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President's Report



Finally spring has arrived and with the increasing temperatures and day length down in the South, the time has come to lift some lids and see what has happened to the bees over the winter. Generally things are very positive, with my colonies coming into the spring with good reserves and minimal feeding required. A wet period in the latter part of winter has replenished the moisture in the lower levels of soil, especially in the traditionally drier areas. However, getting into some paddocks has been a bit of drama due to the soft ground conditions.

Varroa outbreak in Canterbury

The other night I received a phone call telling me that there was a finding of varroa near Christchurch. Subsequent investigations by beekeepers and the authorities established that the mite was to be found over a very large area. This rapid jump from the official control line boundaries was not entirely unexpected, but the distance from the known infected area was a little bit surprising. Anyway, the Canterbury beekeepers will now have to deal with the mite a lot earlier than they would have liked. With this rapid spread, all Canterbury and West Coast beekeepers need to start looking hard at their hives now to detect infections earlier rather than later, so treatment programmes can be set up before the mites reach critical levels.

Beekeepers south of the Waitaki River now need to be extra vigilant as the mite is now very close. If it could get to Christchurch this quickly it is quite logical that it could already be in Otago now.

How the mite managed to get so far and be so widespread without being detected earlier is now really an academic exercise. The issue here is the methods for detecting mites (24-hour sticky board and Apistan). Quite clearly it has insufficient sensitivity to detect mites at very low levels. This being the case, then the methodology is not capable of defining the zone of 100% certainty where all the mites are. A frequent comment I have heard is that varroa is always two years ahead of where you think it is. This outbreak seems to justify this belief.

It is possible that the mites were moved into the area by beekeepers who had hives near the control line. The mite had already spread well past the official area, and the unknowingly infected hives were shifted south.

Another point is that the industry managed to convince MAF to shift the control lines back to a modified version based on the evidence at hand. This new outbreak has clearly nullified that decision. As managers we can only make decisions based on the information we have at our disposal. If the methodology for detecting mites is flawed, then it is logical that any management decisions based on that information are also likely to be flawed. In this case, this decision to shift the line back was futile.

The next course of action is to convince MAF to put in a last-ditch control line in along the Kakanui/Hawkdun Range through to the West Coast around Gillespies Point. That could be an interesting exercise.

The lucky country

As humans we learn from our experiences and hopefully improve upon them. What can we learn from the arrival of varroa in New Zealand? In some respects a lot of this is rather academic. The Australians may learn from our experience and not go through the unnecessary trauma that has been inflicted on beekeepers in this country. The biggest issue is not to lay blame on anyone and act calmly: hysteria based on self interest is futile and distracts you from the real issues at hand. Varroa will appear where you least expect it. Once varroa slips past the biosecurity wall and establishes in the wild, it's too late. With the extensive hive movements employed by Australian beekeepers it will be widespread before they realise

it's there. Political interests of others may dictate how they deal with the incursion. The beneficiaries of pollination may override the proposed course of actions. Control lines are of limited use but do slow down the spread to some extent. Be prepared for it today. Any eradication attempt needs to have 100% probability of success: except in limited cases this is probably not feasible. Varroa will make us better beekeepers—there is no other option.

Resignation of Arthur Day from the Executive Council

Arthur Day recently tendered his resignation from the Executive Council. Arthur's business commitments have prevented him from attending many meetings and he felt that it would be beneficial if he stood down. He will be missed from the Executive as he contributed well to any debate.

The Upper South Island Ward has elected unopposed its Branch president, Glenn Kelly, to be its new Ward representative. The Executive Council was pleased to ratify their choice at our meeting on 20 September, which Glenn attended. Glenn will introduce himself in an article in the November issue.

More from W J Lennon's booklet *Bees in their Bonnets*

Since the importation of Carniolan semen into New Zealand in 2004 the industry has become somewhat polarised about the merits of the Carniolan and Italian races. I maintain populations of these two races and I have some clear views on their characteristics based on some careful recording of behaviours and honey gathering abilities, etc.

However, in the past beekeepers in New Zealand didn't appear to get that worked up about it.

"About 1884, Mr T.G. Brickell imported Italian queens from America. He had earlier imported Carniolans but as he was unable to repeat his importations he turned to Italians. Stock from these were developed and sold in nuclei."

The implication here is that the Carniolans were the preferred type. Despite the emphasis on breeding Italian-type bees over the years in the West Otago region, the Carniolan race is still evident in the Italian-type hybrid still in the area. Morphometric analysis indicates that all colonies sampled from the local stock have workers with high cubital indices, well within the defined Carniolan range.

- Frans Laas



Varroa doesn't always head due south, sometimes it moves in a horseshoe and gets you from behind.

Permit to keep AFB material for education and training purposes

The Management Agency may, upon application by notice in writing, approve a permit for the storage of AFB for the purpose of education, research and training.

In line with the provisions of the Biosecurity (National American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy) Order 1998, Clause 30, such a permit gives authorisation for the applicant to hold AFB-infected honey bee brood frames for educational and training purposes for a period not exceeding 12 months.

The Management Agency will demand certain conditions be met, such as:

1. Storage of material: all AFB-infected brood frames and/or material must be wrapped in newspaper and held in a sealed plastic bag(s) and stored in a freezer belonging to your organisation and/or a freezer under your supervision, when not being used for training, and/or educational purposes.
2. Security and non-exposure of infected brood frames: the AFB-infected brood frames and/or material shall at no time be permitted to be exposed to live honey bees, and must not be allowed to come into contact with non-infected beekeeping equipment.
3. Labelling of infected material: all infected material is to be clearly marked with the abbreviation "AFB".

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager



Deadline for articles and advertising

December issue: 23 October

February 2009 issue: 29 December

NB: No magazine in January

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

Nancy Fithian
email: editor@nba.org.nz
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American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS)

Report to the Annual General Meeting of the National Beekeepers' Association (Inc.) of New Zealand for the period 1 July 2007–30 June 2008

Introduction and background

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

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

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

The Management Agency

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

Mr Frans Laas (Chairman)	Otago
Mr Neil Farrer	Southern North Island
Ms Maureen Maxwell	Auckland
Mr Lewis Olsen	Waikato
Mr Barry Foster	Poverty Bay
Mr Neil Mossop	Bay of Plenty
Mr Arthur Day	Marlborough

Maureen Maxwell joined the Management Agency part way through the reporting period.

Trevor Corbett stood down from the Management Agency in February.

The Management Agency has met on 10 separate occasions during the reporting period, two of which were “face to face” meetings.

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

The Management Agency resolved after deliberation to increase the membership in line with the resolution agreeing to move forward in the following way:



- the AFB NPMS Manager to write to all recognised beekeeper organisations seeking nominations to fill the additional positions on the Management Agency.
- an invitation to forward nomination(s) to be included in the October 2007 issue of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* journal; this edition goes to all registered beekeepers.
- the Management Agency to appoint an independent recruitment professional to oversee the selection process.

The Management Agency is pleased to advise that Mr John Hartnell will be confirmed as a member of the Management Agency at this conference.

Beekeeper, apiary and hive numbers

There were 2,589 beekeepers, 20,439 apiaries and 343,155 hives as at 20 June 2008, compared to 2,602 beekeepers owning 313,399 hives on 19,228 apiaries this time last year. The downward trend of beekeeper numbers that we have experienced over the last eight years since the arrival of varroa has virtually ceased with a net reduction from last year of only 13 beekeepers. Both apiary and hive numbers continue to trend upwards and have contributed to a record honey season. Most of this increase is still happening in the North Island (15% hive increase compared to 2% in the South Island) and may indicate a difference in outlook between islands due to the arrival and recent spread of varroa in the South Island and the production of Manuka honey.

AFB disease reports

Between 1 June 2007 and 31 May 2008, 1117 cases of AFB were found by beekeepers and/or AgriQuality/AsureQuality Limited staff in 557 apiaries. This is an average disease rate of 0.32% of hives. Of these AFB reports, 140 cases were found and reported in hives on 49 apiaries owned by beekeepers who are not DECA holders. This represents 1.3% of the total number of hives held by non-DECA holders.

AFB surveillance programme

In late 2007 and early 2008 some 423 apiaries were selected to be part of the AFB surveillance programme this season.

While inspections appear to be progressing well, at the time of preparing this report only 113 inspection forms have been returned for inputting, of which 104 represent inspected apiaries. The balance have deselected due to the apiary having no bees.

Part of the surveillance process is to review the selection criteria with this latest round being no exception. A great deal of time and effort has gone into reviewing the selection criteria (specification).

Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements (DECAs)

As at the end of June 2008 there were 2052 beekeepers with DECAs and a Certificate of Inspection Exemption (79% of beekeepers). These beekeepers are able to inspect their own hives for AFB and make reports toASUREQuality Limited on the authorised forms. No DECAs were revoked in the reporting period.

Annual Disease Returns (ADRs)

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

On 20 June there were 700 defaulters representing some 27%, compared to 39% at the same time last year.

As your Manager I consider these statistics—that in turn reflects the attitude of some to the strategy—to be totally unacceptable. The challenge before the Management Agency is to greatly improve this trend; however, with Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry attitude to prosecution in this regard it makes the task of ensuring compliance all the more difficult.

I can report at the time preparing this report (5 July 2008) ADR defaulters stand at approximately 18%, this improvement being as a result of a concentrated effort by way of chase-up letters threatening prosecution.

A schedule of ADR defaulters will be handed to Biosecurity New Zealand in mid July recommending that prosecution be undertaken.

The industry must come to terms with and appreciate the need to comply with the ADR requirement if we are to take the eradication of AFB seriously.

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Helicopter surveillance

At last year's conference in Dunedin the Management Agency announced that it would be undertaking a helicopter surveillance operation in two locations in order to ascertain the true extent of unregistered hives.

I am pleased to report that this programme has been followed through, with surveillance having been undertaken in part of Otago (November 2007) and a selected area in the Poverty Bay East Coast.

Regional Visits AFB NPMS Manager

The Manager has, in line with policy, attempted to meet with local beekeeper organisations such as the Bee Industry Group in November 2007 (accompanied by Neil Farrer), and in May 2008 travelled with the Chairman, visiting and meeting with Hawke's Bay, Poverty Bay, Bay of Plenty and Waikato beekeepers.

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

Email newsletter

In July 2007, in direct response to a call from the regions for more AFB NPMS-related information, the Management Agency released the first issue of email only newsletter titled "Beating AFB Together". At the time of preparing this report I am in the final stages of completing issue number 5.

For reasons of economy it is not possible to mail 2600 beekeepers a copy six times a year, so we rely on NBA branch and other related beekeeping clubs and organisations to distribute the newsletter on our behalf.

Invitations have been extended to individual beekeepers by way of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* journal to forward their email address in order to be included on the distribution list, rather than relying on others to forward the information.

AFB NPMS website

The Management Agency, through the project leadership of Neil Farrer, now has its own website and we invite the beekeeping industry to visit www.afb.org.nz.

The Management Agency welcomes any comment on how the site might be improved.

Authorised Persons Level 2 (AP2)

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

The first stage of this exercise involved the development of guidelines. This resulted in the Management Agency releasing a document titled *“Guidelines for Selection of*

Continued on page 9

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Authorised Persons Level 2 (AP2) Pursuant to Section 103 (6) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 for the Purposes of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy". This document was mailed to all NBA branch secretaries, the Bee Industry Group and all other beekeeping-related organisations extending to same an invitation to submit nominations for AP2 training courses.

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

The Management Agency is pleased to report that courses were held in the following locations, resulting in 59 new AP2s coming on stream:

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

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

Operations Manual

The Management Agency has continued to review the Operations Manual. This task involves time in discussion during which the development of policy takes place.

Court action to recover outstanding debt

It is with disappointment that we report that it was necessary during this period to initiate court action to recover significant debt. The monies were paid.

The Management Agency had initiated further court action against a second beekeeper who refuses to pay, despite having received various reminders.

In addition to the above, the Manager is currently preparing papers in which a further 17 beekeepers will be facing court action for debts owed the PMS.

Acknowledgement

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

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

Conclusion

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

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager



Beekeeping and the law

[This excerpt is from the revised edition of *Elimination of American Foulbrood Disease without the use of Drugs—a practical manual for beekeepers*, by Dr Mark Goodwin.]

New Zealand beekeepers have a number of legal obligations that must be met regarding American foulbrood disease. In summary, the most important of these obligations are to:

1. Only keep bees in moveable frame hives.
2. Keep access to apiary sites clear from obstruction.
3. Not feed drugs or substances that mask, obscure or conceal the symptoms of AFB.
4. Not keep beehives more than 30 days in a place other than a registered apiary.
5. Register all apiaries with the Management Agency.
6. Mark all apiaries with the beekeeper registration code.
7. Change registration numbers only by the beekeeper who has the code number assigned to them, unless permission to do so is provided by the management agency.
8. Remove all identification codes when transferring the ownership of the hives.
9. Where a case of AFB is found, the owner of the hives must report to the Management Agency within 7 days of becoming aware of the case.
10. Complete an Annual Disease Return by 1 June each year.
11. Destroy equipment and bees associated with a case of AFB within 7 days.
12. Not deal with or transfer ownership of material associated with a case of AFB.
13. Sterilise beekeeping equipment only by approved methods.
14. Ensure hives are inspected for AFB by an approved beekeeper with a DECA provided to the Management Agency by 30 November (unless there is a certificate of inspection exemption).

Under certain conditions there are some exemptions for these obligations.



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AFB National Pest Management Strategy under review

The American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS) has now been in place for 10 years and the Order in Council creating the Strategy is due to expire on 30 September 2008.

Prior to 30 September the Minister will notify a review via public notices in the *New Zealand Gazette* and elsewhere. Under the Biosecurity Act, any NPMS is required to be reviewed at five-yearly intervals.

Once a review of the AFB NPMS is launched, the strategy remains in place until such time as the review is completed.

If the review finds there is merit in retaining the AFB NPMS and this is supported by the industry, it is expected the AFB NPMS will be confirmed for a further term.

The review document to be released by the Minister (prior to 30 September) will review the progress the strategy has made to date while outlining suggested possible changes.

Submissions from beekeepers (both individually and as groups) will be sought. The review document will highlight some specific areas where submissions are being sought; however, beekeepers will be free to submit on any aspect of the strategy.

The Management Agency will be making its own submission. Other groups such as NBA branches, hobby organisations, the Bee Industry Group and other related organisations should be preparing to consult with their respective members on the future of the AFB NPMS.

The Management Agency believes the AFB NPMS has played an important role in managing AFB over the past decade. However, we believe the strategy can be improved to take account of changing times and expectations.

I will be assisting Paul Bolger of MAF with the distribution of the review document, which will also be available from the MAF website.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager



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Responding to a disease report

A question raised on several occasions during a recent visit to a number of regions is how we respond to a disease report, in particular how we deal with it.

In the case where one or two AFB infected hives are reported, an assessment is made as to the seriousness of the report received and we respond accordingly. A possible response could be as little as a quick chat with the beekeeper through to a full DECA review and audit inspection.

In general terms the most serious AFB situation is, as we know, a "rob out". The severely weakened hive can no longer defend itself and has had its stores robbed by neighbouring bees. The situation more than likely results in AFB being spread to neighbouring hives via the robbing process. In this case, letters would be sent to all beekeepers who own hives, generally within a three to five kilometre radius (depending on terrain) of the infection, advising them of the situation and suggesting they inspect their hives or have them inspected by an approved person. Further, if the beekeeper is DECA accredited, a review would be undertaken and depending onASUREQuality's knowledge of the beekeeper concerned, a follow-up inspection might take place.

If the report is considered serious—in other words, if the number of infected hives is high and the area and/or the beekeeper was previously clean or some other risk factor came into play—then the process as already outlined would be implemented. In this case and the "rob out" situation, attempts would be made to ascertain the source of the infection via a database search, beekeeper interview or indeed local intelligence.

A further situation, which is probably the most frequent, is the case where very low infection levels are reported in an area (say, one to two hives) and the beekeeper or the area has a history of disease. Often the beekeeper will say where they think the disease is coming from, or that it is self infected and established. Some beekeepers have a style of operation that makes it harder for them to eliminate AFB; for example, operators who have high pollination hive commitments or who have a high staff turnover. This is where critical staff training and attending AFB refresher courses are important.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager



Varroa: Experience tells us that you need to test all hives in an apiary to find the first hive infected.

To all beekeepers

I am concerned that many beekeepers seem to be unaware of the work that is going on all the time by the Executive of NBA and other delegated persons, to assist all beekeepers.

To go briefly back into history, most commercial beekeepers are focused on manuka honey, but the original research was sponsored by NBA at the time—and now look at the return per kilo of manuka honey. If that research had not been done by Professor Peter Molan and others, we would be struggling.

Just recently NBA fought a case through the High Court and initially lost the case, so a decision was made to progress the claim through the Court of Appeal. Did you realise that if this had not been done, we would have Australian honey being sold in the supermarkets and by now, apart from the economic value loss, beekeepers would be staring down the barrel of EFB.

Then of course the Government of the day decided, notwithstanding that the NBA had a court decision, that a new Bill would be introduced into Parliament that would override the Court of Appeal's decision, supposedly for a greater good of imports and that would have condemned beekeeping in New Zealand. When it comes time to vote, remember which party ignored natural justice and overrode the law of the land with a new Act of Parliament. Work is continuing on the construction of the Review panel and the questions that the Review panel will have to look at over the import of Australian honey—we have not yet finished this fight.

a

Dr Mark Goodwin has conducted extensive trials on hygienic bees and resistance to varroa. In 2000 when varroa was discovered, the Government of the day decided that it was too hard or too expensive to deal with varroa, so now beekeepers pay millions of dollars to treat varroa in hives. Research is continuing with the bee stock and we may have another real alternative with the bees that Dr Mark Goodwin is working on. NBA has been involved all along with arranging and or providing funding for this research.

Another world first is about to be released: a special fungus to control varroa. This breakthrough has come from research that HortResearch (Dr Mark Goodwin's team) completed on behalf of the NBA. Other countries have tried but not succeeded and now the treatment is being developed commercially. This is yet another tool coming thanks to NBA-sponsored research.

Further research is under way on the medical use of honeys—this could be another successful marketing programme, such as manuka honey, that nearly every commercial beekeeper will benefit from.

When dealing with Government and government departments it is hard to say that NBA is acting for around 400 members when there are 2600 beekeepers, at least 1000 of whom will be producing and selling honey.

Now many beekeepers—especially those that have over 30 hives and therefore must be selling honey—are obtaining benefit from the continuing work of NBA, lobbying Government, organising research, and looking at ways to improve the marketing of New Zealand honey. Please remember the value you are getting from your honey and pollination, and if you are not already, then please become a member of the NBA.

The higher the membership numbers, the more effective NBA can be on your behalf, and at the same time collectively, by strength of numbers, the cost of running the organisation will be a lot less.

The alternative of ignoring the demands for research and pressure from Government would mean the end of beekeeping as we know it. We can't do this alone. Without sufficient funding, we may be forced to look closely at what we spend money on and perhaps restrict our spending to activities that directly benefit NBA members instead of beekeepers as a whole.

Help us to help you—become a member. Go to the NBA website <http://www.nba.org.nz/> to get started.

- Neil Farrer
Small commercial beekeeper



MAF Biosecurity to revoke varroa movement controls

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ) will revoke all movement controls associated with varroa bee mite, effective from 25 September 2008.

“Seventeen beekeeping operations in Waimakariri and Selwyn Districts have been confirmed positive for varroa. High levels of mites detected in some operations suggest varroa may have been present for six months which suggests varroa is established and widespread,” said MAFBNZ Incursion Manager Richard Norman.

“Tracing has identified more than 150 beekeeping operations with hives within 5 kilometre radiuses of apiary sites belonging to infested operations. These operations are at risk from local spread of varroa. The infestation in North Canterbury is now beyond the point where it can be eradicated or contained in a localised programme.

