September 2010, Volume 18 No. 8

The NEW ZEALAND BeeKeeper

Bee Week a buzzing success

- Addressing threats to the industry
- NBA Pollination Committee starts work • AFB courses under way

HIVE DOCTOR

Our Bottom Board is now both new AND improved!

At the 2010 NBA conference you gave us some valuable feedback about our Bottom Board (HDBB). We listened and have made some small, but important, modifications to the tooling. These modifications have delayed our preferred launching date, however we believe the added features are well worth the wait. Check out our new and improved Bottom Board features!

HDBB Upgraded Features

Stock Anti-Nudge Device: This retractable 'push button' device is designed to minimise the risk of stock nudging the hive from the Summer entrance position making sure it remains open.

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www.asurequality.com

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www.biosecurity.govt.nz

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Front cover: Bee Week comes to Greerton Village shopping centre, Tauranga. Left to right: Cr Catherine Stewart, Pooh Bear (Greerton Mainstreet Manager Graeme Morrissey), Pooh's helper Bumble (Rob Potts) and Cr Bill Grainger. Photo: Catherine Stewart.
Back cover: (Top) Pooh waves to the crowd in Tauranga; Maya Lindsay dressed as a bee for the day at day care. At bottom: Another view of the prizes for the colouring-in competition. Photos: Catherine Stewart, Jane and Stuart Lindsay, Barry Foster.

Addressing threats to the industry

By Frans Laas, NBA President

Recently I attended the GoTrace Conference in Wellington. This gathering focused on traceability and provenance issues in the global food industry.

The verification of provenance is becoming a major issue worldwide. Consumers are demanding the right to know where the food product was produced so that they are able to make buying choices based on confidence that the food product is true to label. Fraudulent labelling of food products is a significant problem internationally, and unfortunately honey—which is only a relatively small component of global trading—was a major item of discussion in the conference papers.

The development of geotracing and isotope technologies has now developed to the point where it can be used for verification of provenance. As I have mentioned before, the New Zealand beekeeping industry will need to avail itself of this technology. We need to protect our ability to provide assurance to the customer that their products are true to label. We already have the problem of New Zealand honeys being blended with foreign honeys in other countries and sold as pure New Zealand product. If Australian honey ever gets into New Zealand, we will need to be able to prove that our honey is true to label regarding proof of origin.

A paper was presented at the conference about having to create systems to verify that packaging material was true to label. Fraudsters will go to any lengths to misrepresent their inferior and possibly unsafe product as being from a reputable source.

Honey imports

Over the last few weeks the NBA has initiated a series of meetings to set up a steering group to investigate practical options to stop the imports process. We also need to determine how to most effectively utilise the skills of Dr Mark Goodwin and NBA barrister David Boldt in this process.

The steering group currently comprises representatives of NBA, Federated Farmers Bees, New Zealand Honey Packers and Exporters Association, and the Pollination Group. NBA CEO Daniel Paul will act as a facilitator/chairman for this group.

Daniel has recently met with MAF to discuss the industry's concern over a range of issues relating to honey imports. This was quite constructive, as it appears that MAF has taken on board some of the issues raised, especially honey laundering.

Government Industry Agreements (GIA) process

On Thursday 12 August the Executive team, Barry Foster and I, along with John Hartnell of Federated Farmers Bees, attended a workshop to prioritise the threats to the bee industry from exotic pests and diseases. This was the first step along the way towards the signing off the GIA, for better or worse.

> "If Australian honey ever gets into New Zealand, we will need to be able to prove that our honey is true to label regarding proof of origin."

This was quite an interesting exercise in classifying and quantifying a range of pests and diseases and their potential or actual impacts on our industry.

When we looked at the pathways of risk, it was quite clear that the proposed import of honey adds an additional risk pathway. Currently the obvious pathways of risk are airports, mail/courier systems and undeclared imports in cargo shipments.

If honey imports do commence then a fourth pathway—legal imports—will result. Despite mitigation measures, legal imports still constitute an additional risk. Small hive beetle is attracted to bee products so additional measures are required, resulting in additional risk.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) formed by BPSC

The BPSC was recently given a mandate to deal with the issue of finalising an industry standard for the measurement of non-peroxide activity in honeys. I understand the TAG consists entirely of technical experts from a wide range of sectors. There should be no reason now why they will not be able to rapidly resolve this rather simple issue, which has dragged on for far too long and caused so much unnecessary trauma within the industry.

Bee Week

The recent Bee Week publicity campaign appears to have once again been a success. Jessica and others have reported on it in more detail in this month's journal. I was kept rather busy giving interviews to various radio stations and print media on a variety of current issues that are affecting the bee industry.

Pollination Committee

This group is gradually taking shape under the leadership of Executive Council member Neil Mossop. Two South Island-based members have joined the committee and are involved with seed and fruit tree pollination activities. The committee will soon develop formal terms of reference. Many issues are emerging in the pollination sector, especially with anecdotal evidence suggesting that some newer pesticides are causing reductions in colony size during pollination,

continued on page 6

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BK236

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with consequent losses in honey production potential. Rumours have been circulating about some beekeepers who are now reluctant to put their bees into pollination because of fears of production losses due to these pesticides.

ERMA meeting

On 16 August, Vice President Barry Foster, CEO Daniel Paul and I had an informal meeting with ERMA to introduce ourselves. While we didn't discuss any specific issues, we were given a better understanding on how ERMA deals with its role in vetting new substances, etc.

We indicated that we had an account manager with MAF and we thought it would be a good idea for ERMA to have an account manager to deal with our organisation. ERMA already does this with other organisations, and saw this as a positive move. We asked about how the formation of the new Environmental Protection Agency would affect ERMA's current functions. They indicated that it would be business as usual under the new system.

Discussions with the Green Party

We also met with the Green Party to discuss our concerns regarding GM, and especially the proposal to have GM clover released into pastures with the aim of reducing methane production. There is some considerable concern among beekeepers about the possibilities of marketing issues. There are viable alternatives to the use of GM clovers, such as the use of *Lotus sp.* in pasture swards. These alternative species provide additional benefits to animal health and pasture sustainability.

We also updated them on the status of the honey imports issue.

We've moved!

The NBA Secretariat shifted offices recently.

Our new address is:

Level 6, Adecco House
330 Lambton Quay
Wellington 6011

Our post office box, phone and fax numbers remain the same:

PO Box 10792
Wellington 6143
Phone: 64 4 471 6254
Fax: 04 499 0876

IN THE NEWS

Bee Week focus: Bay of Plenty & Auckland

Bee Week raised the public profile of beekeeping and beekeepers nationwide.

We focus here on some of the community activities that took place in the Bay of Plenty and Auckland.

Bay of Plenty

In an effort to promote Bee Week this year, we contacted a large proportion of local schools. We encouraged them to participate in various ways including the colouring competition, beekeepers doing talks at the school, studying bees during the week and talking about bees for trees, doing a play about bees etc.

In addition, we contacted all the Mainstreet Managers in Tauranga, and were able to work with Greerton community manager, Graeme Morrissey (Pooh Bear) who really got behind the promotion, along with a couple of our local councillors, Bill Grainger and Catherine Stewart. We also set up a display in our bee display room at our shop and distributed the posters around town as much as we could, and encouraged the local branch members to do the same.

The week culminated on Friday, 30 July with a community event at Greerton. A number of beekeepers participated on the day, interacting with the public about the challenges and threats facing our bees and industry now and in the future.

The support team, along with Pooh Bear and Bumble, who walked the streets giving out balloons and talking with the public. Photo: Wendy Mossop.

During the community event we had a 'count the number of black & yellow jellybeans in the honey jar' competition. The winner won the jar of jellybeans and a pot of honey.

Several of the local shop owners supported the week in the window display competition. All of these looked great. Waipuna Hospice was judged to be the winning window, as you can see from the photos on the next page.

The theme of the day on Friday was black and yellow of course, and beekeepers wore their bee veils (preferably new or clean ones).

Greerton Village Community Association and Mainstreet Manager, Graeme Morrissey appreciated the input from Mossops Honey and the NBA to the village event. Graeme said, "It was good to work together on something that is so important".

Part of the winning window at Waipuna Hospice. Photo: Wendy Mossop.

It was a great afternoon, with lots of opportunities for the beekeepers to buzz about bees and honey trees and, of course, impending honey imports. We are hoping that next year we will be able to promote Bee Week in many more communities and get a lot more beekeepers involved.

Some of the support team with the Waipuna Hospice window display winners. From left: Ryan & Serenity Mossop, Trish Heke (a Waipuna Hospice Volunteer), Pooh Bear (Graeme Morrissey), Jan Asher, Bumble (Rob Potts), Wendy & Neil Mossop, Dennis Crowley. Photo: Wendy Mossop.

- Wendy Mossop

Tauranga City Councillor Catherine Stewart also provided some background to the council's involvement in Bee Week.

"My interest in National Bee Week came about after I received an email from someone overseas who was keen to promote a National Day of the honey bee in New Zealand. When I looked into what New Zealand does, I saw that we celebrated National Bee Week last year for the first time.

I spoke to Wendy Mossop and Graeme Morrissey (Greerton Mainstreet Manager) and they organised a fun promotional day at Greerton, which raised the importance of the honey bee to the community via information, samples and a retailers' shopping window competition. Cr Bill Grainger and I were invited to judge the best retailers' window display."

This Pooh Bear Cake was part of a window display from one of the entrants in the window display competition. Photo: Catherine Stewart.

