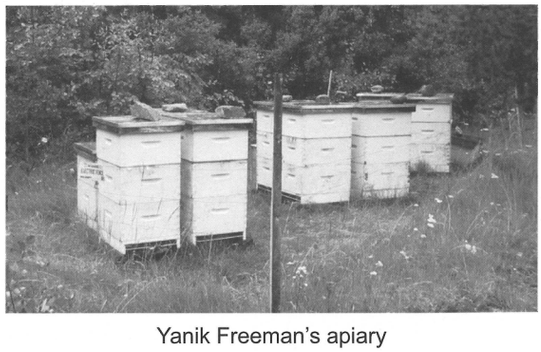
*Continued on page 12*

*Continued from page 11*

(template) out of plywood to get the bottles to line up, ready for the filling machine. They were using a vacuum set up to remove any drips from the filling heads — rather ingenious as drips of honey are messy and take extra effort to clean up. Ninety per cent of the honey packed there was runny honey, as there is only a small demand for granulated honey. I was also impressed by the plastic vertical sliding doors that separated each storage area. The plant also produces all its own plastic containers, via three injection molders that run 24 hours a day. We were shown a huge storage area that held only a week's production for the plant.

Yanik Freeman inspecting a frame of honey

Then it was up to Whitehorse, Yukon, to put escape boards on Yanik Freeman's 12 hives. (Four of these were splits in the spring, the result of bear damage the autumn before.) Beekeepers in the area did not have their best crop this year as it has been cold and wet (unusual, as they only have 1.5 mm of rain most months). We experienced a morning of -1°C, but by mid-afternoon the temperature hit 16°C and the bees were flying like mad working sweet clover. It's a very short season up there. Yanik purchases queens each autumn and checks them carefully to ensure that he doesn't introduce varroa to his bees. Everything is controlled by the availability of pollen. There are only four brood cycles leading up to the flow, which this year was only a week long, then another two brood cycles before the first snows and winter. The bees really have to work, but in summer they have very long days. Yanik sells most of his honey within two days at the annual harvest fair in Whitehorse. He sells the remainder of his stock outright to one of the local herb shops.



Yanik Freeman's apiary

## New York and Virginia Beach

After three lovely days in Toronto we were picked up by some American friends and shown the sights of upstate New York. We drove through the Adirondack Regional Park, took in the view from the top of Whiteface Mountain, visited John Brown's grave at Lake Placid, and saw the Saratoga battlefields where the British lost (a key battle in the Revolutionary War leading to America's independence) as well as Fort Ticonderoga.

Going down into New York State we passed through meadows of Lucerne, Golden Rod and Sweet Clover. It was the height of summer with temperatures mostly around 27°C, and although the newspaper that morning reported a hint of autumn in the air I hadn't noticed it. Conditions were near perfect: no wind and the sky was beautifully clear. The bees we saw on flowers (we didn't see any bees on flowers in some areas in the national parks) looked to me to be on wild Aster (blue but also tufty, like a thistle flower when it first opens). Goldenrod was in full bloom there also but the bees didn't seem to be working it. Purple loose strife was flowering also in the areas that were more damp. Judging from the previous week the beekeepers in New York State should have been doing nicely, although we were told the weather up until our arrival had been fairly poor, with lots of rain.

Further south in Virginia Beach it was hot and humid, and it hadn't rained for a month. Although Dr Pedro Rodriguez's bees were flying, I guess they were mostly bringing in water, although the odd bee was bringing in pollen and nectar. We left a weak hive open (it had swarmed more than three times in the spring) while looking to put in a frame of brood to boost it along, and within 15 minutes we had a full robbing session going on. We fogged the outside of the hives to disguise the bee's marker scents and covered the entrances with leaves, while spraying a mist of water over the hives. It took a good half hour and lots of water to settle the bees down. The wet bees didn't take very long to recover in that heat.

Dr Pedro Rodriguez

And yes, we did see a varroa mite on a bee that had just emerged in a hive, but only one. I also spotted four bees on the ground (after 10 minutes of searching) with damaged wings (a sign of viruses), so some mites must have been present in one of his 10 hives (five large and five swarms). Pedro hadn't fogged for nearly three months so we were expecting to see some mites, but none were spotted in the drone pupa we pulled apart. The hives were in good order but Pedro was feeding the late May swarms he had collected to keep them going.

## Fogging with FGMO and Thymol to control varroa

During this time we discussed fogging and Pedro's recent discovery. In 2005 there were huge bee losses in California. The theory was that they might have developed a 'super mite' but a test Pedro did, using a control hive and by fogging nuc hives supplied from the area with FGMO and Thymol, he proved that the Thymol formula worked well. Most hives had a mite fall of only five per month or less.

Pedro believes FGMO and Thymol is the best solution for mites. Thymol works in three ways: it acts on the respiratory system, the cuticle and on the nervous system. Pedro considers that Thymol combined with FGMO is the optimum solution to the mite problem, because the combination of Thymol and mineral oil causes the mites to fall off the bees before the females return to the cells to lay and reproduce. Hence the reason for greatly reduced mite populations in hives treated with only mineral oil, which blocks the breathing spiracles. Pedro suggested that a 5% Thymol solution can be used at any time of the year without causing residues.

Now Pedro's situation is different to that of New Zealand. His nearest beekeeper is two miles away so he doesn't seem to get any reinvasion. He has found that fogging (only) once a month with Thymol and FGMO provides him with nearly mite-free hives.

Pedro also stated that the type of Thymol used matters. He insists that we should be using "naturally produced" Thymol. Synthetic Thymol comes out of solution, while the natural stuff remains in solution for three years (based on tests so far). He also believes that synthetic Thymol affects the queens somehow. More and more beekeepers are now fogging using FGMO/Thymol with good results. Perhaps we should be looking at getting this procedure registered here in New Zealand.

## History

As one of the first US states to be settled, Virginia is full of history. Jamestown was probably the best example we saw. Jamestown is a recreation of an early Indian village (no teepees there), and you can see the first fort and settlement and the three sailing ships on which the first English colonists arrived in the early 1600s. Two of the ships were tiny: I thought they were scaled replicas, but in fact they were full size and sailed from England with passengers and crew for three months, following the trade winds.

These first European settlers had a hard time, starved between re-supply ships, and were eventually wiped out by the Algonquin Indians. This happened twice over a 10-year period before the Native Americans were subdued by diseases. Next year Virginia celebrates 400 years of European settlement and they are building new amenities for this occasion.

## En route home

In Perth we stopped at a honey sign, talked to the beekeeper's wife and sampled their different types of honey. Perhaps I have been going to Australia for too long, as I really enjoy the taste of most of their honeys. The beekeeper himself was 2000 miles away checking his hives on sunflower pollination. They have the same problems as in New Zealand with sprays affecting beehives. The bees come back from pollination OK but a month later they collapse, the result of small amounts of spray poison coming in with the pollen, killing the young brood.

Then it was back to New Zealand, relaxed and nicely suntanned and into checking my hives. And I'm told we missed perhaps the worst winter in years. Bad luck: we only had about four wet days in seven weeks.

