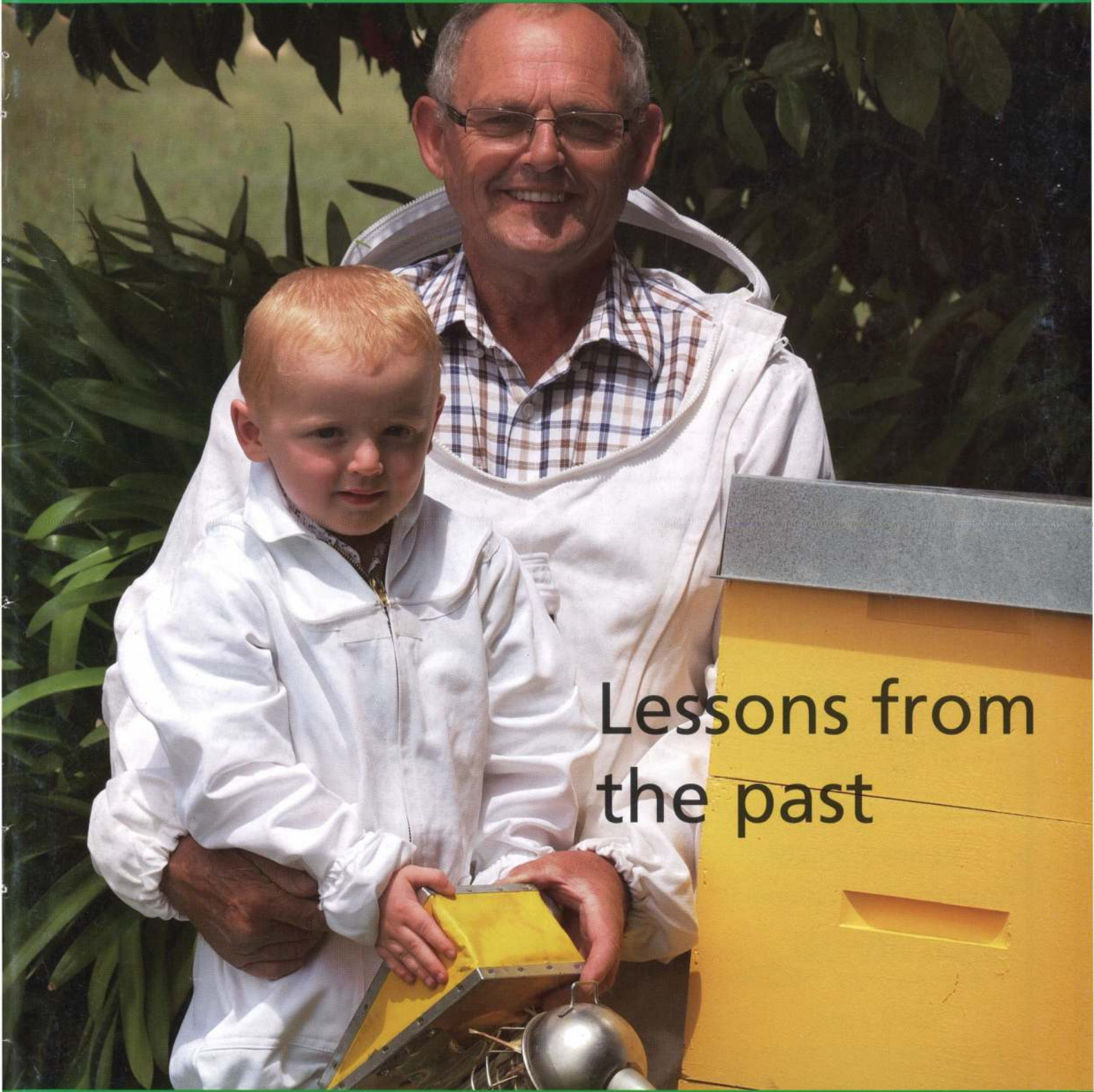


June 2012, Volume 20 No. 5

The NEW ZEALAND BeeKeeper



Lessons from
the past

- Identifying AFB infections
- Research priorities
- Start next year's planning now
- More on manuka honey

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- Carpentry skills for building and repairing hive boxes
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This position is based in Ashburton or Staveley and applicants for this position must have New Zealand residency or a valid New Zealand work permit.

If you hold the above qualities and expertise you may be very surprised by the level of remuneration and overall employment conditions Midlands can offer. You are encouraged to apply.

To apply in strict confidence send your cover letter and CV to james.callaghan@midlands.co.nz or write to James Callaghan, Midlands Apiaries Limited, PO Box 65, Ashburton 7740.

For more information phone James Callaghan on 0274 581 431 or visit our website www.midlands.co.nz

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- Has a minimum of 2 years experience working with bees
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- Is practical
- Is prepared to listen and learn
- Has the ability to work flexible hours.

As well as the above, it would be advantageous if you possessed:

- Carpentry skills for building and repairing hive boxes
- Mechanical skills for repairing equipment.

This position is based in Ashburton or Staveley and applicants for this position must have New Zealand residency or a valid New Zealand work permit.

If you hold the above attributes and you are interested you may be very surprised by the level of remuneration and overall employment conditions Midlands can offer.

To apply in strict confidence send your cover letter and CV to james.callaghan@midlands.co.nz or write to James Callaghan, Midlands Apiaries Limited, PO Box 65, Ashburton 7740.

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Front cover: Southern North Island Branch Vice President Peter Ferris and grandson Jack Rayner. Jack is a third-generation beekeeper; his mum Lottie is a queen breeder. Photo taken by Sandy at Pete Nikolaison, Photographer, Masterton.

Lessons from the past

By Barry Foster, NBA President

Winter brings the annual NBA conference normally held over a week in either June or July. Conference this year will be hosted by the Hawke's Bay Branch of the NBA at the Napier War Memorial Hall from 24–28 June.

Over the past two months I have asked a number of people what they thought made some past conferences so special and which conferences they thought were the best ones they had attended. Perhaps to highlight some of the positive things that made those past conferences so good so that we may learn from them, and not forget some very special moments and memories for many of our members. I've come across some good stories that would fill more than the space allotted for this report.