Auckland

Auckland Mayor John Banks was presented with a blue and white sentinel hive on 30 July. The presentation took place on the roof of the Aotea Centre.

The hive was given to Auckland City to raise the profile of the importance of bees to New Zealand's economy and largest city.

National Beekeepers' Association (NBA) executive council representative, Maureen Maxwell, said there is a lot of space for the bees, manicured parks and gardens right on the doorstep of the Centre. →

Ian Browning (Auckland NBA Branch President) Kim Kneijber (Auckland Beekeepers' Club President), Maureen Maxwell (NBA Executive, Northern Ward) and Auckland Mayor John Banks on the roof of the Aotea Centre, home to the Auckland City Centre sentinel hive. They were being filmed by Country Channel 99. Photo supplied by Maureen Maxwell.

"The hive will get sunshine all day and a million dollar view looking back to Auckland's Town Hall and clock tower—a premium penthouse for bees!

"Overseas evidence suggests hives in cities are thriving and sometimes produce up to three times the amount of honey as bees in rural areas," she said.

The sentinel hive will be paid for and maintained by NBA's Auckland Branch. Auckland Beekeepers' Club president, Kim Kneijber, will be the honorary beekeeper to manage the hive.

Ms Kneijber co-ordinates the exotic and pest management annual disease surveillance for Auckland City.

"The hive is close to the port and heart of the city, and will act as a vigilant scout for exotic pests or diseases, working to protect our fragile ecosystem."

In addition, Ms Kneijber said keeping a hive in your backyard is a great way to pollinate your own fruit and vegetables and also provides informative and entertaining education for kids.

The Mayor was presented with the annual honey harvest.

[Editor's note: this information was adapted from the NBA press release 'NBA gives Auckland Mayor a 'hive' five', 29 July 2010. Read more Bee Week coverage on the next page, on page 22 and the back page.]

IN THE NEWS

Mobile x-ray machine another MAFBNZ tool

A new mobile x-ray machine jointly developed by MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ) and an Otahuhu sheet-metal company started work this week in the Auckland area.

Based primarily at the Biosecurity Centre at Auckland airport, the unit can be used to screen goods at express freight and other importing companies and clear cruise ship passengers at various ports, such as Tauranga.

The idea of modifying an existing x-ray unit to enable it to be mounted on a specially designed, custom-built trailer was suggested by MAFBNZ inspector, Wayne Grant, who developed the concept over several years. The unit was manufactured by Otahuhu firm Ashworth and Taylor Sheetmetals.

At under two tonnes in weight, the trailer fits the design brief that the unit's overall weight be as light as possible, while including the x-ray components and remaining easy to operate and maintain.

Mr Grant said with the unit able to operate anywhere, even where mains power was unavailable, MAFBNZ for the first time had the ability to provide cover in any location.

"For instance, we would be able to move quickly to process passengers and check baggage in emergency situations where X-rays had been damaged or destroyed, such as following fire or water damage or bomb scare," Mr Grant said.

With its distinctive signage, the trailer could well double as a MAFBNZ public relations tool and was likely to feature at field days, fairs and other community events emphasising that Biosecurity was a collaborative effort involving the whole community.

"Everyone has a role to play in keeping out unwanted pests and diseases and containing or, where possible, eradicating any that establish here," Mr Grant said.

MAFBNZ led a biosecurity system which worked on three fronts, namely overseas to stop travellers and importers from bringing in pests, at the border to identify and eliminate pests that did arrive, and within New Zealand to find, manage or eliminate pests that established here, Mr Grant said.

Approximately four million passengers a year arrived at New Zealand's eight international airports on around 30,000 aircraft, and about 590,000 containers passed through 10 ports on 2,900 ships. As well, around 700 pleasure craft, 38.5 million mail items and 70,000 to 140,000 used cars arrived in New Zealand annually.

For photos of the mobile X-ray machine and more information contact:

Helen Corrigan
Senior Communications Advisor
04 894 0687 or 029 894 0687
Helen.corrigan@maf.govt.nz

To report an exotic pest or disease call the MAF Biosecurity hotline on 0800 80 99 66.

Source: MAF Biosecurity press release, received 11 August 2010.

Bee Week a buzzing success

This year's Bee Week was a huge success.

We generated massive publicity in all major media channels and secured coverage in 29 radio and television broadcasts, 12 Internet sites and 65 papers. And that doesn't include coverage on social media sites, blogs, trade magazines and some smaller community newspapers.

Based on accepted industry evaluation criteria, this kind of publicity is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising.

The amazing amount of coverage received shows just how much of a profile the NBA and the industry have.

Some of the highlights of Bee Week 2010 include:

Executive Council member Maureen Maxwell appeared on TV One's *Good Morning*, where she 'wowed' the nation with her rustic roasted pears, honey and blue cheese recipe. She also impressed the presenters with her "TV skills". They were amazed at how much she squashed in to a short seven-minute segment.

> "...this kind of publicity is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising."

Maureen also appeared on Country Channel 99, with Auckland branch president Ian Browning and Auckland Beekeepers' Club president, Kim Kneijber. They gifted a sentinel hive to Auckland mayor, John Banks.

James Ward of Hawke's Bay was interviewed by *TV One News* reporter, Catherine Wedd. The segment aired on *TV One News* and

Bee Week 2010 poster.

presented a great argument against Australian honey imports (AHI).

Russell Berry was interviewed and quoted in a powerful *Sunday Star Times* piece titled 'to bee or no bees'. The piece pushed the industry's argument against AHI and gave readers a clear vision of what New Zealand can expect if imports are allowed.

Daniel Paul, Frans Laas and John Hartnell were all quoted discussing the industry's biggest issues—AHI, importance and value of bees to New Zealand exports and our economy, and a united industry.

Various members were profiled in their local press publications—Carol Downer, Robert Watson, Geoff Bongard, Neil Mossop, Barry Foster and Jane Lorimer to name a few.

However, Bee Week did not just revolve around media clippings. This year a colouring-in competition, word puzzle and bee facts kit were developed and sent out to schools across the country.

Many beekeepers visited schools in their area, with Barry Foster, John Mclean and Willie Kaa doing a total of 14 workshops at one school over four days.

'Be good to bees because...' posters were produced for Bee Week and given out to all NBA branches. Various shops around the country placed the posters in their windows, and stalls at the Auckland Food Show helped promote Bee Week by displaying the posters front stage and centre.

Thank you to everyone who provided product for giveaways. And a huge thanks to Buzzy Bee of Urban Licensing who sponsored 11 prize packs for the colouring-in competition. We've had a great response from newspapers and websites running the colouring-in competition and giveaways. *The Nelson Mail* said they've never had so many entries. Not hard to believe when you know the quality of the product.

Thank you to all those who got involved.

Bee Week has proven that New Zealanders and the media are interested in what the association and its representatives have to say. The more people we educate, the more we can make a difference for the good of the industry.

Prizes for the colouring-in competition. Photo: Barry Foster.

We have plenty of 'Be good to bees because...' posters which do not have the Bee Week stamp on them. So if you're interested in purchasing a couple for field days, then email secretary@nba.org.nz for more information.

COI compliance under close scrutiny

By Rex Baynes, AFB NPMS Manager

The AFB NPMS states that every beekeeper who does not have a Certificate of Inspection Exemption must ensure that every honey bee colony in every beehive owned by that beekeeper is inspected for American foulbrood cases by an Authorised Person on or after 1 August and on or before 30 November of each year.

While acknowledging the COI is an important tool, our compliance rates over recent years do not make for good reading, as evidenced below.

Year	Compliance Rate
2003	8%
2004	##
2005	14%
2006	18%
2007	22%
2008	30%
2009	29%
2010	63%

Note: ## indicates figures not available.

On instructions from the Management Agency, and with the assistance of AsureQuality Limited, I have implemented a number of provisions that will improve compliance rates. Contained in the COI mailing this year is a schedule detailing the names and contact details of those DECA holders (Approved Beekeepers) who are willing to make time available to inspect the hives as above. These DECA holders have agreed to have their names and contact details made available, thus making the task of locating a suitably qualified inspector that much easier.

In addition to the above, a schedule detailing some 15 planned AFB Recognition Courses from North Cape to the Bluff has also been included in the mailing. This is to encourage COI holders to progress towards becoming DECA holders (Approved Beekeepers).

In mid-October a reminder notice will be sent to beekeepers who have not had their hives inspected as above, advising they will be subject to default inspections at their cost if by 1 December their hives have not been inspected.

IN THE NEWS

Happy 100th birthday, Claude!

Comvita founder and NBA member Claude Stratford celebrated his centenary on 18 August 2010.

Claude, who now resides in a rest home in Te Puke, founded Comvita when he was 64 years old. He has been going strong ever since, with the help of his products.

The NBA congratulates Claude on reaching this milestone, and wishes him many happy and healthy years to come.

Here is the 18 August press release from Comvita to mark the occasion.

"Queens Service Medal winner, Philanthropist and Founder of natural health products company, Comvita, Claude Stratford celebrates his 100th birthday today.

Claude Stratford is an outstanding New Zealander who has led natural health innovation at the helm of a business that today turns over $85 million a year and exports to 14 countries around the world.

Claude founded Comvita in 1974, at the age of 64, by making and selling a range of bee products from the basement in his home in Paengaroa (Bay of Plenty). At the age of 95 he was a finalist in the national Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

Claude owned his first beehive in 1921 at age 11 and his life-long affinity with bee products has contributed to numerous innovations in natural health science. Claude has spent his life bringing the health benefits offered by Nature to people in New Zealand and around the world.

