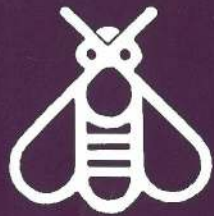


Volume 15 No. 7



August 2007

The New Zealand

BeeKeeper

New NBA Life Members

New Zealand
Permit No. 154506



Photo: Mary-Ann Lindsay.

Bob Blair, Jane Lorimer and Allen McCaw.

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NB: No magazine in January

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President's Report

With a little trepidation I write the first of my monthly reports for our journal. I am writing this report while in Wellington on Association business.

On Monday 16th July I attended the SFF Small Crops Forum. I gave a short presentation on the issues facing beekeepers and the flow-on effects to pollination. The beneficiaries of pollination are becoming acutely aware of the need for the provision of effective and reliable pollination services for their industries. The requirement for research into cost-effective varroa management should be seen as a priority issue to be attended to. We need to collaborate far more closely with these groups so that we can improve the likelihood of receiving better funding for this work and for other much needed projects. With the SMR work done by Mark Goodwin's team moving into the next phase, we need to be able to ensure that these stocks are maintained and enhanced. How we can obtain sufficient and continued funding for this could be a challenge.

On Tuesday I visited Frank and Mary-Ann Lindsay on AFB Management Agency business. These two are busily working on processing a large number of beekeepers who are now being asked to get their Disease Recognition Exams done to be able to keep their DECA status.

On Wednesday I attended the 60th Annual Conference of the New Zealand Association for Animal Health and Crop Protection (AGCARM). I gave a presentation on bee health and wellbeing. I brought up issues relating to the use of plant protection products and agricultural landscapes on bees, as well as the problems associated with the use of chemicals in the beekeeping industry. There is a general awareness among the crop protection industry about the negative aspects of chemical inputs and their effect on beneficial insects, more so from the chemical manufacturers than the applicators. I believe we need to work more closely with AGCARM to resolve these issues. Maybe we could collaborate in producing a "BeeSafe" programme. It was interesting to note that many of the issues facing the other groups in the primary production sector are much the same as for the beekeeping industry.

These include residues, impediments to trade and an aging workforce, with a deficit in replacements and inadequate recruitment incentives.

While I was speaking to the AGCARM, our case to prevent honey imports from Australia was being heard at the Court of Appeal. At the time of writing the judges had reserved their decision. We anxiously await their decision.

I have also visited our Treasurer and AFB NPMS Manager to discuss various management issues.

Annual conference successful

Our annual conference in Dunedin was a great success with a great attendance (over 200 registrations). The seminar programme provided an impressive list of speakers on a variety of relevant topics to the industry. Our overseas speaker Mike Brown provided the audience with some interesting insights into the state of beekeeping in England. Unfortunately I was unable to listen to his presentations because of other duties as a conference organiser. Many people were rather surprised to learn of the depth of work being done by the University of Otago on bee behaviour and genetics.

The conference entertainment was well organised. The haggis ceremony was very entertaining and the Berry brothers were aptly cast as Scots warriors, with Mary-Anne Thomason providing the good looks.

The sponsors of the Conference were very generous in their support this year and made life a lot easier for the organisers to put on a good event. Please support these companies.

The Annual General Meeting was notable for the number of life memberships conferred. These were to Allen McCaw of Milton and Bob Blair of Auckland for long service to the beekeeping industry, and to our former President, Jane Lorimer, for her role in getting the NBA on to its feet after the problems in 2003. The Association was in dire straits and she made a brave decision to not give up but to get the Association back on track. The NBA is now moving forward with a progressively increasing

membership thanks to her course of action. She has worked extremely hard in her capacity as President and we thank her for her tireless efforts. Tony, who was in on the action, acted with the utmost discretion and Jane was unaware of her impending fate at the AGM. He now fears for his life, in a metaphorical sense.

The AGM ran quite smoothly and the new Executive Council had its first meeting on the Friday. I would like to welcome Lewis Olsen from the Waikato Ward and Trevor Corbett from the Canterbury Ward as new Executive Council members. Trevor has been appointed by the executive to fill a vacancy for the Canterbury Ward. Unfortunately I have received a letter of resignation from Brian Alexander, our Auckland Ward representative for the last two years. The Executive Council will now need to seek a suitable person from that Ward to fill the position.

Over the last two years the NBA has been run under our new rules. The Executive Council has been finding its feet and is now preparing to take the next step forward. With the appointment of professional advocates and administrators the association has made significant strides in dealing with various issues, especially in dealings with government bodies.

The move by the Bee Industry Group to seek dialogue with the NBA was debated at the AGM. This was seen as a positive move by those present at the meeting. The debate was very restrained considering the strong feelings that many members have over the events of 2003. The Chairman of BIG, John Hartnell (also an NBA member) was present at our Conference, along with a significant number of BIG members. Their organisation has put forward a written proposal to the NBA that will be discussed at the next Executive Council meeting in August. I will have had an informal meeting with John by the time this edition of the journal is distributed.

- Frans Laas



Photo: Mary-Ann Lindsay

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BK345

New NBA President elected

Frans Laas from Otago has been elected the new president of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand (Inc). He was presented with the presidential taonga by outgoing President Jane Lorimer at the Annual General Meeting.



Photo: Jim Edwards

Frans has provided the following short résumé for those NBA members not familiar with him.

“My involvement in the beekeeping industry began about 12 years ago when my eldest son wanted to have a few hives as a hobby. He soon decided that it wasn't his scene, and I became involved instead. After a stint as a beekeeper with Milburn Apiaries I left to go to university in 1998 to complete a Bachelor's degree in Zoology, followed by a postgraduate diploma and Master's degree in Wildlife Management at the University of Otago, which I finished in 2003. I am now Manager for Betta Bees Research Ltd. I run about 100 hives of my own producing honey, pollen and a few queens and cells. I prefer to deal with small quantities only as my workload with Betta Bees is rather time consuming, and this restricts my ability to deal with my own operation.

I live at Mosgiel near Dunedin and I am married to Rosa. I have three sons, two of whom still live at home. In my limited spare time I like to go bush.”



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BK236

Two new Executive Council members

Lewis Olsen from Ohaupo has been elected to represent the Waikato Ward and Trevor Corbett is to represent the Canterbury Ward. Both attended the first meeting of the new Executive Council on Friday 6 July in Dunedin following the Annual Conference and AGM.

Lewis and Trevor have provided the following biographical information.

Lewis Olsen

I have been beekeeping for the last 39 years and I have had at least 20 years as a commercial beekeeper. My beehives are used for kiwifruit pollination and honey production. I also produce my own queens and provide bees for packages for export. I have served as Waikato Branch President in the past and currently hold this position. Other positions I have served have been on the Pest Management Strategy for AFB and as Disease Co-Coordinator for the Branch.

Ward Representatives should be free thinkers, and there is nothing wrong with a good debate which helps with democracy and enables our industry to move forward. I believe that I will bring practical skills and experience to the Executive, but ultimately I will be there to act as the members' representative. I wish to encourage our branch members to set some goals and ideas which will help our Executive with the direction of the industry. The industry's strength comes from the NBA branches so this is where my effort will go, and if I can help to strengthen the branch further, this will be a good thing. I will serve the industry with honesty and integrity, with the objective of maintaining a profitable business environment for our members.

Trevor Corbett

I first became interested in beekeeping back in 1989, when a friend asked me to help with his hives. Having just finished my Air Force career and looking for a new career working outside, I took up the offer. It soon became obvious he wanted someone to look after his bees as he was too busy with his new business interests to look after them.

Starting with those 30 hives I got a real taste for beekeeping. Living in North Canterbury I soon got to hear about the Rangiora Academy beekeeping course, which I attended in 1990. From this I learnt aspects of hive management and did work experience with some of the local beekeepers.

Soon after this I joined the NBA and went to my first conference in Tauranga in 1994. Except for the Auckland conference in 2002 I have been to every conference since, and have made a lot of very good friends over the years.

In 1996 I was asked to be Canterbury Branch Secretary, a position I have held to this day. I got to know most beekeepers in Canterbury through arranging monthly meetings, field days, AFB disease surveillance, disease recognition courses and have been an AP2 since 2000. I was a committee member of the 2005 conference in Christchurch.

I started my business in 1994, running 500 hives. With the arrival of varroa in 2000, I decided to reduce my hive numbers and find other streams of income until I knew how pastoral beekeeping was going to survive in Canterbury. I joined FFBIG as a member when it started, mainly to keep in touch with all aspects of beekeeping in Canterbury.

I have three adult children and have just recently remarried. All are keen for me to keep up my beekeeping interests. My interests outside beekeeping are off roading, tramping, and anything to do with travelling and seeing our world. I am also a foundation member of the North Canterbury branch of Child Cancer Foundation, so I know a bit about fundraising for good causes.

