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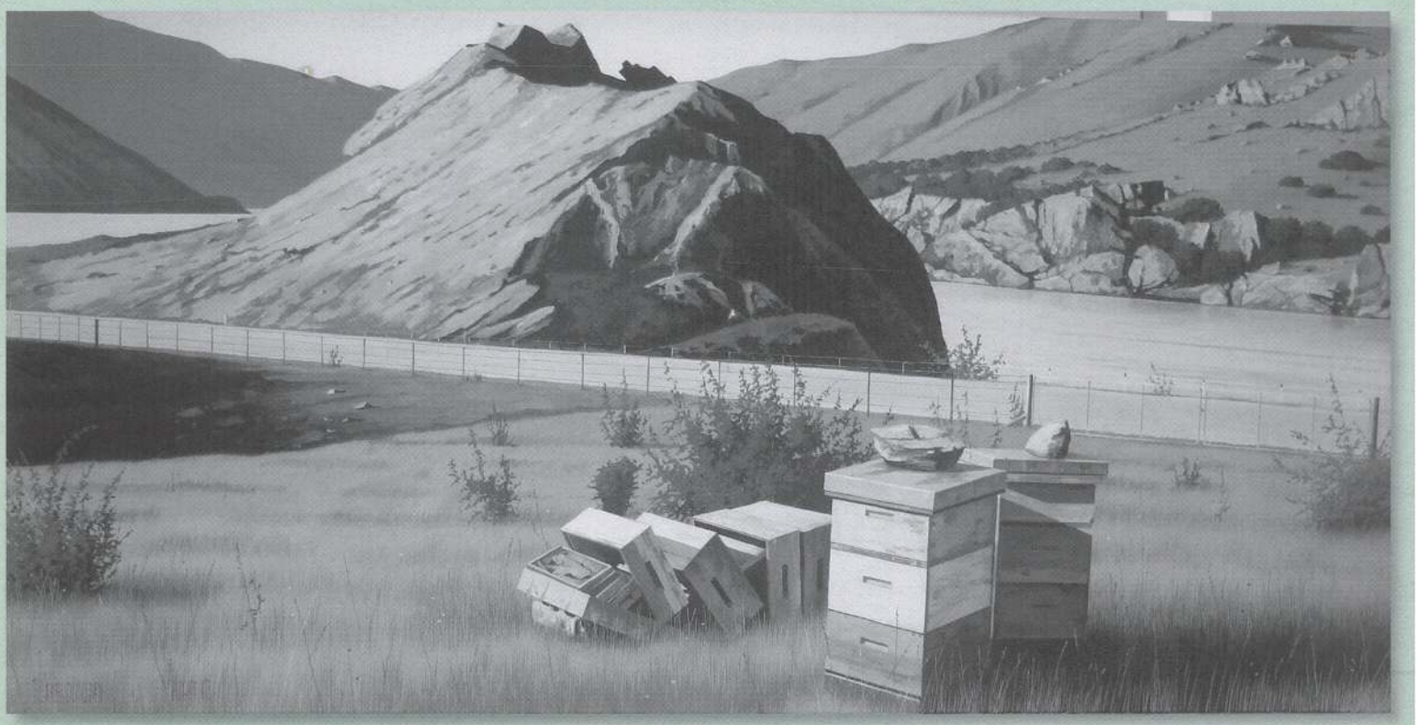
Lake Dunstan (2007), by Michael Hight



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President's Report

This last month has been relatively quiet: the post-conference hiatus I suppose. After returning from my trip to Wellington I visited John Hartnell (Chairman of the Bee Industry Group) for an informal chat on various issues confronting beekeepers in New Zealand. A major issue we discussed was the possible effects of varroa on the profitability of some beekeeping businesses in the Southern regions. With the continued depression of white honey prices and the limited availability to obtain paid pollination contracts and other revenue sources, some beekeepers may struggle to remain viable. While this may sound depressing, beekeepers are an adaptable lot and the majority will find ways to get around the problem and remain profitable. Already many beekeepers in the South are beginning to re-evaluate their business models. Some are downsizing, some are getting bigger and others are retiring from the industry a little bit earlier than they probably intended.

A wide range of predictions and models have been produced about the likely impact of varroa on the South Island beekeeping industry, and the flow-on effects for people requiring pollination. We really won't know the truth of the matter until the dust settles. Those beekeepers who have organic certification will probably face the biggest challenge. Do they temporarily or permanently relinquish their certification until the acute phase has passed, or do they take the bull by the horns and use chemicals certified for use by the relevant certifying organisations from the beginning? The re-establishment of lost markets for certified organic bee products may be an interesting exercise.

A note from Biosecurity New Zealand about the latest surveillance round in the Nelson/Marlborough region has indicated that detectable varroa infestations are still confined within the official control area. This is a good piece of news for those beekeepers on the south side of the line.

Colony Collapse Disorder in the USA

I have recently received a copy of the United States Department of Agriculture Action Plan for Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). As yet they are not able to definitively pin down the cause of the disorder. They are now looking at four main topics of research: survey and data collection, analysis of samples, hypothesis-driven experimentation and mitigative and preventative measures. This document will be put on the NBA website soon so members can read all about the most definitive work on the subject to date. Until such time as the true cause of CCD is elucidated, then the New Zealand government should take a strong precautionary approach to the importation of all bee products into this country.

Honey import appeal

At the time of writing this report we are still awaiting the decision of our appeal on the import of honey which was heard on 18 July.

Apimondia

I will be attending Apimondia in Melbourne in mid September, where I will give a short presentation to the Working Group on Cooperation and Coordination between Beekeepers' Associations. This talk will briefly outline our Association to an international audience. The Apimondia General Assembly will also be held at the same time, and as a member the NBA is entitled to a vote in various matters.

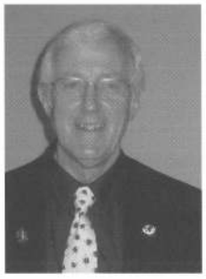
One whole session will be devoted to bee breeding and instrumental insemination issues. Since inseminating honeybees is a major part of my work, I won't be missing this session for anything.

- Frans Laas

Stainless steel loses its lustre over time and can become water stained. Try polishing it with pantyhose.

Chief Executive Officer's report

Beekeeping in North America



Following our AGM in Dunedin, Pam and I headed for the American Veterinary Medical Association convention in Washington, DC, where I made two presentations. During our time there we visited, with assistance from our colleague in the New Zealand Embassy, the USDA:APHIS entomologists at Riverdale, MD.

We were particularly interested in Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and received a report on work being done to define the problem and find the cause. You will find all the relevant information at: http://www.ars.usda.gov/News/docs.htm?docid=15572

We also had a discussion on the status of pollinators in North America. A review has recently been published and this can be found and purchased from the National Academy of Sciences at: http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11761

Finally, we discussed the shortage of bees in the US and the potential for bees to be imported from New Zealand. Assessment demand for almond pollination begins in November for supply in late January, so that is really too early for New Zealand to supply. We also discussed the difficult access conditions and the effect that this was having on New Zealand beekeepers who may want to supply bees to the US, especially on the transit of bees through the US to Canada where most of our exports currently go. We agreed that for North American beekeepers to access New Zealand bees, the preparations need to be practical and work in with other management activities, such as inspection when honey is collected and that varroa treatments are applied to the hives that will be shaken for export. The current requirement to go back and inspect supplying hives again has proved to be a significant difficulty that is not technically justified.

Varroa research

We have been working to further research efforts in a number of directions. The MAF Sustainable Farming Fund has supported the second phase of the major varroa work being done by Dr Mark Goodwin and his colleagues at HortResearch. At conference we heard about their plans for moving their population of varroa-resistant bees to Mercury Island (opposite Coromandel Peninsula), to establish and maintain a strong genetic base which can then supply queens to industry members. We have been discussing how to start evaluating these bees—this should start next year when those people who have been major sponsors of this research project use their initial supplies. The aim is to begin supplying queens to the whole industry within about two years.

Marketing

New Zealand honey needs to be promoted on both the domestic and export markets. Whether or not honey imports begin, it is clear that we need to be promoting the benefits of honey to a wider range of consumers. At conference we heard about the potential to use the 'Glycaemic Index' (GI), which holds value for honey in a number of dietary applications. You can find out more about this index at: http://glycemicindex.otago.ac.nz/. We are looking at supporting research into determining the GI values of different honeys.

The NBA continues to learn of cases of misrepresentation of New Zealand honey in export markets. If we want to increase the valuable export returns and benefit from the inflow of that revenue to supplying beekeepers, then we need to ensure that we have a clear New Zealand brand, backed with an effective quality assurance programme. The recent case of Australian 'Manuka' honey in Canada demonstrated the risks. The last thing we want is foreign honey masquerading as something that is unique to New Zealand. *[See page 15 for more information.]*

We do, of course, need funds to support these initiatives. If you would like to provide funds and even nominate where you would like them to be used, then please contact Pam or me at the NBA office.

- Jim Edwards
Chief Executive Officer

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Report to the annual NBA conference, Dunedin, 5 July 2007

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During the year the apiculture section lost the services of Carole Lasseter as Apiary Registrar based in Lincoln. Carole had taken on extra work in the Seeds Section within AgriQuality and did not have the time to undertake registrar duties for the apiary group. Carole's contribution over the years is much appreciated. She will continue to be available as Registrar in an exotic bee disease response. Bob Derry continues as Apiary Registrar based in Hamilton and he, or any of the Apiculture Officers, can assist with registrar enquiries.

2. BEEKEEPER, APIARY AND HIVE NUMBERS

There were 2602 beekeepers, 19228 apiaries and 313399 hives on the 20th of June 2007 (see Table 1). This compares to 2694 beekeepers owning 300728 hives on 18954 apiaries this time last year. The downward trend of beekeeper numbers appears to be leveling off with a net reduction of only 92 beekeepers in the last 12 months. This compares with 217 beekeepers in the previous 12 months period. By comparison, both apiary and hive numbers continue to rise with an increase of 274 apiaries and 12671 hives. Most of this increase happened in the North Island (92% of the hive increase).