Awarded the Queen's Service Medal in 1999 for his service to the community, Claude continues to support philanthropic projects in New Zealand and overseas, through his charitable trust.

Claude's values and the heritage of his commitment to product quality and purity is still the cornerstone of Comvita today, says CEO Brett Hewlett.

"Claude is an inspiration to the people at Comvita and we continue to support philanthropic projects in New Zealand and overseas, in keeping with his philosophy that business should give back to the community."

Claude's special 100th birthday party will be hosted at the Comvita Visitor Centre in Paengaroa on Friday *[20 August 2010]*.

[Source: "Comvita Media Releases." Giving back reaps rewards – New Zealand natural health innovator turns 100. *Comvita, 18 Aug 2010. Web. Accessed 19 Aug 2010. http://www.comvita.com/mediareleases_1.html#3094. This is an abbreviated version of the full release.]*

AFB Recognition and Destruction Courses

By the Management Agency, AFB NPMS

We are providing non-DECA holders with the opportunity to attend a course and take the test. This is an essential step to becoming a DECA holder.

Please note that at the time of going to print certain arrangements still needed to be confirmed on some courses. Further information about future courses will be provided in the October 2010 issue of the journal. Courses have already been held in the Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay and Wellington.

Auckland

Host: Auckland Beekeepers' Club
When: 18 September 2010 (Saturday)
Venue: Point Chevalier
Unitec
Auckland
Cost: Full Course $60.00
Refresher: $30.00
Catering: BYO lunch (coffee and tea provided)
Registration: Deadline – 30 August 2010
Contacts: Kim (09) 4181302
Email: kimk_bees@hotmail.com
Carol (09) 3766376
Email: thefairy@xtra.co.nz

Waikato

Host: Waikato Branch of the National Beekeepers' Association (Inc)
When: 18 September 2010 (Saturday)
Venue: Arataki Honey Ltd Waiotapu
Rotorua
Cost: $50.00 (Includes course and test fees)
Catering: BYO Lunch (shop on site)
Registration: Deadline 6 September 2010 (Monday)
Contacts: Mark Berry (07) 366 6772
(021) 741 691
Tony Lorimer (07) 856 9625
Applications: The Secretary
Waikato Branch NBA
258 Tauwhare Road
R.D.3
Hamilton 3283

Poverty Bay

Host: Poverty Bay Branch of the National Beekeepers' Association (Inc)
When: 2 October 2010 (Saturday)
Venue: To be confirmed
Gisborne
Cost: $55.00 Course and Test
Catering: BYO Lunch (coffee and tea provided)
Registration: Deadline 22 September 2010
Contacts: Paul Badger (06) 8684785
(021) 0557421
Willie Kaa (06) 8679511 (021) 2109328
Email: floydie@xtra.co.nz

Takapau (Southern Hawke's Bay)

Host: Hawke's Bay Branch of the National Beekeepers' Association (Inc.)
Venue: Takapau Fire Station
Charlotte Street
Takapau
When: 18 September 2010 (Saturday)
10.00 am Start
Cost: NBA Members – Course and test free
Non NBA Members – Course is free (test will cost $25.00)
Any person wishing to do a refresher only – no cost.
Catering: BYO Lunch (Local store nearby with basic food
Registration: Deadline 6 September
Contacts: Mary-Anne Thomason
(06) 855 8038
Tom Taylor (06) 856 6610

Wairarapa

Host: Southern North Island Branch of the
National Beekeepers' Association (Inc)
Venue: 348 Francis Line
Carterton
When: 31 October 2010 (Sunday)
Cost: $30.00 Course
$30.00 Test
Registration: Deadline 12 October 2010
Catering: BYO Lunch (coffee and tea provided)
Contact: Peter Ferris (06) 379 5558

Horowhenua

Host: Southern North Island Branch of the National Beekeepers' Association (Inc).
Venue: Thompson House
Near War Memorial
Levin
When: 30 October 2010 (Saturday)
Start: 9.00am
Cost: $25.00 Course
$30.00 Test
Registration: Deadline 18 October
Contacts: Andrew Beach (04) 904 1634
or (027) 613 8059

West Coast

Host: Management Agency AFB NPMS
When: 18 September 2010 (Saturday)
Venue: Paparoa Range School
Blackball Site, Blackball
West Coast
Start: 10.00am
Cost: $30.00 course plus $25.00 test.
Catering: Lunch (coffee and tea provided)
Registration: Deadline 2 September 2010
Contact: Gary Glasson (03) 732 4856
Email: gary.sue.samuel@xtra.co.nz
Gavin McKenzie (assisting)

NZFSA

Honey and tutin: sample results

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) says that of 4500 honey samples from beekeepers that had been tested by the end of April, around a quarter contained tutin.

Twenty-five samples exceeded the maximum permitted level of 2mg per kg. Nine contained between 5 and 10mg/kg, which was a third to a half the level in the toxic Whangamata honey, enough to cause only "low-severity illness".

[Sources: New Zealand Food Safety Authority, Review of the Food (Tutin in Honey) Standard 2008, NZFSA Public Discussion Paper; no. 06/10, 4 June 2010, www.nzfsa.govt.nz/consultation/tutin-in-honey-review/review-of-tutin-standard-discussion-document.pdf. *Additional information quoted from Johnston, M. (2010, August 14). Toxin still found in honey samples.* New Zealand Herald, *http://www.nzherald.co.nz/health/news/article.cfm?c_id=204&objectid=10666003]*

Vine hoppers and tutu.
Photo supplied by Mary-Ann Lindsay.

BUSINESS

NBA Pollination Committee starts work

By Neil Mossop, Chairperson, NBA Pollination Committee

In recent years, beekeepers have been experiencing more and more bee mortality from poisoning, unexplained bee losses and weakened hives during and immediately after pollination.

Those involved in paid bee pollination services have not in the past had strong representation on such issues.

The NBA Executive Council believes it is time to change this situation. As a result, during its meeting held in Nelson after the NBA annual conference, the council formed a Pollination Committee. The group will comprise five members representing beekeepers involved in a variety of paid pollination crops throughout New Zealand—three from the North Island and two from the South Island.

The committee's purpose is to represent the views of the NBA Executive Council and beekeepers throughout New Zealand who are involved in pollination crops on pollination issues facing our industry, to organisations connected to pollination. These groups will include Horticulture NZ, Zespri, Kiwifruit Growers Inc, and Plant & Food Research, along with such technical groups that are involved in recommending crop sprays, and any other organisations that may affect bee pollination in any way. With increased bee mortality during pollination we hope to have more beekeeper input on this issue.

Current members of the committee are:

- Barry Foster, Gisborne (NBA vice president & East Coast Ward representative)
- Dennis Crowley, Tauranga (Bay of Plenty Branch president)
- Michael Vercoe, Alexandra (Bee Industry Group board & NBA member)
- John Symes, South Island (Bee Industry Group board & NBA member) and
- Neil Mossop, Tauranga (Bay of Plenty Ward representative, NBA Executive Council member and chairperson, Pollination Committee).

Since forming the committee in early July, we have approached Bayer to release the research that Dr Mark Goodwin's team at Plant & Food Research compiled on Movento®, a systemic spray used in orchards. To date Bayer has not responded to our request for this information, so further inquiries and discussions will be pursued in this regard.

We are also investigating the possibility of Barry Foster joining a technical group that assesses orchard sprays.

Initial contact has also been made with Zespri regarding auditing of beehives in orchards, which will be followed up in the near future. Our plan is to also contact packhouses in this regard, along with other concerns beekeepers may have.

We will provide updates via *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* journal as information becomes available so everyone is better informed on pollination issues.

Queen rearing: grafting and mating nucs

By Gary Jeffery

Westport beekeeper Gary Jeffery shares his expertise in grafting and mating queen cells.

I prefer to use a tapered 0 sized sable hairbrush. The taper helps pick up the larva. Squirrel hair is also OK. Avoid artificial sable or other fibres, as they do not pick up the larva properly.

When you come to the actual grafting, select a comb with eggs and freshly hatched larvae. I usually say that if you can see them they are too large. Actually, they are about the size of a pinhead and ideally sitting on some royal jelly. I am fortunate that I can see the larvae quite easily as long as I remove my glasses. The use of a Maggi-type lamp can help if you have trouble seeing objects at close range.

To begin grafting, put the brush bristles into some honey and lick them straight. The honey helps keep the bristles together better than just saliva, and you can pick up the larvae more easily if you use honey. Gently insert the brush down the side of the cell and pick up the larva on to the tip of the brush. If it doesn't pick up straight away the first time, discard the larva, as it will have been rolled and will not be accepted by the bees because it probably will have drowned.

For some geographical areas, feeding a mixture of honey (could cause robbing and perhaps sugar syrup would be better) and pollen every couple of days is necessary so the bees put more royal jelly under the larvae, making it easier to lift them out on the tip of the brush. However, on the West Coast this is not necessary as we usually have ample pollen and nectar sources available. When I feel it is necessary I will toss some sugar syrup over the bees, or add a little water to the sugar in the feeder to stimulate the bees.