As Central South Island Executive Council member I hope to bring all aspects of my past experience together in representing members in the area. I will also be working for all levy payers with the AFB NPMS.

New NBA Executive Council.



The new Executive Council, blinded by the sunlight in snowy Dunedin. Left to right: Arthur Day, Barry Foster, Jim Edwards (CEO), Neil Farrer (Vice President), Neil Mossop, Pam Edwards (Executive Secretary), Trevor Corbett, Frans Laas (President), Brian Alexander, Lewis Olsen.

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BK 313

NZ Honey Packers and Exporters AGM and General Meeting at NBA Conference 2007

Around 60 people attended the Honey Packers and Exporters AGM held in Dunedin on 2 July, in conjunction with the NBA Annual Conference. Officers elected were Allen McCaw (Chairman), Mary-Anne Thomason (Secretary), Rod McKenzie (Vice Chairman), and Steve Lyttle, Kate White, John Hartnell (Committee Members).

The meeting continued into a general meeting where advancing the restructuring of the Association's constitution was discussed, and which still needs further work. Discussion also took place on the marketing of Manuka honey in Canada, where it is being misrepresented as Australian honey.

The current situation with respect to the EU residue-testing programme for honey was discussed. A vote of thanks was recorded to Murray Reid and Byron Taylor of AgriQuality Limited for their sterling work in managing the collection of revenue for the past six years of the programme. This method of collection of the funding is no longer possible with the advent of e-cert for exporting bee products, and NZFSA is looking at possibilities for a future funding collection method.

Mike Clear from NZFSA provided an update on residues issues, including an interesting development in reducing PDB residues. He reported on the recent European Union Food and Veterinary Office (EU FVO) audit carried out here in New Zealand and the expected timeline for a new National

Residue Monitoring Programme for honey, which they intend to place under the Regulated Control Scheme (RCS) before the end of the year. Jim Sim summarised the first round of RMP audits, and discussion took place on the classification error in the cost-recovery notices that had recently been sent to all RMP holders. Greg Zemke-Smith then presented on traceability and the official assurances programme.

This meeting was followed by a workshop by Brian Astridge and Greg Zemke-Smith on transfer documentation and e-cert training for export assurances.

Copies of these two presentations are available to Honey Packers members by contacting Mary-Anne Thomason (e-mail: kintail_honey@xtra.co.nz.)

For some time all known bee product packers and exporters have been receiving information via the organisation's HIPEA e-mail list. However, this service is due to sunset this year, and only financial members of the Association will be listed after 1 December 2007. All non-member packers and exporters, and any other interested parties, are invited to continue receiving this service by contacting the Association Secretary and becoming financial members. (Mary-Anne Thomason, HPA Secretary, c/- Kintail Honey, Sydney Terrace, Takapau, Central Hawke's Bay.)

- Allen McCaw
Chairman



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BK 951

Telford Rural Polytechnic annual report to the National Beekeepers' Association of NZ (Inc.), Conference AGM Thursday 5 July 2007

Enrolments and completions 2006–07

There were 38 students enrolled in 44 apiculture courses in 2006. This compares with 38 students enrolling in 47 apiculture courses as of 28 June 2007. The breakdown of student enrolments for apiculture courses in 2006 and 2007 is outlined below.

Certificate in Apiculture Level 3 (one year full-time)

One student (Daniel Adams) graduated with distinction in the Telford Certificate in Apiculture Level 3 in 2006. Three students are currently enrolled on this full-time Certificate course for 2007.

National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 (five months full-time)

Two students (Daniel Adams and Jude Sharpin) completed the National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 at Telford during the first half of 2006.

National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 (one year part-time)

Four students completed the National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 at Tairāwhiti Polytechnic (Gisborne) on 14 July 2006.

National Certificate in Apiculture Level 3 (seven months full-time)

One student (Daniel Adams) completed this course in 2006. A second course that was scheduled to go ahead as a joint delivery between Telford and Tairāwhiti Polytechnic did not get sufficient numbers.

Certificate in Queen Bee Rearing Level 4 (block course and correspondence)

Daniel Adams and Jude Sharpin completed the Certificate in Queen Bee Rearing Level 4 with distinction in 2006. Sam Bell-Iyer was awarded a merit pass.

Six students enrolled in this course in 2007, and they all completed the one-month block course. Two students have finished the requirements for the course to date.

Queen Bee Rearing Knowledge Level 4 (six months correspondence)

There were three students enrolled in the course on 16 June 2006 and there are three students currently enrolled as of 28 June 2007. No students completed the course in 2006.

Certificate in Apiculture Knowledge Level 3 (one year correspondence)

Fourteen students completed the correspondence course during 2006. On 16 June 2006 there were 30 students enrolled in this course. There are currently 29 students enrolled in the course as of 28 June 2007.

Bursaries and Awards

NZ Honey Industry Trust bursary of \$3,200 to Daniel Adams (Hamilton).

Beeline Supplies, queen bee rearing bursary of \$300 to Jude Sharpin (South Otago).

Airborne Honey bursary of \$500 for high all-round achievement in apiculture to Daniel Adams.

Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies Achievement Award: first prize of \$200 of beekeeping equipment for the student with the highest aggregate marks on the Certificate in Apiculture Knowledge correspondence course to Christopher Shaw (Te Anau).

Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies Achievement Award: second prize of \$100 of beekeeping equipment for the student with the second highest aggregate marks on the Certificate in Apiculture Knowledge course to Barbara Pimm (Opotiki).

Graeme Clarke cup for the best queen bee breeder to Daniel Adams.

Telford Graduate's Association Award for student with the highest aggregate marks from an urban background to Daniel Adams.

Telford–Christchurch Polytechnic (CPIT) joint venture

Telford and Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology have formed a Memorandum of Agreement to jointly deliver the National Certificate in Apiculture Level 2 course at the CPIT, Seven Oaks, Horticulture campus. The tutors will include Dr David Woodward, Bill Martin, Jeff Robinson and Maggie James. Advertising has begun through papers, mailouts, local beekeeping organisations and conferences to attract potential students. The anticipated start date is 13 August 2007 with two five-day blocks, one three-day block and seven weekend blocks and finishes on 18 May 2008. The course is 56 credits (NZQA) and the course fee is \$1,420.

Proposed two new Telford Certificates in Honey Production and Bee Diseases

Two new certificates, the Telford Certificate in Honey Production (40 credits) and the Telford Certificate in Bee Diseases (40 credits), have been approved by the Telford Academic Board. These two certificates are being submitted to the Tertiary Education Commission for funding. The two new certificates have been endorsed by the National Beekeepers' Association.

New secondary school beekeeping course (video conferencing/e-learning)

A new apiculture e-learning (video conferencing) course of 20 credits started at the beginning of term one (February 2007) with one student enrolled at Level 2 from Darfield High school. The course comprises six topics, of which five are NZQA unit standards and one is a Telford module. All topics are at Level 2 (6th form/year 12). The course is taught in the Telford e-learning studio for one hour per week for about 34 weeks during the school year. It is all theory-based learning. There are approximately 200 e-learning students enrolled with Telford in five different subject areas from throughout New Zealand.

Publication of Queen Bee Rearing book and revamp of Queen Bee Rearing course

The book entitled *Queen Bee: Biology, Rearing and Breeding* written by Dr David Woodward was published by Telford Rural Polytechnic on 8 March. Copies of the book are available from the Telford book shop for \$40 (including GST). The books are also available from Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies and Beeline Supplies. The book has become part of the Certificate in Queen Bee Rearing and Queen Bee Rearing Knowledge courses. Modules have been updated to include the book as the major required reading.

DECA (Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement) course

DECA courses were run on 15 July in Gisborne and on 31 October at Telford with about 10 participants, including the

full-time students in each course. The next DECA course to run will be at Telford on Friday 31 August 2007.

Introductory beekeeping course

Two free introductory beekeeping courses were run on 5 and 19 November 2006 in the Mosgiel area. There were six students on the first course and 10 on the second course.

Honey house RMP audit

The first AgriQuality audit of the Telford honey house was carried out on 13 March 2007. The audit looked at three areas:

- (1) design construction, and maintenance of buildings, facilities and equipment
- (2) cleaning and sanitation
- (3) honey processing, including inventory control and traceability.

The honey house met the requirements of the first audit, with some minor painting being undertaken in the hot room. The cost of the 40-minute audit was \$739, compared to \$65 for inspection by the district council last year.

Varroa surveillance

The students were involved in varroa surveillance in the South Otago area over a 2-3 day period (7-9 April 2007). Approximately 100 hives within a 20-kilometre radius of

Continued on page 10

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Continued from page 9

Telford were sampled, with David Woodward registered as an AP2 and the students working under his supervision.