If I had to distil it all into one sentence, I would say that conferences are about people, people and people and the stimulating interactions between them. There is nothing new about that.

The best experiences at the most memorable conferences seem to have been around being part of events outside of the usual and in places that engender a good relaxed social interaction. Friendship and humour are the glue that has crystallised many special moments in the past.

Some examples of a relaxed atmosphere are found with the Dunedin conference in 1989 that included a day off for ski trips to Cardrona and a stay over in Wanaka. In Queenstown in 2001, a day for jet boat trips down the Shotover River, bungy jumping and four-wheel-drive trips proved memorable.

But for some members I spoke with, the best conference of all happened in 1990 when the entire conference was held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands. It broke the stereotype. If you were not there (and unfortunately I was not), this conference was a very relaxed affair that included two-hour lunch breaks for swimming and more relaxing before commencing again. Nonetheless I am told

that the 241 people who attended, including quite a few hobbyists, did a surprising amount of work. I'm thinking that the ability to relax had something to do with their accomplishments.

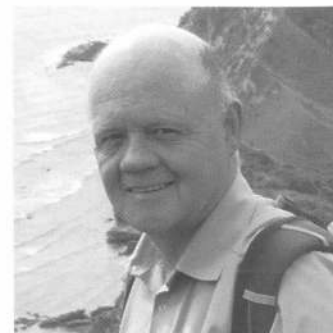
Responding to time pressures

The human dynamics of beekeeping are changing. As a country we work harder than many others in the OECD and often for less gain in terms of productive dollars per hour than workers in most other OECD countries (Callaghan, 2011).

New Zealand beekeepers would be surely well up there amongst the hardest of workers in the country, and this trend will only be exacerbated as pressures with resistant varroa and our changing world impinge on our small portion of the globe. We are becoming more time poor, not less, and time to relax and unwind is becoming even more precious. We need to take back some of those important values that varroa has robbed us of. Sufficient relaxation may be one of those lost values.

"Future conferences should draw from the best the past offers."

Over the past year some 600 new beekeepers have become registered, and it would be a fair assumption to say that the vast majority of these new beekeepers will be hobbyists, with some aspiring new commercial beekeepers within driven by the lure of manuka crops. Corporate beekeeping is also growing, witnessed by the purchase of a substantial number of hives by Comvita NZ Ltd and Midland Apiaries in Canterbury for seed crop pollination.



Other specialist supply and service businesses are a growing part of the business diversity around our industry, borne out by the increasing levels of sponsorship that our conferences enjoy. How we cater for and include these new arrivals into our world of beekeeping is a challenge. We should draw from the best they have to offer and give the best we can in return, because our future lies in a more inclusive and unified industry in order to adequately tackle the problems we face. How we find some of the answers to that challenge surely lie in the past.

Perhaps future conferences should cater for a more holiday atmosphere that numbers of beekeepers choose already instead of attending conference. A relaxing day swimming in a tropical sea or a day's skiing or fishing in stunning surroundings might just get more conference-related work done than we give credit for as well as engender good social communication.

More conference history

The history surrounding conferences is interesting. I was part of the organising committee for the Gisborne conference in 2000. Up until April that year we were working on a conference that included the late Dr Eva Crane as a speaker on the history of beekeeping.

Life changed in April 2000 with the discovery of varroa and so did our conference. The focus changed to one in earnest as this threat to our livelihoods manifested itself in a raft of concerns and questions that had to be addressed. A tense air replaced the relaxed feeling among the organising committee, and it was not until that conference was over that we could reflect what made it a success. Once again, people made the conference.

Former Poverty Bay Branch President Peter Burt spoke and sang in te reo

Continued on page 6

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Continued from page 4

Maori on behalf of the local beekeepers during a powhiri given by a local Maori cultural performing group who welcomed conference participants into the conference venue. The uniqueness of it in that setting broke the ice, and to my mind was one of the many highlights of our conference. The powhiri set the stage for making the conference into something far better than it might have been, in spite of the threats from varroa.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy came with the 1986 conference in Rotorua, when a Maori cultural performing group led by the late Sir Howard Morrison welcomed President Ian Berry and conference participants into the conference venue. Ian did not flinch as a taiaha was flashed within centimetres of his head as he was challenged to pick up the wero. What followed was wonderful singing and a gift of a carved bone taniwha from the Morrison family to Ian as President of the NBA. This treasure is now passed onto every president as a sign of respect and leadership to wear at our AGMs. It comes in a wonderfully made box carved by Murray Reid's father.

Our industry faces some significant challenges, opportunities and decisions to make in the not-so-distant future. The quality of decisions that are made is often reflected in the environment in which they were developed, and by the greater number of participants involved in that decision. Your executive wishes to work with you on means of improving communication with our branches and members. We work hard for most of the year in our businesses and often communication suffers as a result. We are always open to suggestions on improving our communications.

Future conferences should draw from the best the past offers. New entrants to our industry will write their own stories in their own way. But if we don't learn from the past and we don't tell the new people the lessons of the past, then we may repeat the mistakes of the past.

See you at conference.

Reference

Speech by Sir Paul Callaghan to the Mapping our Future Conference, March 2011. Groningen Growth & Development Centre, University of Groningen. <http://www.rug.nl/corporate/index>



NBA CONFERENCE

The Roy Paterson Trophy

By Jane and Tony Lorimer, NBA Life Members

The Roy Paterson Trophy was instigated by Professor Sutherland, Queensland and Dudley Lorimer, Hamilton. Without their dedication the award would not have happened.

The Roy Paterson Trophy is presented annually in recognition of an invention (or similar) by a beekeeper to help in a beekeeping situation in their day-to-day operations.

The current trophy was created by John and Peter Berry from Hawke's Bay.

Roy Paterson

Roy served in World War II, and on his return started beekeeping in the Oamaru area in the South Island. He then moved to the West Coast as an Inspector with the Department of Agriculture, transferring to Hamilton in 1936.

Roy came from an engineering background, which helped greatly as his inventive mind pondered problems encountered in his beekeeping operation. He designed equipment for beekeepers including heating and straining of honey by immersion strainers, which ensured no damage to honey by using a hot water jacketed tank. Also in the processing of honey, he designed a creamer to cream granulated honey so the honey did not go rock hard in the jar.