Setting up the cell builder

At this point, you will be coming to the hive in which you intend to put the grafted cells for acceptance. First, slosh about two cups of weak sugar syrup over the bees and combs where you are going to insert the grafted cells. My theory is that the bees are kept busy licking up the syrup for a while, so do not get around to cleaning the freshly grafted cells and removing the grubs. Whatever the reason, you will get better acceptance if you use syrup. Sometimes we graft into a strong queenless hive and transfer to a queenright hive to finish the cells.

Next, place the cell bar frame between two combs containing brood. Ideally the combs surrounding the cell bar will have unsealed brood in them.

> "I believe that the most important time for feeding is when the cells are reaching full size, rather than when first grafted."

If we get a lot of cells accepted, we move half of them after one to two days to another finishing hive. To transport the cells, shake off the bees and cover the cells with a damp cloth. Be aware that they can only be left for an hour or so before they start to dry out.

Next, make sure there is enough sugar to keep the bees busy until the queen cells are being finished. I believe that the most important time for feeding is when the cells are reaching full size, rather than when first grafted.

Grafted cell bar frame.

We usually graft two bars each with about 15 cells on them. We are quite happy to get 10 to 15 accepted as we are aiming for good quality cells rather than numbers.

The cells are left to complete their growth without moving to other hives for finishing. We normally try to graft into 10 hives each day, weather permitting, and if we end up with around 100 good finished cells each day we are very happy.

It is basically a type of supersedure cell rearing, seeing the queen is right next door through the vertical queen excluder.

We remove the cells nine days after grafting; i.e., if we graft on a Monday, the cells come out the Wednesday of the following week. We don't get very high tech as we do not use an incubator to transport the finished cells. Instead we use a nucleus with plenty of bees, with at least a comb of honey included with the cell bar frames. The honey is needed to allow the bees to eat enough to keep the temperature up during transit.

When we remove the finished cells, at the same time we move the queen over to the other side of the excluder, preferably with sealed brood, leaving the youngest brood to surround the next graft.

Queen mating nucs

On arriving at the apiary to put out the cells, you will find it best to place a caged queen on the top bars of the opened carrying

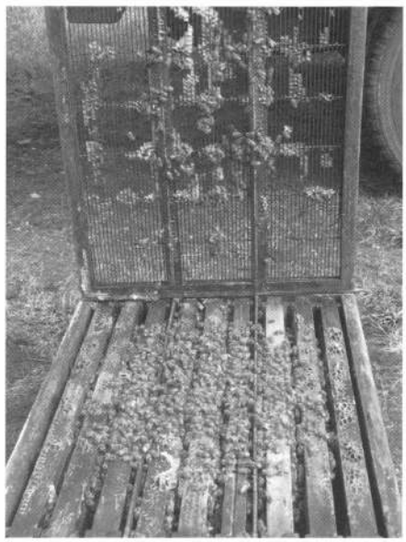
nucleus. This will help to keep the bees in the nucleus, which keeps the cells warm. We tend to put a few cells between the top bars to use, rather than continue lifting out the cell frames for each cell as needed. Make sure enough bees are near the cells to keep them warm. I usually cover the top of the nucleus with a towel or jersey, except for a little at one end so that the bees can get back into the carrying nucleus if they fly. Have a comb of honey in it beside the cells, for without honey the bees cannot maintain the temperature of the cells.

Then we come to the mating nuclei. We use half-depth boxes divided with hardboard into three sections, each holding three frames. Underneath is a gap for sugar.

There are several reasons why we use these boxes for nuclei. A few years ago there was a glut on the world market for cut comb honey, so we used the boxes for nuclei. Second, it is easier to find queens on smaller frames. The third reason is if you do not have at least enough bees to cover the width of three frames (it doesn't matter if full-depth, three-quarter, half-depth or even baby nuclei are used), they will abscond if conditions get tough, especially if attacked by wasps (or ants in Fiji).

Absconding appears to be a survival technique, as several nuclei abscond and then enter a nucleus, making it strong enough to fend for itself. However, before we knew about the width of bees (which I discovered by observing bees in Fiji), we used to travel around our nuclei yards in the autumn and if we saw a swarm, we would quickly catch it and look for balls of bees around the various queens. Seventeen was the highest number found in a single swarm. Although balled, the queens were quite OK, unless of course they came across each other, and after a while there would only be one left to head the swarm.

Anyway, back to the nuclei. We divide up the original nucleus into three nuclei. Each nucleus ideally has two frames with brood in the outside nuclei and one in the centre of the middle one. The stronger the better, as the mating percentage is better from stronger nuclei. I get the impression that the bees in strong nuclei are a better attraction for a queen returning from mating. Each nucleus has to have enough sugar to keep it going for at least four to five weeks. Any extra honey the bees collect is a bonus. You must make sure that the bees cannot go sideways from one nucleus into the other. However, we then put a queen excluder on top with strips of wood to stop sideways movement. When the nucs become strong in bees, they will go through the excluder and store honey in the second box. We quite like being able to take off one or two half-depth supers of nice honey from our nuclei in the autumn as it helps cover the feed costs.



Example of a nucleus divided into three nucs.

Before you get honey into the second box, remember each nucleus acts quite independently: one can have plenty of honey in it and the one next door can starve if it runs out of feed. At the same time, if a nucleus misses out on mating a queen, you can move a comb of brood from one of the other nuclei to build it up again. The bees will stay with the brood, unlike what happens with completely isolated nuclei, which would drift back and rob out the nucleus to which the brood was added.

Basically you are operating the half-depth box as if it were a brood nest, where you can move the brood back and forth within the cluster, ignoring the dividers (except you need to remember to watch the feed in each unit).

We do a lot of things wrong with our nuclei. As long as there is a honey flow or enough added sugar, we can cage our mated queens. We add a little candy to the cage as we feel that until the bees get used to it, they can sometimes stop feeding the caged queen and she dies. I base this on the observation that queen deaths usually occur soon after caging, but not if there is candy in the cage. We use a wooden cage with wire gauze on it and a piece of wire to hold it in position, stapled to the top bar.

Although you can get reasonable matings with another batch of cells when the queens are caged, if you leave a queen laying in one of the units, you seldom get queens mated from cells put in the other units. Bank queens in wooden cages.

You can leave queens laying in the three units as another way of banking and they can continue like this for a long period. In mild winter conditions the three queens will survive OK as long as feed is available. We usually sell all except one queen in the autumn, leaving one to winter the nucleus. In a warm climate a single will winter OK. We put raw sugar in the feeder above the cluster to work, which keeps them warm enough.

We usually expect the new queens to be laying about a calendar month from the grafting date. However, we like to leave it for another week to replace lost bee strength. This is especially important if the mating percentage is low, as you ideally need brood in each unit when you put in the next cells. The brood keeps the bees next to the fresh cell as well as retaining bee strength. (Unsealed brood or even eggs hold bees better than sealed brood.) We usually mark weak nuclei and after putting all the cells out, dump a few bees from the carrying nucleus in front of the weakest nuclei.

When we cage the new queens, we also top up the sugar under the frames for the next cycle. While the frames are out, it is easier to do rather than having to do it later. We sometimes use top feeders on the nuclei, especially when holding queens in nuclei over the autumn, as it is time consuming taking out frames just to feed. This is also necessary if queens are banked in cages.

Mating apiary.

Getting to grips with the Big 6

Information from the Department of Labour

Need help with employment issues? Check out the Big 6.

According to the Department of Labour website (www.dol.govt .nz), "the Big 6 covers six areas employers have told us they would like further assistance with: health and safety, hiring new employees, pay, holidays and leave, performance management and ending employment relationships. The Big 6 contains checklists of the main things employers need to know and links to further information."

Here's an abridged version of the first three elements of the Big 6. We will print the remainder in upcoming issues. You can find more information at http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/big6/index.asp

What you need to know about: 1. Health and Safety

Who should read this?

- Employers who employ adults, young workers and young people under 15 years of age
- Employers who engage the services of contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, and persons receiving on-the-job training

Why is it important?

- To ensure a safe and healthy work environment, and avoid tragic and costly accidents.
- All employers have duties under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of employees at work, and other people in the workplace.
- Good health and safety management practices encourage higher staff retention and increased productivity and efficiency

What you need to do

The key steps associated with health and safety management are outlined below:

- know your legal responsibilities
- make a commitment to health and safety in the workplace
- plan how you will implement a safe working environment
- identify, assess and manage hazards
- provide information, training and supervision for employees
- report, record and investigate incidents, injuries and illnesses
- involve employees in the process to improve health and safety
- plan and be ready for emergencies
- include contractors and subcontractors in your hazard management processes
- help employees return to normal work after injury

The page provides a checklist of the key tasks involved with each step. It provides a description of your key legal duties as an employer, together with other good practices for managing health and safety in smaller workplaces. Further information is available on: www.osh.dol.govt.nz or by contacting us on 0800 20 90 20.

More detailed health and safety information is available from the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and references are included on this webpage.

What you need to know about: 2. Recruiting

Who should read this?

Employers recruiting and hiring new employees, whether they are full-time, part-time, permanent, casual or fixed-term employees.

Why is it important?

To help employers find the right person for their business and provide a base for building a good employment relationship.

What you need to do

There are four main stages involved in hiring new employees:

1. describing and advertising the job
2. receiving applications through to interviewing
3. selecting and appointing an applicant
4. getting the new employee started

What you need to know about: 3. Pay

Who should read this?

Employers paying adults, new entrants to the workforce, trainees and children, whether they are full-time, part-time, permanent, casual or fixed-term employees; also employers who employ people with disabilities.

Why is it important?