Table 1 Changes in New Zealand Beekeeper, apiary and hive statistics since varroa arrived in 2000

	May-00			June-07		
Location	**Beekeeper**	**Apiary**	**Hives**	**Beekeeper**	**Apiary**	**Hives**
Blenheim	414	1741	28443	292	1874	26533
Canterbury	727	4748	60356	502	3783	52796
Hamilton	486	2800	49863	175	2207	41236
Otago/Southland	451	3495	50823	335	3325	51280
Palmerston North	1214	3655	43534	576	3156	47724
Tauranga	496	2971	51008	249	2834	58408
Whangarei	1168	3033	36086	473	2049	35422
New Zealand	4956	22443	320113	2602	19228	313399

3. EXPORT OF LIVE BEES

Bulk bees are exported as "package bees", which are cardboard and wire mesh units that contain between one and one and a half kilograms of bees, a queen bee and a food source. The demand from Canada for package bees reached a peak in 2003/04, with the orders for the last two years being well down. However, for the 2007 exporting season, orders increased by 68% and 15120 packages of bees weighing 1 kilogram each, and 4350 individual queen bees were exported. In comparison, 8988 packages and 10,172 queen bees were exported in 2006, 15711 packages in 2005, 27729 in 2004 and 25121 in 2003.

Difference between bkprs, apiaries & hives from 2000 to 2007

Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives
Blenheim	-122	133	-1910
Canterbury	-225	-965	-7560
Hamilton	-311	-593	-8627
Otago/Southland	-116	-170	457
Palmerston North	-638	-499	4190
Tauranga	-247	-137	7400
Whangarei	-695	-984	-664
New Zealand	-2354	-3215	-6714

Loss '00-'07

Location	Beekeeper	Apiary	Hives
North Island	1891	2213	-2299
South Island	463	1002	9013

In addition 670 queen bees were sent to the UK and 500 bumble bee queens went to Korea. Bumble bees are used mainly to pollinate greenhouse crops such as tomatoes.

4. HONEY CROP 2007

Similar to last year the nectar flow stalled after Christmas, following reasonable bush flows in late spring. The honey that was produced in many areas in early 2007 came in over a two-month period, as a rather long protracted flow. Despite this, average to above six-year average crops were reported from the North Island. Below average crops were reported from the South Island, especially in Southland, parts of Central Otago and Marlborough. Just under 1000 hives were removed from Nelson city and surrounding areas and taken to the North Island in an attempt to eradicate varroa. This loss is reflected in the smaller crop reported from that area.

Some very good yields were recorded in parts of Northland, the Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay and the Manawatu. Yields in these areas ranged from 40 to 48 kilograms per hive with district averages of 36 to 40 kilograms per hive. The national average was 30.7 kilograms per hive. The New Zealand honey crop was calculated at 9666 tonnes, down 757 tonnes from the 2005/06 crop of 10423 tonnes (see Table 2). The six-year average is 9267 tonnes with a range from 4682 tonnes (2002) to 12252 tonnes (2003). Regional honey production data for the past six years are summarized in Table 2. The national average was 34.7 kilograms per

hive. The New Zealand honey crop was calculated at 10423 tonnes, up 734 tonnes from the 2004/05 season of 9689 tonnes. The six-year average is 9180 tonnes with a range from 4682 tonnes (2002) to 12252 tonnes (2003).

Table 2: New Zealand Honey Crops

	2002 (tonnes)	2003 (tonnes)	2004 (tonnes)	2005 (tonnes)	2006 (tonnes)	2007 (tonnes)	6-year average (tonnes)
Northland, Auckland, Hauraki Plains	593	1066	1047	1221	1337	1252	1086
Waikato, King Country, Taupo	708	2210	1164	1095	1124	1270	1262
Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, Poverty Bay	319	2064	2052	1498	1937	1897	1628
Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Manawatu, Wairarapa	750	1607	1330	1440	1935	1912	1496
Marlborough, Nelson, Westland	300	1350	550	800	690	675	728
Canterbury	921	2400	1500	1500	2100	1620	1674
Otago, Southland	1091	1555	1245	2135	1300	1040	1394
New Zealand	4682	12252	8888	9689	10423	966	9267
Yield/hive (kg)	15.0	40.8	30.2	33.1	34.7	30.7	30.6

5. DISEASE REPORTS

Between June 1 2006 and June 20 2007, 952 cases of American foulbrood (AFB) were found by beekeepers and/or AgriQuality 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.

6. EXOTIC HONEY BEE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

The inspection and sampling programme is split into the inspection and sampling of 350 apiaries in high-risk areas such as major cities, tourist centres and near ports and airports, plus the testing of bee samples from apiaries supplying bees for export. The target for the high-risk areas was almost completed with only a few apiaries still to be done. For the low risk surveillance sites, 375 samples were collected out of a target of 300 samples. No exotic bee diseases were reported. AgriQuality will prepare a more surveillance detailed report when the lab testing has been completed.

- Murray Reid
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Active Manuka Honey Association AGM 2007: Chairperson's Report

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the AMHA AGM for 2007. I want to thank you all for your commitment and interest in AMHA, through your attendance and support. It has been a busy year. As a group we have grown since August 2006: from 39 members in 2006 which included 29 licensees, to 49 members in 2007 which includes 33 licensees.

We have continued with the issues to gain registration of the trademark in as many countries as we could, monitoring the trademark, establishing research projects, and developing within the group of AMHA a robustness that our systems and protocols could carry us forward, in preparation for what the Committee sees as being a period of substantial growth and change in the association.

The registration process has continued and we are registered in 35 countries, approved and awaiting registration for two applications (one being in USA), examination of three applications—Class 5 and 30 in China and Class 5 in Malaysia—and a NZ application for the words UNIQUE MANUKA FACTOR. We propose that we move into new regions this year, possibly the Middle East. There will be a form available today for you to fill in and give us feedback on which countries you think we should tackle next.

We have had several investigations made by Pipers (our attorneys) this year, looking at breaches of the trade mark. There has been great support by members bringing home samples of honey to be tested to support these breaches. A range of monitoring activities has been ongoing throughout the year, including: Internet monitoring by an independent searcher; test sampling of honey sourced from within New Zealand; engaging overseas associates to consider potential infringements in countries such as the UK, Singapore, Japan, China, United States and Canada; spot checks of websites; and more recently, obtaining samples of UMF® honey from some countries and obtaining test results on that honey for comparison with claims on the labels. As a result of recent test results undertaken on honey samples obtained through auditing in New Zealand and overseas, members will soon be receiving letters regarding the results of the tests—whether good or bad news.

These activities are closely linked with ensuring registration of the trade mark in the various countries, establishing suitable auditing procedures, accumulating strong evidence and having the available funds to continue further.

Cease and Desist letters and/or e-mails have been sent to several parties in New Zealand, and positive outcomes/ responses have been obtained from 90 percent of these. The other 10 percent is being monitored with a view to further action.

In order to ensure that any action taken by AMHA in such instances would not directed against a bona fide distributor of a current AMHA Licensee, the brand manager requested provision of distributor details dealing with AMHA licensees and products legitimately bearing the UMF® trade mark, so we can target those who are not. This request was not taken up by members, so it still takes time for our brand manager to work through who is working with whom. If you make a request of our brand manager to follow up on a breach, please try and assist with all the information asked of you.

It is the Committee's hope that all members will support this initiative and see the benefits of this monitoring. There will be a time when the Committee may need to employ someone or a firm to do more investigative work with potential breaches, and this may be a decision we make on a case-by-case basis.

Research projects

Research projects are an area of great need and focus for the Committee. It has been a challenge to work through the most important projects and get the results. I totally understand that there is some frustration from members with the present honey testing system; however, it is not an easy fix.

We have been reviewing the honey testing systems. In relation to the current test, this has involved reviewing the procedures, test protocols, and the staff doing the work at New Zealand Laboratory Services Ltd to ensure that the testing was valid; for example, by undertaking physical quality assurance checks in the lab and undertaking test sampling. AMHA has spent a considerable amount of time looking at which way to move forward, deciding on what funds to spend and when. Some comparative work has been done to look at the MIC test along with the honey assay test. We are trying to get the best, most reliable, repeatable test—great idea, but a complex one to achieve. I had hoped that we would have conclusive answers to report, however, I do not have them at this stage.

There have been recent reports of methylgloxal (MGO) in the media. Some work has been done with Hill Laboratories to test MGO in honey and they have successfully developed an accurate test for this. It is an area that committee feels needs close monitoring and ongoing research.

Major decisions taken

Two major decisions Committee made just recently after considerable discussion were:

1. allowing the use of UMF® 5+ on any honey tested having non-peroxide activity test result of 5+ or greater. What we proposed is that this would be reasonable, provided there is a rider/disclaimer on the label that the product is not recommended for therapeutic use at these levels. The rider MUST BE DISPLAYED PROMINENTLY on the front of the label, all in the same font and in close proximity to the UMF® trade mark, and that it can only be used on product having measurable non-peroxide levels of less than 10+.
2. We also agreed that the trade mark is able to be used on products such as skincare or soaps etc containing 2%

UMF® honey on volume: volume basis provided the UMF® value of the honey is 15+ or higher.

In both of these instances the membership is charged with promoting the brand. There should now be no reason why the term ACTIVE is used, and members are required to cease use of this term immediately if UMF® honey and products are to be distinguished from products supplied to the market by non-members.

Direction of AMHA

Bill Floyd, a familiar face to those of you who have been in the industry a while, comes to speak to us today having had a role as the marketing manager for the honey industry back in the mid-90s. Because of that role and his experience in other industries such as the green-lipped mussel and blackcurrant industries, I know he understands the challenges and opportunities we face here. Bill has spent a lot of time gaining background and feedback from people in AMHA over the last six weeks to get a picture of what we are and where we are going. Committee has been reviewing the direction of AMHA, who the shareholders are and to do some future proofing, and Bill was asked to independently review this information for us. I am really interested to see and hear what he has to report. Welcome, Bill.

There have been ongoing reviews of our licence, reviewing AMHA documentation (both legal and non-legal) and policy. What a job! This has been done in conjunction with the concept of gaining a valuation of the UMF® brand. We went to Staples Rodway (a firm in Tauranga) to evaluate the brand for a number of reasons, not the least being litigation insurance. This has not been quite completed and I must comment on the slow response from members to reply to the questionnaire sent out by Staples Rodway. I was surprised, as many members had agreed that in order for AMHA to move on, and to make sure that our fees that we charge members truly reflect what we are worth, we must do this work. The Committee needs member support on this to ensure that we are doing this correctly.

During the year Committee spent some considerable time on looking at auditing systems, trying to establish what we need to identify as key issues. We developed a draft process chart and have moved onto looking to implement audits of our members to ensure that they are doing what our licence requires us to do. To this end we have our speaker Tony Kane here today to speak to us about audit processes. Audits have become part of our industry and AMHA and members must also work together to show the marketplace we are doing what we say we are. Welcome, Tony.