“In addition, the high densities of hives in the Canterbury region and the lack of geographical barriers means there is little scope for an effective movement control line to progressively withdraw down the South Island.

“It has been inevitable that varroa would spread from the Nelson region. Movement controls can only attempt to reduce the risk of human-assisted spread – they do not address local spread by bees drifting between hives, robbing, and swarming,” said Richard Norman. MAFBNZ intends to use some of the remaining funds from the response to help beekeepers in the South Island adapt to the newly detected spread of varroa through advice, hive testing and education workshops. “We will also discuss with industry and research providers whether there are immediate, high value research needs that remaining funds could assist.

“MAFBNZ appreciates the assistance of beekeeping industry leaders and individual beekeepers throughout the varroa response,” said Richard Norman.

Varroa remains a notifiable organism and beekeepers in uninfested areas should report suspect finds of varroa to MAFBNZ on 0800 80 99 66. More information is also available on the MAFBNZ website www.biosecurity.govt.nz.

Source: Biosecurity New Zealand news release, 24 September 2008.



Management Agency prepares for spring surveillance programme—a change in policy

Beekeepers will be aware of the stated policy that the Management Agency is required to both target and randomly survey between two and four percent of apiaries each year.

As plans are under way to commence another surveillance round, it is appropriate that I give thanks to those of you who assist in the running of the programme, both from a Disease Coordinators' perspective as well as those of you who assist in lifting the lids.

I have been especially pleased to have received calls from a number of the coordinators, who while not being afraid to express their views in no uncertain terms, have also been constructive in their advice and support.

The Management Agency has decided on a trial basis to seek the input of local Disease Coordinators in the first instance before applying the Selection Criteria as set out below. We have found in the past that upon receiving the inspection forms, the Disease Coordinators will then come back to us to ask why we did not select a certain location for inspection.

I have heard through the grapevine that a number of beekeepers are, to put it mildly, annoyed as they see themselves being targeted almost annually. It is important to note that your apiary may be targeted each year, but it will not always be for AFB. The Exotic Disease programme requires regular inspections.

Selection criteria (specific)

The confirmed policy to be applied for the forthcoming round is as follows:

- 1) history of AFB incidence
- 2) previous positive results from testing of bees and/or honey
- 3) beekeepers who have increasing reported levels of AFB
- 4) new beekeepers
- 5) beekeepers who may have rapidly expanded their hive holdings, in particular from a hobby level to a semi-commercial/commercial status
- 6) consideration of local knowledge from Disease Coordinators.

Selection criteria (consideration)

- 7) geography must be considered in terms of travel
- 8) selection criteria to take account of all beekeepers having their apiaries inspected within a 3–5 year cycle
- 9) those sites/beekeepers surveyed last year to be excluded from the sample for selection, unless they are in a high-risk category as above
- 10) if beekeeper surveillance is conducted under other sections of the strategy; e.g., ADR/COI defaulters, then these beekeepers are to be removed from selection.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager



Management of risks to prevent tutu toxicity

The Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) is to consider the findings and recommendations of the Working Group that has met twice to examine how to prevent future toxic honey events. These meetings have been approached very positively and the members have made constructive recommendations.

The working group has considered the following:

- education and extension to keep all beekeepers informed
- monitoring the risk
- comb honey production
- possible regulatory controls
- research needs.

Tutin is found throughout much of the North Island and the top of the South Island. While some areas have little risk, it is clear that where tutu is growing within the flight range of

apiary sites, beekeepers will need to ensure that the risk is identified and managed.

We cannot afford to have the reputation of New Zealand honey damaged again with another poisoning incident. Modern consumers are very risk averse and will turn away from unsafe food.

On page 17 you will see the report from Jim Sim of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) with information from the research and survey work they have done and the plans for consultation.

The BPSC is meeting with the NZFSA in October and the consultative process will continue from there.

- Dr Jim Edwards
Chairman, Bee Products Standards Council



Why compliance with the AFB NPMS is good for your business (or hobby)

The American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS) is ostensibly about the eradication of American foulbrood from managed colonies in New Zealand. In reality, it is far more than that.

The Strategy is the lifeblood of the beekeeping industry in this country, hence the title of this article.

Many years ago the beekeeping industry and Government very wisely chose to go down the path towards eradication of AFB without the use of antibiotics. This has been a blessing, as we don't have to worry about antibiotic residues in our honey, and as a result we have a market premium on our export honey. **This is good for your business.** Those countries that persist in using antibiotics for foulbrood suppression are suffering from the consequences: market access issues, antibiotic resistance and generally a sloppy attitude towards the principles of sound and sustainable colony management.

We have the apiary database or the Register as it is referred to in the Order in Council. The database contains information on the location of all apiaries in New Zealand.

The traceability of food products is becoming a mandatory requirement in both domestic and international trade. Having good traceability systems protects a country's integrity when things inevitably go wrong. Look at the recent endosulfan issues in the meat industry. Because of the excellent traceability systems the problems were quickly located to the source. The same applies to the bee products industry. The database protects your industry and again an accurate apiary register enables a market premium to be obtained: **this is good for your business.**

Some beekeepers contend that the location of their apiaries confers some property and intellectual property right. This is a self-defeating exercise, as the helicopter surveillance exercise has shown. Any beekeeper can do this and find your sites and also locate new areas that haven't been utilised. Failure to declare your apiaries as required by law can lead to financial loss, as some individuals have discovered. Others are soon to find out that their bank balance is about to be significantly depleted by having to engage the services of a lawyer.

Seven-day reporting of AFB is also good for your business. There are two aspects to this: one is that the Management Agency (MA) is able to detect patterns in AFB and is able to deal with any situations that are developing. The other, which unfortunately has had negative consequences, is related to export verification. Some countries impose area freedom requirements for AFB. This is clearly a non-tariff trade

barrier but we are still required to follow the rules. Routine audits eventually discovered non-compliance by a number of beekeepers who tried to hide the fact that there was some AFB in the locality. As a result, New Zealand has lost access to these markets because our certification authorities have no confidence. The ill-considered actions of these people have not only cost them money, but they have had a negative impact on all other beekeepers in New Zealand.

The MA regularly gets comments from levy payers about why they are being audited even though they have no history of AFB. They also resent having to pay levies as they see no value to them.

Auditing activities are always necessary to see whether your ADR declaration is actually true. The MA occasionally has found that some people who do not declare AFB at all actually have a significant problem. What is the benefit to a beekeeper of non-declaration of AFB? These deluded and selfish individuals are actually causing financial loss to other neighbouring beekeepers and to themselves.

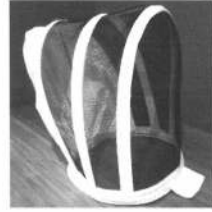
To those who don't see any value in paying a levy because they don't have a problem themselves, think again. Who doesn't insure their business assets for adverse events? The levies can also be viewed as a form of insurance. The MA does have to intervene to deal with problem beekeepers and contain their problem.

A constant and frustrating issue for the MA is the number of beekeepers who hand their ADR declarations in late, or never. While compliance has improved substantially over the last few years by the MA taking a more vigorous approach, the MA has sent a list of non-compliers to MAF recommending that they be prosecuted. Failure to comply costs you as levy payers money, as directly and indirectly this is one of our biggest operational issues. **The ADR is the core of the NPMS.** It is also a significant part of export verification processes as well.

Compliance with the laws of the land is generally seen by importing countries as a prerequisite for the exporting country. This is quite a justifiable position to take. Being compliant with the requirements of the AFB NPMS is clearly a stated requirement for some bee products and live bee exports. It is also implied for the EU, since it requires that honey imports come from hives with a known health status. The ADR process is a statutory declaration of disease status in beehives at present; therefore if your ADR is not handed in to the MA on time and/or is untruthful, our certifying agencies cannot permit you to send product to these countries as your hive health status is, by definition, unknown.

Continued on page 15

Bee Suits - New Folding Hoods



Fit For A King (or a Queen or a Drone)

As some of you will be aware we have had quality issues in the past with some of the flexible black mesh on the sides of our folding hoods.

We have finally sourced an excellent replacement material — so now all of these problems are history. If you have had a bad experience with our hoods, firstly we hope that we had the opportunity to rectify it, and secondly you can now be confident in our new excellent quality.

Our new folding hoods are so good we are now phasing out our standard hoods. **A folding hood is now the new standard hood.**

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off all 3, 4 and
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31st October 2008.

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- Stunning quality
- XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL and XXXL

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1-9 pairs \$30.00 per pair + GST

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10 pairs \$25.00 per pair + GST

1-9 pairs \$29.00 per pair + GST

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31st October 2008

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52 – 207 \$3.15 each + GST

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Continued from page 13

Our certification authorities are requiring exporters to be compliant with the Strategy rules not only at the time the honey is harvested, but also at the time of export. Handing in your ADR late causes problems for those non-compliers who export product. Keeping your ADR declarations up-to-date is **good for your business**.

The price of honey in this country is set by the international price. For those that deal only in the domestic market, including small operators, having a premium in the international market is also **good for your business**. What are the consequences of no exporting of bee products? You all know the answer.

Having your apiaries correctly marked is also **good for your business**. Recently I had to deal with an incident where a beekeeper had his hives given to another beekeeper because the landowner was not able to find out who owned them. This was because of the lack of the legally required registration number, even though the site was registered. The beekeeper also did not ascertain who the owner of the land was and was dealing with the neighbouring landowner. Another lesson to be learned here, as he is having some difficulty getting the hives back. The correct registration number also acts as a property right. This led to more unnecessary work for me to resolve the situation.

MAF Biosecurity also needs an accurate and up-to-date apiary register to deal with exotic disease surveillance and response measures. In the case of, say, an exotic disease outbreak in domestic livestock, then beekeepers who are in the response area can be found quickly and dealt with appropriately with regard to compensation and management issues if they are not able to enter the affected area.

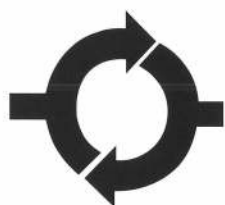
As illustrated above, the AFB NPMS is the absolute core of the beekeeping industry as it creates the framework for a whole range of activities that are vital to the functioning of the industry in general.

That is why compliance with the AFB NPMS rules is good for your business.

- Frans Laas
Chairman, Management Agency
AFB NPMS



Varroa: If bees travel 5km from a hive, it is possible for varroa to spread 10kms when two intersecting bees meet on a flower.



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Beekeeper consultation on proposed AFB NPMS 2009/2010 Operational Budget: 1 June 2009 through 31 May 2010

Biosecurity (American Foulbrood – Apiary and Beekeeper Levy) Order 2003 – Payment of levy

– Section 16: Consultation on how levy is spent -

- (1) *The Management Agency must, before the start of each levy year, consult with beekeepers on how the levy money is to be spent.*
- (2) *The Management Agency must use the following process to consult with beekeepers.*
 - (a) *it must send to every beekeeper a proposed budget for the levy year's expenditure: and*
 - (b) *it must give every beekeeper an opportunity to make submissions to it on the proposed budget; and*
 - (c) *it must send to every group or association of hobby and commercial beekeepers known to it a copy of the proposed budget.*

NB: The order 2003 expires as at 30 September 2008 but the Management Agency has been informed by MAF (Government) that it is intended to roll over the present order in the meantime, pending a full 10-year review. We are waiting for the Gazette Notice to be published.

The budget presented is for the coming year 2009 – 2010 operational period 1 June 2009 to 31 May 2010.

The budget outlines how the Management Agency intends to spend levy income for the 2009–2010 period.

If the budget is approved, the levy will be set at \$20 per beekeeper and \$10.50 per apiary.

Important: if you wish to make a submission on the proposed budget, then please do so in writing by 1 December 2008 to:

Rex Baynes,
AFB NPMS Manager
P O Box 44282, Lower Hutt.
Email: rbaynes@ihug.co.nz

PROPOSED AFB NPMS OPERATIONAL BUDGET 2009–2010

Income :	Levies (Beekeepers)	52,000.00	
	Levies (Apiaries)	215,250.00	
	Interest Received	10,000.00	
	Defaults & Other income	10,000.00	
		\$284,250.00	
 Expenditure:			
	Management Agency Admin	55,000.00	
	AsureQuality Contract	90,000.00	
	Hive Inspections	50,000.00	
	AFB Spore testing	30,000.00	
	Data Base implementation	20,000.00	
	Meetings & travel	10,000.00	
	Accounting, Legal & Audit	10,000.00	
	Other general expenditure	20,000.00	
		\$285,000.00	

NB: For this budget we have not allocated expenditure to the particular account categories as we have done in the past, but identified the likely main contractual arrangements that the Management Agency will have.

Beekeepers will realise that without the formal gazette notice, and because we are estimating income and expenditure up to 18 months ahead, it is extremely difficult to accurately categorise the amounts.

Tutin poisoning follow-up by NZFSA

Research

The poisoning at Easter from honey collected in the Whangamata area has led to a significant amount of work being done to find out more about the problem.

What was found in the samples of leftover honey from poisoning victims was tutin between 30–50mg/kg and hyenanchin between 180–300mg/kg. Hyenanchin is a derivative of tutin and appears to be produced when the tutu sap passes through the vine hopper, as it is only one hydroxyl group different to the parent compound tutin.

Hyenanchin is found naturally in a plant called *Hyenanche globosa* found in South Africa. NZFSA has imported some non-viable seeds from South Africa under biosecurity permit to extract the hyenanchin for use in toxicological study. Extraction of pure hyenanchin has been confounded somewhat by another naturally occurring related compound formed in the plant proving rather stubborn to remove.

A large amount of tutu has been collected for extraction and purification of tutin toxin for research and laboratory standard manufacture. Crop & Food Research is doing the purification of the hyenanchin and tutin in conjunction with the University of Otago.

NZFSA has also funded purification of some hyenanchin already available in New Zealand for use in toxicological studies. Oral feeding studies are being done on hyenanchin at AgResearch to determine its toxicity. Mode of action studies are also being done at the University of Otago on both tutin and hyenanchin, which should help confirm why any differences in toxicity of the related compounds occur.

Once sufficient data are available, NZFSA will propose a limit to be set for tutin and/or hyenanchin. If hyenanchin proves significantly less toxic than tutin it may only be necessary to regulate for tutin. Until toxicity testing has been completed and limits set, no honey may be sold containing detectable quantities (including trace amounts) of tutin or hyenanchin. (Trace results in the survey are <2.0mg/kg for tutin and <1.0mg/kg for hyenanchin.) Export honey has had an interim limit set at 0.01mg/kg.

Where known contaminated honey has been traded between premises, it is a legal requirement that the originating premises notify the purchaser of the honey of its status.

Tutin survey

NZFSA tested 49 samples of honey available from the national residues monitoring programme as soon as possible after the outbreak at Easter. Ten of those samples showed low levels of hyenanchin to be present, all from the Coromandel and Bay of Plenty areas.

This finding was followed by a targeted survey of honey undertaken by NZFSA's Compliance and Investigation

group, taking 146 samples of generally late-season honey from areas known to be at risk and some adjacent areas. The results are in the table below:

Tutin survey results

Area	Samples taken	Samples positive for tutin	Highest tutin level found	Samples positive for hyenanchin	Highest hyenanchin level found
Northland	24	4	<2.0mg/kg	9	1.1mg/kg
Coromandel	26	14	<2.0mg/kg	19	1.1mg/kg
Eastern Bay of Plenty/Gisborne	37	10	<2.0mg/kg	20	3.7mg/kg
Inland Wairoa (Northern Hawke's Bay)	27	16	21.0mg/kg	18	117.8mg/kg
Central North Island	6	0	n/a	0	n/a
Marlborough Sounds	20	2	<2.0mg/kg	3	<1.0mg/kg
Takaka/Nelson/West Coast	6	0	n/a	0	n/a
Totals	146	46		69	

These results show that many areas have potential for tutin contamination and the harvest restrictions in the Coromandel and Bay of Plenty prior to 1999 were not sufficient to manage the problem. Most honey in the survey had been extracted, though not all was blended.

Consultation on new requirements for tutin management

NZFSA hopes to have sufficient data to be able to commence formal consultation on setting limits and future management requirements in October. NZFSA's consultation on requirements will be informed by discussions already underway in the Bee Products Standards Council, the Industry Tutin Working Group and data from the research above. Keep an eye on our website www.nzfsa.govt.nz for the consultation document. I know we will be consulting over the industry's busiest time of the season but that can't be helped: we have had to get research done which takes time, and it has been very important to meet with beekeepers to discuss management options before firming up on proposals.

In the meantime we recommend that beekeepers, particularly those in the North Island and Nelson/Marlborough areas, should start thinking about making preparations to ensure that any risk from tutin will be minimised in their product this coming season.

Suitable precautions could include:

- planning to remove hives or supers from risky areas by January
- checks of areas to ensure no significant quantities of tutu are near hive locations. (Dr Mark Goodwin has advised a five-kilometre radius, which is a large area.) Topographical maps or aerial photos could be handy here to identify likely areas without having to wander all over the countryside
- where significant quantities are found, making plans to check these regularly during the summer months or vine hoppers and/or honeydew
- making plans to test product before sale if harvesting late-season honey in risk areas.

Other matters from NZFSA

Honey drums

A lot of honey still seems to be around in sub-standard drums. If you don't know what sort of drum lining you have and the history of the drum, sufficient to be able to prove it is suitable for food use, then our advice is simple—don't fill it. A few companies have found that taking shortcuts with drum quality has cost them a lot of money and hassle.

Labelling

There seems to be a lot of unlabelled/poorly labelled honey around. All honey must be properly labelled for sale—no exceptions.

The Australia New Zealand Joint Food Standards Code www.foodstandards.gov.au/thecode/ outlines the labelling and composition requirements of foods for sale. Your label will almost certainly need a minimum of:

- name of the food (honey!)
- date marking or lot number
- supplier name and address (including street or road).

If a recall should ever be necessary, this information is very important, especially the date mark or lot number. Having this information on your label could be the difference between a complete recall of all your products, or the recall being able to be limited to identified batches and dates.

Further details of labelling requirements for your products can be found on the NZFSA website at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/publications/info-pamphlet/bee-products/honey-label.htm>

- **Jim Sim**
Senior Programme Manager (Animal Products)
NZFSA



New website for small and medium businesses

A new government website has been launched with free resources, tools and information to help small and medium business, whether they are starting out, dealing with day-to-day tasks or are ready to expand. The site has useful information and links for everything from laws and regulations to employing staff, from tax to importing and exporting.

Check it out at www.business.govt.nz

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The Honey Bee Exotic Disease Surveillance Programme (Summary)—Autumn 2008

Byron Taylor, Apicultural Officer
AsureQuality Limited, Hamilton
taylorby@asurequality.com

June 2008 saw the completion of 'The Honey Bee Exotic Disease Surveillance Programme' for another year. All targets were met (and in some cases exceeded) due to the efforts of all involved. Most readers will be aware of the field component of the programme but less may be aware of the non-field component. The following is a summary of activities for the 2007–2008 period.

Non-field components

Along with the field component, there is a significant non-field component of the programme including:

- contributing to the upkeep of the apiary database (25% of the total cost of the ADR process)
- education and raising awareness via funding of popular articles in *The New Zealand Beekeeper* journal, and the exotic disease surveillance pamphlet (mentioned below)
- contributing to the ongoing technical development of the AsureQuality Apiculture Technical Team.



Photo: Murray Reid.

The review and re-printing of the exotic disease surveillance and the 'Cape Bee' pamphlets was also completed as part of the Honey Bee Exotic Disease Surveillance Programme this season. The pamphlet and insert were combined and a copy of the new pamphlet was sent out to all registered beekeepers. Colony Collapse Disorder, as a new threat to beekeeping, was added to this latest revision.