- To ensure that employees are paid fairly
- To help the efficient running of your business
- To avoid employment relationship problems

What you need to do

There are three main steps involved in paying wages.

1. Understanding minimum pay entitlements for all employees including:
   - adults
   - trainees
   - new entrants
   - children, and
   - people with disabilities.
2. Ensuring correct calculation of wages:
   - what you need to consider when working out pay
   - when wages should be paid
   - how they should be paid
   - managing deductions, and
   - working out holiday pay.
3. Keeping accurate records.

This brochure provides a checklist of the key tasks involved with each step. Further information is available on: www.ers.dol.govt.nz/pay or by contacting us on 0800 20 90 20.

[Source: Department of Labour website, http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/big6/index.asp, http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/big6/healthandsafety.asp, http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/big6/recruiting.asp. Accessed 14 August 2010.]

2010 Notices of Motion

1. Auckland Branch:

The Auckland Branch recommends that executive pursue the labelling regulations that allow imported bee products to be labelled produce of NZ.

WITHDRAWN

2. Auckland Branch:

The Auckland branch moves that the National Executive negotiate with MAF Biosecurity to institute a hive monitoring scheme around all international points of entry (i.e. ports, airports, inland ports, container terminals, etc) for the early detection of exotic pests and diseases.

The provision of hives in the vicinity of those points of entry, and the collection of samples for analysis would be the responsibility of the beekeeping industry (hobbyist & commercial). Samples to be collected at least every 60 days.

The analysis and notification of results every 60 days to the branch concerned would be the responsibility of MAF Biosecurity. Results should also be made public (via *NZ Beekeeper*, etc.

CARRIED

NB: The amended Notice of Motion (NOM) put forward by the Auckland branch was lost. We returned to the original NOM, which was amended. The amendments to the original were lost and the original NOM was voted on and CARRIED.

3. Auckland Branch:

The Auckland branch requests that executive express and voice industry concern to government in regards to the emissions trading scheme (ETS) implementation.

CARRIED

4. Southern North Island Branch:

The Southern North Island branch recommends to conference that the Executive establish and seek funding for a research project on a common standard for manuka honey (*Leptospermum scoparium*).

LOST

5. Waikato Branch:

The Waikato Branch requests that the NBA initiate a national programme to comprehensively survey our current bee health (*Apis mellifera*).

CARRIED

6. Waikato Branch:

The Waikato branch requests that the NBA urgently reviews its executive structure in order to achieve:

- value for money for NBA members,
- improved communications at all levels,
- greater representation of beekeepers and increased membership of the NBA.

LOST

7. Canterbury Branch:

The Canterbury branch moves this conference recommends to Executive that NBA seek funding a graduate student to investigate the potential returns to Beekeepers that can be gained from carbon credits.

CARRIED

8. Hawke's Bay Branch:

The Hawke's Bay Branch recommends to Executive that they advise Branches hosting conferences in future that:

- NBA Annual Conference should go back to a weekday format (Monday–Thursday or Monday–Wednesday)
- Speciality meetings at conference should be scheduled on weekdays only—not Sundays.
- "Pre conference" hobbyists meetings would be acceptable on a Sunday.

CARRIED

9. Trevor Cullen:

I, Trevor Cullen, and others, recommend that executive approach other agricultural, fisheries and forestry industry (AFFI) associations with a view to obtaining support to lobby Government to enact legislations to establish two national trust funds to benefit the AFFI.

1. The AFFI alien pest and disease incursion eradication trust fund
2. The AFFI alien endemic pest and disease research trust fund.

CARRIED

[Editor's note: If anyone wishes to see the Notices of Motion with the explanatory notes provided with each remit, please contact Jessica Williams at secretary@nba.org.nz]

Don't talk on your cellphone and drive! This was an entry in the Ecroyd/NBA photo competition under the category 'Then what happened'. Photo: Peter Ferris.

AFB Recognition & Competency Test papers

Please Note: from 1 October 2010 the test papers will cost $30 each.

Then what happened?

Last month we said that we would publish more of the award-winning photos in the second annual Ecroyd/ NBA Photography Competition, held in Nelson as part of this year's conference.

Maggie James was the people's choice winner in the "Then what happened" category. Entrants were asked to provide two photos that showed a situation and explained what happened next.

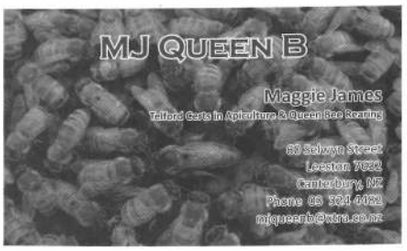
We asked Maggie to provide some background to her winning entry. Here's her account:

"I was preparing to participate in the Ellesmere A&P Show, which took place on 17 October 2009. The main tent feature was a beekeeping display by the local beekeepers in the area: mjqueenb (myself), Ellesmere Apiaries, Hantz Honey, Sheehan Apiaries, and Bee My Honey.

A couple of days prior to the A&P Show I had expected that Peter Bray would have a mighty fine splendid photo of a queen bee to help promote my business, but no. I nearly contacted Frank Lindsay for a photo and everyone said, 'Don't be stupid—take one yourself'.

The people's choice for the category 'Then what happened'.

So I used my one and only photo ever of a bee to produce my business card. I also used a large photo of it in October at the Ellesmere A&P Show for the display in the main tent.



Maggie's business card.

The A&P Assn had a record gate-taking (admittedly it was a nice day), and subsequently Leeston and Southbridge Primary Schools had a bee component for their primers last year. The beekeepers in this area comprise members of NBA and BIG. We also had photography from Peter Bray (Airborne Honey) and Dr Linda Newstrom-Lloyd (from Landcare Research, Lincoln) came along, and Dr Mark Goodwin and Stuart Ecroyd supplied informative display material. It was good that we had such a great display and such good feedback from the community. The A&P Show was an example of what beekeepers can do to promote the industry, the problems we face and the future of our industry to the wider community."

Staff at work: then and now

The photo above was taken about 20 years ago. It shows Tao and Emmanuel Kelly helping their father, Glenn Kelly, work the bees.

Their mother, Anne Walsh, submitted the photo to this year's photography competition in the 'Staff at work' category.

Guest judge Michael Traynor selected it as his choice of entries.

Tao, Anne, and Emmanuel with Anne's trophy. Photo: Mary-Ann Lindsay.

Bee posters available!

The NBA has produced this poster for the second annual Bee Week, 26–30 July 2010. Each branch was sent 10 copies, and posters can be purchased from head office.

If you are interested in purchasing a poster, please contact Jessica Williams at secretary@nba.org.nz or ring 04 471 6254.

TREES AND SHRUBS OF NEW ZEALAND

Two *Elaeocarpus* species

By Tony Lorimer, NBA Life Member

The Hinau (*Elaeocarpus dentatus*) is a short tree with oblong leaves and small creamy white flowers which occur from October to November.

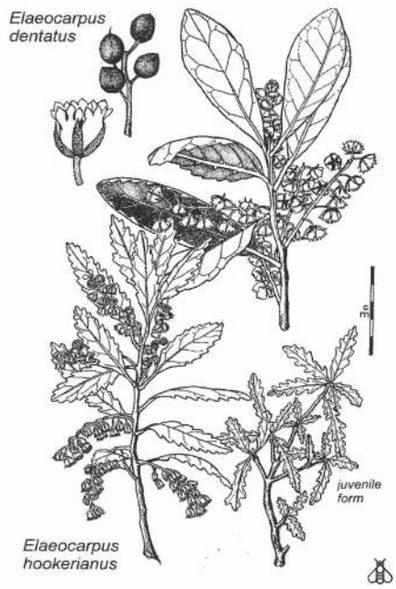
This tree is found in both the North and South islands.

The Pokaka (*Elaeocarpus hookerianus*) is also found in both islands. It is identified by having longer serrated leaves, and the flowers are greenish white. The flowers hang in clumps, looking like a spray of 'Lily of the Valley'.

The nectar of both species is light in colour and mild in flavour and produced copiously.

The fruit resembles an olive and Maori soaked it in the hull of the waka (canoe). The stalks and skin were strained out, leaving behind a coarse grey meal that was made into a cake baked and eaten. The cake had a dark appearance and was too oily for European tastes.

The bark made a blue-black dye. Maori used the bark to dye the black threads in their garments and as a dye for tattoos, as well as in a hot bath to cure skin disease.



RESEARCH

The win-win ecology of honeybee introductions

David W. Roubik, Rogel Villanueva, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, 34002, APO-AA, USA
Email: roubikd@si.edu

Introduction of pollinators into communities occurs worldwide, yet their impact is poorly understood.

Reports clearly identify competition, and native flower visitors are displaced or decline in some manner. Studies on population levels of native bees and their floral resources have been scant, but long-term studies in the American tropics found no honey bee impact on solitary or social bees. We studied Africanized honey bee colonization in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, in a large, species-rich, Biosphere Reserve. Our data were gathered from replicated trap-nesting and pollen analysis of two native bees, and from pollen taxonomy applied to Africanized bees. Four hurricanes and two droughts had more negative influence on native bee populations than did honey bees. Moreover, native bees tended to increase, beginning little more than a decade after honey bee arrival. Pollen analysis showed native bees used 136 plant species, also used by the honey bees. Remarkably, *Megachile zaptlana, Centris analis* and *A. mellifera* all favored *Pouteria (Sapotaceae)* which matures to flowering in 8 years. Although competition with the honey bee apparently displaced native bees from other major resources, *Anacardiaceae* and *Euphorbiaceae*, bees compensated by using other native species, mostly legumes, malpighs and also *Pouteria*. Their populations used the local flora differently, and we propose honey bees fed their competitors by increasing reproduction of some major resources. In species-rich habitats, species of related plant taxa and flowering periods may be substituted for resources lost to honey bees. Our data cannot address honey bee impact on rare bees, but fit data obtained in other studies and provide a mechanism-flexible foraging choices of native, tropical bees.