When I first came onto Committee we had about four meetings per year. This year to date we have had meetings almost monthly and they are lengthy. There is a huge amount of information to process, and many emails per day. I get a lot of calls and emails every day from members with inquiries. As with previous years we spread the load, and each Committee member has been allocated a portfolio of responsibilities.

Committee changes

Our Committee has had some changes over the year. Grant Young from Comvita left in December. Nevin Amos replaced Grant, bringing valuable experience to Committee. Paul Fear from Honey NZ also left earlier this year, and it was decided that we would continue on with one less member, as it was not long to the AGM. There was a concern that the face of the Committee that you had elected was going to be very different and that we would co-opt support people if we needed to.

Nevin Amos has the job of looking after the financial issues and working with Invisible Office to ensure all is well there. I reported last year that all accounting issues and that of levy collection would be the work of Invisible Office, based in Tauranga. They have implemented good systems of sending out pro-forma invoices each quarter for levies, and member and licensee renewals each year. Committee has set up that membership and financial issues are to be handled by the Brand Manager and Invisible Office, and we will not be privy to this information. Each quarter we are made aware of the amount collected in levies, not by whom.

Neil Stuckey had a task of the publishing the newsletter, a task he found challenging, but he is underway with Denise's help. I am proud of the efforts so far and hope that we will continue regular contact with members through the newsletter. There was a lull in the middle of the year; however, there have been two newsletters in recent times and I hope that members are happy with content and our ability to keep you informed of what is happening.

Margaret Bennett has done a tireless job of monitoring activity here and overseas, helping our independent monitor with the ongoing job of seeing that our members are doing and saying the right things on their labels and websites. She has also had the task of updating and revising our AMHA website and brochures.

It is with regret that I tell you that John Bassett will not be continuing on the Committee this year. John has been with AMHA (or AMHIG as it was known from the inception). I once told him he was the granddad of AMHA and I got growled at; now I can say it and get away with it. Your time and efforts with this organisation, John, are second to none, and to be honest I don't know what we will do without you. Your history with AMHA has helped us to ensure we are moving in the direction the original guys suggested. Enjoy your retirement from AMHA; I hope we can call on you on occasion to guide us.

The team at Pipers run by Denise Tryer-Harding, our patent attorney, along with Janice O'Neill, her secretary, has worked above and beyond for us. The role that they fill for AMHA has become far more complex and has grown beyond what I thought it would a year ago. The workload of this position has increased and Denise and her team were unable to continue as it is. Janice's role with AMHA will cease, Denise will continue, and we are looking at how to best move forward. Denise feels at this stage she can continue to provide the legal expertise to assist us with trade mark protection as well as the administration role. I want to monitor this closely and we may have to advertise to gain someone to assist in this role.

My sincere thanks to Denise and Janice for the huge amount of work that you have done. The hours well exceeded what you were paid for and I personally really enjoyed the time we worked together.

I hope that the new Committee will be able to embrace the huge role that they will need to take on, and that members will support us to do the job as well as we can.

In summary, it has been another very busy twelve months, a lot of time taken in reviewing and establishing best practice and systems that will operate for AMHA into the future. I feel confident that there is a great Committee—both those who served throughout 2006–2007 and the new team coming on board today—who bring diverse backgrounds and strengths to the table and who are working hard to attend to members' needs and requirements. We still have a lot to do to continue with protecting and promoting the UMF® trademark here in New Zealand and around the world, and we must have your support as members.

Please accept this report as a summary of the work done for AMHA throughout 2006–2007. Thank you.

- Moira Haddrell
Chairperson of AMHA Committee
9 August 2007

NIWA's climate outlook: August to October 2007

During August–October, mean sea level pressures are expected to be higher to the south or southeast of New Zealand, with weaker than normal westerly winds across the country. Air temperatures are likely to be average or above average in most regions, but tending below average in the eastern South Island. Despite the overall temperature expectation, cold outbreaks typical of early spring will occur from time to time.

Normal or below normal rainfall is expected in most regions, except the north and northeast of the North Island, where normal or above normal rainfalls are likely. Normal or above normal soil moisture and river flow levels are expected in the north of the North Island; they are likely to be near normal in the east of the North Island, and normal or below normal elsewhere.

Summary of NBA Conference Remits 2007

Words from a Mary Coughlan ballad well described some bits of the remit session at the NBA conference. And, like the singer, some of the debate, and asides, had a touch of the Irish too. However, seasoned observers noted the exchanges were rather more cordial than in years past.

Remit 1 (Bay of Plenty): wanted tutin poisoning testing incorporated with current testing, and also more information promulgated about tutu and monitoring.

The remit was then split in two. No one quibbled about the second bit, but the testing issue got a tad testy. Jody Mitchell (BoP) said under the old rules, hives had to be removed from designated areas. Now it was up to the individual, and there were wide breaches. The branch wanted the issue investigated.

Allen McCaw (Otago) noted the current test was expensive and unspecific; targeted testing was needed. Neil Farrer (Hon. NBA Treasurer) said the NBA had research funding for testing upgrades, a result of Dr Mark Goodwin's concerns.

The remit passed: 16/13 hand vote; then 7/4 delegate vote.

Remit 2 (Auckland): wanted the Executive to negotiate contracts for AP2s doing biosecurity inspecting for AgriQuality Limited.

Bob Blair (Auckland) said there needed to be a contract that both sides kept to; reports of neglected yards were sometimes not acted on.

Allen McCaw put an amendment that negotiations be done only for NBA-member AP2s (passed). Southland (voiced by Russell Berry) said if the NBA got into the act, contracts would have more weight.

Passed unanimously.

Remit 3 (Auckland): wanted the Executive to investigate best practice for disposal of plastic frames and miticide strips; burning was not allowed.

Ian Berry (Hawke's Bay): black smoke was already a problem in Hawke's Bay. It was a difficult issue: the way it was now, foulbrood was good; plastic bad.

Passed unanimously.

Remit 4 (Auckland): wanted a preliminary look at large-scale gamma irradiation to sterilise supers and gear.

David Woodward (Telford) noted the system worked well interstate in Australia (it cost $20 to do four boxes, which had to be wrapped and free of honey). The catch in New Zealand, though, was that under the PMS it would be illegal to extract the honey.

Lost unanimously.

Remit 5 (Auckland): wanted a total ban on overseas honey-containing foodstuffs.

Withdrawn in favour of Remit 8.

Remit 6 (Auckland): wanted the reestablishment of the Apiaries Act, and beekeeping and products out of the Animal Products Act.

Ian Berry (Hawke's Bay) quoted West Coast beekeeper Gary Jeffery, saying that the local National MP might be willing to promote a Private Member's Bill to that effect.

Michael Wraight (Nelson) said it was a good idea; a plant-products act would be more straightforward. Allen McCaw (Otago) said internationally bee products were by definition animal; forget our own act. Southland supported the remit. Frank Lindsay (Southern North Island) said Australia had Apiaries Act; why not us?

Remit lost.

Remit 7 (Auckland): wanted hobbyists to be allowed to extract and sell their little bits of honey in bulk without NZFSA certification.

Withdrawn (would undermine integrity of current system).

Remit 8 (Waikato): wanted the NBA to research bee products moving for animal to plant definition under the various applying acts.

Russell Berry queried whether pollen and propolis were animal or plant products. The suggestion was made that new legislation might bring the acts closer together. It was noted there was more money available for certifiers of animal rather than plant products.

Passed 24/14.

Remit 9 (Waikato): Govt and MAF should suspend all imports of bee products pending evidence Colony Collapse Disorder could not be brought into NZ.

Peter Berry (HB): NBA must be very strong on this; CCD unknown danger. Allen McCaw (Otago): Must act now; CCD giant worry in Australia, where they feed non-irradiated Chinese pollen.

Passed unanimously.

Remit 10 (Waikato): MAF should change Import Health Standard to reflect total sugar content, not just honey content

in bee products (honey content may be low, but sugar high, making it attractive to bees, and potential disease).

Southland noted Mark Goodwin's report that 1% honey/50% sugar very attractive to bees: 1% sugar, and bees wouldn't touch it.

Passed unanimously.

Remit 11 (Waikato): That the NBA approaches other primary-producer groups to set up national biosecurity lobby. Great chance, it was said: look at pork industry problems.

Passed unanimously.

Remit 12 (Waikato): A complex motion, eventually split into two bits: That NBA oppose moves by NZFSA to have RMPs extended (perhaps trying to stop extraction in field and stipulating covered trucks), and investigate codes of practice.

NBA should be able to set up code, said Allen McCaw. Russell Berry: "Bet you are wrong."

Southland did not want RMPs extended into field, and Michael Wraight said remit support would be seen as collective effort.

Peter Berry (Hawke's Bay): "Just an excuse for more nosey buggers interfering with my business".

Ian Berry (Hawke's Bay): "It could come down to painting our boxes prettily."

Frans Laas (Otago): In the long term, we'll be dictated to. Let's get in first, and make the code simple and broad.

Peter Sales (Otago): How broad would that be? The Bee Industry Group has already put up a similar code-of-ethics motion.

Carried.

Remit 13 (Waikato): That AFB inspectors be paid $30/hour, plus $1/km and GST. Waikato was running out of volunteers.

Jane Lorimer said $40,000 was allocated by the Agency; the suggested rate would double that. A meeting resolution would be binding, and the extra cost would have to be cut from other projects.

Neil Walker (Otago): The management agency is quite separate from the NBA, therefore the meeting can't vote on the issue.

Roger Bray (Canterbury): It's a PMS issue; perhaps all we can do is voice concern.

Ron Morrison (Hawke's Bay): Amended resolution to NBA investigating more equitable payments for AFB pest management.

Carried.

Remit 14 (Canterbury): NBA should push for a Cook Strait control line to stop Deformed Wing Virus coming south.

Roger Bray (Canterbury): Where did the virus come from; does the South Island have it? If the varroa line gets dropped, that's the whole control. Is the virus a problem, and do we want it in the SI?

Frank Lindsay (Southern North Island): Go to MAF and get an investigation.

John Berry (Hawke's Bay): If it came in with varroa or Carnolian semen, we've already got it.

Lost.

Remit 15 (Nelson): That the NBA set up a research and marketing structure, and actively canvass the "industry" for funds. It cited Manuka and antioxidant honeys as niche markets: the industry needed to target these and similar projects, and canvass for funds.

Arthur Day (Blenheim): Don't feel enough has been done; we need to target funds other than subs.

Southland countered that enough research had been done, and more work was more money.

