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Deadline for articles and advertising

June issue: 23 April

July issue: 26 May

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

Nancy Fithian
email: editor@nba.org.nz
(See page 2 for full details)

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President's Report

Visit to Minister of Food Safety

On 4 March I met with the Minister of Food Safety, the Hon. Kate Wilkinson, at the Beehive. Jim and Pam Edwards and Daniel Paul, the NBA's communications advisor, were also in attendance.

We put forward our views on a number of issues relevant to the industry. One of our major concerns was with cost recovery by the NZFSA. While they are obliged to recover costs, it was pointed out that were some issues relating to how the NZFSA justified setting the level. We noted that the new Government has a stated policy of improving efficiencies in the public service sector and we desired an improved cost-effective service. The Minister was sympathetic but expressed the view that a compromise situation was inevitable.

We also stated that the effect of the new RMP system was having a significant effect on the smaller players in the industry. In my own case, I mentioned that the costs of getting my honey extracted had increased by over 50% since the new procedures were instigated. The Minister was somewhat surprised and showed some concern about this situation. While some of these costs have resulted in an improvement in the standard of my honey, a significant component was related to compliance costs. It was also pointed out that the NZFSA was actually beginning to influence the structure of the industry and forcing changes over and above the food safety aspects of their mandate. While it could be argued that there is a need for some rationalisation in the way the industry processes bee products, it shouldn't be forced onto the industry because of unintended consequences of Government regulations intended to do something completely different.

Jim briefed the Minister on the current tutin situation and also impressed on her the desire for the industry and the regulators to work together. Confrontation was seen as an undesirable way to progress an issue.

I also raised concerns about the consistency in auditing standards between auditing agencies and within these agencies. There have been consistent comments within the industry of problems with verifiers having different interpretations on how things should be done. We suggested that the NZFSA ensures that the rules are applied in a consistent and fair manner so everyone is treated equally.

The Minister asked for a quick overview of the industry. When I mentioned the number of registered beekeepers she asked about the number that were not registered. She actually seemed rather interested and concerned about this especially in relation to export verification issues.

Visits to Ministers of the Crown are, unfortunately, very short so we were unable to fully discuss all our concerns.

Earlier in the day I was wearing my AFB NPMS hat and had a meeting with the debt collection agency acting for the MA to discuss modifications in the way debts would be collected.

Prior to the meeting with the Minister, Rex Baynes and I also met with senior MAF officials over the vexing issue of enforcement.

- Frans Laas

Bee Products Standards Council update

The Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) met on 17 March and began with a discussion on conflicts of interest in keeping with what is becoming standard practice in governance bodies.

The BPSC members reviewed the progress with managing the risk of toxic honey and received reports from field research that has been conducted this summer. The Tutin Honey Standard will be under review mid-2009 and the information gathered so far will assist with that review. There is now a better understanding of *Scolypopa* passion vine hopper life cycle and the effect of elevation on its distribution. While rainfall has been thought to reduce the risk, it is now apparent that any benefit lasts less than one day. Some new risk areas have been identified, but on the positive side, it is hoped that further analysis may show some areas to be a non-significant risk. The Council agreed that further research will be required.

The Council received a report on the residue monitoring programme. There have been no detections so far. The programme began about 10 years ago in response to the EU market requirements. Initially it was paid for by the exporters to those markets. As the demand for wide market assurances has grown, the cost recovery has been spread across all Risk Management Programme (RMP) holders.

The need to finalise the development of honey standards was emphasised and it was agreed to complete the process. The BPSC plans to have an independent consultant conduct the industry consultation over the next three months.

The Council considered reports of auditors requiring single use of drums only. It was noted that some drums are only suitable for single use because of the liner; but that some export customers will accept drums that have been used to pack honey previously as long as they have suitable liners and are still "fit for purpose".

The Council received some questions about membership of the BPSC. It reflected on the terms of reference, which state the purpose to be as follows:

1. To be a consultative forum between the New Zealand bee products industry and government.
2. To provide leadership, analysis and advice that contributes to the development of cost effective sustainable standards and risk-mitigating strategies that achieve best practice in risk management and consumer protection.
3. To work with the New Zealand Food Safety Authority in the establishment of food safety and other technical standards as well as protocols that are necessary for bee products.

In respect of Industry Standards, the BPSC is to act as the consultative body representing organisations, participants and businesses involved in the bee products industry, specifically in relation to the implementation of the Animal Products Act 1999.

The BPSC has been funded by three organisations (the National Beekeepers' Association, the New Zealand Honey Packers and Exporters Association and the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group), which initially made nominations to the Council when the development of the Code of Practice concluded. The Council noted that all members were also coincidentally members of the NBA.

It was agreed that if any individual had an issue, they could ask the organisation that they belong to ask the Council to consider these concerns. The Council has held ad hoc meetings and sessions such as the workshop on electronic certification and honey standards.

- Dr Jim Edwards
Chairman, BPSC

Discussion summary:

- Conflicts of interest
- Tutin honey standard
- Residue monitoring programme
- Honey standards
- Honey drums
- BPSC membership and terms of reference.

Did you know that when you have a product recall, you have to pay the full retail price for your product (not the amount you received for the product)? This can put financial pressure on a small company unless you can get insurance to cover this contingency.

Minister of Agriculture to speak at NBA Annual Conference

The Hon. David Carter, the Minister of Agriculture and Minister for Biosecurity, has accepted an invitation to attend and speak at the Annual Conference to be held in Rotorua.

The Minister will be speaking at 10.30am on Tuesday, 9 June.

Plan now to attend the Annual Conference.

- Jim Edwards
CEO

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From the Secretary's desk

The year is flying: we are already into the fourth month.

It is very pleasing to see a number of new members joining the NBA. The more beekeepers who join, the more your Executive Council can achieve on your behalf. However, plenty of people are still gaining benefit from the NBA without putting anything into the Association. While this is a fact of life, it would be good to see more beekeepers supporting the NBA.

Conference planning

We are already busy at the office getting ready for Conference and the AGM.

At Conference we plan to run two competitions.

The first is the **Quintessential Honey Competition for 2009**, which will be judged by those present to determine people's overall favourite honey, be it in liquid, naturally crystallised, creamed or from monofloral or polyfloral sources. No matter how many hives you have, all members are welcome to enter.

The second is a **Photo Competition**. This will be split into three sections: Bees at Work; Working with Bees and Processing/Products. Each section will be judged by those attending the conference, but we are working towards having a professional photographer to judge the overall top photo, so get those cameras clicking.

You will find the rules and entry forms on the members' section of the NBA website under the Events Conference heading. Copies are also available from your Ward Representative or Branch Secretaries. *[Editor's note: you can find additional information in the conference article on page 8.]*

Two of our little "honey bees": Sarah & Gemma.
Photo: Jim Edwards.

Visit to NBA Library

Five Council members visited the NBA Library during February. The Library has some great books available for members to borrow. We plan to have a complete list of books available on the members' section of the website shortly. If you have any useful books related to beekeeping that you have no further use for, please consider donating them to the library.

Subscription reminder

If you have not paid your subscription, this will be the last issue of the Journal you will receive. The membership form is on the NBA website www.nba.org.nz or you can contact me directly. See page two for details.

- Pam Edwards
NBA Executive Secretary

AFB Surveillance Programme 2008–2009

To date we have scheduled 410 apiaries for inspection, with inspectors having so far completed 128 apiaries (31%).

Feedback so far would indicate a favourable impression, with some areas completing inspection work in the spring and others waiting until the autumn.

It is anticipated there will be another 40–90 inspections scheduled for the North Island, giving a total of 450 to 500 apiaries inspected.

Return of inspection forms has been light over the past few months (as is the norm), but it is expected this will pick up during the autumn as inspectors winter down their own hives and free up time for inspection work.

Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager

Byron Taylor
AsureQuality Limited

Annual Disease Returns reach a new high with 96.4% response

Clause 27 of the Order in Council requires all beekeepers to provide the Management Agency with an Annual Disease Return (ADR) updating their hive information. This information provides the basis for New Zealand's statistics on beekeeper and hive numbers and AFB incidence.

The Management Agency is delighted to report that at the time of preparing this article for the April 2009 issue of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper,* 96.4% of registered beekeepers had lodged their ADR.

I have listed below a schedule detailing the percentage of ADRs returned since 1999.

Year	% ADRs Received
1999	76 %
2000	85 %
2001	70 %
2002	75 %
2003	70 %
2004	79 %
2005	82 %
2006	84 %
2007	83 %
2008	91 %
2009	96 %

It is interesting to note that in the MAF report on the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy dated September 2008, the term "disturbing" is used when describing the lack of compliance during the late 1990s and the early part of the new millennium.

The Management Agency wishes to acknowledge the work undertaken by AsureQuality Limited staff in attaining this excellent result.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager

Have you ever had someone ask you to deposit money into their account and when you get to the bank, the tellers advise that they can't use the alphabetical sequence as a reference for the deposit (e.g., abc honey, or john smith). It puts you on the spot. How will they know that is your money?

Try using your phone number, or something that is uniquely you!

Extraction Plant Open Day

On Saturday 6 June 2009, an open day will be held at the Beeline Honey Extraction plant, 32 Otewa Road, Otorohanga. This plant became operational in 2008 with a modern array of honey extraction equipment, including a horizontal extractor. So if you have never had the chance to see a horizontal extractor working, now is your chance.

The open day will start at 11 am and go through to 3 pm. At approximately 2 pm we will start the plant up, and extract some boxes. We would appreciate that you come with clean footwear and good health!

Entry is by gold coin donation and is being held in association with the Waikato Branch of the NBA. BBQ lunch will be on sale.

Otorohanga is the Kiwiana Capital of New Zealand, and boasts that it is the closest town to the Waitomo Caves. You will also find the Otorohanga Kiwi house and Native Bird Park within the town boundary. There are also lots of Kiwiana displays around the town. Bring the family for the day.

If you are part of a hobbyist club, then way not make it a weekend away? Conference 2009 starts the next day (Sunday 7 June) in Rotorua, with the new and small beekeepers' day being planned for that day.

Directions to the plant

If you are travelling from Auckland or Hamilton, take State Highway 31 into Otorohanga and then head south out of the town. If you are travelling from the south, New Plymouth, National Park, Wanganui, then State Highway 3 will bring you into the south of the town. Look out for the beekeeper field day signs at the south end of town.

Our landlord has kindly allowed us to hold the open day; all we ask is that you observe the parking signs, thank you.

- Jeremy and Fiona O'Brien

National Beekeepers Association of New Zealand Incorporated

Notice of 2009 Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the NBA will be held at the
Millennium Hotel Rotorua
Wednesday, 10 June 2009
commencing at 8.30 am

Jim Edwards
Chief Executive Officer

Conference 2009: many good reasons to be there

The 2009 conference will be held at the Millennium Hotel in Rotorua from 7–11 June. Why Rotorua? The Millennium Hotel offered the best facility for all aspects of the conference. There are four well-equipped seminar rooms of differing sizes, a fantastic sponsors' area, good food, and excellent accommodation. It is also within walking distance of many more accommodation options and sightseeing for those with family attending who do not wish to partake in the conference.

The detail of the programme has not been finalised so we can leave options open for any last-minute changes that may need to be made because of the ever-changing environment we live in. The invitation to conference will give you a broad idea of the format. The purpose of this article is to give you an overview of the conference.

New and small beekeepers' day: Sunday 7 June

The 2008 conference ran a very successful hobbyist day in Masterton that was well attended. With such good support we consider it important to continue with this type of programme to encourage new beekeepers and hobbyists into the industry, with all the information they require to ensure they enjoy their beekeeping in a safe manner.

Specialty group meetings

These meetings will be held on Sunday 7 June and Thursday 11 June, many of which are open to all.

Outdoor forum: Sunday 7 and Monday 8 June

The outdoor forum will be an opportunity to check out the utility and truck options and all the equipment used in conjunction with vehicles. Most of the equipment will be on display until Tuesday, however, we are making designated sessions in this area where people can watch demonstrations and talk to both the owners of the equipment and other beekeepers.

Elective Workshop sessions: Monday 8 June and Tuesday 9 June

These sessions will enable us to present a greater range of topics. The types of topics will include business mentoring, new registered products for our hives and how to use them, healthy living, new log books and how they work, driver training, new truck regulations, other uses of bee products, plus many more. If you have an idea, please let the committee know and we will see if we can find an opportunity.

Seminar Days: Monday 8 June and Tuesday 9 June

Weather is an important aspect of beekeeping, so Ken Ring is speaking on weather prediction. For those of you who have heard Ken speak before, you will know he is an excellent and entertaining speaker.

Shane Max from Zespri will discuss artificial pollination and just how far this has progressed in recent times.

Dr Mark Goodwin will present some pollination opportunities and an update on metarhizium.

Ever wondered what you would have to do when a foot and mouth outbreak (or any other biosecurity issue) happens on the farm on which your hives are located? Come along and find out.

Neonicotinoids are an emotive subject and we are working on bringing together discussion from all sides.

Tutin is very topical at the moment, so there will be opportunity to review this year's information and discuss how to move forward positively on this issue.

There will be other equally interesting topics for presentation on which we will keep you posted. Look out for the full programme in the May edition of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper.*

Competitions: open to all NBA members

This year we are having three competitions that will be judged during conference. Put on your thinking caps, dust off the lens and enter your prized honey.

Roy Paterson Trophy

Roy Paterson became a MAF Apiaries Instructor in the years when beekeeping was going through a period of expansion from very much a cottage industry to small business ventures.

Roy was a keen inventor with an engineering background, so he spent a great deal of time designing equipment for mechanising the handling of honey in the honey house. Some

of his equipment included honey warmers and strainers and a steam plant for a hand uncapping knife. He also made float switches to operate in honey tanks and a saw bench for beekeepers.

Prior to 1945, the tree/shrub that had caused honey poisoning hadn't been identified. Although scientists had isolated hyenanchin in honey, they knew this wasn't the whole story. Roy spent days in the Pongakawa Valley where some of this honey had come from, trying to work out which flower the bees were working. Roy noticed the honeydew on the tutu bush after observing the large numbers of *Scolypopa australis* feeding on the tutu. He then realised that the bees were working the honeydew. From leaves sent to Wallaceville, the industry then found out that the tutu honeydew was responsible for the poisonings.

Roy was happiest if he was out meeting beekeepers rather than working in an office. He also enjoyed visiting schools and talking to children about bees and beekeeping.

The Roy Paterson Award was instigated to remember Roy and his work with the beekeeping industry. The award is for inventions to help beekeepers in their work. I am sure there are plenty of good ideas out there that are really worth sharing with others, and may win you the prestigious and beautiful trophy designed and built by John and Peter Berry.

Any queries, please contact Barbara Pimm 07 315 7650 or hikuhoney@xtra.co.nz

Quintessential Honey Competition for 2009

We are seeking the Quintessential Honey 2009: people's overall favourite honey, be it in liquid, naturally crystallised, creamed or from monofloral or polyfloral sources. Honey will be presented anonymously to tasters, grouped in colour and presentation style.

All entries must be delivered to the competition table at conference by 9 am, Monday 8 June 2009.

NBA beekeepers are invited to submit their personal favourite honey for judging.

400mls of unmarked honey is to be presented in two unmarked 200ml square plastic jars with white plastic lids, available from Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies or Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies.

Honey will be judged by fellow members and invited visitors as to overall impression, including colour, texture and flavour.

All entries must be accompanied by an entry form (available on the members' section of the NBA website under the category of Events Conference).

Competition contact: Maureen Maxwell, 021 956 349 or maureen@beesonline.co.nz

Photo Competition

Another new initiative we are running this year is a photo competition. This will be split into three sections: Bees at Work; Working with Bees and Processing/Products.

Unmarked 5x7 photos must be received by Pam Edwards, NBA Executive Secretary, either via post on or before Thursday 4 June 2009, or delivered to the NBA stand at conference no later than midday on Monday 8 June 2009.

All entries must be accompanied by an entry form (available on the members' section of the NBA website under the category of Events Conference).

Entries will be judged by a members' choice in each section and I am presently working towards arranging a prize for the overall winner, judged by a professional photographer.

Competition contact: Pam Edwards, 06 362 6301 or 027 205 1956, secretary@nba.org.nz

Field trips

With the conference being in Rotorua we are within easy driving distance of two major honey processors. To make the most of the opportunity to see how other operators go about their business, we have arranged a trip to Comvita and Arataki Rotorua Division. This will be a good opportunity to get an inside view of how these large companies process product in today's environment. For the cost of the bus fare you could spend a really interesting day on either Wednesday or Thursday to complete your conference experience.

Sponsors

Conference would be very expensive if not for sponsors. Our sponsors this year include Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies, Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies, Tunnicliffe Timber, Comvita, FMG, Beetek, Manuka Health New Zealand, Commercial Autos, Beegreen, HP Packaging (NZ), New Zealand Honey Producers Honey Co-operative, NZ Beeswax, Boutelje Products, Aqua Rain, NZ Sugar, Eastpack, Seeka, The Stainless Factory, Total Tie Downs, Leafscreen NZ, Mills Reef Winery, Gibbons Engineering, Milburn Apiaries, Glenbrook Machinery, South City Print, Airborne Honey, McAuley's Transport, BeeSafe Agrichemicals, Tawari Apiaries, Apiary Services, and AsureQuality Limited.

A number of other sponsors will be at conference, and as they confirm their availability and ability to support conference in these difficult times we will let you know.

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Hotel options

We have made arrangements with two hotels: the booking forms are included in the conference liftout. The conference is being held in the Millennium Hotel, which is a 4.5 star hotel, while the Kingsgate is a 3.5 star hotel approximately five minutes' walk away. Note the twin room options where people willing to share can achieve a good rate. I have not seen the rooms at the Kingsgate but I am sure they are good. The Millennium twin rooms are mostly two bedroom with a double bed in each—perhaps a good option for some.