[Editor's note: Over the course of this year we are reprinting some abstracts of the approximately 500 papers and other presentations to the 41st Apimondia Congress, Montpellier, France, 15–20 September 2009. This is abstract number 25.]

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Changes in nectar flow timing

Wayne Esaias, Robert Wolfe, Joanne Nightingale, Jaime Nickeson, Peter Ma, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland USA
Email: wayne.esaias@nasa.gov

Monitoring change of hive weight is used to define the local nectar flow phenology and provide linkage to satellite data for understanding how climate and forage changes are impacting pollinator-plant interactions.

The phenology of the honey bee nectar flow (HBNF) in many parts of North America is changing drastically due to climate and land cover changes. In the Mid-Atlantic region, scale hive data show that the HBNF is now about 25 days earlier than in 1970, a shift comparable to the inter-annual variation. The significant trend is closely correlated with an increase of winter minimum temperatures, and the trend is equivalent to the advance in spring 'green-up' observed with satellite sensors. The high degree of correlation between HBNF metrics and satellite derived vegetation phenology in Maryland suggests that the advancing trend due to warming extends throughout the northern Atlantic portion of the US. In Louisiana, delays in HBNF of about 40 days are consistent with both land cover changes (forage provided by invasive plants) and satellite derived green-up. The numbers of volunteer observers has increased geometrically in the past three years, and continued growth is expected to provide the basis for studying climate impacts on nectar flow phenology on a continental scale using satellite observations and ecosystem climate models.

[Editor's note: The full title of this abstract is 'Scale hive network and satellites reveal shifts in Nectar Flows due to climate and land cover'. *This is Apimondia abstract number 23.]*

WEATHER

La Niña conditions for the rest of 2010

The NIWA National Climate Centre outlook says that the equatorial Pacific is now in a La Niña state. La Niña conditions are likely to continue through the remainder of 2010.

Early spring temperatures are likely to be near average or above average across the country. However, short-term cold snaps and frosty periods typical of early spring will still occur.

Rainfall is likely to be near normal in most regions, for August–October as a whole. The exception is the lower half of the North Island, with normal or below normal rainfalls likely in the west, and normal or above normal rainfalls likely in the east.

Soil moisture levels and stream flows are likely to be in the normal range for many regions August–October as a whole. But the Centre says that normal or below normal soil moisture levels and stream flows are likely in the west of the North Island, and normal or above normal soil moisture levels are likely in the eastern North Island.

The National Climate Centre's latest outlook states that mean sea level pressures are likely to be above normal near New Zealand, for August–October as a whole.

Overall picture

Temperature: Early spring temperatures are likely to be near average or above average in all regions. However, short-term cold snaps and frosty periods typical of early spring will still occur. Sea surface temperatures are expected to be near average or above average around New Zealand over the August to October period.

Rainfall, soil moisture, and stream flows: Rainfall is likely to be near normal in most places, but normal or below normal in the western North Island, and normal or above in the east of the North Island. Normal soil moisture levels and stream flows for August-October as a whole are likely in many regions, except for normal or below normal conditions in the west of the North Island, and normal or above normal soil moisture levels in the eastern North Island.

FROM THE COLONIES

Waikato Branch

I thought winter was supposed to be quiet. I've been busy catching up on all the maintenance jobs, attending conferences and finishing off the last of the honey processing jobs.

Spring must be imminent with the early cherry trees, daffodils and plums now in full blossom and the odd bit of drone brood in the strong hives. Spring rounds have now started: let's hope the good weather continues, unlike last year when it started out strong only to turn dreich. [Look it up!]

We have probably all heard about the Australian honey imports raising their heads again. We all need to join together and fight this like last time, and not take the Government's or MAF's word as written in stone.

- Stephen Black

Bay of Plenty Branch

Bee Week in the Bay

An exhibition was held in the Greerton shopping village where passers-by were engaged in bee talk; the Federated Farmers' Trees for Bees brochure proving to be very popular. Local shops competed for the best window display. The prize, kindly donated by Mossops Honey and containing a basket of Mossops' fine bee products, was won by the Greerton Waipuna Hospice Shop.

School visits took place around the Bay. Dennis Crowley took an observation hive along to his talk at Mount Maunganui Intermediate and Glen and Kushla Haenen visited Tahatai Coast School in Papamoa.

Looking for the queen. Photo: Craig McDonald.

Kushla recounts some of the comments in the thank-you letters from the kids: "I learnt the drones do nothing but mate with the queen." "The girls do all the work." "The drones get kicked out in winter." "Only girl bees can sting." "I liked spotting the queen, because it was hard to find her."

According to Kushla, the teacher had done lots of prep, so they were well-schooled on pollination in the bay, and that one-third of our food would disappear without bees for pollination. Interestingly, at least one child in the class had never eaten honey. Ever.

Some of the questions the kids asked included: "How do they make the wax?" "Does the queen bee sting?" "How can you tell the difference between a drone and a worker bee?" "Is 'The Bee Movie' like real life?" (Answer: most definitely not.) We had one newsy young girl who (despite it being question time) felt we needed to know "I know someone who got stung on the bum!" Apparently this was an unfortunate incident involving a friend and a bee trapped inside a car. The bee obviously made more than one lasting impression.

Kids poke their fingers in drawn comb to feel the texture of the wax. Photo: Craig McDonald.

Kushla concludes, "We had one minor incident where Glen's carefully cleaned and prepared 'empty' hive was discovered to have a single hitchhiking bee hiding under the edge of the lid. Chaos ensued until it was shooed outside. The display frame went down a treat (thank goodness for Glen's woodworking skills—he whipped it together the day before). The queen actually laid while the kids were watching, which was great, as Glen and I hadn't seen this before either! We were asked to come back next year too."

Bay of Plenty Branch meeting and discussion group

The August branch meeting was hosted by Dennis Crowley at his Paengaroa yard. Thirty-seven beekeepers from both ends of the Bay and Waikato, including a handful of hobbyists, spent a sunny afternoon discussing issues and sharing experiences on a range of topics including pollination hive auditing procedures, kiwifruit sprays and the threat of Australian honey imports. Dennis demonstrated his sugar syrup feeder system for pollination hives and his plans to trial moving hives during the day.

Dennis Crowley talking to an attentive group about hive auditing. Photo: Greg Wagstaff.

The discussion group format for branch meetings is popular so will continue this month.

The next meeting will be held on 7 September, 12:30-3:00pm and hosted by Leon at the Kintail Honey shed at Glen Meadows Orchard, 135 S.H. 33 Paengaroa. Non-NBA members are welcome to attend this discussion group.

- Greg Wagstaff

Poverty Bay Branch

Hi to all. I hope the winter has not been too harsh with bee losses, especially for those who now have to deal with varroa.

I was glad to hear the South Island conference was a success, with a large turnout.

A key point to be noted is the progress on the BPSC needing a consistent amenable agreement for all to benefit in the export market. Minister of Agriculture David Carter's

announcement that Government will consider allowing the importation of Australian honey will lead to impending doom for our industry and economic destruction of our markets. Corporate giants are the only people who will gain from this imported product, which has the potential to bring EFB with it.

If we want New Zealand honey to be considered the best in the world, we need to ensure its future by not bringing risk to our hives. What do you see our future as being?

- Don Simm, Branch President

Hawke's Bay Branch

Like most of the country, Hawke's Bay can only be described as wet, really wet or wet as. It is very early in the pollination calendar but so far things are running later than average.

We had a very good turnout of about 70 people at our last meeting, with Michelle and Byron Taylor talking on various subjects and Jim Sim updating us on the New Zealand Food Safety Authority's response to the tutin problem.

Beekeepers suffer from their fair share of allergies including allergies to propolis and even honey, but I was surprised when my dermatologist told me that every beekeeper he had ever examined had hives.

- John Berry, Branch President

Southern North Island Branch

Spring has started around the Wanganui and Manawatu area. Willows are budding, plum trees are starting to blossom and many of the hives are coming out of winter mode. Another couple of weeks and it will be time to start preparing for queen grafting and from then on it will be busy. Hopefully we will enjoy good weather also.

Our Branch was well represented at Conference. Stu Ferguson picked up the Roy Paterson Award for his innovative new PVC hive bases, the Wanganui Beekeepers' Club placed second in the Club Honey competition, and Chris Valentine was awarded a photo prize in the 'Staff at Work' category, with his little son in full bee suit on top of the truck waiting for the helicopter with the next load out.

We have had a Train the Trainers Day for those who are already taking DECA courses and a number of new recruits. It was an interesting day with a lot of up-to-date information provided via the latest Powerpoint presentation.

- Neil Farrer

Food Safety and RMP Awareness Courses

In the second week of August approximately 25 people attended a 'Food Safety & RMP Awareness in the Honey Industry Training Programme', held at Palmerston North. The course ran for two full days with a lot of information given by Tony Roper and Marco Gonzalez of AsureQuality Limited, assisted by Tony's wife Margaret.

The course was very informative for most and a good revision for those who already had their risk management programme (RMP). Over the two days we participated in exercises that will lead to a unit standard qualification over the next 12 months.

Tony Roper of Asure Quality Limited addressing the course participants. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

We basically went along to refresh ourselves and redo the food handler's part as we believe this will become a compulsory aspect to the RMP in time. After all, honey is a food.

The whole message given is QUALITY in all honey matters, from the time the super is taken off the hive, to the extracted product and movements from there. It is very helpful to understand the Code of Practice (COP) and where to find things.

Here are some of the gems from the course discussions. With regard to cleaning honey houses at the end of the day, the late Trevor Rowe was quoted: "The easiest way to clean up a mess is not to make it". Marco noted that "the only muscle that doesn't get cramp is the tongue".

During the tutin discussion, Dan Riddiford told me his grandfather used to cure horses with tutin poisoning by burning brown sugar in a horse's oats nose bag. Apparently the fumes given off by the burning sugar neutralise the poison. *[Editor's note: Don't try this at home. You just never know how someone will interrupt it and may end up lighting the horse's nose bag on fire while it's strapped to its face.]*

- Frank Lindsay

Otago Branch

Changeable weather from solid snowfalls to spring sunshine seems to be on the agenda at the moment. After what has been a fairly mild winter, at least in coastal areas, beekeepers report hives opening up with plenty of brood already. All eyes will be looking for varroa and for once I am hoping not to find what I'm looking for.

Varroa field days confirmed

The Otago Branch has planned two field days focusing on varroa control. These are now confirmed for 11 September at Cromwell and 12 September at Outram. All will be welcome: we will send out the programs to beekeepers in Otago and Southland closer to the time.

- Peter Sales, Branch Secretary

Don't forget to update your branch and club details!

The next issue of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* will go to all registered beekeepers. If any of the details of your Branch or club details have changed, please email editor@nba.org.nz and secretary@nba.org.nz so that we can update your details in the journal and on the NBA website.

Control of Varroa: A Guide for New Zealand Beekeepers by Mark Goodwin and Michelle Taylor can be purchased from the NBA. Please contact Jess on secretary@nba.org.nz or 04 471 6254 to order a copy.

Using a top syrup/sugar feeder

By Anne Hulme

Many hobbyists will want to feed their hives for the next couple of months so that they can have a maximum number of bees flying out when the honey flow starts.

Some are using a frame feeder, which takes the place of one or two frames in the brood box, while most of the hobbyists in our club are using a top syrup feeder under the crown board and lid. We find it is quicker to fill the containers and the bees are not disturbed very much.

"Dry sugar is considered a maintenance feed that can be given in July, August, and September."

This syrup/dry sugar feeder can be made from new timber or a cut-down super. It has a hardboard floor rebated into the walls and a space to allow the bees to come up and get the dry sugar or the syrup. Our feeders have a gap at the back for the bees to access (it uses up hardboard shorts), while the top feeders on the five-frame nucleus hives have a hole in the centre where it is warmer for the bees to use. We just make sure that the bees can get into the containers that we are using inside the feeder.

Dry sugar is considered a maintenance feed that can be given in July, August, and September. It is easy and safe to replenish at any time of the day under the crown board. The bees don't take any notice as they would when feeding on syrup, and dry sugar won't stimulate the queen to lay excessively in the cold months. Of course the commercial beekeepers are feeding a strong syrup solution now because they want lots of bees for their pollination contracts. The hobbyist doesn't need too many bees eating up their food supplies until it is time to requeen and split the hives.

Top feeder with bracken for syrup container and dry sugar. Photo: Graham Pearson.

When we give syrup to the club hives to encourage the queen to lay (usually in late September, October and November), we use a mixture of 50% hot water to 50% dry sugar. The syrup is cooled before pouring into a container that has crushed bracken in it, which enables the bees to cling on while they are feeding so that they won't drown. We make sure that we don't spill the syrup outside the hive, and we also feed it late in the day when the bees have stopped flying because the bees get excited on syrup, which can encourage them to rob each other. They are usually settled by the next day. One and a half litres of syrup at a time is plenty for a ten-frame split to take down and pack away overnight, although if the hobbyist has the time it is better to feed them a little less and more often. If the bees haven't used up the last syrup that was fed to them, we don't give them any more until we have checked inside the hive. The weather could have improved and they may have found a good source of nectar. However, last year our new beekeepers were feeding syrup to their nucs and splits right up to early December because of the foul weather.

Feeding syrup does have one disadvantage: it boosts the queen to lay. If we are not checking for swarm cells regularly, and moving the frames or adding boxes to give the queen space, the bees could swarm and all our good work is undone. However, we rarely have that problem now with the club hives because we are making up nucs and splits for the new beekeepers. Those replacement frames are giving the bees plenty of work, drawing out the wax, so they don't swarm.

If we find that the bees are crowding into the syrup feeder and making comb in there, we know that it is time to put on a honey super. By using a top syrup feeder we are able to 'read' what is going on in the hive without actually lifting off a box in bad weather.

Requeen hives that have more than 15 mites per 100 bees with queens raised from colonies with less than half that number.

Source: Control of Varroa: A guide for New Zealand beekeepers *(revised edition), by Mark Goodwin & Michelle Taylor, page 123.*

Send us your burning questions!

We want to know your burning beekeeping questions. Do you want to know how to set up your hives for spring? How and when to move hives? Whatever your question, simply email it to editor@nba.org.nz and we will post the answers in the next issue of The New Zealand BeeKeeper *and on www.nba.org.nz.*

Honey hobby reward

By Peter Watson, *The Nelson Mail*

Maitai Valley hobbyist beekeeper Jane Besley is producing world-class honey.

From just two tastefully painted blue hives in her sprawling garden overlooking the Maitai Valley, Jane Besley produces some of the best honey in New Zealand.

The Nelson Hospital nurse and long-time hobbyist beekeeper stunned herself and many others at last week's National Beekeepers Conference when she was named supreme winner at the inaugural national honey show.

But what made her effort in beating many bigger, commercial producers more remarkable was that she produced a range of top honeys, winning with both her medium liquid and light naturally granulated honeys and being placed in the top three in five other classes.

One of the judges, Maureen Maxwell, who judges honey internationally, said Ms Besley's honeys would win on the world stage "no question about it".

Her "perfectly presented" entries shone and were the result of "very clever, considered and experienced beekeeping", she said.

Ms Besley said she was "gobsmacked" to do so well.

She knew her medium liquid honey was special, but was thrilled to win a swag of awards, including a "splendid trophy" as supreme winner which impressed her three teenage daughters who have regularly won more modest-sized cups for their ballet.

"I've been keeping bees for 20 years so you know when you've got a cracker of a honey. When it came out of the extractor I thought 'this is lovely'. It was a lovely colour, it was clear and it came out of the cone *[comb]* very well and the bouquet was divine.

What a buzz: Jane Besley with the trophy she won as supreme champion at the National Beekeepers' Association's honey show in Nelson.

"I was lucky because I had three distinct harvests which gave me three distinctive colours and they do the show categories like that."

Having the national conference in Nelson prompted her to enter. "I am sure there were lots and lots of people there who make exquisite honey who didn't put in but hopefully they will next year."

Ms Besley's two hives produce up to 90 kilograms of honey which is decanted into recycled glass jars and spread around family, friends and work colleagues. She makes candles, furniture polish and soon, soap, from the beeswax.

With the varroa mite having reduced the number of wild bees, hers have plenty to forage on. She says her 2.8 hectare hillside "goat country" garden has not been specially planted to attract them, "but it's in the life plan".

But there's cabbage tree and lavender and the willows in the Maitai provide a good source of protein pollen which helps the bee brood build up in the spring.

Her interest in bees began as a little girl living in Devon, in England's southwest, close to where Brother Adam, a famous beekeeping monk, worked. As well as someone who was talked about at home, she used to sing at Brother Adam's abbey. But what really got her hooked was watching the local coastguard's wife – a Romanian woman who smoked a pipe – handle her bees.

"She used to cut the honeycomb and give it to me. It was very hands on."

So when her family moved to Auckland and she found beekeeping was much easier than in England, "there was no excuse".

Ms Besley's first hives were in Remuera. After doing a night school course in beekeeping she joined the Auckland Bee Club where "old duffers" taught her much of what she knows.

> "Beekeeping is not difficult if you follow the rules and treat it scientifically ..."

"They had three bee masters and we used to hang out with them. They would mentor you, and if you were in strife with your hives they would come over and say 'what have you done now, Jane'?"

She now fulfils a similar role in Nelson, where she has lived for nine years, mentoring three new beekeepers. "We help each other with extractions, it's a little fraternity."

Beekeeping is not difficult if you follow the rules and treat it scientifically, she said.

One of the most common mistakes was being careless with honey taken off the hive. If left unattended or stored improperly, it could induce the bees to start "robbing" where they leave the hive to find the missing honey and become increasingly agitated when they do. It can also lead to bees cleaning out other hives.

Little winners: Jane Besley checks the bees that made her award-winning honey. Photos: Martin De Ruyter.

As a nurse working in the cardio intervention suite at Nelson Hospital where they put stents into the coronary arteries of people with heart problems, she is careful to wear the proper protective gear so she isn't stung. Working in the operating theatre with gloved hands covered in stings "would not be a good look", she jokes.

Nursing and beekeeping required the same attention to detail and methodical approach. "You have to be pretty exact."