He also designed a saw bench where the blade came up from underneath the bench when a pedal was pushed down. This made it easier to cut timber for making supers and lids, etc for beehives.

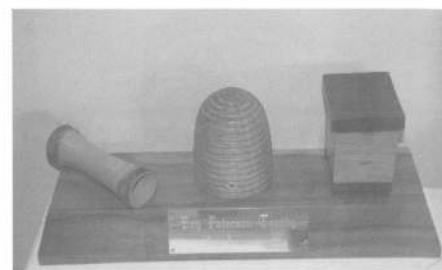


Photograph of Roy Paterson supplied by Dr Mark Goodwin.

Roy was the eyes behind finding the cause of Tutu honey poisoning. He camped in the Pongakawa Valley for a week after a serious Tutu poisoning incident in a bush camp where some people had been hospitalised after eating honey.

He observed bees feeding on a sticky sweet substance on the Tutu plant. Roy saw that the passion vine hopper was responsible for this substance appearing on the Tutu plant. Samples of the Tutu plant with the honey dew were sent to Mt Albert to be tested. There Dr Sutherland isolated the melitoxin as well as tutin from the honey dew.

From his observations on the Tutu problem, Roy was offered the post of Superintendent in Wellington. He turned down this post as he wanted to remain in the Hamilton area until his retirement.



The Roy Paterson Trophy crafted by Peter and John Berry. Photo: Nicol Finnie.

Taking a lead role in AFB control

By Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

In the March–April NSW Apiarists' Association magazine, Doug Somerville wrote about the problems of AFB in Australia and how the Australian government is gradually reducing its services. His article was titled "AFB—Its day of reckoning has arrived".

What caught my attention was a couple of paragraphs that show how packers treat AFB honey. The following quote comes from the section of Doug's article entitled 'The future. Where to go from here?'


"From now on AFB will struggle to get attention from Governments which have other priorities. It is an endemic disease that is not a biosecurity threat or likely to need an emergency response from DPI [Department of Primary Industries]. It doesn't have an impact on the environment, affect trade or human health. The honey-packing sector [does] not reject or price discount honey with AFB spores. This fact sends a clear message to Government that it isn't a food safety or quality issue and they don't consider it a problem.

The beekeeping industry therefore clearly needs to take the lead role in a way forward



Doug Somerville at a New South Wales Apiarists' Association conference dinner. Photo: Mary-Ann Lindsay.

for AFB." I for one would like to see only AFB spore-free honey to be imported into New Zealand, should our Ministry for Primary Industries have its way.

Doug Somerville will be one of the speakers at our conference in Napier. 



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NATIONAL OFFICE UPDATE

By the NBA Secretariat

Membership

After the April journal, we have seen a good uptake of new members and renewals from some lapsed members from 2010.

So, despite what has been a rather poor honey season in many parts of the country, income from membership is tracking at the same point as it was last year. Some categories of commercials are lower than last year, but others have increased.

The Executive Council have taken on board the results of surveys and independent comment and will be working on a complete overhaul of the membership category levels. This is to work towards meeting the diverse needs of an industry that is evolving. An initial draft of proposed category levels and membership fees will be presented at the 2012 AGM on 28 June.

Member benefits

Our member benefits scheme is designed to find product and service providers who are willing to offer special deals to NBA members. This is part of our trying to add some additional value to NBA membership. One of the member benefits National Office has sourced for members recently is a relationship with Corporate Traveller. Corporate Traveller sends weekly 'Deals of the Week' via email for NBA members. National Office circulates these deals to all members with email addresses. If you do not wish to receive these generous offers, please email us your name and we will have you removed from this mail database.

Getting the rules right

The 2011 AGM recommended that the NBA review its rules. Because we couldn't establish a members' committee to review the rules, we asked specialist lawyers, Duncan Cotterill, to give us an opinion. This has been distributed to all Branch presidents.

The recommendations from Duncan Cotterill have highlighted the fact that there is room for some improvement with the Association rules and they have provided initial feedback on how that could be accomplished quickly and efficiently.

Further discussions will be had at the AGM as to how these recommendations might be progressed.

GIA scenario

Daniel and Pauline have been holding weekly meetings with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI, formerly MAF) to plan an exercise at conference that will demonstrate how the proposed GIA biosecurity management system will work for beekeepers. The exercise will showcase a simulated incursion and demonstrate how it would be handled under the GIA, comparing it to how biosecurity management is conducted now for the industry.

This is a great opportunity for beekeepers to see for themselves how the GIA will affect our industry. The exercise will be held on **Monday 25 June between 3–5 pm**. An outline of the exercise will be included in conference registration packs.

Wellington Better Home & Living Show

The NBA was invited to support the Wellington Beekeepers' Association stall at the Wellington Better Home & Living Show in May. The main focus of the show was on sustainability and eco-friendly products.

National Office designed and printed a brochure, 'Love our Kiwi Bees', aimed at informing the home gardener why bees need our help and what they can do to help. The NBA banner was proudly displayed alongside the Wellington Beekeepers' Association banner. See John Burnet's report on the show on page 15.

2012 Annual General Meeting

National Office has been very busy preparing for the 2012 AGM to be held after Conference on Thursday 28 June.

17 Notices of Motion have been received for consideration at this year's AGM. The AGM offers the opportunity for new Ward Representatives to be elected. These are the Wards that are coming up for re-election this year:

- Northern
- Bay of Plenty
- Southern North Island
- Central South Island
- Lower South Island.

To date nominations have been received from the Southern North Island, Central South Island and Northern Wards.

Attending the AGM is a great way of keeping up with the current events and opinions in the beekeeping world and to have your say via a vote on key issues that affect you.

Check the website www.nba.org.nz for information on the conference and AGM.

Annual Report

All members should have received their copy of the 2012 Annual Report. This year National Office compiled it early to meet the May journal deadline, which meant it could be circulated with the journal for no extra cost. In previous years the reports were mailed out at great cost to the Association. If you have not received a copy of the 2012 Annual Report, call National Office 04 471 6254 or email secretary@nba.org.nz and we will send a copy to you.