Carried.

Remit 16 (Nelson): That the Executive looks to engaging marketing specialists (albeit part-time); to have something is better than nothing.

Allen McCaw: The NBA has already had a marketing plan, with lots of things undone. Let's dust them off.

Southland Branch: NBA already in deficit. Where would the money come from?

Lost on branch vote.

Remit 17 (Nelson): Should be only two categories of NBA membership (Basic=journal, and Full), instead of tiered structure.

Lost on voices.

The meeting closed with the confirmation of Masterton as the next conference venue.

- Mike Lynch

Book review

***Queen Bee: Biology, Rearing and Breeding,* by David Woodward, Telford Rural Polytechnic**

(ISBN 978-0-473-11933-1)

This book covers everything from basic (and not so basic) bee biology through cell and queen rearing, bee nutrition, and stock selection right through to the instrumental insemination. This is not a queen rearing pamphlet but an in-depth book.

The main reason I brought this book was to study the Cloake method of cell raising. Although I have not yet tried this method, it seems to be very well explained and I am sure any competent beekeeper could follow the instructions.

The book has some fascinating science in it. While much of it is over my head (I doubt if I will remember what tergites or sternites are in another week), it was still fascinating to look at a different side of beekeeping and bees. Because I have a practical rather than a theoretical background in beekeeping, it is impossible for me to judge the accuracy of all the information available in this book, but from what knowledge I do have it all seemed to fit pretty well.

The only real criticism I can make of the book is perhaps in the area of cell raising. If you do it exactly as David says I'm sure it would work extremely well—probably better than what I do—but it is not necessary to have humidity, light and temperature control when you're grafting. You can do it sitting on a bee box out in the sun and still get very good results. In beekeeping there are many right ways to do things and this book has a lot of them.

Heaven forbid that I should agree with everything he has written, but I recommend this book to anyone looking to rear their own queens, or to someone who just wants to find out more about how their bees tick. I bought my copy from Ecroyd's Beekeeping Supplies.

- John Berry

You can't help laughing

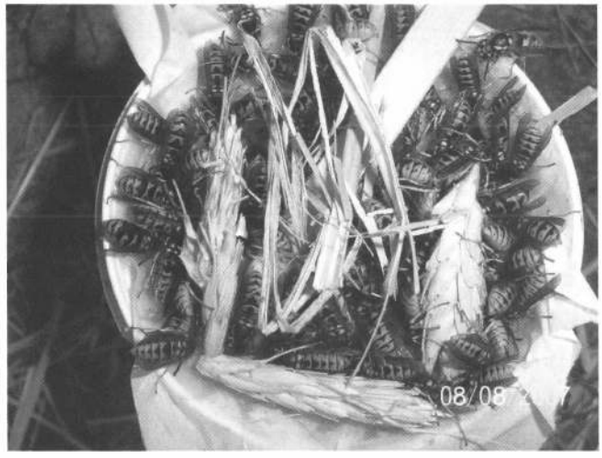
We learnt how to shift hives the hard way. I gained the help of a friend, so off we went to load and move hives into an apple orchard. The first mistake was that we did not strap up the hive. When we slipped on the wet clay the hive proceeded to roll down the slope, falling to bits as it went on its way. We then scrapped the bees up and put them into the hive, then went off to collect a second hive. We placed the hives on the trailer, which had no sides or ropes. We each hung over the top of a hive and off we went, with the young bloke driving the tractor. I think he must have gone the steepest, bumpiest way and there we were, hanging on for grim death with bees pouring out all over us, stinging as they went.

- Gary Jeffery

German Wasp bait station

The German Wasp has been in New Zealand since the 1940s. It is characterised by an expanded yellow pronatal band (at front of the thorax) and separate black dots and rings on its back.

This bait station photo was taken inside the box storage shed on 8 August 2007. Seven days later the visiting wasps were down to just five. Description and identification was taken from the Auckland Regional Council booklet on wasp identification and control measures.



- Bob Russell

'What you see is what you get' ... right?

How about this!

'Liquid', 'Unpasteurised', 'Manuka', 'Honey' 'Product of Australia', 'Grade 1'.

On a recent trip to Canada, friends presented us with a fancy squeeze pack of real Manuka honey. Wow! At last New Zealand varietal honeys have shouldered their way into the shelves of one of North America's largest supermarket chains. And that's no mean feat.

But, hang on! Liquid (?) unpasteurised (?) stuff that tastes like cooked eucalypt honey?

My eyesight, hearing and memory have been steadily going downhill, but oh, not my taste buds as well! After all, they've had a quarter of a century of sampling hive tool and fingerfulls of top grade Manuka. Little wonder I felt a trifle gutted to realise that some 'sweet talking' middleman had loaded a heap of spin on to the buyers of the prestigious President's Choice brand. It's been suggested that this buyer would be well advised to get a test done from an independent laboratory. They may well be able to claim a ton of money back for misrepresentation of this product.

Now, most of us know that delusion is not the exclusive domain of the magician. Labels do need to be randomly put under scrutiny. Several years ago we tasted 'Manuka honey' from a specialty honey shop in Singapore, where the label referred to this "distinctive licorice" flavour. The taste of burnt honey overpowered the taste of any true basic honey. Marketing wise, a consistent product, but nevertheless an inferior one.

Not the real thing. Photo: John Moffitt.

It was our marketing guru Bill Floyd who prompted honey gatherers to turn their backs on commodity honey and 'go varietal'. He also encouraged chefs to enhance their menus by using unique New Zealand floral honeys. Today, reputable firms like Airborne Honey Ltd and others do a great job in packing and promoting New Zealand specialty honeys around the globe.

We are honey gatherers who, like others, do the painstaking work of reaping the highest grade possible of our specialty honey. Little wonder it leaves a bitter taste in my mouth to watch opportunists capitalising on a quality name, flogging off inferior honey to misled consumers. 'Manuka Honey—Product of Australia'? Yeah, right!

So where can dissatisfied consumers or watchdog beekeepers register a complaint about shoddy marketing or misleading products/labels? That is, stuff that is likely to sabotage the 'quality halo' that presently hovers above our unique New Zealand varietal honeys. Any suggestions? *[Editor's note: see AMHA report, page 9.]*

Finally, on the subject of 'what you see is what you get' (or as I'm told by my IT savvy relatives is known in the trade as WYSIWYG) ... if you were ever to see me at conference chatting to a striking 29-year-old woman wearing a name tag of Merle Moffitt you may think, ah, that's Merle. But I would know it's not Merle, it's Neisha wearing Merle's coat, so what you see is *not* always what you get.

- John Moffitt

Tip for insulating queen cells

It's requeening time and more beekeepers are putting in 10-day-old queen cells into hives instead of mated queens. The success rate can be as high as 80 percent if you have a good supply of mature drones in your hives.

Normally when you switch to queen cells you need some sort of container or carrier to keep them warm. There is a very good unit on the market in New Zealand for those using large numbers of cells but for the one-off customer, there is an alternative.

I remember reading in an Australian journal that dried sawdust or dried rice were very good insulators and could be packed around queen cells in an 'eski' (a Styrofoam beer pack). Heat rice or sawdust in a microwave and allow it to dry. Place a small layer of the material in the bottom of the eski. Make a hole with your finger and gently press the queen cells part way into the layer, then cover over. On arrival at their destination (if they are couriered or at the apiary site if you have transported them), lift out the cells, gently blow away any sawdust or rice (or leave as is). Protect the queen cell and it's ready for introduction.

No heat is necessary, I hear you say? The wax surrounding a queen cell is a very good insulator. A queen producer once told me that he left a bar of cells on top of a hive overnight, during which time it rained. He was very surprised to find a few queens had emerged the next morning and that later, all emerged ok. So heating the rice or sawdust isn't really necessary.

Apparently cells packed this way have been dispatched overnight to beekeepers with no ill effects.

- Frank Lindsay

Getting stuck

Before you start moving hives around or going across country, be it for pollination or to a new apiary site, think ahead and consider all the possibilities. Apart from the lifting process and all the gear needed to accomplish this, consider what type of ground you will be travelling over. Apiary sites are now being established further out on farms or in poorly accessed bush blocks. Have you the ability to get out of a sticky situation?

Conditions can change very quickly. Say you are working in a paddock and a rain shower passes over. It's only a slight incline to the gate. Should you chance it or put on chains or perhaps let the tyres down a bit? Nine times out of ten you make it out easily without thinking about it, but there's the odd time when you can put yourself into a serious situation, especially when going through gates or up narrow farm tracks. All it takes is a muddy surface and the vehicle slides sideways into a strainer post, rubbing off paint and crunching in your mudguards and perhaps your blinker light. (Wrap around bullbars have often saved me from embarrassment and an insurance claim.) I have put the back tyre partly over the edge of a drop while going around a fallen tree. This was an unnerving experience and took a bit to work through.

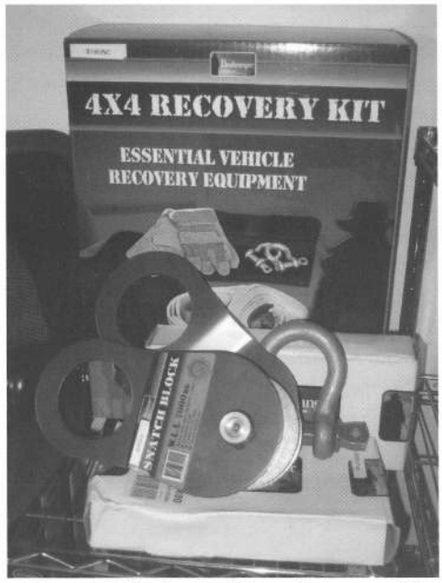
It's important to appreciate that ground conditions vary from time to time and the ability to move over it is often determined by how fast you travel. Sometimes you can creep over soft flat ground in first gear with the engine idling, or just above idling speed.

You may expect a track to be nice and dry, but perhaps a large vehicle has been through a day before and churned up the grass surface into a slippery mess. It will depend upon the type of tyres you have on the vehicle as to whether you take evasive action or not. Some beekeepers have a summer and a winter set of tyres (mud grips for winter use). Others use a combination tyre, which is good for both road and light off-road conditions.

Chains

Some beekeepers use tyre chains. There are different types: the solid, chain type for heavy ground and mud, or the lightweight ones used for ice and snow conditions that fit a normal car. This type of chain is handy for the smaller beekeeper using a standard two-wheel-drive ute. They will get you out of a paddock after it has just rained, where your normal road tyres won't give enough grip.