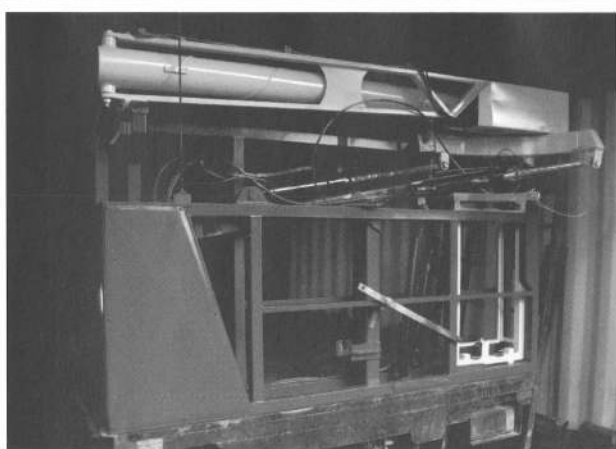
Field trip

Students were taken on a three-day field trip (10–13 June 2007) which included: the NZ Honey Producers Cooperative packing plant and warehouse (Ian Gebbie and Kevin Guthrie), Pleasant Point Apiaries (Paul Bartrum), Honey Valley NZ Ltd (Steven Lyttle), NZ Beeswax (Peter Lyttle), Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies (Stuart Ecroyd), the Canterbury Agricultural Science Centre (Dr Barry Donovan) for a talk on native and introduced bee species, Havill's Mazer Mead Co. Ltd (Leon Havill) to sample some honey mead, and the NZBIG conference in Ashburton to hear speakers on management for varroa, conservation of pollinators, pollination opportunities and residues.

Field day

The Otago–Southland NBA branch held a field day at Telford from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday 7 October 2006. The field day was attended by about 20 beekeepers. Guest speakers spoke on subjects including apiculture training, bee disease strategies, bee breeding and varroa mite, with demonstrations of queen cell bars, making up nucs and top hives, artificial insemination and a smoker lighting competition. Participants were given the option of sitting a DECA test and about six beekeepers completed the test.

- Dr David Woodward
Head of Department, Apiculture
Telford Rural Polytechnic



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Bee Products Standards Council report

The Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) met in Dunedin on Monday 2 July 2007.

EU audit

Mike Clear from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) gave a residues update in which he reported on the recent EU Food and Veterinary Office audit that had concluded the bee products residue programme was insufficiently robust. They will now require that honey be incorporated in the Regulated Control Scheme (RCS) for bee products. The NZFSA has had to agree and will give priority to this development.

An RCS may assist to counter the requests for assurances that have been coming from several Asian countries. An RCS does not differentiate between domestic and export markets. It seems that the cost recovery for a RCS will be on a per kg basis in each RMP. The resultant cost impact may determine whether exporters continue to supply the EU market.

RMP audits

At the end of May there were 205 premises and 30 stores that had been audited. A compliance audit was being completed and was expected to give issues that need to be resolved including Code of Practice deficiencies. The primary purpose of audit was to ensure that the Verification Agency and AgriQuality Limited were auditing on same basis. Residues issues highlighted further concerns. There may be some scope to review the number of audits. The number of audits for storage facilities needs to be related to the seasonal period—two audits over six months versus four audits over 12 months.

Risks with shared containers

Product under different certificates should be able to be cleared separately. For example, if your consignment is in the same container as a meat product consignment that is detained, you should expect your bee products to be released if all the importing requirements have been met. Exporters having problems with clearance at their market border should request assistance from NZFSA: Drasko Pavlovic manages border rejections and he will involve the appropriate programme manager. Separate certificates may be clearly applied for but will incur separate fees.

Bee Products Standards Council funding

There was discussion on the funding of the BPSC, which forms the industry interface with the NZFSA. It was acknowledged that there are widespread benefits to wider members of the industry. To date, the funding for the Council has come only from the NBA and the Honey Packers and Exporters Association. It was agreed that funding should come from

Continued on page 14

American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS) Report

1 July 2006–30 June 2007

Introduction and background

New Zealand has had legislation to control AFB since 1906. The most recent change in that legislation occurred in 1998, when the Biosecurity (American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy) Order was passed into law. The Order established an American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS) under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

The Biosecurity Act 1993 allows New Zealand agricultural industries affected by a pest or disease to determine their own goals and strategy for its control, and to use legal powers to ensure the strategy is carried out. In the case of AFB, the NBA (being the main representative organisation representing the beekeeping industry) developed the AFB NPMS, and went through the process of having the strategy approved by government.

The Management Agency for the AFB NPMS is the NBA. The NBA has a statutory responsibility to implement the AFB NPMS, which comprises a range of regulatory and educational programmes. The strategy is funded using income generated from a mandatory levy on beekeepers and apiaries through the Biosecurity (American Foulbrood – Apiary and Beekeeper Levy) Order 2003.

The Management Agency

The Management Agency for the reporting period consisted of the following NBA representatives:

Ms Jane Lorimer (Chairperson)	Waikato
Mr Neil Farrer	Southern North Island
Mr Brian Alexander	Auckland
Mr Barry Foster	Poverty Bay
Mr Neil Mossop	Bay of Plenty
Mr Arthur Day	Marlborough
Mr Frans Laas	Otago

The Management Agency has met on 12 separate occasions during the reporting period, two of which were ‘face to face’ meetings in Wellington.

Future make up of the Management Agency

During the 2006 Annual General Meeting in Hamilton, NBA members voted to accept a notice of motion promoted by the Bay of Plenty branch to expand the make up of the Management Agency to better reflect the industry.

The Management Agency has resolved after deliberation to increase the membership by two members, agreeing to move forward in the following way:

- The AFB NPMS Manager to write to all recognised beekeeper organisations seeking nominations to fill the additional positions on the Management Agency.

(Note: The above mailing has taken place.)

- An invitation to forward nomination(s) to be included in the October 2007 *New Zealand BeeKeeper* journal; this edition goes to all registered beekeepers.
- The Management Agency to appoint an independent recruitment professional to oversee the selection process.

The Management Agency has developed selection criteria to assist in the process.

The deadline for receipt of nominations is 5.00 pm on 9 November 2007.

Beekeeper, apiary and hive numbers

There were 2,602 beekeepers, 19,228 apiaries and 313,399 hives as at 20 June 2007, compared to 2694 beekeepers owning 300,728 hives on 18,954 apiaries this time last year. The downward trend of beekeeper numbers appears to be levelling off, with a net reduction of only 92 beekeepers in the last 12 months. This compares with 217 beekeepers in the previous 12-month period. By comparison, both apiary and hive numbers continue to rise, with an increase of 274 apiaries and 12,671 hives. Most of this increase happened in the North Island (92% of the hive increase).

AFB Disease Reports

Between 1 June 2006 and 20 June 2007, 952 cases of AFB were found by beekeepers and/or AgriQuality Limited staff in 540 apiaries. This is an average disease rate of 0.30% of hives. Of these AFB reports, 85 cases were found and reported in hives on 31 apiaries owned by beekeepers who are not DECA holders. This represents 0.007% of the total number of hives held by non-DECA holders.

AFB Surveillance Programme

In late 2006, early 2007 some 460 apiaries were selected to be part of the AFB surveillance programme this season.

While inspections appear to be progressing well, at the time of preparing this report only 174 inspections have been returned.

Part of the surveillance process is to review the selection criteria, with this latest round being no exception. A great

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 12

deal of time and effort went into reviewing the selection criteria (specifications); this appears in detail on page 19 in the October 2006 issue of the *New Zealand BeeKeeper* journal.

Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements – DECAs

As at the end of June 2007 there were 2,068 beekeepers with DECAs and a Certificate of Inspection Exemption (79% of beekeepers). These beekeepers are able to inspect their own hives for AFB and make reports to AgriQuality Limited on the authorised forms. No DECAs were revoked in the reporting period.

The Management Agency has for some time been concerned with the high level of DECA holders who have yet to pass the AFB competency exam. Recent figures obtained from AgriQuality Limited state that of the beekeepers who are DECA holders (1,058), some 51% have yet to pass the test. Acknowledging this unacceptable level of non-compliance and the ample time DECA holders have had to comply, **the Management Agency has resolved to revoke beekeepers' DECAs who have not complied by 31 July 2007.** The AFB NPMS Manager has been working closely with AFB Recognition Test Coordinator Mary-Ann Lindsay to encourage past trainers to make themselves available for conducting training courses, as well as liaising with NBA branch secretaries to organise such training days. The response from all concerned could be better, especially given the resolve of the Management Agency to follow through on their decision to revoke.