Agriculture Sector Action Plan to 2013

Daniel and Pauline recently attended the launch at Parliament of the Department of Labour Agriculture Sector Action Plan to 2013. This is a workplace health and safety strategy for New Zealand that the NBA has agreed to be a part of.

The NBA has signed the Partners in Action Pledge, recognising that government, employers, workers, industry groups, unions, and health and safety professionals need to work together to bring down injuries and deaths in the workplace. Read more on the next page.

A major survey on varroa resistance

Earlier this year, Barry Foster met with the Minister of Primary Industries to discuss the formation of a joint working group to be responsible for scoping the looming issue of varroa resistance. As a result of this meeting, a major survey is now being undertaken.

The questions are being crafted by Mark Goodwin and the survey is being designed by Ministry for Primary Industries. National Office is to co-ordinate the survey and results, which will be determined by Plant and Food Hamilton.

With funding support from Agmardt, this is an important piece of work which will go a

long way to providing a full picture as to the seriousness and spread of varroa resistance in NZ.

VSH Queens July workshops

At the request of the Sustainable Farming Fund, which funded the VSH Queens extension project, two special beekeeper workshops are to be held in July. The aim of the workshops is to:

1. talk to as many beekeepers as possible about the looming issue of resistance to varroa treatments
2. brief and educate them as to what is being done to address this issue (specifically the VSH project, but we can highlight other work as well)
3. encourage them, where possible, to take advantage of the opportunities that may be available to them as a result of the VSH project and the subsequent work being done by Rainbow Honey and Betta Bees Ltd.

The workshops will be held in both the North and South Island.

The NBA secretariat will be responsible for the planning and implementation of the workshops. We will keep Branches informed of dates and venues etc. Please check the website for further details: www.nba.org.nz

AFB National Pest Management Strategy 10-year review

National Office and the AFB National Pest Management Agency have been liaising with the Ministry for Primary Industries for the past nine months on the proposed 10-year review of the AFB NPMS. We have been advised this will now be advanced with the secondment of a senior policy advisor who will be dedicated to the completion of this review. MPI estimates the review will be completed by the end of June. We will keep you updated on MPI's progress and developments.

2012 Bee Week

Planning for Bee Week is well under way. Bee Week 2012 is to take place in the week of August 24. As in previous years, Bee Week will focus on gaining media traction on issues important to the bee industry and educating and interacting with schools.

We have a recipe competition and colouring competition lined up for schools, as well as bee facts and a word find. Following on from the success of last year, National Office intends to run media competitions to draw attention to the importance of bees.

National Office will be in touch with Branches very soon, with details and timeframes around school packs and media opportunities.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

NBA participating in H&S strategy

By the NBA Secretariat

The Department of Labour has released its Agriculture Sector Action Plan to 2013, a workplace health and safety strategy for New Zealand which the NBA has agreed to be a part of.

The action plan focuses on goals relating to four areas which feature most consistently in injuries and fatalities across the agricultural sector, or are seen as having wide effects on the health and safety of those making their livelihood in the industry.

These areas are the use of agricultural vehicles and machinery, the physical and mental wellbeing of agricultural workers, slips, trips, and falls, and animal handling.

The NBA has signed the Partners in Action Pledge, recognising that government, employers, workers, industry groups, unions, and health and safety professionals need to work together to bring down injuries and deaths in the workplace.

By signing the pledge, the NBA has agreed to:

- play an active role in our area of work to improve health and safety outcomes at work
- contribute to and support the National Action Agenda, the Sector Action Plans and the Occupational Health Action Plan; and
- work towards achieving zero harm in New Zealand workplaces.

As a Partner in Action, the NBA will be kept informed about workplace health and safety activities and developments through regular e-newsletters. The NBA will also be recognised as a Partner in Action on the Department of Labour's website.

The Department of Labour hopes to ensure those in the agricultural sector have appropriate health and safety leadership, the skills, confidence and knowledge to improve health and safety and effective systems and processes to bring about behavioural change by 2015.

For more information go to the Department of Labour website www.dol.govt.nz



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TE TARI MAHI



Identifying AFB infections

By Dr Mark Goodwin, Apicultural Research Unit, Plant and Food Research, Ruakura

Any discussion on American foulbrood (AFB) must also include the issue of when is and isn't a colony diseased.

The issue is important for both legal reasons and for reasons of disease control. As far as AFB is concerned a honey bee colony can be uninfected, contaminated, or diseased.

Uninfected hives

Uninfected means that the colony does not contain any AFB-diseased larvae or any AFB spores. However, I have heard it suggested that if you looked hard enough you would find AFB spores in all hives. This is probably true of outfits with high disease levels. For example, we tested bees from hives belonging to a commercial beekeeper with a 25% AFB incidence. Eighty-two percent of 400 hives with no symptoms of disease tested positive for AFB spores. If we had looked hard enough we would have probably found spores in the remaining 12% of hives.

However, this case is not typical. No positive results were obtained from samples from 200 hives belonging to a beekeeper who had not reported any AFB hives for many years. These hives probably contained few if any spores.

Contaminated hives

Contaminated means that the hive contains AFB spores but not enough to create an infection, or there are enough spores but they are in the wrong location to create an infection. The contamination may come about for a variety of reasons. It may be because the bees have robbed honey from another hive that was contaminated with AFB spores or because of bees drifting from a diseased colony. It may also have had contaminated hive parts added by a beekeeper.

In one trial we added 20 extracted supers from hives with low-level AFB infections to 20 uninfected colonies. We were very careful that the outside of the supers was clean. We could not see any evidence of robbing or even any bees investigating the outside of the supers we added. However, when we tested samples of bees from 20 uninfected hives at the same site that had not received added supers, they all tested positive for AFB spores.

Generally the numbers of spores in a hive will decline over time if no further spores are introduced to a hive. Contaminated honey is consumed and contaminated bees defecate outside or die and are removed. While it is possible that enough spores will find their way to a larva to create an infection, this will become less and less likely with time as the number of spores reduces.

Although lab tests can identify contaminated colonies for the presence of spores, their presence does not legally require the hive to be destroyed. However, the presence of spores suggests that the colony is at risk of developing AFB and that there may be a diseased hive nearby.