Her family help with her hobby. Her husband, Simon – "the long suffering helper of the beekeeper" – and daughters pitch in at extraction time and she hopes the girls will go on to have their own bees.

"They used to have little bee suits and have all done a turn at beekeeping, In Auckland the kids painted the hives different colours and drew bees on them.

"I think everyone should have a hive because no section is too small. It would be great. They would be pollinating their garden, producing honey and candles."

Beekeeping was inexpensive and not time-consuming if planned right.

"I visit the hives eight times a year. They are the most productive thing in the garden."

BEE FACTS

There are 2957 registered beekeepers in New Zealand, of which 262 are in Nelson, Marlborough and the West Coast.

There are 376,672 hives nationwide, including 28,063 in the top of the south.

Exports of bee products, of which the vast bulk is honey, totalled $97.5 million last year.

Honey production totaled 12,565 tonnes last year, of which 8209 tonnes was exported. Manuka honey made up about 60 per cent of that.

Source

Watson, P. (2010, July 6). Honey hobby reward. *The Nelson Mail,* 13. Reprinted with permission.

Preventing starvation and varroa infestation

By Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

September and now things are starting to move in the hive. Bees are flying when it's warm, bringing in pollen and nectar.

You can now tell whether your hives are placed in a good position. In hives that are shaded during the day, or are in a draughty position, you will find lots of dead bees with pollen on their hind legs sitting in the grass around the entrance of the hive. They are coming back with supplies and if they land short of the entrance, they get chilled before they can climb up into the hive. Move the hive, reduce the amount of shade or add a board from the entrance to the ground so that those bees landing short can climb up into the hive.

Are we in for a surprise? Ken Ring has predicted it's going to be the worst spring in 34 years, and I thought last year's was bad enough. If hives can't fly at least one day in three, they may need additional assistance in the form of sugar syrup and pollen supplement to keep the queen laying flat out.

You can check whether a hive needs pollen supplement by looking at the frames with brood in them. There should be a complete band of pollen around the top edge of the brood in each frame. If there is only the odd cell (indicating that the pollen has been brought in that day), check the pollen frames on the outside of the brood nest. Is there still a reasonable amount of pollen in the outside frames? If so, move them in slightly so that they are in contact with the bees on the outer brood frames. (If you do this, remember to move them out slightly each month as the brood nest expands.) Not much pollen in the frames means you should consider feeding pollen supplement. With the increasing loss of scrubby areas on farms today, most commercial beekeepers are increasingly putting pollen supplement into their hives in the spring. As an alternative to patties, Feedbee® can be added into the sugar syrup as this requires less work in the field. I prefer to monitor the bees' uptake of the patties.

A lot of pollen in the hives can also be a symptom of a failing queen. Older queens lay well initially, but when the pressure is put on them to increase the egg-laying rate beyond 1000 a day, they fail to make the grade. If her pheromone levels are down as well, the bees will try to supersede her. When inspecting hives in the late spring, be careful to check for eggs in the brood frames before removing the odd queen cell. I tend to put aside the first frame with a queen cell I come across during an inspection, and make the decision what to do with it once I have looked through the whole hive. If you are not sure, put the frame with the queen cell and another of emerging bees into a nuc box. Add a shake of bees so that both frames are covered in bees and take the nuc box home or move it to another apiary. There, you add a couple of frames of honey and pollen to keep them going. Any hive not expanding at the same rate as the others should be marked for requeening.

> "Any hive not expanding at the same rate as the others should be marked for requeening."

Another interesting thing you will notice in a strong hive is the development of drones. Hives that produce drones early are the hives that are making preparations to swarm. Gradually start removing the odd frame of brood each visit from the outside of the brood nest and giving them a foundation frame to draw out. Generally bees drawing foundation won't swarm. I say generally as the bees haven't read the books and sometimes they do not follow the rules we set them.

Rescuing a starving hive

Starved-out hives are upsetting, but can happen if we don't get around to looking at our hives on a regular basis. The closer to spring, the more likely the possibility of a hive starving. It seems to happen very quickly but in fact it can take a couple of weeks; it's just that you didn't recognise the problem on your last visit.

Signs of starvation include:

- a very light hive when hefted
- no observable sealed honey in the combs when viewed from above
- bees with their heads in cells, and those between the frames slowly vibrate their wings when a little smoke is puffed over them
- bees fall off the frame when it is lifted out
- signs of cannibalised brood (opened cells, half-eaten larvae).

The bees need heat and food to right themselves. The quickest way is to spray the bees and frames with warm sugar syrup and dump them on another hive, with a queen excluder between each hive that is half covered with plastic or paper to separate the queens. The bees from below will come up and take the syrup and feed the other bees. Crack the top super to break the propolis seal and move one corner back a little to create a top entrance. Young bees will also come up into the brood area below and the queen will start laying again. After a week or so, you can place a couple of frames of brood with emerging bees in the top hive and separate it into individual units again.

I usually take starving hives home and spray warm sugar syrup or dribble honey over the frames where the bees are, then put the hive in my honey room with a fan heater directed against a side. Within a few hours the shivering bees will have fed each other and reorganised into a loose group. Make sure there are no holes or cracks that the bees can escape from and don't leave a light on. It's disconcerting to return a

few hours later to find bees everywhere, defecating over everything. Dribble more syrup or honey over the tops of the frames and turn off the heater so the bees start to form back into a loose cluster. Hopefully more than half the bees will have come back to life. Add a couple of frames with a brood area the size of your hand (enough for the existing bees to cover and keep warm), plus a couple of frames of honey and add a feeder. Check in four days. If there are eggs, the hive is queenright and it can be returned to a nearby apiary site. Put a piece of foil insulation over the middle of the brood area to help the bees preserve their heat and the hive should come right by Christmas.

Varroa treatments

We are all about to start treating our hives again for varroa mites. During the winter their numbers will have increased considerably from 50-odd to several hundreds. For those in the North Island, it's a matter of fitting treatments in with a round of feeding or inspections. The only thing to bear in mind is whether resistance is starting to develop in your hives. After a month it may pay to check the efficacy of the treatment by counting mite numbers by digging out drone pupa, using a cappings fork. Checking a few hundred drones at the pink-eye stage should give you an indication of how successful the strip treatments have been so far. The only thing that can upset this type of count is if your neighbour didn't put in their treatments at the same time you did: your bees and his/her drones could be bringing in a hundred mites each week. Try to co-ordinate your treatment with your neighbouring beekeeper. It's important to get complete coverage of an area at the same time. Of course, the odd feral hive that you don't know about can also upset counts.

For those in the South Island just getting varroa, timing the introduction of the strips is important. First of all, you will have to determine that you have varroa. The sugar-shake method is unreliable unless you put two or three more treatments of icing sugar into the jar of bees, as not all mites are released with the first lot of icing sugar. Most of you won't be using ventilated floors so you will have to physically look through brood. As noted above, mites are attracted to drone brood so that's where to look. If you find mites in one hive, you should treat that whole apiary—and I would recommend treating that whole area. Mites have a habit of sneaking into an area through the back door. In my case, they came over quite a steep hill rather than up the valley floor. Treatments should be timed so that the treatment is put in eight weeks before your main honey flow.

Some might be trying drone brood removal for the first time, following suggestions made at this year's conference. Place an empty frame (no wiring or wax) against the outside of the brood nest, just inside of the pollen frame. Once the bees have an excess of pollen and nectar coming into the hive, they will start to draw down the frame and produce drones. When the frame is half sealed (15th to 18th day), cut the wax out and place the frame back into the hive. (Drone brood is an excellent food to restore egg laying to old chooks.) We also learnt at conference that bees that draw down the frame in a saw-tooth formation are likely to swarm and should be split early, rather than waiting for the queen cells to be laid in.

If you mis-time your treatment, the same advice about putting frames of honey and brood with emerging bees goes for any hive that has Parasitic Mite Syndrome (PMS) caused by high numbers of varroa. Although the worker bees may look all right, they may not be fully developed, or they might have viruses so will not be able to produce royal jelly. To get a PMS hive back on track, it will need healthy young bees.

Things to do this month

AFB check. Replace any old, dark or broken-lugged frames that you moved to the outside of the super during the season. Feed if necessary. Prepare for queen rearing. Once the temperature gets to 19°C, queens can be mated. Spray or weed-whack the weeds around the hives. Check for wax moth in your stored frames.

Hive losses from varroa occur, but they are often replaced by splitting surviving colonies the next spring.

Source: Control of Varroa: A guide for New Zealand beekeepers *(revised edition), by Mark Goodwin & Michelle Taylor, page 28.*

Deadlines for advertising and articles

Advertisers and contributors to *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* are advised that new deadlines are now in place for advertising and articles.

These changes will allow us to ensure that the journal hits beekeepers' hands at the same date each month. If you have any questions, please email ceo@nba.org.nz

Advertising deadlines

Advertising is now due on the 6th of the month prior to publication. Material received after the 15th of the month and prior to publication may not be published.

In order to be fair to all advertisers who occasionally offer deals for a limited time period in their ads, there will be no exception to these rules.

Article deadlines

Articles are now due on the 6th of the month prior to publication. Material received after the 15th of the month and prior to publication may not be published.

Employment Wanted

Professional Canadian beekeeper with 25 years experience in all aspects of commercial beekeeping is looking for employment opportunities in New Zealand. Would prefer a permanent position but will consider a seasonal spot with a view to something longer once established. Will send CV to those with serious interest.

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