Annual Disease Returns – ADRs

Clause 27 of the AFB NPMS Order states **“On or before 1 June in each year, every beekeeper must, for all hives owned by that beekeeper, complete and send to the Management Agency an Annual Disease Return – ADR”.**

AgriQuality Limited reports that to 20 June 2007 there were 816 ADR defaulters, representing some 39% of beekeepers. We are informed this is lower than the historic average, but consistent with last year's result.

As your Manager, I consider these statistics—that in turn reflect the attitude of some to the strategy—to be totally unacceptable. The challenge before the Management Agency is to greatly improve this trend. The industry must come to terms with and appreciate the need to comply with the ADR requirement if we are to take the eradication of AFB seriously.

Other reportable statistics for reporting period

- **Total Number of DECAs Reviewed/Amended/Revoked**
14 DECAs have been formally reviewed, with approximately another 20 to 30 informally reviewed as part of the strategy's counselling programme.
- **Beekeepers requiring Certificates of Inspection (COI)**
There are 12,027 hives on 1,187 apiaries owned by 534 beekeepers that require a Certificate of Inspection.



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There are 419 Certificate of Inspection defaulters (78%).

- **Number of unregistered apiaries found – action taken**
24 unregistered apiaries have been found during the reporting period.
- **Number of abandoned apiaries found – action taken**
Three abandoned apiaries were found and were destroyed by AgriQuality Limited.
- **Number of beehives infected with AFB destroyed on default of a notice issued**
AgriQuality Limited reports they have not destroyed any hives on default of a notice during this reporting period. All beekeepers complied with notices issued.
- **Number of Restricted Place Notices sent to beekeepers under the AFB NPMS**
One restricted place notice was sent restricting movement of bees and bee equipment over an entire commercial operation.
- **Number of apiaries inspected on default of a notice issued**
Nil.
- **Number of AFB robbed out hives found or reported**
Four hives were reported to have been robbed out.

Unregistered hives

The Management Agency is becoming increasingly concerned (with what we accept as anecdotal evidence only) that an estimated 30% to 40% of hives are still not registered, not to mention those beekeepers who do not declare their hive holdings in an accurate manner. It must be understood that non-compliant hobby and commercial beekeepers are also signing false declarations for the AFB NPMS. As a consequence these beekeepers could jeopardise the export of honey products from this country.

With the above in mind, discussions have taken place with a number of agencies who we believe may be able to assist us: these include New Zealand Aerial Mapping Ltd (Hastings), TUMONZ (Rotorua) and Helicopters Otago Ltd (Mosgiel) to assess the various options available.

The Management Agency has resolved to put funding aside immediately for a helicopter surveillance operation covering a region (confidential to the Management Agency) on a trial basis only. It is anticipated the trial will be over a four-hour period. Modern GPS technology allows for extremely precise flight patterns to be controlled. Flight direction will be controlled manually using a less complex GPS on the helicopter and a grid search will be carried out, with each search line being 200 metres parallel to the initial line. When an apiary is sighted the helicopter will divert from its flight plan and momentarily hover over the site, while another GPS unit will be used to mark the site and number of hives recorded.

Following this exercise the Management Agency, along with AgriQuality Limited, will then analyse the results, which in turn will help in determining the way forward.

HortResearch retail honey pack sampling

Under the direction of the Management Agency, during June, July and August 2006 the AFB NPMS Manager purchased, from a variety of different sources and locations from across the country, some 45 pots of honey from retail and supermarket shelves for supply to HortResearch for testing. It was agreed for reasons of credibility and transparency the purchases be the sole responsibility of the Manager.

HortResearch, in their 28 March 2007 report to the Management Agency, advised that none of the lines tested had detectable levels of *P. larvae*.

It is encouraging to note that the results of the retail honey pack exercise confirms the trend from last year's honey testing samples for AFB NPMS, with 0.1% of honey samples testing positive. According to HortResearch, these results show that there appears to be a decrease in the number of samples testing positive.

Regional visits AFB NPMS Manager

The Manager has, during the reporting period, participated in a number of regional meetings and field days:

Hawke's Bay industry meeting	5 May 2006
Poverty Bay industry meeting	6 May 2006
Bay of Plenty Field Day	10 June 2006
Otago/Southland Open Day	7 October 2006
Southern North Island industry meeting	November 2006
Whangarei industry meeting	7 March 2007
Tauranga meeting with NBA members	17 April 2007
Auckland industry meeting	10 May 2007

A number of recommendations emanating from the above meetings have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

One suggestion put forward from a number of meetings is the introduction of an AFB monthly newsletter summarising any AFB finds that have been notified or located by way of surveillance. The Management Agency is planning to publish the first monthly news sheet in early July, copies of which will be forwarded to NBA branch secretaries and other related organisations for wider distribution.

Authorised Persons Level 2 (AP2s)

The Management Agency has as one of its key objectives for 2007 the task of increasing significantly the number of AP2s to assist in the detection of AFB, surveillance for varroa in the South Island as well as assisting in the Exotic Bee Disease Surveillance Programme.

The first stage of this exercise involved the development of guidelines, which resulted in the Management Agency releasing a document titled "*Guidelines for Selection of Authorised Persons Level 2 (AP2) Pursuant to Section 103 (6) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 for the Purposes of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy*". This document was mailed to all NBA branch secretaries, the Bee

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

Industry Group and all other beekeeping-related organisations, extending to same an invitation to submit nominations for AP2 training courses.

It is appropriate at this point to acknowledge the time and effort accorded this exercise by Jane Lorimer, who was the driving force behind the development of the guidelines document.

The Management Agency is pleased to report that we have had an excellent response with courses scheduled as follows:

Gisborne	11 July 2007
Napier	12 July 2007
Palmerston North	13 July 2007
Hamilton	17 July 2007
Whangarei	24 July 2007

It is expected some 75 people will be added to the list of available AP2s.

In addition to the above the Management Agency successfully carried out the AP2 renewal process.

Operations Manual

The Management Agency has over the reporting period spent considerable time in reviewing totally the Operations Manual. This task has involved hours of discussion, during which the development of policy has not only taken place, but a comprehensive rewrite also.

The document is all but complete, requiring a final edit.

Acknowledgements

As the AFB NPMS Manager, I am extremely fortunate to have supporting me such a dedicated and able group of people who make up the Management Agency.

My sincere thanks to you all for your continued guidance and advice.

Conclusion

I believe the strategy is meeting both its objectives and targets; however, the Management Agency cannot do it alone—it requires total support from the industry.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager



Continued from page 11

all affected parties in the industry and to do this, the NZFSA will need all representative groups to write and ask for funds to be collected from industry members and the total amount required to be collected.

- Jim Edwards
Chairman, BPSC

[Editor's note: this article should be read in conjunction with the report on the NZ Honey Packers and Exporters AGM on page 7.]



Roy Paterson Trophy 2007

The Roy Paterson Trophy for 2007 was awarded by Allen McCaw to New Zealand Honey Specialities represented by David McMillan.

The trophy, which honours the late Waikato beekeeper and inventor, Mr Roy Paterson, is awarded annually at Conference to the most innovative ideas or inventions for beekeeping put forward by industry members. This year three entries were received and judged by international guest speakers Mike Brown from the UK and Dr Benoit Seifert from Switzerland.



Allen McCaw (left) presents the Roy Paterson Trophy to New Zealand Honey Specialities representative, David MacMillan. Photo: Jim Edwards.

New Zealand Honey Specialities won the 2007 trophy for their development of an exciting new range of fruit and honey drinks consisting of 80 percent honey content. These drinks have recently been introduced successfully to the upmarket chain of Waitrose stores in the UK.

- Information provided by Jim Edwards, Allen McCaw and Mike Lynch



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New 'home' for NBA Library

The news for members is that the library 'home' has finally arrived at our beekeeping premises. We are pleased with the conversion of a new shipping container into a purpose-built library, which can be transported to where future librarians may live. The whole process has taken longer than anticipated and we are planning to carpet the floor before putting the books in.

We would like to see more use made of the resources of the library, and welcome visits by members if they are passing through Ashburton. We ask that if you wish to visit **please phone first** to arrange a time that is convenient. We hope to have photos of the completed library in the next issue of the magazine.

- Roger and Linda Bray
Librarians
Braesby Farm, 18 Buclands Rd
RD 1, Ashburton 7771
Ph/Fax 03 308 4964
Email: birdsbees@xtra.co.nz

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Photos: Roger Bray.