Diseased hives

Technically a colony is diseased if it contains one or more diseased larvae (Figure 1), irrespective of whether diseased larvae are visible to the beekeeper or not. For every diseased larva seen in a hive there



Figure 1: A larva with AFB.

may be many more diseased larvae that cannot be seen.

If the infection is very recent the diseased larvae may be hidden by cell cappings that have none of the symptoms we usually associate with AFB (e.g., darkened, sunken or chewed cappings). The bees themselves can also affect the clinical expression of the disease. Bees with good hygienic behaviour can recognise and remove diseased larvae before they exhibit disease symptoms that might be recognised by a beekeeper.

“Legally a colony is classed as having AFB if it contains, or has contained, a diseased larva.”

Others do not chew cappings but either leave the cells untouched or remove the cell cappings and the diseased larvae completely. One hive we inspected had no sunken or chewed cappings but did have a very spotty brood pattern, suggesting there was something wrong with the colony. As AFB is always a possibility with a spotty brood pattern, we started uncapping cells and found more than 70% of them to be infected.

Legally a colony is classed as having AFB if it contains, or has contained, a diseased larva. Colonies with only a few cells exhibiting disease symptoms may at times eliminate the disease symptoms, either with or without eliminating the actual disease. Many beekeepers have reported being unable to find any sign of AFB when they have checked a hive a week after an inspector had diagnosed AFB in a hive. Even though a colony may no longer contain larvae with AFB symptoms, once it has been diagnosed with AFB it must be destroyed as specified in legislation.

Apart from the legislative requirements, beekeepers are sometimes tempted to keep

colonies in which AFB appears to have been cleared up. There are large risks in doing this. The hive may still be diseased although it shows no sign of it. There is therefore a risk of it infecting other colonies even up to a year later.

[Editor's note: This is the seventh article of a series that has been written for the Management Agency for the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy. These articles were first published in 2003, and have been reviewed and updated where necessary. The original title was 'American foulbrood infections'.]

We will run these articles on a regular basis over the year. The articles will cover a range of aspects of American foulbrood control, including how to inspect for and identify diseased colonies, the management of colonies to prevent American foulbrood and a beekeeper's legal obligation with regard to American foulbrood.



Have you registered for an AFB Recognition Course?

Do you know someone who has not yet attended an AFB Recognition Course? See pages 17 and 18 of the April 2012 journal for details and registration deadlines of course(s) in your area.

Staff should receive regular training in AFB recognition and their performance at inspecting hives should be audited.

Source: Elimination of American Foulbrood Disease without the use of Drugs: A practical manual for beekeepers (revised edition), by Mark Goodwin, page 69.



The National Beekeepers'
Association of New Zealand

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the NBA will be held at the War Memorial Conference Centre, Napier, on Thursday 28 June 2012, commencing at 9.00 am.

The opening speaker at the AGM will challenge you and pose some interesting questions about the future of the industry.

The AGM offers the opportunity for new Ward Representatives to be elected. Below are the Wards that are coming up for re-election this year:

Northern
Bay of Plenty
Southern North Island
Central South Island
Lower South Island

Contact your local Branch secretary to find out when the next branch meeting is to be held as election of Ward Representatives will take place during branch meetings prior to the AGM.

A nomination form for a ward representative is available from your Branch secretary or can be downloaded from the Members Only area on the website.

Attending the AGM is a great way of keeping up with the current events and opinions in the beekeeping world and to have your say via a vote on key issues that affect you.

Check the website www.nba.org.nz for information on the conference and AGM.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM. Let's make it the best ever.

Barry Foster
President

BEEKEEPER – QUEEN BREEDER

Blaycliff Apiaries Ltd is looking for an experienced Beekeeper starting at the beginning of August 2012. We currently have 3000 hives throughout the Marlborough region, from the tip of the Marlborough Sounds to the Awatere High Country. Marlborough is located at the top of the South Island, and is New Zealand's largest grape and wine producing region. Year-round sunshine, a spectacular coastline (including the Marlborough Sounds); it is a mecca for the outdoors enthusiasts.

This position is seasonal from August 2012 – May 2013 however after one season this could be offered as a permanent position.

Queen Breeder: The person we require will have sound knowledge and experience in the field of Queen Breeding. You must display knowledge and understanding of breeding genetics, hive manipulation for Queen Raising, Raising cells, drone production and catching & caging of queens. Applicants must hold a DECA certificate.

For a full job description please reply to Darren on 03 5776955 ext 1 or darren@thehoneycompany.co.nz

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An interview with Stephen Black

NBA Vice President Stephen Black has been the Waikato Ward representative on the Executive Council since July 2010. The Secretariat interviewed him about his role and experience in the industry.

How long have you been a beekeeper?

My first experience with bees was with Stan Young's bees on my grandfather's farm in Oakura when I was about 13. They had been brought in for extra pollination of the market garden.

Some years later, after returning to New Zealand from a number of years in Scotland, I purchased two hives which then increased to seven. Not long after I had the opportunity to buy the remaining hives from a couple who were retiring, so [the number] went up to 147. My hives have slowly increased since then and beekeeping has become a full-time business for both myself and my wife, Fiona.

How did you get into beekeeping?

I wanted something that fitted in with our new lifestyle in New Zealand that did not require sitting in a helicopter or travelling away from home to go to work. The beekeeping gives us an income, flexibility and a great lifestyle.

What do you enjoy about beekeeping?

Being my own boss and doing something different from my previous life (I worked in the oil industry).

Tell me about your apiary.

I am getting really good at digging my 4WD truck out of the mud, and getting better at avoiding getting stuck in the first place.

What made you decide to become a member of the Executive Council?

Being involved on two school Boards of Trustees (BOT) I feel I have new skills which will help the NBA.

Tell me a bit about your role on the Executive Council, including your priorities as an Executive Council member.

I have taken what I have learnt through my school BOT training and I'm helping the executive adopt professional governance ethos. Last year the Executive Council spent a day with a governance trainer. I believe that it was money well spent and the training was put into practice at the next meeting.

"...beekeepers need to ... start respecting other beekeepers and work together."

Can you see any problems/issues with the Executive Council?