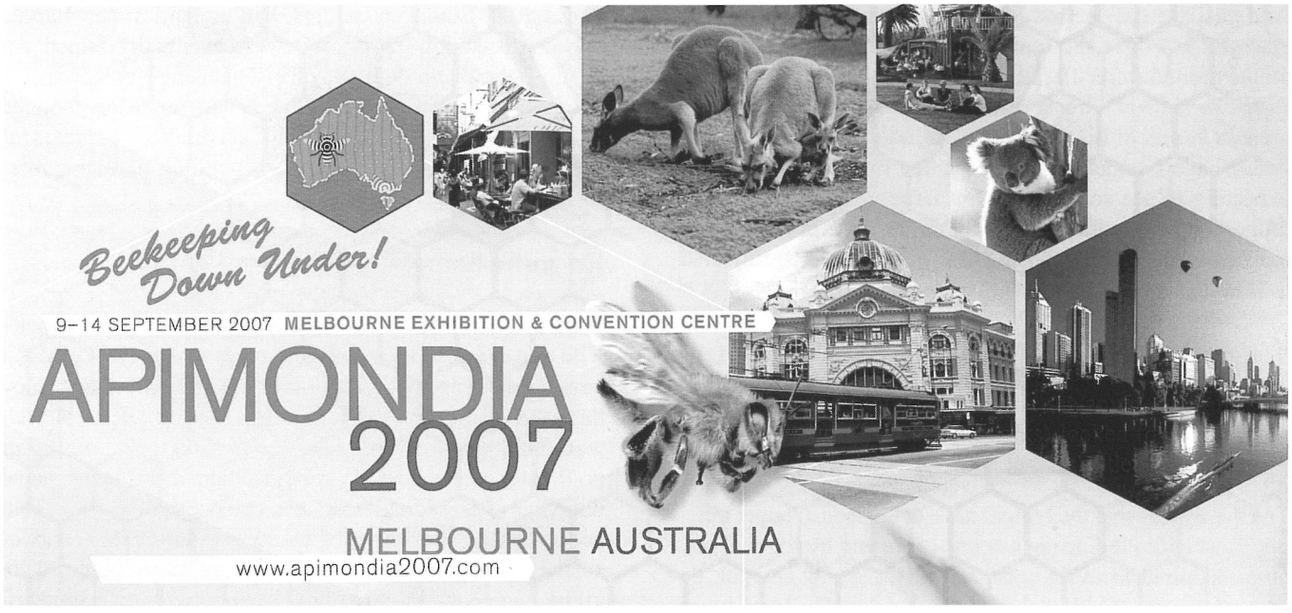
**- Frank Lindsay**

# A Box of Bees
## *a winning effort*

If you are looking for a Christmas stocking-stuffer, *A Box of Bees*, Emily Dobson's first book of poetry, fits the bill perfectly. Most of you will know that Emily comes from a long line of beekeepers (her great-grandfather and grandfather set up Arataki Honey; her dad is 2005 Roy Paterson Trophy winner John Dobson). Emily worked at Arataki Honey herself during holidays. Many of the poems evoke the pleasures and risks of beekeeping.

*A Box of Bees* is a charming, well-crafted and attractively presented first collection of poems from a talented writer. The book was the basis on which Emily gained a MA degree in English Literature with Honours from Victoria University. Emily won the Adam Foundation Prize for best folio for *A Box of Bees*, and also won the 2005/2006 Schaeffer Fellowship to the prestigious Creative Writing Program at Iowa University.

*A Box of Bees*, Victoria University Press, $17.95, ISBN 0-864730-510-3.




# *Melbourne, Australia, 9–14 September, 2007*

A lot of new information has been added to our website in the past few weeks. There is now provision for registration; the accommodation venues are shown; the world honey show is there, showing the different classes you can enter; and the popular Apimondia contests are listed.

The scientific program is now listed, as well as the keynote speakers. Provision for sending in abstracts is on the website.

There is a short section on Australian beekeeping and some notes about Australia.

The social tours are shown, as well as the social functions and pre and post congress tours.

There will be extra information added from time to time. Check on the Latest News section to see what has been added.

Check out all the new information at www.apimondia2007.com

oooooooooooooooOoooooooooooooooo

It is pleasing to report that our Organising Committee has had enquiries from several countries wishing to bring beekeeping tour groups to Australia for Apimondia. If you need some help in planning a tour down under to Australia, let our Organising Committee know. We want you to have a memorable time in Australia. We can help with visits to beekeepers, tourist venue suggestions or cultural activities.

oooooooooooooooOoooooooooooooooo

It may seem a long way off but for those coming to Australia from overseas please visit the website and look at the Travel Information section. You will need to obtain a visa to come to Australia and, except for New Zealand residents, this visa must be obtained before leaving home. Secure your visa early to avoid any delays.

**Trevor Weatherhead (Organising Committee) e-mail queenbee@gil.com.au**

# *World bee conference: Apimondia*

## *Melbourne, Australia, 9–14 September 2007*

Many of you have already heard about this important beekeeping event being held in Melbourne next year. I suggest that you put it on your "must do" calendar for next year and, despite the untimeliness of the date, somehow work your beekeeping activities around it.

### What is Apimondia?

Apimondia is the International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations and other organisations working within the apiculture sector. It exists to promote scientific, ecological, social and economic apicultural development in all countries.

The Federation was founded by resolutions passed at the XIII International Apicultural Congress of 1949 in Amsterdam, and is the successor to the International Apiarist Congress Secretariat founded in 1895. Its offices are in Rome, Italy. The actual first "Apimondia" Congress was held in Paris, France in 1897.

### What are the objectives of Apimondia?

A major objective of Apimondia is to facilitate the exchange of information and discussions. This is done by organising congresses, conferences and seminars where beekeepers, scientists, honey-traders and legislators meet to listen, discuss and learn from one another.

### When and where is it held?

The Apimondia "congress" or conference is now held biennially, and each time there is a vote taken from members to decide on where to allocate the next Congress. Last year, Apimondia was held in Dublin, Ireland and it was then that Montpellier, France won the vote to host the 2009 event. So in Melbourne next year the members will vote to decide where the 2011 event will be hosted.

### Who goes?

All members of the beekeeping fraternity and their friends/relatives can attend, whether involved in research, honey production, pollination, recreational or professional beekeeping, and will be assured of a warm welcome.

In Dublin 2005 there was a good representation of New Zealand beekeepers and traders of honey and bee products. We personally took this opportunity to network with other New Zealanders but more importantly, to meet up once again with beekeepers from around the world.

### What are the seminars about?

The scientific seminars are related to any of the seven standing commissions of Apimondia, and it might surprise you that your beekeeping interests can be widened significantly. For example, the commission for apitherapy (studying products of the hives for their healing qualities) and beekeeping for rural development had seminars last year that took my fancy. One lecture talked about using your apiary as an apothecary. In the rural development seminar, I learned how a Ugandan beekeeper had received assistance to set up a viable beekeeping business in his village, using plastic buckets that were readily available and affordable, unlike wooden boxes and frames!

Other presentations are related to bee biology, bee health, bee economy, pollination and bee flora, and beekeeping technology.

### What is the API Expo?

Running concurrently with Apimondia is API EXPO. As a paid participant or accompanying person, you will spend much time poring over the huge commercial displays of the latest products and developments in apiculture.