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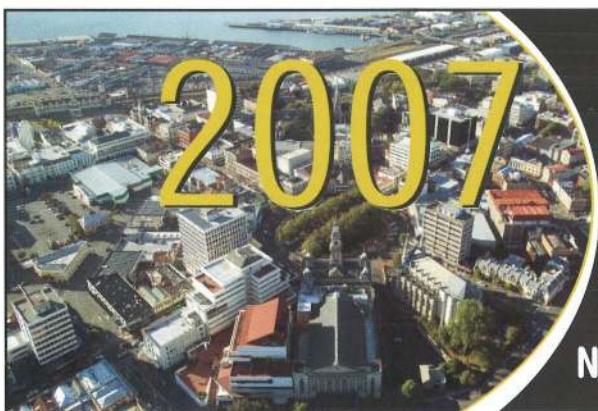
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NBA Conference Dunedin 2007



Above: NBA AGM attendees
Below clockwise from top left: Dr Benoit Seifert, Reuben Stanley, Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies display stand and seminar attendees.
Photos: Neil Andrews and Frank Lindsay.



More Conference photos



Clockwise from top left: Ian Berry and Frances Trewby; discussion panel; Joe Peeters and sons; John Berry, Mary-Anne Thomason, Peter Berry & the Master of Ceremonies; Jan Fergusson, Mori & Kevin Gibbs; Neil & Trish Walker; Allen McCaw & Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin; Jane Lorimer.
Photos: Mary-Ann Lindsay.





Varroa Agency Incorporated News

Update from Varroa Agency Chairman Duncan Butcher

South Island Varroa Surveillance 2007

The varroa bee mite appears to be confined to the Nelson area, following the Varroa Agency's annual South Island varroa surveillance programme.

No further infestations of the varroa bee mite have been found in beehives in the greater South Island area (outside the Nelson Controlled Area), following this year's varroa surveillance programme.

However, two further varroa infestations were found inside the Nelson control area, just east of the original positive apiary at Pelorus Bridge, first detected in July 2006. Restricted Place Notices have been placed on these apiaries and further surveillance of the operator's apiaries was arranged.

So far no more positive sites have been reported.

A total of 10,033 hives in 909 apiaries were selected to be sampled for varroa right across the South Island. Priority testing areas involved all urban areas over 200 hectares, airports and seaports and bee product processors or exporters who received product from the North Island. Also tested were hives close to honey factories, and hives on or close to major highways.

Seventy two percent (7,229) of the hives were tested by the time the programme concluded on June 30, 2007, with 45 Authorized Person Level 2 inspectors carrying out testing. Nine AP2s did not complete sampling their allocated apiaries.

The Varroa Agency has operated a surveillance programme for three seasons now, which involved sampling hives in autumn each year, the selection of surveillance apiaries based on risk modelling, with the models changing slightly from year to year.

As well as its own surveillance programme in the South Island, the Varroa Agency also monitored apiaries in the east and south of the Nelson Controlled Area on behalf of MAF. MAF wanted to know if varroa had spread east into Marlborough and or into a 50km band south of the Nelson/Marlborough Controlled Area line.

An additional 493 apiaries and 8,405 hives were allocated for testing in the Nelson/Marlborough/Buller/West Coast area. To date 60 percent

(4,991) of the boards from that surveillance programme have been returned and sent to Gribbles Veterinary Pathology Ltd.

In total the VAI allocated 1,402 apiaries and 18,438 hives to be sampled, with AP2s actually testing 12,220 hives (66%).

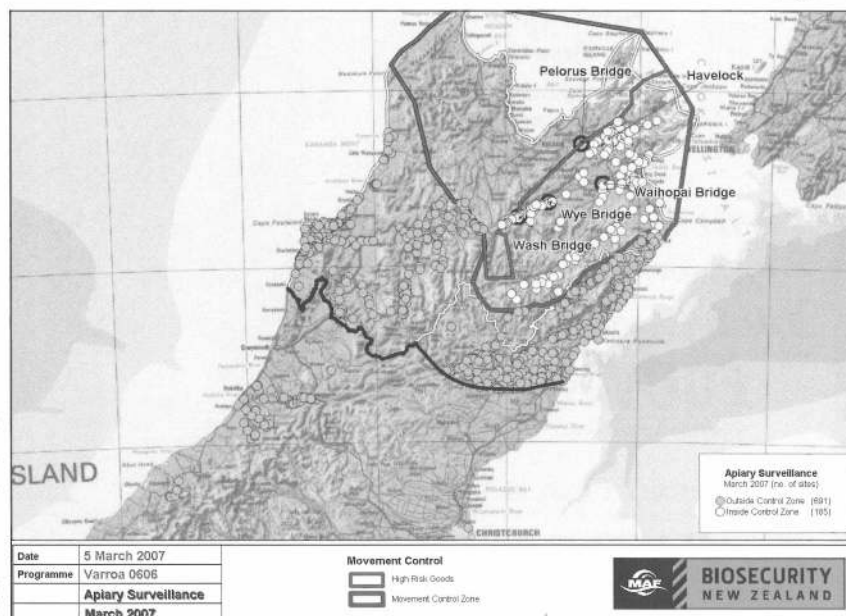


MAF is now examining the programme results from the Nelson Controlled Area and looking at allocated sites that weren't tested to see if there are any gaps in the 'surveillance ring'. It will decide if any of the apiaries not tested can be done in the spring or left until autumn 2008. MAF hopes to consult on the completed varroa surveillance programme and on a planned programme for later this year and or next autumn.

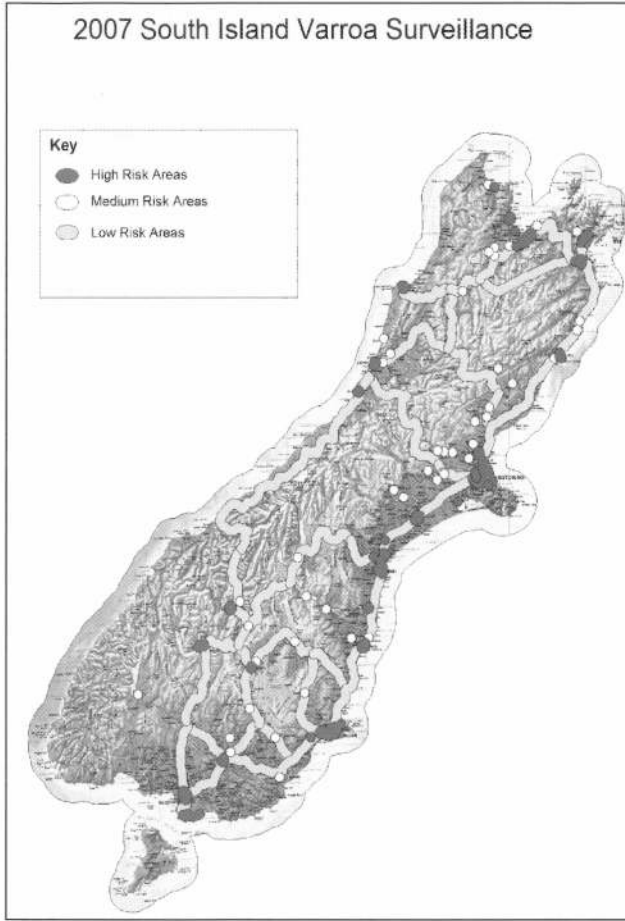
MAF will be discussing these issues during another series of 'Living with Varroa' workshops scheduled for August 2007. Two-day workshops for commercial beekeepers will be held in Christchurch, Timaru, Alexandra and Gore beginning 30 July, with concurrent evening workshops for hobby beekeepers in Christchurch, Timaru, Dunedin, Alexandra and Gore.

The Varroa Agency and MAF are very grateful to those beekeepers who carried out this surveillance programme and recognise it would not have been possible without their support.

Continued on page 20



Apiary Proposed Surveillance March 2007, Nelson area surveyed.



Biosecurity New Zealand Varroa Surveillance, South Island 2007.

Letter to the editor

Chilean beekeeper seeks work

Hello,

My name is Matias, I'm from Chile and I'm looking for job in Agriculture or Beekeeping area. Please contact me for any suggestion.

Thank you so much.

Matias F Rebolledo
22 Seaside Avenue
Waterview Auckland
(09) 820 3214 or (09) 828 5379
mf.matias@gmail.com

(Please contact Matias for a copy of his CV.)



Three Life Memberships awarded

As can be seen on the front cover, the 2007 Annual General Meeting recognised the service of three NBA stalwarts and made awards to Bob Blair from the Auckland Branch, Allen McCaw from the Otago Branch and to Jane Lorimer, the retiring National President.