Field components

This autumn, as in previous years, Biosecurity New Zealand, the beekeeping industry and AsureQuality worked together to deliver the field component of the Honey Bee Exotic Disease Surveillance Programme. This programme has two goals:

- 1) To detect an exotic honey bee pest or disease early enough for an eradication attempt to be considered.
- 2) To enable New Zealand to make country freedom statements with respect to these exotic pests and diseases. This helps facilitate the negotiation of more favourable overseas market access conditions.

Partnering with industry to deliver the field inspection component of this programme is vitally important to achieving these goals. To this end approximately 30 Authorised Persons—level 2 (AP2) sourced from within the industry offered their services for this year's programme. A number of these AP2s are beekeepers who have many years of experience inspecting beehives for exotic diseases; while for others, although experienced beekeepers themselves, inspecting for exotic diseases is relatively new. I would like to offer these individuals my thanks for a job well done this season and look forward to working with you again next season.

AP2s are experienced beekeepers who are warranted under the Biosecurity Act 1993. These beekeepers are authorised to enter property and inspect beehives under the direction of an Authorised Person—level 1 (AP1) who are currently AsureQuality or Biosecurity New Zealand employees. AP2s are warranted 'by programme' rather than 'by industry'. What this means is that AP2s may be warranted for exotic disease surveillance and response, but not AFB and vice versa. Having trained inspectors within our industry effectively means that we can get more done with the money that is available than we could by sending apiary officers from central locations.

The specification required hives in 650 apiaries to be inspected and sampled in two risk categories. Hives were sampled for a range of pests and diseases of importance to the beekeeping industry. Every hive in each of the apiaries was required to be inspected and tested in order to maintain the sensitivity of the surveillance programme.

A total of 363 apiaries were inspected as part of the high-risk site surveillance against a target of 350 sites. This was very pleasing as it is the first year that the programme has been finished both on time and above specification. High-risk areas were selected as the most likely points of introduction for an exotic pest or disease and include: seaports, airports, large population areas, tourist areas and any other area deemed to be an elevated risk.

Continued on page 21

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Medium Brood	17	21	15
Light Brood	21	27	14
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Total Frames

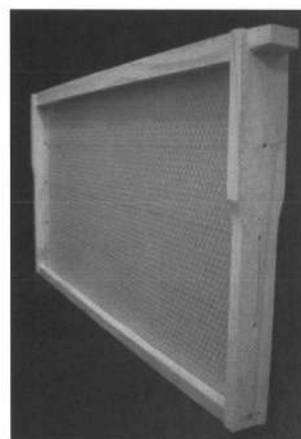
Total Frames

Total Frames

Total Frames

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Continued from page 19

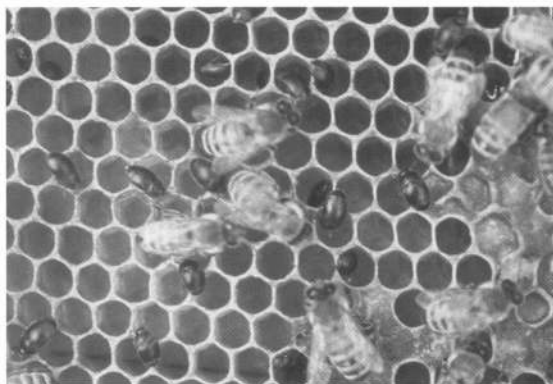


Photo: Murray Reid.

Apiaries were inspected and sampled for internal and external mite species, bacterial infection (EFB), Small Hive Beetle and undesirable bee species or subspecies. A number of these inspections rely on visual diagnosis and sampling suspect material while for external mite species, miticide and sticky boards were used. On completion of the surveillance programme this year, the high-risk inspection programme was reviewed and it was determined that our inspection sensitivity could be improved. As a result of this review, the programme next autumn will use four miticide strips per hive (up from two) in line with currently accepted research. We are also looking to trial a field testing kit for EFB to eliminate some of the false positives created by half-moon syndrome and parasitic mite syndrome (PMS).

Some AP2s reported that a number of high-risk area boundaries needed to be updated. All areas will be reviewed and updated if necessary before the start of the next surveillance round.

Samples from 446 low-risk apiaries that supply bees for export contributed to the programme this year, which was well above the target. Last year the number of samples requested from beekeepers was raised from 20 to 25 on the basis of failing to meet the target in the 2005–2006 season. It is acknowledged that 2005–2006 was a very light export season. Additionally, exporters were reducing their number of suppliers. With export consignments recovering, the number of samples requested from beekeepers supplying bees for export may be reduced next season to 20.



Photo: Byron Taylor.

In addition to the scheduled surveillance programme, each year Biosecurity New Zealand and AsureQuality Limited receive a number of calls from beekeepers reporting suspected exotic bee diseases or unusual symptoms in hives. AsureQuality worked with Biosecurity New Zealand's Investigation and Diagnostic Centre in Wallaceville to screen these calls and determine whether sampling was justified. Nine calls were received, seven of which resulted in further sampling being required. Of the calls, four related to internal or external mites, three were suspect Colony Collapse Disorder, one was a suspect beetle and one concerned the importation of antique beehives.

Lastly, thanks to all those beekeepers who endure, in some cases, almost annual apiary inspections. You are not being picked on but rather your apiary happens to be one of the few that fits the risk criteria for the area. I hope that with the revised risk area boundaries, beekeepers in some areas may get a 'break'.

Happy beekeeping and good luck for the coming season!



National Beekeepers' Association Conference – 2009

Millennium Hotel Rotorua,
7–11 June

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Meetings

&

New / Small Beekeepers'
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Monday – Seminar Day

Tuesday – Seminar Day

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Opotiki 3198

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Wanganui Beekeepers Club celebrates Silver Jubilee

The Wanganui Beekeepers Club held a Silver Jubilee dinner for 45 members recently, with some members remembering back to the first meetings run by John Brandon of Canaan Apiaries. Both commercial and hobby beekeepers gathered to celebrate the club's 25-year anniversary. Some of the commercial beekeepers had started their early beekeeping as hobbyists and grown the hobby into a full-time business.

A Life Membership of the club was awarded to Anne Hulme in recognition of her outstanding contribution, particularly her teaching skills in showing new beekeepers the correct methods of handling all aspects of beekeeping and varroa treatment.



John Brandon presents Anne Hulme with Life Membership of the club.

The guest speaker was Mark Christensen, Research Director for the New Zealand Central Tree Crops Research Trust, who gave a very interesting presentation on how he found the original old Monty's Surprise apple tree in the course of his work with the New Zealand Tree Crops Association (NZTCA) Central Districts Branch. Mark also discussed the tests and experiments that have been done on the old apple varieties he has grown in his orchard. The outstanding results of the tests and experiments completed have proved that 'Monty's Surprise' apple has outstanding anti-cancer properties. Through the Trust and donations of funding and time, many thousands of Monty's Surprise apples have been given away in this district for people to grow.



A special cake in the shape of a skep hive was cut by the most senior member, Joe Wright, and the Club's youngest member, Joel Martin. Joe manages to get the largest honey yield from his hives of anyone in the club, and possibly more than any commercial beekeeper in the district. Joe's record to date is 114 kilograms of honey from one hive. His hives are situated in his garden in the city and he is an inspiration for all beekeepers.



Photos: Graham Pearson.

Beekeeping has changed over the last 25 years, especially since the varroa mite arrived in Wanganui in 2002. While many beekeepers lost their hives to varroa and gave up at that time, the club membership actually grew. When hobbyists were seeking support to master the varroa problem, club members attended many of the field days run by the branches of National Beekeepers' Association, and learnt a lot by seeing the problems first hand and knowing how to rectify them. Now all that's needed is careful timing to put treatment into the hives, using either chemical strips or the other organic methods.

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Some of the beekeepers who gave up beekeeping donated their hives to the club. The hives are now sited in the organic orchard in Springvale Road, where many heritage varieties of apple trees grow. The beekeepers club conducts educational field days at the site, giving club members the opportunity to join in and then go away happy to practice what they have learned on their own hives.

Every year for the last decade the club has fostered a scholarship for one or two novice beekeepers, who have been given a hive each to practice on at the club site. These hives have eventually become their own property at the end of a year, after they have proved that they can handle all the little problems that they might meet. This year the club has accepted three novices who will be tutored at the club's hives and will be given a hive each to learn from.

Being a member of the club enables one to join in the bulk purchase of equipment, which keeps costs to a minimum. Members also receive up to date information at the monthly meetings on how to use correctly the new products that come on to the market. Often secondhand equipment is available at the club, which also can keep costs down for new beekeepers wishing to take up the hobby.

The club meets on the second Wednesday every month at 7.30 pm. Prospective members can telephone Neil Farrer on 06 343 6248, or John Brandon on 06 345 5350.

- Neil Farrer



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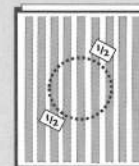
GENERAL INFORMATION

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.

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SINGLE-STOREY (1 CHAMBER)



MULTIPLE-STOREY (2 CHAMBERS)



Thymovar®

FOR THE CONTROL OF VARROA MITES IN BEEHIVES

HARMFUL AND CORROSIVE
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DANGER: This product is corrosive and may cause skin burns and eye damage.
HARMFUL: May be harmful if swallowed or inhaled.



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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10 to 90 wafers	\$3.55 plus GST each
100 to 470 wafers	\$2.97 plus GST each
480 to 4990 wafers	\$2.80 plus GST each
5000 + wafers	\$2.69 plus GST each

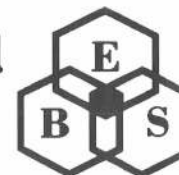


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Spray poisoning! Who u gonna call?

In Canterbury last season we had two occasions where beekeepers were concerned at spray operations and wanted some enforcement of regulations to send a message that bee poisonings were not acceptable. I undertook to get some action and phoned among others the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Occupational Safety and Health, the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury), and the Ashburton District Council. Most were sympathetic but explained that “this is not our role” and passed me on to yet another bureaucracy.

Getting sick of the run-around but not forgetting the cause, I decided to look at the regulations. My view has been passed to the appropriate authority and although they have not yet acted, they have indeed acknowledged that it is their “responsibility”.

Here are some of the regulations that may help if you have spray damage problems.

Status of chemicals

All toxic substances have been subject to an approval process. This process was conducted by the Pesticides Board and more recently by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA). The approval process considers the risks posed by the chemical and places appropriate controls on its use.

There are eight standard bee warnings which can be placed on the labels as controls for its application. For example, “Toxic to Bees: Spray must not contact plants in flower if they are likely to be visited by bees”.

In some cases spraying is permitted “in the evening when bees have stopped working” (never permitted in the morning). Other cases for systemic insecticides involve not permitting spraying within a certain number of days prior to flowering.



Morning spray application to a flowering crop in mid-Canterbury. Photo supplied by Roger Bray.

The legislation

The Pesticides Regulations 1983 (now largely redundant) and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996 are the pieces of legislation that make it an offence to contravene the bee warnings.

Section 109 of the HSNO Act makes it an offence to “fail to comply with any controls imposed by an approval granted under the act”.

The penalties under the HSNO Act (section 114) are a maximum imprisonment not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding \$500,000.

As one can see, the penalties could be enough to ensure that farmers/contractors take care with the products they use.

The enforcement agency

The HSNO Act is quite helpful here in listing the appropriate body to enforce the act and it depends on what is at risk or contaminated. For example, the Ministry of Health will enforce for the protection of public health.

Section 97 (h) gives the chief executive of any Territorial Authority the responsibility to “ensure that the provisions of the act are enforced on any premises situated in the district of the territorial authority”.

The territorial authority is normally a district council and will be gazetted as such.

There you have it: your district council is responsible; unfortunately a lot of district councils are not aware of their responsibilities, as I found out in my dealings with our council. It was not until I quoted (in writing) the relevant regulations (they really like this!) that I at least obtained a verbal acknowledgement that it was their responsibility.

Where to from here

In order that we as beekeepers can get on top of “bee deaths” we need to be aware of “responsibilities”. It would be unnecessary if farmers/contractors organised their spray programmes not to affect bees, but poisoning does occur and it is imperative that some investigation and perhaps enforcement takes place. The investigation could involve the enforcement officer checking spray diaries, chemical registers, approved applicator licenses etc. In some cases this will be enough to focus the farmers/contractors as the penalties could be hard on the offender, while being a significant boost to council funds (councils receive monetary fines imposed by the court).

The Hawke’s Bay Regional Council has been active in “the protection of bees”; however, their “enforcement” has been via the Resource Management Act by which it is necessary to “prove a loss”. It would be much easier to prove the inappropriate use of chemicals than prove a loss.

As a footnote, when we had a second case of “bee poisoning” in Ashburton last season, another beekeeper and I went straight to the council. As with most bureaucracies the “person we should be dealing with” was on leave. I find it hard to believe that with 116 servants paid by the ratepayers, nobody else could help. The staff member (or rather the third person we had to repeat the message to) became quite agitated when we suggested that we should leave the bucket of dead and dying bees we had brought with us for the “appropriate person” when he returned. We did, of course, indicate that we needed the bucket!

- Roger Bray



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Russell Berry



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Beekeeping ethics

While attending the last NBA conference I had the opportunity to renew friendships that have been forged over many years, friendships that function both on a social and business level (and it saves our partners from having to listen about the weather again).

Unfortunately it also brings you into contact with people who have, I believe, acted unethically towards either myself or other beekeepers. Ethics is a slippery can of worms and this is only my interpretation—I look forward to robust debate on the subject. Many people have talked to me in the past about some sort of ethical standards for beekeeping but have stopped short at drawing a line in the sand.

Pressure for apiary sites has increased with both kiwifruit pollination and high prices for manuka honey, but it has existed for as long as there have been beekeepers and is certainly not confined to the North Island. It is legal to place apiary sites just about anywhere you have permission from the landowner. It is unethical to place hives unreasonably close to a public road, walkway or neighbour's house. It is also unethical to place hives within three kilometres of someone else's bees. Exceptions to this are when it is your own land, when you have permission from your neighbouring beekeeper, temporary paid pollination or when you have only a few hives. Where a hobbyist has an apiary site with only a few hives it is acceptable for other beekeepers to keep hives in the same area, but it is only polite to talk to that person if possible, and certainly you should not dump a large commercial site in the next paddock.

It is ethical to place hives in an area where another beekeeper has hives, provided you keep more than three kilometres away from existing apiaries. Your neighbouring beekeeper may not like it but if he wanted to put hives there, he should have done so.


Beekeepers behaving unethically have led to some interesting situations in the past. In one case I heard of some inappropriately placed hives that were delivered back to that person's front lawn the next night (illegal but not unethical). Several other instances in the past have led to either the deliberate physical destruction and or the deliberate introduction of AFB (illegal and except in extraordinary circumstances, unethical).

Only so many hives can be profitably kept in a given area. Apiary sites in close proximity can lead to major management problems, including disease and robbing. Having the respect and friendship of your neighbouring beekeepers is of immense benefit in this sometimes lonely and isolated job.

This is only my interpretation of what I believe is ethical, and while I believe it should apply to most areas it will obviously vary a bit, especially close to towns and in areas with very high hive numbers. I'm looking forward to some people justifying their behaviour.

- John Berry





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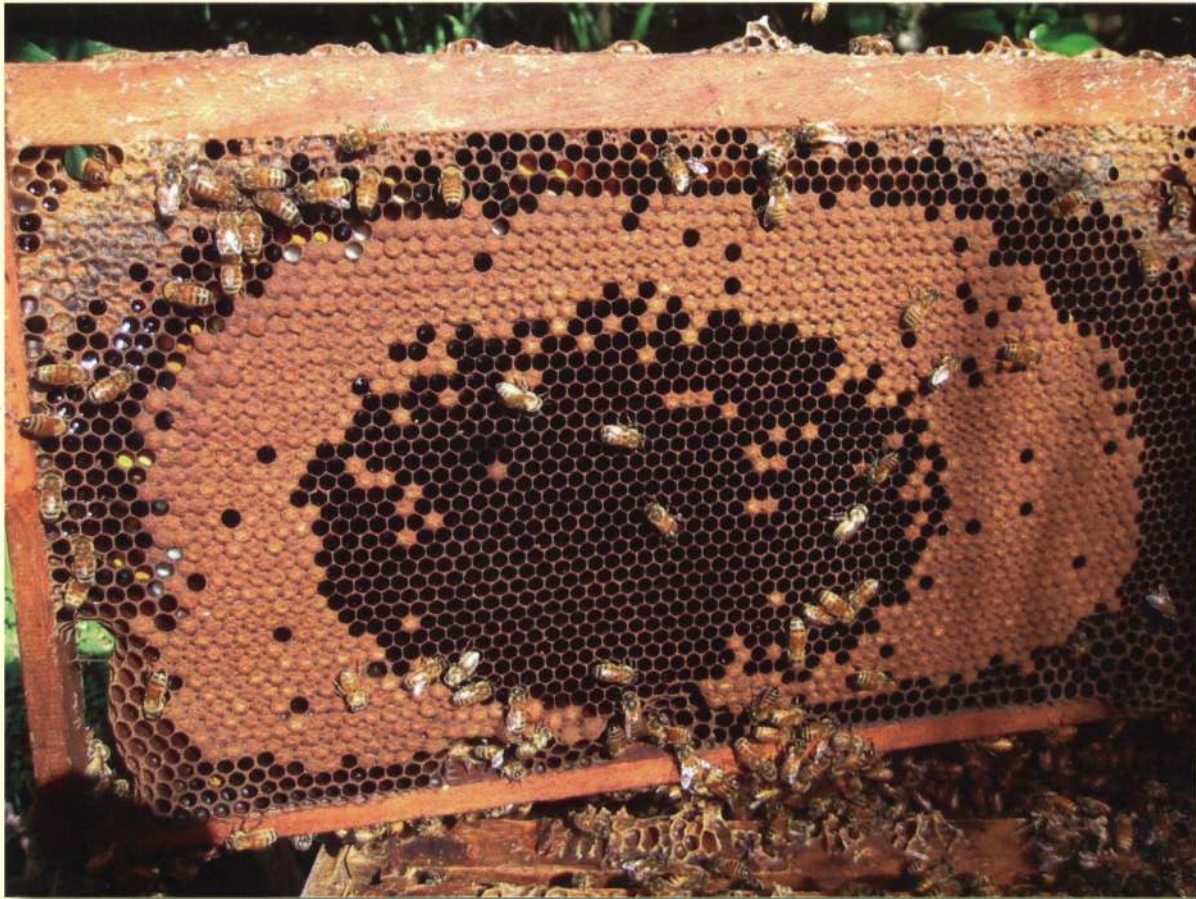
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Radiata pine

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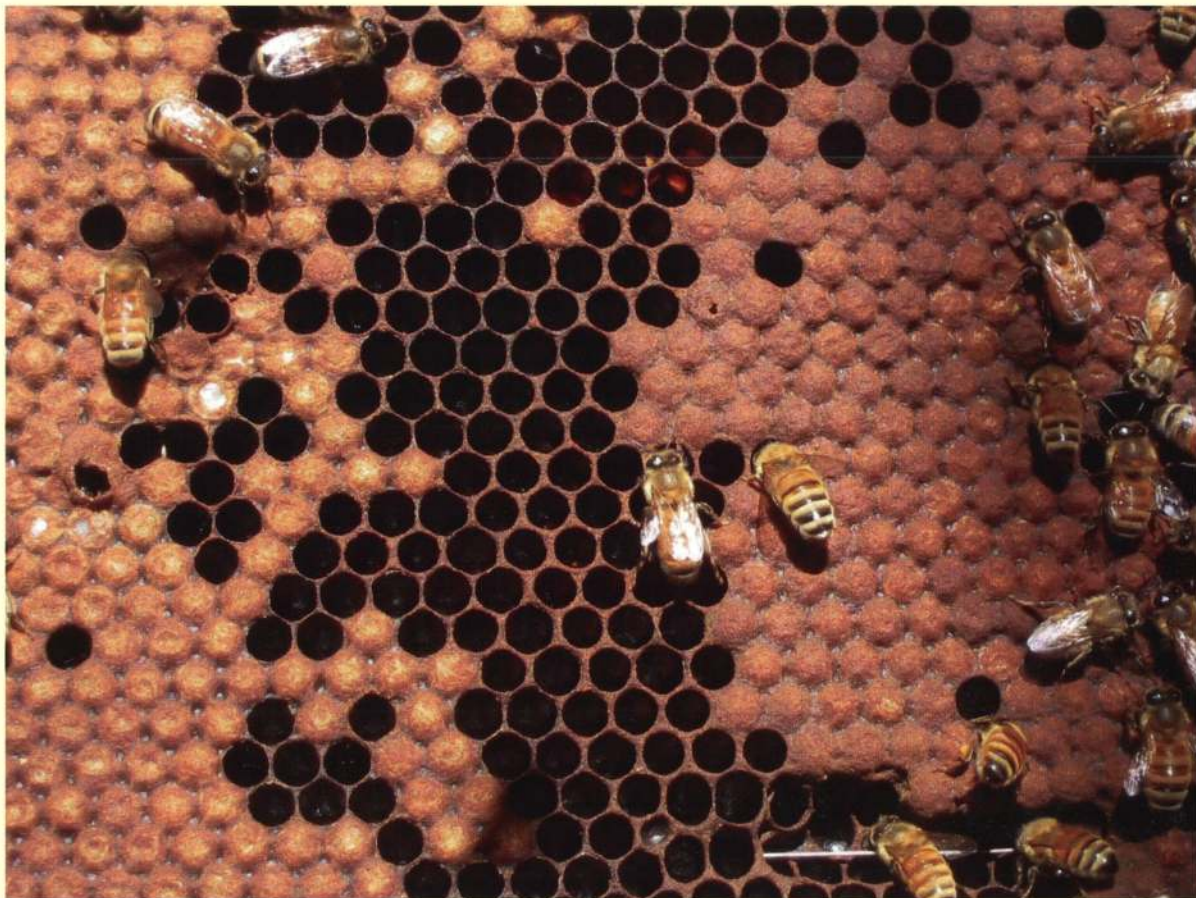
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Where to look for disease on a frame of emerging brood.