They need to attract more people who understand the roles of governance and have experience in this area. This does not mean you have to have been a director at a big company, but someone who is going to do the job for the beekeepers, is willing to learn and has perhaps been on the local sports club committee. And [be] thick skinned!

What do you think is valuable about the Executive Council?

They are in a position where they can influence the future of the industry through liaising with government agencies. A current example of this would be the GIA process that the primary industries are currently going through with the Government, but to have this influence the NBA needs a strong and active membership.

What do you believe to be negative about the beekeeping industry?

The current manuka gold rush, how it is ruining the camaraderie of beekeepers and the relationship with the land owners. I am coming across an increasing number of landowners who are becoming wary of beekeepers.

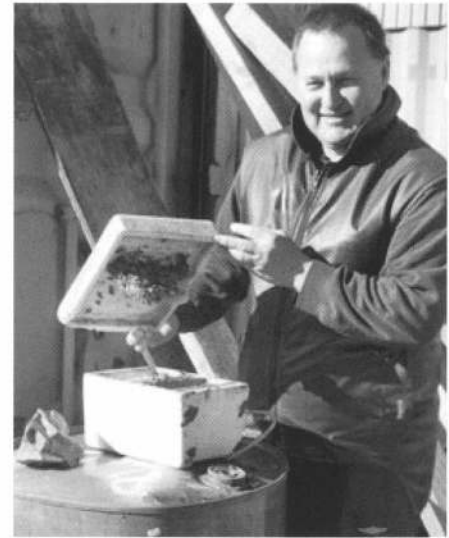


Photo: Sue O'Dowd, Taranaki Daily News.

What would you like to see improved in the beekeeping industry?

All gold rushes and fads eventually fizzle out after a few years. The beekeeping industry started the manuka fad and has benefited from it, but it has been blinded by the results and greed. The beekeeping industry needs to look forward and start thinking about what's next. To start working on the 'what's next' beekeepers need to lose the mentality of every man for himself, start respecting other beekeepers and work together.

What do you like about the beekeeping industry?

There is always plenty to learn. Some things I have learnt since I started beekeeping include:

- marketing
- types of honey
- life cycle of bees
- processing equipment
- pests of bees
- pollination of plants.

If I am not learning I get bored and move on, so I should be around for a while yet.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time/what are your hobbies?

Beekeeping is my hobby. It just takes up a lot of my time. Any spare time is spent with my family.



NBA research priorities: have your say!

By Kerry Gentleman, NBA Research Committee chairperson

Research is such a high priority for the NBA. We dedicate a budget to research every year because we know how important it is to you and to our industry as a whole.

Last year, we asked our NBA Branches for their views on the research project the NBA should prioritise. Now we are asking again, because we want to channel our research

dollars where members think they'll be most effective.

So tell us: what aspects of bee-related research the NBA should support or initiate?
What issues are most important to you?
What kind of research would help you most as beekeepers (big or small)?



Please email your thoughts and submissions (either individually or as branches) to me at frazer.kerry@clear.net.nz

Or you can post them to me:

Kerry Gentleman
176 Ward-Holmes Road
RD 2
Takaka 7182
NELSON

The deadline is 31 July 2012.

Thank you for your time.



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"Many Thanks to all our current suppliers for their support during 2011"

Wellington Better Home & Living Show

By John Burnet, Wellington Beekeepers' Association

The Wellington Beekeepers' Association, with the support of the National Beekeepers' Association, hosted a stand at the Wellington Better Home & Living Show held from 27–29 April.

The main theme of the show was on sustainability and eco-friendly products.

The show was held in the main concourse of the Westpac Stadium—an ideal venue as the show was fully under cover with plenty of parking available for exhibitors and the public alike.

There were over 150 exhibitors in total grouped into one of several sections: Better Homes, Better Bodies, Better Transport and Better Gardens. As well as including the beekeepers, Better Gardens consisted of a variety of commercial and non-profit organisations such as nurseries, landscapers, garden equipment suppliers, outdoor furniture suppliers and nature advocacy



Stuart McCaw with the brochures and observation hive. Photo: Pauline Downie.



Jan Reed (at rear) checking the extractor. At left is Anne Melville; at right is Stuart McCaw.

groups (e.g. Forest & Bird, Vegetarian Society, organic farmers etc.). Hauora Honey from Arataki Apiaries also had a stand, providing visitors with a range of honeys to taste and buy.

The primary objective of the Wellington Beekeepers' Club was to raise public awareness of the plight of bees in New Zealand as well as globally. Our brochures reflected this with details of trees and shrubs that Kiwis should plant in their gardens to attract bees, and pesticides and insect sprays that should be avoided.

The beekeepers' stand attracted a lot of attention and positive comments, particularly the artificial lawn and bee-friendly plants and shrubs borrowed or hired especially for the show. The observation hive provoked much interest, especially from children, with 'Saving the Bees', honey imports and other bee issues being discussed extensively. The interior and workings of a hive and honey extracting were shown to visitors and the differences in appearance and behaviour between bees, wasps and bumble bees were explained.

The Wellington club had 20 volunteers staffing the stand in shifts of 2–3 hours over the three days of the show. All volunteers

reported a lot of visitor interest (10,700 attended in total) with lots of brochures handed out and several new beekeeper members signed up.

In view of its success it is likely the club will participate again at next year's Better Home & Living Show.



Part of the display. Photo: Nikki Burnet.

Update on VSH results

Plant & Food Research Ruakura is completing data analysis for the Varroa Sensitive Hygiene (VSH) Honey Bee Breeding Programme. The VSH results from the six beekeepers will be included in the July issue.

BEEKEEPER – TEAM LEADER

Blaycliff Apiaries Ltd is looking for an experienced Beekeeper starting at the beginning of August 2012. We currently have 3000 hives throughout the Marlborough region, from the tip of the Marlborough Sounds to the Awatere High Country. Marlborough is located at the top of the South Island, and is New Zealand's largest grape and wine producing region. Year-round sunshine, a spectacular coastline (including the Marlborough Sounds); it is a mecca for the outdoors enthusiasts.