Chains laid out to be put on.



A snatch block, shackle and recovery kit.
Photos: Frank Lindsay.

I remember giving a beekeeper a hand to move a load of hives into kiwifruit pollination using his two-wheel-drive ute. Everything went well until we had the last two hives to place. Unfortunately there was a slight rise in the track and we started skidding and slipping sideways. Being the passenger I had to climb out, scrape away the mud and fit the chains. These were just light ski chains that wrapped over the tyre without having to move the vehicle forward. Five minutes later and we easily climbed out of there.

For those with four-wheel-drive vehicles, fit your mud chains to the front wheels to provide greater traction and positive steering.

There's one good rule I follow. If you think there is a possibility of getting stuck, put the chains on. This only takes five minutes and it's quick and clean. Once you are stuck in

mud, you often have to climb under the vehicle, back or lift it to put chains on. This takes effort—it's often a dirty job and takes four times longer to do.

At some time we will all get stuck. I find this embarrassing and the last thing I want to do is to go and disturb the farmer to ask for a tow. Often this is the quickest solution, however, before doing this, I try my best to get out on my own.

If it's not a serious situation you can take Harlan Cox's suggestion and put a couple of plastic frames under the wheels. *[See the article 'And the winner is ...', September 2006, page 32.]* If you are stuck in a hole, letting the tyres down doesn't seem to help, so you need some sort of device to pull yourself out. As stated earlier, a farmer with a big tractor and tow rope is the best solution; however, you might be struck miles from assistance.

Some beekeepers use truck jacks to lift the truck to put things under tyres (i.e., a 44-inch Hi-lift) but the ability to do this could also depend upon the load on your vehicle.

In the old days we used a couple of fencing strainers, lengths of No. 8 wire, a few sacks and fencing tool. If you didn't have enough wire, there was plenty on a nearby fence—you just had to renew it the next time through. You could completely turn a Land Rover over with these. The sacks were placed on the wire to stop it whipping back if the wire broke. This was in the days before OSH and modern winches.

Winches

Instead of purchasing expensive four-wheel-drive vehicles, some prefer two-wheel-drive vehicles and to put a winch on them for the odd occasion when things get sticky. Let's take a minute to look at the science behind vehicle traction. This may help you to prepare better or appreciate things when the farmer pulls you out of a hole using a large wire rope or strop.

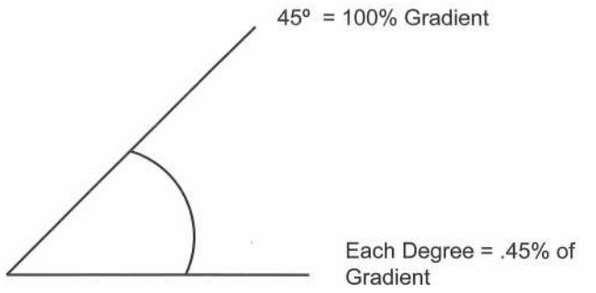
Towing: How much resistance does your vehicle put up under different conditions? The type of terrain the vehicle is in will vary the rolling resistance, and a steep grade or slope will increase the effort required to winch the vehicle back to the roadway.

The rolling resistance of a pneumatic-tyred vehicle on a flat road is approximately 40 kilograms per tonne of vehicle weight. The following table is a guide to calculate the rolling resistance of a vehicle on a variety of flat surfaces.

Type of surface	**Rolling resistance per tonne**
Concrete or Asphalt	40–50 kg per tonne
Grass	120–140 kg per tonne
Gravel	200 kg per tonne
Soft sand	250 kg per tonne
Shallow mud	300–350 kg per tonne

Gradient (slope) may be measured using the degrees measured from 0° to 45° or 0% to 100%: 45° being 100%.

Gradient may be measured in a percentage or degrees.



When a gradient measured in degrees is used for calculation purposes, 1/60 of the vehicle weight is used for each degree of slope.

Example: Find the line pull required to recover a vehicle on Pneumatic Tyres (correctly inflated). The road surface is gravel and the gradient is 10% (45 ÷ 4.5 = 10); Vehicle gross weight, including the load, is 3 Tonne (T).

Line pull = surface x vehicle gross weight (T) + (1/60) x the gradient x vehicle gross weight (in kgs)

Therefore = (200kg gravel surface) x 3 (load in T) + (1/60 x 10 x 3000) (load in kgs)

$$= 200 \times 3 + \frac{1 \times 10 \times 3000}{60}$$

600 + 500 = 1100 kg line pull

Minimum winch capacity required is 1,100 kg

When the gradient is 45°, then the line pull = the Vehicle Weight.

So we now have some idea of the capacity required for a 10% slope, so work out what the line pull is for your own vehicle in soft mud.

The size of the winch is also important. Vehicles going off road should have a big capacity winch. This will get you out of any situation without overloading it. Our four-wheel-drive specialist recommends before purchasing a winch that you take some time to talk to them about your requirements. There are a number of winches on the market and their capacity varies, but generally it should be in the range of 8,000 to 10,000 pounds as a minimum. The choice you make may also make a difference as to whether you can convert to a synthetic rope, as the drum might get too hot.

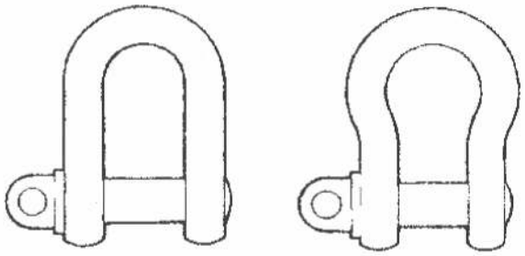
After you've had the winch installed, get your specialist to teach you how to use it. This is important as often when you are stuck, it could be in a dangerous situation. It's best to know the 'how' and 'wherefore' before it happens. As a minimum, read and understand the manufacturer's handbook.

You will also have to know about anchor points. That single tree to the side of the track might not be as stable as it looks. Don't take chances. Carry gear to make an anchor point: use a spade or shovel, four or five metal or wooden pegs and a rope to tie between each to create the anchor. Remember you may also have to dig these out again once you have traction. If there's nothing available, you could bury your spare wheel.

You will need a strap or 'tree protector' to go around your anchoring object. You can't just wind the winch cable around the anchor point and snap the hook over the wire—this can damage the wire rope or could make it very difficult to undo afterwards. You should also put a recovery blanket over the wire rope just in case it snaps. Again, discuss this with your specialist or at a minimum, purchase a 'recovery pack'.

A snatch block and a few shackles can come in handy when the anchor points are at an angle to the forward direction of the vehicle.

There are two types of shackle on the market—a 'D' shackle (the ones you purchase at a hardware shop), and those sold by specialists that have a SWL (Safe Working Load) rating stamped on them.



"D" Shackle Bow Shackle

As part of your training you may wish to attend a four-wheel-drive exercise where you will gain expert knowledge and years of experience in one outing. Take advantage of these courses if they are offered.

Earlier on I mentioned synthetic winch ropes. I'm told once you use a synthetic rope, you will never go back to a wire rope. Synthetic winch ropes float, they are stronger than steel and if they snap, they will drop to the ground rather than snapping back. However, keep in mind that these ropes require more maintenance. They must be cleaned after use. They break down in sunlight so the winch drum should be covered when not in use. They can't be used on some winches due to the heat coming off the drum—this may also depend upon how much the winch is used.

Whenever you have been using your winch and you get back to base, unroll the wire and rewind under slight tension so that the wire tracks back on correctly.

So remember, take precautions, be prepared for anything and hopefully you won't get stuck again.

Tip: if you aren't able to do a four-wheel-drive course, check out the television show 'Suzuki Xtreme 4x4', Sunday afternoons on TV3.

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Riggers and Crane Handbook, Australia Skills Training Pty Ltd.

Rigging – Approved Code of Practice for Load-Lifting, Department of Labour, 2001. http://www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/134.shtml *[Refer to section 6.8, which covers winding wire rope on to drums and snatch block safety.]*

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Guy Motors Wellington, my 4x4 specialist, for their assistance.

- Frank Lindsay

Michael Hight 'Recent Work' art exhibition

In July an invitation was extended to all members of the National Beekeepers' Association to attend the Michael Hight 'Recent Work' art exhibition and preview evening. Michael Hight is a painter, sculptor and assembler, working with paint, canvas, tin, wood and found objects. His most recent series of work has focused on beehives and he continues to explore this subject through both abstract assemblages and realist paintings. His latest exhibition 'Recent Work' features realist oil paintings.

Thank you to all who did attend the exhibition. For those who were unable to attend, we hope that you are interested in the following summary of Michael Hight's exhibition and preview evening. The 'Recent Work' exhibition preview was held at Milford Galleries, Dunedin, on Friday, 27 July 2007.

What more could one ask for than the ideal landscape illustrating nature at its sweet and busiest? The Michael Hight exhibition preview evening asked just that. The evening began with a glass of fine wine (courtesy of Nevis Bluff) to ward off the winter chill outside, followed by a slow walk around the gallery in order to admire and embrace the artworks which have become Michael Hight's best and most confident works. This was a mesmerising and absorbing exhibition, which conveyed a sense of being encompassed into the work and a feeling that one might actually be there, almost able to hear the slow and pleasant gentle humming of the bees busy at their tasks.

During the course of the evening, Michael Hight gave his viewers a short talk regarding the background to his work, the seasonal changes which affect the heights of the beehives and a general discussion as to what draws him to paint nature at its very best. The audience seemed genuinely impressed with Hight's natural ease painting the land and his ability to convey the sense of nature's dynamics, inviting the viewer to figuratively transport themselves into the work and become part of the work, part of nature's natural design.

About the artist

Michael Hight has received considerable critical acclaim for his observations of the ubiquitous beehive and their individual locales. These works contain all the particularities of location—geography, vegetation, weather. More than that, they convey the idiosyncratic qualities of ownership and use and allude to a wider consideration of 'place'.

Although Hight has produced works based in a number of regions, his paintings of Central Otago are undoubtedly the high point of his considerable achievements. Central Otago offers maximum contrasts of landscape (and season) with the placement and disposition of hives which best establishes a metaphor that goes to the substance of the New Zealand rural circumstance: the apparently empty, natural environment is in fact intensively farmed and industrialised. Bees are the primary insects domesticated by mankind. In New Zealand no successful farm, orchard or vineyard can do without them. Yet while not a single bee has been painted the symbiotic relationship is evident.

Courtesy of Milford Galleries Dunedin.

Above: Lake Dunstan (2007); Below: Willowbank (2007).