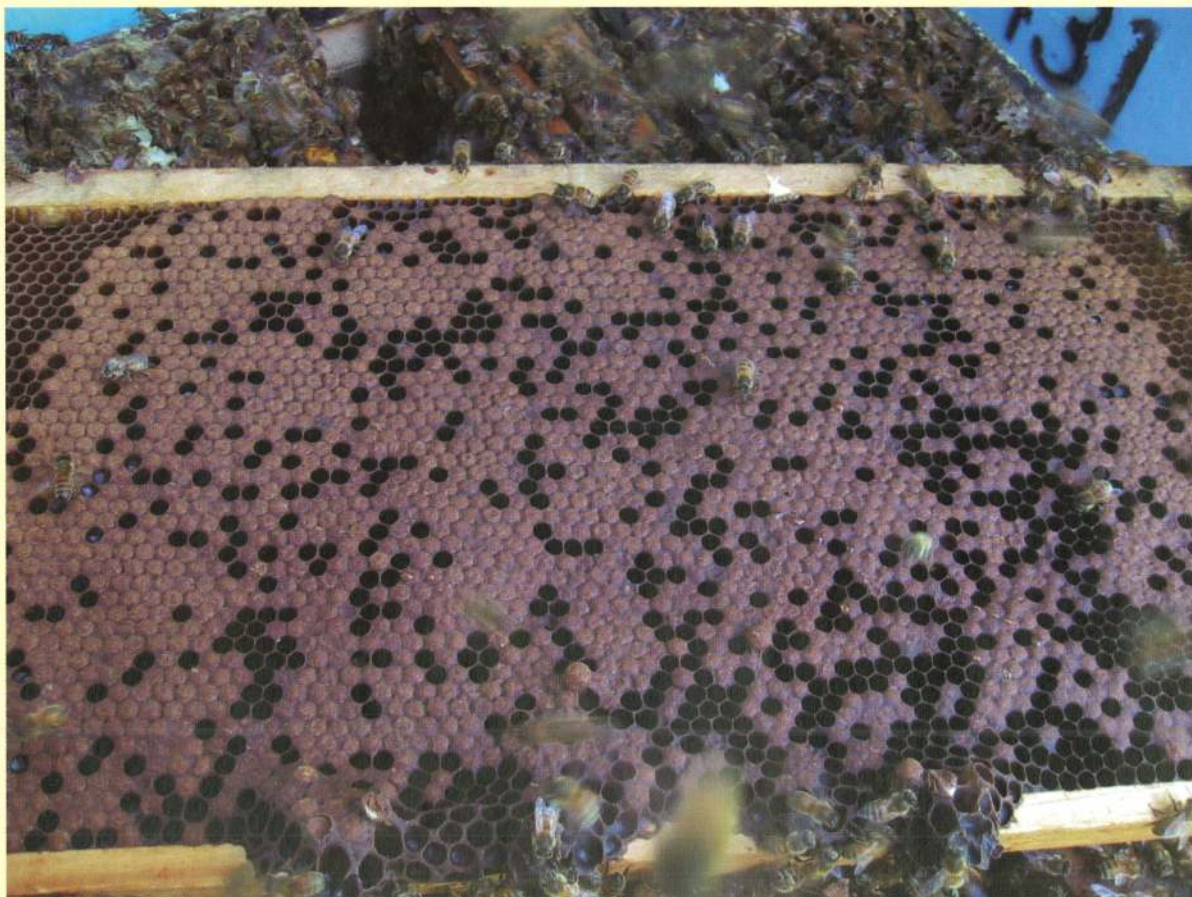


A section of comb. Why is there a hole in the cell? It's just an emerging bee.
Note the wax moth silk under the cappings to the left.

Lesson: shake off bees during inspections and flick

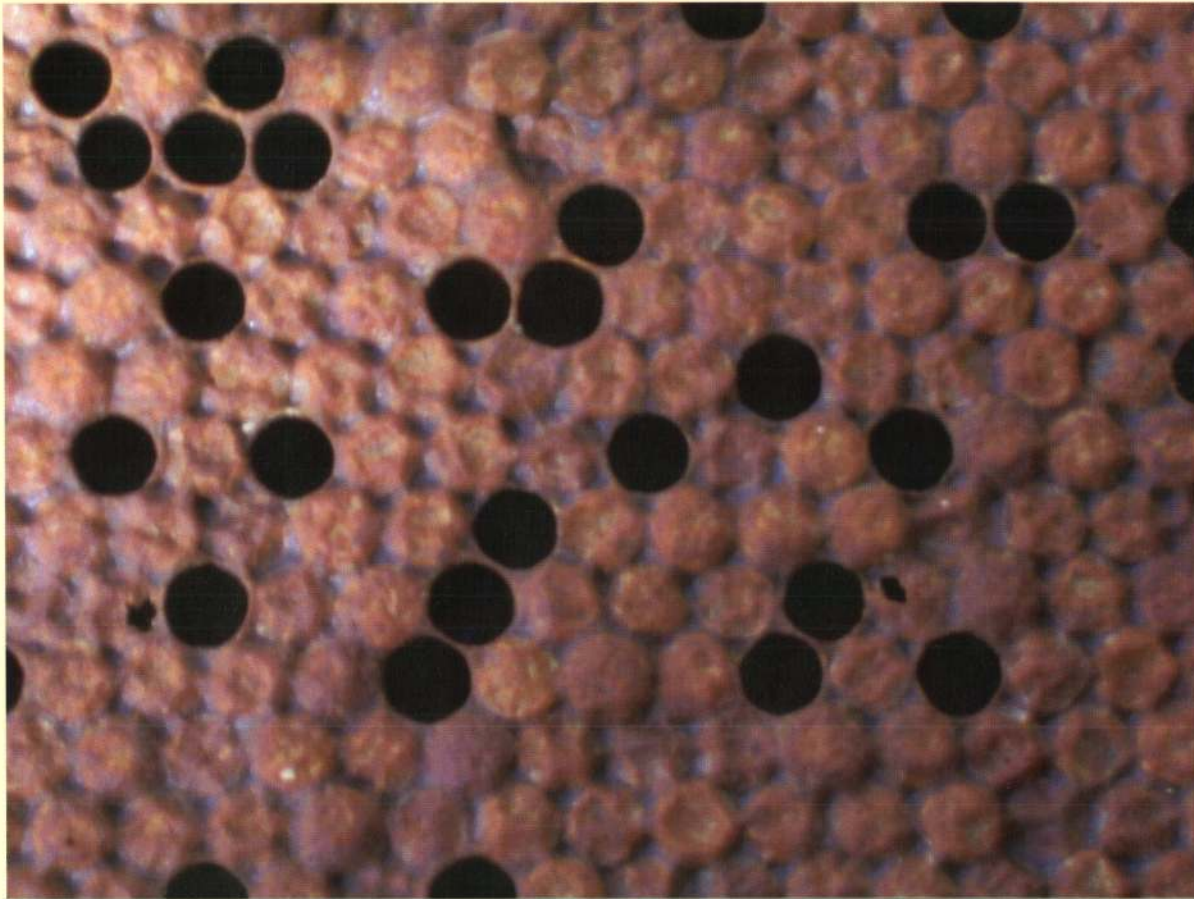


Covered in bees, the odd diseased cell is hard to see. Spot the concave cell?

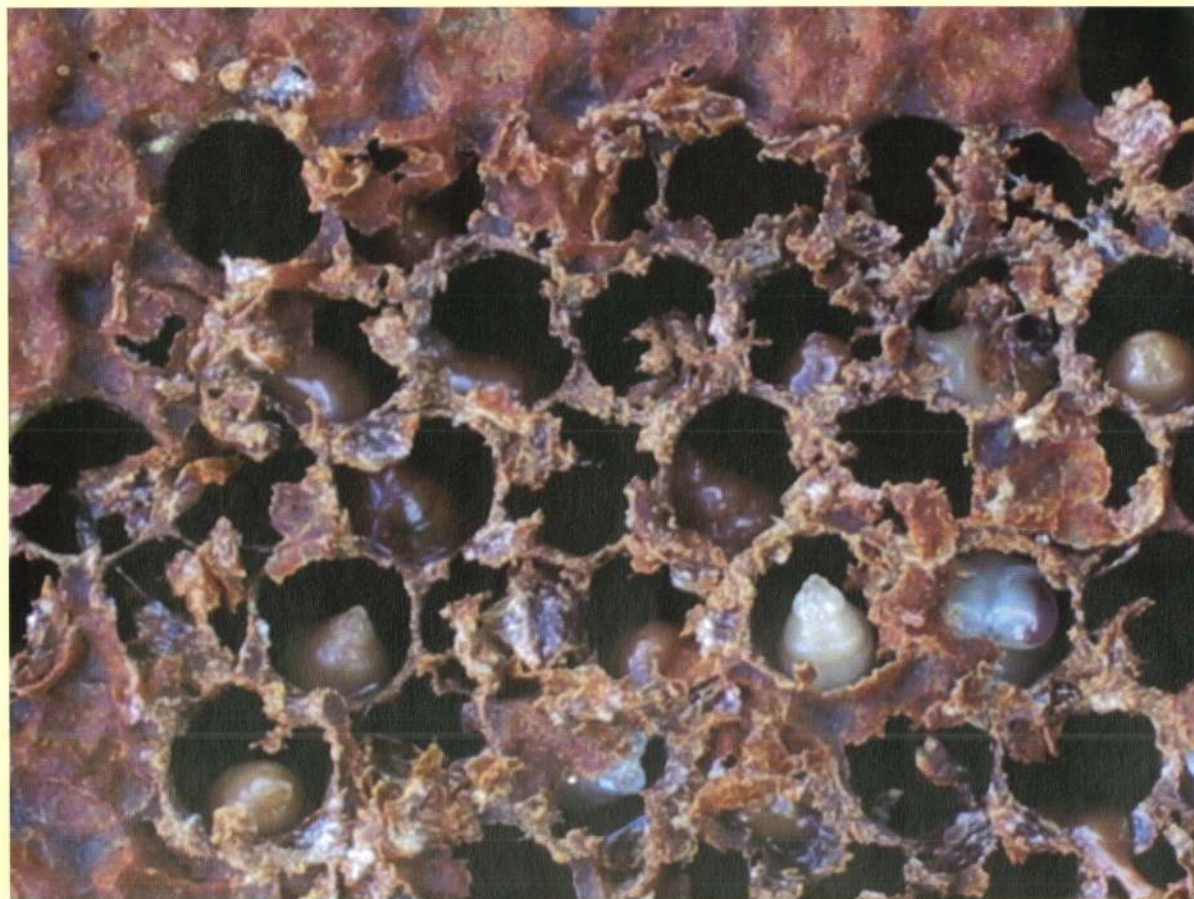


With bees removed, it's easy to spot suspect cells.
They are darker and sunken slightly.

Remove the cappings to inspect the larvae underneath.

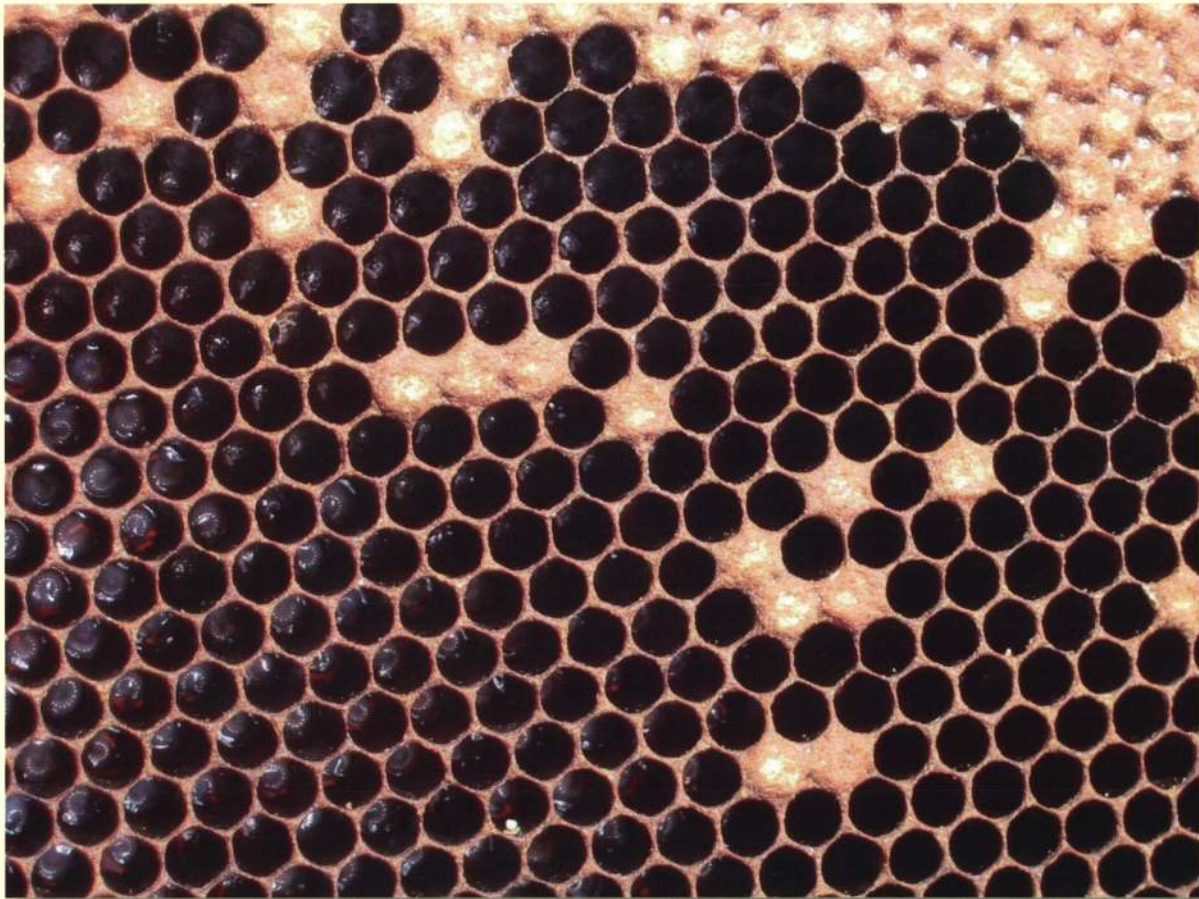


Close-up of cells.

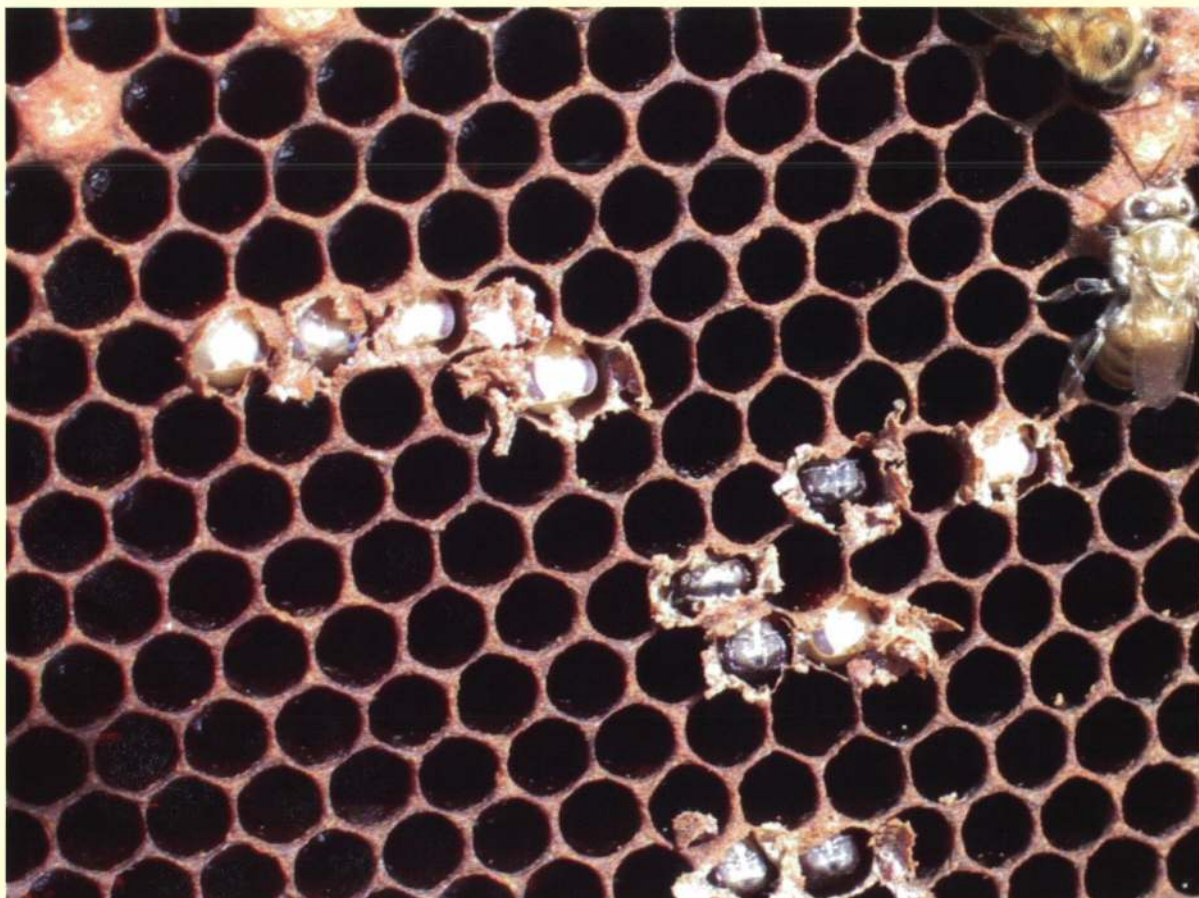


Cappings removed, showing the majority of larvae are infected with AFB.