- Jim Edwards





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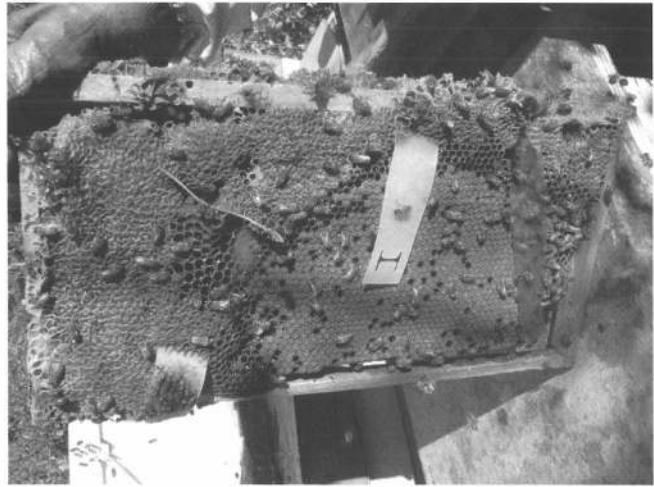
From the colonies



Auckland Branch

Our power was off for 24 hours as some really strong winds blew through the night before. We'd just returned from our holiday up North before the torrential rain flooded out Northland. Luckily I've got all my hives strapped down now: it gives you peace of mind.

Recently I went on surveillance as contracted by AgriQuality Limited to check hives for AFB and exotic diseases. It was my first time out on surveillance and I was surprised/horrified by some of our findings—see the photos below.



Photos: James Harrison

Most of the hives were in good order. Some hives were non-existent, which meant a lot of looking through paddocks and orchards trying to find hives that weren't even there. One group of 10 hives in the Auckland area were downright appalling. With the hives pushed hard up against each other in rows it didn't leave much room for inspecting, if they'd even bothered to look at their hives at all. Although there was no sign of disease, three hives out of the 10 were dead. In one hive, the brood chamber had only five frames pushed to one side so the bees had built burr comb throughout, making it impossible to inspect. We also found old varroa treatment strips that had been there so long the bees had built comb over the top of the strips and just left the ends sticking out through the wax. That one hive had three separate strips from different occasions. It seemed as though the beekeeper had just kept opening the hive every now and then to stuff a different strip in.

It makes you wonder why some people bother keeping bees; actually you wish they wouldn't. There are some people out there just letting the rest of us down.

I didn't make it to conference this year so will have to catch up with what went on when I get back from my annual leave.

Congratulations to Bob Blair for his life membership of the NBA—you've earned it.

- James Harrison



Bob Blair, new NBA life member.
Photo: Jim Edwards

Waikato Branch

As one who did not attend conference this year, it has been difficult to catch up with beekeeping colleagues and find

Continued on page 23



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out what is going on in our patch. I can only focus on the King Country area but the story does seem much the same everywhere; i.e., some hives have hatching brood and are well advanced, others are on the point of starvation. Also I have heard of a possible case of spray damage lingering on into winter, with 75 percent of a yard dead. And there have been lots of lids off due to wind damage.

The weather has certainly created havoc—it will be interesting to see how much damage has been caused to incipient flower buds, meaning will there be a bush crop? Will there be a manuka crop?

The Branch has finally completed the AFB audit with over 60 apiaries inspected. We are hoping to undertake the next audit in the spring and by then will have more AP2s to assist—they will have completed their training in July.

Again on the issue of hatching brood, our congratulations to Byron and Michelle Taylor, who have recently added another daughter to their brood.

- Pauline Bassett

Poverty Bay Branch

More rain...oh well, hope it's gone by spring.

The July conference was another good one thanks to the Otago Branch. After a stroll round Dunedin in the cold I found a neat fish shop like what I saw as a kid, with heaps of cheap crayfish and allsorts. I don't mind our honey going to Japan but our crayfish...you don't see our crayfish in the shop in Gisborne anymore.

Conference is always good for discussion, and in talking with the honey buyers one theme emerging is the demand for organic products, which is great. I hope the South Islanders keep their organic status, those who have it, and will retain a premium for their product.

On another note, it's good to talk to beekeeping parents whose kids are showing interest and learning beekeeping and are not scared of bees. It's wonderful as my kids are doing the same, and will hopefully be still doing it as the decades roll without being worried by all the hassles the industry has to deal with. I would not have any other vocation.

Hopefully a good spring for all.

- Don Simm

Bay of Plenty Branch

We had an excellent Branch field day in June with interesting speakers and helpful discussion on wax moth and residues.

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BK342

Special thanks to the organising committee for the time and effort such events take, and to the speakers for informative, thought-provoking presentations.

Unfortunately it is still evident that some beekeepers are still neglecting to remove varroa treatments. This only hastens resistance and disaster. Please use miticide treatments correctly as your misuse impacts on all of us.

The autumn drought has broken and now we look forward to "bog wheeling" sites (taking a 4WD through muddy holes). While the rain continued at home we enjoyed the hospitality of Dunedin and an excellent conference. There will be more detail on conference at the next branch meeting from our delegate: look forward to it, Jody.

We are now off to warmer climates for a well-earned break before the madness of spring sets the cycle in motion again for another season.

- Barbara Pimm

From the Bay of Plenty Branch delegate:

It was great to see so many Bay of Plenty Branch members at conference. BOP won the branch competition for saucy sporrans and bonny bonnets.

- Jody Mitchell



Branch competition winners Jody and Ralph Mitchell, Barbara and Alan Pimm. Photo supplied by Jody Mitchell.

Hawke's Bay Branch

The rains have finally come to Hawke's Bay; indeed at the moment they don't seem to want to stop. Unfortunately it is too late for any real grass growth and many farmers are really feeling the pinch. What effect this will have on the bees next year is unclear but we can only hope for the best.

Quite a few people from Hawke's Bay attended this year's conference in Dunedin, where we all had an interesting and educational time. I was able to follow most of the scientific talk (not all) but some of the marketing talk was way over

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my head. For example, what is a "New Zealand unique value proposition"?

I made a lot more headway with homovanillyl alcohol (found in Royal Jelly) and Methyglyoxal (found in Active Manuka honey).

- John Berry

PS: if you want to know what a 'New Zealand unique value proposition' is, check with (*undertake meaningful dialogue to ascertain the pertinent data with*) New Zealand Trade and Enterprise.

Southern North Island Branch

The last couple of months seem to have rushed by. It has been an educating time: seminars for DECA courses; an AP2 course and a refresher for some of us; and, of course, the annual conference in Dunedin. I came back with a heavy cold, so thanks to someone for passing on the germs—never mind. Conference was most interesting with a lot of stimulating talks on aspects of beekeeping.

Most members around our area are working on winter chores, making up new gear—boxes, floors, roofs, and getting frames ready. I have yet to do mine. At least in our area it has been fine and frosty, and the paddocks are dry and easy to drive over so feeding hives is not difficult. Our thoughts are with the Northern beekeepers and the problems that they must be experiencing—we had similar flooding conditions in 2004 in the Wanganui and Manawatu areas.

I noticed when checking hives two weeks ago that a lot of the queens are still laying; some even had fresh nectar! Every year is a surprise: the bees work in their own way and not always to our timetable. However hives close to the sea have a different climate to those further inland.

We look forward to spring—just around the corner now.

- Neil Farrer

Canterbury Branch

The Canterbury Disease Recognition Course and Competency Test for AFB will be held on **Saturday 22nd September 2007**, at the Hornby Workingmen's Club, Carmen Rd, Christchurch, 9.30 am. Cost \$50.

All applicants will need to *register before 28 August* with Linda Bray at 'Braesby Farm', RD 1, Ashburton.

Enquiries to Lindsay Moir, Trainer, ph 03 388 3313 or Linda 03 308 4964.

Congratulations to the Southland and Otago branches for co-hosting such a successful conference.

Southland Branch

June in Southland came and went with very little beekeeping done. The weather was cold and wet so for winter relaxation the best thing to do was to take a boat through the ice and snow to Milford Sound and go fishing!



Doug's fishing trip. The photo was taken by his fishing mate Brian King of Te Anau.

Thanks go to HortResearch for bringing Mark Goodwin to Invercargill to have a 'no nonsense' talk on varroa. Hopefully Mark will be able to come down again as varroa moves down the South Island, just to refresh our memories.

A successful conference was held in Dunedin at the beginning of July—thanks go to the team who organised it.

- Doug Lomax



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BK273

North Island Only

Residue realities

“Don’t use unapproved chemicals.”

That was the hard-hitting message from Airborne Honey’s Peter Bray in a polished seminar presentation. He made use of extensive computer graphics to show how and why our export honey was increasing in price—at the expense of chemical-tainted naughties like China and Argentina. The latter is out of the US market because of detected chemical residues; China too has been banned from the US market, as well as in Japan and the EU.

The chemical non-tolerance was getting tighter and tighter. The EU has a 10 parts per billion residue limit. That, he said, was the equivalent of two Panadol tablets in 50 tonnes of honey. And testing techniques are getting better and cheaper all the time. Peter went into considerable detail about the new spectrometry technology his company uses.

Be wise, and be warned.

(As an aside, Peter contrasted our care with exports against the almost total lack of testing data on food coming into coming into New Zealand. Eat up, and wonder: pretty much all of our supermarket peanut butter, for example, is now produced and packed in China.)