There are competitions of all sorts for you to enter if you wish, offering everything from honey and photo competitions, to books, video and technical displays.

### Is it worth the money?

You might think that the registration or entry charges are high, but let me tell you that this is not only a week of sitting and listening to the latest scientific research! Attend just one congress and you will feel that you have more than had a good run for your money.

As a participant, you will be treated to wining and dining and entertainment on several evenings (planned for and designed by the host county, as well as one evening by the host of the next Apimondia congress), culminating on the last day with a full guided bus technical tour to sights and beekeeping experiences in the area.

### Is NBA an Apimondia member?

If you attended the NBA conference in Hamilton this year, you will be aware that a resolution was passed for the NBA to join Apimondia. Now more than ever, it is important for our New Zealand organisation to be visible and working not only regionally, but globally.

If you have a yearning to be stimulated, to widen your beekeeping horizons, and to combine it with some interesting business travel, tick the box and register to attend Apimondia 2007, especially since next year it will be held practically on our doorstep!

### Relevant websites

www.apimondia.org
http://www.apimondia2007melbourne.com/

**- Merle Moffitt**

# AgriQuality Limited report to the annual conference of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand: Hamilton, 20 July 2006

## 1. PERSONNEL

***Apiculture Officers AgriQuality Limited***

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Murray Reid | Hamilton | Phone (07) 850 2881 | Fax (07) 850 2801 | Mobile (021) 972 858<br>Email reidm@agriquality.com |
| Byron Taylor | Hamilton | Phone (07) 850 2867 | Fax (07) 850 2801 | Mobile 021 918 400<br>Email taylorby@agriquality.com |
| Tony Roper | Christchurch | Phone (03) 358 1835 | Fax.(03) 358 6222 | Mobile (021) 283 1829<br>Email ropert@agriquality.com |
| Marco Gonzalez | Christchurch | Phone (03) 358 1937 | Fax (03) 358 6222 | Mobile (021) 951 625<br>Email gonzalezm@agriquality.com |

***Registrar of Apiaries AgriQuality Limited***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bob Derry | Registrar for the North Island. | Phone (07) 850 2837, Fax (07) 850 2801<br>Email derryb@agriquality.com |
| Carole Lasseter | Registrar for the South Island | Phone (03) 358 1723; Fax (03) 325 7088<br>Email lasseterc@agriquality.com |

It was with regret that the apiculture section farewelled David McMillan from the team during the year. David joined us in October 1992 and after 13 dedicated years of service decided to accept an offer from a honey company in the South Island. David's contribution over the years is very much appreciated but the good news is that his talents will not be lost to the beekeeping industry. We welcomed Marco Gonzalez to the team in May this year (see the July 2006 issue for a profile). Marco is a veterinarian from Paraguay, but has been in New Zealand for four years undertaking post-graduate studies at Lincoln University.

## 2. BEEKEEPER, APIARY AND HIVE NUMBERS

There were 2694 beekeepers, 18954 apiaries and 300728 hives on 14 June 2006 (see Table 1). This compares to 2911 beekeepers owning 294886 hives on 19281 apiaries this time last year. Beekeeper numbers are continuing to track downwards with a net reduction of 217 beekeepers for the year ending June 2006. This compares with a net reduction of over 300 in the previous 12-month period. Hive numbers, however, continue to increase (6000 over the past 12 months), indicating that existing beekeepers have a certain amount of confidence in the industry. 229 new beekeepers registered this season (up 50% on last year) while 446 deregistered.

Varroa mite was confirmed in the South Island on 15 June 2006, which, depending on the success of an eradication plan, could result in a significant reduction in the number of hives in the South Island over the next few years. The table below illustrates the net reduction in beekeeper, apiary and hive numbers over the last six years.

**Table 1: Changes in New Zealand beekeeper, apiary and hive statistics since varroa arrived in the North Island in 2000**

| | May 2000 | | | | June 2006 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Location** | **Beekeeper** | **Apiary** | **Hives** | **Location** | **Beekeeper** | **Apiary** | **Hives** |
| Blenheim | 414 | 1741 | 28443 | Blenheim | 255 | 1628 | 25013 |
| Canterbury | 727 | 4748 | 60356 | Canterbury | 507 | 4051 | 55753 |
| Hamilton | 486 | 2800 | 49863 | Hamilton | 185 | 2193 | 39544 |
| Otago/Southland | 451 | 3495 | 50823 | Otago/Southland | 339 | 3243 | 48784 |
| Palmerston North | 1214 | 3655 | 43534 | Palmerston North | 655 | 3256 | 46468 |
| Tauranga | 496 | 2971 | 51008 | Tauranga | 257 | 2669 | 53630 |
| Whangarei | 1168 | 3033 | 36086 | Whangarei | 496 | 1914 | 31536 |
| New Zealand | 4956 | 22443 | 320113 | New Zealand | 2694 | 18954 | 300728 |

***Loss of beekeepers, apiaries & hives from 2000 to 2006**

| Location | Beekeeper | Apiary | Hives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blenheim | 159 | 113 | 3430 |
| Canterbury | 220 | 697 | 4603 |
| Hamilton | 301 | 607 | 10319 |
| Otago/Southland | 112 | 252 | 2039 |
| Palmerston North | 559 | 399 | -2934 |
| Tauranga | 239 | 302 | -2622 |
| Whangarei | 672 | 1119 | 4550 |
| New Zealand | 2262 | 3489 | 22874 |

**Loss 2000-2006**

| | Beekeeper | Apiary | Hives |
|---|---|---|---|
| North Island | 1771 | 2427 | 9313 |
| South Island | 491 | 1062 | 10072 |

*The varroa bee mite was discovered in NZ in April 2000, an apiary levy was introduced in 2003 for the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS) and a hive levy was introduced (for South Island beekeepers only) in 2005 for the varroa PMS.

Source: AgriQuality Limited

*[Editor's note: prior to 2003, all commercial beekeepers funded the AFB NPMS.]*

## 3. HONEY CROP 2006

The nectar flow stalled after Christmas, following the good flow in late spring and early summer from many bush sources. The honey that was produced in early 2006 came in over a two-month period, as a rather long protracted flow. Despite this, average to above-average crops were reported from the North Island and below-average crops in the South Island, with the exception of Canterbury.

Some exceptionally good yields were recorded in Northland, the Coromandel, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki and Canterbury. Yields in these areas ranged from 36 to 95 kilograms per hive with district averages of 36 to 42 kilograms per hive. The national average was 34.7 kilograms per hive. The New Zealand honey crop was calculated at 10,423 tonnes, up 734 tonnes from the 2004/05 season of 9689 tonnes (see Table 2). The six-year average is 9180 tonnes, with a range from 4682 tonnes (2002) to 12,252 tonnes (2003).