Photos: Frank Lindsay.



Why haven't these emerged in the centre? Answer below.



Flick off the cappings and all is well underneath.

AFB Strategy under review

[Editor's note: the following is a gazette notice under section 62(1) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 for the review of the AFB National Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS, referred to below as 'the Strategy').]

Description of the new proposed Strategy

The above Strategy relates to the management of the pest known as *Paenibacillus larvae larvae* (formerly *Bacillus larvae*), the cause of the disease American foulbrood, which affects bees. The National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand Incorporated (NBA) is the management agency under the current Strategy, which will expire on 30 September 2008. The primary objective of the Strategy is to manage American foulbrood to reduce its reported incidence.

The Strategy has been in force for more than 5 years and has not been reviewed since its inception. I will be reviewing the Strategy as required under section 88(6) of the Act.

A report assessing the effectiveness of the Strategy and suggesting possible amendments is being released for public consultation. The report concludes:

1. The Strategy has failed to achieve its primary objective
2. There still appears to be considerable support for the Strategy within the beekeeping industry
3. Industry needs to assess what would be a realistic objective for the strategy, in light of the level of funding industry is prepared to provide
4. Numerous minor changes are proposed, including
 - a. Changes to the requirements for recording apiary locations
 - b. Streamlining the process needed to seize and destroy abandoned hives
 - c. Removing the requirement for the management agency to review every Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement each year
 - d. Reducing the audit requirement imposed on the management agency.

A copy of the proposal may be viewed at (<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/strategy-and-consultation/consultation/current>) or may be obtained by contacting:

Holly Foran
Policy and Risk
MAF Biosecurity New Zealand
PO Box 2526
Wellington
Email: holly.foran@maf.govt.nz
Ph: (04) 894 5687

Result of review

Submissions on the report will be analysed. If there is support from affected persons for continuation of an amended Strategy, I propose to recommend to the Governor-General to amend

the Strategy by Order-in-Council and extend its duration for another 10 year term, in order to enhance the ability of the beekeeping industry to control American foulbrood disease.

Submissions

Any person may make submissions on the proposed Strategy in writing to:

Minister for Biosecurity
c/o Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
PO Box 2526
Wellington
Attention: Holly Foran
E-mail: holly.foran@maf.govt.nz

Submissions should reach MAF no later than 5 p.m. on Friday 28 November 2008

Every submission should state

- (a) Those aspects of the proposed Strategy that the submission supports; and
- (b) Those aspects of the proposed Strategy that the submission opposes; and
- (c) The reasons for the support and opposition identified; and
- (d) Any specific alternatives to the proposed Strategy that the person making the submission wishes to recommend
- (e) Whether the person making the submission wishes to be heard in respect of that submission if a board of inquiry is held.

Dated at Wellington this 22nd day of September 2008

Jim Anderton
Minister for Biosecurity



Articles published in *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* are subject to scrutiny by the National Beekeepers' Association publications committee. The content of articles does not necessarily reflect the views of the association or the publisher.

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BKGS

Comment: research is the lifeblood of an industry

In the 'meet the speaker' section at the NBA Conference in Masterton, Des Cannon, chairman of Australia's beekeeping research committee, told us how Australia raises \$300,000 from beekeepers through a levy system that is matched equally by their government. They have at least six major research projects and many more PhD student projects on the go, and this is from an industry that exports \$65 million of product.

We are a small player by Australian standards, but thanks to Professor Molan's research it has turned New Zealand honey industry into a \$65 million export industry; yet we have to beg to get beekeepers to donate to research.

We have pioneered research in a number of fields over the years, but we are an industry based mainly on a couple of products and services. It is so easy these days to isolate our industry from exports—take the tutin incident as an example. We were fortunate that the New Zealand Food Safety Authority handled this incident well so that we did not lose market access. We must kickstart research funding again so we can at least keep ahead of the rest of the pack. We have got to preserve New Zealand's honey and bee products industry as being unique in the world and therefore worthy of high value.

There were grumbles when we had a compulsory Marketing Levy, as there were always competing interests vying for the money.

If we did not have a legacy left by the Honey Marketing Authority in the form of the Honey Industry Trust, we would be as an industry a dead duck, unable to fight government on importation issues or to give a modest amount to research.

Perhaps it is time that we all woke up and smelled the roses. Research is the lifeblood of an industry. It's not working using a voluntary scheme, so perhaps it's time we approached Government again and asked them to institute a compulsory levy on honey, bee products and bee services. We don't need to implement a levy on everything immediately but one could be instigated in the future, should we find over the next 10 years that our industry has turned mainly into a service industry (pollination only), rather than a mainly honey production industry as it is now. What would happen if a new blight attacked this country's manuka trees next year? Would most of us go bankrupt?

Let's look ahead a bit and work out a scheme to put research funding on a solid foundation so that all beekeepers contribute, no matter which industry body they belong to.

- Frank Lindsay



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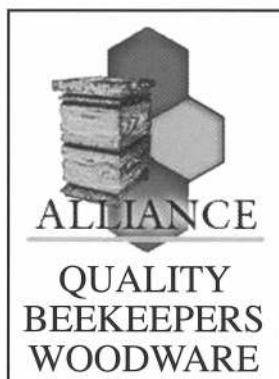
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BK6

Waikato Branch field day, 30 August 2008



Lewis Olsen, Stephen Batters, Dot and Roger King cooking the BBQ lunch.



Lunchtime and it's all talk at the Waikato Spring Fling Field day.



Queuing for lunch.

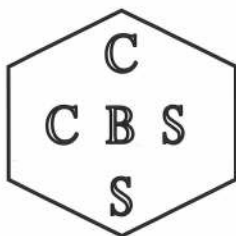


Listening intently to Rex Baynes, AFB NPMS Manager.

Right: Pauline Bassett, labelling plants and tree specimens for identification, one of the static displays.

Photos: Fiona and Jeremy O'Brien.





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BK193a

AFB Reporting and Destruction Form

7 Day notification to the Management Agency, of a case(s) of American foulbrood

North Island notifications to be returned to:
Byron Taylor or Murray Reid,ASUREQuality Limited
Private Bag 3080
Hamilton

South Island notifications to be returned to:
Tony Roper or Marco Gonzalez,ASUREQuality Limited
Private Bag 4718
Christchurch

Beekeeper Name (print): _____ Beekeeper Registration Code: _____
Company Name: _____
Postal Address: _____
Home Phone: _____
Work Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Mobile Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

MAF Apiary Number: _____ Date found: _____
Grid Reference: _____ Date destroyed: _____
Number of Hives with AFB: _____ Was the hive(s) a "robbed out hive"? _____
Name of Land owner or Occupier _____
Property Name if applicable _____
Address of property (street/road and number) _____
Possible source of infection: _____

BEEKEEPER'S STATEMENT — AFB DESTRUCTION

I certify that an American foulbrood case(s) was discovered in a beehive(s) as listed above, and that these honey bees and the associated bee products and equipment have been, within 7 days of my becoming aware of the case(s), reported to the Management Agency and have now been destroyed or dealt with in accordance with my DECA.

Beekeeper's Signature

Reporting Date

Notes: Biosecurity (National American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy) Order 1998:

Clause 26. Notification of American foulbrood—

- (1) Where an American foulbrood case is discovered in a beehive, the person in charge of the keeping of the honey bees must, within 7 days of becoming aware of the case, notify the management agency and the beekeeper, in writing, of the American foulbrood case.
- (2) A breach of this rule, without reasonable excuse, is an offence under section 154(q) of the Act.

Clause 28. Obligation of beekeeper to destroy honey bees and materials—

- (1) Where an American foulbrood case is discovered in a beehive, the beekeeper who owns that beehive must, within 7 days of becoming aware of that case, destroy by burning all honey bees, bee products, and appliances associated with that honey bee colony unless directed otherwise by an authorised person.
- (2) The provisions of this clause do not apply to—
 - (a) A beekeeper who is acting in accordance with the relevant provision of a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement between the beekeeper and the management agency; or
 - (b) A person acting in accordance with a permission, regulation, or authorisation provided for in sections 52 or 53 of the Act; or
 - (c) A person acting in accordance with an exemption given under clause 30.

Office use only: Update Beekeeper details () Lab report authorised () N/A
Signed: Receipt notice sent to Beekeeper () Rob out notice issued () N/A
Date: Follow up with beekeeper () N/A Date:

Amended September 2008

Annual Disease Returns at all-time high

The Management Agency is pleased to report that as at 2 September 2008 there is a 91% ADR compliance rate. This is due to some hard follow-up work from both staff at AsureQuality Limited and from within the Management Agency.

While the AFB percentage levels are up slightly at 0.32%, we attribute this to increased reporting as a result of the upward trend in beekeepers returning their ADRs.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Percentage of beekeepers with a DECA	55%	60%	62%	69%	72%	7%	75%	79%	79%	79%
Percentage of DECA-approved beekeepers who have completed the competency exam	##	##	##	##	##	##	43%	45%	49%	62%
ADR compliance (by 15 June)	53%	##	##	##	##	##	41%	65%	61%	73%
ADR compliance (best for year)	76%	85%	70%	75%	70%	79%	82%	84%	83%	91%
Certificate of Inspection (COI) compliance	42%	##	34%	47%	8%	##	14%	18%	22%	30%
AFB percentage levels	0.31%	0.43%	0.46%	0.48%	0.34%	0.30%	0.26%	0.32%	0.30%	0.32%

Statistics Courtesy of AsureQuality Limited.

Note: ## denotes figures not available.



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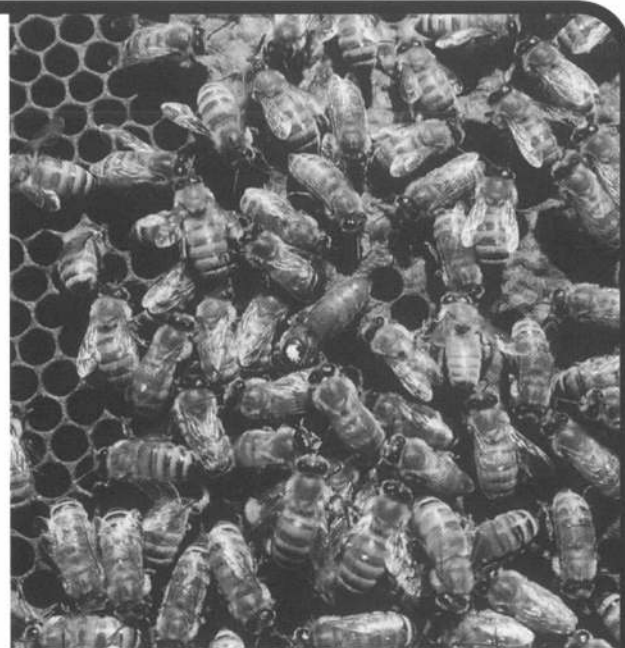
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Manuka—what's in a (common) name?

The honey industry is currently reviewing the honey standards that were developed by the Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) in 2003. Manuka honey, with its soaring prices, is the key honey type that has prompted this review of the current standard. As the price of generic honeys in the world hovers around US\$3,000 per tonne, manuka honey is returning the producer over US\$8,000 per tonne. The financial incentive (or perhaps imperative) to claim that one's production is "manuka" honey is overwhelming. Some years ago I quipped that without standards, New Zealand has an annual production of 9,000 tonnes (our average total honey production) of "manuka" honey.

So what is "manuka" honey and what issues are being considered when reviewing this standard?

Because we trade in a world market and wish to have our products accepted on the world stage, we need to look at international conventions for setting honey standards. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) runs a commission called the Codex Alimentarius (literally, "food code"). Most countries (including New Zealand) work with this commission to produce standards for many different foods, and these Codex standards are then incorporated into each member's own food laws as they are reviewed. The recent change of our honey standard from the old Food Regulations 1984 to the new honey standard in the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) food code saw the wording for the definition of honey change to almost exactly reflect the Codex wording. The Codex standard for honey can be found at: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/standard_list.jsp

The key phrases in the Codex standard for defining honeys by their floral or nectar source is:

6.1.6 Honey may be designated according to floral or plant source if it comes **wholly** or **mainly** from that particular source and has the **organoleptic, physicochemical** and **microscopic** properties corresponding with that origin.

and:

6.1.7 Where honey has been designated according to floral or plant source (6.1.6) then the **common name** or the **botanical name** of the floral source shall be in close proximity to the word "honey".

Most of us are familiar with botanical names comprising genus and species. When we give a botanical name such as *Trifolium repens* for white clover, we are being very specific

about the identification of the plant. On the other hand, a common name such as "clover" can refer to Red, White, Subterranean, Alsike and Strawberry clovers etc. Even the sweet clovers (*Melilotus* sp.) can get lumped into the "Clover" pool and in the USA, "Clover" honey is usually derived from the Melilots. When we refer to "Clover" honey, we are not specifying that it is from *Trifolium repens*.

In some areas of the South Island *Echium vulgare* is a prolific honey plant. North of Christchurch it has traditionally been called "Borage" or "Blue Borage", with one beekeeping business even being named "Blue Borage Apiaries". Marlborough, North Canterbury and Kaikoura more commonly use "Borage" for this plant, but Vipers Bugloss is the more common name in South Canterbury and Central Otago.

However, there is another plant also called "Borage" and "Blue Borage", and that is the herb *Borago officinalis*. This plant has been commercially grown in Canterbury for some years (often over 10,000 hectares) and there is usually a surplus (often considerable) of honey from this source. In the honey market, some companies market their products as Vipers Bugloss and some use Borage for honey produced predominantly from *Echium vulgare*.

So which is the true Borage, one might ask. The fact is that a common name is neither strictly right nor wrong. The following sample of synonyms for "common" demonstrate the concept: "Often met with, usual, frequent, customary, occurring frequently or habitually, most widely known, ordinary".

Very often (as in the case of Borage/Vipers Bugloss), a common name varies from region to region. In the USA *Echium vulgare* is called "Blue Weed" and in Germany it's "Natter Kopf". Another good example is *Arripis trutta*, that favourite sporting fish we commonly call Kahawai. Skip across the Tasman, and it becomes Eastern Australian Salmon, but also sports a list of known aliases including Australian Salmon, Black Back, Cocky Salmon, Colonial Salmon, Buck Salmon and Bay Trout.

So we can have common names that refer to more than one species or even genus (as in the case of Borage/Vipers Bugloss), and we can have regional variances in the use of different common names for the same plant. We can also have changes in usage over time. *Echium vulgare* has been expanding its range for many years and, particularly in Central Otago and South Canterbury, this spread has been dramatic—perhaps due to one beekeeper's strategy of throwing seeds into the local council's roadside shingle heaps whenever he saw them! Vipers Bugloss is now becoming the more dominant of these two names, possibly because there is more of the plant in more visible areas where its common name is Vipers Bugloss. Use of the term Vipers Bugloss is possibly dominant also due to the high visibility of the "True" Borage (*Borago officinalis*) grown for seed and the resulting oil.

Continued on page 41

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BK356

Continued from page 39

The other way common name usage varies is by groups of people. One group with perhaps a more technical approach or industry-specific knowledge will use a different common name to that of the wider public.

Common name usage of “manuka”

So let's now attempt to apply all of this to the manuka case.

To start with, “manuka” is a Maori word. When Europeans arrived in New Zealand and started to record in writing such things as botanical names, each Maori tribe in New Zealand had its own dialect with different words, pronunciations etc. According to J.T. Salmon's book *Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand*, the naming convention for *Leptospermum scoparium* north of Auckland is kahikatoa and for *Kunzea ericoides* it is “manuka”, while elsewhere “manuka” is more common for *L. scoparium* and “kanuka” for *K. ericoides*. Other texts also have recorded differences in Maori names for both plants, as would be expected given the different tribal and regional dialects.

Incidentally, *Kunzea ericoides* was classified as *Leptospermum ericoides* up until 1983. The change was made to acknowledge that *K. ericoides* had split off from the evolutionary origin of *Leptospermums* long enough ago to warrant being placed into a different genus. There is some confusion whether both species are endemic to both Australia and New Zealand. The researcher who reclassified *K. ericoides* believed so, but others more recently believe this may not be the case. It could be that *K. ericoides* is a true endemic New Zealand species, while *L. scoparium* is merely a recently naturalised Australian immigrant! Such is the intrigue of the lumpers and splitters in the realm of evolutionary biology. Suffice to say that even at the taxonomic level, it is far from clear-cut.

A search of botanical texts reveals that the use of “manuka” is widespread and common between both *L. scoparium* and *K. ericoides*. These common names listed here are quoted in the order they are listed in the reference texts.

Allan H.H., *Flora of New Zealand*, 1961. *L. scoparium*: Manuka, Kahikatoa, Tea-Tree; *L. ericoides*: Manuka or Kanuka, Tea-Tree.

Laing and Blackwell, *Plants of NZ*, 1910. *L. scoparium*: Manuka, Kahikatoa; *L. ericoides*: Heath Like Manuka, Manuka-rauriki.

Maori Healing and Herbal. *L. scoparium*: Manuka, Kahikatoa, Pata; *K. ericoides*: Kanuka, White Manuka.

J.T. Salmon, *Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand*. *L. scoparium*: Manuka, Kahikatoa; *K. ericoides*: Kanuka, Manuka, Tea-Tree.

A Field Guide to the Native Edible Plants of New Zealand. *L. scoparium*: Tea-Tree, Red Manuka; *K. ericoides*: Tea-Tree, White Manuka.

Medicines of the Maori. *L. scoparium*: Manuka, Kahikatoa, Tea-Tree, Red Manuka; *K. ericoides*: Manuka, Kanuka, Tree Manuka, White Manuka.

New Zealand Medicinal Plants. *L. scoparium*: Tea-Tree, Red Manuka, Manuka, Kahikatoa; *K. ericoides*: Tree Manuka, White Manuka, Kanuka.

R. S. Walsh, *Nectar and Pollen Sources of New Zealand*. *L. scoparium*: Manuka, Red Tea-Tree; *K. ericoides*, Tree Manuka, Kanuka, White Wooded variety of Manuka, White Tea-Tree.

This last reference is very significant as it gives a beekeeping perspective on historical common usage of the word “manuka”. R.S. Walsh was the honey grader for 13 years and the book was published in 1967 by the National Beekeepers' Association. The author's first comment under “Manuka” is, “There are some 35 species of manuka...”; that is, he lumped all the *Leptospermums* into the manuka pool (and at the time *K. ericoides* was still classified as a *Leptospermum*).

We also have to remember that less than 20 years ago, manuka honey was a low-value honey and difficult to sell. Beekeepers' use of the term “manuka” was not influenced by points of activity or by the medicinal properties of one or the other species it came from, but rather reflected the general public's view that it came from plants called “manuka”.

The general public's use of the word “manuka” today shows that there is common usage of the term for both *L. scoparium* and *K. ericoides*. Phrases such as “manuka firewood” when it is often or usually *K. ericoides* firewood, and “manuka sawdust” for smoking fish bear this out. Just recently an item screened on national television news of an old roadway dug up in Dunedin during a property redevelopment there. Logs had been laid down over a piece of swampy ground to form the base of the roadway, and these were referred to as “manuka” when the size of the timber (“logs”) indicated that they were *K. ericoides*.

Marketing of “manuka” honey

For the last 20 years or so, since the first papers were published indicating that manuka honey had a special antibacterial activity, a lot of honey has been sold as “manuka”. To date virtually all *K. ericoides* production has been sold as manuka, with little (I would suggest far less than 1%) sold as kanuka.

So back to the Codex. This standard says that we may call a honey “manuka” if the nectar comes wholly or mainly from a plant source that is commonly referred to as “manuka”. The general public think of both plants as manuka. Until recently, most beekeepers thought of both plants as manuka. Many still do. Until now, honey sourced from both plants has been called manuka honey.