His other soapbox was the failure of AgriQuality Ltd to embrace technology to better plot hive sites. Using Google Earth (which many at the conference seemed familiar with) and GPS gave much greater accuracy and ease of monitoring than map grid references.

But expect more debate before the spy-in-the-sky comes in. Peter Bray asked delegates how many would want their yard sites public knowledge.

Not a hand was raised.

- Mike Lynch



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BK350

Genome jumps

Dr Peter Deardon, University of Otago Biochemistry Department, gave a conference seminar paper “The Honeybee Genome: What it means, and what can we do with it”. Dr Deardon has provided this abstract of his talk.

Over the last five years a remarkable project has been carried out in honeybee research. This was the sequencing of all 236 million base-pairs of the honeybee genome (its DNA sequence). Honeybee DNA was extracted, broken into 700 base-pair chunks, sequenced by a huge number of automatic sequencing machines and then the full sequence re-assembled from these fragments. In all, 1800 million base-pairs were sequenced and assembled, meaning that each base-pair was sequenced seven times on average.

After the sequence was assembled, a number of researchers from around the world took three years to annotate the sequence. This means they went and identified each gene (the bits of the genome that do things) and tried to work out exactly what it might do. At the end of this process, in 2006, the Honeybee Genome was published in the leading science journal *Nature*. Two groups of New Zealand scientists (my group and Alison Mercer’s), both at the University of Otago, were part of the annotation effort, making the Honeybee Genome the first published genome that New Zealand scientists have contributed to.

The sequenced genome allows scientists to do experiments that previously they only dreamed of. Part of the sequencing effort identified variable regions in the genome, allowing us to map genes associated with traits like honey production and aggressiveness very easily. In the future I expect that queen producers will provide information on the gene variants that their queens contain, giving their customers a preview of their likely performance in the apiary.

In more fundamental research, a genome chip containing every single gene in the honeybee genome has been produced. This allows us to determine which genes are turned on or off at particular times and places in the honeybee life cycle. My group is using this technology to understand what genes are turned on or off when larvae are fed royal jelly and become queens.

To researchers the honeybee genome presents a number of challenges: to carry out meaningful experiments, to decipher all the remarkable biology of honeybees, and to ensure the genome is translated into tangible benefits for the beekeeping industry. We look forward to working with the beekeeping industry to ensure we meet these challenges.



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BK327

Loaded questions

Here's a weighty notion to tantalise you while waiting for spring to arrive. Some time in the not-too-distant future it could save you a lot of miles, and give dreams of heavy supers some substance.

Ross Ward, managing director of Beetech NZ Ltd, spoke about new technology at the Dunedin conference. He made a passing reference to "loadcells" being used in Tasmania to monitor the weight of remote hives, feasible anywhere with cellphone coverage, and monitored from the comfort of your home.

It sounded tantalising, and chasing up inventive electronic and weighing-machine technicians in Dunedin got them quite interested in the concept, and the information that loadcells that give remote weight readings are already quite widely used in industry and farming (anything from forklifts and cranes to feed hoppers in chicken farms). The technology is getting better all the time, could be surprisingly cheap, and is well open to the inventive mind. The telemetry transmission is similar to that used to monitor river levels.

Basically, a loadcell can come in many forms. Simply, it is a transducer that sends out an electronic signal corresponding to the pressure applied mechanically. It could be an aluminium bar that when stretched or stressed changes voltage, air or hydraulic rams, or a pressure transducer inside an air or fluid-filled bag. The only requirement is that it be weatherproof and operate smoothly.

The consensus was that the sealed bag, perhaps between a couple of hinged steel plates, might be the go for beehives. For super weights the readings need not be that precise, but would need to be averaged to account for wind, etc. From there, using a processor board and RS232 protocol, the data goes to a cellphone transmitter powered by a solar cell, and can be sent out automatically or be interrogated from your home computer. The only caution is that because voltages are so low the system wouldn't handle much cabling and perhaps best be restricted to adjacent hives.

The cost for the electronic bits could be as low as several hundred dollars, but that's where invention, and the Internet, comes in.

If you want more information, find your local electronics whiz. Or you could contact Andrew Meek (Andrew@scsolutions.com). Andrew has considerable experience in innovative medical electronics at the University of Otago. He once reputedly designed a metal-bar loadcell attached to the tails of laboratory rats to measure their blood pressure.

- Mike Lynch



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BK 347

GI moneybags?

Niche marketing, and real or supposed healthy living, sells. Products as diverse as Milo, Vogel's bread, and Extra Milk market themselves as "Low Glycaemic Index"—they break down relatively slowly during digestion and make for a better satisfied stomach, especially helpful with diabetes and pancreatic disease. Conversely, products with a high GI are more desirable for the likes of athletes, who need a faster blood-sugar response.

The GI classification is a numeric classification of carbohydrate foods for blood-glucose response. Glucose is the standard at 100; fructose rates 23.

Sara Macdonald, nutritionist and dietician at the Glycaemic Index Laboratory at the University of Otago, gave a persuasive hard-sell to the recent NBA Conference on the desirability of getting GI readings for New Zealand varietal honeys. It's already been done in Australia, with surprisingly five out of six honeys coming out with low GI (35 to 52). Low GI honey could supplant artificial sweeteners, she said.

She made no bones it could be a marketing tool. But Otago is New Zealand's first accredited GI testing lab, and testing is not cheap; 12 trusted people have to stick to strict diets, fast, and present themselves for three hours of blood sampling from 6.30 in the morning. A product test might cost \$3,000.

No one put their hand up to enrol, but it mightn't be too far away as misgivings get answered. The GI lab has a website (<http://glycemicindex.otago.ac.nz/c/>), with information and email contacts.

Sara was asked from the floor to answer a frequent question to honey-sellers: can diabetics safely eat honey? Yes, she said, but to be safest, it's best consumed with a low-GI (wholegrain) bread.

- Mike Lynch



New AFB NPMS Bimonthly Newsletter available

The first issue of the AFB NPMS Bimonthly Newsletter is now available. This newsletter is produced by AFB NPMS Manager Rex Baynes, in response to beekeepers' call for more information on the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS).

For reasons of economy it will not be practical to mail 2600 beekeepers six times a year, so the newsletter will be distributed to contacts within the NBA branches, the Bee Industry Group and hobby-related organisations to make the necessary distribution arrangements within their groups by whatever means they consider appropriate.

This first newsletter features a range of topics that in part covers what has happened over the past year plus other AFB NPMS-related issues. Future issues will address what has happened over the past two months.

If you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter, please contact the president of your NBA branch, ward representative, or hobby club.



About the Apiary

I am writing this in mid-July—it's winter. Down south in Central Otago, the days are generally fine but the temperature hardly rises above 0°C. In Northland (when the bees are not swimming after recent flooding), the days are mild, between 13 to 16°C, and the bees are starting to build up towards spring.

In Wellington, being at the bottom of the North Island where it's not protected by any ranges, we tend to get all the storms going through. Mostly we have cloudy days with rain and wind, interspersed with the odd fine day. Where the temperature gets to 13°C at midday a few bees can be seen flying for an hour or so. In the warmer southern suburbs hives are a lot stronger and have been working Pohutukawa flowers. These trees don't know whether it's summer or winter, or is it perhaps caused by the hole in the ozone layer? This might be the same weather phenomenon that has caused the Manuka to flower through the winter up north, where it's been too cold for the bees to take any advantage of it.

In most hives the queens will have started laying again (well, those that stopped laying have). Replacement bees are being reared to offset those dying of old age, by using stored pollen and honey. When these stores run out, the bees will raise the next generation using their body fats, but this shortens the bee's life. Hence it's most important to place your hives near early pollen sources.

We can plant early spring sources in our gardens to assist our bees, but in the city the bees can get pollen from many

flowering sources, including waste areas covered in gorse. But if you have hives on farmland it's a different story. Most farmers today use every bit of their land to produce grass or crops—hardly the diverse environment needed to support an active and growing beehive.

Generally in early spring bees can make a round trip of a few hundred metres before becoming chilled. Therefore you should site hives close to waste areas, or get permission to plant a line of pussy willows, Tree Lucerne, etc. along the fence line or in some scrubby areas to assist your bees. Once these shrubs have established they can be used as fodder for stock when grass is short, so apart from assisting your bees you could be assisting your farmer. Heel in two-metre lengths now so they have a chance to get established in the spring. If you are planting other woody plants you can make a rooting hormone by cutting 15 mm lengths of willow branches into a bucket with a little water. (The willow gives off the hormone to assist rooting).

