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The New Zealand BeeKeeper

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Permit

Still buzzing

The Honey Hive team kitted up for cleaning up the mess after the building was gutted by arson on 31 May 2008.

Photo courtesy of Blair Matheson.

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Deadline for articles and advertising

September issue: 31 July
October issue: 28 August
(goes to all registered beekeepers in New Zealand)

NB: No magazine in January

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

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President's Report

Conference 2008

The conference organisers are well on the way to having everything in place in time for the big day. With the addition of a hobby beekeeper forum on the Sunday prior to the main events (13 July), the Conference will run for a day longer than usual. The Sunday session is quite a busy one, with a good mix of relevant topics for the hobby beekeeper.

The conference is being conducted with a different format than those of previous years, with the Association's Annual General Meeting being held before the seminar programme. Due to the time constraints imposed by this change of format, time will be at a premium. I will need to move things along smartly so those attending the AGM need to be aware of this and prepare themselves accordingly.

Varroa in the South Island

After the detection of varroa mite outside the control line, MAF responded by gazetting a change to the line by expanding it down the West Coast to near Okarito and southwards to the Conway River. This was done without consulting the industry. During my mid-May visit to the North Island I had some informal discussions with Biosecurity New Zealand on this matter and expressed some concern about where the lines had been drawn up and the consequences of this action. During the meeting held on 28 May in Christchurch, where a group of industry representatives met with Biosecurity New Zealand officials, these concerns were reiterated by the other people present at the meeting. As a result Biosecurity New Zealand is considering the possibility of retracting the line back to the original position, although it may need to have some adjustments based on the findings of the current surveillance round conducted by Biosecurity New Zealand.

On 5 June I attended the Varroa Workshop held at Telford Rural Polytechnic. This meeting was reasonably well attended. Unfortunately it was held during the week, so many hobby beekeepers may not have been able to attend. The various speakers delivered their version of how they are dealing with varroa and how they coped when it arrived in their business. NBA Vice President Neil Farrer gave a good rundown of the available chemicals for control of varroa. Because many of the retailers of various control products were unable to attend this meeting to promote their products, Neil did a rather humorous impersonation of these individuals while advertising on their behalf.

These workshops were funded by the Sustainable Farming Fund, whose assistance is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank Neil Farrer, Jane and Tony Lorimer, Barry Foster, Mary-Anne Thomason and James Ward for making themselves available to travel around the South Island delivering their message. NBA Life Member Allen McCaw acted as MC.

At the end of the workshop a short discussion on the current varroa situation ensued. The general consensus was for the current control line to be rolled back to a modified version of the original line. A final control line running across the South Island starting in the Waitaki Valley region was viewed as being the last potentially useful barrier to slow down the spread.

Feedback from those I talked to after the workshop was favourable and everyone seemed to gain some positive information from it.

While the current control lines are having some effect in slowing the spread of varroa down the South Island, inevitably all beekeepers will have to deal with it. As a consequence, the southern beekeepers have to decide where they want to be and to realign their business model and management systems to accommodate the extra costs and efforts associated with varroa management.

The income-generating opportunities for many South Island beekeepers is a lot

more limited than what is available in the North Island. In Canterbury the small seeds industry is expanding and there are increasing opportunities for beekeepers operating in those areas. In the deep South, paid pollination opportunities are almost non-existent and the rapid expansion of the dairy industry is not helping much by reducing honey production potential in some areas. While there is lip service about the necessity to maintain bee colonies in pastoral environments for adequate nitrogen fixation, it will be interesting to see what happens once varroa has spread throughout the South Island and the situation settles down.

Review of IHS for Australian honey

At present the process of getting a review of the Import Health Standard for the importation of Australian honey in this country is still under way. At the time of writing the review panel has not been formed. However, there is concern from the NBA Executive Council about the way the terms of reference can be formulated. We have submitted our concerns to Biosecurity New Zealand, as we feel that they (the review panel) have no guidelines as to what they can or can't do. The review panel has no independence of action from the Director-General and the D-G is not obliged to accept their recommendations. In essence, the outcome of any review process depends on what mood the Director-General or his/her political masters find themselves in at the time.

Bee poisonings in Europe

As many of you will be aware, there has been a significant problem with insecticide-related deaths in Germany recently.

"Vast numbers of the insects were killed in the Rhine valley area of Germany's Baden-Wuerttemberg state by the chemical clothianidin, the Julius Kuehn Institute in the northern city of Braunschweig said." (The full article is available at http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3343248,00.html)

This has resulted in the German authorities banning the use of a range of neonicotinoids in that country.

This issue is likely to be discussed at the conference, as this chemical family has been the source of much concern to beekeepers in this country for a number of years.

- Frans Laas

AFB NPMS report

New website

Due to persistent confusion in the minds of many levy payers concerning the relationship between the NBA and its role as the Management Agency for the American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy, the MA has decided to produce its own website independently of the NBA.

By the time this is published the website will be up and running at www.afb.org.nz

The NBA Secretariat regularly gets enquiries from levy payers who somehow seem to think that being a registered beekeeper means that they are automatically a member of the NBA. This is not so and has not been the case for quite a number of years, when under the now-defunct Commodities Act all beekeepers with more than 50 hives or more three apiary sites were obliged to pay levies and became members of the NBA by compulsion. Beekeepers below this threshold could join voluntarily.

I must thank Neil Farrer for his efforts in getting the website up and running. Any comments about the content and any suggestions for things that may be useful additions should be directed to the Manager, Rex Baynes. His email address is info@afb.org.nz.

Annual Report

The annual report of the AFB NPMS is prepared by our contractors AsureQuality. This report will be published on the website.

A pleasing note is the substantially reduced number of ADR defaulters. Reminder notices have been sent out to those non-compliant beekeepers. The names of those who have not sent in their ADRs by the stated deadline will be forwarded to Biosecurity New Zealand with a recommendation for prosecution.

Unfortunately, the number of people who are required to complete and return their COIs and have not done so is still excessive, and it is likely that default inspections will be needed. These inspections are not done with levy payers' funds so in many instances it could cost these non-compliant beekeepers substantial amounts of money.

Compliance with the Strategy is the cheapest option in the long run.

NPMS Review

As many will be aware the Strategy expires on 30 September 2008. As far as we know, the Strategy will be rolled over while the rather belated review process is undertaken. This will be an opportunity for all levy payers to comment on the Strategy.

- Frans Laas
Chairman
Management Agency
American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy

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Bee Products Standards Council news

Honey standards and toxic honey

The two working groups formed by the Bee Products Standards Council have been working hard to develop discussion documents for industry consultation on honey standards and preventing toxic honey.

The **Tutin Working Group** met at Ruakura and the discussion document was developed entirely from material presented and discussed at that meeting.

The **Honey Working Group** has met three times by teleconference and worked to refine the standard for monofloral honeys. It has also looked at an internationally acceptable standard to define honey.

These two discussion documents are being released for industry consultation and feedback. The Bee Products Standards Council will then finalise the standards for adoption.

Consistent feedback from international buyers of New Zealand honey is that we need to adopt standards here so that they can meet their own regulations and the expectations of their consumers.

- Dr Jim Edwards
Chairman, Bee Products Standards Council

John Bassett, Colin and Dulcie MacBeth, Tony Wright, Allan and Barbara Pimm.

Cliff Van Eaton, Jim Sim and Dr Mark Goodwin.

Successful outing for NBA membership cards

The Bay of Plenty Branch recently held its field day with free entry to those presenting their NBA membership cards. After a bit of a search I found my card, then promptly forgot to take it with me. I was lucky that those on the door knew me: phew, gave me $5.00 extra for lunch.

For those of you who have forgotten, the letter that came with the membership card attached also has the NBA website password information. Have a dig around and see what has been added to the website since you last looked: www.nba.org.nz

- Fiona O'Brien

Chemistry group under criticism

Bayer (a leading chemical company) and the dead bees

In many bee stocks, the humming and humming this summer will be cancelled. Beekeepers, farmers, politicians, and a chemistry business are likewise shocked at the large scale death of the honeybee in the Upper Rhine: several thousand bee hives in the Rhine plain between Loerrach & Rastatt were destroyed by a pesticide of the manufacturer Bayer CropScience. Meanwhile, in the region around Feiburg (in the Black Forest) the dying also spreads itself. The beekeepers are alarmed. Since Friday, more exact numbers to the damage circumference have been well known.

Altogether, until the beginning of June, 700 beekeepers submitted damage reports to the responsible authorities, reports the Ministry for Nourishment & Rural Areas of Baden-Wuerttemberg (around Stuttgart). Approximately 11,500 bee hives are concerned; that is, they are either decimated entirely or partially. Many lost their flying bees, with serious consequences.

From a conscious flight bee loss rate, it is possible that 2008's honey harvest will be lost or strongly restricted, say specialists.

"The economic damage at the strongly damaged beekeepers can mean a total loss of the year's yield" [said] Peter Rosenkranz (Rosary), leader of the bee customers [department] at the University of Hohenheim.

Source: Die Frankfurter Allgemeine berichtet: (The Frankfurter Allgemeine), *16. Juni 2008 (16 June 2008), "Bayer und das Bienensterben". Translated from the German by Leon Theaker.*

[Editor's note: another article on this subject can be found in The Guardian, which reported that "Tests on dead bees showed that 99% of those examined had a build-up of clothianidin. The chemical, produced by Bayer CropScience, a subsidiary of the German chemical giant Bayer, is sold in Europe under the trade name Poncho. It was applied to the seeds of sweetcorn planted along the Rhine this spring. The seeds are treated in advance of being planted or are sprayed while in the field."

You can read the full article at:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/may/23/wildlife.endangeredspecies

Frank Lindsay adds that there were also 200 hives poisoned this year in the kiwifruit orchards in the Bay of Plenty and again another neonicotinoid was suspected but didn't show up on gas chromotography.