So all this is pretty obvious, you might say. What's the problem? Well, the argument goes like this. Most would agree that manuka honey has become famous for its special antibacterial activity. This activity has been defined by a

small group, the Active Manuka Honey Association Inc. (AMHA), as ANY antibacterial activity (against one specific strain of *Staphylococcus aureus*, known to be a wound infection agent) that is found to be present after the sample has been treated with catalase to remove hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) and tested thus at NZ Labs in Hamilton. This activity is not defined by what it is, but rather by what it isn't. It is not H_2O_2 activity.

Those marketing manuka with this property will argue that because manuka honey is famous for this property, and the price has risen for this reason, then selling manuka honey without this property is leading the consumer up the garden path. There are claims that *L. scoparium* is the only source of this special activity and *K. ericoides* doesn't have it. But other honeys, including *Echium vulgare*, have been shown to have this activity (as defined by AMHA: that is, **not** H_2O_2), so this not a clear position.

More concerning is the growing sentiment that any honey (including that derived from *L. scoparium*) that does not have this special activity is NOT manuka! In fact, the claim is that because it doesn't have this unique activity, it was not produced from *L. scoparium* at all. This must be a significant concern to all manuka producers with non-active manuka sites; i.e., the great majority of them. Taking this further, some claim that any honey that has this special activity then becomes manuka. So by combining a little manuka of a high unique antibacterial activity with a lot of another, perhaps similarly coloured honey (e.g., honeydew, rewarewa), it would be OK to call this manuka in order to satisfy this argument when it clearly fails the "wholly or mainly" test in the Codex standard.

But this argument about misleading the consumer is weak to start with. Those around at the time to observe the widespread publicity that thrust manuka honey into the spotlight would remember that a potential cure for stomach ulcers was the key sound bite that captured the public's imagination. Up until then it had been a wound care dressing. But now, suddenly, there was a significant gain to be had from actually eating the product! And this gain could be demonstrated with clinical trials and laboratory tests to confirm the potency of each batch. But alas, it was not to be. The clinical trials failed to show any cure for stomach ulcers and the product's unique antibacterial activity was again reduced to the realm of a topical wound dressing—where it has stayed for the last 12 years.

At this year's NBA conference Professor Peter Molan gave a stimulating and motivational address on the current research work being done on manuka honey. All of the opportunities for use of this product's unique antibacterial properties centred around topical applications with the exception of a possibility of use against *Campylobacter* (under study).

To date there is no clinically proven benefit derived from manuka honey's unique antibacterial properties when you eat it that could not be derived from another honey with hydrogen peroxide antibacterial activity. So when it is being sold with this unique property, why is it not clearly spelt out that the only benefit the consumer is getting from this unique feature is as a wound dressing—and one that has not been sterilised for that purpose? Just who is leading whom up the garden path?

It is clear that the people marketing manuka's unique antibacterial properties have a marketing problem. What they are actually selling is a topically applied antibacterial action, but they have not positioned their brands (e.g., UMF) to stand on their own without the "manuka" name. Instead they have put all their efforts into promoting the "manuka" name such that their products are inextricably linked with it and have not clearly defined what benefits their brands actually have. This is an understandable course of action and has been a highly successful marketing strategy for some. But now there is a push to exclude the use of "manuka" from all other rightful users of this name by claiming that only UMF manuka is actually manuka, and further that any brown honey that has a UMF rating is now manuka. This has to be a cause of concern for most manuka honey producers.

Summary

"Manuka" is a [common] name that is widely used by the New Zealand public to commonly refer to two closely related plant species, *L. scoparium* and *K. ericoides*. Honey from these two plants has almost exclusively been sold as "manuka" honey. Under the Codex standard, honey that is derived "wholly or mainly" from these two commonly named species may be called "manuka". Manuka honey with unique antibacterial activity is a subset of *L. scoparium* honey. This in turn is a subset of honey derived from *L. scoparium* and *K. ericoides*, which is commonly called "Manuka". A standard for manuka honey must use characteristics that define "manuka" honey, and each characteristic (organoleptic, physicochemical and microscopic) should be defined by a range of values that is normal for this honey type.

Whether or not a honey has antibacterial activity is a separate issue that is currently encompassed by third-party offers in the market. This must not be allowed to cloud the issue of honey identification standards.

- Peter Bray
Airborne Honey Ltd.
BPSC member
BPSC standards subcommittee member



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Letters to the editor

No urgency for monofloral honey standards

Dear Editor,

I refer to the chairman's report of the Bee Products Standards Council in the July issue (page 6), in particular the final paragraph suggesting that foreign buyers are clamouring for New Zealand to adopt monofloral honey standards to satisfy their own regulatory requirements and downstream customer expectations. I believe this is misleading.

As a honey exporter I sometimes (repeat, sometimes) get enquiries for some kind of declaration of authenticity of the honey's floral origin, particularly with the more expensive manuka. I explain there is no "official" declaration of such (just as there is no official declaration to say whether an apple is a Braeburn or a Gala). It is through years of experience knowing my sites and working intimately with my hives that I know what honey I am producing.

From that same experience I also know what type of honey I may be buying from another beekeeper. I also consult with others around me to get second opinions. If that customer wants to perform their own evaluations or tests (at their own expense) I am quite happy to make samples available and they can make their own decision. 99.9% of buyers understand the situation and business continues in a rational manner. As for the other 0.1%, nearly all of them are "tyre kickers" and I'm best shot of them anyway.

This process is the essence of commerce and has been going on very successfully for thousands of years. There will always be sellers who try to flout the integrity of the system but their competitors will soon show them up in the light created by a free market.

Furthermore, I have recently met with a European importer who has been buying from New Zealand for over 25 years and presently buys approximately 20% of New Zealand's total honey crop. That equates to about 65% of our total exports! We discussed the issue of monofloral standards and he intimated no pressure by European authorities for such requirements. He suggested that the New Zealand beekeeping industry may care to promote such standards

for our unique honeys but the process should be owned and administered by the industry itself. He also suggested that while pollen percentage analysis may be useful and accurate for determining European honey varieties such as lavender, acacia, etc., he thought that uniquely New Zealand honeys (including manuka) would probably be better suited to a process where sensory evaluations take precedence and pollen analysis is the last tool used from the box. The overriding conclusion was that bucketloads of scientific research and analysis still need to be done before any conclusions can be drawn.

As a result of my meeting the man who buys more of our honey than anyone else on the planet I am convinced there is no great urgency (regulatory or otherwise) to meet any monofloral honey standards. But should we choose to go down that path it should be owned and controlled firstly by the beekeepers of New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,
Mark Horsnell
Sunrise Apiaries Ltd.

Response from the BPSC

There are a number of views on the need for and type of honey standards that could or should be applied in New Zealand.

The reality is that our industry must take control of the standard setting, or default to standards set outside the industry, or worse still outside New Zealand.

Dr Jim Edwards
Chairman, Bee Products Standards Council

Support for area freedom bid in Otago/Southland

As a long-time supporter of the AFB NPMS, I was pleased to read that a group of 'beeks' in the Otago/Southland region is working to achieve "area freedom for AFB in Otago/Southland" (September issue, page 4).

As the present "strategy" has expired and should go through the review process, it is perhaps timely that this process should take into account that there may be more regions which also could qualify for area freedom status, and the legislation be written to accommodate this achievement.

The area freedom brings a lot of benefits for the 'beeks' in that area:

- exemptions from the requirements of the strategy
- financial responsibilities to contribute to the strategy would not be necessary.
- the area would be "closed" to transient beekeepers (unless there is some proof of "disease free" status)
- sales of "other than local" honey would be restricted.



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I know a lot of work is still to be done and a start needs to be made. I guess that this will somewhat complicate the "exotic/endemic" status of AFB in New Zealand, and government will assume responsibility for AFB (as an exotic disease) for the areas covered in the "area freedom". They will also need to initiate some form of movement controls to prevent the spread of AFB from areas with AFB to those areas that are free of disease. The MAF has had quite a bit of practice in writing risk analyses and import health standards, and I'm sure that it will be no problem to them to have a robust system which will prevent the reintroduction of AFB into these new AFB-free areas.

Just a word of caution: the article talks of "reported disease". There will, of course, need to be some verification that there is not some "unreported" disease that still exists, perhaps in an "unregistered" beehive.

Best of luck, and keep up your diligence in the eradication of AFB. It's great to see what 'beek' cooperation can achieve.

- Roger Bray

More on manuka and kanuka

Reading Professor Molan's question regarding manuka and kanuka in the letters to the editor in last month's magazine, I offer this opinion.

I have been looking at manuka ever since I told a field day over 30 years ago that one day manuka would be worth a lot of money, and was laughed at as then it was only produced for feed. Professor Molan's research confirmed my prediction.

Generally, manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) is found more on wetter country like the West Coast. Kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) is more common in drier areas.

Also, manuka yields better if the soil is wet at the time of flowering or there is rain during the flowering period. Kanuka yields more heavily in dry years. When in Oamaru we had a drought with no green grass at all, and hives near kanuka gathered four three-quarter supers of kanuka honey each. Hives up to seven miles away also made better wages than from kanuka, which did not occur closer than this. I was previously the Apicultural Advisory Officer in that area and knew the country well, and knew where the kanuka occurred.

In Canterbury, manuka and kanuka grow together and often they flower together, with the manuka starting a little earlier and the kanuka flowering a little longer.

In wet years the manuka honey will dominate. In drier years the kanuka will produce more honey.

Manuka has a medicinal-type flavour and tends to be a little darker in colour, although not always noticeably so. Kanuka has a sharper flavour and lacks the medicinal after-flavour of manuka.

Beekeepers generally treat both types of honey as manuka as they find it difficult to distinguish from each other. Also there is an economic advantage of saying they are both manuka. Both types of honey are thixotropic so cannot be separated using this characteristic.

I discussed the activity of manuka with Professor Molan some time ago. At that time he thought it was related to the iron content of the honey. I thought it was related to the presence of gold in the soil.

Following on from this discussion I had honey tested for both gold and iron. The iron content varied greatly but did not correspond directly to the activity. The gold content also did not relate directly, although generally higher activity is found in honey with a higher gold content. Also I found activity in clover and honeydew in the region of 10 plus where gold ions were at a similar level to that in active manuka.

I suspect that kanuka also shows activity where gold is present. A possible area for research? My theory is that you get activity where there is either gold deposits or past volcanic activity. But of course iron also occurs in such areas?

All I really know is that activity is not as simple to determine as some would have us believe.

- Gary Jeffery

Belgian beekeeper seeks work

I'm a beekeeper in Belgium. As the season is almost over here, I would have liked to join a beekeeper from New Zealand and work there during your entire season in 2008 if you know any. I think I'm skilled for about everything in this job, except I should get acquainted to one or two of your local diseases, which I already read about.

So, if you know of any beekeeper who would appreciate a foreign worker for the whole season 2008/2009, I'd be happy to join.

Best regards,

Frank Paris

Email: frankparis@skynet.be

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Philippines beekeeper seeks work

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Obituary: Toni Dudek

Toni Dudek (1926–2008) was a survivor of Poland's World War II destruction at the hands of Germany and Russia. He arrived in New Zealand soon after the end of the war, where he established his own construction company. Beekeeping was a keen hobby of Toni's dating back to his childhood in Poland. He had 200 hives at one stage around Hamilton, especially the Gordonton area. Toni passed away on 9 August 2008 at the age of 82, and is survived by his wife Krystyna, their one son, four daughters and nine grandchildren.

Source: Abridged from an obituary in the Waikato Times, Saturday, August 23 2008, page B6. Thanks to Roy Burke, Waikato Times.



Please note the following amendment to the address for the NBA:

National Beekeepers' Association of
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Waikato Branch

Spring has most definitely arrived: the flowers and bees have revved up. Early willows such as the cricket bat willow have finished, the *Salix matsudana x alba* are just coming into flower and leaf, as are the weeping willows. Again I am reminded that the male clone willows are better for bees as they produce both nectar and pollen—apparently the male flowers have nectaries at the base of the stamens. Some years ago the Franklin Beekeepers' Club put out a one-page list of willows suitable for bees—maybe it could be published in *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* sometime.

The branch has had two notable meetings, the first in early August to review the conference and to plan for our spring field day. The meeting was well attended and there was much discussion and laughter. Good to see people in a relaxed mode after what has been a fairly horrible year of drought and then rain, rain and more rain.

On the last Saturday in August we held our spring field day (see photos on page 35). The weather was mostly obliging and 80-plus people attended. I heard someone remark that it was a good old-fashioned field day. The morning was taken up with speakers: Rex Baynes on the AFB NPMS, Dr Mark Goodwin on *Metarhizium* with some new information since conference, Neale Cameron on Bee Safe, Andrew Primrose from Farmsafe and Gary McQuoid from Roadlife Trucks.

Later in the day we heard from David Hitchcock of Vehicle Testing New Zealand on the new brake testing requirements (as from 1 April 2009 for our area).

After lunch there was hands-on queen raising with Russell Berry, Jane Lorimer, and Rob Atkinson as tutors. This attracted a lot of attention, and it was good to see people trying their hand. It was also good to see participation from some hobbyist club members.

The field day was held in the Matangi Hall, which proved to be an excellent venue. Good facilities for providing food, including an opportunity for a BBQ lunch, which always provides a chance for participants to have a good chat. There were also static displays around the perimeter of the hall on AFB, trucks info, and examples of bee-friendly plants, both native and exotic.

The branch was fortunate to have a number of commercial entities at the field day that sponsored various raffle prizes (NZ Safety, Tunncliffe's, Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies, NZ Beeswax, Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies, Bee Green). Thank you to them all—we were very fortunate to have them there and hope that they continue to be supported by beekeepers.

Fiona O'Brien has begun a branch newsletter, and the second issue has just been distributed. It is proving to be an excellent way of keeping in touch with what is going on.

Our last meeting for the year will take the form of our first Bee Discussion Group (BDG). It will be held in Otorohanga and will focus on logbooks, including the new rules. And that



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will be it for the year, as we will all be too busy. The next meeting will be in February 2009!

- **Pauline Bassett**

Bay of Plenty Branch

The last two weeks of August have been warm and mostly sunny in the eastern Bay of Plenty. Not so for other parts of the country, but here we can get to all of our sites and have completed our first round of checks. Both here and in the western Bay it seems the hives have come through winter in good condition, especially considering the wet weather. The willows have started to flower and with that comes reminders to spray contractors and kiwifruit growers to be careful when spraying willow shelter belts for pests.

During the full moon period in August the frost protection was going at least twice for most gold kiwifruit orchards, and they seem to have been successful. We now await the forecast for the next full moon period, when many more orchards will be at a very vulnerable stage of development. At this stage both gold and green kiwifruit are on track to flower at much the same time as last year, weather permitting of course, so pollination is approaching quickly.

Conference 2009 planning is well underway with some speakers and sponsors already confirmed. We have included a notice in this edition of the journal, so check out the dates and mark your diary. Should you have any ideas of what you would like to see at conference, please let us know.

We have only one more meeting planned for this year, which will have taken place before this magazine is printed. In March we will reconvene for monthly meetings. Meanwhile, should you have anything which you would like to discuss, give us a call or email.

- **Barbara Pimm, Branch Secretary**

Poverty Bay Branch

Hi to all, I hope the weather is better by the time you are reading this and your hives are healthy.

There have been many reports of high mite levels this spring. I remember reading on the Internet in the USA that a bee inspector had commented that every four years mite levels were high: maybe theory, maybe not.

On a funny but tragic note, pigs smashed up an apiary at Ruatoria—they were after the sugar in the top feeders. I hope their teeth rot or they get diabetes.

As this copy goes out to all beekeepers, if you are not a NBA member perhaps you should join. Also, come to the annual conference, which will be in Rotorua next year.

I hope the weather comes right for the honey flow.

- **Don Simm, Branch President**

Hawke's Bay Branch

Snow to low levels followed by severe frosts with very cold daytime temperatures have not helped with the spring build-up, nevertheless most hives appear to have come through in reasonable order.

As I predicted there have been some losses due to wasps over the winter. The flowering in the stonefruit is about 10 days ahead of normal but no doubt the recent cold conditions will slow that down. As I write this, the long-range forecast predicts at least a week of rain—so much for the early willow flow. We have had a run of very good springs in Hawke's Bay over the last few years but it looks like weather patterns are starting to return to normal. Oh well, that's beekeeping.

- **John Berry, Branch President**

Nelson Branch

As I write in early September, it is hard to believe the predictions of a mild spring. I can't ever remember August being so rainy and cold. As with many parts of New Zealand, we have had late snowfalls, and the hives around the Nelson Lakes got the heaviest snowfall in 60 years! Even the hives in the upper Wairau (Marlborough) and related valleys saw their first snowfalls ever.

Bee strength, queen rearing, and general beekeeping activities are all several weeks later than normal.

Luckily, there has been enough early willow and heather pollen to get the hives going, but many beekeepers report feeding more sugar syrup and pollen substitute than usual.

Following a survey of the presence of the poisonous tutin plant, with the exception of one find in the Marlborough Sounds, our area has been proclaimed tutin-free. However, beekeepers must still be ever vigilant to make sure that they have none in their collection areas during the honey flow.

We are sorry to report the resignation of Arthur Day as our Ward NBA member. We appreciate the long hours he has put in. The process of appointing a new member is currently underway.

John Rawcliffe of AMHA (Active Manuka Honey Association) was the guest speaker at our 4 September NBA branch meeting. John's message was to "get focused on the unique properties of YOUR product, define it, and protect its brand". Those who put a poor standard product into the marketplace threaten the integrity of the brand. As other industries have shown, lowering of—and controversy with—standards can have the disastrous effect of destroying consumer confidence with the subsequent landslide of reduced income to producers.

Those who made the effort to come to hear the message at the meeting were justly rewarded.

Bring on that warm settled spring weather!

- **Merle Moffitt**

Canterbury Branch

After so much 'wet' this winter, the country is finally drying enough to allow access to beehives. I have worked some hives and found that my hands need to toughen up as I now have a painful blister on my index finger. Isn't it strange that you always seem to get blisters in the position where it is most comfortable to grasp a hive tool?!

The main difference with beekeeping this season is when I fill the truck with diesel. Last season the litres registered faster on the pump than the dollars; this season the dollars are registering faster than the litres. We need to be aware of our increased costs in order to set our selling price for our products.

The selling price is the factor which keeps us in business, and allows us to make a reasonable return for our investment. South Island beekeepers have been 'accepting' prices for their products that do not contribute to their long-term financial survival, especially with the inevitable spread of varroa into other regions.

I find it hard to figure why there has been downward pressure on the prices of our South Island white honey. There is worldwide concern for the sustainability of bees with many bee deaths reported: dead bees don't produce honey! Perhaps the 'downward pressure' is a result of the 'take it or leave it' attitude of hard-nosed buyers being accepted by those beekeepers least able to afford selling at a price which always keeps them on the back foot. Some cooperation is needed with buyers accepting that everyone in the chain needs to make a fair return.

There has been a lot of interest in the "honey standards" by the pollen count. Whilst I feel it is an advantage to have standards, I wonder who reaps the benefit of this move. I also wonder that there are bigger issues which may assist the beekeeper more such as addressing the "adulteration" of honey. Quite frankly I don't believe that all products sold in the world as 'honey' are from a floral source. Will the introduction of standards allow those skilled at processing to put out water white manuka (flavoured syrup) with the required pollen count allowing it to be called 'manuka honey'?

Perhaps the New Zealand Food Safety Authority/Commerce Commission should also look at those products labelled as containing 'honey' in which the major "sweetener", by a long shot, is sugar. Have a look at a product such as 'honey mustard dressing': perhaps you will note that the ratio of sugar to corn syrup is 20 percent to two percent. Is this not misleading product labelling? Food manufacturers who use this form of deception are cashing in on the good name of honey and beekeeping, with little return to the beekeeping community.