Checking winter stores, and other seasonal tasks



A few days ago I visited several apiaries to see that all hives were standing and still have enough stores. Hives are 'hefted' to check that they are still fairly heavy. Rather than look inside the hives at the capped honey frames, you quickly learn to judge a hive's weight from the outside. All that is necessary is to stand beside the hive and lift the back of the hive by the handgrip. If it lifts easily, check inside for stored honey. Less than three frames and the hives should be fed within the next couple of weeks. While it's still cold, use an inverted feeder over the brood nest. Put the feeder on in the evening so that any excited bees will not attempt to fly outside the hive and become chilled. Or if you are like me and hold a supply of spare honey and pollen frames, put these in, as honey is far better than sugar-water mix at this time of the year.

While in the apiary I trimmed the grass around the hives and looked in the odd hive that had no apparent bee activity. I started doing this without using a veil or smoker, and soon found that most of these hives had active colonies that were rather upset when I split them apart. It didn't take me long to cover up after that. I also checked a few hives to see how damp they were. Close-fitting roofs allow the build-up of condensation given off by the bees, and this dampness (drips falling on to the cluster of bees) causes them to consume more honey to stay warm. A 3-mm twig or a match stick under each corner of the hive mat allows this condensation to dissipate, without increasing the airflow in the hive to such an extent that the bees consume more stores to keep warm.

Generally I face my hives in different directions to prevent drift, and I noticed more dead bees in front of those hives that face away from the sun. The bees would have been coming in chilled, falling short in the grass without an opportunity to get back into the hive again, so I have been placing pieces of wood at an angle in front of the hive to assist those landing short. At my home hive I collect these bees up, put them in a container beside the fire, warm them up and return them to the hive after dark.

Continued on page 29

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Actually it's a real pleasure to travel north 50 km to where it's much warmer, and to observe the bees bringing back pollen and nectar. Spring is only a month away so get those winter chores done, as you won't have time later on when everything is 'go' again.

I also checked a couple of hives where I'd written 'queenless?' on the roofs. Sure enough, they each had a queen in them, but they were not laying so I suspect that they have not mated. I have a number of nucs put aside for this eventuality so next time through, I'll be uniting them to these hives after removing the unmated queens.

I also checked the mite drop in my trial hives (five Hungarian Kónya Rotating Brood Nest hives and four Langstroth hives). I found some hives to be very light in stores, down to the last frame of honey. All these hives took a real hammering from varroa and the Langstroth hives were just saved from destruction by putting in treatments when they were down to three frames of bees, (full of PMS). I was really surprised that most had chewed through a full super of honey yet were only just starting to come away again. There was no evidence of robbing (that is, chewed flakes of wax on the inspection boards), so I can only presume that mite-infected bees need more honey to survive.

Things to do this month

Make replacement supers and protect the wood with a non-toxic preservative. Make up new frames and wire them, but do not put in the wax foundation until just before they go into the hives. Air plastic frames before coating them with wax. Check hives for wind and cattle damage after storms. *Check stores:* hives are very strong but some of them are very low and require feeding. Cut grass down around hives.

Check for mites. I was preparing to move an apiary and was checking for AFB (15°C, no wind, bees flying between light showers—and this is winter?) when I noticed most hives had wet honey in them and several had signs of mite-damaged bees. Seems the bees have been out robbing last year's swarms that are now breaking down and as well as bringing back honey, they have brought back mites. I am having to put strips in some apiaries to protect my bees.



Kohekohe—winter flowering.

- Frank Lindsay



BIG changes

As always, industry unity, and lobbying power, came up at the AGM. But a more positive move this year was that the breakaway (and Federated Farmers affiliated) Bee Industry Group wants somehow back into the NBA fold.

Neil Farrer (Vice President) noted there were 2600 beekeepers nationally, but only 410 NBA members. However, BIG had now said it wanted to participate in the NBA executive.

John Hartnell (Canterbury), the new BIG chair, said a recent BIG meeting suggested (unanimously) both groups become affiliated members of each other. "We've got to move forward as an industry."

Allen McCaw (Otago) said there was no bar in the NBA rules to new members joining, but executive positions were a different story; this would need a rule change, and was complex.

Jeff Robinson (Christchurch Hobbyist Beekeepers) said he was a member of both groups, and wanted a new link.

Peter Sales (Otago): Does BIG membership entitle individual BIG votes? No, only one vote, like hobbyist groups.

Roger Bray (Canterbury) noted the original split was mainly in Canterbury, and the issue possibly needed sorting out there. But along with Bob Blair and Russell Berry, he said there needed to be a joint effort from the industry.

Ricki Leay (Nelson) said he was a member of both groups; there had never been any slugging off of the NBA. But along with Brian Alexander (Auckland), he said the Federated Farmers weight was important.

Allen McCaw: There's no reason why BIG could not speak with its one membership voice. It doesn't have to be a business deal; the executive can decide.

Neil Farrer (with the right of reply): "It's a good start."

- Mike Lynch

Members are urged to discuss at your branch meeting and provide feedback to the Executive Council.



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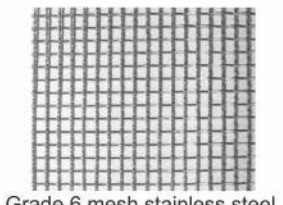


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Agrichemical Management Strategy

Six organisations were present at a meeting at Zespri on Tuesday 19 June 2007 to discuss the reporting and policing of spray-related complaints:

- Kiwifruit Growers Inc. (KGI)
- Environment Bay of Plenty (EBOP)
- New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA)
- Department of Labour (OSH)
- Zespri
- Kiwifruit Pollination Association/Steve Weenink and Neale Cameron (KPA).

The KPA had five goals for the meeting:

1. Extract the KGI from the role of investigating complaints.
2. Start dialogue between stakeholders.
3. Begin the process of forming a robust system for the handling of complaints, investigations and prosecutions.
4. Help in forming best practice guidelines.
5. Convey the seriousness of the situation in terms of honey exports, to the community and effective pollination moving forward.

The meeting was successful in the aim of extracting the KGI from investigating complaints. KGI now handles the education side and facilitates the 0800 number. Although the intention of the KGI was to reduce the number of incidents

of the misuse of agrichemicals, the perception of those in the wider community was that they cannot police themselves and must not be in a position of screening complaints or making the decision to pursue.

The setting up of a robust system for the reporting and investigating complaints is under way with a draft plan and positive dialogue between stakeholders. This needs further work, but I have confidence as long as we can continue working together we can come up with a system that may be able to be duplicated around the country. The key is to remember that we are all on the same side and this is a win-win for everyone involved.

We also highlighted some of the incidents which we were involved with in the last spraying season. These incidents very clearly exposed the risk to our communities and the beekeeping industry posed by applicators who either don't know their responsibilities, or simply don't rate them as a high priority.

For any queries feel free to contact me.

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KGI spray complaint number: 0800 232 505



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You can't help laughing

My first contact with bees was seeing an observation hive at the Wellington Zoo where they also sold comb honey. I studied that comb for ages before we ate it, and it started a fascination that has continued.

When I first started keeping bees, we collected swarms and they were generally quite nasty. I started reading bee books that proclaimed the value of requeening. So I followed that advice and requeened all my hives. Instead of becoming nice and quiet, they ended up worse-tempered.

Visit to South City Print

Members of the Executive and the Publications Committee visited the home of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* while in Dunedin for the annual conference. This was a great opportunity to meet Leonie Young and Allan Middlemiss, who are responsible for the layout and printing of our monthly journal.



Leonie Young



Glyn Burrows, Rex Baynes, Allan Middlemiss and Pam Edwards. Photos: Frank Lindsay.



Fiona O'Brien, Frank Lindsay and Rex Baynes watching the July issue rolling off the press, operated by Glyn Burrows. Photo: Pam Edwards.

These new bees had an interesting habit: you could take the hive apart and they would be okay. Then all of a sudden they would attack, so much so that it was difficult to see out of your veil. I don't know what selection process was taken by the queen breeder, but docility was definitely not a feature.

If you start in beekeeping, you need dedicated helpers. Because I was really scared of the bees even though fascinated by them, I used to sit inside the front room window, calling out instructions to my father about what to do. After a really good stinging, he gave me the ultimatum, "Look after them yourself or get rid of them". I was too interested in them to get rid of them, so took the plunge and worked them myself.

Collecting swarms has its moments. I wanted to collect a swarm on the branches of a willow tree. It was quite high up and as I hate heights, called on the help of a friend. He climbed up into the fork of the tree and I passed him a stick to push the swarm so that it would drop lower. Perhaps I should have mentioned that he was directly under it. When the bees fell, he took off down the track running faster than he could have fallen. Being the fastest runner at school, he excelled himself and within seconds had disappeared out of the creek bed. I was looking over the top of the bank and couldn't see him, only a few bees circling some long grass. He had gone to ground. I don't know why he made a fuss: he received only three stings.

- Gary Jeffery



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