The situation in Germany is also a reminder to beekeepers in the South Island who may be asked to pollinate canola to check what is sprayed on the crop.]

Vintage beekeeper

This photo was taken in early June. Wanganui Vintage Car Club members participated with a wide range of vehicles: me in the Commercial section with my 1958 Vanguard Ute—note Wanganui District Honey sign writing on door. This was part of the prior publicity for the Vero 2012 International Vintage Vehicle Rally to be held in Wanganui in January 2012. It is expected that over 1000 vehicles will attend this rally for New Zealand and many other countries.

In my case, suitably dressed with old copper smoker and old veil for the period.

"Old beekeepers never die, they just lose their sting!!"

- Neil Farrer

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Preparing for varroa's move south

Biosecurity New Zealand meeting

The NBA has recently been involved in two significant activities in the South Island. On 28 May we participated in a meeting with Biosecurity New Zealand, along with representatives from the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group and the South Island Varroa Control Group.

Of major interest was the Biosecurity New Zealand proposal to move the control line, which had attracted significant criticism. At the meeting the industry representatives persuaded Richard Norman and Katie Owen to revisit the actual position of the line.

A major issue was the amount of money remaining from the amount which had originally been allocated by the Government. It was clear that there are not sufficient funds to pay for all the potential compensation that may be claimed and the ongoing controls, education and extension.

Biosecurity New Zealand is going to consult further and will work initially with a group of beekeepers to develop the options ahead.

Meeting participants (left to right): Frans Laas, Arthur Day, Matt Davidson, John Syme and John Hartnell.

Varroa workshops

Two workshops fully funded by the Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) were held in Telford and Timaru on 5 and 6 June, respectively. These workshops were very well attended by beekeepers from throughout the southern half of the South Island.

The NBA is grateful to the speakers who gave their time to spend two days in the South to advise beekeepers how to prepare for and cope with varroa. Jane and Tony Lorimer, Neil Farrer, Barry Foster, James Ward and Mary-Anne Thomason spoke about different aspects of the industry and strategies to control varroa.

The participants received copies of the booklet *Living with Varroa* which contained more experiences and advice from North Island beekeepers who were among the first affected when varroa arrived in the country. Copies of the NBA-published *Control of Varroa* were also available for sale.

Sustainable Farming Fund
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Te Manatū Ahuwhenua, Ngāherehere

- Jim Edwards
Chief Executive Officer

NIWA's climate outlook: June to August 2008

In the New Zealand region, mean sea level pressures are expected to remain higher than normal to the south of the South Island and lower than normal to the northwest of New Zealand, with more winds from the northeast than normal over the country. Sea surface temperatures around New Zealand are expected to remain above normal.

Air temperatures are likely to be above average in the North Island, average or above in the north of the South Island, and near average in the remainder of the South Island over winter. Rainfall is expected to be near normal in all regions, except for normal or above normal in the east of the North Island, and normal or below normal in the southeast of the South Island. Soil moisture levels and stream flows are expected to be normal or above normal in the north of the North Island, normal or below normal in the southwest of the North Island, and normal elsewhere, except for normal or above normal stream flows in the east of the North Island.

Safe loading of vehicles

The way you load your vehicle is crucial to preventing injury to the driver, any passengers or animals that you carry or to other road users. It is also crucial in preventing damage to your vehicle, its equipment or the goods it carries or damage to other vehicles.

Your load must be restrained to stop it shifting on the vehicle when you drive over uneven roads, turn, brake or accelerate.

Avoid overloading your vehicle. Overloading can permanently damage your vehicle and significantly reduce its stability, performance and lifespan—all of which creates a high risk of serious injury or death.

Trucks with a high centre of gravity are particularly unstable when overloaded (especially when operating on uneven surfaces, or barges and small vessels).

For information on basic safety principles that must be followed, drivers and others who place loads in or on vehicles should consult:

- for cars, vans, station wagons, utes, 4 wheel drives etc and light trailers (vehicles whose maximum laden weight is less than 3.5 tonnes) or the weight of the load is up to 500 kilograms: (See Glovebox guide to safe loading and towing (http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/road-user-safety/motorists/glovebox-guide.html)
- for trucks and heavy trailers or for loads of more than 500 kilograms: *Truck Loading Code. The Truck Loading Code* is available from bookshops.

Following are some basic guidelines:

Loading do's and don'ts

Do

- Do make sure that passengers are seated and wearing an appropriate restraint for their age.
- Do make sure your vehicle's loading space or deck will suit the type and size of the load that you want to carry.
- Do make sure that animals are either attached to the vehicle with a suitable harness or carried behind the front seat or in appropriate crates or pens or cages or behind a cargo barrier (or tethered to the rear of the cab if they are carried on the open deck of a ute).
- Do make sure your vehicle is fitted with suitable clamps to hold the load or anchor points (hooks, eyes or rails) to hold any lashings (straps, ropes or chains) that you will need to use.
- Do make sure the front of a load of goods is pushed against the cargo barrier or headboard or front rack or use extra lashings or clamps to prevent the load moving forward.
- Do make sure you have enough clamps or lashings; that they are in good condition and are strong enough to hold your load to the vehicle so they can prevent it shifting forwards, backwards, sideways and upwards (when going over bumps).
- Do secure the lashings to your vehicle's load anchorage points.
- Do tighten up the lashings.
- Do use wedges and chocks so that your load cannot move.
- Do make sure that loose bulk or fragile loads are covered so that they cannot fall or be blown off your vehicle.
- Do check your load:
  - Before you move
  - After you have travelled 25km, and then regularly after that
  - Whenever you check your tyres
  - Whenever you add or remove items
  - After emergency braking or excessively sharp or violent manoeuvres.

Don't

- Don't overload your vehicle (by exceeding its manufacturer's maximum laden weight or the maximum legal weight on its individual axles).
- Don't load you vehicle too high (this could make it unstable).
- Don't use rope hooks to restrain heavy loads (check in the Truck Loading Code).
- Don't forget the size, nature and position of your load will affect the handling of your vehicle.
- Don't take risks.
- Don't move the vehicle if any part of the load is not secured.
- Don't leave loose wedges, lashing, chocks and dunnage lying on the vehicle deck once the load has been removed.

More information is available from your Land Transport office or http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/commercial/loading.html

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Tunnicliffe Timber Company Ltd and a revolution in bee woodware

Tunnicliffe Timber Company Limited (Tunnicliffe's) has seen a steady growth in its bee woodware business from the time the first super left its yard in 2002. Beehive boxes are the main product next to kitset floors, top feeders and other custom-made products as specified by the beekeeper. All woodware is to standard sizing but the company specialises in custom runs to give its customers what they really want.

Back in the old days the supers were made by the beekeeper, during the winter when there was time and good native timber to work with. Over the years native timbers became scarce and expensive whilst the change to Radiata pine was inevitable. The beekeeper's preference went out to "old-man" pine, large old pine from farms and woodlots, with a high resin content. Dipped in paraffin wax, these boxes lasted a reasonable time. Times have changed yet again, and there is little time for the modern beekeeper to spend time making boxes. Also, as small mills and "old-man" pine are disappearing, it is difficult to get good-quality timber at a good price. To get "new-age" Radiata pine boxes to last longer, ways to preserve the timber have been developed.

To date Tunnicliffe's has been supplying its products as kiln-dried untreated Radiata pine, or treated with bee friendly Tanalised® Ecowood™. The treated version comes in treated wet or kiln dried.

When referring to "treated timber" we more or less immediately associate this with using a cocktail of chemicals applied to timber. When we talk about chemicals we enter into a sensitive area to beekeepers, as the issue of contamination of honey is a real risk to their business, a current hot topic.

It is reasonable to assume that the majority of beekeeping woodware undergoes a treatment of some kind, especially beehive boxes, to make them last longer. There are several techniques ranging from painting only to dipping in a copper naphthenate solution, paraffin wax and using a vacuum-pressure treatment process, such as with bee-friendly chemicals like Tanalised® Ecowood™.

When we say bee-friendly, this means that the chemicals used are not killing the bees. But if it is safe for bees, the next question is whether it is safe for the honey. Tunnicliffe's believes it is, yet with today's advanced analytical equipment finding minute traces of residues in honey, and with the lack of standards in New Zealand, we are having to deal with a perception in the market that looks less favourably at chemical treatment of bee woodware.

Contamination of honey was thoroughly discussed during the NBA Conference last year in Dunedin. In fact, it triggered Tunnicliffe's to go ahead with an alternative it had been aware of for several years. You may say that Tunnicliffe's has come up with a revolutionary new product to help address the issue with regard to bee woodware.

Tunnicliffe's has extended its beehive box range with a durable timber product, free of any chemical. The timber used is thermally modified New Zealand Radiata pine, which is comparable with naturally durable timbers such as Cypress Macrocarpa, Western Red Cedar and Redwood.

Tunnicliffe's recently invested in the latest technology to "thermally modify" New Zealand grown Radiata pine using the ThermoWood® process. In effect the process creates a new timber species with its own specific properties. Tunnicliffe's purchased a high-tech pilot-scale treatment chamber, previously located at Scion (former Forest Research Institute) in Rotorua where the technology has been trialled since 2003.

Background

It has been known for centuries that burning the surface of wood in an open fire will make it more durable in exterior use. The Vikings (700–1050 A.D.) used this method in outdoor structures such as fences.