Full time – permanent

Team Leader: The person we require will communicate well with both staff and management and display sound leadership skills. Applicants must be DECA certified, have had at least 5 years' experience in the field of beekeeping & display knowledge and expertise in all aspects of beekeeping. Heavy Trade License would be an advantage but not essential. Knowledge and experience in breeding queens would be preferred and willingness to working in a beautiful environment within a team of enthusiastic and friendly Beekeepers.

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Response to UMFHA article

By Peter Molan

I am writing to challenge the statements made in the article 'Building belief and integrity behind manuka honey and its unique activity' in the April issue of the *BeeKeeper*, that "The body of research around Manuka honey is primarily coming from overseas" and that "Overseas laboratories are also leading the work to identify the unique elements and supporting standards".

These statements are made without any substantiation, and if there is not the evidence to back them up then they are an affront to the many scientists and research students in New Zealand who are working on manuka honey. I ask the writer of this article to list the research work being done overseas on manuka honey, and I invite readers to compare that list with the large amount of work being done on manuka honey in New Zealand listed as follows:

Industrial Research Limited, Lower Hutt:

- Chemistry of arabinogalactans (responsible for immunostimulatory action in honey)
- Two projects on the anti-inflammatory activity of manuka honey (details confidential)

University of Auckland:

- Inhibition of protein-digesting enzymes in wounds by components of manuka honey
- Identifying components of manuka honey that allow it to be distinguished from other honeys
- Determining the therapeutic values of unique components of manuka honey

University of Waikato:

- Investigating the range of error in the estimation of NPA rated as 5, and testing if honeys given that rating are in fact equivalent to 5% phenol in their activity
- Surveying the nectar of manuka and other *Leptospermum* species to see if factors can be identified which affect the production of dihydroxyacetone
- Studying the chemical kinetics of the conversion of dihydroxyacetone to methylglyoxal in honey
- Studying the involvement of other components of manuka honey in the conversion of dihydroxyacetone to methylglyoxal in honey
- Studying why in different manuka honeys there is a different proportion of the dihydroxyacetone converting to methylglyoxal
- Identifying the synergist in manuka honey which doubles the antibacterial effectiveness of methylglyoxal
- Identifying the anti-inflammatory components of manuka honey
- Identifying the components of manuka honey responsible for its action in debriding wounds (removing attached pus and dead tissue)
- Investigating the action of manuka honey in stimulating tissue growth for wound healing.

There are also clinical trials in New Zealand on using manuka honey to prevent skin burns from radiotherapy for cancer, for treating nasal sinus infections and for treating periodontal disease.

I suspect that the writer of the article is not very aware of what is going on regarding

manuka honey. This certainly seems to be the case when he complains that the industry is being undermined by the counter-positioning of marketers claiming "my test is better than your test", or "this is the test which describes the honey's true value". There seems to be no awareness that the UMF Manuka Honey Association is a major culprit in this. On the website of the Association it is stated "The UMF Honey trademark is: The only quality standard behind the research on Manuka Honey". It is also stated there that "There is a plethora of other 'manuka honeys' and honeys from other countries on the market using a variety of descriptors and implied claims of containing NPA, such as 'active', 'bioactive', 'AAA' etc. These terms do not guarantee NPA antibacterial qualities and any numbers that might appear on the jar such as +10 or +15 are meaningless to the retailer and consumer as they do not adhere to the recognised NPA standard behind the research on Manuka honey."

In reality the numbers on many of these "other" products come from using the published microbiological testing method which is what the UMF Honey Association referred to in a recent press release as the "NPA standard" and is what AMHA used to use to obtain the UMF rating before the antibacterial activity was instead estimated from measurement of the content of methylglyoxal in samples of honey.

The statement by the author that "The array of medical claims that currently exist, ranging from recommending direct application to wounds ... start to erode the credibility of the product" shows a lack of awareness that seems astounding for someone involved in the business of selling manuka honey. An award-winning review article published recently in a peer-reviewed medical journal outlines the vast amount of evidence from clinical trials for the effectiveness of direct application of honey to wounds, and lists the many wound-care products manufactured from manuka honey that are available in many countries registered as medical products with the regulatory authorities in

those countries. This paper is available for downloading free of charge through the University of Waikato's 'Research Commons': <http://hdl.handle.net/10289/6095>

The high prices charged for wound-care products make them the ultimate value-added product for manuka honey. With the rapidly increasing uptake of honey products by the medical profession there is a very rosy picture for the future for beekeepers producing manuka honey. But there are people wanting to get in on this market with other honeys. I see time and time again papers describing research done in other countries where they have compared their local honeys with manuka honey and found that their honeys give better results.

Looking at the results they obtained with the manuka honey they used it is very clear that what they have purchased has not been the genuine 'active manuka honey'.

My opinion is that the most important thing for "protecting our position of strength" is to ensure that there is unambiguous labelling of activity so that the purchaser knows that they are getting the genuine activity. Whether the labelling shows the level of methylglyoxal or the non-peroxide antibacterial activity does not matter, as long as the numbers have with them something to state what they show. With labels showing the level of methylglyoxal it is stated that the numbers show methylglyoxal as mg per kg of honey. Some of the "other"

marketers state on their websites that the numbers show antibacterial activity as the % phenol with the same level of activity when the honey is tested by the published method. (It matters which method is used, because different results will be obtained in different microbiological testing methods.) If you are selling manuka honey, does the rating of activity that you give specify what the numbers mean? And if you show antibacterial activity do you give the details of a published method by which it is measured?

[Editor's note: this letter represents the personal views of the author.]



Comment on AFB

By Gary Jeffery

The April magazine was full of interesting articles. I was interested to see how uniformly spread AFB is now after the years we have had the AFB programme in place.

Of course this refers to the REPORTED cases. Of course we do not really know how much does exist, as many commercial beekeepers would just find an AFB hive and destroy it but not bother with the paperwork required. Commercial beekeepers have enough paperwork imposed by Food Safety and Assurance, without something extra.

When I was in Southland I did my best to eliminate AFB entirely and I heard at one stage the Southland folk wanted Southland

declared AFB free. I expect it has reoccurred from buildings I marked on the map as having had AFB colonies removed from them, but these pin marks were removed from the map soon after I left. I expect I could recognise some of those buildings even now.