**Table 2: New Zealand Honey Crop (tonnes)**

| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 6-year avg |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northland, Auckland, Hauraki Plains | 869 | 593 | 1066 | 1047 | 1221 | 1337 | 1022 |
| Waikato, King Country, Taupo | 672 | 708 | 2210 | 1164 | 1095 | 1124 | 1162 |
| Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, Poverty Bay | 794 | 319 | 2064 | 2052 | 1498 | 1937 | 1444 |
| Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Manawatu, Wairarapa | 1735 | 750 | 1607 | 1330 | 1440 | 1935 | 1466 |
| Marlborough, Nelson, Westland | 606 | 300 | 1350 | 550 | 800 | 690 | 716 |
| Canterbury, North Otago | 2743 | 921 | 2400 | 1500 | 1500 | 2100 | 1861 |
| South and Central Otago, Southland | 1725 | 1091 | 1555 | 1245 | 2135 | 1300 | 1509 |
| New Zealand | 9144 | 4682 | 12252 | 8888 | 9689 | 10423 | 9180 |
| Yield/Hive (kg) | 29.4 | 15.0 | 40.8 | 30.2 | 33.1 | 34.7 | 31 |

Source: AgriQuality Limited

## 4. DISEASE REPORTS

Between June 1 2005 and May 31 2006, 952 cases of American foulbrood (AFB) were found by beekeepers and/or AgriQuality staff in 482 apiaries. This is an average disease rate of 0.32% of hives. Of these AFB reports only 18 cases were found and reported by beekeepers who are not DECA holders. This represents 0.002% of the total number of hives held by non-DECA holders.

**- Murray Reid**
**National Manager Apiculture**
**AgriQuality Limited**
**Hamilton**

# BAYVAROL®

## NZ's No 1 VARROA TREATMENT

### Why?

- it's highly effective (up to over 99% efficacy)
- it's the easiest to use (rigid strips - no curling)
- it's very safe to use (very important - especially for staff)
- it has twice the contact area (4 strips per brood chamber)
- very kind to beeswax, propolis & comb honey
- very gentle on queen bees & nucs
- it can be used during the honey flow if required

**— 8 Week treatment now approved in N.Z.**

**— showing no signs of resistance**

**— no residues detected**

***We'd strongly recommend that you use Bayvarol® as one of your alternate treatments.***

We believe that Bayvarol is now New Zealand's most popular Varroa treatment.

**Current prices**

| | |
|---|---|
| 20 to 96 strips | $1.87 + GST each |
| 100 to 796 strips | $1.75 + GST each |
| 800 to 8800 strips | $1.49 + GST each* |
| 9600 plus strips | $1.35 + GST each |

* For orders of one or more cartons, enquire from us to find out how to join in with a bulk purchaser and receive your strips at the best possible price.

Packets contain 20 strips, cartons contain 800 strips. For orders of up to 100 strips please add $6 incl. GST for freight. Orders of 100 strips or more are despatched freight free to anywhere in New Zealand. Payment is required prior to despatch by Visa, M/Card, Cheque or Electronic Banking.

**For any enquiries or orders, contact Stuart Ecroyd**
**Free Fax: 0800 233 929 or email: Bayvarol@beehealthy.co.nz**

BK121

***Bayvarol*** ® - Registered trademark of Bayer AG Germany - Approved under the Animal Products (Ancillary and Transitional Provisions) Act 1999

**Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies Ltd**

*Distributors, Exporters & Importers of Beekeeping Equipment*
*Distributors of Bee Healthy & Beeway Honey & Bee Products*

www.beehealthy.co.nz

www.ecroyd.com

P.O. Box 5056 Papanui, Christchurch, New Zealand • 6A Sheffield Crescent, Burnside, Christchurch
Phone: (03) 358-7498 • Fax: (03) 358-8789 • Free Fax 0800 233 929 • Email: ecroyd@beehealthy.co.nz

# Minimum pay

## Current minimum wage by law

All employees aged 16 years or more must be paid the statutory minimum wage.

- For persons aged 16 or 17 years old, the minimum wage is $8.20.
- For persons aged 18 or over, the minimum wage is $10.25.

Minimum wage rates for all employees aged 16 and over are as follows:

| | Before 27 March 2006 | After 27 March 2006 |
|---|---|---|
| **Adult Rate** | **$9.50/hour** | **$10.25/hour** |
| per 8-hour day | $76.00 | $82.00 |
| per 40-hour week | $380.00 | $410.00 |
| per annum | $19,760.00 | $21,320.00 |
| **Youth Rate and the training rate** | **$7.60/hour** | **$8.20/hour** |
| per 8-hour day | $60.80 | $65.60 |
| per 40-hour week | $304.00 | $328.00 |
| per annum | $15,808.00 | $17,056.00 |

The adult rate applies to those aged 18 or over. The youth rate applies to those aged 16 or 17 years and the training rate applies to people doing recognised industry training, undertaking at least 60 credits per year. Please note that when the minimum wage increases, employers are required to increase the wages of any employees earning less than the new minimum wage.

Anyone employed after 2 October 2000 must have a written employment agreement, whether it be an individual agreement or a collective agreement. An Employment Agreement Builder has been created by Employment Relations Services to provide guidance to employers and employees on content for the creation of individual employment agreements. Refer to www.ers.dol.govt.nz

*[Source: Excerpted from Department of Labour website http://www.ers.govt.nz/pay/minimum.html, and http://www.ers.govt.nz/relationships/builder]*

**National Beekeepers' Association — bridging your knowledge gap**



# Letter to the editor

## Varroa eradication

I have been following the saga regarding the varroa eradication project and I am amazed at the naiveté of the folk who are promoting this 'ploy'. To quote an old chestnut from the Clyde shipyards in Scotland, "these folk are onto plums"! Varroa, however hellish, will never be eradicated once established on a land mass where bees exist — just a couple of missed mites and in a short space of time the 'worst case scenario' repeats.

The organic acids are the best bet against the mite and if applied correctly (dose and timing), will keep the infestation levels below the lethal 'threshold'. The proposed eradication of the feral colonies is also gross stupidity, because the ferals offer the only real hope of producing resistant bees by 'Natural Selection'. The Primorski Bee is a prime example of this phenomenon. Don't your 'experts' who are making the current proposals read anything other than *The Beano*?

Any eradication programme, in New Zealand or anywhere else, will prove to be a monumental waste of money and effort. The Yanks could not stop *A.m. scutellata* in Panama, despite the weight of their beekeeping best. Canute proved that raw Nature will always succeed.

Keep the mite populations low and the viruses will not reach epidemic levels. Take a lesson from the rabbit disease, myxomatosis, which only goes exponential when the flea vector, in the presence of a high rabbit population density, has effortless access to new hosts.

Get expert advice from the mainland Europeans and in particular the Swiss and take the mite 'head on' by understanding its epidemiology.

**Eric McArthur**
**Emeritus Editor, *Scottish Beekeeper* magazine**

## Greetings from Peterborough, England

The Peterborough and District Beekeepers Association is planning to hold a beekeepers' weekend on 14–15 July 2007. As secretary of the association, I wondered if any beekeepers from New Zealand would be visiting England at that time and who would be willing to give a talk on beekeeping in New Zealand. Accommodation could be arranged if required.

*If any beekeeper is interested, please get in touch with Pam Edwards, NBA Secretary, who has the Peterborough contact details.*

# Overwintering small nuc colonies

Last autumn after wintering down my hives I had six small half-frame nucs left over and wondered what to do with them. These nucs had mostly young queens but I had let them run down by drip-feeding them every now and again with honey from the drip trays, so they gradually dwindled down to the size of my fist.