The heat treatment of wood was scientifically studied in Germany and the USA during the 1930s and 1940s. Research carried on in Germany in the 1950s through to the 1970s. More recently, research work was carried out in Finland, France and the Netherlands in the 1990s, when the technology gained momentum and was successfully developed for commercial use. The technology Tunnicliffe's is using originates from Finland: the ThermoWood® process has been developed by VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland in Helsinki (www.vtt.fi). Tunnicliffe's established an association with the Finnish company Jartek Termo Oy (www.jartek.co.nz), which is a treatment chamber manufacturer and a member of the Finnish Thermowood Association (www.thermowood.fi).

Today there are several brands established in the European market where thermally modified timber is used to replace tropical hardwood timbers, naturally durable timbers such as Western Red Cedar and Redwood and also softwood timbers treated with chemical preservatives.

The process

New Zealand-grown Radiata pine is very suitable for the heat treatment process. The timber is treated in a special chamber where it is exposed to temperatures up to 230 degrees Celsius in a computer-controlled process. Steam is added to prevent the timber from combusting but also has an effect on the chemical changes taking place in the timber.

The process permanently changes the chemical and physical properties of the timber. In other words, the wood structure is re-formed or "modified". These changes are mainly caused by thermal degrading of hemicelluloses (a sugar compound in the timber). It increases the biological durability, stability and also the thermal insulation properties are improved. On the other hand, there is some loss of strength, but this is insignificant for beehive box applications.

High Durability

In principle, the durability is increased because the edibles (sugar compounds) on which fungi live have been taken out by burning them off.

Dimensional Stability

The equilibrium moisture content (EMC) is reduced, which increases the dimensional stability of the timber as there is less swelling and shrinkage caused by moisture uptake/release.

Appearance

The timber darkens completely through towards an attractive chocolate-brown colour. The higher the maximum temperature to which the timber is treated, the darker the timber looks.

Working with ThermoWood®

Working with ThermoWood® is easy as it machines and finishes well. In general the timber can be nailed and screwed as with the untreated version, keeping in mind that it is a little more brittle. For nailing, it is recommended to use a small pneumatic nail gun with adjustable drive depth. Self-tapping screws can be used without pre-drilling. Normal PVA, PU, MUF glues and RF resins can be used as well.

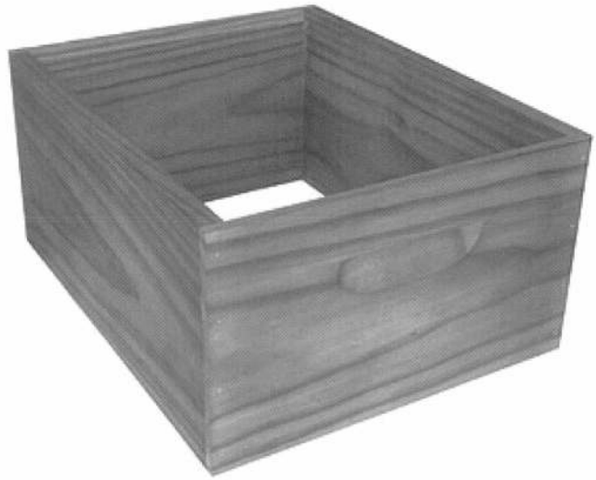
ThermoWood® can be used unpainted for exterior use. However it will weather, turning grey as any other timber. It is recommended to seal the timber with at least one coat of paint to keep it in long-lasting good condition.

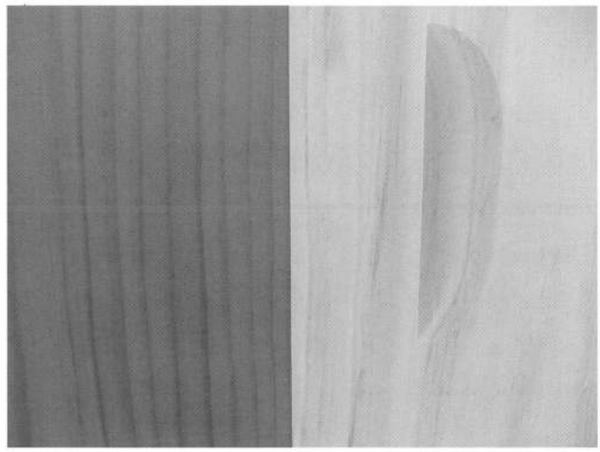
The company

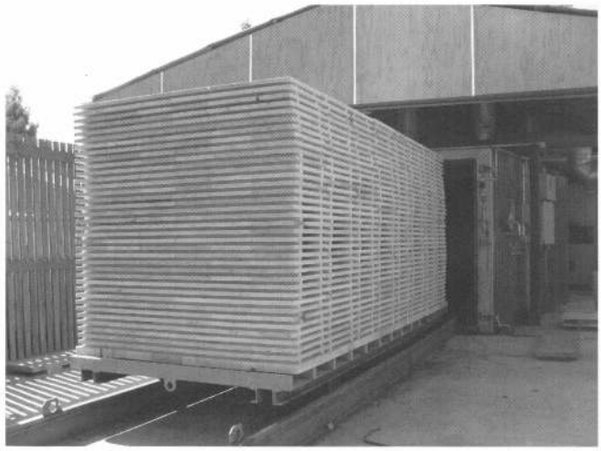
Tunnicliffe Timber Company is located in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and has a rich local history. The beginnings go back to 1929 when the Tunnicliffe family started their native sawmilling business in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The company later merged with MWG Timber and Hardware Limited (Morris, Walsh and Gatfield), a business that gained momentum while the town of Kawerau and its pulp mills were being built during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1997 the processing division was sold as a separate business, including its staff and expertise, and took on the old original family name again.

The company's core business is fingerjointing, turning rough-sawn kiln-dried Radiata pine into high-value clearwood components for the traditional joiners making exterior timber windows and doors, window reveals for the aluminium joiners and door jambs for the interior door manufacturers and pre-hangers. All Tunnicliffe's business is for the domestic market.

You can find out more by visiting Tunnicliffe's website (www.tunnicliffes.co.nz), or call Daan Olthuis at 0800 657 934.







Two articles hit the NZFSA website—FYI

The following are the Contaminant Requirements for Bee Products for Export, which are necessary for the purpose of facilitating access to overseas markets. This is pursuant to section 60A of the Animal Products Act 1999. This came into effect on 30 June 2008.

The maximum permissible level (MPL) for agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines in bee products for export is 0.01mg/kg, unless otherwise specified in the following table.

Contaminant	*Substance to which the MPL applies*	*MPL mg/kg Unless otherwise stated*	*Products to which the MPL applies*
Amitraz	Amitraz	0.2	Honey, honey in comb
Arsenic	Total arsenic	0.1	Honey, honey in comb
Cadmium	Total cadmium	0.01	Honey, honey in comb
Chloramphenicol	Chloramphenicol	0.0003	Bee products
Copper	Total copper	2.0	Honey, honey in comb
Polychlorinated Biplenyls (coplanar)	Sum of total toxic equivalents of congeners as listed in clause 6	0.5 pg/gm TEQ	Honey, honey in comb See NZFSA website
Coumaphos	Bee products	0.1	Honey, honey in comb
Dioxins and furans	Sum of total toxic equivalents of congeners listed in clause 6	0.9 pg/gm TEQ	Honey, honey in comb See NZFSA website
Lead	Total lead	0.1	Honey, honey in comb
Mercury	Total mercury	0.01	Honey, honey in comb
Flumethrin	Flumethrin	0.1	Honey, honey in comb
Fluvalinate	Fluvalinate	0.1	Honey, honey in comb
Furaltodone	3-Amino-5-morpholinomethyl-2-oxizolidinone	0.0001	Bee products
Furazolidone	3-Amino-2-oxizolidinone	0.0001	Bee products
Nitrofurantoin	Aminohydantoin	0.0001	Bee products
Nitrofurazone	Semicarbazide	0.0001	Bee products
Para-Dichlorobenzene	Para-Dichlorobenzene	0.01	Honey, honey in comb
Tutin	Sum of Tutin and Hyenanchin	0.1	Bee products

Further information relating to polychlorinated bipenyls and dioxins and furans can be found on the NZFSA website: www.nzfsa.govt.nz

Restriction on bee products for export that exceed MPLs

Bee products for export:

a. must not contain contaminants that exceed the MPLs specified in the table above); and
b. must be accompanied by documentation that demonstrates compliance with those MPLs.

New: 08/10: Contaminant Requirements for Bee Products for Export http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/publications/omar/08-010.htm

Animal Products (Regulated Control Scheme – verification of contaminants in Bee Products for Export) Notice 2008

This scheme commencing 01.07.2008, has been implemented to test for contaminants in bee products for export, by way of sampling, testing, monitoring, and surveillance to meet our market access requirements.

This scheme allows NZFSA to verify absence or presence, extent and distribution of contaminants in bee products.

New: Animal Products (Regulated Control Scheme - Verification of Contaminants in Bee Products for Export) Notice 2008 http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/legislation/notices/regulated-control-schemes/ap-rcs-verification-of-contaminants-in-bee-products-for-export.pdf

From the colonies

Auckland Branch

The Auckland Branch is intending to run a DECA course/test later this year. Please provide expressions of interest to the Auckland NBA Branch Disease coordinator, Mr Bob Blair (phone 09 479 4354), or refer to the inside cover of this magazine for other Branch contacts.

- Bob Russell, Branch Secretary

Waikato Branch

It is early June as I write this. Our extractor is still humming but only a few more days to go. I hear of a few others still extracting. In some cases mite strips are coming out now, and some beekeepers are feeding sugar to their weaker colonies.

The branch held its AGM recently and there was almost a complete change in office holders:

President: Cameron Martin
Vice President: Stephen Black
Secretary: Grant Redshaw
Treasurer: Tony Lorimer.

I must admit the Treasurer has been around a while—Tony has been looking after the dollars since 1975, cor blimey! Lewis Olsen continues as our ward representative.