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Lessons in long-term planning for short-term jobs

Comment by Penelope Ryder Lewis (specialist employment lawyer at Bartlett Partners, Wellington).

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Before an employee starts work, the employee must be given the intended employment agreement containing all the terms required by the Employment Act 2000; advising them of the right to seek independent advice; given a reasonable opportunity to do so; and the employer must consider and respond to any questions about the agreement. Employer and employee must agree on the terms of employment before the employee starts.

Do your planning well beforehand and have your employment contracts ready before you advertise and conduct interviews. For further information contact prlbtlaw.co.nz or (04) 472 5579.

(Excerpted from her article in the Dominion Post, *August 6, 2007.)*

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From the colonies

Auckland Branch

As with most parts of the country we've had a lot of rain this winter. Most sites need a quad bike to get in as they're still really muddy.

The majority of hives have between two and four frames of brood depending on the site, as of early August. We're onto our second round now, checking brood and stores as well as giving the odd stimulus feed to sites that are a bit slower and hives that will later raise our spring queens.

The pollen is really starting to roll in now, with the bees working the gorse and wattle and the pussy willow about to open up. A couple of sites that were bordered on pine forests and were a bit low on pollen now have an ample supply as the trees were deforested about a year ago, allowing the gorse to flourish rather spectacularly.

- James Harrison

The Auckland Branch is holding a DECA course and test in October. The date and venue will be confirmed. Please provide expressions of interest (with your contact details) to:

Bob Blair
Auckland AFB Disease Coordinator
Phone/fax 09 479 4354

Waikato Branch

A single three-letter word, repeated over and over across the region. Wet!

Beekeepers are on foot into many yards. Some chance the 4WD vehicle, often to no avail, as they only get so far into the paddocks to be halted by the rain-soaked pastures. Two weeks ago it was mild, but the changing weather patterns have brought back the cold winter winds.

The brood and bees themselves are looking good with a little sugar feeding. Some would say it is still too early to do rounds (those who have been on late holidays, and that's their excuse for slowly getting back into work).

Some beekeepers are still making up new gear and others are putting up new storage sheds for the coming season.

Most dairy farms are over three quarters of the way through calving, and the tankers are already on night pickup. What will be interesting later on in the season will be the condition of the pasture, with very heavy pugging at this time. Will it affect the clover that was in such abundance last season?

- Fiona O'Brien

Bay of Plenty Branch

It's wet and cool but then it's winter. Over the past month it's been wetter than most would like and perhaps not quite cool enough in some areas, with a bit more feeding than usual going on for some.

Most of us are now starting to open up hives with the impending kiwifruit season looming and so far, so good. The hives are in reasonable condition with nothing too radical to report—long may it continue. Over the next few weeks we hope for some warm sunny days to carry out spring checks and start gearing up for kiwifruit pollination once again.

Our last meeting of the year will be held on Monday 17 September, 7.30pm, Buretta Park, Vale Room, Tauranga.

- Barbara Pimm

Poverty Bay Branch

Kia ora, folks. I hope when you read this it is warmer than today and spring is starting to arrive.

I think the bee industry is in good shape even with varroa and the hassle the NZFSA has imposed on us with RMPs, etc. We must realise that this is the nature of the beast and no sector of our economy is free of the face of the bureaucrat. Farmers and horticulturists have had this before us and had to adapt; that is to say, we should also keep questioning the motives and their regime and opposing it if it's seen to be nonsense … like most of the time (chuckle). On another note, the NBA is doing a great job with the AFB NPMS and is helping to clean up the industry of all the unregistered hives, neglected hives, etc.

With spring coming on and spring checks (I don't like the word spring manipulations), remember that if you find swarm cells use them to requeen other hives. As these are the best queens, usually you can get big hearty cells. Some will read this and think "but they carry swarming tendencies". What are swarming tendencies? A strong hive, obviously. I believe that is a myth about swarm cells having that tendency anyway, but if you disagree write with your experiences, feedback, etc. Hope things are well, and God bless all.

- Don Simm

Hawke's Bay Branch

While all of Hawke's Bay is very wet at the moment, only a few areas were severely affected by recent flooding. I have had a few reports of hive losses, but most beekeepers have not had too many problems.

All varieties of stonefruit trees are already flowering and some hives are already in pollination. I have noticed a lot of apple orchards that have yet to be pruned and with the current low prices orchardists are receiving, I wonder if some of them are going to be pruned.

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It has been an especially hard winter for our local farmers with the drought through most of the winter, followed by heavy rains and flooding during early lambing. Lambing percentages and stock numbers are both well down, and only time will tell what effect this will have on the honey crop.

- John Berry

Nelson Branch

On 31 July the branch conducted a field day titled Pollination Hive Strength. Guest presenter Trevor Bryant (ex-MAF and AlphaBees) talked with 16 beekeepers and 25 orchardists. Topics discussed included counting frames of bees and brood, the quality of male kiwifruit flowers, varroa and artificial pollination. The meeting explored opportunities for sustainable apiculture and increasing the number of trays/ha for the Nelson area.

Trevor Bryant promoted hive strength standards above that stated by the Kiwifruit Pollination Association (KPA). He informed participants that pollination costs/tray have not increased since the 1990s, and advocated introducing one-third of hives into kiwifruit at one percent flowering, and the remaining two-thirds of hives at 30 percent flowering.

Cold, miserable weather limited the inspection of hives and the counting of frames of bees and brood. Nevertheless, it was an enjoyable and successful field day hosted by the Nelson Branch, and four beekeepers renewed their NBA membership on the day.

On 4 August, Michael Wraight, longtime branch secretary and branch life member, supervised a well-attended DECA course. Thirty-two beekeepers undertook this training.

As I am writing this we have had a few warm spring days followed by snow on the hills, frosts and wintery southern blasts. There's a lot of gorse pollen around and the wattles are also flowering. Another couple of weeks and varroa will be on the march. Most Nelson beekeepers are about to purchase their varroa treatments and are anticipating the changing face of beekeeping.

- Glenn Kelly

Canterbury Branch

In July, Canterbury was fortunate enough to have AgriQuality Limited present the MAF varroa workshop. This presentation attracted more than 50 commercial beekeepers and a greater number of hobbyists.

Many thanks to Murray Reid and Byron Taylor for giving a well-balanced presentation that covered all the technical aspects, intermingled with practical experiences. Well done, guys. I'm sure that it has given participants the tools they need to contemplate their future with varroa. The most pertinent snippet I came away with was that the North Island experience shows that most outfits now run 300–400 hives per labour unit. I anticipate big changes coming to South Island beekeepers and beekeeping!

July finally brought winter home with a vengeance with severe frosts and below average temperatures. However hives seem to have fared well during this period. I know this as I have had more than my fair share of hives being knocked over by cattle. I guess this is one of the inevitable consequences of lower lamb prices: a huge increase of dairy grazers coming onto dry stock farms over winter.

It's unbelievable that it all starts again next month. It seems such a short time ago that I finished wintering! Once varroa gets here the winters are only going to get shorter. Anyway, here's hoping that varroa doesn't suck the enjoyment out of beekeeping.

- Brian Lancaster

About the Apiary

Spring is here. The weather is settling now and my bees are flying well. Most are storing nectar and pollen, which is stimulating brood production.

September is an important month in the beekeeping calendar. It's possibly the first real opportunity to get out and do the first inspection of your hives. A tip I noticed in *BeeCraft* stated it well: "If you can work outside in your shirt sleeves, it's warm enough to open up a colony and inspect it". In colder areas of New Zealand you are restricted to removing the odd outside frame, moving to the centre of the brood nest to check on a few frames, but it's best not to disturb the brood nest for too long.

In the warmer areas it is possible to inspect your hives for a little longer; i.e., inspect the brood nest to investigate how the queen is laying by first removing an outside frame to make room to remove the other frames one at a time, so bees are not rolled when the frames are removed.

Your hive may not be expanding in bee numbers or you may have noticed that it has small drones (suggesting you may have a drone-laying queen or you have worker bees that have become drone layers). No matter how you try, one or two hives per 100 hives will be queenless. Identifying what is wrong is important as this affects the way you deal with the problem. If there is a mixture of worker and raised drone pupae interspaced in worker cells, you have a failing queen, so order a new queen. When it arrives (in a month or so) find and remove the old queen, sprinkle a little sugar syrup over the bees and place the queen cage against the brood with the exit hole upwards.

If you can't get a queen within a month, remove the old queen and unite the hive on to another (preferably another weak colony with nothing wrong with the queen and free from AFB) using two sheets of newsprint. The bees chew through the paper slowly and will unite with each other. Later in the spring, order a new queen and make a nuc as a replacement.

If you cannot find the queen and there are only drone pupae in the worker cells, you have drone-laying worker bees. Generally these are not worth saving, as the workers will kill any new queen you put into the hive. All is not lost: you can salvage most of the bees to strengthen another hive. Choose a warm day and carry the brood boxes with the drone-laying workers away from the site by 20 metres or more, then shake the bees out of the hive onto the ground (or onto a mat if the grass is wet). Put another hive in the same position where the queenless hive was, or move the one that was next to it closer to the drone laying hive's position, and the field bees will return to it and will be accepted.

If you do not have another hive, get a frame of brood from another beekeeper that contains both eggs and capped pupae and place this into the queenless brood box. Order a new queen from a queen producer and when she arrives, look through the hive, find and remove the bee-raised queen if the bees have produced one. If there isn't a queen and you still have drone brood being produced, you still have drone layers.

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If this is your only hive, obtain two frames of disease-free brood and bees from another beekeeper and set up a nuc hive, placing the new queen in the cage in the middle of the brood with the bee escape entrance slightly uphill. This enables the queen to emerge from the cage should any of the escorts die early. If the cage had the exit downwards, a dead escort could block the queen's escape. A good tip when introducing a new queen is to liberally feed the hive. As stated above, I usually sprinkle a little warm sugar syrup over the bees to give them something to do, but not too much as you don't want to encourage robbing by nearby hives.

Remove the old hive and place the nuc in its position. Take the queenless hive 20 or more metres away and shake out all the bees as above. The field bees will return to the old colony's site and enter the hive. There shouldn't be any fighting and by the time the bees have cleaned themselves and the rest of the brood nest, they will have accepted the queen and will have started feeding her in the cage.

Leave the hive undisturbed for 10 days before checking to see that the new queen has been accepted (look to see that there are eggs in the cells where bees have recently emerged). Don't bother going through the hive to find the queen as this could disturb the hive too much.