The Branch is organising a Disease Recognition Course and Competency Test to be held in November in Ashburton. For information contact Linda Bray (telephone 03 308 4964), and refer to the advertisement elsewhere in this journal.

The frost has gone now so it's off to do what I enjoy—beekeeping—as long as I don't get stuck in the mud!

- Roger Bray, Branch President

Otago Branch

Like most places, the Otago region is presently about as wet as it gets. The exception would be parts of Central and further west, which missed much of the rain associated with the August storms. With drought being the major problem in recent years the good soil moisture levels bode well for the coming season. On the downside, access to bee yards is quite an issue. There will be a bit of walking and I am about to bring the big plastic wheelbarrow into use!

We had a discussion group meeting this week hosted by Carne Clissold in Southland. Beekeepers report hives opening up after winter are a bit slow as a result of few flying days, and many now need to feed pollen substitute to their hives. A few still have some of last year's clover crop on hand and their patience to sell is paying off, with prices over \$4 per kilogram finally being offered by exporters. This is good to see when some New Zealand packers are still shooting themselves and everyone else in the foot with 500-gram specials below \$3 in the supermarkets.

The Otago Branch is hosting a beekeepers' field day this spring on the Taieri at Outram on Saturday 1 November. The full programme is still to be confirmed but the main focus will be on hive health. We will especially cater to the large number of new beekeepers in the Dunedin area. A local beekeeper has offered the use of his sites nearby for training in AFB inspections, etc. The field day will kick off at the Outram Hall at 10 am and all local beekeepers are invited to attend.

Branch members have been discussing with the AFB NPMS manager Rex Baynes and AsureQuality Limited the possibility of increasing the effort to eradicate AFB in managed colonies in Otago and Southland. There were only 17 known incidences of AFB last year in the regions and our hope is to follow up all outbreaks in the future and offer to help these beekeepers eradicate the disease. Our aim is to create an area of freedom from AFB within a few years. Worth a shot, we think.

Meanwhile I just heard this evening that varroa has been found in Canterbury near Rangiora. This is a serious jump south and a reminder we will all have to deal with varroa sooner rather than later. Despite more than a third of New Zealand's hives in varroa-free areas at the moment, there seems little political will for further control lines and I suspect we will be left to our own devices. Good luck for the season ahead.

- Peter Sales, Branch Secretary

Otago Branch Spring Field Day Outram Hall, Taieri Plains Saturday, 1 November, 10 am start.

The main focus will be on hive health, including practical disease inspection.

For further information contact Allen McCaw (03 417 7198) or Peter Sales (03 472 7220).

All beekeepers most welcome.

About the Apiary

By mid October on the coastal strip of the southern North Island, the flow from kamahi will have started and with it comes swarming. Most beekeepers are now checking hives on a two- or three-weekly basis for food levels and swarm control. Most won't be too worried about swarming, as they would have already been removing frames of emerging brood (with the attached bees) from strong hives and giving them to weaker hives, after doing a disease check. Remember that moving frames between hives is the quickest way to spread AFB, so make sure to inspect hives thoroughly before swapping brood frames. Look on the brood frames where bees are emerging, and flick off the cappings from at least 10 cells that haven't emerged to verify that there is healthy brood underneath.

Most beekeepers will leave only six frames with brood in the hives at this time of the year, so that the hive continues to build up but doesn't become overcrowded. After that it's just a matter of splitting apart the first and second super to look for queen cells being built along the bottom bars of the second super. Whenever you see queen cells you have to investigate further.

I saw my first queen cell on 3 September this year: very early by my calculations, so I had to split this hive. Before doing anything with a queen cell, check the brood, and especially check to see that there are eggs in the cells. No eggs means something has happened to the queen and therefore this queen cell is a replacement, so leave it alone unless you have spare queens. Yes, if eggs are there it means that this hive is looking to supersede or swarm. Spotty brood pattern is an indication of supersedure but it can also mean that the hive is preparing to swarm, especially if it's crowded with bees.

I checked the brood area where the queen had been laying and found nice, even brood with hardly any missed cells. This hive looked to be in swarming mode, especially as a lot of drone brood was also present. Generally, hives that are intending to swarm produce a lot of drone brood well ahead of time.

So what to do? Do nothing and the hive will swarm. (A swarm means a lost honey crop and varroa mite re-invasion when the swarm breaks down in May next year). Either remove three or four brood frames to give to another hive, make a nucleus hive and replace these frames with last year's drawn comb, or give foundation frames.

In the particular hive I was inspecting, the top super was mostly filled with honey. It had brood in the centre three frames from about the middle of the frames to the bottom where the queen cell was located.

I chose in this case to take the centre three frames plus another three frames of sealed brood and bees (without the queen) and placed these in another super. I located the queen cell on the bottom of the frame and carefully cut it off, keeping it intact. In the centre of one of the frames with brood, I scooped away a little honey and carefully pushed the queen cell into the hollow. By moving the cell to the centre of the frame, the bees are more likely to look after it if the weather turns cold, whereas they might leave the queen cell in the event of a cold snap.

Carefully moving the frames back together again, I placed a frame of pollen and honey on either side of the brood frames and filled up the gaps with more honey—nine frames in all. I placed the super on a bottom board, plugged the entrance with grass and covered the top of the super with a split board so that the bees were enclosed within the super, ready to move to another apiary. I had to move them to another apiary so that the field bees did not return to the original hive, thus weakening the nuc hive I'd just created.

The original hive still had plenty of honey. Apart from the four frames left in the top super, it had two frames of honey on either side of the brood nest—plenty of food to go on with. So I used a combination of foundation frames and drawn frames to fill in the gaps. I moved the frames with brood into the centre of the super and placed a foundation frame on either side of the brood, and then placed drawn frames against these, and finally, the pollen frames. In the top super I interspaced drawn and foundation frames across the centre of the super. I used foundation frames because there was a slight flow on (wet nectar in the open cells). If a flow wasn't on, I would have used all drawn frames.

Generally hives do not swarm if they are drawing out foundation, so interspace two or three foundation frames between drawn frames immediately above the brood nest to give the bees something to work on. This also helps with your yearly frame replacement programme; i.e., replacing at least three frames for each brood super per year. This is done by removing any old dark or frames with broken lugs from the outside of the supers and putting foundation frames back on the outside of the brood area where they will be drawn

Continued on page 51



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BK193

Continued from page 49

quickly. If the old frames are not in an outside position, work them gradually across during each inspection round so they are removed before the main honey flow starts.

A lot of beekeepers who run two brood supers reverse the position of the first and second super this month. The queen gradually works her way up into the second super and concentrates the brood there. By reversing the super you immediately give the queen somewhere to lay above the existing brood area, thus relieving congestion. You cannot do this if you have placed foundation in the second super. When left in the second super, the foundation will be drawn down to the bottom bar. If foundation frames are placed in the bottom super where there isn't so much warmth, the bees tend to leave a gap between the wax foundation and the wooden frame.

For those using a single brood nest, move the odd frame of capped brood (after shaking all the bees off for those who aren't good at finding queens) into the second super each visit to create room for the bees to expand. This will draw the bees up above the queen excluder into the second super. Once established in the second super, foundation frames can be added and once drawn out can be put down into the lower super.

Many beekeepers are now using plastic frames in the brood nest. Mixing wooden and plastic frames doesn't seem to work well, as the bees are loath to draw out the plastic frames when the wooden frames are present. When given only plastic frames to work on, they quickly adapt and draw them out.

Supering

As soon as the honey flow starts, or when you see bees covering more than half the frames in the top super, it's time to add a honey super. If you are not sure as to whether a hive is crowded or not, lift the front of the hive up and tilt it back slightly so you can look along the bottom of the super. If bees are hanging down and covering 6-8 frames, the hive needs another super on top.

Requeening

From October onwards queens become available from queen producers. Any hive that is not coming ahead should be considered for requeening. At the same time it's important that the hive should not have a break in brood rearing, so if a hive needs requeening, make a split or nuc and get the new queen laying in it before killing the old queen and uniting the split or nuc on top of the hive.

I use split boards. This is just a crown board with a 25-mm opening on one side. When not in use, it sits above the feeder (I use top feeders) under the roof.

If a hive needs requeening, I mark it with a pen and when the new queens arrive, I proceed to make a split from the original hive. These consist of two frames of emerging brood, a frame of pollen and honey and another one or two frames of honey. These are placed in a separate super on top of the split board.



LANDWARD MANAGEMENT LTD on behalf of LAND INFORMATION NEW ZEALAND NOXIOUS WEED SPRAY PROGRAMME 2008-2009

Beekeepers and other users of the riverbeds in the Canterbury Region listed below, are advised that herbicide spraying (inc. Grazon, Tordon®, Roundup® and Trounce®) along with added surfactant compounds is to be carried out to control gorse, broom, lupin, briar rose and old man's beard. The work to be carried out will commence no earlier than the 15 September 2008 and will continue intermittently as weather permits until 30 June 2009, excluding the period from 20 December 2008 to 10 January 2009.

The river channels involved are:

(g) = ground spraying using one of the following methods: gun and hose, knapsack or mistblowers (a) = aerial spot and/or boom spraying, (ga) = ground and aerial

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Pahau River (g) | 24. Ashburton River N & S. Branch (ga) |
| 2. Ashley/Whistler Rivers (g) | 25. Thirteen Mile Bush Stream (a) |
| 3. Leader River (g) | 26. Tengawai River (a) |
| 4. Okuku, Grey, Karetu, Makerikeri, Waipara Rivers (g) | 27. Maerewhenua River N. and S. Branch (a) |
| 5. Waiau River (ga) | 28. Otaio River upstream of gorge (a) |
| 6. Boyle River (ga) | 29. Rangitata River and tribs. upstream of gorge (ga) |
| 7. Hurunui River (ga) | 30. Orari River (g) |
| 8. Clarence River (ga) | 31. Twizel River (g) |
| 9. Glencoe River (a) | 32. Boundary Stream (trib. of Lake Tekapo) (a) |
| 10. Mason River (g) | 33. Jollie River - First Stream (a) |
| 11. Seaward River (ga) | 34. Godley - McCauley River (a) |
| 12. Lottery River (a) | 35. Tekapo River (g) |
| 13. Whitewater Stream (ga) | 36. Pukaki River (g) |
| 14. Porter River (g) | 37. Lake Pukaki E. and W. Shoreline (g) |
| 15. Poultter River (a) | 38. Ohau River (g) |
| 16. Rakaia River and tribs. upstream of Glenarriffe (ga) | 39. Ohau 'C' Canal (g) |
| 17. Rubicon River upstream of "Torby" (g) | 40. Lake Ohau Shoreline (g) |
| 18. Esk River (a) | 41. Lake Aviemore Shoreline (g) |
| 19. Upper Selwyn Gorge (g) | 42. Lake Benmore Foreshore (g) |
| 20. Upper Waimakariri River at Cora Lynn (a) | 43. Ahuriri River (a) |
| 21. Upper Wilberforce River (a) | 44. Hakataramea River (g) |
| 22. Harper River (g) | 45. Hanmer River (g) |
| 23. Swift River (a) | 46. Kahutara River (g) |
| | 47. Charwell River (g) |
| | 48. Upper Opuha River (g) |
| | 49. Upper Waihi River (g) |
| | 50. Hope River (a) |

Copies of the full annual spraying programme, and further information, is available from Landward Management Ltd during office hours on Ph/FAX 0508 244-746, or write to P.O. Box 5627, Dunedin, email graeme@landward.co.nz.

BK59

I plug the entrance on the split board with fresh green grass so the bees in the split have a delayed release.

Procedure

When opening the hive, use very little smoke at the entrance as this could drive the queen upwards on the brood frames you want to use for the split. Instead, lift the roof and give 4–5 puffs of smoke over the top bars and close the hive for a couple of minutes. The smoke tends to drive the queen down on the lower brood frames.

Open the hive and waft a little smoke over the top bar just to keep the bees under control. Remove an outside frame and place it beside the hive. Then proceed to move the frames across until you come across a pollen frame. Remove it, take a quick look for the queen on it (although she's unlikely to be on a pollen frame), and put this frame into the spare super on the split boards. Now look for a frame with sealed and emerging brood. Select one which has brood covering half to three quarters of the frame—not a whole frame of brood as the bees might have difficulty keeping it warm if a cold snap occurs. Then select another frame of brood about the same size, again with the majority being sealed brood. Before putting each of these frames in the super with the pollen frame, check to see that the queen is not on them.

Then place a honey frame on the outside of these three frames. Take the queen cage and remove the tab that covers the sugar candy plug. Place the queen cage with the existing hole slightly upwards and press it firmly in between the pollen and brood frame, just above the brood. The cage is placed in edgeways so the bees have access to the queen in the cage. Take a little sugar syrup and sprinkle it over the top of the brood and honey frames. Not too much, as you don't want the syrup to leak outside and attract robber bees. Then add extra bees by taking another brood frame from the original hive, check that the queen is not present and with a quick downwards jerk, shake all the bees from this frame into the super and cover the super with the roof.

Replace all the frames with drawn and foundation frames and then place the split with the entrance away from the main hive entrance. By the end of the next day the bees in the split will have begun to chew through the grass and will be exiting from the split.

If you are not good at finding queens and use a double super brood nest, four to five days before the queen arrives, put a queen excluder between the brood nests. Four days later, look for eggs in both supers. The one with eggs contains the queen, so take the brood and bees from the other super—that way you will be sure the queen has not been put into the split.

Leave the split for 10 days and then check that the queen is laying. You should be looking just for new eggs—you don't have to find the queen. Remove the cage and add frames to fill the super.

Open the original hive and find the queen and remove her from the hive. Again, if you are not good at finding queens, use the queen excluder method or ask a friend to assist you. Two pairs of eyes are better than one. For the non-purist, use

a water-soluble correcting fluid to mark her thorax, then the next time you look for her she will find you.

Once the queen is removed and dispatched, take two sheets of newspaper and place them on top of the original hive. Place the split on top of the newspaper and put the split board back as a crown board. The bees will chew through the two sheets of paper and unite slowly, and the new queen will take over the hive.

If you want to dispense with making a split, it is possible to requeen the hive by placing the queen straight into the hive after first removing the old queen, but this time do not break away the tab covering the sugar candy. Sprinkle a little sugar syrup over the top bars to take the bees' focus away from the new queen. Leave the new queen in the cage for four days, then open the hive again. Check all the brood frames to make sure the bees haven't made any emergency queen cells (rip them out) and this time, release the tab so the queen can be released. Wait another 10 days before checking to see that the new queen is laying. This is not full proof, as sometimes the field bees will kill the new queen; hence I prefer to keep the old queen laying until the new queen is established and laying in the split before uniting her on top of the main hive.

Of course if you already replaced the queen in the autumn, you won't be going through all this work. Just keep doing quick checks to make sure they're not going to swarm and that the hive has plenty of food. Don't let the honey reserves fall below three frames of honey (a week's honey reserves for a strong hive). Below this level, start feeding equal parts of sugar and water as a syrup until the honey flow starts. Strong hives can be fed raw or industrial sugar without making it into a syrup by placing it in a top feeder. To encourage the bees to come up into the feeder, add a little water to the edge of the sugar and make a trail to the entrance hole. To work the sugar, the bees need to bring up water to dissolve it. This takes a lot of work on the bees' part and doesn't stimulate them as much as sugar syrup feeding, which is likely to lead to swarming.

Things to do this month

Check feed, check pollen and do an AFB check. Raise queen cells, super up hives, control swarms, cull old frames and fit foundation in comb honey frames.

Check the natural mite fall in a number of hives, and from the *Control of Varroa* manual, work out when you should treat your hives. It is recommended that you shouldn't go any longer than 50 days between treatments, especially while your area is in the "acute phase" of mite spread (before all the feral hives and the 'leave them alone' beekeepers' hives are dead); in this time 100 mites multiply to 1000 mites (the treatment threshold). Work out when you are going to take off your honey (now as soon as the flow has finished) and work backwards 50 days. If there isn't a flow on at the time (like the November gap), treat your hives. I treat my hives early in the spring; that is, I calculate when my honey flow starts and work back two months. I put the strips in the hive at this point to give protection during the build-up.

- Frank Lindsay



Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand

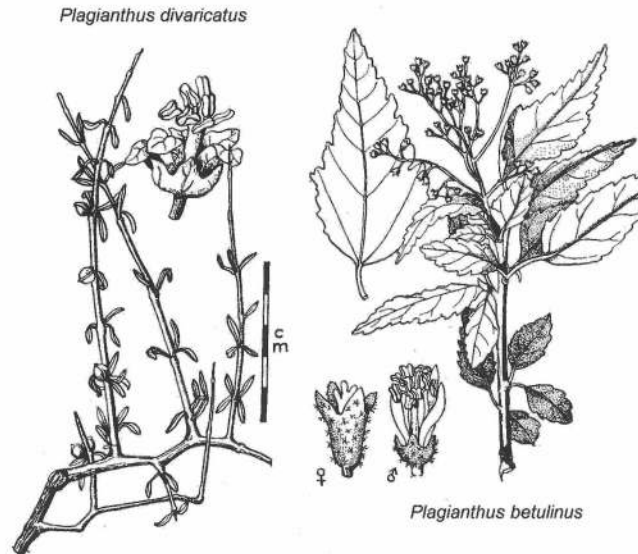
Plagianthus divaricatus

Common name: Salt Marsh Ribbonwood

Plagianthus betulinus

Common name: Lowland Ribbonwood

Maori Name: Manatu



The lowland Ribbonwood is a small deciduous tree 6 to 15 metres high found throughout New Zealand and in the Chatham Islands, although in the North Island it doesn't fully lose all its leaves.

The Ribbonwood has a juvenile stage of small leaves and interlacing branches, changing to a tree in which the foliage resembles an English birch. This trait of having both juvenile and adult foliage is found only in a few New Zealand native species.

In 1890 Dr L Cockayne likened this trait to a drier climate in New Zealand when the plants took on a xerophytic state to resist drying out.

The adult leaves are alternately coarsely toothed and soft with the flowers in large clumps up to 25 centimetres long, very numerous, small and green.

The bees visit the flowers from September to November for the medium amber and good-flavoured honey, but they never gather a surplus.

The other species of Ribbonwood is the salt marsh Ribbonwood which, as the name implies, grows in the salt marshland at the end of tidal estuaries. It remains a dense bush with small leaves without changing to larger leaves in adulthood. Its flowers are small and white.

The ribbon-like inner bark of the Ribbonwood was used by the Maori for making rope and twine for their fishing nets, and was used by early gardeners to tie their plants up because of its softness.

The Maori also boiled the leaves and gave it to children to drink to cure worms.

- Tony Lorimer



Do's and don'ts of AFB control

[This excerpt is from the revised edition of Elimination of American Foulbrood Disease without the use of Drugs—a practical manual for beekeepers, by Dr Mark Goodwin.]

Do

- Inspect your hives for AFB at least twice a year.
- Inspect hives before removing bees, honey or equipment.
- Inspect all brood frames.
- Shake bees off frames before inspecting them.
- Train yourself and your staff in techniques to recognise and eliminate AFB.
- **Report AFB to the Management Agency within 7 days.**
- Burn infected colonies.
- Feed pollen substitutes rather than pollen.
- Feed sugar syrup rather than frames of honey.
- Use hive and apiary quarantines.
- Only use approved sterilisation methods.
- Use a thermometer and timer when paraffin wax dipping (10 min at 160°C).
- Treat hives to clear up parasitic mite syndrome (PMS) before checking for AFB.
- Become an approved beekeeper.
- Get suspect AFB samples tested.