Instead of just killing the queens and shaking the bees in front of another hive, I decided to follow the advice of another beekeeper on how to winter nucleus hives. Now these colonies were tiny, and under normal conditions wouldn't have survived without being boosted with additional bees shaken from another hive. But as an experiment, I popped each one into a four-frame, full-depth nuc box and placed full frames of honey and one frame of honey and pollen on either side of the half frames so the bees had enough honey to carry them through the winter, if they survived.

The advice I was given was to place some insulation foil directly on top of the frames of bees and brood, so that any heat given off by the colony would be reflected back down on to the bees. I didn't have any insulation foil (the type you staple under your house to insulate the floor), so I used some oven foil and in one nuc I placed two empty Bayvarol® packets, side by side over the small frames.

I moved these hives up north to a good wintering site where the Kohekohe *(Dysoxylum spectabile)* flowers throughout most of the winter, put them off the ground on an old pigsty roof where they got some afternoon sun and left them to their own devices.

Two months later, to my surprise I had five healthy colonies with brood in the equivalent of two full-depth frames. They still had half a frame of honey left and had built new comb between the end bars of the two half frames. The sixth hive went queenless and died.

Maybe we should all try to overwinter a few nucleus colonies so that we have a few queens and bees available to make up winter losses. I'll be trying this technique again, but this time I'll give them a better chance of survival by making them a lot stronger before wintering them down with a little insulation on top.

**- Frank Lindsay**

One of the nucs. It has six half-width, full-depth frames and has progressed quite well from just a handful of bees.

# Southern North Island field day

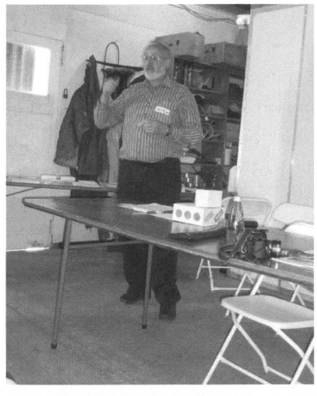
The Southern North Island field day hosted by Alan and Kay Simmonds in the Wairarapa on 23 September was an enjoyable event. The weather was perfect and the venue superb, and thanks to the Simmonds' whanau, everybody was well fed and watered.

**Varroa treatments:** Neil Farrer discussed treatments available to beekeepers, emphasising the importance of post-treatment testing to ensure the product has produced the desired results. We are expecting to find resistance to the main strips in the next few years, so make sure you are using alternative products each year to prevent resistance being established. More beekeepers should be looking into using alternative methods as you may have to use them in the future. These methods may not give a consistent result so have to be trialled to check the results for each beekeeper's own beekeeping practices.

Neil's presentation was followed by addresses from Reuben Stanley (ApiLife VAR™), Peter Lyttle (Apivar®) and Stuart Ecroyd (Bayvarol® and a new Thymol product).

**Formic acid:** Howard Norton demonstrated his method of using formic acid using homemade pads constructed from 'oasis', a foam used by flower arrangers to hold and provide water to the flowers. *[Editor's note: see Howard's article 'Treating hives for varroa using formic acid', July 2006, page 19.]*

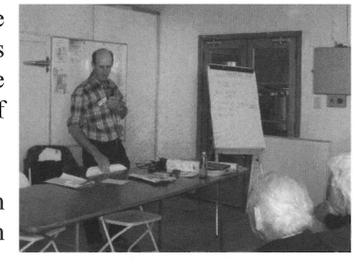
**Hive spring development, systems and records:** Robin McCammon produced copies of the record system he uses, with a printout for each apiary. These printouts make verification easy as everything is at hand. He transfers important information to a whiteboard where he can see his whole operation at a glance.



**Introducing queens:** Gary Milne stressed the basics — keep them warm, ensure that there are no sprays in the house, keep queens out of the sun and don't store them in glove boxes or anywhere where they will overheat. Gary believes they don't need watering (a drop each day) as there was sufficient moisture in the candy, and giving water tends to cause the bees to defecate in the cages. Queens can be kept for some time in the cages but attendants may need to be changed. It is best to introduce queens as soon as possible. Gary prefers to introduce the queen cages flat against the frame to stop brace comb building up. He has found there is no difference in acceptance whether the cage was flat against the comb or sticking out sideways with the bees exposed.

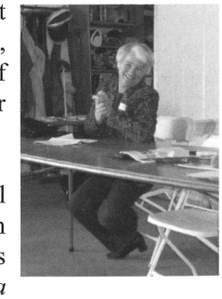
**RMPs:** Frank Lindsay spoke on the Risk Management Programme (RMP). He reminded beekeepers that the time period for getting your initial RMP system registered had now passed, and that any honey that wasn't held at a registered premises could not be exported. If beekeepers are considering upgrading their plant, they should follow the guide laid out in the RMP. Frank pointed out that everybody should be working towards getting registered.

**Developing hives and transport problems for pollination:** Vernon Gledstone-Brown stated that more of the larger beekeeping businesses should be considering moving hives to kiwifruit pollination. Vernon covered the minimum standards required and some of the problems and pitfalls of doing pollination.



**Open hives session:** Alan Simmonds and Robin McCammon went through the hives, explaining aspects as they proceeded. The hives were rather dark and they used lots of smoke to keep them under control. There are distinct differences between the actions of commercial and hobby beekeepers. Hobby beekeepers should take their time and see that the hives are not unduly disturbed, while commercial beekeepers are in and out of the apiary quickly, without having to consider who goes near the apiary later. Robin uses kitchen gloves, which last well and are an inexpensive alternative to leather gloves. Alan and Robin assessed hive strength and explained how to make a split. These hives were full of fresh honey as the willow flow was in full swing. They removed old dark frames and put in new foundation frames for the bees to draw out. Frank Lindsay disappeared when they started looking for a queen by shaking bees through a queen excluder, as he wasn't kitted up (dark queens tend to run and are difficult to find after being smoked).

**Exporting honey:** while most participants were out inspecting hives, Sue Walker covered the basics of exporting and shared some of her experiences.



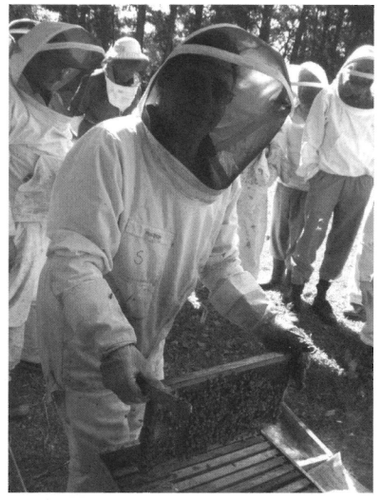
**Wasp control:** Frank Lindsay, Neil Farrer and Vernon Gledstone-Brown discussed their experiences. It seems that the German wasp *(Vespula germanica)* is making a comeback, which means more hives are being robbed by wasps in the autumn. They explained various methods of baiting wasps.