We think the program is extensive and interesting. The timing is different to past years but take a break early and enjoy Rotorua, then visit the New Zealand National Agricultural Fieldays® (Mystery Creek, Hamilton, 10–13 June) on your way home. We look forward to seeing you.

Meanwhile, take the time to register early and drop a line if you have any thoughts on the programme.

- Barbara Pimm

AFB NPMS EMAIL NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE TO ALL LEVY PAYERS

In response to a call for more information on the American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS), the Management Agency publishes several times a year a newsletter dealing with issues relating to AFB.

This newsletter can only be accessed by way of email as the cost of mailing is prohibitive. If you are not on email, I recommend that you contact your local NBA area representative or hobby group (see the Club Contacts on page 55) and request a copy.

Those who are on email and would like to be on the distribution list are asked to contact me at rbaynes@ihug.co.nz

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager

ADVERTORIAL

Analysis for Tutin

The presence of tutin in honey received a lot of attention in the media last year when twenty two people were taken ill after consuming honey containing the toxin. In the past a number of people have been either killed or hospitalised over years as a result of eating honey contaminated with tutin. While tutin is extremely toxic to humans, to produce the toxic honey, all of the following conditions are required:

- Concentrations of numerous tutu bushes
- High numbers of vine hoppers
- Hot dry weather to allow the honeydew to build up on the tutu
- An absence of more attractive food sources for bees, usually created by drought
- The presence of honey bees being managed for honey production.

Tutin contamination in honey occurs when bees gather honeydew produced by a sap sucking vine hopper insect feeding on tutu plants. The tutu plant is a widely distributed native species. It can be found throughout New Zealand, particularly along stream banks and in regenerating native bush.

The main time of the year that tutin can contaminate honey is in late December in the Eastern Bay of Plenty (EBOP) and mid-January to the end of April in the Coromandel and Marlborough Sounds areas.

On the 25th of January 2009, the New Zealand Food Safety Authority introduced new regulations which aim to prevent tutin contaminated honey reaching consumers. (See http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/policy-law/legislation/food-standards/tutin-standard-final.pdf)

Hill Laboratories have developed a test for tutin that is fast, accurate and affordable. The method utilises liquid chromatography coupled to triple quadrupole mass spectrometer. This method is highly selective and sensitive down to 0.01 mg/kg.

To request testing for tutin, go to our website http://www.hill-laboratories.com/ and follow the links.

A specialised Honey and Bee Products Analysis Request Form allows you to request tutin testing as well as a range of other tests for honey that we offer.

Alternatively for a copy of this form, or assistance in ordering Tutin testing, please call one of our Food & Bio Client Service Managers: Chris Berkers on (07) 857 0607 or Barry Axon (07) 857 0609 for further details.

The Honey Bee Exotic Disease and Pest Surveillance Programme—Autumn 2009

Byron Taylor
Apicultural Officer
AsureQuality Limited
Email: taylorby@asurequality.com

Every year a number of apiaries throughout New Zealand are selected to provide samples for the Honey Bee Exotic Disease Surveillance Programme. Hives are surveyed during the autumn by experienced apicultural professionals from within the industry who have a keen interest in the wellbeing of the New Zealand beekeeping industry.

The annual surveillance programme has two primary goals:

1) to detect an exotic 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 which help facilitate the negotiation of more favourable overseas market access conditions.

The specifications for the programme this year have remained largely unchanged from last year. A total of 650 apiaries in two risk categories will be sampled for a range of pests and diseases of importance to the beekeeping industry. Every hive in each of the apiaries is required to be inspected and tested in order to maintain the sensitivity of the surveillance programme.

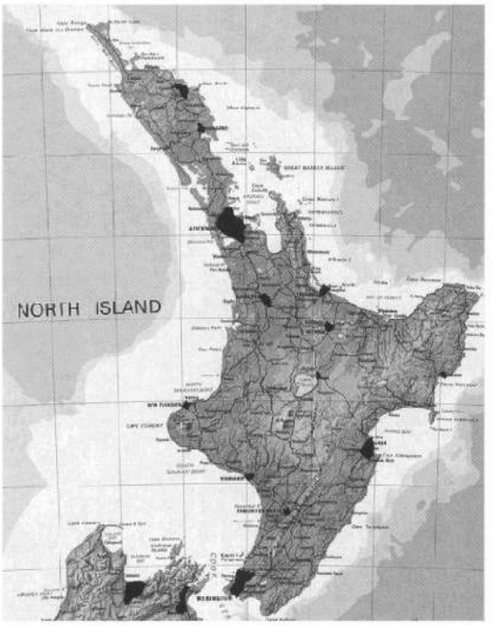
The exotic pests and diseases that we are concerned about are the same as in previous years, although inspectors are trained to report anything that looks unusual. The official list is:

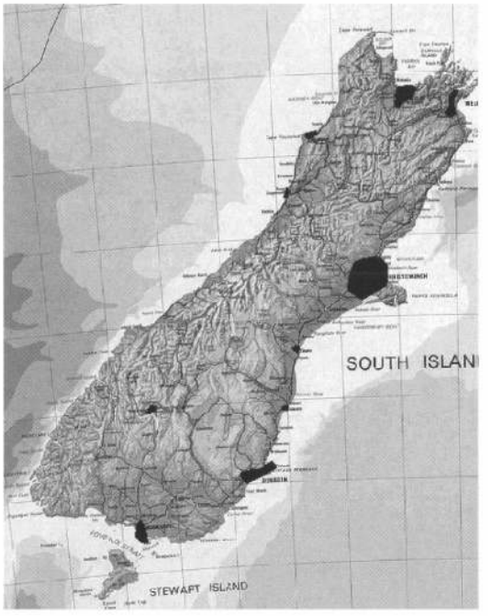
- Africanised Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera scutellata)*
- Cape Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera capensis*)
- Other Apis species (*cerana, dorsata* etc)
- Asian mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae, Tropilaelaps koenigerum*)
- other Varroa species (*Varroa jacobsoni, Varroa underwoodi, Euvarroa sinhai*)
- Tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*)
- European foulbrood (*Mellisococcus plutonius*)
- Small Hive Beetle (*Aethina tumida*)
- the Parasitic Fly (*Braula coeca*)

Inspection programme outline

The inspection and sampling programme is split into two components:

1) the inspection and sampling of a number of apiaries in high-risk areas as shown in the following maps
2) the testing of bee samples provided from apiaries for which clearance is required to supply bees for export.





High-risk areas

350 apiaries from within high-risk areas will be inspected and sampled for the exotic pests and diseases mentioned above. 183 of these apiaries come from 13 high-risk areas identified in the North Island, with the other 167 coming from 10 high-risk areas identified in the South Island. High-risk areas are areas that have been identified as most likely points of introduction of an exotic bee disease and include:

- seaports
- airports
- large population centres
- tourist areas.

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The beekeepers carrying out the inspections, in addition to being highly experienced, are recognised as Authorised Persons (Level 2) under section 103 of the Biosecurity Act. This means that they have the legal authority to enter property for the purposes of inspection and sampling hives under the direction of an Authorised Person (Level 1), who are AsureQuality Apicultural Officers. However, the inspector will endeavour to contact the owner prior to any hives being inspected to arrange a suitable inspection time.

In order to achieve the required detection sensitivity, every hive in each of the selected apiaries is to be tested. They will each receive a 24-hour miticide and sticky board test to detect infestations of external mites and will have an adult bee sample taken to be tested for Tracheal Mites (*Acarapis woodi*).

Sticky boards being removed after a 24-hour miticide and sticky board test. Photo: Murray Reid.

In addition to the routine sampling, hives will receive a visual inspection for signs of European foulbrood, Small Hive Beetle, Africanised Honey Bee, Cape Bee, other *Apis* species and *Braula*. In some cases, suspect samples will be taken while in others (particularly if there is a threat to human safety), the hive will be reassembled and marked for further investigation and/or sampling. The inspectors will also note any unusual symptoms.

For the first time this year, AP2s carrying out exotic disease surveillance will have access to a field test kit for European foulbrood suspects. The kits are compact and easy to use, looking very much like pregnancy test kits with a similar mode of operation. Inspectors will take 5–6 suspect larval samples, mix them in a solution and place a drop of the resulting mix into the well on the test strip. After a short wait, the result panel will display one bar to confirm that the test has been successful and a second bar if the sample is positive. This will allow for faster differential diagnosis and will improve our response time should the need arise.

If your apiary/s is selected to be inspected you will not be advised of the results of the tests unless they are positive. If a test does come back positive, an exotic disease response will most likely be launched.

Bee samples from export supply apiaries

300 apiaries, from the population of apiaries supplying bees for export, will have an adult bee sample taken and tested for both internal and external mites. Each supplier is required to provide samples from up to 25 apiaries that they use to harvest bees for export.

As with the high-risk samples, beekeepers are not informed of negative test results.

Apiary database

The Honey Bee Exotic Disease Surveillance Programme relies heavily on the apiary database for the design of the surveillance programme and the selection of apiaries to inspect. Because of this, Biosecurity New Zealand provides 25% of the funds required to collect the information on the database. Biosecurity New Zealand have also made a significant contribution to the upgrade of the Apiary Database which is currently underway. More information on the upgrade will be available at the National Beekeepers' Association 2009 annual conference.

What you can do

While it is important for the surveillance programme to inspect and sample hives, it is even more important for all beekeepers to be always on the lookout for an exotic pest or disease. Read the pamphlet on exotic bee pests and diseases of honey bees, and when you are inspecting your hives always look for signs of an exotic disease. If you suspect an exotic pest or disease ring the MAF Exotic Disease Hotline 0800 809 966, or contact your local AsureQuality Apicultural Officer.

Lastly, thanks to all those beekeepers who are taking part in the 2009 programme. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

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Mob: (021) 283 1829
ropert@asurequality.com

Rating the antibacterial activity of manuka honey

Professor Peter Molan
Honey Research Unit, University of Waikato

The unique type of antibacterial activity that is present in manuka honey, distinct from the antibacterial activity due to hydrogen peroxide that is common to all honeys, was discovered in research at the University of Waikato in 1982. This discovery was first published in an MSc thesis which is held in the university library (K.M. Russell, 1983, *The antibacterial properties of honey*), and subsequently in a journal (Molan, P.C. and Russell, K.M. 1988, 'Non-peroxide antibacterial activity in some New Zealand honeys', *Journal of Apicultural Research 27*, 62–67).

The variation that occurs in the level of this unique activity in manuka honey was reported in a subsequent publication (Allen, K.L., Molan, P.C. and Reid, G.M., 1991, 'A survey of the antibacterial activity of some New Zealand honeys', *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology 43*, 817–822) where it was noted that:

> *The present survey has shown not all samples said to be manuka honey can be relied upon to provide this antibacterial activity.*

It was from this came the term **"Active Manuka Honey"**. The term was used in a fact sheet put out by the *New Zealand Honey Food & Ingredient Advisory Service* in 1998, which said:

> *All of the patients in the trials who were taking the special active manuka honey, as opposed to those patients taking ordinary inactive manuka honey, had a marked improvement in their symptoms.*

It also said:

> *Research at the University of Waikato showed that* ***some*** *New Zealand manuka honey (and it is important to emphasise* ***"some", not all)*** *New Zealand manuka honey has a unique antibacterial activity. Laboratory trials showed that this active manuka honey is effective in killing* Helicobacter pylori.

Because of increasing publicity about active manuka honey though news media reports on the research being done at the Honey Research Unit at the University of Waikato, the public demand for this special honey increased. But it also brought out people seeking to gain financially by 'passing off' to the public so-called manuka honey which did not have the unique antibacterial activity. In 1997 I was asked by TRADENZ (the predecessor to New Zealand Trade and Enterprise) to help with the setting up of an Industry Group for the producers of the genuine active manuka honey, and to advise on how best the producers of the genuine active manuka honey, and consumers, could be protected from those selling manuka honey without the unique type of activity yet implying that it was the same thing.

Unfortunately the recommendations I made have not provided the answer to the problem. For instance, in the UK it is said that much of the manuka honey on sale does not have measureable levels of the non-peroxide antibacterial activity that is unique to manuka honey. Similarly there is honey on sale in New Zealand where the rating of activity on it is not a rating of the unique type of activity as measured by the assay described in Allen *et al.* (1991). There are also people selling manuka honey with the activity claimed to be the unique non-peroxide activity "assayed by the method developed by Dr. Molan" but there are beekeepers saying that different results from different laboratories are obtained for the same honey. There have also been many complaints that poor repeatability in results is seen when the same honey is sent repeatedly to the same laboratory. Consequently there is a need for a method for assaying and certifying the unique non-peroxide antibacterial activity of manuka honey that is accurate, highly reliable, independent of competing companies, open to anyone meeting set standards, and in which consumers can have confidence.

The measurement of the antibacterial activity of manuka honey by the method published in Allen *et al.* (1991) is by reference to a standard antibacterial agent (phenol) which is not what gives the manuka honey its activity. The assay uses bacteria which can vary in their relative sensitivity to the factors in the manuka honey and to phenol. Because of this, small differences in the way the assay is performed can give different results for the rating of the honey. (This is why cross-checking between laboratories is essential.) Similarly, lack of adequate control to ensure that the catalase added to destroy hydrogen peroxide is fully effective can lead to results being reported for non-peroxide activity for honeys such as honeydew, which have high activity due to hydrogen peroxide but no non-peroxide activity. Thus people selling honey saying that the claimed non-peroxide activity has been tested by the method published by Allen *et al.* (1991) may be misleading the consumer.

The unit of measurement of the antibacterial activity of honey relative to that of phenol has *de facto* always been defined by the Honey Research Unit at the University of Waikato, with most other laboratories which carry out such measurement cross-checking their results with the Honey Research Unit to ensure that they are the same. I shall shortly be submitting for publication a paper which tightly defines the conditions and controls for the testing (and thus for the unit of activity) so that any laboratory following exactly the published method will get the correct result. This can then be used as the basis of a standard for Active Manuka Honey and can be used by regulatory authorities overseas to ensure that products on sale have the activity level claimed. If it is claimed that a laboratory has used the method then it can easily be verified if that is true, because with the tight specification of procedure exactly the same result should be obtained if the honey is re-tested.

The specifications in the method will ensure that there is no bias towards an incorrect result. For example, the new specification

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BEESWAX WANTED

Cappings Beeswax

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Don't commit elsewhere before talking to us.

South Island Combs Wax

We are particularly interested in buying combs wax which has not been subjected to Varroa Treatments or PDB.
We are paying record prices for suitable quality beeswax.
Now is the time to cull out those old dark combs and cash in on the high beeswax prices.
It is also well recognised that bees do a lot better on new clean combs.
(See our other advertisement for Comb Foundation, and Total Frame specials).

Combs Rendering and Cappings Melting

For South Island Beekeepers we offer a highly efficient combs rendering service to recover the wax from old combs and slum.
We also render cappings.
(Minimum quantities apply)

For more information regarding the sale of beeswax to us including information about the necessary documentation see www.beeswax.co.nz/purchase.htm

We accept beeswax as payment for all our products.

New Zealand Beeswax Ltd

Post: Private Bag 6001, GERALDINE 7956, New Zealand
Factory: 44 Gladstone St South, ORARI, South Canterbury
Phone: 64 3 693 9189; Fax: 64 3 693 9780
Email: info@beeswax.co.nz; Web: www.beeswax.co.nz

The Beeswax Specialists

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that checks should be made spectrophotometrically on the purity of the phenol standard will prevent a laboratory giving results that are consistently too high because their standard contains less phenol than is assumed, as can happen if the phenol has deteriorated with age. Another new specification will be that repeated assays are done. This is necessary so that allowance is made for the inherent margin of error and the variation in the many factors which cause deviation from the correct results. These are random (*i.e.* give no bias), so by repeated measurement it is possible to apply statistical analysis to estimate the correct result and the degree of confidence there can be that the true result will be within a particular degree of variance from the stated result. This has not been normal procedure in commercial assaying of honeys even though it is a basic scientific procedure. (It was not included in the method published by Allen *et al.* because that paper described an investigation of a very large number of samples of honey, seeking trends associated with floral type, so knowing the exact level of activity of single samples was not necessary.)

Research in the Honey Research Unit seeking improvement in the accuracy of the assay method for measuring the antibacterial activity of honey has been going on for many years. Some of the findings and new ideas have been implemented in the commercial testing over the years. Others have been recommended but not implemented, as published in the August 2008 issue of *The New Zealand Beekeeper* (pp. 24–25). Since then we have done further work to identify the various reasons for the errors and variation that occur in the results, and to devise ways of eliminating them. Because funding for this work has not been forthcoming from the honey industry the research has been funded by the university. Consequently the intellectual property (IP) from this further work belongs to the university. A proprietary assay giving more accurate and less variable results will be offered in the near future. With this, if the sample of honey supplied is truly representative of the bulk quantity the sample is taken from, then beekeepers can have a more reliable measure of the activity of the honey when trading drums of honey, and to be able to confidently adjust or confirm the blending of drums in a stirred vat to get a batch with the desired activity level.

A condition of use of this new proprietary assay will be that the results are not to be used for rating the activity of honey sold in retail packs unless the producer is licensed to have the University of Waikato certification of activity on the packs. This new assay will be a service available only for beekeepers to know the activity of bulk quantities of honey. This is because there will also be offered by the University of Waikato a certification of the correctness of the rating of antibacterial activity of retail packs of honey. This certification will be done only after assay of samples of finished labelled retail packs with labels bearing the batch number, with proof of consistency of activity throughout the batch being required, so as remove any scope for error which could lead to consumers purchasing jars of honey with activity not true to label.

The certification will include a statement of the statistical confidence in the correctness of the rating, for example, "There is 99.9% certainty that the activity is no more than 0.1 units below what is stated."

I have been approached by several companies over a number of years asking for the University of Waikato to provide such a certification of rating the activity of manuka honey that would be open to anyone producing the genuine article. I have resisted doing so because I have invested so much effort into educating the world's consumers about the system I initially recommended to TRADENZ. However, because there is now so much confusion in the market place (see the recent article in the *Daily Mail*, a major UK daily newspaper, as an example: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1134423/Is-manuka-honey-really-worth-money.html) the time has come for the provision of a rating system that consumers can trust, that will easily allow them to distinguish genuine Active Manuka Honey.

This certification by the University of Waikato is expected to be readily recognised as trustworthy by consumers because there has been so much exposure of the Honey Research Unit at the University of Waikato in the news media. I have been filmed in 19 TV documentaries on manuka honey, contributed information for seven others, filmed about manuka honey for 20 TV news programmes, interviewed for 14 radio news programmes, and have been interviewed in 38 other radio programmes. I have also been interviewed about manuka honey for 111 newspapers and 137 magazines, books and news websites. Most of these TV, radio and print media have been overseas. Discussion with buyers for companies in the health food trade overseas has indicated ready acceptance of the certification system because of the reputation of the Honey Research Unit and the recognition of the expertise of this group in the measurement of the antibacterial activity of honey.

Because the new proprietary assay of activity will give the same results when run in any laboratory, it will be possible to license overseas laboratories to operate the service and thus allow the university to certify honey exported in bulk and packed overseas, as long as the requirement is met of assays being done on labelled retail packs. This will give beekeepers more options for marketing the honey they produce, and at the same time hopefully will encourage reputable packing companies overseas to sell genuine Active Manuka Honey. The university will also make the proprietary assay available to regulatory authorities overseas so that they can easily check if manuka honey on sale in their countries genuinely does have the activity claimed.

Beekeeper to keep selling after poisoning

A Whangamata hobbyist beekeeper who accidentally poisoned 22 people has said he will keep making and selling honey.

Projen Apiaries beekeeper Kevin John Prout was ordered to pay $3350 reparation to his unintended victims, after pleading guilty in Waihi District Court yesterday to three charges of selling contaminated honeycomb and a fourth charge over labelling of the honey.

Prout told the *Waikato Times* he hoped his case would alert other hobbyist hivemakers to the dangers of poisonous pollen from the tutu plant.

He said the sentence was fair and he would continue working with bees, which he called an amazing insect.

"I look forward to putting out a good, safe product again in the future," he said.

Prout's honey was sold in Whangamata on the Coromandel last Easter.

Food Safety Authority (FSA) tests found the honey, marketed as "A Taste of Whangamata Pure Honey", contained high levels of the toxic substances tutin and its derivative hyenanchin.

Prout told the court he also accidentally poisoned himself by eating the honey, becoming delirious and was hospitalised for three days.

Medical staff conducted extensive tests but failed to detect the tutin and after returning home from hospital, he packaged and sold the honeycomb.

He was unaware the honey was poisoned.

At the trial, Judge Thomas Ingram criticised the FSA, saying it was their responsibility to make sure people registering hives knew about tutin poisoning.

NZPA

[Source: http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/2296984/Beekeeper-to-keep-selling-after-poisoning, 27 March 2009.]

[See also the media release from NZFSA dated 27 March 2009, http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/publications/media-releases/2009/2009-3-25-beekeeper-fined-forselling-poisoned-honey.htm]

The Publications Committee would love to hear from someone out there who would be willing to share some skills and write a few pointers for *The New Zealand BeeKeeper.* See the bottom of page two for the editor's contact details.

Upgrade of Apiary Database on track

The Management Agency is pleased to report work is progressing well on the upgrade of the apiary database.

It is anticipated that pre-production testing will take place over the next six to eight weeks, involving user acceptance testing and problem solving.

It is hoped to launch the new database during the AFB session of the NBA conference in Rotorua, during which the implementation programme will also be explained.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager

National Bee Week, 4–8 May 2009

The NBA has teamed up with HortNZ and Organics Aotearoa to promote National Bee Week from 4–8 May.

The intention is to raise public and political awareness of the honey bee with activities targeted to politicians and the media. Branches of the NBA and other organisations and companies associated with the industry are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to raise awareness in their communities.

The overall theme is: **"The Honey Bee can not survive without human intervention"**. There will be daily themes as follows:

• Monday, 4 May	The value of honey bee products
• Tuesday, 5 May	The value of pollination
• Wednesday, 6 May	The responsible use of agrichemicals to look after our bees
• Thursday, 7 May	Research and development
• Friday, 8 May	Biosecurity and the need to protect bees

On Tuesday evening, the Hon. David Carter, the Minister of Agriculture and Minister for Biosecurity, is hosting a function at Parliament for politicians and parliamentary staff.

This is a real opportunity to develop strong public awareness and increase the industry's reputation with constructive promotional activities. Success this year will see this become an annual event.

- Jim Edwards
CEO

Travelling abroad? Rules about taking New Zealand honey with you

(News from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority, December 2008)

"Can I take some jars of NZ honey when I visit the 'rellies'?" The New Zealand Food Safety Authority receives many calls about this from soon-to-be travelling Kiwis.

There is no NZFSA requirement for such circumstances. Many countries allow up to 5kg or 5 litres (UK up to 1 litre of glorious NZ honey) of food products per person subject to local customs, health and agriculture requirements.

To the best of our knowledge the United Kingdom, Australia and United States generally permit limited quantities of honey if in unopened commercially-packed containers.

For the United Kingdom allowances for posting honey or taking it with you when you travel are found here:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/illegali/pdf/personal_import1.pdf
http://importdetails.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Location=None&Module=IDDSearch

You may wish to check further either with the embassies or by contacting the relevant departments in the destination country perhaps the fortunate would-be recipient can make some enquiries.

Please ensure that you don't attempt to bring any honey back into New Zealand upon your return.

NZ bees are relatively disease free and honey can spread bee diseases.

Our honey is exported in commercial quantities to many countries. As an alternative to taking honey with you try asking the New Zealand packer where it can be purchased in the country you are travelling to.

Disclaimer: *This publication is not a legal interpretation of the Animal Products Act or the Animal Products (Ancillary and Transitional Provisions) Act and is intended only as a guide.*

Contact for enquiries

New Zealand Food Safety Authority, 68–86 Jervois Quay, PO Box 2835, Wellington, NEW ZEALAND Phone: +64 4 894 2500, Fax: +64 4 894 2501

Source: http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/publications/info-pamphlet/bee-products/travelling-abroad.htm

[Editor's note: Passengers need to carry honey out of New Zealand in their stowed luggage as opposed to hand luggage. Honey appears to be caught in the liquids limit that has been enforced over the last few years.]

Sitting the AFB Competency Test without attending a training workshop

The application to sit the competency test is required to be returned 12 days prior to the requested date you wish to sit the test.

This is due to the fact that post from some parts of the country can take up to five days to reach me, and the same amount of time for the papers to reach the Proctor.

You can ask any responsible person to be a Proctor for you, such as librarians and teachers. They must of course agree to do it. They will supervise you as you do the test.

Study the revised yellow AFB disease book "AFB Elimination Manual" by Mark Goodwin, at home at your leisure.

If you do not have or cannot find your book, a copy is available from the NBA Executive Secretary. Pam Edwards, 10 Nikau Lane, RD 3, Otaki 5583, cost $25 plus pp.

Pam Edwards' e-mail is: secretary@nba.org.nz. You can also go to www.nba.org.nz or www.afb.org.nz

The subject of the test is fully covered in the book. When you feel you are fully conversant with the contents of the book, fill out the application form and return it to me, see details below.

It will also be helpful to study the photos in the centre of the April 2009 issue of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper.*

There are 25 questions. **All five photo questions must be answered correctly to obtain a 75% pass mark.**

- Mary-Ann Lindsay
AFB Recognition & Competency Test Administrator
lindsays.apiaries@clear.net.nz
(04) 478 3367

Thymovar®

FOR THE CONTROL OF VARROA MITES IN BEEHIVES

Consider alternating your Autumn Bayvarol treatment with Thymovar in the Spring

TESTED AND PROVEN IN NZ

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

SINGLE-STOREY (1 CHAMBER)

MULTIPLE-STOREY (2 CHAMBERS)

ACTIVE INGREDIENT

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

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

Bio Gro Certified

Thymovar®

FOR THE CONTROL OF VARROA MITES IN BEEHIVES

HARMFUL AND CORROSIVE

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN - ECOTOXIC

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

HARMFUL: May be harmful if swallowed or inhaled.

TESTED AND PROVEN IN NZ

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

DIRECTIONS FOR USE - GENERAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

® Thymovar is the registered trademark of, and is manufactured by, Andermatt BIOCONTROL AG, Stahlermatten 6, CH-6146 Grossdietwil, Switzerland.

Bio Gro Certified

Current Pricing as at April 2009

10 to 90 wafers	$4.91 plus GST each
100 to 470 wafers	$4.62 plus GST each
480 to 4990 wafers	$4.20 plus GST each
5000 + wafers	$4.00 plus GST each

www.beehealthy.co.nz

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ADVERTORIAL

AsureQuality Now Offering Tutin Testing Services to Apiary Industry

On 25th January 2009 New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) introduced new regulations which aim to prevent tutin contaminated honey reaching consumers.

Testing of honey for tutin prior to packing is one of the measures that you can apply to meet the new standards.

At AsureQuality's world-class laboratory in Wellington, new testing methods have been developed to monitor the tutin levels in honey and it is now offering this test to the apiary industry for honey.

Dr. Alan Stanley, manager of AsureQuality's Wellington laboratory says, "We are using a very sensitive and accurate testing method to analyse for tutin – Liquid Chromatography Tandem Mass Spectrometry (known as LC-MSMS).

"Our method reports tutin levels down to 0.1 part per million, the lowest requirement for the NZFSA's Standard, so AsureQuality's test method gives you peace of mind that your honey meets this Standard."

Pricing structure for Tutin testing

AsureQuality is providing two options for testing. National Beekeepers' Association (NBA) Members are entitled to a 10% discount on these prices:

Option 1: $59+ GST per sample for a Composite Testing Programme where AsureQuality composites four samples for testing.

Note: If a positive result is found in the composite test, AsureQuality will identify the supplier of the positive sample at its own expense and report the results back to that supplier. That supplier will be required to test future samples individually at the routine analysis price of $175 +GST per sample until two consecutive "clear" samples are obtained. When this requirement is met the supplier can re-join the composite testing programme.

Option 2: Each honey sample tested on its own at the routine analysis price of $175 +GST.

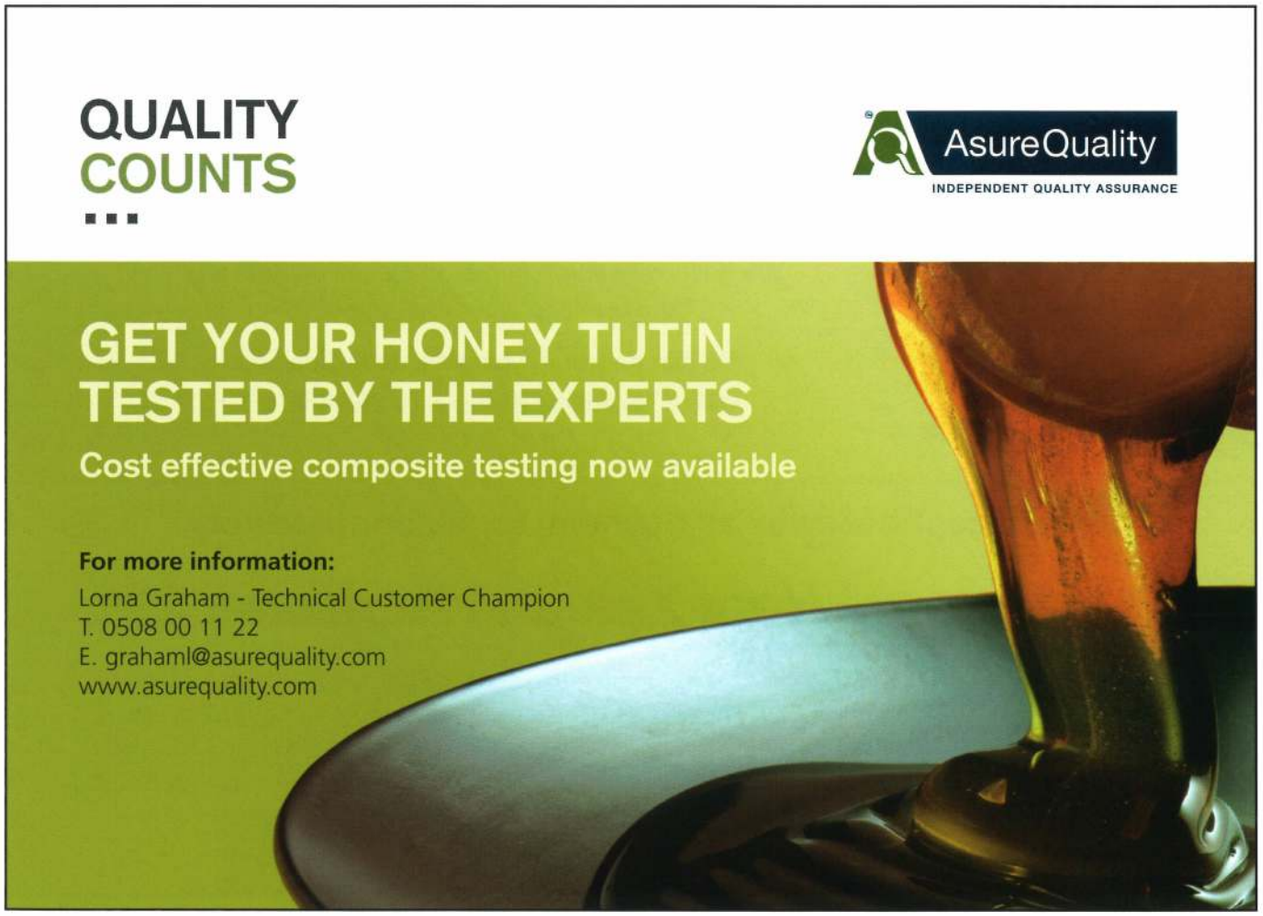
Jim Edwards, CEO of the NBA says that it is really important to meet the new Food Act standard for tutin and to know that if you have collected honey in an area where tutu presents a risk, that your honey is tested.

For more information contact:
Lorna Graham
Technical Customer Champion
ph 04 570 8364 or 021 813 465
grahaml@asurequality.com

AsureQuality is the largest and most internationally accredited provider of food safety and biosecurity services to the food and agricultural sectors in the southern hemisphere.

AsureQuality Laboratories are accredited to the internationally accepted ISO 17025 standard.

For more information visit: www.asurequality.com



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☆ **Special Offer** ☆ – 20 cents a frame discount*.
Order before the end of June and receive a discount of
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The Beeswax Specialists

Research begins on native chelifers for control of varroa

B. J. Donovan[1], L. Fagan[2], M. Walker[2], W. Hyink[3], B. Howlett[2] and W. Nelson[2]

[1]Donovan Scientific Insect Research, Private Bag 4704, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. [2]Plant and Food Research, Private Bag 4704, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. [3]863 Main Road, R. D. 1 Katikati 3177, New Zealand.

Recently MAF Biosecurity New Zealand decided to use some of the money left over from the cancelled varroa survey to fund an application, led by Plant and Food Research Ltd. at Lincoln University, for $43,762.50 for research on native chelifers as possible control agents for the vampire mite *Varroa destructor*. Previously the chelifers have been known as pseudoscorpions due to their superficial resemblance to true scorpions, but because the two groups are not closely related, and the species we are interested in are classified in the Superfamily Cheliferoidea, we feel that 'chelifer' is a much more appropriate name.

The native chelifers which occur in beehives near Katikati have a body length of about 4 mm, and projecting forwards from near the head are two scorpion-like pincers, with which prey are seized (Fig 1).

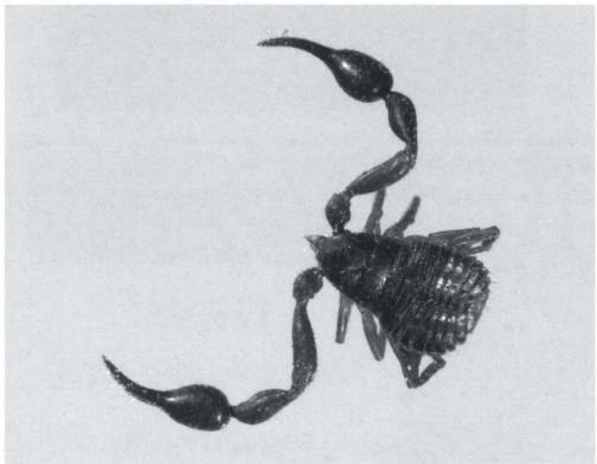

Figure 1. A chelifer from a beehive near Katikati. Note the huge pincers with which prey are grasped. Photograph by Robert Lamberts, Plant and Food Research Ltd., Lincoln.

In sharp contrast to real scorpions, there is no tail at all. Sixty-seven species identified from New Zealand are listed by Harvey (2008), and three of these have been recorded from beehives: one specimen of *Thalassochernes taierensis* from near Leeston in Canterbury, and numerous individuals of *Maorichernes vigil* and *Nesochernes gracilis* from near Katikati (Donovan 2001, Donovan and Hyink 2006).

Little is known about the biology of these native New Zealand chelifers, but what we have recently learned strongly suggests that with sufficient research, perhaps they could be exploited for control of varroa in our beehives. In pioneering, self-funded research, W. Hyink found that when placed in a small container with varroa, these latter two species sucked fluids out of varroa and so killed them. One chelifer ate three varroa in a couple of hours. Furthermore, when inserted into a mass of bees in a polystyrene mating nucleus, chelifers were ignored. One chelifer disappeared among the bees and reappeared 10 minutes later, unharmed. During the last several years a couple of dozen chelifers from Katikati have been held in small containers at the Canterbury Agriculture and Science Centre at Lincoln by B. Donovan. The chelifers fed readily on small larvae of moths and fruit flies, two produced eggs in January and November but human interference nearly certainly caused the eggs to collapse, and one chelifer has lived for well over a year.

The aim of the Plant and Food Research project is firstly to develop at Lincoln a breeding colony of chelifers from Katikati so we can study their biology to maximise population increase, and also to study their interactions with bees and varroa in observation hives. Unfortunately the funding from MAF Biosecurity New Zealand runs out at the end of July, so the chances of making significant advances in just four more months are limited. However, already 15 chelifers recently collected by W. Hyink are being held under controlled conditions at Lincoln, and in late March two of us will assist W. Hyink to collect a lot more.

But the question must be asked: even if chelifers can live safely among bees, will sufficient varroa be eaten to prevent the varroa from multiplying and damaging bee colonies? One way of attempting an answer, when we have very few facts to work with, is to make a number of assumptions from which we can model the interactions of different numbers of chelifers and varroa. For argument's sake, let's assume that a bee colony has 1,000 varroa, and that the population of varroa can double every 21 days. Also, let's assume that a chelifer might eat one varroa a day. If so, then in 21 days one chelifer will eat 21 varroa. So to eat 1,000 varroa in 21 days in order to prevent the number of varroa from doubling, the number of chelifers needed would be 1000 divided by 21 = 47.6 chelifers. Now this calculation is, of course, very simplistic, but what it points out is that in order to prevent 1000 varroa from multiplying, very few chelifers would be needed. Such a small number of chelifers in a bee colony would hardly be noticed by beekeepers, and probably no more so than 1,000 varroa. Even if a chelifer ate a varroa only, say, every fourth day, less than 200 chelifers would be needed per hive, which is still a small number.

Of course, small numbers of chelifers would probably be of little help during the mass-invasion phase of varroa when the mite is colonising an area, but with the northern half of the South Island now colonised, the whole country will soon assume a steady-varroa-state scenario in which chelifers might prove to effectively constrain varroa numbers. If successful and once established in beehives, the benefits of chelifers would include no chemicals in the hives, a self-

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perpetuating population that needed no further expenditure, a reduction in pollen mites and wax moth larvae—and a predator-in-waiting should other species of mites reach New Zealand.

How likely is our research on native chelifers to be successful? Because we are dealing with the unknown, of course, we simply can't answer that question until we have undertaken a great deal of research, and unfortunately the current funding will be just sufficient to get us started. However, if we can obtain further funding then if our native chelifers can live among bees in a full-sized colony, and the breeding site requirements of the chelifers can be determined, the prospect of controlling varroa would appear to be good.

But, if not, what then? Well, in Europe the species *Chelifer cancroides* was an inhabitant of bee colonies until it was last recorded among bees about 60 years ago. Donovan and Paul (2005) speculated that chelifers were lost from European beehives because when smooth-sawn wood was used in place of rough skeps, chelifers could no longer find refuges such as nooks and crannies in which to breed. *Chelifer cancroides* is now present throughout much of the world where it sometimes inhabits old books, causing it to be called the book scorpion or house scorpion. In New Zealand it has been recorded from a bird's nest, and an insectary. If the species could be again located, we could initiate research to provide breeding sites in beehives. We would be very pleased to be told of any chelifers occurring in houses or similar situations.

Another approach would be to import to quarantine for study the species of chelifers from India and South Africa which are known to live right among bees, where they eat varroa and other mite and insect enemies of bees.

But first we need to make progress with our research on native New Zealand chelifers. A report will be presented in due course.

References

Donovan, B. J. 2001. NZ pseudoscorpion find. T*he New Zealand Beekeeper 8*, 1:14.

Donovan, B. J. and Hyink, W. 2006. New Zealand pseudoscorpions kill varroa. *The New Zealand Beekeeper 14*, 9: 41–45.

Donovan B. J. and Paul, F. 2005. Pseudoscorpions: the forgotten beneficials inside beehives and their potential for management for control of varroa and other arthropod pests. *Bee World 86, 4:* 83–87.

Harvey, M. S. 2008. Pseudoscorpions of the World, version 1. 2. Western Australian Museum, Perth. http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/arachnids/pseudoscorpions/

Inspect your hives for AFB at least twice a year.

NZFSA tutin update

We have already had reports of beekeepers finding non-compliant levels of tutin in this year's honey crop when they test it. There needs to be ongoing vigilance by beekeepers for this problem. Beekeepers in all parts of the top of the South Island also need to be vigilant even outside the Marlborough Sounds—see below.

The new tutin standard came into force on 25 January of this year. All beekeepers who sell honey **(including 'hobbyists' who barter or trade)** are required to comply with it. Copies of the standard and compliance guide were direct mailed to all registered beekeepers in late December.

These documents can be found on the NZFSA web site at
http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/policy-law/legislation/food-standards/tutin-standard-final.pdf
and
http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/publications/manualsguides/tutin-standard-compliance-guide/index.htm

Reviewing the Standard

Part 1 (The limits) will be reviewed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) for inclusion in the Food Standards Code. While a full assessment is being done by FSANZ we expect that a temporary standard will be put into the Code. This is because the full assessment may take some time to complete. The temporary standard will be the same as that set in the standard we have set under the New Zealand Food Act.

A review of Parts 2 and 3 of the Standard (the compliance options and testing) has to commence no later than **25 July 2009.** This review will be undertaken by NZFSA, and formal consultation on any proposed changes to the compliance options is expected to occur later this year once the review is complete.

Have we got the limits right?

To help with answering this question, we are currently setting up a number of toxicological studies designed to look at:

- how tutin acts in the body
- whether there are long-term effects from consuming tutin
- whether there are cumulative effects from consuming tutin daily at low levels; and
- whether there are any other chemicals in toxic honey that could be harmful.

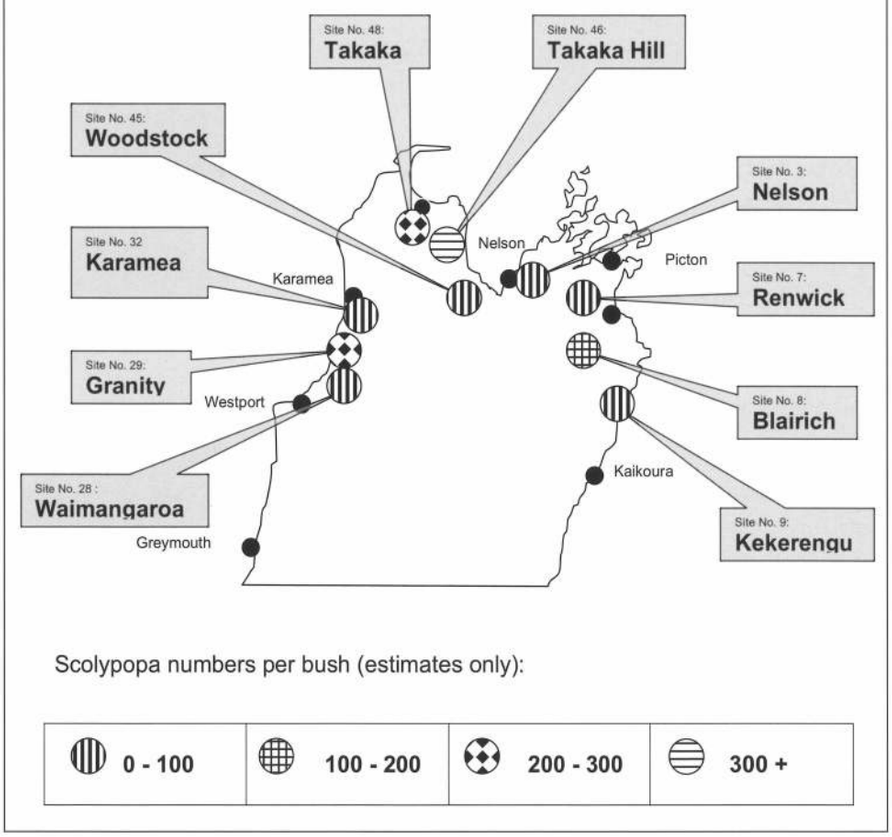
These tests have been discussed with FSANZ to make sure we have sufficient information to properly inform the permanent standard.

Have we got the compliance options right?

To help inform the review of the compliance options, we have a number of activities underway.

As we were not convinced about the risk in the top of the South Island being limited to the Marlborough Sounds, we sent one of our staff looking for *Scolypopa* around the top of the South Island (excluding the Marlborough Sounds because we already know there is a problem there). What he found in a long week's driving is shown in the diagram below.

Numbers and Location of *Scolypopa* found on Tutu plants during the week 23–27 February 2009



You will see that not only is *Scolypopa* widespread, but it is present in significant concentrations in some places. Beekeepers in the top of the South Island outside Marlborough

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clearly should also take precautions to make sure that high levels of tutin are not present in their product. Bees were observed gathering honeydew and were caught in the act on camera at some of these locations. (See photo!)

Activity on plants in Takaka Hills (27 February 2009).

We didn't find *Scolypopa* at Kaikoura or south of Westport. That's not to say they can't be found there, just that a brief scout around by our man couldn't find any. Obviously in a week and 2000 km of driving he couldn't cover all areas in detail!

The Bee Products Standards Council also put a couple of students into the field in the North Island looking at *Scolypopa* and the results of that study will also be used in the review. I won't steal their thunder, but it's fair to say they have exposed a few myths about tutin and *Scolypopa*!

We have our compliance group in the field at the moment looking at beekeepers' compliance with the tutin standard as a part of their audit and we will be seeking feedback from the RMP verifiers as well.

There has also been a discussion at the recent Bee Products Standards Council meeting on tutin and we will be using the upcoming industry conferences for further discussion with industry members.

Matters we already have on the list to take a closer look at in the review include:

- whether inspections of tutu should have to continue on a weekly basis if no *Scolypopa* are present the first time you look
- whether sampling by the beekeeper can be drum core samples or venturi, etc., to get an average result for a batch with no further need to test—provided the packer mixes it sufficiently before packing
- which areas of the South Island should be included within the Standard
- whether there are areas of the North Island that should be excluded from the Standard
- whether large homogeneous batches of honey should be excluded from the testing requirement.

What we need from you

What we need from you to help inform the review process is data to inform the above matters; for example, test results, *Scolypopa* observations, etc. Also welcome are other suggestions as to how the Standard can be made to work better for beekeepers, preferably accompanied by data to support your proposals.

Your information is needed by the end of May. You can send it to me by email to: jim.sim@nzfsa.govt.nz or post it to me at: NZFSA, PO Box 2835, Wellington.

- Jim Sim
Senior Programme Manager Animal Products
New Zealand Standards Group
New Zealand Food Safety Authority

When everything dries up in the Wairarapa, the bees find an alternative source — cleaning up a pear.

Bees defending an opening.
Photos: Frank Lindsay.

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 require 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".

Permit Application

When wishing to hold AFB material, please apply by letter to the Management Agency via Rex Baynes, AFB NPMS Manager, PO Box 44282, Lower Hutt, or email to rbaynes@ihug.co.nz

Normally the process can be completed in a couple of days.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager

170 years of beekeeping in NZ

Some recent press reports have suggested that 2009 is the 150th anniversary of beekeeping in New Zealand. In fact, this year marks 170 years of beekeeping.

We're all looking forward to celebrating the 175-year anniversary in 2014.

Comment: the changing nature of beekeeping

Beekeeping used to be a risky business relying mostly on a six-week period for your yearly income, which in some years failed completely. Banks would give the beekeepers overdrafts that were paid off when the honey cheque came in but were often restarted again a month later. Depending upon the season, some beekeepers were farming 30% of their hives just to cover bank and overdraft fees.

Today beekeepers spread their workload, deriving income from pollination and/or moving hives to different locations to collect more than one crop. Some also gather propolis by placing mats on all their hives and replacing them when the bees have partially filled them, thus increasing the yield. Thanks to research, we have the opportunity to gather more profitable types of honey, and rather than just putting all the honey together in a vat, separating out floral varieties provides higher returns.

On the minus side, banks are not as generous as they used to be. Our costs have increased considerably, with new plant required to make us more efficient and meet the new export regulations; plus we still don't know what sort of crop we'll get next year.

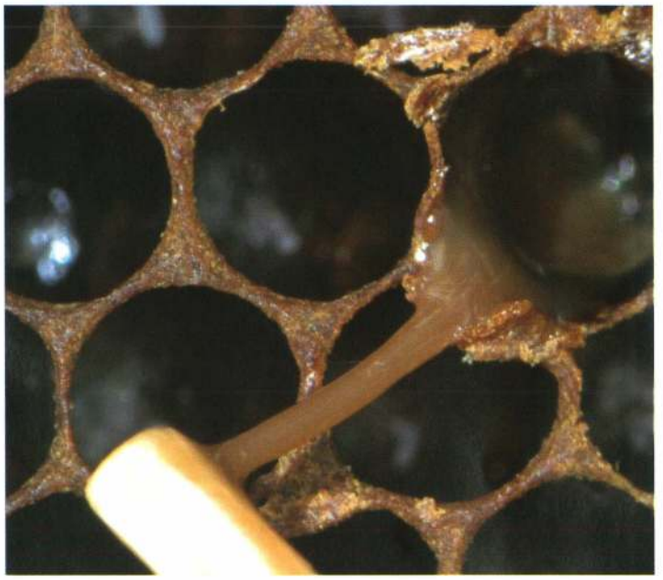
Some New Zealand beekeepers have been holding back a little honey in recent times as honey prices have been low, but they are now on the increase thanks to the world economic recession dropping the value of our dollar. Couple this with a world shortage of white honey thanks to droughts in South America and other places, and just when things are coming right some beekeepers are finding that this year's harvest is well down on expectations.

No matter what business you are in, it's a lack of cashflow that generally cripples a business. It's easy to farm through the good times but takes skill to farm through the bad. Don't just dance around on top of your hives. Plan ahead and put something away for the bad seasons so you remain viable and when things are extremely tight, never scrimp on feed for the bees for without healthy strong hives, you won't get a crop.

AFB — older, darker, diseased

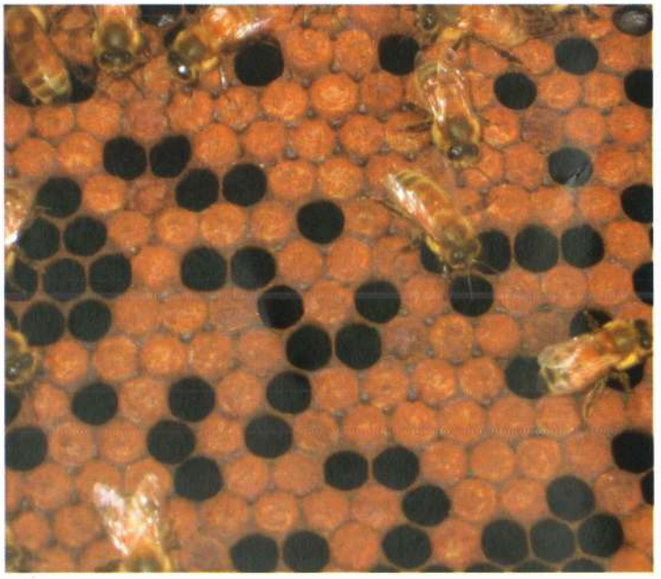
AFB — diseased larvae

AFB — diseased pupa with tongue



AFB "ropiness" test

Chalkbrood — white mummy



Cappings of brood infected with AFB
This photo taken by Frank Lindsay.

INVITATION

NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION OF NZ (INC) SEMINARS AND CONFERENCE 2009

Millennium Hotel, Corner of Eruera and Hinemaru Streets, Rotorua

7–10 June 2009

BOP NBA

Sunday 7 June

Small and New Beekeepers' Forum: All welcome
Specialty group meetings
Outdoor forum of equipment
Mix and mingle in the evening

Monday 8 June

Seminars
Outdoor forum of equipment
Workshop sessions
Sponsors' night

Tuesday 9 June

AFB National Pest Management Strategy AGM
Seminars
Workshop sessions
Conference dinner

Wednesday 10 June

National Beekeepers' Association AGM
Bus trip to Comvita and Arataki Waiotapu

Thursday 11 June

Repeat of the bus trip if sufficient numbers

THE NBA WELCOMES ALL MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS
TO JOIN US FOR AN INFORMATIVE CONFERENCE 2009.

NBA National Seminar & Conference 2009 Registration Form

Date: _____ Name: _____ NBA Membership No: _____

Partner's Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please indicate your Conference attendance choices below:

Event	Number attending	NBA Member	Non Member	Total
Registration Fee (all attendees)		$40	$70	
New & Small Beekeepers' Forum		$40	$50	
Mix & Mingle		$30	$40	
Seminar/Workshop Day 1 Registration Monday 8 June		$60	$80	
Sponsors' night		Courtesy of Sponsors		
Seminar/Workshop Day 2 Registration Tuesday 9 June		$60	$80	
Conference Dinner Tuesday 9 June		$70	$90	
Wednesday Field Trip to Comvita and/or Arataki		Price to be advised. Please indicate interest		
Thursday Field Trip to Comvita and/or Arataki		Price to be advised. Please indicate interest		
Late registration fee for payment after 15 May 2009		$30	$30	
TOTAL PAYMENT (GST INCL) **Cheque ( )** **Direct credit ( )**				**$**

Mix & Mingle includes snacks and two complimentary drinks—bar available to purchase additional drinks at own cost thereafter.
Sponsors' night includes meal and two complimentary drinks—bar available to purchase additional drinks at own cost thereafter.
Dinner will be at the Millennium Hotel and includes entertainment and a band for dancing.
Outside forum will include vehicles and equipment relevant to beekeeping.
Seminars and elective workshops will run in conjunction with one another.
Field Trip will be to observe good manufacturing processes in action at the two plants.

Payment options
Cheques made payable to National Beekeepers' Assn. of NZ Inc. BOP Branch.
Direct credit to Westpac account of National Beekeepers' Assn. of NZ Inc. BOP Branch 030435:0465878:00. Please ensure a suitable legend is applied to the transfer to identify yourself and remember to send the registration form by snail post or email to Barbara Pimm.
Please send completed registration and payment to:
Barbara Pimm, 448 Woodlands Rd, RD 2 Opotiki 3198 or hikuhoney@xtra.co.nz

Millennium Hotel Rotorua - Accommodation Request Form

MILLENNIUM
HOTEL
ROTORUA

National Beekeepers' Association Conference
6–12 June 2009

Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
_____

Email: _____
Contact Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Check In Date: _____ /06/09 Check Out Date: _____ /06/09
Smoking Non Smoking
Number of Adults (maximum two): _____
Extra Adult: $40.00 incl
(subject to available room) GST per night

	Room Only	
Superior Room (Single, Double or Twin occupancy)	**$135.00 plus GST**	
Superior Lakeview Room (Single, Double or Twin occupancy)	**$165.00 plus GST**	

Rates quoted per room per night

Please note that this booking will not be confirmed without a form of payment. Please supply credit card details below or include a cheque with this form.

To guarantee your booking please provide credit card details as below:

MasterCard / Visa / American Express / Diners (please circle as appropriate)

Card Number: .....

Cardholder's Name: .....

Expiry Date (mm/yy): .....

Please forward your completed accommodation registration form to:
Jenny Matchitt – Reservations Manager
Millennium Hotel Rotorua
Corner Eruera and Hinemaru Streets
PO Box 1044, ROTORUA
Ph 07 347 1234
Fax 07 348 1234
E-Mail jenny.matchitt@millenniumhotels.co.nz
www.millenniumrotorua.co.nz

Please provide your fax number or email address and we will confirm directly to you once the reservation has been made.

Signature .....

Kingsgate Hotel Rotorua - Accommodation Request Form

National Beekeepers' Association Conference
6–12 June 2009

KINGSGATE
HOTEL
ROTORUA

Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
_____

Email: _____
Contact Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Check In Date: _____ /06/09 Check Out Date: _____ /06/09
Smoking Non Smoking
Number of Adults (maximum two): _____
Extra Adult: $30.00 incl
(subject to available room) GST per night

	Room Only	
Standard Room (Single or Twin occupancy)	**$105.00 plus GST**	
Superior Room (Single or Twin occupancy)	**$120.00 plus GST**	

Rates quoted per room per night

Please note that this booking will not be confirmed without a form of payment. Please supply credit card details below or include a cheque with this form.

To guarantee your booking please provide credit card details as below:

MasterCard / Visa / American Express / Diners (please circle as appropriate)

Card Number: .....

Cardholder's Name: .....

Expiry Date (mm/yy): .....

Please forward your completed accommodation registration form to:
Kelly Barnett – Reservations Agent
Kingsgate Hotel Rotorua
Fenton Street, Rotorua
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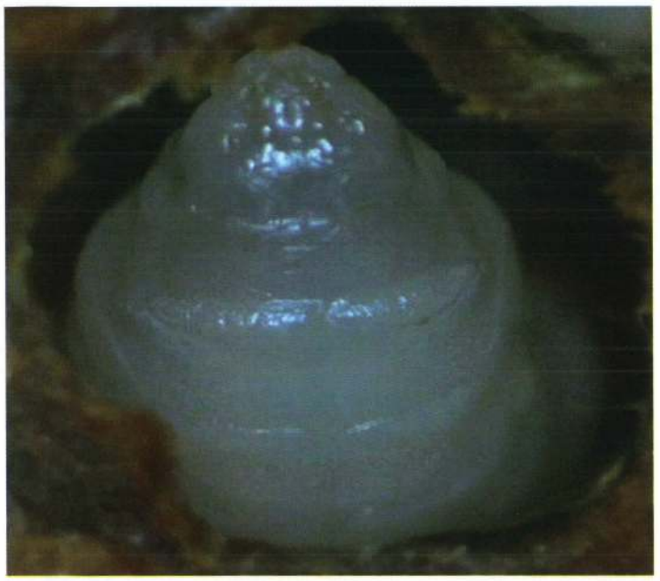
Please provide your fax number or email address and we will confirm directly to you once the reservation has been made.

Signature .....

d in the AFB recognition test.



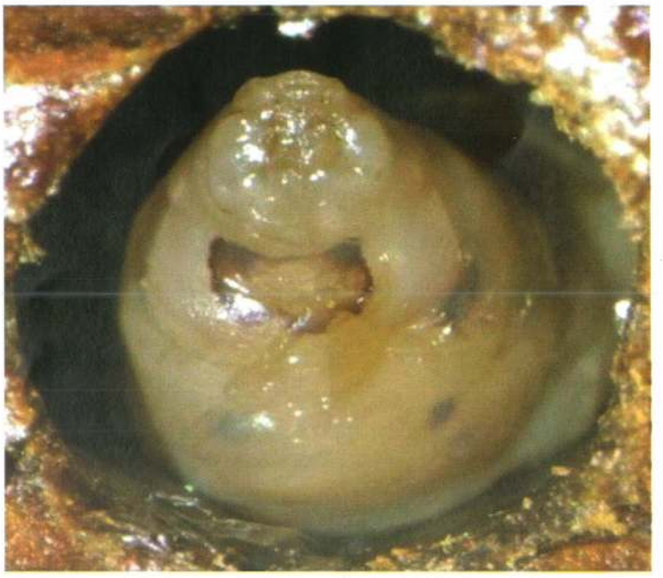
Healthy prepupa

PMS larva spiralling up cell

PMS larva with varroa

Removing PMS larva

Sacbrood — coffee coloured larva



Sacbrood — swollen larva

Photos courtesy of Dr Mark Goodwin, HortResearch Limited (now known as Plant & Food Research Limited).

Letters to the editor

Tutin testing costs to producers

At a recent Waikato branch meeting we discussed the President's Report in the February 2009 edition of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* journal.

In particular, the comments made under the heading of "Tutin regulations in force" and I quote:

> *"The implication from this [representative samples] is that all extraction plants should take steps to ensure that each batch of honey is properly homogenised to ensure samples are truly represented".*

Our members have no issue with this statement and have gone to considerable time, money and effort in upgrading their extraction plants to ensure the homogenisation of honey. The next sentence had us wondering as to the President's intent and I quote:

> *"The cost to honey packers and exporters to further test honey because of these issues is passed onto producers in lower prices being paid"*

The Waikato Branch believes that this cost (tutin testing) should not be born by producers alone; i.e., passed back from packers/exporters. Why?

During the course of our day, it became evident and it was alarming the costs that some beekeepers had to incur. From simply adding stirrers and motors to existing tanks, to installing new tanks with stirrers and motors, through to complete changes of pumping systems, in their efforts to comply with homogenising honey. We believe that our branch members are not isolated in their costs.

It would add insult to injury to infer that producers then also take a lower price because the packer and/or exporter has had to further test the honey when packing etc. Often the producer will have already tested their honey prior to sale anyway.

As NBA members we feel strongly that the advocacy for members needs to be more balanced. We feel that if it was the President's intention to indicate that there will be increased costs, an acknowledgement from him that these costs will be industry wide is more appropriate in this instance.

Producers cannot continue to take the brunt of food safety charges alone!

Cameron Martin
Waikato Branch President

[Editor's note: NBA President Frans Laas will respond in the May issue.]

More on an Apiaries Act

I appreciate Frans taking time to reply to my letter in the previous issue of the *Beekeeper*.

He was correct that he made his decision to not accept the motion that we go back to having our own Apiaries Act based on [a voice vote]. A pity he did not allow a show of hands as requested by Russell Berry, as then we would really have known what the majority wanted, not just a decision based on the volume of perhaps a minority.

Frans is obviously one of the new generations of beekeepers who go along with whatever the bureaucrats lay down without question.

I for one am tired of treating our business the same way as other animal products. The other products have serious health risks that need careful monitoring, but honey is distinctly different. Surely because of this we can streamline things to reduce paperwork and auditing costs, which have been steadily climbing.

Have you ever considered that without a viable beekeeping industry, much of horticulture and agriculture and accompanying animal products would decline rapidly? Surely instead of adding Apiculture to the Animal Products Act as an afterthought, the reverse should happen. We could have an Apiaries Act to ensure a viable industry and then add on Animal Products as an afterthought. Does either option make sense?

Frans mentions Products Definition in his reply. At present we have a definition from Food Safety [Authority] that has no relationship to our honey as determined by analysis. If we accept the Food Safety definition, then it is basically illegal to write "Honey" on our drums, as we are now told that we must.

[The New Zealand] Food Safety [Authority] apparently has little understanding of what honey actually is. It is not just a mixture of simple sugars. A large percentage is made up of complex carbohydrates, which explains the long-lasting energy available from honey. No wonder Hillary reached the top of Everest.

As an industry we should be advertising the low GI [glycemic index] rating of honey in comparison to other sugary foods on the market. If the definition is ever finalised, the low GI rating could be added to antioxidants as well as antibacterial activity as another reason why eating honey is good for you.

Anyway, I am looking forward to a general rearrangement of our industry to not only have our own Apiaries Act, but also an effective Advisory Service once again who can get away from paper shuffling.

Yours,
Gary Jeffery

[Editor's note: NBA President Frans Laas will respond in the May issue.]

Change of venue for the NSW Apiarists' Association AGM, 9 & 10 July 2009

The NSWAA AGM has had to change venues. This is due to the fact of many different conferences being held at the same time and accommodation not being available in Penrith.

NSW Conference will be held at:

Rydges Parramatta
116–118 James Ruse Drive
Rosehill, NSW 2142
Phone: 0061 2 8863 7600
www.rydges.com/hotel/0/RNPARR/Rydges-Parramatta-Sydney.htm

As there is a lack of accommodation around Sydney at this time, I have block booked rooms at Rydges. They will hold these until 2 weeks before conference—after that date they will be released. Please book your accommodation early. Rydges has a very competitive rate of $140 a night. Rydges has also block booked 30 rooms opposite them at the Waldorf—ring 0061 2 8837 8000 (these are one-bedroom serviced apartments).

Rydges is located opposite the Rosehill Racecourse. Within walking distance is a Hooters Restaurant, Woolworths, KFC, McDonalds and the Rosehill Bowling Club. It is a 5-minute drive to Westfields Parramatta and all Parramatta malls.

I apologise for any inconvenience the change has caused anyone but it was beyond our control. Hope to see you at conference.

Julie Lockhart
State Secretary/Treasurer
NSW Apiarists' Association
Phone: 0061 2 9631 3934
Mobile: 0061 427 815 181
Fax: 0061 2 9631 0585
Email: nswaa@bigpond.net.au

Philippines beekeeper seeks work

Wenceslao (Wency) Sala Gerong, Jr. is seeking work as a fulltime beekeeper. He is a 32 year old, single Filipino citizen and a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Commerce majoring in Management. He also trained in Baguio City, Philippines at the ATI-CAR Benguet State University for basic beekeeping.

His contact address is wency_gerong@yahoo.com

Assistance required for beekeeper's widow

Dear Editor

I need help from beekeepers: just two weeks ago my husband, Peter, died suddenly while out for a morning run in the Ashley Forest. Peter was a beekeeper. He has 280 hives in North Canterbury, spread around Waddington, Russells Flat, Dalethorpe, West Eyreton and Ashley Forest. He was two thirds through extracting this season's honey crop.

With invaluable help from local beekeeping friends I will manage to complete the extraction and get the hives wintered down but I have to sell them before the beginning of the new season. I am not a beekeeper—at best I was only ever the beekeeper's assistant!

The hives are in good condition (bees and woodwork), there are honey supers for all and each hive has a top feeder.

As you can all appreciate I am still shocked at this sudden turn of events, but Peter's comprehensive diary and methodical working practices have helped me pick up the pieces and keep things moving forward.

To add a layer of complexity to my situation, I was discovered to have breast cancer last year. After surgery and treatment I am disease free but this can also change with very little warning. This reinforces my decision to sell the hives as soon as possible. I am open to discussing any financial proposal put forward by anyone wanting to purchase the hives.

Any assistance beekeepers can provide will be gratefully received. I can be contacted on (03) 312 5085 or email: beckingsale.l-p@xtra.co.nz.

Lyn Beckingsale
Eyre Apiaries

Report AFB to the Management Agency within 7 days.

Reminder to all beekeepers

The American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy (AFB NPMS)

The management of the American foulbrood disease in New Zealand is controlled by law. Currently this law is the Biosecurity (National Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy) Order 1998. This legislation retains many of the provisions of the Apiaries Act that had been in place for over 90 years.

Background

The Apiaries Act, which had provided the legal powers to control American foulbrood for over 90 years, was replaced in 1993 by the Biosecurity Act. Using this Act, the Government of the day, in association with the National Beekeepers' Association, created the Biosecurity (National American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy) Order 1998 (NPMS), which came into force on 1 October 1998. The aim of the strategy is to eliminate American foulbrood disease (AFB) from New Zealand.

The NPMS is designed to both encourage and require beekeepers to rid New Zealand of American foulbrood disease for good. Elimination of AFB can be achieved.

Beekeepers who put an honest effort into reducing AFB will be encouraged to rid their hives of this disease through the Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement (DECA) they have with the Management Agency. These beekeepers are able to call on all of the expertise and information we now have available to help them.

Put simply, if you don't attempt to do the job right, someone will do the job for you and send you the bill. The choice is yours ...

The Management Agency

The legislation names the National Beekeepers' Association as the Management Agency (MA) responsible for implementing the strategy.

The Management Agency employs contractors to carry out a number of its duties under the Pest Management Strategy. The main contractor is AsureQuality Limited.

Funding

From its inception in October 1998 until November 2002, the Pest Management Strategy was funded from revenue collected under the industry's Commodity Levy Order. This Order expired, and a new Order under the Biosecurity Act was approved by the Cabinet Legislation Committee and came into force on 20 November 2003.

The levy year is from 1 June to 31 May. The levy consists of a base levy plus an apiary levy.

The 2009/2010 rates are:

> *"base levy of $20.00 and an apiary fee of $10.50 per apiary, excluding GST. The base levy will be the same each year, but the apiary levy may change annually, but is limited to a maximum rate of $15.17 + GST. The levy will be calculated on the apiaries registered on the 31st of March each year."*

All beekeepers are required to fund the levy, although those beekeepers who have registered fewer than 11 beehives on fewer than four apiaries will only be required to pay the base fee plus one apiary; i.e., $30.50 + GST.

When will I need to pay the levy?

Invoices are sent out on or about 20 April and will be due for payment by 1 June.

PLEASE NOTE: Penalties under the law will apply to outstanding debts. These will be initially at 10% if not paid within 30 days and 2% for each month thereafter (compounding).

What is a DECA?

A Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement, or DECA, is a formal agreement between you as a beekeeper and the Management Agency. The agreement sets out a 'code of beekeeping practice' to ensure that the incidence of AFB in your hives will reduce to zero over a period of time and remain at that level once achieved. Scientific and case study knowledge show that this goal is attainable if beekeepers follow the correct procedures.

The DECA agreements are tailored to suit each beekeeper's particular circumstances. If you have little or no AFB you won't need to change your beekeeping procedures much, if at all. Beekeepers with a progressively more serious AFB incidence in their hives will need tighter controls and more attention to detail in order to reduce the incidence.

In consultation with the Management Agency or the contractors, you will be able to review your procedures over time to ensure that the goal of AFB elimination is reached. The aim is to use these agreements to ensure that you get all the help and advice available to eliminate AFB from your beehives, and hence, from all beehives in the country!

Who should have a DECA?

Hopefully nearly every beekeeper will eventually have a DECA. Remember, the Strategy rules apply to each and every beekeeper, hobbyist and commercial. There will be some who, for a number of reasons, will not enter into a DECA.

If you take up the offer to enter into 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 sat 'cold' or after completing a Disease Recognition and Destruction course. These courses have been and will continue to be made available to all beekeepers at centres throughout New Zealand.

If you enter into a DECA you will have an Approved Beekeeper status and will receive a Certificate of Inspection Exemption. You will not have to complete a Certificate of Inspection each year for your hives. However, you must maintain a record of inspection dates and relevant information for audit purposes. As part of the DECA, you must undertake a test on AFB recognition and control before a certificate will be granted and your DECA approved.

What happens if I don't have a DECA?

Those beekeepers who fail to respond to the Management Agency's offer to enter into a DECA agreement will be required to furnish a Certificate of Inspection each year for their hives. This certificate must be completed, and hives inspected by, an Approved Beekeeper or by Management Agency personnel.

Most beekeepers will incur some cost to have this work done for them. This will happen every year and the beekeeper must complete a Certificate of Inspection, again completed by an Approved Beekeeper, or by the Management Agency.

Beekeepers who for any reason do not have a DECA must obtain the services of a person who has a DECA to assist with inspection and signing off the Certificate of Inspection.

Obligations for all beekeepers

AFB—Exposure: you must not allow honey bees to have access to any hive, equipment or products that have come from an AFB-infected hive. You must not extract the honey from an AFB-infected hive.

AFB—Destruction of Hives: ***you must destroy by burning any of your hives that have AFB within seven (7) days of it being found,*** unless you have written permission from the Management Agency to do otherwise.

AFB—Moving Hives: you may not transfer ownership of any AFB-infected hives or infected equipment or products, or remove the hives or equipment from the place where it was found, without permission of the Management Agency. You may move the diseased hives or equipment, however, if you have a provision in your DECA allowing you to transport diseased hives to a safe place for destruction.

AFB—Notification: if AFB is found in your hives you must notify the Management Agency Contractor (AsureQuality) in writing within seven (7) days.

AFB—Sterilising of Equipment: this can only be done with permission of the Management Agency, using methods they have approved.

Annual Disease Return: before 1 June each year you must return the form mailed to you by the contractor, recording:

- the number of hives you have
- the number of AFB hives found during the previous year (if any: this is in addition to the 7-day reporting requirement), the dates on which they were found and where they were found, and the dates that you destroyed them
- any changes to the apiary information you have supplied to the Management Agency. Complete all sections
- the dates on which you transferred the ownership of any of your hives to someone else, and provide the name and address of the new owner.

Apiaries—Registration: an apiary is any group of your hives that are more than 200 metres from any other apiary that you have registered. All apiaries must be registered with the Management Agency Contractor (AsureQuality) if hives are on a site for more than 30 days.

Continued on page 35

Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies Ltd

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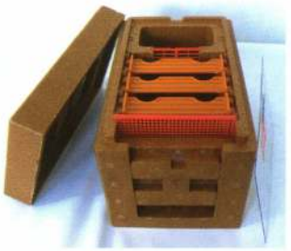
Kieler Queen Mating Nuc Polystyrene. $35.00ea + GST

Lovibond Colour Grader, simple to use. If you are exporting honey, you probably need one. $959.20ea + GST

SB Queen Mating Nuc complete with frames + feeder, Polystyrene. $30.60ea + GST Discount for quantity.

Pry Bar type, a handy hive tool. Extremely strong – forged! 200mm $24.00ea + GST/ 300mm $32.00ea + GST.



Apidea Queen Mating Nuc complete with frames + removable feeder, Polystyrene. $43.50ea + GST Discount for quantity

Battery operated fluid level alarm, hangs on edge of tank. $62.80ea + GST.

Not just your ordinary Capping Scratcher. Stainless Steel, premium quality, with side scraper. $71.00ea + GST.

All Items in Stock

Top Feeder liners, many 1000s in use, very robust. Starts from $9.65ea + GST Discount for quantity.

Div Feeders, 3 sizes available, very robust. Best value for money available. Starts from $8.70ea + GST. Discount for quantity.

Dadant Blowers Briggs + Stratton Powered. Buy 2 and get a special price. Spare hoses + nozzle Available.

Please contact us for more info and quantity pricing. Freight additional.

Continued from page 33

When registering the apiary you will need to supply:

- your full name and address
- the number of colonies in the apiary
- the name and initials of the occupier of the property
- the road name and address of the property
- a written description of where the apiary is on the property
- a 260 map series grid reference
- whether it is seasonal (stating the months it is usually occupied) or permanent.

If you have a permanent apiary site that has been unoccupied for 30 days or more, you must deregister it. You will, therefore, need to deregister all your permanent apiaries that are not occupied, or alternatively change them to seasonal apiaries if you intend to use them in the next 12 months.

Approved Beekeepers: any beekeeper can become an Approved Beekeeper by:

- having an American Foulbrood Disease control plan (known as a 'DECA') for their hives that has been approved by the Management Agency Contractor (AsureQuality) and
- having sat and passed an AFB Disease Recognition and Destruction Competency Test.

Certificate of Inspection: unless you are an Approved Beekeeper, you must ensure all of your hives are inspected by an Approved Beekeeper between 1 August and 30 November each year. An authorised beekeeper must complete the Certificate of Inspection form, which details the inspection, and forward it to the Management Agency within 14 days of the inspection. The Approved Beekeeper who carries out the inspection will need to fill out parts of the certificate, including signing off the form.

Change of ownership: when you transfer the ownership of your hives you must remove or deface all of your codes on the hives and notify the Management Agency that you have done it. You also need to give them the name and address of the new owner of the hives.

Code (hive registration) numbers: new beekeepers will be given a new code number. The code number must be marked on the outside of one hive in each apiary or on a sign in the apiary. Only the beekeeper who was allocated a code may remove or alter the code (without written permission from the Management Agency).

You should not have any other person's code number on your hives, or any other number that could be confused with a code number. In reality, many beekeepers have equipment in their apiaries that have purchased from other beekeepers over the years. Considering the difficulty of removing code numbers, it will be considered sufficient in the meantime to remove any confusion by erecting a sign in the apiary with the correct apiary code number.

Compensation: no compensation will be paid by the Management Agency for any losses occurred by beekeepers in having to comply with the Pest Management Strategy.

Drugs: you must not feed any substance to your bees that has the effect of obscuring AFB or attempting to 'cure' it.

Hives—Access: you must ensure that the area around your hives is kept free from vegetation to allow normal access.

Hives—Moveable frames: you must keep your bees in moveable frame hives. Exemptions may be granted by the Management Agency for research, queen rearing, package bees and public display.

Unregistered/abandoned hives: please report them to the Management Agency Contractor (AsureQuality), who will take reasonable steps to find the owner of unregistered apiaries. If they are unable to locate the owner they may destroy the hives.

To ensure that the Pest Management Strategy works for the benefit of all beekeepers, the Management Agency may have to enforce compliance of the above obligations. This enforcement may take the form of any or all of:

- cancelling a beekeeper's approved status
- conducting the above obligations on behalf of the beekeeper and sending them an account for the work done, and
- bringing a prosecution under the Biosecurity Act.

You will have noticed that you may need to contact the Management Agency Contractor (AsureQuality) to gain permission for a number of things that you have been doing already (e.g., keeping bees in non-moveable frame hives, wax dipping, moving AFB-infected hives to central location to deal with them, etc). This is not a change, as you have always required permission. It was just that it wasn't enforced before so people didn't bother. The best policy would be for beekeepers to seek permission in writing early on: indeed, it is an integral part of the DECA agreements that most beekeepers have with the Management Agency. In most cases the permission will be granted automatically as part of your DECA, although the permission will probably be conditional.

So what do I have to do?

Don't be concerned if having read the information about the NPMS you are suddenly confronted with the prospect of breaching the rules and you are fearful of prosecution. The Management Agency is available to assist in a constructive manner and asks that you make direct contact with the AFB NPMS Manager, Rex Baynes.

For many/most beekeepers, you can expect a confirmation of acceptance of your DECA application within a short time, though more complicated DECAs may take longer. Please contact your nearest disease coordinator regarding AFB field days, and disease elimination courses and the tests.

All beekeepers will need to complete an Annual Disease Return and the declaration when it is sent to you this autumn.

Continued on page 36

Continued from page 35

Conclusion

The prospect of being able to keep bees in a country free of AFB is exciting. It will save the beekeepers of New Zealand millions of dollars, and much stress and heartache. Almost every beekeeper in the country has had to deal with this disease at some time or another.

We would love to see the end of it. It really can be achieved. So let's do it!

Additional information

If you require additional information on the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy or AFB control, the following documents are available:

- the Biosecurity Act 1993 (available from bookshops that supply government publications)
- the Biosecurity (National American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy) Order 1998 (available from bookshops that supply government publications)
- The Biosecurity (American Foulbrood – Apiary and Beekeeper Levy) Order 2003 (available from bookshops that supply government publications)
- The AFB Disease Elimination Manual (available from the Management Agency or from the Executive Secretary of the National Beekeepers' Association)
- www.afb.org.nz

Contact details

Management Agency:

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

AsureQuality Limited:

see page 14 for contact details.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager

Bee on ivy. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

DECA COURSE

When: Saturday, 23 May 2009

Where: Whangarei

Contact: Kevin and Melissa Wallace, 09 423 8642

Did you know?

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (March)
Registered Beekeepers	4864	4550	3973	3649	3211	2911	2694	2602	2589	2675
Number of Apiaries	21633	20993	20258	20228	19592	19281	18954	19228	20439	21347
Number of Beehives	299712	320113	305152	300729	292530	294886	300728	313399	343155	354603

There are 2675 registered beekeepers of which:
1,557 (58.2%) own less than 5 hives (1,756 apiaries) or less.
287 (10.7%) own more than 251 hives (16,471 apiaries) or more.
287 beekeepers control 341337 hives; i.e., 10.7% of beekeepers control 96% of the registered hives.
87 (3.2%) own more than 1000 hives (10,083 apiaries) or more.

- Rex Baynes
AFB NPMS Manager

Let's keep it simple—what's a DECA?

So I'm a keeper of two hives, or maybe 1000 hives is more your style. Whatever the number, however you paint them, wherever they are located, the hive(s) must be checked for American foulbrood.

The Management Agency would prefer that you become proficient in checking for your own American foulbrood, and individually we are on our way to achieving that.

Part of the process as a beekeeper is entering into an agreement with the Management Agency to show that:

1. you can recognise American foulbrood
2. that you know what to do with it when you find it and
3. how you are going to eliminate it from your hives.

Notice I say eliminate, not propagate! The whole idea, or if you like, the 'aim of the strategy' is to rid New Zealand of American foulbrood.

This agreement is called a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement, known in short as a DECA.

To obtain a DECA, you need to apply to the Management Agency Contractor: AsureQuality Limited. AsureQuality is looking to see that you understand the numbered points above.

Recognising AFB is the first crucial thing. The earlier you can detect it, the earlier you can deal with the hive(s). Undetected AFB can cause all sorts of problems: one being that if the hive is robbed out, you will start spreading AFB to your other hives in the apiary, and ultimately into the foraging area for bees located around your hives.

Before you apply to have a DECA, you must pass the Disease Recognition and Competency test!

How do you go about doing this? By attending a Disease Recognition and Competency course—whew, let's call it a training day—you will learn about AFB firsthand. Your tutor will be skilled in teaching you about what to look for and you are guaranteed to learn about other beekeeping info at the same time. Sometimes it is a chance remark that sticks in your mind that helps you at a later date. At the end of this day you will sit a test: a Disease Recognition and Competency test. You can of course sit this test cold (without the training day); however, think about the information that you will miss out on!

With the results of the test, AsureQuality now knows if you are proficient at looking for and identifying AFB. The other sections of the DECA are how you will deal with it, and how you will eliminate it. Again this information is what you will learn about at your training day and is also in the "Yellow Book" (*Elimination of American foulbrood without the use of drugs —a practical manual for beekeepers*, by Mark Goodwin). If AsureQuality is happy with your application to have a DECA, you will become an Approved Beekeeper.

Being an Approved Beekeeper gives you an exemption from completing a yearly Certificate of Inspection—COI for short. However, it doesn't exempt you from doing your actual inspection(s); you must still retain records about inspection dates and what you do if you find anything.

Now you have a DECA, it isn't a document to throw in the bottom drawer. It is a living document; i.e., plan to go back over it once a year and ask yourself if you are living up to your agreement. If you aren't in control of your AFB, then revise your agreement and talk to AsureQuality about what you need to change in order to meet the 'elimination' part of your agreement.

So what happens if you aren't approved to hold a DECA? You will be sent a Certificate of Inspection. You will need to find an Approved Beekeeper to check your hives for you. They will look for AFB and as long as everything is OK they will sign the Certificate of Inspection to say they have checked the hives and forward this to AsureQuality.

But what is the catch, you say? Most Approved Beekeepers will be busy checking their own hives. The cost for retaining the services of an experienced apicultural professional (see the article on the Exotic Bee Disease programme, page 13) is not unlike the cost of having your car serviced. It could be that their time is worth $50–60 per hour, and I hate to put a limit on that. Please note this is not the cost of AsureQuality personnel; their costs would be higher again.

Using an Approved Beekeeper to check your hive(s) has a degree of risk. That will raise a few eyebrows! The risk is that the approved beekeeper only comes once a year to check your hives. If your bees forage and rob out another hive that has AFB, it could be up to one year before disease is found in your hives. The flow-on from this could mean you would have more hives to destroy than if you can identify AFB yourself and deal with it early.

So all in all, it is easier in the long run to have your own DECA. However, for whatever reason if you feel you cannot contemplate the DECA process—and if you are willing to pay the service cost—there are alternative options for complying with the Pest Management Strategy.

- Fiona O'Brien

Annual Disease Return (ADR) is a yearly summary:

- of all your bee sites (registered and deregistered)
- of all your diseased hives (7-day reporting)
- of all purchases and disposal of hives.

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- it's highly effective (up to over 99% efficacy)
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- it has twice the contact area (4 strips per brood chamber)
- very kind to beeswax, propolis & comb honey
- very gentle on queen bees & nucs
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- strips have a 5 year expiry date from date of manufacture

Still unquestionably New Zealand's best overall Varroa treatment.

We'd strongly recommend that you use Bayvarol® as one of your alternate treatments and Thymovar® as the other.

Bayvarol is New Zealand's most popular Varroa treatment, for **very** good reason.

Current prices as at April 2009

20 to 96 strips	$1.98 + GST each
100 to 796 strips	$1.85 + GST each
800 to 8800 strips	$1.48 + GST each
9600 plus strips	$1.43 + GST each

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

For any enquiries or orders, please phone 03 358 7498 or email: Bayvarol@beehealthy.co.nz

BK121

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Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies Ltd

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From the colonies

Waikato Branch

Just when we thought that our summer might be a repeat of 2008, the rain came, ensuring a continuation of pasture flow although at this stage of the season more pennyroyal than anything else. Reports suggest an average crop for most.

The branch meeting on 6 March was fairly well attended. We were fortunate to have Dr Mark Goodwin update us on the latest regarding tutin research. This created a good discussion regarding the tutin regulations. The attendees appeared to be very conversant with the expectations of the tutin standard and knew what to do in order to comply. Given the number of passion vine hoppers that have been observed, also honeydew in some areas, it will be interesting to see what the test results reveal.

I had to leave the meeting before it finished but before I left there had been two Notices of Motion formulated, both relating to native plants, i.e., tutu and manuka.

A number of the Waikato Branch beekeepers are now in package bees mode, which will keep them busy until the end of April. There seems to be a mixture of dread at the thought of more extreme hours and hard work, but pleasure in anticipation of the financial reward. However, I guess that is much of what our industry is about.

Field day Extraordinaire 2009

Auckland Branch

16th May 2009

Location/venue: Cammells Honey House
20 Thorps Quarry Rd
Clevedon, South Auckland
(Follow the Beehives)

Programme Starts 9.30am registration cup of tea

Interesting Programme 10.00am until 3.00pm

Includes "How to get a 10 Tonne Crop per 100 hives"

David Boldt on "Australian Honey Imports"

Graham Cammell on "Field Honey Extracting"

Bob McDavitt MetService Weather Ambassador

Keynote Speaker The Hon Kate Wilkinson, Minister for Food Safety

Trade Displays

Admission $10 Non NBA Members.

$5 NBA Members with card

Contact details page 2, *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* Journal.

John recorded an amusing incident in our honey house a few weeks back. He took the lid off a drum in readiness to fill it with honey and a little jumping spider leapt from the protection of the lid flange … yes, straight into the drum where it was suspended on a filament of silk. Not wanting spider in the honey, John put his finger in to retrieve it, at which point the spider let itself down into the drum. When it thought the danger was past, it climbed up to the surface but disappeared when John tried again with his finger. Then John put the curved end of his hive tool in the mouth of the drum and waited. Eventually the spider decided it was safe, climbed up the thread, and John was able to hook it out with the hive tool. It just goes to show that in spite of our clean work practices there are still hazards to contend with!

- Pauline Bassett

Bay of Plenty Branch

February has been a great month for taking honey off and getting jobs done around the apiary. The weather has been good with a little much needed rain—the Western Bays got a bit too much, but here in the East we had enough to get the clover going while the ground temperature is still good.

March is officially autumn and for us autumn has certainly arrived. With the extraction nearly over, the varroa treatments in the hives, requeening done, it's time to bring the hives home. All that's left to do is pay for the tutin testing and sell honey.

Conference planning is well underway, as you will see from the registration information and the article on what's on this year at conference. Registering early certainly helps with planning, so please remember to do so.

Branch meetings will start again in April. For those of you not on my contact list, please send me an email or phone me and I will keep you posted of the timing of meetings. Look forward to seeing a good turnout at the AGM in April.

- Barbara Pimm, Branch Secretary

Poverty Bay Branch

Another season of harvest and extraction out of the way, with a less-than-average honey crop but still not a bad one really. The East Coast had virtually no rain from August to mid January. With hot weather in December through February the manuka did not yield too well: even the rewarewa (which flowered OK) produced, but not abundantly.

The hives up the top of the East Coast around Hicks Bay produced very little, which is not surprising as it is overstocked with every man and his dog chasing manuka. The situation has become ridiculous, with no gentlemen's agreement as in the past, but beekeepers dumping their hives right next to other beekeepers.

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The interesting thing was the spring was brilliant. I stated in the October 2008 issue that mite levels were high, but this was based on the first spring checks which had beekeepers close by but generally normal to low mite levels elsewhere. This summer and into autumn the mite levels have been very low with hardly a mite seen, as Ron Morison from Hawke's Bay mentioned in his positive item in last month's issue.

As usual, a mention to the Mainlanders in the South Island: keep soldering on with varroa, and if you can work together in your areas to all try to treat at the same time this helps, as shown overseas.

I hope no one is worried about the recession that the media is continuing to bombard us with. I don't know a lot about this financial stuff but I know my truck used to cost $125 to fill. Now it costs $70, and with our dollar being low the honey companies should be selling our lovely products for more as lots of it is exported. Yeah, right ...

- Don Simm, Branch President

Hawke's Bay Branch

As usual, varroa numbers have gone from very low to very high in a very short time, with some hives in late February already showing signs of PMS. I have also noticed a lot of bees with deformed wings; these bees seem to be showing up at lower varroa levels than in the past.

We have had some rain in Hawke's Bay but it is still relatively dry and many farmers are still very short of grass. In most parts of the Bay very little honey was gathered in February and the bees have been robbing very freely. Most beekeepers in the area are expecting to have a fairly large sugar bill this autumn.

In early March I was contacted by MAF Biosecurity about a possible Africanised honeybee colony near the port of Napier. I had already had a hard day but agreed to go and have a look and set off with my sample jar, poison etc. The report had been of a small, very aggressive swarm of bees; they were small and they were highly aggressive. In fact, they were bad tempered even for wasps, which is what they were (German variety). I poisoned the nest while I was there, so the lady of the house was happy and I went home with a smile on my face. Killer bees had not invaded after all and a false alarm is better than no alarm at all.

Talking of robbing, does anyone out there have bulk supplies of bee candy, and has anyone tried feeding this rather than the liquid sugar?

- John Berry, Branch President

Southern North Island Branch

Most of our members are reporting good clover honey yields, but poor bush and manuka honey yields. Around the Wanganui area there has been a below-average manuka yield, and in my case the water content percentage was higher than usual. Too much rain at the time that the bushes were flowering.

The clover flow stopped very abruptly, and this sudden stop has caused a few problems for those who were requeening and splitting. The acceptance of earlier mated queens and queen cells were very good around the area.

We have been following very closely the tutin bush survey, especially as most of us had assumed that in our area it was a non-event. Now we unfortunately know better. Looking at tutu bushes on the side of the road and in gullies was a most interesting exercise. In some cases hardly any insects and no honeydew, but in other seemingly 'safe' areas both insects and honeydew were observed. So now we are waiting for the report from the researcher to give us a better guide to the whole problem.

In my own case I found that I had been driving past tutu bushes almost every second day for years on the way to my farm block and had never noticed them, only seven kilometres from Wanganui City. I made a point of stopping every week to check the bushes, and although there were small numbers of passion vine hopper insects, I never saw any honeydew, thank heavens, as I and other beekeepers have hives close to this particular spot.

We live in interesting times.

AFB Recognition & Competency Course and test

The Wellington Beekeepers' Club is running an AFB Recognition & Competency Course and test at the Johnsonville Community Centre on Saturday, 20 June 2009, starting at 1 pm.

Interested persons please contact Frank or Mary-Ann Lindsay on 04 478 3367, or email lindsays.apiaries@clear.net.nz

-Neil Farrer

Nelson Branch

Where did the summer disappear to? As I am writing mid March, we are having such cold nights that I should imagine the drones will soon be tossed from the hives. Luckily, the autumn queens are still getting mated nicely and queen cells are being successfully raised as long as the sugar feeding keeps continuous. Gone is the heat of the intense short summer. The days are still warm but it feels more like autumn than summer. I don't envy those of you who are still taking off honey as the robbing and 'aggro' have begun in earnest.

Most beekeepers in the 'top of the South' are disappointed with their honey crops as mentioned last month, both in quantity and quality (lack of monofloral honey, especially manuka). At this point, there is still not enough autumn honey coming in to make winter stores adequate. As optimistic as some beekeepers remain (a bit like fishermen in that way!) we still hope that summer and small nectars might linger.

The wasps are more prevalent than I have seen in many years, so hope beekeepers will be diligent with entrance guard restrictors, as I am sure that mice will also be looking for a warm nest to sneak into for the winter!

- Merle Moffitt

Canterbury Branch

Down here in Canterbury the weather this autumn is being kind to us with very warm days, plenty of soil moisture to keep the 'rats and mice' flowering and very few nor'westers to keep the bees at home.

It appears that autumn requeening is going well, with above average matings. This is primarily due to the exceptional conditions at present: long may they last. Every good day gained now makes the winter that much shorter.

The spread of varroa doesn't appear to be as bad as we first thought, thanks to the efforts of the beekeepers who first got it down here. Their actions have enabled a lot of us to miss this autumn as the first treatment. A big thank you to you guys, I'm sure everyone down here knows who these people are.

This spring will be a different story though, and we all need to get our heads around this problem and go forward or get out at a profit. I would suggest to fellow Canterbury beekeepers to either dust off your contacts list, or make the effort to go to conference in Rotorua and talk to beekeepers who have lived through the first two years of varroa. Their experience is invaluable in coming to terms with the challenge.

Good luck selling your crop this year, it appears to be a lot easier and with better prices than last year.

A lot to consider this winter!

- Brian Lancaster

Otago Branch

Well, the Otago summer came and went pretty fast in the end. Beekeepers report an abrupt end to the season in mid- to late-January, with little or no honey coming in since. As a result, many earlier expectations have not been met but I hear at least a few had a very good crop. Once again, "about average" is a common answer.

Around Dunedin we went from a very warm and dry summer to a wet and cool autumn in a matter of days, as if someone flicked the seasonal switch. There haven't been too many opportunities for queen mating either and it would be an optimistic beekeeper that puts cells out from now on. I must be one of them with my last cells to use this week.

The final harvesting and an earlier-than-usual wintering down are this month's tasks, and of course, selling the honey. On that front at least the news is positive, with clover and other honeys like kamahi in good demand. With the lower Kiwi dollar export prices are well up, with top grade clover fetching over $5 per kg. It could be a handy time to get a better income given the cool economic forecast.

Speaking of chilly weather, with snow already on Otago hills in March we may have a longer 'off season' than usual in which to spend it!

- Peter Sales, Branch Secretary

About the Apiary

It's autumn, and a very pleasant time of the year. It's still warm and dry and while I'm still taking off honey, the bees in some hives are starting to settle into winter mode. A recent cold snap saw the bees reject drones and drone larvae, while other hives are still full of brood and drones.

For most of us, once the honey is off we are administering miticide treatments and checking hives for disease, and setting them up for winter and the coming spring. It's also robbing season: when any exposed honey is pounced upon by bees or when a hive is left open, other bees try to steal the exposed honey and a fight breaks out. Hence honey supers are removed early in the morning, and the hives are worked when it's a little warmer.

Going into an apiary, it is quite easy to see when something is wrong. No flight activity, two or three lines of alert bees surrounding the entrance, and cracks between supers wide enough to allow entry into the hive indicate the apiary is under attack.

Quite often the aggressors at this time of the year are wasps rather than bees from another hive. They are after sucrose to feed to developing queen larvae. Any rotting fruit or weak hives nearby are targets. Wasps continually probe the defences of a colony and occasionally get in. They are also quick learners. Instead of the nervous jerky action of a scouting wasp, they learn to fly straight in and often won't be challenged. After several trips they obtain the colony's odour, more wasps are recruited and pretty soon the colony will be sucked dry of everything edible.

In plague years, wasps will move on to the next weakest hive, attacking in considerable numbers until all the hives in the apiary are dead. All a beekeeper can do is close the entrances down completely so that only a few bees can get in and out at one time, and to move the hives away. Laying jam baits surrounded with insecticide powder—or mixed in with the jam—is effective during these frenzied attacks, as the wasps will go for anything. However, if they are not yet attacking the hives, you have to leave jam baits around until the wasps start taking it back to their nests. It is only then that a poison can be introduced. If successful, within an hour their numbers will have dropped considerably.

The only problem with jam baits when wasp numbers are low is that bees will take advantage of it, so it's best not to mix in the poison straight away. I put my jam baits under the floorboards as the wasps tend to search there first for newly ejected bees.

In other apiaries where there are no wasps the bees are in full flight, packing nectar in and around the brood nest. The mild autumn has extended the late nectar sources: catsear is re-flowering, and pennyroyal, koromiko, climbing rata, and lacebark are in full flower. Then there are countless other introduced species like red-flowering gums and orange-flowering gums, grevilleas, ivy, etc., that are producing late nectar. Or perhaps the activity could be due to another bee hive close by that is either queenless or has been decimated by varroa mites. Robbing bees can bring back all sorts of nasties: American foulbrood, nosema and chalkbrood spores, and varroa mites.

Take a quick look around the apiary. When bees are robbing, they leave dirty marks and flakes of wax at the entrance and you won't see any guards or bees with loads of pollen going into the hive. A quick inspection will tell you whether the hives are OK or not. A month after the robbing season has finished, it's very important to check all hive brood nests to make sure all hives are still disease and mite free, ready for winter.

Wintering hives

When setting hives up for winter, it's best to check the hive's foundation. I like my hives to be off the ground so there is airflow underneath, so I place the hives on pallets. These rot in time, causing the hives to collapse (especially when they are full of honey), so I replace them early when it's easier to do so.

Make sure the bottom board is sound and has a slight slope towards the entrance, so that winter rains run off instead of into the hive. Reduce entrances to stop mice entering. Mice can do an awful lot of damage to frames by eating out a hole and making a grass-lined nest. In time they can cause the hive to starve by eating most of the reserves.

It doesn't really matter how many supers you use to overwinter a hive. A single hive needs to be full of bees with at least six frames of honey and pollen, but will also need feeding in the spring to enable the bees to build up to a production level by December.

Most beekeepers winter hives two supers high; again full of bees with the top super being full of honey, while three to four frames in the bottom super should be a mix of both pollen and honey frames. Two-super hives are a lot stronger and therefore tend to survive better through the winter, but will still decrease in bee numbers through natural attrition before the queen's laying kicks in fully again in the spring. It will depend upon your area (whether there is an early flow) as to whether the hives should be fed or not.

Because the hives are stronger, it's possible to put a couple of scoops (using a two-kilogram honey pot) of dry raw sugar in a top feeder during August. The sugar attracts moisture given off by the bees, and therefore it's easier for them to convert it to food should they need it. If there are early flows, the bees will ignore the sugar and feed on the incoming nectar.

Ventilating the hive

One important point to consider is ventilation. Bees need to exchange the air in the hive once an hour. Some beekeepers

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have found that open mesh floors are totally adequate, while those using conventional floorboards may need top ventilation.

I have a split board on all my hives as a crown board under the roof. This has a 25-mm entrance cut in one side that serves as my top ventilation, or an entrance if the board is turned over and a split or nuc placed on top. I have found this system works well for my hives in the Wellington area. Though years of experimenting I have found a larger entrance on the split board (top ventilation) causes too great an airflow, therefore more stores are consumed. Too little ventilation, and I end up with a wet split board and frame lugs which tend to rot out quickly. Under these conditions the bees also consume more stores to keep themselves warm.

Other things to consider

Apart from winter stores, the bees should be young and unaffected by varroa for at least two brood cycles. The queen, of course, should be relatively young but I tend to judge a queen's suitability by her laying pattern. If she's producing a good brood pattern, I leave her as is. I replace any queen whose brood pattern is spotty or has not produced much honey during the season, and mark the hive by pushing a drawing pin into the bottom super. This makes it easy to identify new queens in the spring, as they tend to require less attention. Second-year queens are likely to swarm so require greater attention. and will be split in the spring as a form of swarm control.

No matter how well you prepare hives for winter, some will go queenless and die out, or the queen will become a drone layer. For the past few years I have been overwintering nucs. These are four-frame hives that I place in a sunny sheltered spot, close to a winter nectar source (kohekohe or Spanish heath in my case). In late autumn, I replace the outside frames with full frames of honey and by August the nucs will be full of bees and short of honey stores. I then move them into full supers with additional honey frames, to be used as replacements for any hive that has died out.

Small hives struggle to keep warm during winter. Other beekeepers have found by placing insulation foil immediately on top of the frames, the heat given off by the bees is reflected down on to them so they tend to consume a little less honey.

Leave 25 mm completely around the foil so moisture-laden air can escape. Insulation like this can be used on any sized hive, but it must be placed immediately over the bees to be effective. Placing it on the second super when the bees are in the bottom super doesn't work.

Storing supers

One of your most valuable assets is your honey supers. It takes a lot of honey to draw them out so they should be protected from rodents and wax moth.

Place supers off the ground in a cool, windy environment rather than stacking them up one on top of the other in a shed. I use plastic pallets and place a queen excluder under each stack of supers as well as on top. An alternative is to leave them on the hives until the first frost, by which time most of the adult moths are dead. In the meantime the bees will have cleaned up any wax moth larvae that emerge from eggs.

For those with only a few supers, it's easy to freeze a super or a few frames at a time and then store the frames in a plastic bag in the garage or shed. Freezing for 24 hours will kill wax moth eggs and larvae, thus protecting the frames until they are ready to use again in the spring. *Don't use any form of fumigant, as these tend to leave residues in wax that can then transfer into the honey when it's stored in the frames.*

Things to do this month

Winter down hives. Check feed and the effectiveness of mite treatments. Do a check for AFB. Slope bottom boards and fit mouse guards. Replace rotten or damaged supers and bottom boards. Attend to fences, check for wasps and control grass. Freeze stored supers to kill wax moth eggs and larvae or store in a shed that is open and has a good airflow through the supers. Those in the upper half of the North Island will have to watch more closely for wax moth infestation. Those in the South Island can smile as they do not have wax moth problems.

- Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

*Passion vine hoppers (*Scolypopa *sp.) and tutu*

I have been signing harvest declarations for quite a few years now. As part of that process, I have kept an eye out on a few selected tutu bushes for passion vine hoppers. I hadn't seen any hoppers previously, except for about 20 years ago when I found them all over blackberry bushes at one selected bush apiary site in Otaki.

Most of my hives are spread over 90 kilometres on farms close to native bush or in regional parks where there are lots of tutu bushes growing.

This year, with the new regulations in place, I spent a few days in each area plotting the locations of bushes and selected two that were near each apiary to monitor.

I started recording and photographing tutu bushes from the beginning of January and as expected, came away with nil results. My method was to carefully lift up long new growth spikes and look under the leaves all the way down, then give the bush a good shake to see if any hoppers jumped off.

It was a bit frustrating to commit one morning each week and find nothing, so I increased the number of bushes I was looking at to include some huge bushes, where I would stand on the back of the truck to give the branches a shake. I also gave up on looking for hoppers in the Wellington area and concentrated on the Otaki area, where it's a lot warmer.

It wasn't until 4 February 2009 that I found my first hopper on the truck, but none on the bushes. During one of these observations, a group of walkers passed by and asked what we were doing. I explained that we now had to check for hoppers because of the people who had been poisoned in 2007 in the Coromandel after consuming tutin contaminated honey. One fellow replied that his garden at Waikanae Beach was full of hoppers, so they were around. It came as quite a jolt to learn they were well established in some areas but I hadn't seen them. It also made me think that perhaps I missed something, but reminded myself that another beekeeper had walked the entire Waikanae River from the mouth to the bridge at State Highway 1 without seeing a single tutu bush. They generally don't grow in ex-swamp country.

By 18 February I was finding a few adults (4–5) on the bushes I had first started monitoring. By the end of February (we missed a week's observation because of heavy rain), hopper numbers had increased and a few juvenile nymphs were present on a few bushes. I looked for honeydew but couldn't see any, but after magnifying my photographs I found what looked like two drops on one under-story leaf.

About this time I was sent photos from the Waikato showing lots of hoppers and honeydew dripping off the leaves—staggering. It was also suggested that I look at other shrubs and trees for hoppers.

On 2 March I noticed vine hoppers on a blackberry bush in high numbers. I could see a couple of spots of honeydew, and the odd wasp was going from leaf to leaf, looking for dew or perhaps nymphs. I spent an hour carefully looking over all the bushes down the accessway to this apiary. I found that the hoppers were concentrated around the blackberry bush, and the further away I looked, the fewer there were until there were none after 20 metres (although I found four on a grapevine 70 metres away).

Adult passion vine hoppers cluster together on blackberry, 12 March 2009.

Apart from blackberry, I found a concentration of hoppers and honeydew on a single Poroporo (*Solanum aviculare*) bush, a few on new growth on some kohekohe and a few on some elderberry. Being such an isolated group, I thought I had possibly spread it to this spot as the blackberry bush was just where I always parked. However, after further observations I found heaps of hoppers on blackberry growing along the roadside, but not that many on tutu bushes. I think they prefer blackberry to tutu in this area. No bees were ever seen anywhere near these bushes. The bees were flying like mad, gathering nectar from climbing rata, grevilleas (there are rows of them as this property used to supply cut flowers), catsear and clover, plus numerous others that flower in suburban gardens.

Passion vine hoppers on Poroporo, 12 March 2009

Just when the hopper populations were starting to explode on the tutu, a cold front came through, dropping snow in Dunedin and decreasing our temperatures considerably for a few days.

By 12 March the hopper numbers had declined drastically. Some bushes had no hoppers. Others had adults concentrated in a few groups of 4–6 on the underside of stems, and I saw a few groups of 10 or more on my blackberry bush. No nymphs were present.

A week later I checked the Wellington sites again. I didn't find any hoppers but the tutu was regrowing and flowering again. Most disappointing was that the extra supers I had put on for the bees to gather the late manuka crop were empty.

Is this an unusual one-off year when hopper numbers exploded, or is this the usual pattern? One thing that these regulations have done is made everyone look for hoppers. People are seeing them for the first time in their gardens, and all over the hedges in some cases.

It also has made us aware that perhaps wasps play a part in controlling hopper populations and gathering honeydew before turning to beehives for their carbohydrate requirements.

- Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

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.

'Old wives' tales'

"You can't get foulbrood off dry equipment: only wet equipment."

No matter how old or dry the frames or supers are, spores live for decades. So when the equipment is reintroduced to a hive, the bees will pick up the spores when cleaning the equipment. As you know, it takes fewer than 10 spores to infect a larva that is less than 24 hours old.

From the archives

[Editor's note: this article originally appeared in the Winter 1991 issue of The New Zealand BeeKeeper, *pages 5–6.]*

Disease Control—are you prepared to do your bit?

From John Heineman and Allen McCaw

AOTEAROA—a beautiful land somewhere in the Great South Seas. Mountainous and bush-clad for the greater part and at first inhabited only by many bird species, large and small, and a few small creatures such as lizards and insects. Man was absent for a long time, for these islands were very remote from the rest of the earth's land masses, and lay undisturbed.

Then one day a group of the human species arrived from the northeast in their great canoes and settled and multiplied. A good few centuries later others arrived in sailing ships originating from the opposite side of the globe. At first they were hunters and traders, but were inevitably followed by settlers in search of new lands and keen to share in the bounty this favoured country had to offer.

Settlement also meant they introduced many of their domestic animals, including eventually the honeybee species—Apis hitherto not found in this remote region. And together with these animals came many of their diseases and pests. In the case of honeybees, Bacillus larvae, nosema and perhaps some others were introduced.

Over the decades, some wise and forward-looking officials changed the ways of animal husbandry, introduced better management methods, sought to combat existing pests and diseases, and developed good legislation and controls to keep any further "nasties" out of this country, now known as New Zealand. They realised the advantages of our natural remoteness from the rest of the world, and that largely by chance, a great many other very serious pests had not arrived with the original importations. New Zealand began to develop an enviable reputation as a source of healthy primary produce and quality animal and plant-breeding material.

This still holds true today, but the question has to be asked: for how much longer? Our remoteness has diminished by modern communications and travel. With the frequency of transport, the arrival of abundant goods from all parts of the world, and a regular daily influx of people, the task of our Customs and Agricultural Quarantine services has become onerous indeed, and cannot be expected to be totally foolproof. Add to this the recent political influences whereby free-trade practices and promotion of increased tourism is being advocated as a panacaea for our economic difficulties, and it no longer becomes a question of "IF" some new problem arrives here. Rather, we are faced with contemplating what we will do "WHEN" the situation occurs. **POSSIBILITY has changed to PROBABILITY.**

This is why the NBA Executive has recently sent out a questionnaire to branches and some individual members posing a number of hypothetical, but serious, future situations where discovery of an exotic bee disease or pest has taken

place. Also included were questions regarding the attitude of beekeepers towards the use of drugs or chemicals for the treatment of European Foulbrood, AFB, and mites, etc.

The questionnaire also sought comment on a fair composition of an action committee to be formed before the occurrence of such an emergency in order to be ready to deal with it in the most appropriate manner.

What of the response to this questionnaire from the industry? To say disappointing would be an understatement. Dismal is more apt.

It is also the reason why the Executive, with financial backing from the Industry Trust Funds, judged it prudent to commission a report from MAF Quality Management summarising the research and practical experience gained worldwide in the use of drugs and chemicals to combat bee diseases and pests. Under the title "Feeding Drugs to Honey Bees to Control Diseases—some of the issues", the report represents a well-considered and informative document.

Topics covered include a history of AFB developments in NZ: disease-resistant strains of bees; effects upon AFB levels of antibiotic drug use; antibiotic resistant strains of AFB; contamination of honey with antibiotics; benefits of drug feeding; availability, cost, and legal implications of feeding antibiotics; suggestions for further research; and a discussion of EFB and drug feeding as a control measure.

The report assists in pinpointing the problems which must be addressed in considering drug feeding, and some of the options available based upon present scientific and practical beekeeping experience. It is stressed that the paper is NOT meant to be a policy document—either for the MAF or the NBA. The work in forming industry policies in the use of drug feeding now or in the future has yet to be done, and is presently under consideration by the Executive in this year's Industry Plan.

As an industry we have for many years followed the policy of eradication of AFB (B.L). The disease was reported as early as 1877, and played havoc with the early development of beekeeping. Eventually, legislation was adopted fostering better management methods and imposing controls which involved regular inspection of bee colonies and the burning of infected hives. The incidence of AFB since that time dropped substantially, until in 1970 only 0.4% of hives were reported infected. These infected hives were found in 2.7% of apiaries.

However in 1990 the picture again became disturbing. Most recent statistics show infected hives at 1.2%, found in 7% of registered apiaries, which represents a trebling of disease incidence in two and a-half times as many apiaries. This, of course, takes no account of unscrupulous or ignorant beekeepers who do not register apiaries or report disease incidence.

Some reasons for this trend appear fairly obvious. Hive numbers have increased markedly—as have beekeeper numbers. (Both dropped slightly for 1988–'90.) Pollination activity has multiplied rapidly, involving large concentrations of hives, in kiwifruit in particular, and transportation of hives over long distances.

Stress and drifting are often the result, and intensive management methods to achieve rapid build-up of colonies, sometimes by inadequately experienced or trained operators, all add to the potential for disease spread. When these are added to a dramatic contraction of apiary advisory services from the Government, then perhaps it is not entirely surprising that AFB levels have risen in proportion.

Some questions come to mind as a result of this present trend. Are we fighting a losing battle by adhering to our established control methods? Is it time to alter course? Will alternatives such as drug feeding lead to more efficient management and consequently save us dollars?

Could we jeopardize our good reputation here and overseas as producers of high-quality products through the possible risk of antibiotic residues in honey, as has been the recent experience in other countries where more diseases and pests are prevalent? What of the expanding and potentially lucrative organic food market which NZ honey should all be ideally suited for?

Will it still be necessary to destroy hives which show AFB infections even after drug treatment? Is it inevitable that drug feeding is the only option to combat European Foulbrood if it should arrive here? What is the likely risk of EFB arriving in the near future as present free-trade policies, such as CER with Australia, lead to the development of protocols to allow heat treated honey imports to New Zealand?

The fact remains that we are faced with some very complex problems which call for thorough consideration and sound judgment. The writing appears to be on the wall, and with the familiar back-up of free MAF experience and advice in the past, now carrying a price tag if we want it, then the past practice by many beekeepers of adopting the "ostrich" method to solve problems simply will no longer do. We must be prepared to adapt to change, and urgently prepare for any unwanted problems before they land on us.

It is for this reason that the Executive has been actively pursuing the question of funding for disease inspection services over the past five or six years. And also why we are, right now, being requested to make our collective needs and preferences known in the re-drafting by MAF of emergency response procedures to combat an exotic disease outbreak. No longer are they telling us what will happen—we are being asked to tell them what we want to happen. We have a right to be asked under a democratic system, and equally we have a definite duty to respond. There are many questions and problems to consider and time is running out. It is essential while facing such radical changes that the greatest number of different viewpoints be heard so that decisions can be taken with confidence now to serve the beekeeping industry as well as humanly possible in the future.

If we allow lethargy to prevail, then a small number of concerned individuals will be left to make the decisions. No one will have the right afterwards to lay the blame for

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disagreeable or unsuitable measures at the doorstep of officials or industry leaders unless they have taken the opportunity to contribute beforehand.

The MAF report on drug feeding addresses some of the issues before us. It is clear and informative, and above all understandable. Copies are available from the NBA Executive Secretary at a cost of $5 for re-production, or may also be borrowed from the NBA Library, P.O. Box 112, Milton. *[Editor's note: this report is now longer available.]*

Of one thing we can be reasonably certain: *Apis mellifera* will survive, as it has done for centuries, together with all the bugs, diseases, and pests. Whether beekeeping also survives as a viable (sometimes even profitable) enterprise in future is perhaps more questionable. Much will depend on the decisions we make now, just as our present existence depended upon the early pioneers of the industry as they faced the particular problems of their times. It is nearly always later than you think. As the barmaid said: "Time, ladies and gentlemen—NOW!"

Allergic bee sting reactions—when bee stings turn bad

During the past month I have heard of five beekeepers who have had quite severe reactions to bee stings. Two were new beekeepers and three were long-time, semi-commercial or commercial beekeepers. Another two people were airlifted to hospital in the rescue helicopter from Turakina last month.

Some reactions were as a result of a single sting (on or near the ear) and others were from multiple stings.

All were very frightening for the individuals and could have been serious, but luckily were not. Most people were at home but one was hours away from medical help.

This sort of reaction can happen to anyone at any time and usually happens within five minutes of being stung, but it could also occur an hour or so after multiple stings. Reactions can happen in three ways:

1. With new beekeepers, the reaction to individual stings gradually gets worse with each sting; i.e., swelling increases with each sting to a large local reaction. Then it progresses to a generalised skin allergic reaction: itchiness all over the body. The next stage is that a drop in blood pressure causes the heart to race. More severe, life-threatening systemic allergic reactions have all of the above characteristics, as well as the swelling, plus the reaction can reduce your eyesight to pin holes and make it impossible to stand and difficult to breathe. *NB: fainting can cause you to stop breathing if you fall in a way that cuts off your airway.*

2. Older beekeepers, usually in their seventies, also gradually get worse reactions after years of no reaction to bee stings. (Incidentally, people over 40 years of age are more susceptible to bee stings.) Unfortunately their bodies don't readjust and this is a sign that it's time to give up beekeeping. Sometimes the reaction is due to other medical problems or medications. As you get older you cannot take the strain brought on by a racing heart or shortness of breath.

3. With beekeepers who get stung regularly or receive the occasional sting, suddenly a very bad reaction occurs. However, it usually stops short of a full, life-threatening systemic allergic reaction; i.e., you do not lose consciousness (or die) and come out of the reaction within 10 to 20 minutes.

Why do we hear of reactions at this time of the year? During autumn, a bee's venom sac doubles in size in readiness to defend the hive against attackers, so we are getting more venom with each sting—especially if we squeeze the sac when pulling it out. We also tend to get more stings during the robbing season, but it also depends upon one's own health as to how our bodies react. If you are tired, fatigued, perhaps coming down with something—the body's immune system might be stretched so can act differently to what you would normally expect.

Note: If you are taking medications to control your heartbeat or reduce high blood pressure, you will not be able to increase your blood pressure in response to a bad reaction as well, so the results could be worse. If you suffer from breathing problems like asthma, or if your airways are blocked with phlegm you cannot handle the shortness of breath very well.

So what can we do about this situation? It's always a good idea to seek medical advice. Some GPs are not always tuned into this sort of severe incidence as they see so few of them, so you may need to get a referral to an allergy specialist. Not all hospitals have specialists and it may take some time to see one. You may be offered a series of injections to boost your immune system to bee venom. These are usually carried out in a hospital where all the equipment is at hand in case of an adverse reaction. This usually takes you up to the equivalent of two stings over a time period, but some people fail to achieve this level and therefore have to give up beekeeping. (This may be a long undertaking and the treatment may need to be weighed up against the need to continue beekeeping.)

Consider a better protective suit or just do it up correctly in the first place. It's often when you think, "I'll just do this quickly so won't need a veil or suit" when you get unexpectedly stung—often multiple times. If you are with another beekeeper, check each other's suit to see that it's done up correctly before starting.

If you are having bad reactions (severe swelling or one of the incidents outlined above), you may be able to take a non-sedating antihistamine about an hour before going out to work the bees. Some natural health practitioners advocate that you take a couple of vitamin C tablets to boost your immune system before working bees. (Depending on the situation this may not be enough protection and may wear off.)

Make sure that someone knows where you are going! It is just as important to beekeepers working alone as it is to fishermen or trampers.

Make sure you have a cellphone and that it is working, preferably with a booster kit for poor reception areas.

Have an Action Plan of what to do if you have a bad reaction to a bee sting. Discuss this with your doctor.

Do you know first aid? Can you help someone in trouble? (It may be a good idea for a local club meeting to get some training.)

Plan for the worst and hope for the best. Do you know what to do if you need to?
Get out of the area. Don't remove your hood unless you are well away from bees.

Sit down or lie down with your feet up if you feel faint.

Stay quiet and calm.

Wait about five minutes to judge what is happening. Are things getting worse or better?

Know what you have to do next and when to do it. It is easier to plan it out before you need to do it and make sure you have everything you need.

Oral liquid (liquids work faster than tablets) antihistamines can prevent things from getting too bad but they do take between 30 minutes to an hour to work. Remember that most liquid antihistamines can make you drowsy! It's no use getting over a bad reaction only to crash your truck into something or someone.

Consider purchasing an Epipen so that you can self-administer in case of a very severe reaction but get advice on where to administer it. Timing is important too. If you have had a bad reaction previously and feel another coming on, don't wait too long to see what sort of reaction you are having before injecting yourself.

Adrenaline buys you time but you will still need to get medical help as it wears off!

A syringe and ampoules of adrenaline is a cheaper alternative (available on prescription through your doctor) but you have to be fully conscious and know what to do to use it.

If you work alone or work in the backblocks, consider purchasing a personal locator beacon. The new GPS unit costs about $700 but they can now quickly track you to within 30 metres, which may save your life.

Quite often, for commercial beekeepers this is just a one-off event or it could happen a couple of times during your beekeeping career. The next sting is generally OK and your body doesn't react; however, you never know. (Your body could be telling you that something is wrong.)

Prevention is better than cure

It's such a little thing, the sting. It's designed to deter attackers but sometimes there are unexpected consequences, so be alert to them.

- Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member
- Stuart Lindsay, Oncology Pharmacist, Palmerston North Hospital—and highly allergic to bee stings ☹

Further reading

The Hive and the Honey Bee, Dadant and Sons, chapter 27.

It is important to wash your overalls regularly. Venom-filled overalls just attract more bees to you!

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Club Contacts & Beekeeping Specialty Groups

WHANGAREI BEE CLUB
Meets first Saturday each month (except January)
Time: 10.00 am, wet or fine (we are keen)

Contact: Mike Maunder
Phone: 09 437 5847
Arthur Tucker
Phone: 09 438 4283
Kevin & Melissa Wallace
Phone: 09 423 8642 (Wellsford)

AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC
Meets first Saturday monthly at Unitec, Pt Chevalier, Auckland.

Contact: Carol Downer, President
Phone: 09 376 6376
Email: fairy-angel-peewee@xtra.co.nz

FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets second Sunday of each month at 10.00 am for a cuppa and discussion. 10.30 am open hives.

Contact: Peter Biland
Phone: 09 294 8365

WAIKATO DOMESTIC BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Meets at 7.30 pm every third Thursday except December & January at Lab 1, Wintec Horticultural Centre, Hamilton Gardens, Gate 2, Cobham Dr., Hamilton.

Contact: Dave Woolley
Phone: 07 853 6304
Email: davew@gallagher.co.nz

HAWKE'S BAY BRANCH

Meets at 7.30 pm, Arataki, Havelock North for workshops or meetings as advised to the members
Contact: Mary-Anne Thomason
Branch Secretary
Phone: 06 855 8038
E-mail: kintail_honey@xtra.co.nz

TARANAKI BEEKEEPING CLUB

Contact: Stephen Black
685 Uruti Road RD 48, Urenui 4378
Phone: 06 752 6860
Email: beeclub@beesrus.co.nz

WANGANUI BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets on the second Wednesday of the month.

Contact: Neil Farrer
Phone 06 343 6248

MANAWATU BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets every fourth Thursday in the month at Newbury Hall, SH3, Palmerston North

Contact: James Gellen
55 Bruce Road
Levin 5510
Phone 06 368 8553
E-mail: james.gellen@paradise.net.nz

WAIRARAPA HOBBYIST BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets second Sunday of month (except January) at Norfolk Road, Masterton at 1.30 pm.

Convenors: Diana and Neale Braithwaite
Phone: 06 308 9101
Fax: 06 308 9171
Email: nandd12@xtra.co.nz

WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
Meets every second Monday of the month (except January) in Johnsonville.
All welcome.

Contact: John Burnet
21 Kiwi Cres, Tawa, Wellington 5028
Phone: 04 232 7863
Email: johnburnet@xtra.co.nz

MARLBOROUGH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
Contacts: Darren Clifford, President
829 Taylor Pass Rd, RD4, Blenheim 7274
Phone: 03 577 6955

Mark Biddington, Secretary
8 Belvue Crescent
Witherlea, Blenheim 7201
Phone: 03 578 9746
Email: amandab@xnet.co.nz

NORTH CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS CLUB
Meets the second Monday of April, June, August and October

Contact: Mrs Noeline Hobson
Phone/fax: 03 337 3587
Mobile: 021 2112 655
Email: n.hobson@slingshot.co.nz

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

Contact: Jeff Robinson
64 Cobra Street, Halswell, Christchurch 8025
Phone: 03 322 5392
Email: alpinebee@hotmail.com

SOUTH CANTERBURY REGION

Contact: Peter Lyttle
Phone: 03 693 9189

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.

Contact Club Secretary: Margaret Storer
Phone: 03 415 7256
Email: flour-mill@xtra.co.nz

ACTIVE MANUKA HONEY ASSOCIATION (INC)

P O Box 19348, Hamilton
Website: www.umf.org.nz

www.nba.org.nz

NZ COMB PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Contact: John Wright
Phone: 09 236 0628

NZ HONEY BEE POLLINATION ASSOCIATION

Contact: Russell Berry
Phone: 07 366 6111

NZ HONEY PACKERS AND EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION INC
Contact: Allen McCaw
Phone: 03 417 7198
Contact: Mary-Anne Thomason
Phone: 06 855 8038

NZ QUEEN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Contact: Russell Berry
Phone: 07 366 6111

BEE PRODUCTS STANDARDS COUNCIL

Contact: Dr Jim Edwards, Chairman
Phone: 06 362 6301

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

John Moffitt, Nelson. Photo: Daniel Iseli-Otto.

Drips of dew on leaves of tutu. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

Wasp on tutu. Photo: Fiona & Jeremy O'Brien.