The branch has also instigated a newsletter to be compiled by Fiona O'Brien. The first issue is hot off the press and looks to be an excellent way of keeping members informed. And there is to be action on the social front with a get-together and potluck meal on 21 June. This will be an opportunity for us to organise a spring field day. Meantime we will have attended the Bay of Plenty field day in mid-June. In early July we will meet to vote on the notices of motion and then for some of us it is off to conference.

Frans Laas and Rex Baynes have just completed an AFB National Pest Management Strategy tiki tour culminating in our area. Waitomo Honey hosted a meeting of about 25 beekeepers who heard about the NPMS, in particular the enforcement side of the strategy and the outlook for the future. The at-times vocal audience fired some curly questions and comments at Frans and Rex. I think it was a good learning exercise for all and hopefully gives the NPMS Committee some ideas towards the 10-year review.

The branch will host a spring field day on 30 August. More information in next month's issue.

- Pauline Bassett

Bay of Plenty Branch

The annual field day for the Bay of Plenty Branch was held on 14 June at Paengaroa Hall. We had a good turnout of around 70 people who enjoyed a good programme with topical subjects and obviously lots of interest, as many questions were put to both the meeting and speakers during lunch and afternoon tea.

Colin Baskin from Comvita started the day with a really interesting presentation of Comvita's involvement with the Kyoto Forests project and the opportunities this may present to all parties, including beekeepers. The only thing holding this project back seems to be the politics of the day.
Neil Cameron gave a summary of the work the BeeSafe group has been carrying out during the past 12 months, and for those people involved in pollination services this group is carrying out excellent work to reduce the bee poisoning potential. It is always interesting to catch up with what is happening in Zespri, so it was really good to have an update on both the market situation and the research work the innovations group is carrying out on pollination.

Byron Taylor seemed to attract most of the questions just before lunch as RMPs and the necessary paperwork around exportation of honey were discussed. This is always an interesting topic and maybe next time we should allocate more time, although I am sure those who needed to caught up with Byron later on.

After lunch the topic changed to toxic honey and Dr Mark Goodwin gave us an excellent presentation on the history of toxic honey to date, plus a better understanding of how we end up with toxins in our honey. Tony Lorimer and Pauline Bassett then showed us a number of plant specimens they had collected from the same sort of environment as tutu, so we could check out our ability to identify things correctly. These plants were available to look at during the lunch break as well, which many did, but didn't take up the challenge of putting pen to paper to test their skills. We kept it a bit closer to the chest in case we were wrong: one or two were a bit tricky for some of us.

Jim Sim from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority then updated us about where NZFSA is in regard to setting limits for the future. I urge you all to partake in discussions at branch level and conference regarding this issue. Not all beekeepers are affected, although many of you will be surprised at the extent of the problem. This issue will not go away and must be managed sensibly by both the authorities and beekeepers.

Jim Edwards rounded off the day with a summary of NBA's major areas of involvement and the progress of various working groups and appeals.

Thank you to all the speakers, all those who attended and the organising committee. A very good field day; I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did.

- Barbara Pimm, Branch Secretary

Hawke's Bay Branch

Rain, rain go away: it never rains but it pours. From this you should be able to gather that it is no longer dry in Hawke's Bay.

Frans Laas and Rex Baynes attended our last branch meeting and were very informative. There is obviously a problem with government bureaucrats being unwilling to enforce infringements of the AFB National Pest Management Strategy when they are found. The AFB NPMS is not perfect but it is better than no regulation at all, which was our other option. Continued non-compliance by some beekeepers could lead to the cessation of all exports of honey from New Zealand.

If you don't like the NPMS, remember that it is coming up for review. Get involved and come up with some sensible changes that could be made. Remember, though, the difficult part is not writing sensible legislation, it is getting bureaucrats that know nothing about our industry to agree to them.

Most beekeepers are now looking forward to a break, so how about we all fill in our ADRs on time, register our sites and pay our levies so maybe Frans and Rex can have a break too.

- John Berry, Branch President

Southern North Island Branch

Planning for this year's conference is well in hand and from the amount of registrations that are being received it looks like a lively time is going to be had by all attendees. So make sure you pack your winter woollies, as it can sure get nippy down in the Wairarapa, and there's bound to be a healthy covering of snow on them there Tararuas.

This past month has been busy with the cleaning up of the extracting facilities and making sure all is shipshape and prepared for next season. It's hard to comprehend but it's less than six months away.

Out on the apiary front it's been wasps, wasps, wasps and more wasps. Wasps have been prolific from New Plymouth down to Wellington in both town and country areas. More than a few wasp nest hunters have had a nasty shock from inhaling fumes, dusts, etc during the eradication process.

The winter months are a good time to get onto arranging New Zealand FarmSafe training for your staff and to get your farm chemical handlers' certificate done. This certificate is administered as part of the FarmSafe programme. They have regional training providers throughout the country: contact 0800 545 747 or see their website: http://www.farmsafe.co.nz/Home.aspx.

Varroa levels are high again this autumn with reinvasion widespread over our branch area. The cold snap we have had is no deterrent to the little critters, so be vigilant and if necessary, change your treatment to get the little suckers in line.

- Peter Ferris, Branch President

Nelson Branch

We are experiencing very dry conditions at the time of writing and with hives generally wintered down with good stores.

The varroa movement control line has been substantially changed with the discovery of varroa being found "across" the previous line. However, there are suggestions that the new line may be altered and pulled back somewhat. With the inevitability of varroa taking itself to Invercargill, an all-encompassing concept has been mooted.

1. There are limited funds available via Biosecurity New Zealand to monitor and slow down the spread of varroa in the South Island.
2. Compensation claims and future compensation claims may be larger than anticipated.

The concept is that the funds allocated to Biosecurity New Zealand for varroa control in the South Island be deposited with the Honey Industry Trust Fund, and that these funds and/or interest be tagged to varroa research. This could benefit not only the South Island beekeepers but also the North Island beekeepers.

- Glenn Kelly, Branch President

ADVERTORIAL

Using the quieter months to help minimise accidental loss

Now is the best time to review your procedures and workplace practices to help you avoid potential future accidents, and minimise your losses.

There are a number of risks that you face in your business, some of them you can avoid through prudent housekeeping and working procedures, and some that you can't avoid. Here's just a few of them:

- Production—hive management, disease, mites and pests, drought, storm, flood and slips
- Regulation—tax laws, legislation, compliance, health & safety and other government regulations
- Financial risks—pertaining to equity, debt levels, liquidity and credit
- Price or market—competition in a global marketplace, volatility of the NZ dollar, commodity prices and overheads
- Human and personal risk—accident, illness and death.

It's difficult to plan for every risk you face, and planning for disastrous weather events is difficult as you never know what's around the corner. Flooding and slips have been a problem recently, so ensure you place your hives on stable ground and away from areas which could potentially slip after excessive rainfall.

You can also help to minimise the effect of an accidental fire by ensuring you have effective rubbish disposal, adequate workplace housekeeping, appropriate storage of chemicals and flammable materials such as honey boxes and wax, obtaining fire permits when required, enforcing a no-smoking policy in workplace buildings, and installing smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in appropriate buildings and or vehicles.

Ask your local supplier if you'd like advice on what type of fire extinguisher to install. For more information on fire safety, visit www.nrfa.org.nz/firenet/regions/rural

FMG has insurance options which can provide more effective cover under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, for fire risks that get out of control such as fires burning on drought-ravaged countryside, or in the event of a vehicle or smoker accidentally causing fire near forestry, bush or plantations.

For a more proactive look at your insurance needs **contact FMG on 0800 366 466 or www.fmg.co.nz**

So what has changed since 1937?

[Editor's note: Mary-Ann Lindsay found this newspaper article in an old branch minute book started in 1908, which is now part of the Southern North Island Branch.]

The importance of the busy bee: fear of flooded market

The fear that if the present protection on honey were lifted the Dominion would be flooded with imported honey and the New Zealand industry ruined was expressed before the New Zealand Tariff Commission to-day and it was further argued that the maintenance of the beekeeping industry was of importance to clover growing and fruit farming.

Arthur Ecroyd, representing the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand, asked that the present duties on honey, 2d a lb British preferential and 4d a lb plus nine-fortieths surtax should remain.

In the past the honey-producing industry had been protected from overseas competition by a substantial duty on honey, which had so far successfully prevented the exportation to New Zealand of foreign honey. Beekeeping had been encouraged by the Department of Agriculture until a valuable primary industry had grown up to swell in no small measure the volume of our exports.

The following figures show the exports of honey during the past five years:-

1928 – 2,329,131 lbs. £ 77,495; 1929 – 2,365,887 lbs. £82,743; 1930 – 171,536 lbs, £6216; 1931 – 584,739 lbs. £19,401; 1932 – 226,243 lbs. £7054.

In addition there was a large amount consumed locally, for the Dominion was considered to be the highest per capita consumption of honey in the world, the estimate a head being in the vicinity of 3lbs a year. The total value of the 1932–33 season's production, based on figures supplied by the Department of Agriculture, which estimated the production at over 5,000,000 lbs was in the vicinity of £126,000.

The number of apiaries in New Zealand was 6461 in September of last year, containing 103,529 hives, these figures show an increase of 476 apiaries 11,628 hives over 1929 figures. Competition, should the present duties be removed, would undoubtedly have to be faced against exports chiefly from the United States, where honey is produced, in California particularly, of quality which would suit the taste of the New Zealand public, for the quality approaches closely that of the New Zealand high standard.

The United States, whose producers were keenly anxious to find outside markets, had imposed an effective barrier against New Zealand honey of 1 1/2 cents a lb, while Canadian beekeepers were also protected. Australian producers also enjoyed a duty of 1 1/2 d a lb. He would say that at the present time, the chief source of possible competition without a substantial duty would be the United States of America.