If the bee population in your hive has dwindled down to a handful of bees, it's not really worth rescuing. Having said this, I have saved some of these tiny colonies by putting a sheet of oven foil (the size of the bees' cluster) on the top bars immediately above the bees. This provides a little more insulation and reflects the heat given off by the bees back down on them, allowing them to maintain a smaller than normal colony (this tip comes from Gary Jeffery—see 'Overwintering small nuc colonies', November 2006, page 20). Once the colony has started increasing, add an outside brood frame from another colony (after doing a disease inspection) which has a small patch of brood and bees, every few weeks. The idea is that the colony will be able to keep this additional frame warm, whereas they couldn't keep a full frame of brood warm until bee numbers have increased considerably. The hive will quickly start to expand.

Sugar feeding

Some colonies will be running low in stores and will need feeding. The rule is not to let the hive go below three frames of honey. If the bees run out of food, the adult bees will survive for up to three weeks (provided it is warm) by cannibalising all the brood. This means there will be a brood break that will weaken the hive about a month later, eventually resulting in a hive that will not reach its potential and will not produce as much honey as we would like.

Sugar feeding methods are fairly easy to follow and you don't need to go to the expense of buying feeders: an inverted quart jar or a wide mouthed plastic bottle with a large lid will do. Burn, drill or punch half a dozen tiny holes in the lid so that the liquid sugar is held in under a vacuum seal. Place the inverted bottle over the frames (so that some of the liquid is spilled, letting the bees know there is food available) on a couple of sticks, or drill a hole in a board so that the lid is held 10mm off the top of the frames so the bees can get at the lid.

If you don't have a suitable feeder, fill a plastic bag with sugar solution and seal the end with a rubber band and place the plastic bag on the frames, or use a GLAD® SNAP LOCK® bag. Put a pinprick in the middle (top) of the bag and press down gently creating a pool of syrup on top of the bag. Dribble a little sugar solution over the edge so the bees know it's there, put on another empty super and cover. The bees will come up on to the bag and take up the syrup. Their weight will force more through, thus feeding the bees. Try and feed two to five kilos of sugar syrup at a time. Quite often a hive will take down two kilos of sugar syrup in a night.

Very strong hives that are running short of supplies can be fed dry raw sugar in a top open feeder. Pour in two 2kg containers of raw sugar then add a little water around the edge of the sugar so some is dissolved. Dribble this down the feed hole so the bees know it's there. The bees will come up and take up the dissolved sugar and then bring in water to dissolve the rest. This takes a lot of work and should only be used on a strong colony. The advantage of this method over sugar syrup is that raw sugar does not stimulate the bees into queen cell production. It will hold a hive until new sources of outside nectar becomes available.

Once you start sugar feeding you should continue to feed the hive until a honey flow starts. Another piece of advice given to me over the years is *don't skimp on feeding*. If you are down to your last dollar, spend it on feed. You need bees to bring in a crop. If the bees are set back in any way, you get a reduced honey crop.

Other hives will be strong and could possibly need an extra super just to give the bees the impression there is still a lot of

room in the hive. If you have Carniolan bees you will have to give them a super early, as they expand as such a fast rate that without the extra room they are liable to produce queen cells early and swarm. How do you tell when to add another super? When looking down on to the frames of a two-high hive, it may seem that the hive needs another super as all the frames have bees between them. The real way to determine whether a colony needs another super is to tilt the two supers backwards on the base and look under the frames of the bottom super. If half the frames are covered with bees showing along the bottom bars, it's time for another super. It may also be a good time to reverse the bottom and second super (although this is generally done in October). This will move the majority of the brood to the bottom of the hive, giving more room in the top super for the queen to lay in.

Tip: if you are a new beekeeper and are increasing hive numbers, liquid sugar feeding is recommended for stimulating brood growth. Talk to a commercial beekeeper about techniques for bulk feeding.

Things to do this month

Make up frames and supers. Prepare woodware for the spring inspection. Replace anything that is showing signs of rot. Keep grass down around the hives. Check honey stores and feed where necessary. Check natural mite fall or use a cappings fork to determine mite numbers. Most beekeepers who have early flows put miticide strips in this month.

-Frank Lindsay

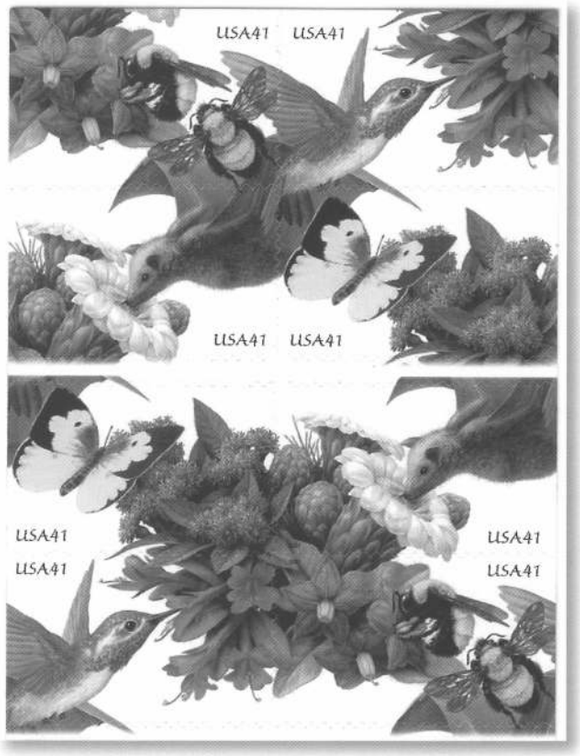
Weaker hive

Strong hive

Pollinator stamp series issued in the USA

A bold plan to publicise the importance and plight of pollinators in the US came together in Pollinator Week, held 24–30 June 2007. National Pollinator Week was designated by the US Senate and the US Department of Agriculture to help publicise the vulnerability of pollinators and to call on the public to create pollinator-friendly habitats in their own landscapes.

The US Postal Service block of four pollination stamps, issued during Pollinator Week, featured Morrison's bumble bee, the calliope hummingbird, and the lesser long-nosed bat, in addition to the Southern dogface butterfly. For more information please visit: http://www.pollinator.org/.



- Pam Edwards
Executive Secretary

Golden goose in beekeeping

The whole world is alarmed about the latest report about the disappearance of honey bees.

"The picture is alarming—honey bee losses are severe in many countries" (Rogers et al., *American Bee Journal,* May 2007, p441). These fears are justifiable since honey bees are involved in pollination of most of the foods that humans and animals consume in our planet. Such fears would be even more justified if we were to take into consideration Einstein's prediction that should honey bees disappear from our planet, humanity would last exactly four years.

There is no doubt in my mind that this catastrophe would take place if bees were to disappear, but fear not, it is not going to happen, at least not at this point and time. However, we are in for pretty hard times if the present trend in beekeeping continues. As in every other aspect of the world's economy, beekeeping is ruled by money, big time money. Beekeeping, for some, is becoming the goose that lays golden eggs. As Kirk Webster, commercial beekeeper, so very aptly quoted Mark Twain, (*ABJ*, September 2006, p755), "In America, the dollar is our God, and how to get it is our religion". Unfortunately, this phenomenon applies to the entire world.

It would take several pages of this publication for me to explain all the factors that I believe to be involved in the process of the disappearance of honey bees. I hope to be able to convey my thoughts in a simple way that is appealing to many readers, especially to beekeepers. I hope that my dialogue makes as much sense to them as it does to me.

I have been a beekeeper for 70 years and a veterinarian for 45 years. I have performed research in honey bee pest management for the last 15 years as a devoted nature lover, qualities that I believe make me well prepared to address the factors that I believe contribute to the present aliment of honey bees. In order to understand what is happening in beekeeping, I believe that a brief analysis of the situation should be made at this point.

We have the same diseases and parasites in beekeeping as we had 20 years ago (bacteria, mites, protozoa, viruses, hive beetles, Cape Bees, fungi, moths, lots of stress and definitely, transgenic seeds!). It used to be that if we had an ailment affecting honey bees in a large scale, we would be made aware of it the moment we came near a hive due to the stench of dead bees, and one could see a pile of dead bees either in front of the hive or inside on the bottom board. In modern days we have added a convenient phrase to what we used to see in the past: disappearing bee syndrome, an inappropriate terminology. Why? Simply because it does not exist. (Syndrome: the aggregate of symptoms associated with any morbid process, and constituting together the picture of the disease, *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, p1339). Yes, bees do disappear, but it is not a syndrome. It is a condition, not the enigma it has been made out to be. It is an occurrence very easily related to economics. Instead, I prefer the term Colony Collapse Disorder, or CCD, a term that describes the situation appropriately.

Lots of money, lots of talk ... but no agreed solution

Pharmaceutical/chemical manufacturing enterprises and the scientific community are enjoying a 'windfall' from beekeepers in particular and beekeeping in general who worry at the prospect of going bankrupt, a fact amply described in the media. It is not difficult to make a connection regarding money spent about disappearing honey bees and the factors responsible for their disappearance. Beekeepers are desperately attempting to save their bees and livelihood trying all kinds of remedies, commercial or otherwise, hoping to find the 'silver bullet', a term commonly used by just about anyone speaking about such remedies.

Government agencies, institutions, beekeepers and beekeeping associations are spending huge amounts of money (for example, Scientific AG Co. donates $75,000 to California Association, *ABJ*, September 2006, p723; multimillion dollar funding now in process by the United States legislature, assigning funds for honey bee research for the next four years, Senate Bill, *ABJ*, August 2007, p663). Bee research conferences are being held frequently in the United States and in foreign countries, to which private individuals, corporate business, institutions and government representatives converge to discuss their views and findings about this disorder. All of them have a common view: beekeepers are losing great numbers of bees. All agree about lots of contributing ideas; almost as many different ideas as there are investigators working on the subject.

Unfortunately, in spite of the large number of accomplishments brought to these meetings, everything is not in agreement. Beekeepers in attendance complain that scientists are using different testing methods, times and numbers (Bill Ruzicka, *ABJ*, August 2007, p658). Hence the need for an international standard treatment method, as could be found in the FGMO/thymol treatment method. On the other hand, these meetings are good for the industry because they show ample range of social impact and human interaction. Proof: read the minutiae of honey bee conferences, meetings, congresses and other contributing authors who are jumping into the scene (i.e., Mike McInnes, linking honey bees, diabetes and stress, *ABJ*, July 2007, p562). But do they solve the question of CCD? It does not appear to do so because the problem continues unabated.