Don't

- Don't feed drugs for control of AFB.
- Don't scorch boxes to sterilise them.
- Don't try to control AFB by removing diseased frames.
- Don't extract honey from infected colonies.
- Don't feed bee-collected pollen to colonies.
- Don't feed extracted honey to bees.
- Don't let hives be robbed out.
- Don't shook swarm.
- Don't let stock knock over beehives.
- Don't use steam chests to sterilise infected equipment.
- Don't distribute the equipment from dead hives between other hives.
- Don't allow colonies to die of varroa or any other cause.



Sierra Club asks USDA to suspend nicotine pesticides use

[Editor's note: The following is an extract of a letter sent from the Sierra Club in the USA to the US Environmental Protection Agency. This letter has been circulated widely to beekeepers worldwide, and a link to the full letter can be found on http://www.moraybeekeepers.co.uk/N&Views/sublethal_effects.htm]

**Registration Division Director
Office of Pesticide Programs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

Re: Request to suspend use of nicotine insecticides until EPA obtains scientific evidence that sublethal effects do not cause harm to America's honey bees.

The Sierra Club and its 1.3 million members and supporters is requesting that EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) take urgent action to suspend use of the high volume pesticides known as the nicotine insecticides until the EPA possesses the scientific evidence to demonstrate that these pesticides do not cause or contribute to sublethal effects on the nation's honey bees. Serious questions need to be raised by EPA's OPP over the sublethal effects to honey bees occurring in the low parts per billion range (ppb) of 1.0 ppb to 20 ppb from these pesticides, which apparently the EPA has not evaluated to date, and the pesticide manufacturer's may not have adequately investigated or may have submitted incomplete findings to EPA. Synergistic effects may also be occurring. The EPA has clearly missed the unintended consequences of the nicotine (neonicotinoid) insecticides, including imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, clothianidin, and several others and now action is critical.

As EPA's OPP is aware, the German federal government Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) ordered the immediate suspension of the approval for eight seed treatment products due to the mass death of bees in Germany's Baden-Wuerttemberg state. The suspended pesticide products are mainly neonicotinoids:

- 1) Antarc (ingredient: imidacloprid; produced by Bayer)
- 2) Chinook (imidacloprid; Bayer)
- 3) Cruiser (thiamethoxam; Syngenta)
- 4) Elado (clothianidin; Bayer)
- 5) Faibel (imidacloprid; Bayer)
- 6) Mesuro methiocarb; Bayer) and
- 7) Poncho (clothianidin; Bayer)

According to the German Research Centre for Cultivated Plants, they reported that 29 out of 30 dead bees it had examined had been killed by contact with the neonicotinoid clothianidin. Wild bees and other insects are also suffering from a significant loss of population. In communications with German beekeepers, Manfred Hederer, president of the German Professional Beekeeper's Association reported that 50 to 60 percent of the bees have died on average, and some beekeepers have lost all their hives. Beekeepers and agricultural officials in Italy, France and Holland all noticed

similar phenomena in their fields when planting began in April and May.

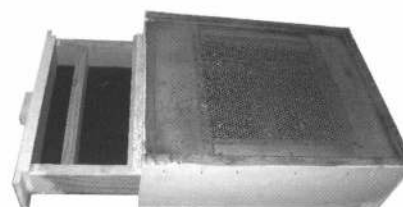
By applying a sophisticated analytical technique using High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) coupled to tandem Mass Spectrometry (atmospheric pressure chemical ionization-mass spectrometry or APCI-MS/MS), French scientists were able to precisely measure low amounts of imidacloprid in the soils, plants (leaves and flowers), and pollens. Extraction, separation, and detection were performed according to quality assurance criteria.

1. These neonicotinoid substances and their metabolites are systemic pesticides. Systemic neonicotinoid treatments, which target the entire plant, are probably contaminating all its parts (French team reported average levels 5-6 ppb), including the flower (reported average levels 5-6 ppb) through translocation from the root system and seeds (Bonmatin et al., 2003 and 2005). Corn had a reported tassel average of 4 ppb and the ear averaged 10 ppb. Sunflower and corn pollen contained about 5 ppb imidacloprid after pesticide treatment.

2. These neonicotinoid substances and metabolites are neurotoxic to insects including honey bees in low concentrations in the low parts per billion range. The neonicotinoid substances are powerful insecticides that irreversibly block the receptor sites for acetylcholine and neurotransmission in the adult insect or in the larval stage (J. Pest. Reform, 2001).

3. These neonicotinoid substances and metabolites have greater neurotoxic effects on honey bees due to genomic vulnerability. Research on mapping the honey bee genome discovered that its nicotinic acetylcholine receptor possesses eleven vulnerable subunit members in its nervous system (Jones et al., 2006). The honey bee possesses more nicotinic acetylcholine receptors than either the mosquito or the fruit fly, research has found. In short, the problem for honey bees is they possess more vulnerable acetylcholine receptors to be blocked by pesticides like imidacloprid compared to other insects, and from a theoretical perspective, the honey bee is made more sensitive to pesticides like imidacloprid and similar neurotoxins.

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French scientists led by Dr. Marc Colin (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, INRA) in 1998 videotaped one set of their experiments on bees exposed to low ppb concentrations of imidacloprid to demonstrate that the honey bees became too groggy and intoxicated effectively impairing their short-term memory in smell and theoretically blocking normal foraging behaviour. After only a few days, the honey bees exposed to low ppb levels of imidacloprid stopped feeding and their numbers sharply dropped compared to the control groups. Dr. Colin compared videotapes of exposed bees and unaffected control bees to dramatically demonstrate the powerful sublethal effects of imidacloprid. If the bees stopped their feeding behaviour, they will quickly die.

4. These neonicotinoid substances are persistent in the environment. Evidence confirms the environmental persistence of imidacloprid and fipronil as well as for some of their metabolites. The same applies to clothianidin and thiamethoxam. Persistence was expected since the stability of these compounds is necessary for the systemic action supposed to last for the entire growing period of the plant over several months. An imidacloprid fact sheet (J. Pest. Reform, 2001) cited 1993 EPA information on a field test showing the concentration of this insecticide did not decrease for a year following treatment. As the pesticides are widely used and may be used on all cereals, maize, sugar beets, potatoes (as spray), as well as on beetroot, oilseed rapes or sunflower, for several consecutive years and in a systematic rotation, it is necessary to study the behavior of the substances in the soil after several successive years of treatment, and the possible contamination of untreated flowering crops that have been grown in a soil being treated for several consecutive years.

5. These neonicotinoid substances and metabolites may act synergistically with fungicides in complex combinations. Research at a North Carolina University laboratory found certain neonicotinoids when combined with specific fungicides acted synergistically to increase the toxicity to honey bees over 1,000 times (Iwasa et al., 2004). This presents a concern for honey bees because both neonicotinoids and fungicides (Terraguard and Procure) are used rather widely.

6. Honey bees may avoid higher concentrations of neonicotinoids in plants with pollen and nectar. Evidence suggests that honey bees have an innate ability to detect higher concentrations of neonicotinoids in plants and may avoid feeding on those plants to avoid chemical exposures, which lead Bayer scientists to conclude there were no effects below 20 ppb (Schmuk et al., 2001). But the Bayer's studies may not have considered that honey bees have an innate detection ability to sense the presence of neonicotinoids above 20 ppb.

7. These neonicotinoid substances carry acute toxicity that is extremely harmful to bees. EPA-OPP has identified imidacloprid and clothianidin as highly toxic to honey bees. According to the EPA Fact Sheet on Clothianidin, "Clothianidin is highly toxic to honey bees on an acute basis (LD50>0.439 mg/bee). It has the potential for toxic chronic exposure to honey bees, as well as other non-target pollinators through the translocation of clothianidin residues in nectar and pollen. In honey bees, the affects of this toxic chronic exposure may include lethal and sublethal effects in the larvae and reproductive effects on the queen." Seeds are treated with

clothianidin in advance or sprayed with it in the field, and the insecticide can also be blown onto other crops. The chemical is often sprayed on corn fields during spring planting to create a protective film on cornfields.

Conclusion The EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs needs to promptly suspend use of the nicotiny insecticides until EPA obtains scientific evidence that sublethal effects do not cause harm to America's honey bees.

Sincerely yours,
Laurel Hopwood
Chair, Sierra Club Genetic Engineering Committee
2459 Queenston Road
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118-4315

Comment

These products are registered for use in New Zealand. Beekeepers should be making enquiries to farmers and horticulturists to see what chemical they are using on their crop—some could affect your bees.

Also, beekeepers should start recording instances of colony weakening. This can happen a month after coming out of pollination where a systemic spray has been used without an adequate holding period. My only experience of bee poisoning was a few years ago. I noticed reduced bee numbers and hardly any crops just in hives used for pollination. Others in the same apiary that were not moved did well.

- Frank Lindsay





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Control of varroa using organic treatments

— part 5

Michelle Taylor, Mark Goodwin, Heather McBrydie, Natalie Page-Weir and Harlan Cox

HortResearch, with support from the Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF), the National Beekeepers' Association (NBA), contributions from a number of beekeepers, and Zespri, are working with beekeepers to trial the efficacy of organic varroa control products. The organic products trialled were Apilife VAR®, Thymovar®, Apiguard®, and thymol crystals. Each of these products was applied to both single and double brood box hives. This is the fifth article of a series that will be presented as a means of sharing the information on use and efficacy of organic varroa control products.

Results

In spring 2007 the trial began with 10 cooperating beekeepers, but this number dropped to six during the season. Because of the limited number of beekeepers, the results presented should be viewed somewhat cautiously and considered to be preliminary results.

Spring 2007 results

Analysis of the spring (September) 2007 varroa levels indicated that none of the organic products was as effective at controlling varroa as either of the non-organic products Apistan® or Bayvarol®. The synthetically treated hives all had zero mites detected in a post-treatment sugar shake of 300 bees, whereas the organic hives had between zero and 21 mites. The mite levels in these hives were low enough not to require a second treatment as long as the colonies were treated again in early autumn. Apiguard® and Thymovar® had the same level of effectiveness in both single and double brood box hives, while thymol crystals were more effective in singles, and Apilife VAR® was more effective in double brood box hives.

Autumn 2008 results

The honey crop was analysed using data from five beekeepers who had followed trial protocols during spring 2007. There was no significant difference in the amount of honey collected from hives that were treated with any of the organic products: Apilife VAR®, Thymovar®, Apiguard® and thymol (Figure 1). Compared with the productivity of hives treated with the non-organic products, Apistan® or Bayvarol®, hives treated with Apilife VAR®, or Thymovar® were equally productive for honey yield whilst Apiguard® and thymol crystals produced significantly less honey (Figure 1). The single brood box colonies appeared to collect more honey than the double brood box colonies. This is probably because the honey in

the double brood box colonies was not collected from the second box beneath the queen excluder. Because of this, and some swarming from the single brood box colonies, we will use only double brood box colonies in future trials.

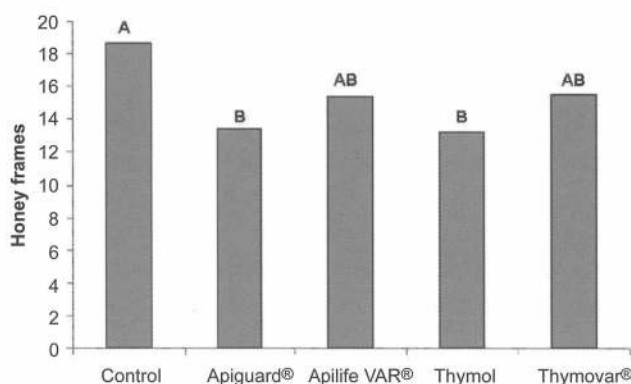


Figure 1: The average number of honey frames collected from 'control' (Apistan® or Bayvarol®) hives and from hives treated with one of four thymol-based varroa treatments. Shared letters above bars indicate no significant difference between the treatments ($P \geq 0.05$).

All the beekeepers found that mite numbers increased while the organic treatments were in the hives. The number of mites in each hive doubled, and in some cases there were 12 times more mites than before treatment. For example, before treatment there were 8 mites in a sugar shake of 300 bees; after treatment with thymol crystals (24 days) there were 102 mites in a sugar shake.

Among the hives from all six beekeepers, a total of 18 out of 120 (15%) colonies died during the autumn treatment period. Twelve hives from three of the beekeepers died because varroa levels became too high, despite all hives having fewer than 40 mites per 300 bees before they were treated with an organic product. The colonies that survived had all been treated a second time with a synthetic product.

In autumn, because organic treatments did not effectively control varroa and the varroa levels were very high after the treatment, we recommend that any hives with more than 40 varroa in a sugar shake after being treated, should then be treated with a synthetic control.

Because the number of mites increase rapidly during autumn, we suggest that beekeepers who wish to use organic treatments, treat their hives early in the autumn to knock down varroa numbers. At this stage it is **extremely important** that beekeepers monitor their hives after treating with an organic product, as it is likely that the product will not be effective at keeping varroa numbers sufficiently low. At least if hives are treated early enough in the season and that the organic treatments are found to be not effective, the chance to treat

hives with a synthetic miticide and reduce the risk of losing hives to varroa is still possible.

Further trials will be conducted in the coming season to determine if the control offered by organic compounds can be improved. To do this, the cooperating beekeepers will be removing honey early, using ventilated floorboards, and testing the effects of oxalic acid and fogging with food grade mineral oil whilst also treating with one thymol product. The 2008/2009 trial design will be outlined next month.

Our thanks go to the beekeepers that are taking part in this trial, for their generous use of hives, their time counting mites and for applying treatments. Thanks to Reuben Stanley for providing the Apilife VAR®, Stuart Ecroyd of Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies for providing the Thymovar®, and Trevor Cullen of Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies for providing the Apiguard® used in this trial.



Varroa: Random testing for varroa in an apiary is the quickest way to miss varroa.

Erratum

An error crept in on the back page of the September issue in some of the copies that were printed. The last sentence of the bottom photo caption should have read: They had also chewed openings in the top feeder—quite destructive.”

South City Print noticed the error during the print run and was able to overprint about half of the copies, but the other half will have the error.

We regret the error.

- Publications Committee

Please post your Certificate of Inspection (COI) before 15 DECEMBER 2008.

Failure to comply could mean that the Management Agency will bill you for this inspection.

FMG20014

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FMG is proud to support the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand

Congratulations to Bryan Clements of Waikato Honey Products Ltd, winner of our NBA Conference competition. Bryan correctly chose fire as FMG's most common claim from beekeepers in 2007 and collects \$200 of Ecroyds gift vouchers.

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Club Contacts & Beekeeping Specialty Groups

<p>WHANGAREI BEE CLUB Meets first Saturday each month (except January) Time: 10.00 am, wet or fine (we are keen)</p> <p>Contact: Mike Maunder Phone: 09 437 5847 Arthur Tucker Phone: 09 438 4283 Kevin & Melissa Wallace Phone: 09 423 8642 (Wellsford)</p>	<p>AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC Meets first Saturday monthly at Unitec, Pt Chevalier, Auckland.</p> <p>Contact: Carol Downer, President Phone: 09 376 6376 Email: fairy-angel-peewee@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p>FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets second Sunday of each month at 10.00 am for a cuppa and discussion. 10.30 am open hives.</p> <p>Contact: Peter Biland Phone: 09 294 8365</p>
<p>WAIKATO DOMESTIC BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</p> <p>Meets every third Thursday at Hillcrest High School, Community Room, Masters Ave., Hamilton, 7.30 pm.</p> <p>Contact: the Secretary Phone: 07 853 6304 Email: davew@gallagher.co.nz</p>	<p>HAWKE'S BAY BRANCH</p> <p>Meets at 7.30 pm, Arataki, Havelock North for workshops or meetings as advised to the members</p> <p>Contact: Mary-Anne Thomason, Branch Secretary Phone: 06 855 8038 E-mail: kintail_honey@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p>TARANAKI BEEKEEPING CLUB</p> <p>Contact: Stephen Black 685 Uruti Road RD 48, Urenui 4378 Phone: 06 752 6860 Email: beecub@beesrus.co.nz</p>
<p>WANGANUI BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets on the second Wednesday of the month.</p> <p>Contact: Neil Farrer Phone 06 343 6248</p>	<p>MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets every fourth Thursday in the month at Newbury Hall, SH3, Palmerston North</p> <p>Contact: James Gellen 55 Bruce Road Levin 5510 Phone 06 368 8553 E-mail: james.gellen@paradise.net.nz</p>	<p>WAIRARAPA HOBBYIST BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets second Sunday of month (except January) at Norfolk Road, Masterton at 1.30 pm.</p> <p>Convenors: Diana and Neale Braithwaite Phone: 06 308 9101 Fax: 06 308 9171 Email: nandd12@xtra.co.nz</p>
<p>WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Meets every second Monday of the month (except January) in Johnsonville. All welcome.</p> <p>Contact: John Burnet 21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa, Wellington 5028 Phone: 04 232 7863 Email: johnburnet@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p>MARLBOROUGH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Contacts: Darren Clifford, President 829 Taylor Pass Rd, RD4, Blenheim 7274 Phone: 03 577 6955</p> <p>Mark Biddington, Secretary 8 Belvue Crescent Witherlea, Blenheim 7201 Phone: 03 578 9746</p>	<p>NORTH CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets the second Monday of April, June, August and October</p> <p>Contact: Mrs Hobson Phone: 03 312 7587 Email: n.hobson@slingshot.co.nz</p>
<p>CHRISTCHURCH HOBBYIST CLUB Meets on the first Saturday of each month, August to May, except in January for which it is the second Saturday. The site is at 681 Cashmere Road, commencing at 1.30 pm</p> <p>Contact: Jeff Robinson 64 Cobra Street, Halswell, Christchurch 8025 Phone: 03 322 5392 Email: alpinebee@hotmail.com</p>	<p>SOUTH CANTERBURY REGION</p> <p>Contact: Peter Lyttle Phone: 03 693 9189</p>	<p>DUNEDIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB Meets on the first Saturday in the month September–April, (except January) at 1.30 pm. The venue varies so check phone or email contact below.</p> <p>Contact Club Secretary: Margaret Storer Phone: 03 415 7256 Email: flour-mill@xtra.co.nz</p>
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**Is your group or Branch missing from here? Or have your details changed?
Please contact the National Beekeepers' Association—inside front cover.
Please also send any changes or additions to: editor@nba.org.nz**



DECA holders please take note!

All beekeepers who have held a provisional DECA for over 12 months and have not sat and passed the AFB Recognition and Competency Course will by now have received a letter advising that their DECA will be revoked if by 31 October 2008 they have not passed the test.

In 1999 when the DECA scheme was introduced, beekeepers were issued with Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements. Upon signing this agreement and lodging it with the Management Agency, they agreed to be responsible for disease elimination in beehives that they owned or were responsible for. Under Part 1, Compulsory requirements, 1.10 beekeepers were required "To pass a competency test in American foulbrood disease recognition and destruction; issued by the Management Agency." (Course on AFB recognition will be available).

In the October 2006 issue of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper*, (page 9) beekeepers were again reminded, "If you take up the offer of a DECA, you will need to show your proficiency in AFB identification and control by passing a Disease Recognition and Destruction Competency Test. This test can be taken 'cold' or after completing a Disease Recognition and Competency course...**As part of the DECA you must agree to undertake a test on AFB recognition and control**

within six months of your DECA being approved."
[Emphasis added.]

There has been a lot of publicity with courses held around the country over the last 18 months to give everyone an opportunity to attend and pass the test. In August 2007 as part of the published Management Agency report, beekeepers were again reminded that "The Management Agency has resolved to revoke a Beekeeper's DECA if they had not complied by 31 July 2007."

Now, one year later, those beekeepers who for any reason have not passed the AFB Recognition and Competency Test will have their DECAs revoked. Beekeepers falling into this category have had ample opportunity to attend a course and/or sit the test.

Please take this advice seriously.

Now a DECA will only be granted after the paperwork has been completed and the beekeeper has passed an AFB Recognition and Competency test.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager