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The New Zealand

# BeeKeeper



**BEE WEEK**

4TH - 8TH MAY 2009



Left to right: NBA Vice President Neil Farrer, Executive Council member Barry Foster, NBA CEO Jim Edwards, Exec Council member Glenn Kelly, NBA President Frans Laas. Photo: Pam Edwards.

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# NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSN OF NZ (Inc.) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

<p><b>Lower South Island Ward</b>  <b>Frans Laas (President)</b>                  Wildlife Solutions Ltd                  102 Gladstone Road                  Mosgiel 9007                  Ph: 03 489 4597                  Email: f-laas@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p><b>Northern Ward</b>  <b>Maureen Maxwell</b>                  BeesOnline/Wild Forage Ltd                  97 Taylor Road, Waimauku                  Auckland 0882                  Ph: 09 411 7065 (h)                  Mobile: 021 956 349                  Email: maureen@beesonline.co.nz</p>	<p><b>Bay of Plenty Ward</b>  <b>Neil Mossop</b>                  Mossop's Honey                  1064 State Highway 29                  RD 1, Tauranga 3171                  Ph: 07 543 0971                  Email: info@mossopshoney.co.nz</p>	<p><b>Upper South Island Ward</b>  <b>Glenn Kelly</b>                  Motueka Apiaries                  PO Box 421                  Motueka 7143                  Ph/Fax: 03 528 8174                  Mobile: 021 159 8483                  Email: nzhoneys@yahoo.com</p>
<p><b>Southern North Island Ward</b>  <b>R Neil Farrer (Vice President)</b>                  7 Nixon Street                  Wanganui 4500                  Ph: 06 343 6248                  Mobile: 027 457 9634                  Email: farrer@infogen.net.nz</p>	<p><b>Waikato Ward</b>  <b>Lewis Olsen</b>                  260 Ryburn Rd                  R.D.3                  Ohaupo 2452                  Ph: 07 823 6706                  Email: lewis.olsen@clear.net.nz</p>	<p><b>East Coast Ward</b>  <b>Barry Foster</b>                  Tawari Apiaries Ltd                  695 Aberdeen Road                  Gisborne 4041                  Ph: 06 867 4591                  Fax: 06 867 4508                  Mobile: 027 449 7131                  Email: bjfoster@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p><b>Central South Island Ward</b>  <b>Trevor Corbett</b>                  PO Box 20                  Waipara, North Canterbury 7447                  Ph: 027 450 4567                  Email: beeworks@xtra.co.nz</p>

## NBA Branches: First named is President/Chairperson. The second named is Secretary.

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## National Beekeepers' Assn – Member Services

<p><b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:</b>  <b>Jim Edwards</b>                  10 Nikau Lane                  RD 3, Otaki 5583                  Ph 06 362 6301                  Fax 06 362 6302                  Mobile 021 631 447                  Email: ceo@nba.org.nz</p> <p><b>EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:</b>  <b>Pam Edwards</b>                  10 Nikau Lane                  RD 3, Otaki 5583                  Ph 06 362 6301                  Fax 06 362 6302                  Email: secretary@nba.org.nz</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NBA Librarians  <b>Roger and Linda Bray</b>                  Braesby Farm, RD 1, Ashburton 7771                  Ph/Fax 03 308 4964                  Email: birdsnbees@xtra.co.nz</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Publications Committee  <b>Frank Lindsay</b>                  26 Cunliffe Street                  Johnsonville                  Wellington 6037                  Ph/Fax: 04 478 3367                  Email: lindsays.apiaries@clear.net.nz</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NBA membership &amp; Journal</b>  <b>Subscriptions:</b>                  Pam Edwards                  10 Nikau Lane                  RD 3, Otaki 5583                  Ph 06 362 6301 Fax 06 362 6302                  Email:secretary@nba.org.nz</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Journal subscriptions:</b>                  — 11 Issues —  <b>NZ \$112.50 GST inc</b>  <b>Australia NZ\$125.00</b>  <b>US, UK &amp; Asia NZ\$135.00 inc p&amp;p</b>  <b>Subject to review if postage</b>  <b>charges increase</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NZ Beekeeper Printed &amp; Published by:  <b>South City Print</b>  <b>P.O. Box 2494,</b>  <b>Dunedin 9044.</b>                  Advertising: Leonie Young                  Telephone: 03 455 4486                  Fax: 03 455 7286                  Email: sales@southcityprint.co.nz</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Editorial/Publication:  <b>Nancy Fithian</b>                  8A Awa Road, Miramar                  Wellington 6022                  Ph: 04 380 8801 Fax: 04 380 7197                  Mobile: 027 238 2915                  Email: editor@nba.org.nz</p>
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## Important contacts to the New Zealand Beekeeping Industry

<p><b>Rex Baynes</b>                  AFB NPMS Manager                  PO Box 44282, Lower Hutt 5040                  rbaynes@ihug.co.nz                  info@afb.org.nz</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>American Foulbrood Pest</b>  <b>Management Strategy</b>  <a href="http://www.afb.org.nz">www.afb.org.nz</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AsureQuality phone:</b>                  0508 00 11 22  <a href="http://www.asurequality.com">www.asurequality.com</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Exotic Disease and pest</b>  <b>emergency hotline</b>                  0800 809 966  <a href="http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz">www.biosecurity.govt.nz</a></p>
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## Deadline for articles and advertising

**August issue: 23 June**

**September issue: 23 July**

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

### Bee Week

National Bee Week took place over the week of 4–8 May. This was an initiative of the NBA in association with Horticulture NZ and Organics Aotearoa. This activity certainly generated a substantial amount of media interest throughout the country. However, the activities at Parliament House on the Tuesday were the highlight of the week.

In the afternoon there was a photo shoot with the Minister of Agriculture and Minister for Biosecurity, the Hon. David Carter, in the grounds of Parliament. A dummy hive was set up on the lawn and Frank Lindsay supplied an observation hive so that the Minister could see the bees up close.

The Minister obviously was a little reticent about being close to our little friends. I suggested that he touch the glass screen. He was fascinated to feel the heat coming off the glass and I think gained an appreciation of this complex creature. Unfortunately the queen was a little shy at the time and he was not able to see her.

In the evening there was a function in the Beehive hosted by the Minister. Ruud Kleinpaste gave a good presentation in his usual flamboyant and entertaining style. The Minister and our CEO Jim Edwards also gave speeches. The themes of these talks were the importance of honey bees and other pollinators to our economy and of the threats to them. However, the Minister still regarded the implementation of "free trade" as a paramount issue with this Government as well, and that only scientifically valid arguments could be used to prevent the trade of goods between countries.

During the evening I had some light discussions with various politicians who were in attendance. I did manage to have an extended conversation with the Minister of Food Safety, the Hon. Kate Wilkinson, about various matters; during this conversation she extended an open door invitation to the NBA so that we could discuss various food safety issues pertinent to our industry. She expressed the view that she would like to see reduced regulation within the



food industry. How this translates into the real world remains to be seen.

The Minister of Agriculture has also strongly indicated that he wishes that the Ministry and industry should work more collaboratively in the future rather than the previous climate of confrontation, which as I have stated before was effectively non-productive and possibly counterproductive to the interests of our industry.

### Honey imports

The honey imports review has been extended for a month due to the unavailability of one of the reviewers.

The NBA has, in the past, criticised the mechanisms of the review process as having some inherent flaws that make it less than independent. However, the Hon. David Carter has stated that any restrictions on trade (based on sanitary issues) should be based on scientific principles. If the review panel finds in favour of the NBA's view, then the Minister is obliged to accept the recommendation based on his statements at Parliament in May. In a radio interview a senior MAF official also indicated that MAF would abide by any decision made by the Review Panel.

If the Review Panel finds in favour of the Government's view then we have limited options to mount another challenge.

### Honey standards

In April 2008 a Bee Products Standards (BPSC) general meeting was held in Wellington to discuss the creation of a set of standards to define monofloral honeys. The standards as ratified by the NBA in 2002 were the basis for these provisional standards. As usual, most

of the debate was about manuka-type honey. The members of the bee industry have not really done anything substantive and the time for action has come. The BPSC will put out a consultation document to most of the industry, which will be affected by the creation of a honey standard.

At the end of this consultation period a set of monofloral honey standards will be defined and presented to the BPSC for adoption. If the industry fails to come to an agreement, the regulators will then create their own standards and the industry will have to accept them without argument. You have all been warned. The consultation period will be over the winter so there will be no excuses about being too busy.

- Frans Laas

*[Editor's note: to have your say on the consultation paper, go to the article on page 9, as the BPSC is inviting submissions.]*



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## Letter to the editor

### Free organic beekeeping manual available

My name is Oscar Perone. I live in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, and I am 63 years old. I have been keeping bees since I was young, and in 2002 I became a professional organic, natural beekeeper. I have also taught beekeeping as a teacher at training schools in several parts of Buenos Aires.

In 2004, trying to escape Roundup and the environmental devastation as a consequence of soybean farming, we moved all of our hives to Pirané and Monte Lindo in the Formosa province in the tropical region of Argentina, where we still have them.

For over one year I was in charge of beekeeping, using my method, at the 7,500 acre 'El Palomar' ranch (for livestock and beekeeping) in Palo Santo in Formosa. The ranch has 1,000 hives, is organically certified, and is one of the largest beekeeping operations in the north of Argentina.

During all these years I developed a new technique called Extensive Organic Beekeeping that is especially for the care of African bees, although it works well with normal bees too, in non-tropical zones of the world.

I was going to publish a book, but I decided to offer all the materials for free in a manual on my new blog: <http://oscarperone.blogspot.com>

I firmly believe that, as beekeepers, we are directly responsible to try to save the bees all over the world that are in serious danger of disappearing. Across the globe the hives are losing population at an alarming rate.

I humbly think that beekeepers need to realise that we must be symbiotic with the bees, now that environmental degradation means that [beehives] are virtually the last refuge left to them [through] the thousands and thousands of hives across the world that we keep.

I feel humbled that I can do something to help, and that is why I do it. I hereby authorise the use of the information in my blog, to use as people think necessary.

All the best.

Thanks.  
Oscar Perone

Ozanan 96  
1617 General Pacheco  
Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
Tel: +54 011 1532837346  
Email: [oscarperone@gmail.com](mailto:oscarperone@gmail.com)  
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*[Editor's note: this letter was written using translation software, so I have provided some clarification where necessary.]*



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# Mervyn Joseph Farrington—Life Member of the Southern North Island Branch: 1 March 1930–11 May 2009

One of the stalwarts of Manawatu beekeeping has died aged 79. Merv Farrington of Longburn died peacefully in hospital surrounded by his family Monday 11 May after a short illness.

Merv initially worked for New Zealand Railways as a porter after leaving school before becoming a beekeeper at Wolworth's in Palmerston North with his brother-in-law Jack. At that time they were the largest beekeeping operation in New Zealand, running 3000 hives through the Manawatu and into the Hawke's Bay. The roads were mostly metal and they would camp out for one or two days while working the bees. (It took a day to travel to Hunterville—now less than an hour away.) Clover was the main honey crop beekeepers chased in those days but hives were also moved into the Wellington area to gather manuka, which was put in the hives as winter feed.

Merv then worked for Fields with Don Gibbons and the late Norm Kean before striking out on his own as a commercial beekeeper. During these times, the gear was pretty shocking and one of the stories he told was at extracting time. They had been worked long hours with little protection from bee stings. A broken lugged frame fell out of the super Norm was carrying, not for the first time that day, and he was so frustrated that he upended the whole super on the ground and jumped up and down on the frames. At this time Mr Field came out of his office, looked at the three of them and quietly went inside. Nothing was ever said but Norm felt a lot better, and I believe they started upgrading the equipment after that.

Merv went bus driving to supplement the family income and nearly became a statistic when the bridge over the Rangitikei River at Bulls collapsed under the weight of the bus while it was in flood. Luckily, he was saved by another motorist but was seriously injured. After a long spell in hospital and with the aid of a leg brace, Merv recovered and went back to beekeeping but also concentrated on woodwork: making toys and beekeeping equipment to bolster the family income.

As a new beekeeper I met Merv at the South Western District Branch meetings (now the Southern North Island Branch) some 36 years ago where he was the secretary/ treasurer for a number of years. He and the late Ted Roberts would put in their own money to keep the branch going and recoup it at field days, the branch's only source of income in those days.

Merv was one of my beekeeping mentors. We spent many hours with Merv and Bernice, talking bees and looking at his setup. We (Mary-Ann and my two very small boys) once put together 1000 frames in 10 hours. We had two compressors going, stapling the frames together using two nailing jigs. The boys would stand the end bars in the jigs while Merv cut out the last of the top bars on the saw bench.

Merv had a four-frame Pender extractor and would go out with Sue Walker in the mornings and come back with a truck load of supers and extract them in the afternoon while the honey was still warm (1.5 minutes a side). He sold most of his honey from the gate and to a little shop in Palmerston North.



Merv started countless people into beekeeping. He would make all the woodware and set them up with the bees. He liked nothing better than to talk bees. He believed that with each hive he sold, part of the purchase price should include a year's subscription to the local bee club. That way, the new beekeeper obtained ongoing knowledge and support.

There is a saying that "with the passing of an old beekeeper, a library of information is lost", but not in this case—Merv passed on his knowledge freely. An indication of the esteem in which Merv was held was demonstrated at his funeral where well over 250 attended, a good many of them beekeepers.

- Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member



## Northland Branch AGM

Friday 12 June, 6.30 pm  
St Andrews Church Hall  
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7.30 pm: Small Hive Beetle  
presentation by Sarah Peacey.  
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## Report on field study trip to Australia: Small Hive Beetle (SHB)

On 4 May 2009, 14 beekeepers from around New Zealand went for 10 days along the east coast of Australia, mainly to study Small Hive Beetle (SHB). The beekeepers also looked at European Foul Brood (EFB).

Eight of the participants were representatives of their NBA wards and sponsored by the Honey Industry Trust: Jan van Hoof (Lower South Island), Brian Lancaster (Central South Island), Emmanuel Kelly (Upper South Island), Gary Sinkinson (Southern North Island), Damien Ward (East Coast), Cameron Martin (Waikato), Allan Pimm (Bay of Plenty) and Sarah Peacey (Northern). Steve Thomas was sponsored by the Auckland NBA branch, Auckland Beekeepers Club and private donations. Also present were Rattana van Hoof, Barbara Pimm, Ryan Mossop and Ralph and Jody Mitchell. The team leader was Cameron Martin.

The purpose of the trip was primarily to study SHB, its impact on the Australian beekeeping industry and the impact it will have on our own industry. Australia first detected the beetle in 2002 but it is widely recognised that it probably arrived two years before. EFB was also looked at and some of the research programmes and their funding system, particularly those associated with SHB, and the Australian response to the *Apis cerana* incursion.

The trip started with three days around Brisbane with a very full programme, meeting with scientists, apicultural officers and beekeepers. Having a mixture of theory and practical was very helpful. We also visited honey packers, the radiation plant in Brisbane and the Queensland Brain Institute where they are doing research on bee navigation.

From Brisbane the group travelled south, visiting beekeepers along the way. We looked at SHB, EFB, extraction plants, talked about SHB, AFB, EFB, honey flows, and differences between Australian and New Zealand beekeeping. The furthest point was Bateman's Bay on the South Coast of New South Wales, then back to Sydney where we, once again, were able to look at some of the research on SHB. At a number of places we were able to reciprocate and talk of New Zealand's experiences with varroa.

After nearly 2500 kilometres, lots of observations and even more talking, we have come back with some definite thoughts on the impact that both SHB and EFB will have on our industry. There is a huge amount of information to be disseminated. In the coming months a series of articles will be written by the members of the group on different aspects of the trip. Broad topics will include the effects of SHB in the hive and the honey shed and the changes needed



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Front row, left to right: Damien Ward, Cameron Martin (team leader), Barbara Pimm, Gary Sinkinson (principal driver), Rattana van Hoof, Jody Mitchell.

Back row, left to right: Steve Thomas (luggage), Brian Lancaster (driver), Allan Pimm (vice team leader), Sarah Peacey (scribe), Emmanuel Kelly (timekeeper), Jan W van Hoof (Treasurer) Ryan Mossop, Ralph Mitchell.

**Photo: Bob Russell.**

in management practices as a result, EFB, *Apis cerana*, SHB control methods, research and funding, Australian beekeeping and the work at the Queensland Brain Institute. Each of the sponsored members is available to talk to and to make presentations on the findings of the trip.

The information brought back by this group will enable the New Zealand beekeeping industry to be well prepared for an incursion of SHB; however, most of us feel that EFB is at this stage a far greater threat because of the difficulties that we observed in distinguishing it from PMS (Parasitic Mite Syndrome), the residue problems that using antibiotics would present to the industry if that were the way we dealt with it, and its effect on the AFB National Pest Management Strategy here.

Our thanks go to all those involved in this trip, the organising committee who put together a great programme in a very short space of time, and all the people in Australia who gave up their time willingly and were so helpful, informative and, above all, hospitable. Thank you, also, to the participants on the trip.

- Sarah Peacey, Northern Ward



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BK12

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## Having fogger problems?

I'm now on my third food grade mineral oil fogger, having worn out the mesh screen in the previous foggers (possibly by leaving them on the truck during rainstorms). I fog hives immediately upon entering an apiary. The fog acts like a smoker and gives me an idea of the condition of the hives by the number of bees that come pouring out of the hive after fogging. The food grade mineral oil fog also helps to knock down mites, thus extending the duration between strip treatments.

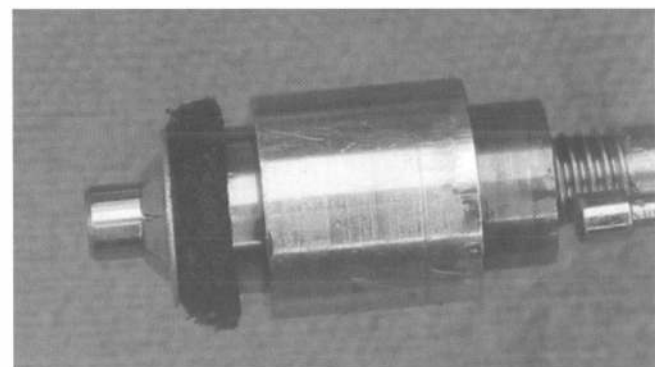
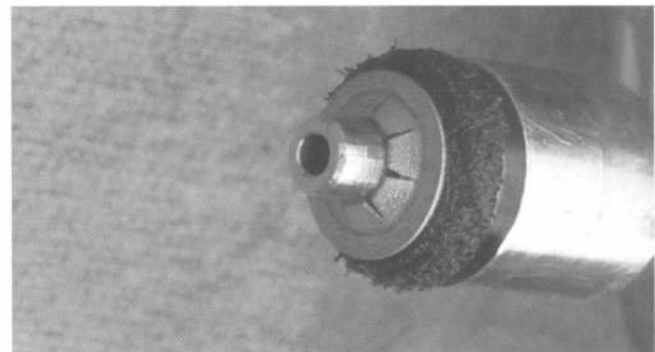
However, this new one with the ignition start device worked for only a few days then started jamming and wouldn't pump. I stripped it down and worked out that the rubber seal had expanded, so purchased a new seal from an engine reconditioning supply company.

This new seal worked well for a couple of days before it also started to jam. I hadn't had this problem with the Burgess foggers, so took my old one apart and noted the differences. The Burgess didn't have a rubber ring but used a piece of leather held on with a circlip.

I wondered whether I could just swap the brass cylinder over rather than change the leather seal and circlip but the threads were different, the new one being a copy of the Burgess fogger. However, it did go on a couple of turns so I left it and haven't had a problem since.

If you are having trouble with the fogger not pumping, make up a new leather seal. It's old technology and will probably last for years.

- Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member





# Setting a New Zealand Honey Standard for Monofloral Varieties of Table Honey Produced in New Zealand

## A consultation paper for the Bee Products Standards Council

The Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) welcomes submissions from all interested parties on any aspect of the draft standard for monofloral varieties of table honey. In particular, submissions are sought on:

- the use of appearance, pollen and organoleptic criteria as principles for differentiating floral varieties, and
- the suitability of the range of values used for each floral type.

The consultation paper on the draft standard, and a submission form, are available in electronic and hard copy versions from:

- the NBA website at: <http://www.nba.org.nz/node/621>
- the Federated Farmers website at: <http://www.fedfarm.org.nz/industry/bees>
- by emailing: [Honeystandard@gmail.com](mailto:Honeystandard@gmail.com) Please use the subject "Copies of standard and submission requested".

### Requirements for submissions

Submitters are asked to include the following information in their submissions:

- the title of the consultation paper;
- your name;
- your organisation's name (if applicable);
- your address and contact details (e.g. phone, fax and email); and
- the number(s) of the sections and questions you are commenting on.

### Closing date for submissions


*All submissions must be received no later than 5.00 pm on Friday 3 July 2009.*

Please send electronic submissions to:  
[Honeystandard@gmail.com](mailto:Honeystandard@gmail.com)  
Please use the subject "Submission on honey standard".

For written submissions post to:  
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PO Box 54052  
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or send by facsimile to: (03) 329 6880, Attention: Honey Standards Consultation.





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# From the colonies



## Waikato Branch

Today is an autumn day of alternating sunshine and nasty showers laced with hail. Bees are hovering about in the sunshine but activity is definitely subdued. Beekeepers in the Waikato are doing the very last of the package bee orders, and in some cases also the last of the extracting. And in other cases, planning for the next season.

As part of Bee Week I prepared a list of bee-friendly plants with an emphasis on the seasons. I believe the list will end up on the NBA website. I hope others will add to this list: at present it has a North Island slant. In fact, it may be a good idea to have regional variations noted on the list. Anything that encourages people to grow bee-friendly plants, and for beekeepers to recognise the plants that are good for their livestock, must be a good idea.

The branch is holding its AGM on 22 May. I am hoping that someone will take over writing the Waikato contribution to 'From the Colonies', so this may well be the last you will hear from me in this format. *[Editor's note: thanks for your contributions over the years, Pauline.]*

I hope everyone has a restful winter in preparation for the 2009–2010 season.

- Pauline Bassett

## Bay of Plenty Branch

The bees are now well and truly tucked away for the winter. Hives here have wintered down well.

Reports are of low mite levels, which is very encouraging. Beekeepers are busy now doing all the maintenance jobs that can't be done during the season and making time for a holiday.

At the time of writing, we were hoping to have a decision by now from the independent panel reviewing honey imports. Here's hoping that good science and common sense will prevail, and no honey will be allowed to be imported into New Zealand. It is good to see that the NBA has been proactive in sending a delegation of beekeepers, representing all the branches, to Australia to find out firsthand about EFB and small hive beetle (SHB). This is an excellent opportunity to get the most up-to-date information from the Aussie beekeepers. In the event the review panel's decision goes against us, we will hopefully be more aware and prepared than we were when varroa was discovered in New Zealand in 2000.

## Conference update

The conference committee has been busy with last-minute preparations for the annual conference in Rotorua, and are all looking forward to an informative and friendly conference. Our national and overseas speakers will be bringing current and

relevant information to the industry that will be challenging as well as interesting. We brought the conference forward to coincide with the New Zealand National Agricultural Fielddays® (Mystery Creek, Hamilton, 10–13 June) so you can hit two birds with one stone. We look forward to seeing you there.

- Neil Mossop, Ward Representative

## Hawke's Bay Branch

See you all at conference. Gone fishing.

- John Berry, Branch President

## Canterbury Branch

This evening I was asked to contribute to this section of the journal as our usual scribe is sunning himself across the ditch chasing small hive beetle, *Apis cerana* and EFB. We look forward to his return and discussions on aspects of this very worthwhile trip. Thanks go to the organisers for this tour in Australia for some selected NZ 'beeks'. One day this information will be very relevant to us all; I just hope that it is not too soon.

The first thing I do when in receipt of the latest issue of the journal is to read 'From the Colonies' section. It is always interesting to note what is annoying or pleasing the rest of New Zealand, hence I am disappointed when some 'colonies' do not make the press in time.

This autumn we have had two problems within the Ashburton District. First and most urgent was the requirement for heavy feeding along the coast side of the Main Highway. This substantial area produced no late summer or autumn forage, whereas the inland hives will winter quite well without too much supplemental feeding. Fortunately most 'beeks' will have carried sugar over from the spring build-up, as hives thrived in the October/November period and required little feeding. I doubt that there will be many spare pallets of sugar in beekeepers' sheds now, due to the recent heavy demand.

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The second problem is the encroachment of varroa. At this stage no mites have been found south of the Rakaia River. This is not to say that the mite is not here, just says that we haven't found it yet. The very last varroa workshop for this region was held in Timaru recently and there weren't too many empty seats. We have been well educated throughout the past eight years, thanks to Biosecurity New Zealand andASUREQuality Limited. Beekeepers who have chosen to avail themselves of this service will be feeling more able to battle this mite than perhaps eight years ago when we knew little about varroa. All we can do now is wait and enjoy our last winter free of varroa.

- Geoff Bongard

### Otago Branch

April has been a delightful month in Otago for tidying up the bee season. After a less than perfect autumn, we at last had long spells of clear and settled days to bring in the remainder of the crop and winter down colonies. I am running a trial yard where I have been monitoring supersedure rates. By the third week of April most hives had just a handful of capped brood remaining, although one or two had taken the settled weather as a good sign and begun to lay a proper pattern again. I suspect they will change their mind pretty soon with our first real winter storms on the way.

The degree of supersedure is interesting. This particular yard had all new queens introduced to the 24 hives in November 2007. By March 2008 there had been five supersedures or about 20%. By the following spring, about 10 months after introduction, there had been 10 supersedures or 40%. Now, after about 18 months and two production seasons, there are 11 queens remaining of the original 24: 55% have superseded.

I will check again this coming spring and let you know how many queens have lasted two years. Note that I have made no attempt to requeen these hives as we want to observe natural requeening rates, but three that became queenless over this period I had re-established with brood and queen cells.

The crop data is interesting too. Of the 11 'original' queens, in their second season this summer, the average crop was 3.2 x three-quarter-depth boxes; say 42 kilograms at 13 kilograms per box on average.

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Of the remaining 13 hives with younger queens of various ages, the crop was three boxes per colony or say 39 kilograms per hive. This is after I excluded the data from the three hives that went queenless during the early summer and made only winter stores, but includes the hives that superseded just at a time that reduced their ability to make a good crop.

If I look at the crop from the six hives that had superseded the previous summer (they began this season with queens less than a year old but well established), they made an average crop of 3.5 boxes each, or say 45.5 kilograms. I have been careful to treat the hives evenly in other respects but of course the sample is small.

Some reasonable observations can be made all the same. Probably half of your newly introduced queens will supersede in a year to 18 months; some within three months. Those hives with a queen under a year old will do best. Second season queens will still do well but are prone to failing just when you need them and will bring down your average. Of note too is that these observations are based on hives without varroa and varroa treatments, which when used may change things somewhat for the worse I hear. Further incentive to have more than enough new queens on hand, so I might make some more nuc boxes this winter after all.

Enjoy the break.

- Peter Sales, Branch Secretary

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## National Bee Week a success

Following a suggestion from Barry Foster to promote bee-pollinated food to politicians, the Executive agreed at its February meeting to promote National Bee Week to improve awareness and understanding of the contribution that the relatively small beekeeping industry makes to New Zealand; and the need to protect the honey bee.

We now work in a cooperative environment, and the suggestion was supported without hesitation by Horticulture New Zealand and we were joined by Organics Aotearoa. Maureen Maxwell joined Barry Foster and Pam and Jim Edwards on the planning team.

The overall theme was: "The Honey Bee can not survive without human intervention". Each day we focused on a different theme and released relevant information to support that cause:

Monday: the value of honey bee products

Tuesday: the value of pollination

Wednesday: the responsible use of agrichemicals to look after our bees

Thursday: research and development

Friday: biosecurity and the need to protect bees.

The highlight was the Parliamentary function hosted by the Hon. David Carter, Minister of Agriculture and Minister for Biosecurity. We had enthusiastic support from Ruud Kleinpaste, who acted as Master of Ceremonies and spoke on the need to protect the honey bee and the environment. The Minister addressed the meeting and I responded on behalf of the three organisations that had collaborated to promote National Bee Week. A number of Ministers and Members of Parliament attended, and showed strong interest in the proceedings and were keen to talk with industry members.

The photo of the Minister and our President Frans Laas in bee suits with live bees and a beehive on the front lawn of Parliament will be memorable reminders of the day.



Left to right: NBA President Frans Laas demonstrates smoker technique to the Hon. David Carter, entomologist Ruud Kleinpaste and Executive Member Maureen Maxwell. Photo: Pam Edwards.

We had excellent media coverage throughout the week. Kevin Ikin produced an 'Insight' documentary on Radio New Zealand. He and Carla Gray highlighted interviews with industry members on Rural Report throughout the week. Many newspaper reports were published, including material on a regional level where it had been supplied by local organisations. There were numerous live interviews on radio stations up and down the country. We achieved some coverage on the television news and the week ended with Maureen Maxwell being interviewed on the Country Channel.

Already there is general agreement that National Bee Week should be promoted annually.

- Jim Edwards, Chief Executive Officer



Ruud Kleinpaste. Photo: Ivor Earp-Jones, [www.ejo.co.nz](http://www.ejo.co.nz)



### Photo captions for page 14

Top row:

NBA President Frans Laas and Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. David Carter.

Second row:

Left: The scene inside Parliament.

Middle: The Hon. David Carter, Minister of Agriculture, addresses the gathering.

Right: NBA CEO Jim Edwards and Executive Council member Maureen Maxwell in discussion with the Hon. David Carter.

Third row, left to right: Executive Council member Barry Foster, Anne Tolley MP and Dr Linda Newstrom-Lloyd, Landcare Research

Middle: Jim Sim (NZFSA), NBA Vice President Neil Farrer, NBA Life Member Frank Lindsay.

Fourth row, left to right:

Left: Jim Edwards, the Hon. Kate Robertson, Maureen Maxwell.

Middle: The Ministers of Agriculture and Food Safety share a frame of honey with Jim Edwards.

NBA Hawke's Bay Branch President John Berry and Massey University researcher Louisa Robertson.

Photos: Ivor Earp-Jones, [www.ejo.co.nz](http://www.ejo.co.nz)

# Beekeepers at the Beehive

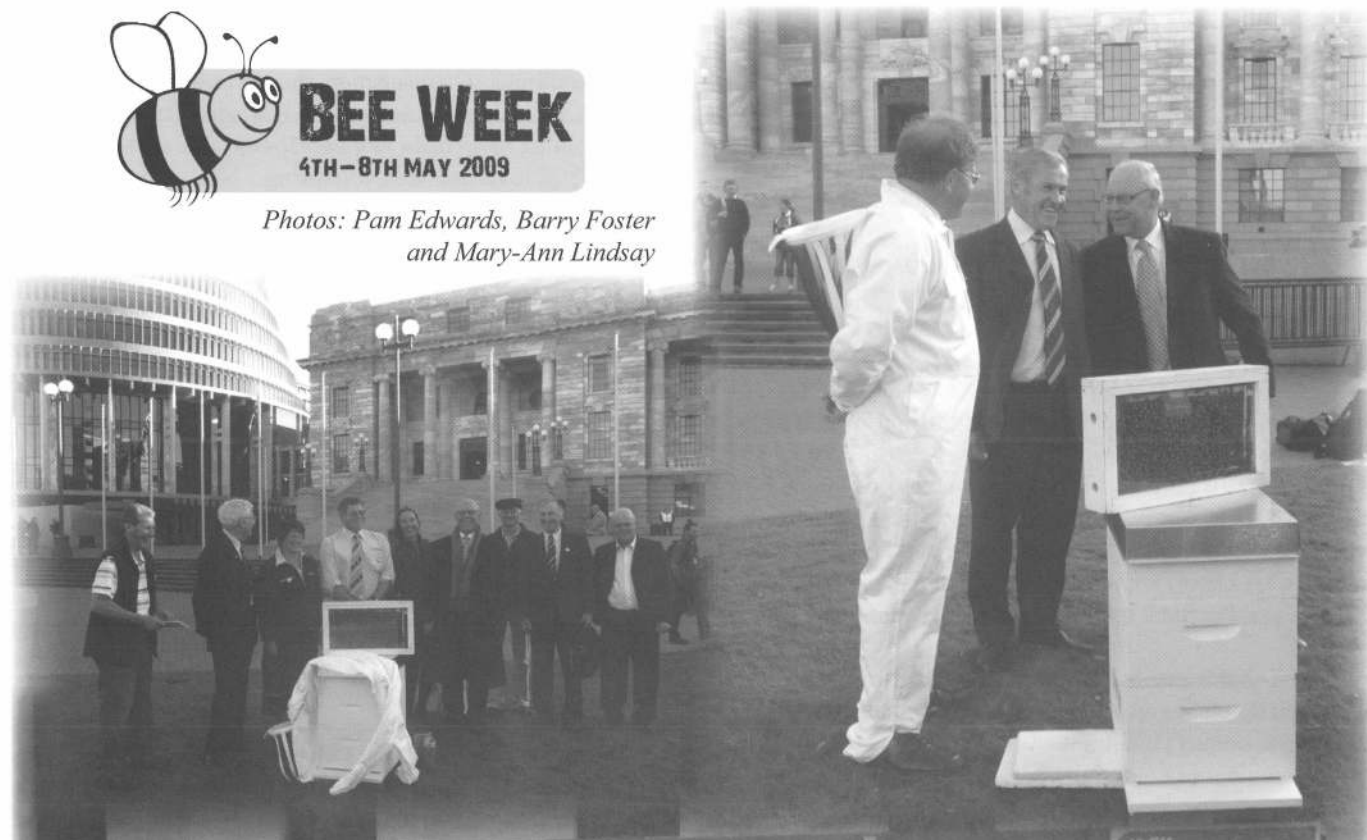




# BEE WEEK

4TH-8TH MAY 2009

Photos: Pam Edwards, Barry Foster and Mary-Ann Lindsay



## About the Apiary

**W**e have had about three weeks of rain in the last month and some of us have had enough of the winter already. At least the weather has put paid to the robbing season. During the past couple of months you couldn't leave a hive open for long before robber bees would come around sniffing out exposed honey. Now we can start the last hive inspections, provided the temperature is above 16°C.

I was reminded of just how wet it's been after driving into an apiary (situated at the bottom of a hill) on road tyres to check my wasp nest destruction. The heavens opened up and it poured for 10 minutes. Water was running down my tyre tracks and when I went to climb back out of the paddock, the wheels started to spin. I made a phone call and after a 45-minute wait, chains arrived. It took just a few minutes to put them on and the truck motored easily up the hill.

I use mud chains that fit both my road and off-road tyres, but even light ski chains on a two-wheel drive vehicle can be very effective in muddy conditions. Ski chains are very cheap and will get you out of most situations.

### Inspections, observations and preparations

Most beekeepers are now cleaning up things ready for the winter and activity is slowing to match the shortened daylight hours.

I was in one of my apiaries removing dry honey supers and strips, when I noticed the bees in one hive flying well in the cool conditions. On inspection, there was lots of fresh nectar in the hive: a sign that the bees had found a late nectar source that the other hives hadn't, or perhaps these bees were robbing out a feral hive that was collapsing. Not willing to take a chance, I re-treated the hive.

A little further on, I came across another hive where the bees had left the strips and had moved down into the bottom super. On closer inspection, it was easy to see small, shrunken, deformed-winged bees with varroa all over them. Bees don't like strips and sometimes will move completely away from them, leaving the hive exposed to varroa.

After finding this hive, I immediately put strips in all hives in the apiary to protect them further, as I have lost hives to reinvasion when the bees robbed other collapsing hives. It doesn't take long for the whole apiary to become repopulated with varroa, causing the gradual die off of hives from June onwards. At least this apiary will be protected in the meantime.

In the varroa-affected hive, I also put in a couple of frames with emerging brood from another very strong hive (after a good check for AFB, even though this apiary has no history of disease) to boost the bee population with healthy bees. With young healthy bees unaffected by varroa, the hive should come through the winter in good shape, but with a reduced population compared to the rest of the hives in the apiary.



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After extracting, I returned a couple of sticky (wet) supers to each hive (above the feeder) to clean out. Apart from cleaning out the residue of honey left in the frames, the bees prevent wax moth establishing in them. I remove these frames when it gets cold (now) and stack them in an open, airy shed on pallets with queen excluders underneath and on top to prevent mice overwintering in them. I place mouse baits into containers in each corner of the shed.

I prefer to put my honey supers away dry. Some beekeepers put their supers in sealed containers wet (straight after extracting), and then put them on the hives in the spring to stimulate the hives into brood rearing. Honey is hygroscopic and attracts moisture. If these wet supers are left exposed to moisture-laden air over the winter, the smear of honey left in the frames starts to ferment. If the bees don't clean this out completely before new honey is put into the frames, a chemical reaction slowly occurs. Within 12 months, the honey in the containers (usually a drum for commercial beekeepers) will ferment, even though the moisture content of the honey is below 18%. Most years this system works well, but in the odd year when there is plenty of early spring nectar, this problem can occur.

### Things to do this month

It's freezing outside so work has moved indoors. Render down cappings and old combs. Make up new equipment for the coming season. Check the effectiveness of your mite treatments—check the natural mite fall over a week or more. If more than a couple of mites are falling per day, you could have a problem.

- Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member



### 260 series maps: handy hint

Calculating a 3 km radius on 260 series maps for tutu distribution but can't find a compass? Use a DVD—it's the right size to give a 6 km wide circle on the map.

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## Erratum

In the May issue of the journal we printed several articles that used the term MGO as a generic name for methylglyoxal.

MGO™ Manuka Honey is a trademark of Manuka Health New Zealand Ltd. Methylglyoxal is the natural compound used to certify and market Manuka Health's Manuka honeys.

MgO is an abbreviation for magnesium oxide, and therefore any use in a generic sense could be misleading. *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* will therefore use the term methylglyoxal in full in future publications.



### Help Solve a Drone Pollution Problem In the Far North

We have been breeding Queens in the Paranui valley near Doubtless Bay for more than 25 years, but now, like every beekeeper in the Far North, we are suffering from the Manuka madness infecting our industry. It has seen hives pour into the Far North from all over New Zealand. This crazy situation, where there are far too many hives chasing too little early Manuka, is causing beekeepers to behave in a desperate, wild west, anything goes manner when it comes to dropping hives. Everyone up here is hurting and stressed because of it, and for some, their business viability is threatened.

For us, it is becoming impossible to maintain adequate control over the natural matings of our virgin Queens. We produce Carniolan Queens, and the racial hybrids that result from the mis-matings are not what our customers want or pay for. We take great pride in the quality of the Queens we produce, and to lose control of this very important aspect of Queen quality is frustrating and stressful.

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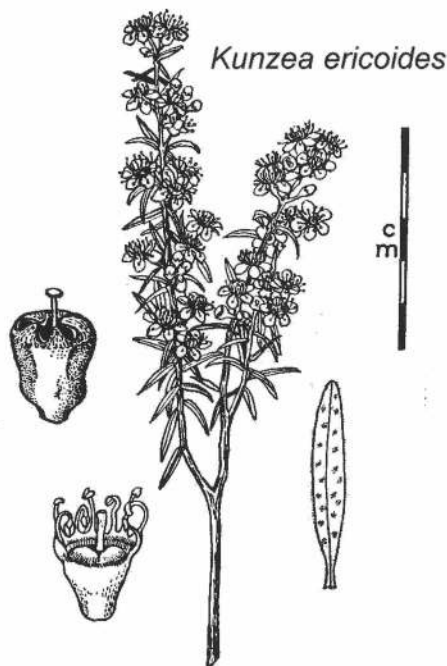
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# Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand

**Botanical name:** *Kunzea ericoides*

**Maori/Common name:** Kanuka



The kanuka grows taller than manuka—often over 10 metres high—although it is not as common, probably due to being considered a very good source of firewood both by the Maori

and the early settlers. Like manuka, kanuka can grow in a great variety of locations.

Kanuka leaves are generally shorter than manuka leaves but in some locations they can be hard to tell apart. When in flower, manuka flowers are larger and less clumped together, while kanuka flowers are smaller and appear in tighter clumps. If seed pods are present, the manuka pod is raised up more above the capsule rim than the kanuka.

Kanuka flowers in January, the honey being lighter coloured than manuka but has a similar flavour.

The timber of kanuka is very durable, and has in the past been used for jetty piles. In fact, kanuka still continues to be used for jetty piles in Bonacord Harbour, Kawau Island. Maori used kanuka timber for canoe decking, canoe poles, garden implements and spears.

The Maori used the gum obtained from green bark on burns, and the young shoots were boiled and used to bathe rheumatism and sore backs. Chewing kanuka seeds and swallowing the juice were an instant cure for diarrhoea.

The vapour from boiling the leaves of the kanuka alleviated the pain of headache, and helped to ease a bad cough and blocked sinuses. The liquid was drunk to help the kidneys and bladder to function.

- Tony Lorimer, NBA Life Member



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BK356

# Auckland Branch field day

Over 100 beekeepers attended the Auckland Branch field day held at Graham and Val Cammell's honey processing plant in Clevedon, Auckland on Saturday 16 May.

This is a well-established family business that produces and exports honey, having moved from Mangere two years ago. The Cammells gave us an opportunity to look over the new facilities they have built on their rural 35-acre property.

One of the initial problems the Cammells encountered when getting established was the cost of supplying power to the new factory. The costs would have been well over \$50,000 and then they would have had to pay for the power on top of that. Graham is an engineer and a thinker, so his solution was to go off the grid and to produce their own electricity by installing a diesel generator in a refrigeration container, backed up by batteries.

The plant's hot water is supplied via a heat exchange off the exhaust of the generator, making the plant 70% efficient. Graham is planning to modify the diesel motor to run on biodiesel, fermented in a peloton in the generator container from waste sugar and heated by the motor.

Heat exchanges are used elsewhere in the plant in the drum warmers. Three drums are placed in insulated milk vats surrounded by hot water that is re-circulated, melting the honey within a day.

There is no extractor in the plant. Graham is the first New Zealand beekeeper to have a New Zealand Food Safety Authority approved field extraction unit. He developed an air-operated single frame extractor that uses four knives to cut the wax back to the midrib as the frame moves past the knives, dropping the honey and wax into an enclosed vat below the extractor. The opening in the vat is about 150 x 150 mm, so only a tiny bit of the honey is exposed and this goes through and under and over a setup like a toilet cistern, so very little is exposed to stimulate robbing. Frames are taken directly from the hives, the bees shaken off and put through the extractor and then immediately returned to the hive they came from.

The vat holds about three drums of honey and by the time Graham has driven home, the wax and honey have mostly separated. At the factory, the vat is forklifted off the truck



and two thirds of the honey pumped off. The remainder is put through a cappings spinner, which Graham intends to change to a spin float in the near future to improve efficiency.

Apart from the factory, which was most impressive, the Auckland Branch had lined up a number of speakers and sponsors displaying their wares.

Dr Mark Goodwin chaired the sessions and kept everyone to time. Brian Alexander talked on the topic of 'towards a 100kg crop'. Brian uses Carniolan queens and feeds both syrup and pollen substitute to stimulate his bees. At present he is achieving a 66-kilogram production per hive from his 1500 hives, but hopes to do better by two-queening them.

Bob McDavitt, our Met Service roving weather ambassador, gave us a history lesson and taught us how to read a barometer.

Steve Thomas provided a rundown on the group's recent Honey Industry Trust sponsored trip to Australia to study hive beetle and EFB.

NBA President Frans Laas brought us up to date with current issues.

NBA's barrister David Boldt gave us a history and update of the Australian honey import saga, including how MAF's position had flip-flopped and where we are today.

Dr Mark Goodwin then presented us with all the evidence of CCD and concluded that a virus looked like the common denominator.

We then went outside where Graham gave us a practical demonstration of his extractor and answered questions. We all came away most impressed with thoughts of how to put into practice what we had learnt from the day.

- Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

*PS: Did anyone inadvertently pick up my Canon IXUS 300 camera by mistake?*

## Auckland field day photo captions

Photos clockwise from top left:

Lunch time

Trevor Cullen, NBA Life Member

Graham Cammell, NBA Life Member, explaining the labelling plant.

David Boldt addressing the group

Warm room

The factory

Drum melter

Diesel generator with heat exchange on the exhaust and at left is Graham Cammell demonstrating his field extraction unit.

*Photos: Frank Lindsay (except photo at left by Chas Reade, on behalf of the Auckland Branch).*



# Auckland Branch field day