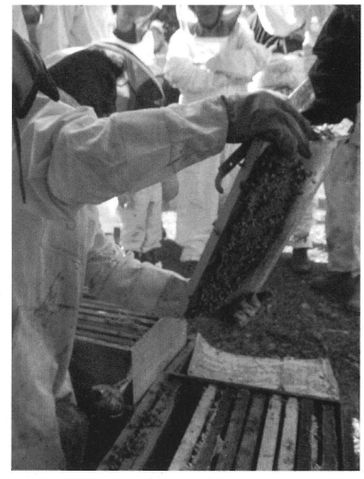
**NBA/NPMS update:** NBA Vice President Neil Farrer outlined the AFB NPMS activities to be undertaken in the Wairarapa this year, and the policy changes being proposed to get non-complying beekeepers to toe the line.

*Continued on page 22*

The field day finished with a cup of tea and sausage sizzle. Most went away full of knowledge and ready to attack the spring. Alan Simmonds suggested that everybody should host a field day, as it made you tidy up and get things spick-and-span.

**- Neil Farrer**





Open hives session with Alan Simmonds and Robin McCammon.
*Photos: Neil Farrer.*

# From the colonies

## Auckland Branch

Just a short report this month as it's that busy time of year again: pollination time. The Gold Kiwifruit orchards have started to ring all at once for their hives. We're busily supering up hives and checking for swarm cells, as well as working some nights as we put out the first of the Gold Kiwifruit hives.

The weather has been awful for the last couple of days with hail and rain really slowing us down in opening hives. Having requeened all our hives earlier in the year, we're hoping swarming will be kept to a minimum. By the time you read this we'll probably be getting into the Green Kiwifruit pollination — we've got over 600 hives going in this year. Anyway it's getting late and there's another big day tomorrow, so I'll sign off and get some shut-eye.

**- James Harrison**

## Waikato Branch

This season is much like the last: terrifying, seemingly uncontrollable, with cries that the bees are ready for pollination now. Queen breeders have been busy supplying queen cells urgently requested by beekeepers to cope with the strong buildup. Nucs are appearing everywhere.

The last spell of cold weather has been warmly welcomed! Saturday 7th and Wednesday 11th October brought late frosts, and the latest weather pattern has seen incredibly strong southwesterly winds. All good in the eyes of some beekeepers as they struggle to deal with the strong early willow flow, super strong carniolan hives already swarming, and barbary busting to flower — colder weather has meant the bees have torn down some swarm cells. [See the article in the May 2005 *New Zealand BeeKeeper* 'Carnica: the grey alternative': "Exactly how explosive their (Carnica) build-up will be under spring conditions, and how much swarming this will lead to if not properly managed, are difficult questions with no sure answers at the moment".]

Local kiwifruit orchardists are commenting that there is triple budding on vines. I wonder what this season will bring for beekeepers and orchardists alike. As you read this, hives will be on the move into Green and out of Gold and sleep will be a precious commodity.

Some beekeepers took advantage of the pollination seminars held in late September around the area courtesy of Zespri. A mix of beekeepers and growers attended the Hamilton session. Dr Mark Goodwin and Michelle Taylor of HortResearch provided information on 'Best practice pollination management for Green and Gold', and 'Varroa update and Artificial Pollination'. Neale Cameron of the Kiwifruit Pollination Association (KPA) updated the group on 'Bee safety and sprays'.

Personally I was able to attend a FarmSafe™ Agrichemicals/ Approved Handler course and was heartened to hear from the course facilitator that he had had quite a few "apiarists" through the course. He was certainly very clued up on the importance of bees and spraying safely. It was a little comical in some ways to hear from course attendees about spraying incidents or accidents. Seriously though, the current initiatives from the industry and Government to get the beekeeping industry to comply with food standards seem to be less of an issue when you compare the risk to human health from previous practices regarding the use of chemicals. It makes one wonder why there has not been more illness or death because of these practices.

I overheard two tired beekeepers talking about the difference in bees in their hives and how hard it is to spot queens. It appears that New Zealand has a new breed: a cross between an Italian and a carniolan – 'cannelloni'. The advantage is that is it easier to artificially inseminate these bees as they are bigger and lighter in colour, so it's easier to spot the queens. As yet unknown is their honey-gathering ability. I think that maybe they will be better at past(ure) pollination though.

**- Fiona O'Brien**

## Bay of Plenty Branch

After a wonderful September the weather turned cold as soon as Gold Kiwifruit pollination started. Only a temporary measure though that slowed down everything, including the swarming. Once the warm weather started again everything picked up the pace and pollination continued. We have not had as strong a honey flow as last year, but it's been enough to keep the bees occupied. Stronger hives make them difficult to keep in pollination mode.

Bay of Plenty Branch wishes you all a fabulous festive season and a great honey season.

**- Barbara Pimm**

## Poverty Bay Branch

Hi to all. The amazing run of weather has changed to high winds. I don't know what's worse, wind or rain, as not many bees are flying and it's shocking for queen mating — well, it is equinoctial time. All the plants are flowering early this year (a repeat of last year), so it's looking good for the honey crop. Ken Ring's moon weather predictions seem to be pretty accurate for the last few months. He has predicted a drought for the East Coast, hot and dry, which is good for the native honeys. Remember to remove your varroa treatment before supering up, as residue is showing up in the honey, propolis and wax.

**- Don Simm**

*Continued on page 24*

*Continued from page 23*

## Hawke's Bay Branch

We have just had a month of some of the nicest spring weather anyone can remember. Most beekeepers have not had to feed any hives for the past two or three weeks, and the only real problem has been stopping the hives from swarming.

We had a successful spring field day on 7 October with about 20 people attending. The emphasis was on practical beekeeping and with several new beekeepers attending we tried to cover even the most basic aspects.

As I write this, hives have just started coming out of the apples and most hives are now in the Gold Kiwifruit. There have been no reports of poisoning so far but it is still early in the season. Although September was very warm and dry there was little wind. We have now had at least some rain in all areas, so we are all looking forward to a good season.

**- John Berry**

## Nelson Branch

To refresh your memories, Nelson had its varroa incursion on 15 June 2006. Perhaps you have read my updates on this or to be more accurate, have read what is happening in your local paper. At the time of writing Nelson beekeepers have now been waiting five weeks for the final draft from Biosecurity New Zealand to set the control line in place to slow the spread of varroa to the rest of the South Island.

North Island beekeepers will well remember their lives when they had stacks of paper work full of requests and approvals to move everything from hives to honey to lids and bases around their apiaries. I have heard a lot of frustration amongst beekeepers here who cannot get their permits approved fast enough, but I think that most appreciate what an onerous task it is for staff issuing permits from Hamilton (North Island) to understand the logistics or geography of the top of the South Island.

Regarding the varroa eradication attempt by the South Island Varroa Control Group, the subsequent relocation of approximately 800 managed hives to the North Island, and more recently Biosecurity New Zealand's inability to get approval to poison feral hives with the poison fipronil, well ... don't ask!

We have had one of the best springs that I can remember: lots of pollen and honey to keep the hives moving forward, and lots of settled and sunny days for the queens to get mated. The beekeepers who are busy with pollination movements have probably had the hardest role with the varroa incursion. All hives being moved into the incursion zone have to be under miticide treatment during the pollination and for a set number of weeks following the pollination. It all becomes a logistical nightmare when hives are moving from one orchard to another, including some stories of orchards that are half IN and half OUT of the treatment area.