The probability of disastrous flooding of our markets with American honey would, he was certain, immediately become an accomplished fact should they lose the protection they now had.

The present unfavourable exchange rate could not be considered to be more than a passing phase, and could not be considered as protection in a permanent sense. Apart from protection against honey from foreign sources, he submitted that they could not ignore the danger of losing the British preferential duty of 2d a lb, without which they would be without doubt subject to competition from British Dominion.

"I would not say that beekeeping is the backbone of New Zealand," said Mr Ecroyd, "but I would say that it is one of the vertebrae. Without bees in large quantities clover-growing for seed would be impossible. Fruit production would be affected".

"In America, in some of the big fruit producing areas, they are prepared to pay a premium to beekeepers to compensate them for moving their hives to the fruit-growing areas in the fruit bloom period. A tremendous business has been developed of sending packages of bees by post—three, four and five pounds of bees—to fruit producers so that they can establish bees in their orchards".

Farmlands' deal for NBA members

The Executive Council, in particular Neil Farrer, has been working with Farmlands. NBA members who are not current Farmlands members can join the Farmlands group: the cost is either a one-off payment of $522, or $50 initially, then a further $50 per month for 10 months. The NBA will receive a one-off finder's payment for each NBA member who joins Farmlands. Farmlands will require a letter from NBA to ascertain that the applicant is a member of the NBA, another outing for the membership card. More details will be provided at the NBA Conference 2008 in Masterton.

- Publications Committee

NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2008

Sunday 13 July

Hobby programme

All hobbyist or new beekeepers welcome

9.30 am	Cup of tea and welcome
10.00	Biology of the Bee (Frank Lindsay)
10.20	Siting your Apiary: local regulations (Neale Braithwaite)
	(Wellington/Masterton/Palmerston North)
	Note: all Councils are reviewing their by-laws)
10.40	Purchasing hives and equipment etc: three-quarter or full-depth hives (Neil Farrer)
11.00	Queen rearing simplified (Gary Jeffery)
11.20	Spring requeening versus autumn requeening (David Cramp)
11.40	Varroa treatments: 'alternatives' (Frank Lindsay)

LUNCH (1 hour: lunch provided)

1.00 pm	Seasonal requirements of the bee (James Driscoll)
1.20	Honey processing (Anne Hulme)
1.40	Food hygiene regulations (Jim Sim, NZ Food Safety Authority)
2.00	Exotic disease (Byron Taylor)
2.20	AFB National Pest Management Strategy overview (Rex Baynes. Manager)
2.40	How to attract new members to your club (Carol Downer, Auckland Beekeepers Club Inc)
3.00	Panel discussion from the floor
3.30	Closing and thanks to the chair

Sunday 13 July

Active Manuka Honey Association (AHMA) seminars

Open to all members of the beekeeping industry

Seminar One 11am–12 Noon

Medsafe & Claims (Please bring a copy of your website and promotion material)

Seminar Two 1–2 pm

Processing Validation

AMHA AGM 2 pm

(Closed meeting: AMHA members only)

Monday 14 July

Specialty Group Meetings

Open to all in the beekeeping industry

9–10 am	Review of the Organic Regulations Pertaining to Exports
	(Kay Shapland, NZ Food Safety Authority)
	This review carries on from an earlier meeting held at the Bee Industry Group (BIG) conference
10 am–12 noon	New Zealand Queen Bee Producers Association

1–3 pm	New Zealand Packers and Honey Exporters Association
3.15–5 pm	New Zealand Honey Bee Pollination Association: General meeting and AGM
6.30 pm	Mix & Mingle in the Evening
7 pm	**Meet our overseas guest speaker**
	Des Cannon, Australia Australian research projects and their funding

Tuesday 15 July

8 am	Opening of the conference by the Mayor of Masterton
8.30 am–3 pm	NBA AGM

Seminars

3.30–4 pm	Honey Marketing (John Rawcliffe, AHMA)
4–5 pm	Bee Products Standards Council & Discussion *Follows on from the April meeting*
6 pm	**Sponsors' Evening & Presentations**

Wednesday 16 July

AFB National Pest Management Strategy Programme

8.30 am	Welcome (Frans Laas)
8.35 am	AFB NPMS Manager's Report (Rex Baynes)
9.15 am	Helicopter Surveillance Exercise (Frans Laas)
9.45 am	**Morning Tea**
10.15 am	Annual Report: AsureQuality Ltd (Byron Taylor)
10.45 am	New Zealand Food Safety Authority (Greg Zemke-Smith)
11.15 am	Open Forum (Delegates)
12.15 pm	Closure (Frans Laas)

Note: The programme and timing may be subject to minor alterations

Women's bus trip leaves 9.30 am; returns 4.30 pm

Visits a number of places of interest including the Paua Factory and time for shopping. Lunch at the Gladstone Hotel.

Afternoon Bus trip 12 noon–4.30pm

Late Barbeque lunch at the Tui Brewery: escorted visit through the factory for sampling.

(Wine and splits available for those that don't drink beer.)

Note that suitable footwear must be worn as there could be broken glass on the floor.

For those not interested in shopping or seeing the sights, it is hoped that videos of the best presentations from Apimondia and the New South Wales 2008 conference will be screened for a couple of hours.

Conference Dinner (Formal dress) & Entertainment (Special Location)

6 pm Bus pick up from Hotel and Motels by arrangement only

DON'T FORGET YOUR CAMERA!

Thursday 17 July

Morning seminars: technology in beekeeping

8.30 am	Remote hive weighing (Des Cannon, New South Wales)
9.00	BeeSpeak: Acoustic monitoring of hives (Clive Mitchell)
9.30	Harvest Electronics: Remote weather stations (Peter Munn)
10.00	**Morning tea**
10.30	Protecting NZ honey: proof of origin (James Driscoll)
11.00	Climate change: the insurance effect and impact on the beekeeping industry (Wayne Thomas, FMG)
11.30	Tutin – results to date (Jim Sim, NZFSA)
12.00	**Lunch**

Afternoon seminars: where are we going?

1.00 pm	Manuka honey testing procedures (Gordana Aleksic, NZLabs)
1.30	Current research at the University of Waikato (Prof Peter Molan)
2.00	Possible biocontrol of varroa (Dr Mark Goodwin, HortResearch Ltd)
2.30	EFB: possible effect on NZ beekeeping (Murray Reid, AsureQuality Ltd)
3 pm	**Afternoon tea**
3.30	Chemical-resistant varroa (Dr Mark Goodwin)
4.00	Small Hive Beetle in Australia (Des Cannon)
4.30	Questions

Major sponsors of the NBA Conference 2008

Manuka Health New Zealand Ltd
Farmers' Mutual Group
Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies Ltd
Comvita New Zealand Ltd

Rotating brood frame hive trial

Background

In 2006 Anivet, a manufacturer in Hungary (www.anivet.hu), offered me five Kónya rotating brood frame beehives to try out in New Zealand conditions. These hives are Dadant size but I can't really tell the difference.

The area I selected to place these test hives contains a number of apiaries within a one-kilometre radius, to prove they can survive under our conditions about 80 kilometres from my home. The test site is a warm coastal dairy farming area, with fragments of coastal forest close to a small town (Otaki). The site has a stream nearby that provides good sources of pollen and early nectar for the bees to build up on. On fine days during the winter the bees can gather nectar and pollen from the kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*), our native cedar, and from tree lucerne (*Cytisus proliferus*), which also flowers all winter.

The brand new hives arrived in October 2006 through Customs in good condition and I coated all the plastic frames with beeswax using a paint roller. (Pre-waxed frames were not allowed entry into New Zealand).

I decided to stock the hives soon after their arrival as per the manufacturer's instructions (from their website) by shaking about 10,000–15,000 bees into single-super hives. The weather was cold and wet, and the bees wouldn't settle around the queen cages. On reflection, I believe the smell of the new plastic frames repelled the bees (they went up into the feeders I was using and a good percentage drowned). A few weeks later, I took the beehives to an apiary and added swarms and bees to each of the hives. The bees went straight into the hives and settled down immediately.

I set up five rotating brood frame hives and five single-super Langstroth hives in a line facing north for this comparison trial. I tossed a coin to establish the positioning of the hives within the apiary. Rotating brood frame hives require half an ampere at 12 volts to rotate the brood nest, so I wired leads in series to each hive from an old car battery and connected an extension lead to a nearby 230-volt power supply for the battery charging.

I placed five-litre plastic trough feeders on each hive above a queen excluder, and topped them up weekly.

Early on, the No. 1 hive (closest to the east) showed signs of drift from No. 2, so I painted the No. 2 hive at the entrance to allow the bees better orientation.

As can be expected, the hives were of different strengths and responded accordingly. I reduced several of the swarms to two-frame nucs due to two months of cold, wet weather (our worst spring in twenty years). After a while it became obvious that these small hives could not support themselves on sugar syrup alone (No. 9 Langstroth died out), so I added three frames of honey to each hive to carry the bees over. Despite their poor start, they bred up to a full-depth super of brood and produced another super of honey (from foundation) as their winter stores, and some produced additional honey in late February 2007. However in the intervening months (February–May), most had eaten over half a super of the stored honey.

Maintenance

I visited the hives every two weeks to do a mite count and to turn the battery charger on. Each hive was given a full inspection every months to ascertain its progress. During the honey flow, two of the rotating hives (No. 1 and No. 7) blew their two-ampere fuses because the mechanism jammed. I had to strip them down to remove the brace comb the bees had built along the top edges of the circular frame housing. This took well over half an hour per colony to clean out and was quite disruptive on the bees. The other hives remained clean and clear of brace comb, except immediately under the queen excluder. The problem appeared to be that the bee space on these two hives was larger than nine millimetres at the top, so the bees filled the space with brace comb and propolis.

Opening the back of the rotating hives to look inside tended to be less disruptive to the bees but taking out the frames was fiddly until I learned the correct technique; that is, to rotate the mechanism to a position where the frames just sit in the cradle, yet are easy to roll out without much pressure. And yes, it is possible to roll and kill a queen, just as it is in a Langstroth hive if you remove a frame from the centre of the brood nest too quickly. In the hive in which I killed the queen, the bees produced seven small queen cells built straight out in the middle of the frame, but I removed them when I put in a new queen. Had I let them mature, they would have been very small queens, although all had a good supply of royal jelly.

One advantage with the rotating brood nest hive is that it isn't necessary to remove the honey supers to inspect the brood nest, although I suspect that more than four supers of honey would bend the metal bar the supers sit on.

I did not treat either the rotating brood frame hives or the Langstroth hives after the honey flow ceased. My theory was to see how both sets of bees fared when hives around them were breaking down with Parasitic Mite Syndrome.

I called a halt to the trial in May 2007 as the Langstroth hives were on the verge of dying through mite and virus predation.

During my last inspection (4 May), I noticed the rotating brood frame hives had brood in four frames, while the Langstroth had brood in parts of two frames. Apart from the No. 1 rotating brood frame hive, the rotating hives have enough bees to cover the frames and those of the honey super. The Langstroth hives had reduced to bees barely covering three frames and may not have survived the winter had the trial continued. I placed Bayvarol strips into the rotating brood frame hives (taped in) and put in Thymovar into the Langstroth hives (as a trial for me). Normally I put in strips in late February before mite levels get too high. Organic treatments are not really suited to controlling such high mite levels.

Overall, the rotating brood frame hives produced slightly more honey than the Langstroth hives (i.e., three rotating hives and one Langstroth produced well) and seem to have reduced the number of mites breeding in their cells, apart from No.1 that looked like the queen was going downhill. All hives were exhibiting some PMS (spotty brood, sick larvae and mites could be seen on the frames) when I placed treatments in the hives. The No. 6 Langstroth hive, the best producer, was perhaps the worst affected by varroa, with lots of rejected larvae.

Looking at mite drop

Every time I visited the apiary, I either collected the debris from below the wire mesh bottom boards or did a mite count while on site. I counted only the mature dark female mites; however, it was quite noticeable that there were a lot fewer immature mites on the slides of the rotating brood nest hives, perhaps indicating a lower reproduction rate. (With the brood nest rotating once every 24 hours, the mites were definitely being disrupted in their breeding.)

On 18 May I turned off the power and disconnected the battery.

Table 1: Mite fall from January to August 2007

2007	R No 1	R No 2	L No 3	R No 4	L No 5	L No 6	R No 7	L No 8	L No 9	R No 10
12 Jan			3		#			*	^	
6 Feb		3		3		13	9			
9 Feb (3-day fall)	9	2	1	0	6	0	3	0		2
10 Mar (+24 hours)	*	2	1	2	2	6	1	0		7
23 Mar		54	134	58	54	426	70	22		59
4 Apr	145	171	659	119	88	651	110	86		72
30 Apr	376	291	1,244	489	276*	2,367	92	189*		96
4 May	185	144	1,313	817	398	2,396	71	986		260
10 May	2,759	1,580	593#	6,009	2,908	1,844	3,053	2,675		*
18 May	184	3,587	484	1,620	1,365	1,659	502	1,699		3,304
18 Jul	7	621	6	750	59	74	19	90		420
7 Aug		1		1		3	1	1		1

R=rotating hives; L=Langstroth hives

Notes:

12 Jan: # bees on 7 frames; * bees on 5 frames; No. 9 dead; put on supers as the weather cleared.

6 Feb: temperature 26 degrees. Most have half drawn the second super, interspaced drawn and undrawn frames.

9 Feb: Changed electrical mechanism to 180 per day (reset power).

10 Mar: * bees on tray.

23 Mar: Hot/calm weather, flow just about finished.

30 Apr: * = no food = no brood. All Langstroth hives were given thymol wafers; all hives were fogged with FMGO and thymol (5%). This gave an initial knock down of mites but a few days after applying Thymovar, several mites could still been seen on bees. Temperatures were a little low for this treatment to be effective but it cleared the bees out of the honey super above the treatment.

4 May: All hives fogged with four bursts of food grade mineral oil and 5% thymol + 24 hours. From this it looks as though fogging is not very effective on the rotating hives. Perhaps the smaller opening below the frames and the larger population of bees stopped the fog penetration between the frames.

5 May: Bayvarol strips put in all hives.

10 May: Mite count five days after treatments put in. No. 3 being robbed by No. 4: closed entrances with grass. * No slide.

18 May: Disconnected battery.

18 Jul: Quick winter check of hives. Kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) and tree lucerne (*Cytisus proliferus*) flowering, giving nectar and pollen.

7 Aug: One or no mites dropped in most hives. Hives 2 and 10: queens failing; bee numbers reduced.

Looking at the results

Until robbing started, the rotating hives only had half the natural mite fall of the Langstroth hives, but following the collapse of a couple of hives in the area, all hives took on more mites and had similar numbers by the end of the trial. However, there was a great deal of difference in the condition of the bees. The bees in the Langstroth hives were all showing signs of PMS: small hive bodies, mites visible on the bees, brood in all sorts of condition.

In the rotating brood nest hives, there were only a few cells with PMS and very few mites could be seen on the bees.

Errors in rotating the hives

I made a number of mistakes during the first six months of operating the rotating brood frame hives:

1. I forgot to disconnect the battery when changing the rotation speed so didn't actually change to the 90 percent rotation until well into the honey flow.

2. Taking strong rotating hives apart can be very disruptive to the bees late in the season. I had bees all over the place (front and back) following the last inspection, and lost the queen in No. 7 when I closed everything up. Upon further inspections, I left the back cover slightly ajar (a bee space wide) and the bees quickly went into the hives via the sides.

3. I didn't undersuper quickly enough. The bees became congested and filled the rotating brood nest with honey.

4. I looked into the hives far too often; however you have to do this under trial conditions and this was disruptive to the bees. I killed two queens by mistake.

Second season

Spring 2007

The Langstroth hives had recovered thanks to a mild winter and plenty of nectar and pollen, but they had gone through twice as much winter stores as the rotary hives, perhaps due to their small populations and having to raise brood all through the winter to survive.

In Spring 2008 I'll test the rotating brood nest hives non-swarming ability.

I had nine hives as before but in Spring 2007 one of the rotating brood nest hives had the queen in the upper honey super. I put a round frame of brood from another hive into the bottom and put the queen down on the frame. Next visit she was back up there again. The queen excluder looked OK, so she must have moved up the outside and in an upper entrance in the super. I blocked the upper entrance and she stayed down this time.

All hives were building up well. I equalised populations by shaking bees from some of the rotating hive honey boxes into the Langstroth hives. I left all hives with only two three-quarter-depth honey supers above the brood nest.

26 November 2007: there was an early honey flow on for about two weeks. Three swarms were hanging in the trees, all from the Langstroth hives. The rotating brood nest hives were full of bees, some hanging out the front. They did not swarm.

I added another two three-quarter-depth honey supers to each of the rotating hives and single full-depth supers to the Langstroth hives. I checked these each fortnight and added more supers when the top super was half full of honey.

The honey crop was 60 kilograms from rotating hives, and 20 kilograms from swarmed hives.

Autumn requeening

I normally put protected 10-day-old queen cells in the third super of each hive to create a supersedure situation. You can't use this method in rotating brood frame hives, so I allowed the queens to emerge and put them onto a frame and watched the reaction. Some queens took no notice and moved around as if they owned the place; one sought out drone cells and hid in them.

Result: not a good replacement rate, but this was the same for most of the nucs I made late in the season. Two of the five rotating brood nest hives had new queens, one hive was queenless and another two still had the old queens.

In October 2008 I'll put new queens in normal nuc boxes and when they are laying, do a direct swap of the queens, putting each where the other queen was on the frame (Brother Adam method). This should just about guarantee good results.

Tips

The Hungarian honey frames are smaller than ours, but the actual hive has a little extension to take our boxes. You can inspect the hive without removing the honey supers, but only up to four supers high. The bees are calmer as you are not disturbing them very much. A puff of smoke in the entrance and in the back after they are opened is all that is required.

As already stated, it's just as easy to squash a queen when putting back frames but the actual method of securing the frames is fiddly and is better done without wearing gloves. You have to prise off the bar with the corner of your hive tool: it takes a few times to become proficient.

The only thing I have noticed over time is that the bars connected to the outside rotating frame tend to bend outwards a little.

Summary

The manufacturers' claim that bees do not swarm from rotating brood frames has proved true, and I pushed them.

Mite control: last year I tested the hives to destruction. The Langstroth hives went from three high to fewer than three frames of bees with PMS. The round hive showed signs of PMS (through reinvasion), but still had a full brood box of bees and wintered well.

Maintenance: scrape down a few frames every few years to renew the wax or to get rid of old pollen. Scrape the inside of the back cover to remove any propolis or wax build-up.

It can take an hour to strip and clean out the whole hive as it can become jammed, but otherwise hives could be left to perhaps three inspections a year: AFB spring and autumn before removing the honey crop, and for requeening.

At Apimondia I talked to the Anivet representatives for some time. They have a new plastic model available now that is lighter in weight and has several new innovations. They have followed the nine-millimetre bee-space more rigidly and the queen excluder is now shaped to follow the curve of the rotary frames, which should prevent any brace comb build-up.

They have found that a 60-degree rotation is more disruptive to varroa reproduction, so suggested I leave my rotation on 45 degrees all the time (I have the older model hive).

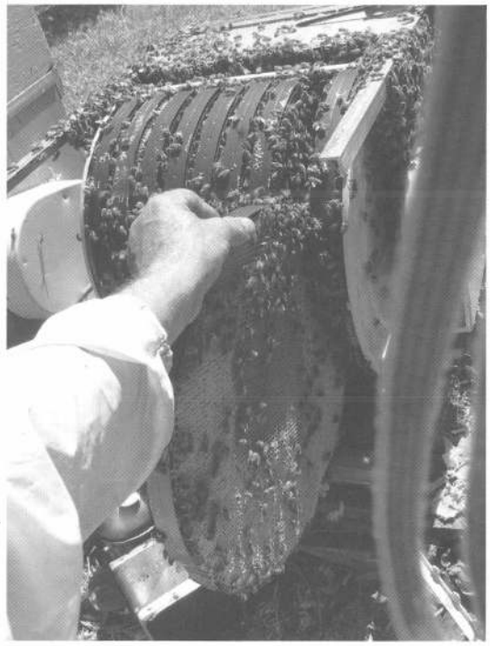
In the new Anivet hive, all the closures are now controlled by stainless steel screws that won't rust and are easy to use.

They've modified the front entrance closure and have installed an upper entrance so bees no longer have to go through the brood nest to deposit nectar in the honey supers. (I slide my bottom super forward a little to create the upper entrance.) The bottom tray is deeper and pulls out, making it easier to remove mite count sheets.

Finally, a word on the cost of rotating brood frame hives. These hives cost the same as a normal hive in Europe but unfortunately our New Zealand dollar is low compared to the Euro, so to our minds these hives are very expensive to buy (double the cost of a New Zealand Langstroth hive), and then the Government will want GST and require a Customs inspection on entry.

Anivet feels that there are advantages to owning this type of hive despite the high initial cost (200 Euros):

1. Hives will only require one treatment for varroa as the rotation mechanism disrupts varroa breeding
2. Rotating brood nest hives do not swarm, so tend to produce a third more honey than conventional hives (if we use a figure that a third of our normal hives swarm)



Method for removing the bar; removing frames.

Summer production.

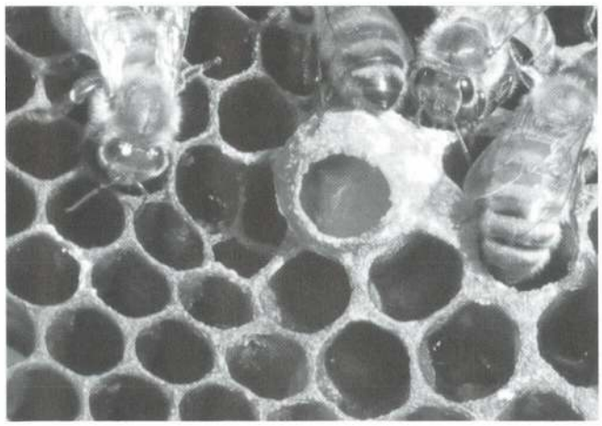
3. Hopefully with a local Australian/New Zealand manufacturer on board in the future, the price of the hives will reflect their real value Down Under.

As to my overall impression of the hives, I'm impressed. Next season I'll work them as normal hives, with fewer disturbances to the bees.

- Frank Lindsay

Postscript

It took hours to count all the mites and now I have a new appreciation for those researchers that have to count countless mites all the time as part of their job, even though they divide the boards into sections and do an estimate.



Frame with queen cells; close up of queen cell.

New plastic hive.

Photos: Frank Lindsay.

Emergency pesticide ban for saving the honeybee

Prof. Joe Cummins' warning against neonicotinoid pesticides in the killing of honeybees was dramatically confirmed, resulting in swift action on the part of the German Government.

Germany's emergency ban

The German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) suspended the registration of eight neonicotinoid pesticide seed treatment products used in oilseed rape and sweetcorn, a few weeks after honeybee keepers in the southern state of Baden Württemberg reported a wave of honeybee deaths linked to one of the pesticides, clothianidin. Prof. Joe Cummins had warned specifically against this class of new pesticides (Requiem for the Honeybee, SiS 34), widely used in dressing seeds and in sprays, and "highly toxic to insects including bees at very low concentrations." His contribution to ISIS' Briefing in the European Parliament in June 2007 (Scientists and MEPs for a GM free Europe, SiS 35) drew attention to the danger of sub-lethal doses of neonicotinoids and Bt biopesticides in GM crops, which could act synergistically with pathogenic fungi in causing Colony Collapse Disorder in the honeybee, and resulted in a question to the European Commission by German MEP Hiltrud Breyer (Emergency Motion on Protecting the Honeybee, SiS 35), shortly after she has submitted an emergency motion to ban the neonicotinoids.

Unequivocal evidence of pesticide poisoning

Walter Haefeker, president of the European Professional Beekeepers Association, reporting to *Chemical and Engineering News* said, "Beekeepers in the region started finding piles of dead bees at the entrance of hives in early May, right around the time corn seeding takes place."

"It's a real bee emergency," said Manfred Hederer, president of the German Professional Beekeepers' Association told *The Guardian*, "50-60 percent of the bees have died on average and some beekeepers have lost all their hives."

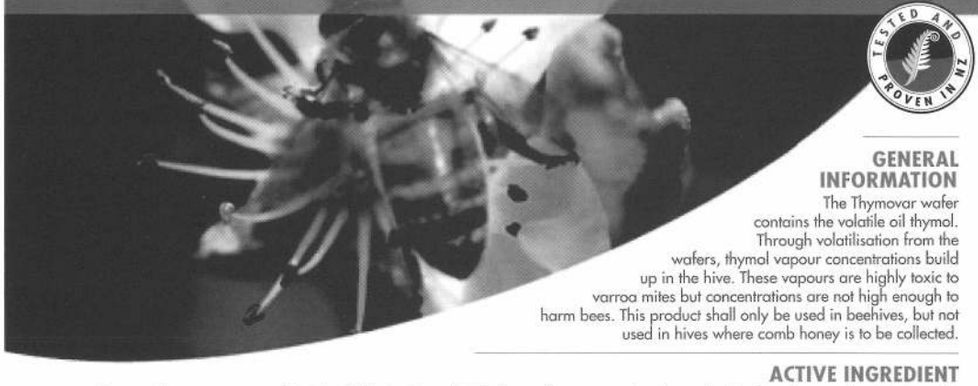
The incriminating evidence was so convincing that a press release from the Julius Kuehn Institute (JKI), the German federal agricultural research agency, stated: "It can unequivocally be concluded that a poisoning of the bees is due to the rub-off of the pesticide ingredient clothianidin from the corn seeds."

Read the rest of this article here
http://www.i-sis.org.uk/honeybeePesticideBan.php

Source: The Institute of Science in Society (ISIS), ISIS Press Release 09/06/08, Dr. Mae-Wan Ho.

Thymovar®

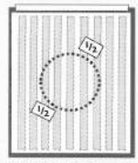
FOR THE CONTROL OF VARROA MITES IN BEEHIVES



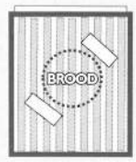
TESTED AND PROVEN IN NZ

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Thymovar wafer contains the volatile oil thymol. Through volatilisation from the wafers, thymol vapour concentrations build up in the hive. These vapours are highly toxic to varroa mites but concentrations are not high enough to harm bees. This product shall only be used in beehives, but not used in hives where comb honey is to be collected.



SINGLE-STOREY (1 CHAMBER)



MULTIPLE-STOREY (2 CHAMBERS)

ACTIVE INGREDIENT

Contains 721g/kg thymol in the form of a vapour-releasing wafer. (Each wafer contains 15g thymol).

Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. P7303. See www.nzfsa.govt.nz/acvm for registration conditions.

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Thymovar®

FOR THE CONTROL OF VARROA MITES IN BEEHIVES

HARMFUL AND CORROSIVE

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN - ECOTOXIC

DANGER: This product is corrosive and may cause skin burns and eye damage.

HARMFUL: May be harmful if swallowed or inhaled.

TESTED AND PROVEN IN NZ

PRECAUTIONS: Store in unopened original packaging away from foodstuffs. Avoid inhalation of product vapour when opening the sealed sachet. Avoid contact with skin and eyes and wear goggles and latex gloves when handling the wafers. Wash hands thoroughly after handling and before eating or drinking. Harmful to aquatic organisms and terrestrial vertebrates.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE - GENERAL

DOSAGE RATE: Two applications of one wafer per brood chamber at a 3-4 weeks interval. Open the sealed sachet containing 5 wafers. Place one wafer (cut in half) on top of the brood chamber as depicted in the diagram. Use two wafers uncut for a double storey box of chambers. Wafers can be cut with a pair of scissors.

APPLICATION: The first part of the treatment is to put the wafer(s) on the top of the combs of the brood chamber. Close the hive as usual. Open floors have to be closed. Repeat the application of wafer(s) 3-4 weeks later. Remove used wafers after 3-4 weeks. After opening the sealed sachet all wafers should be used immediately.

TIMING: Application can be made in the spring before honey supers have been added for the first honey flow. Alternatively, an application can be made in the late summer to early autumn period immediately after all the surplus honey has been removed. Apply when maximum daily temperatures are between 12°C and 30°C. All hives of an apiary should be treated with Thymovar at the same time, to avoid robbing.

Factors such as temperatures dropping below 12 °C for a longer period during the treatment can lower the effectiveness of treatment. Also temperatures higher than 30 °C increase the sublimation of the thymol, and can have negative effects on the bees (e.g. robbing). It is recommended that the natural mite fall be monitored 2 weeks after completion of the Thymovar treatments and if more than 1 mite per day is recorded alternative non-thymol based treatments be applied. If the mite drop is not checked, all colonies have to be subjected to a follow-up treatment. Otherwise sufficient efficacy for all colonies cannot be guaranteed.

WITHHOLDING PERIOD: Not for use when honey supers are present in the hive.

STORAGE: Store in a cool dry place out of direct sunlight, avoiding temperatures above 25° C. When stored appropriately, this product should show no significant degradation for 4 years from date of manufacture. Contact your supplier for further information about the use of any product that is older than this.

Approved under the Animal Products (Ancillary and Transitional Provisions) Act 1999.Approved pursuant to the HSNO Act 1996, Approval Code: HSR001727. See www.ermanz.govt.nz for approval controls.

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Bio Gro Certified

Current Pricing as at April 2008

10 to 90 wafers	$2.95 plus GST each
100 to 490 wafers	$2.70 plus GST each
500 to 4990 wafers	$2.39 plus GST each
5000 + wafers	$2.25 plus GST each

About the Apiary

June is just about over. Here in the lower North Island, it started with a bit of cold snap but for most of the month we have had still, calm, sunny days, with temperatures reaching 19 degrees Celsius on some days. The grass is growing but farmers are thinking it could become a winter drought. Still it's early days yet, as it could suddenly turn cold tomorrow.

Winter sources are now flowering. Kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) is flowering in what's left of the coastal forests (some of my hives have brought in half a super of honey), Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) is in full flower, while tree lucerne (*Cytisus proliferus)* is just starting and gorse is still providing pollen. All of these are excellent sources of nectar and pollen that build healthy bees. With this stimulation, some hives have perfect brood in two frames so will be consuming more honey than expected.

The mild temperatures have fooled some plants into producing flower buds. I have seen buttercup flowers in some wet areas and while checking out a swarm in the base of a cabbage tree (one of mine), I noticed that bush lawyer (*Rubus cissoides*) was in full bud.

This calm, mild weather has seen bees flying most days. I was quite surprised to find bees completely covering the top of the third super when I opened some hives to put on wet supers for the bees to clean out. I thought the bees would have clustered by now. In checking a few nucs I had made (adding more honey), I noticed the odd bee without wings in a couple of hives. I have had to put strips into all the hives in a couple of apiaries. Varroa has a nasty way of sneaking up on you. A few years ago I lost a lot of hives during the winter. The odd lost hive in June seemed acceptable but the majority were lost in July. It pays to check the natural mite fall in a few hives during the winter, as you might also see the odd misshapen bee on the landing board. It looks like this situation could recur this winter with the weather being so mild.

At this time of the year most commercial beekeepers do a quick round of feeding, especially if they are wintering in singles. Hives in two supers are hefted by lifting the back of the hive slightly, using the handhold to judge its weight. Hives full of honey don't lift off the stand. Light ones are investigated and fed.

A lot of drones in a hive is a sure sign the hive is queenless. The bees also roar when smoke is wafted over the top of the frames. Unite any queenless hive now on top of another hive or it will gradually be robbed out. It seems strange to be working hives in winter but the conditions permit it in some locations. I'm also transferring my five-frame nucs into full-sized supers and moving them to the warm areas, when they will progressively build into a full-sized hive by Christmas.

Things to do this month

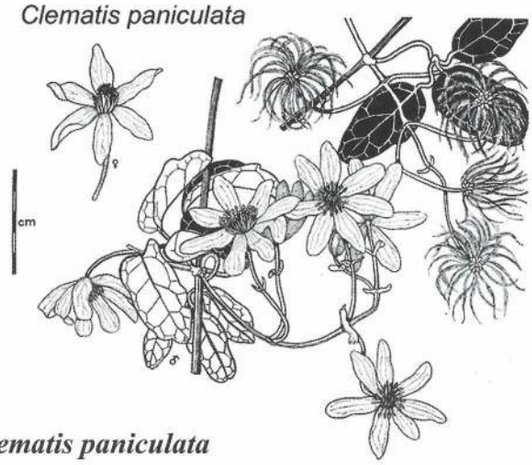
Sort out old combs and render them down. Purchase new frames. I'm gradually changing my honeycombs to plastic and using my own cappings wax to coat them: a great indoor winter activity! Make up new gear; bases, roofs, split boards, etc, ahead of spring—it's just around the corner.

Check your hives after storms to ensure cattle haven't knocked any over. Make sure you have ordered spring queens. Winter is also a time to get a little education. See the FarmSafe advertisement on the back page of this issue: it's free, so take advantage of it.

- Frank Lindsay

Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand

Clematis paniculata



Clematis paniculata

Maori name: Pua-wānanga/pikiarero

Common name: Bush Clematis

This bush climber has thick glossy leaves. The flowers are interesting in that they have no true petals; the white star-like parts are actually seven sepals.

It flowers from August to October—the bees collect a pale nectar from the flowers.

The leaf stems of the flower cling to the branches to climb up the host tree. These stems are very sensitive, and if gently rubbed will turn in the direction from which the friction comes.

The Maori used to use the sap on a sty in the eye, and the decoction of bark soaked in hot water was used to relieve toothache.

- Tony Lorimer

To bee organic or not to bee

Prof. Joe Cummins explains why bees are especially susceptible to pesticides.

Worsening epidemic of Colony Collapse

Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a growing scourge of honeybees has struck again this year. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported a 36 percent loss of colonies in managed hives over the winter, up 13.5 percent from the previous year. USDA has yet to identify a single pathogen responsible for the disease, and has finally begun to study the interaction between pesticides and viruses or varroa mites as possible causes.

CCD is characterised by the complete absence of adult bees in the colonies with little build-up of dead bees in or around the colonies, but capped brood and food stores of both honey and bee bread are present, and are not immediately robbed by other bees. Attacks by hive pests such as wax moth and small hive beetle, if any, are noticeably delayed.

In a colony undergoing collapse, the workforce is insufficient to maintain the brood, and seems to be made up mostly of young adult bees. The queen bee is present, but the cluster is reluctant to consume provided feed such as sugar syrup and protein supplement.

The Institute of Science in Society has reviewed the evidence on the impact of pesticides and the synergistic interaction between pesticides (including Bt biopesticides now widely incorporated into genetically modified (GM) crops) and pathogens such as the fungal parasites (Requiem for the Honeybee, Mystery of Disappearing Honeybees, SiS 34; Parasitic Fungi and Pesticides Act Synergistically to Kill Honeybees? SiS 35). That evidence was the basis for question to the European parliament urging immediate bans on the pesticides such as the neonicotinoid insecticides as well as GM crops containing Bt biopesticides (Emergency Motion on Protecting the Honeybee, SiS 35).

In 2008, the German government took the extraordinary step of banning neonicotinoid pesticides (see Emergency Pesticide Ban for Saving the Honeybee, SiS 39).

Genetics of the honeybee

The honeybee genome has been sequenced, and while rich in genes for behaviour and learning relative to other insects, it is deficient in genes for immunity and the ability to detoxify toxic chemicals such as the pesticides. The genes families involved in insecticide resistance in other insects are completely lacking. These shortfalls contribute to the sensitivity of bees to insecticides. Bees have been found to have immune systems comparable to insects such as flies and mosquitoes, but with about one third less genes devoted to immunity than other insects. Insects' immunity involves inducible synthesis of anti-microbial peptides and constitutive melanisation-encapsulation response to pathogens. The reduced immune flexibility of the honeybee may be compensated by social activity such as hive cleaning. When bees are challenged by a bacterial pathogen, genes in the head of the bee are differentially expressed, and show neuroimmune-behaviour interactions similar to those of vertebrates. A dysfunction in both its immune response and behaviour triggered by exposure to pesticides could easily result in CCD.

Read the rest of this article here
http://www.i-sis.org.uk/toBeeOrganicOrNotToBee.php

Source: Institute of Science in Society. ISIS Press Release 11/06/08.

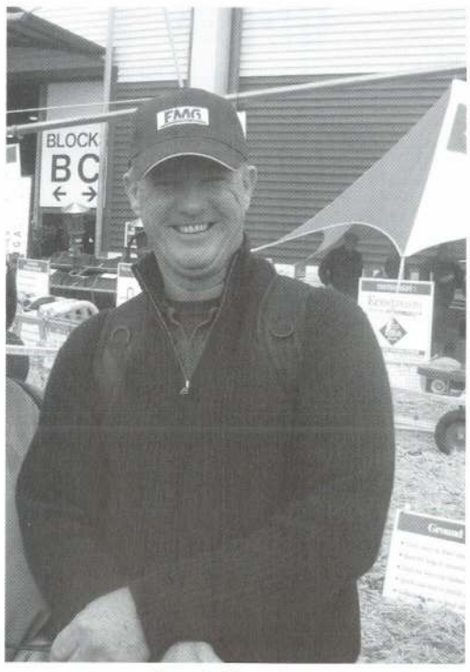
Seen at Mystery Creek Fieldays®

Photos: Frank Lindsay.

Fiona O'Brien, John Bassett and Jeremy O'Brien.

NBA Vice-President Neil Farrer and Mary-Ann Lindsay.

NBA Executive Council member Barry Foster.



Dennis Crowley

A shy beekeeper.

The Honey Hive still buzzing

Dawn and Blair. *Photo courtesy of Blair Matheson.*

"Down but not out..." say Dawn Jansen and Blair Matheson, co-owners of The Honey Hive in Taupo. On the Saturday night of Queen's Birthday weekend, an arsonist set fire to the outside wall of the building, resulting in extensive damage to the interior and reducing most of the stock to melted plastic.

With the burnt building now completely gutted out, the team at The Honey Hive are still buzzing and will continue to trade in portable buildings brought on site. Visitors to the centre will still be able to get the 'honeybee experience'. Rebuilding will take at least five months, and The Honey Hive will be back better than ever.

- Blair Matheson