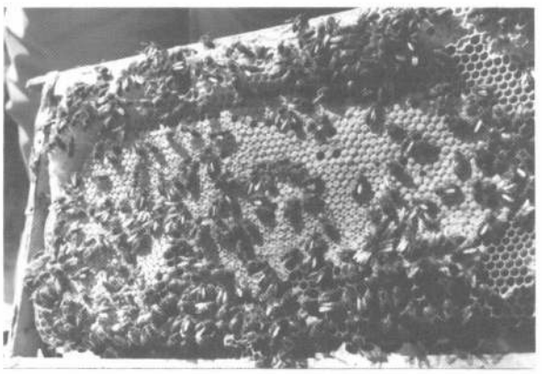
Honey bees are very sensitive organisms and respond to just about all kinds of variants introduced into their colony. Beekeepers in their desperation are pouring many kinds of chemicals into the hives without taking into consideration that most of these remedies are toxic to their bees. Together

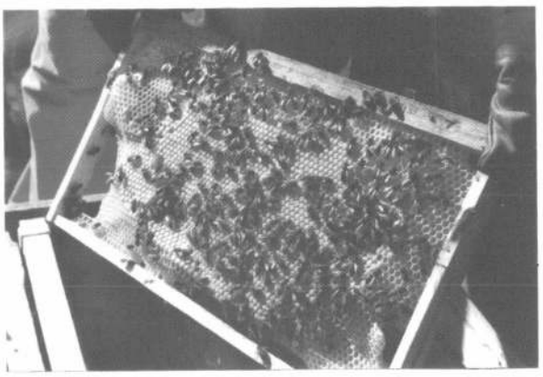
with the illnesses affecting the bees—diseases, parasites, pesticides, handling—all cause stress to the bees. Honey bees under stress abandon their normal activities including hygienic behaviour, an activity of vital importance for hive welfare. Bees often respond to these factors by absconding. In other instances, chemicals, diseases and manipulation affect laying and brood rearing, ending with diminished populations. This is especially true during winter months when bees are confined to the hives with little or no brood development. Under these circumstances, disasters such as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) are likely to occur.

A field day for bee researchers?

CCD has given bee researchers a field day with huge money grants. This is also good for beekeeping because I am sure that most of them will discover remedies to the ailments that may be affecting honey bees. Some of them already have; for instance, Mariano Higes, a Spanish scientist who has isolated a nosema variant that has been found in a great number of colonies seemingly affected by CCD. I live near his place of work and I have known Mr Higes for over ten years. He is a talented and dedicated researcher who may have found another contributing factor to CCD. However, we should take into consideration that pathogens can inflict severe damage to their hosts when the host's strength is weakened, as happens when the bees are stressed. Spain had a severe drought two years ago, which I am sure was responsible for a great number of honey bee colonies collapsing. Perhaps the newly discovered nosema strain contributed to their losses, but it is doubtful that it was the sole responsible factor. I keep my bee colonies in the area, Guadalajara Province, and my bees are not disappearing. I have fabulous bee populations in my colonies (see attached photograph). This statement is not meant to take credit away from my friend's work, but to indicate that investigators must look further to other causes if we expect to arrive at a definite solution to CCD.

In my mind the solution to CCD is related primarily to the effect of the combination of factors such as: long distance movement of colonies, chemicals used within the colonies, diseases, parasites, GMO seeds and stress. Genetically engineered crops (commonly known as GMOs) are widely used in agriculture, as enumerated in several pages of the *American Bee Journal*, the Internet, and numerous agriculture-related literature. It has been documented that GMOs' actions are not limited to the crops for which they are intended, but that GMOs are also transmitted to adjacent plants in which honey bees forage. Do we need to worry about the effects of transgenic seeds in apiculture? In my opinion, the answer is yes. GMOs are widely used in agriculture with few or no restrictions. Their presence has been shown in just about every plant that bears flowers, hence the likelihood for bees to become exposed and be affected by them. One of the signs that have been noted in bees attributed to GMOs is disorientation. Presumably, bees feeding on plants from GMO seeds become disoriented and cannot return to their hives. I have personally inspected hives affected by CCD that had no evidence or signs of illness. The brood chamber and supers had abundant honey but few bees; the queens were found surrounded by a handful of bees. There was neither fresh brood nor eggs. Reasonably, the queens had stopped laying.





FGMO/thymol treatments work against CCD

In conclusion, I have not experienced CCD in either my colonies in Virginia, USA, or my colonies in Spain. I know beekeepers (hobbyists and commercial) who report having great success in their business, all having one factor in common: all, including me, use FGMO/thymol treatments. I have been performing research with FGMO/thymol since 1993. Since then, I have made my findings known immediately after completion each year, and continue to do so for the benefit of beekeeping. I continue to receive phone calls and mail regarding the use of FGMO/thymol. My replies are the same. My work continues to be successful using my established protocol. I do not have mites in my Virginia hives. This is especially important since I have not treated my hives since May 2007. In Spain, my partners and I continue to use FGMO/thymol treatments because occasional mites are being brought from weak/sick colonies by robbing bees or wandering drones.

The beekeeping industry is in trouble to say the least. Commercial preparations are expensive, have limitations of application, may be toxic to bees and leave residues in wax and honey. The food grade mineral oil and natural plant extract (FGMO/thymol) formula and protocol developed by me does not, and the ingredients are readily available at very economical prices. It has been demonstrated by means of strict gas chromatography testing in the United States and Europe that when applied according to my protocol, no residues have been found in either honey or wax, even though my formulation is applied during the entire year. Honey bee researchers have expressed their opinion that FGMO/thymol treatments are not recommended by them because FGMO/thymol research has not been "scientifically" researched, alleging that I did not use control hives in some of my research. During nearly 15 years, only five (known) researchers have alleged that FGMO did not work for them. Reading the description of their test procedures, the answer for their failure was clear and evident. They did not follow the protocol established by me; hence they did not replicate my work.

Beekeeping is in dire need of utilisation of all resources and tools available to attain unity and progress. For the sake of beekeeping and for what benefit may arise out of it, it is evident that some of the resources that are being spent in research could be dedicated to replicate my FGMO/thymol work. There is no reason for not attaining the same results as I have, provided that my protocol is followed, as required by replication. A lot could be accomplished and very little lost. My whole life has been dedicated to my love for honey bees, and it shall remain forever so. I have never searched for wealth, fame or glory for my work, hence replication could be called XYZ for that matter. Failure to replicate my work looms as a great disservice to beekeeping and to humanity.

- Dr. Pedro P. Rodriguez
Virginia Beach, VA, United States of America
and Alcalá de Henares, Spain
August 16, 2007

Obituary—Des Carter

On 16 August the Franklin Beekeepers Club was saddened to hear that Des Carter, a life and founding member of the club that was formed over twenty-five years ago, peacefully passed away. He was a very quiet man in himself and with the bees, was a good teacher and willingly helped both novice and more experienced beekeepers. Des was at one time hive-master and latterly spent a lot of time preparing the woodware for the club hives and wiring and waxing frames. He regularly participated in the club activities, most recently in June when the club visited Lorimer's Apiary in Hamilton, which he found to be particularly enjoyable and a real highlight. He will be greatly missed.

- Stuart Ward

Des Carter on the left with his elbow on the gate. Taken at a club Christmas party, 2004. *Photo: Stuart Ward.*

Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand

Pseudowintera axillaris

Pseudowintera colorata

Maori name: Horopito
Common name: Pepper tree

The Horopito is a shrub reaching eight metres with blackish bark and glossy alternate leaves. *P. colorata* has leaves blotched with red, with a purplish underside.

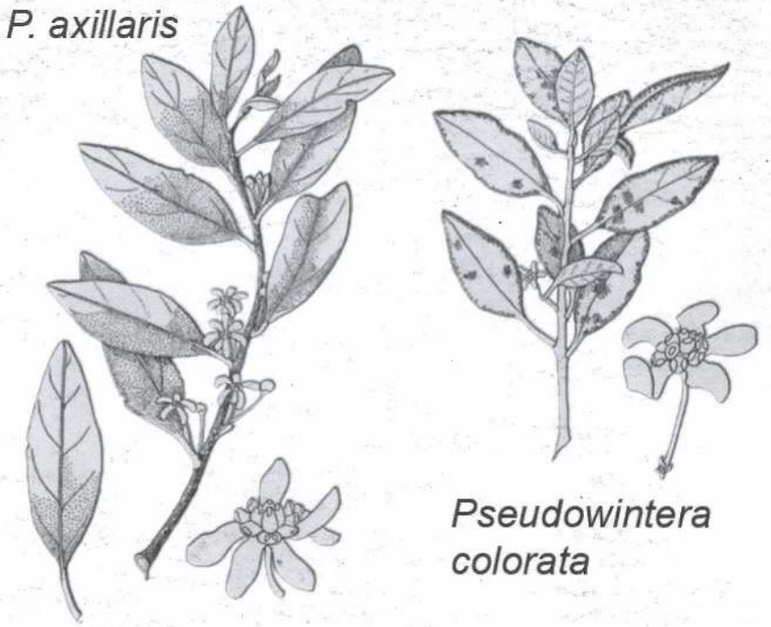
The flowers are small and yellowish green, flowering from August to December, producing a dark amber honey. These two trees often hybridise.

The Maori bruised the leaves and steeped them in water using them as a poultice for ringworm, venereal disease, chafed skin or to heal wounds. The leaves can be chewed to alleviate toothache.

Women used to rub the leaves on their breasts when wanting to wean their children.

The bark was used as a substitute for quinine.

- Tony Lorimer



Free tool will help check for pay bias

Tom Pullar-Strecker

Employers will be able to use software paid for by the Labour Department to check whether they may be unknowingly discriminating against female workers.

Philippa Hall, director of the department's pay and equity employment unit, says the software could have prevented fishing company Talley's from landing itself in hot water. It was fined an undisclosed sum in June after the High Court upheld a finding by the Human Rights Commission that it unfairly excluded female staff in its fish processing factories from higher paid filleting jobs.

The software is being developed by privately-owned Datamining specialist Data-mine at a cost of $37,000 and will be freely available on the Labour Department's website in about two months.

Ms Hall says the software will be able to take employers' payroll data and then check for gender bias by spotting imbalances in pay, bonuses and superannuation, while taking into account a wide range of variables that might legitimately explain differing levels of remuneration, such as workers' age, qualifications and the types of jobs they do. Employers' data would be exported into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis, so the tool should be compatible with almost all companies' payroll systems.

(Excerpted from the Dominion Post, *August 6, 2007)*