**-Merle Moffitt**

## Canterbury Branch

Spring is finally underway in Canterbury, with the seasonable nor'westers stronger and more relentless than usual. There were a few normal days and the bees were able to utilise the willow flow. Some of us actually got a box of willow. The willow flow this year seemed to start earlier and go longer than usual: generally a sign of a dry, hot summer. It looks like the dandelion flow might not be too bad either. There were mated queens before 15 September but since then there hasn't been much, due to wind chill factors.

Honey prices down here haven't moved much from the autumn offerings, so now is a good time to review strategy for the coming season. It takes a lot of kilograms of honey at $3.50 to make a living in 2006. If we are to be an attractive industry for the future we are going to need to improve our income streams. Pollination contracts are one way to help improve income. When pricing services, you should make sure your honey business isn't cross subsidising this; that is, the amount you charge for your services should reflect a return on capital, wages, maintenance and running costs. If you can't charge enough to cover these on a stand-alone business model, *why are you doing it?* Honey prices are low enough without having to subsidise pollination.

One of the main topics of discussion at the October branch meeting was pursuing educational and social opportunities for those who consistently attend branch meetings.

The next branch meeting will be at high noon at the Hotel Ashburton on Sunday 12 November for a posh nosh-up. Participants for this lunch must register with Linda Bray.

**- Brian Lancaster**

## Otago Branch

Spending today dodging spring snow showers was fine for putting out heavy 'stickies' on my bush hives, but that sort of weather does little good for most beekeepers at the moment. Handy for moving hives perhaps. Despite the southerly blasts it has been a favourable spring for bees so far. Unfortunately these fronts bring little moisture with them, and perhaps with the exception of South Otago the region gets drier with the passing weeks. This topic seemed to be the main concern for southern beekeepers who attended our field day held at Telford on 7 October (see photos front and back covers).

The field day went well, with about 50 in attendance. The morning was spent listening to speakers and discussing beekeeping topics. AFB NPMS manager Rex Baynes led a discussion on the strategy and how it could be more focused in areas with low levels. This is the case here in Otago now with

reported cases about a third of the national average. David McMillan led a discussion on the varroa incursion in Nelson and the likely outcomes of the current attempt at control.

Frans Laas, manager of Betta Bees, gave a talk on some selection criteria for southern climate bees. In particular he revealed his findings from studying overwintering weight data. Basically hive weights 'in' correlate to weights 'out', but the actual composition of those weights is the only relevant data when it comes to selection. Is it changes in bees, brood, pollen or honey that you are weighing? Hives of equal weight in the early spring often have dramatically different compositions, so these components themselves must be quantified in order to select for a particular wintering characteristic.

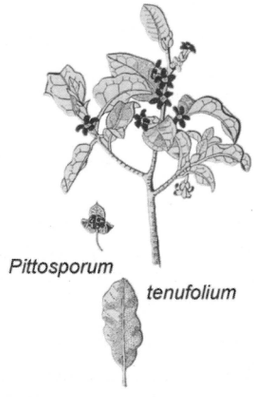
In the afternoon we made the most of the fine day and worked with queen cells in the Telford bee yard on site, which was of particular interest to the newer beekeepers present. Later Frans Laas and David Woodward of Telford gave a demonstration of instrumental insemination of queen bees. The Betta Bees queen breeding programme, now in its third year, is having a positive impact for many beekeepers in the area other than just the shareholders. As many buy cells and mated queens the continually improved Italian stock is being more widely distributed. It is taking some time to get those testy hybrid genes out of my hives in the coastal bush but the improvements so far are nice to live with.

**- Peter Sales**

# Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand

***Pittosporum tenufolium***

## Maori name: Kohuhu




A small tree found in both the North and South Islands reaching up to 10m, with blackish bark and twigs. The attractive Kohuhu is often used as a hedge. The young leaves are pale green and the flowers are dark purple, almost black.

The tree flowers from September to December. It is a free producer of nectar and a dark-yellow pollen. The flowers are heavily scented at night and in the early morning.

The Maori used to gather the gum and hang it round their necks for the scent given off. The branches were used by the Tohunga at important ceremonies of the tribe.

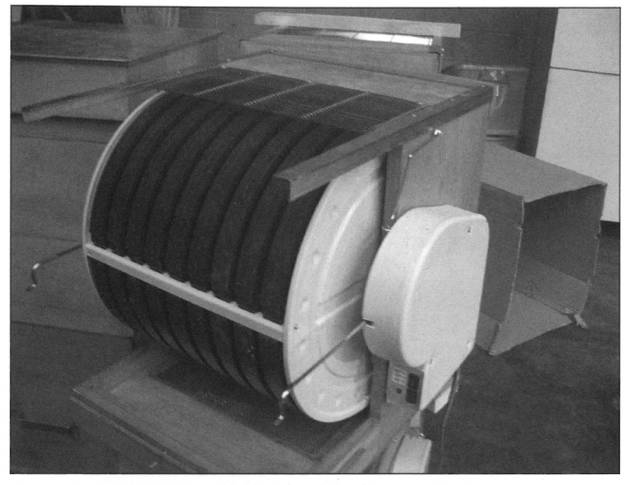
**- Tony Lorimer**

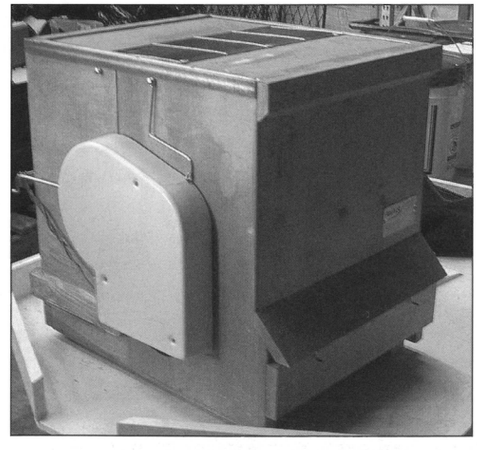
# Rotating brood beehives

Rotating brood beehives have recently cleared inspection by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. A trial will shortly get under way using five AniVet Hungarian design rotating brood beehives. These hives apparently disrupt Varroa mite reproduction so no chemical control is needed during the active breeding season.

I plan to set up 10 hives (five standard and five rotating brood nest hives) in an apiary, all on new foundation and see how they go. I will report back on their progress in the magazine. If anybody is interested you can see details for Anivet on: http://www.anivet.hu

**- Frank Lindsay**





*Photos: Paul Thurston, Auckland*

# 2007 NBA membership and magazine subscription costs

The 2007 subscriptions have been set as shown below. Please note the increased cost of subscriptions to *The New Zealand BeeKeeper,* to account for increased postage costs and to ensure that NBA members are not subsidising those who only receive *The New Zealand BeeKeeper.*

A club category has been established following requests to enable hobbyist club members to be better informed about the NBA, and to encourage their members to become individual members of the NBA.

Invoices will be sent in December for 2007 subscriptions that are due in January 2007.

The Management Committee has tried to minimise increases while looking to provide more value in the work done by the NBA in the interests of its members and the industry.

Thank you to all NBA members for your support.

**NBA Membership Subscriptions:**

| Category | Hives | 2007 | Subs |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hobbyist | <11 | $100 plus GST | $112.50 |
| Sideline/Commercial | 11-100 | $200 plus GST | $225.00 |
| Small Commercial | 101-250 | $400 plus GST | $450.00 |
| Commercial Level 1 | 251-700 | $800 plus GST | $900.00 |
| Commercial Level 2 | 701-1500 | $1600 plus GST | $1800.00 |
| Large Commercial | 1501-3000 | $2000 plus GST | $2250.00 |
| Mega Commercial | >3000 | $3000 plus GST | $3375.00 |
| Hobbyist clubs (receive 4 copies of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper)* | | $200 plus GST | $225.00 |

**Magazine Subscriptions only:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Magazine only NZ subscribers | | $100 plus GST | $112.50 |
| Overseas subscriptions (includes packaging & postage) | | Australia | NZ$125.00 |
| | | US, UK & Asia | NZ$135.00 |

# About the Apiary

What a month October has been. It's been quite unusual with snow falling on the ranges once every week, cooling the region. Wellington has had two or three days each week of cold, misty weather while just up the coast, being sheltered from the southerly winds, it's been fine but windy. Normally the first two weeks of October are warm and settled and I can get queens mated, but not this year. For the first time this year I have a cold — the result of getting soaked a couple of times while out checking hives. Those cloudbursts seem to sneak up on you when your head is down, looking in beehives all the time. By the time you've closed the hive, you're soaked.

Despite the weather, my nectar barometer — the succulents on the bank in the front garden — began flowering at exactly the same time as usual, 7 October, so everything seems to be proceeding normally. A lot of the shrubs in the bush along with hedge plants like Barbary are flowering. Between showers the bees have been gathering enough nectar to put a little away. There are also heavy bands of pollen around the brood so the bees are getting adequate nutrition. These conditions have resulted in a few swarms despite the weather. I caught one but it looks like another two have got away so far, but then again it's early days for swarming.

I have had an excellent take with the queens that I put into splits made from strong hives, and these are now laying in four frames. A few misses resulted when the queen was lifted up into the split. At times when it was raining it was quicker and easier to open a strong hive, work down until I found brood, smoke the top of the super and after a few minutes, lift the whole super off to make a split. I splashed a cup of sugar syrup over the frames to give the bees something to do and pushed in a queen cage between the brood frames, then closed the split board entrance with grass. A few queens didn't take the hint to move down, but most did and I'm very pleased with the results.

I will continue to strengthen these nucs by taking frames of brood from strong hives to keep them in check. I don't want to lose any more swarms this year, as each one lost comes back to bite you in the winter when they collapse and my bees bring back more mites. I've found that in areas where there are few swarms it's easy to treat for mites, while in high-swarming areas I generally have mite losses through the winter. (Our bees fly during the winter on warm days as it's fairly warm along the coastal fringe.)

I am still doing rounds of inspecting brood nests, giving the hives a quick fog with food grade mineral oil to knock off any peripheral mites. This also disrupts the hives so they're easier to work. It takes very little smoke to keep them under control, and I get to see the results on the slide under the mesh floor boards on my next visit.

I have also been doing a quick inspection for queen cells: tilting the top brood super back and looking along the bottom bars (this works most of the time) and removing frames with a lot of capped drone brood to further reduce the mite loading. I've been adding replacement foundation frames into the second super to give the bees something to do while stuck in the hives on those rainy days.

## Monitoring strong hives

A quick method to access a strong hive is to fog it. A strong hive will have a few hundred bees up the front of the hive after fogging (provided the brood area is down into the bottom super), so you can quickly access which hives need to have bees and brood removed. Another method is just to look in the top feeder. I use a top dry sugar feeder — basically it's a 70-mm high rim with a 17-mm hole on the middle (or at one end) of the hardboard bottom. Put a couple of scoops of raw sugar, using a 2 kg honey pot, in the top feeder of strong hives when they start running short of food in November during the nectar dearth — this gives them food but doesn't stimulate them into extra brood production.

A strong hive is when you find bees hanging from the crown board in the feeder. The bees need extra space and will go up rather than down. It's an indication to me that the hives need checking:

(1) for queen cells
(2) that the bees are covering the bottom frames of the bottom super (if not, reverse the first and second supers to create more space in the second super for brood rearing).
(3) if (1) and (2) are OK it needs supering. Add two supers if the hive is near the bush as the kamahi is about a week away from flowering — our first main flow. If your flow is more than a couple of weeks away, remove a couple of frames of emerging brood (without the queen) and add these to a nuc. Replace with foundation frames.

So that's it. Most of the hard work is just about over. It's a matter of going around doing quick checks. Always look at a few frames of brood to check for AFB before moving anything from hive to hive. Any hive that's slow in developing should be checked for queen failure. It can have a split with a new queen united to it (on top) with using a page of newsprint (two single sheets). Next round, reorganise the brood area so it's all at the bottom.

While it's raining, make up frames or wax plastic ones ready for the main flow. I may be old-fashioned but I still prefer to use wooden foundation frames in the brood nest rather than plastic ones. The bees draw them out much faster. Often they will leave plastic ones until they are really cramped before they will draw them out. However, I do like plastic frames in the honey super as they are better at handling the rough and tumble of uncappers and prickers.

## Things to do this month

Check feed, check pollen. (Often there is a nectar and pollen break in November that can arrest brood development. Some commercial beekeepers feed pollen supplements to keep the bees building up). Conduct an AFB check. Raise queen cells, super hives, requeen hives, undertake swarm control. Cull old frames, or at least move them to the outside of the super so they can be removed at the next inspection. Fit foundation into comb honey frames.

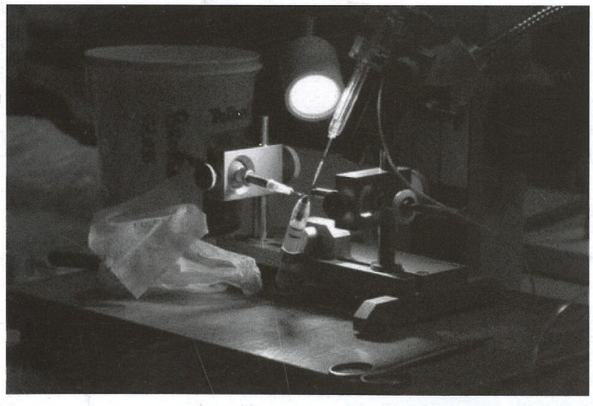
**- Frank Lindsay**

# Otago/Southland field day, 7 October 2006, Telford Rural Polytechnic


Left: Rex Baynes addressing the participants on the AFB strategy. Right: Frances Trewby, well-known Southland queen raiser.

Peter Sales, Otago Branch President Blair Dale and Telford Head of Apiculture Dr David Woodward demonstrating with queen cells.

David Woodward demonstrating beekeeping with some of the afternoon crowd.



A virgin queen bee about to be instrumentally inseminated. Frans Laas gave a demonstration of the techniques involved.

*Photos: Neil Andrews*