We had an upsurge of AFB this past season. For a number of years we were virtually free of it, although in the past AFB was very prevalent. I suppose I should not have been surprised about the increase following varroa killing off wild hives in the bush. Anyway it has made us more observant.

I read about the use of helicopters looking for unregistered apiaries. Obviously to increase the revenue based on the number of apiaries. To charge based in apiary numbers rather than hive numbers is inherently wrong. In windy areas it is advisable to run small apiaries close together. In some areas such as the beech forests for honeydew, very large apiaries can be kept.

Also with pollination not requiring registration, these apiaries are exempt as the

hives can be kept in large holding apiaries after pollination is completed. With continual movement of hives, and the more common practice of farmers locking gates, if someone wanted to inspect hives they would have to contact the beekeeper to determine if the hives were actually on location and how to reach them.

A lot of the costs are related to registration of apiaries. Why not use some of this apiary charge to fund actual Apicultural Advisors and Inspectors in the field and only require beekeepers to specify the area they work, how many apiaries and, more importantly, how many hives?


A lot of emphasis is placed on the risk of amateurs and disease. If an amateur is still operating his hives after varroa arrives, he is obviously a good beekeeper and can be left to his own devices.

Anyway the present system needs modifying if we are to see the distribution of AFB reducing as the plan intended.



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NBA Photo Library

Often the NBA requires photos for media, newsletters, Bee Week and general enquiries. We currently hold only a very few photos on file.

If you have what you consider may be a prizewinning photo or two and you wouldn't mind them being used publicly and without copyright, please email them to secretary@nba.org.nz

Photos must be attached as a jpg file. Please email each photo with a title and/or caption, and don't forget to add your name so that we may credit you.

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FROM THE COLONIES

Poverty Bay Branch

After a lot of rain in early April, conditions dried up towards the end of the month and autumn management could begin in earnest. The difference in management between running hives in single brood boxes as opposed to doubles is very pronounced this year. A high number of singles have eaten their winter stores of honey already and are needing a top-up with sugar syrup to build them up again.

Most queens have shut down by early May with very little brood in most hives. This is a good time to consider using an oxalic acid treatment for mites. It is cheap and very quick if done when the hives are open, such as when removing strips. If any resistant mites are building up, this will help remove them.

Looking forward to a good and informative conference.

- Paul Badger, Branch President

Hawke's Bay Branch

The amount of sugar being fed was a hot topic for discussion at our last meeting. One person who has kept hives around town for a number of years had to feed sugar for the first time and there was general agreement that this is the worst autumn anyone can remember. The last two weeks of April were actually quite pleasant but it was far too late

to make any difference, at least it was nice to see the sunshine.

Our secretary-treasurer Mary-Anne Thomason retired at our AGM. I take this opportunity to thank her for all the work she has done. Deanna Corbett has agreed to be our new secretary and can be contacted at djcorbett@xtra.co.nz

Pam Flack is to be our new treasurer. Contact her at pam@aratakihoney.co.nz

- John Berry, Branch President

Southern North Island Branch

Three AFB Recognition and Competency Courses will be held in the area:

16 June Manawatu Beekeepers Club:

Palmerston North

16 June Wellington Beekeepers Club:

Johnsonville

7 July SNI Branch is hosting a course in the Wairarapa: Carterton

Otago Branch

Last month I wrote that Dunedin was apparently still free of varroa. This statement was very closely followed by the stop press 'Varroa found in central Dunedin and Invercargill'.

Damn! That varroa is a slick critter isn't it? April 2000 in Auckland, June 2006 in Nelson,

May 2012 in Dunedin and Invercargill. Who would have thought such a little sucker could move so fast! We beekeepers helped heaps of course.

I was initially a bit surprised to hear the first East Otago discovery was a 100-kilometre leap to the centre of Dunedin, but on reflection there was always a fair chance it could pop up anywhere.

Going by the levels suddenly found around the town this last month, it's been lurking for quite some time. There is still some brood in hives, after such a mild and sunny April, and many have decided to treat even at low levels of infection and this late in the autumn.

Another 200-kilometre jump to Invercargill during the same season is a shame. Like the Pauatahanui log. Next year? Game, set and match for the Mainland.

Seeing a red sesame seed crab walk down my overalls after sugar shaking a hobbyist's hive was somewhat disturbing.

Good luck, you bee folk on the outer islands. Ditch your clothes at the border!

Happy winter planning.

- Peter Sales, Branch Secretary



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Price cutting: a dangerous practice

Why does a man cut prices? Because he wants volume.

Volume is important—very important—but volume-hunting can be carried to extremes. There are thousands of firms who get big volumes but at the end of the year their balance sheets show no net profit. The keen businessman or the keen business organisation will get volume by taking a fair profit on every unit sold and by sound,

aggressive salesmanship. The danger of using that very easy key to increased volume is exemplified in this table:

On a 25% margin of profit, a cut of

- 5% requires 18 ⅔% more volume
- 8% requires 35 ⅙% more volume
- 10% requires 50% more volume
- 12 ½% requires 75% more volume
- 15% requires 112% more volume

This table is worthy of careful consideration—it tells a graphic story. The sound businessman's object in life should be

greater volume without the sacrifice of one iota of net profit, and the one sure way to secure this is by selling—selling quality.

Source: The New Zealand BeeKeeper, August 1973.



Plan for your retirement

By David Kneebone, Sorted spokesperson

No matter your age, it's never too soon (or too late) to hatch a money plan that will help you to enjoy the lifestyle you want in retirement.

Life expectancy has risen as our quality of life improves and on average, a 65-year-old man can expect to live until they are 85 and a woman until they are 89. The majority of New Zealanders end up relying on the government pension (NZ Super) and their savings for income during retirement.

There's no 'rule' about how much you need to save for retirement because everyone is different, but putting aside some of the money you earn now will make your retirement nest egg that much more cosy.

To work out how much you'll need, think about these questions:

- When would you like to stop working?
- What sort of lifestyle would you like in retirement?
- How does that compare to your current lifestyle?
- Will you live in your own home or rent?

If you retire at 65 you will need to have a plan that provides the income you want for at least 20 years.

Any retirement plan should include the goal to be debt-free by retirement. Pay off 'dumb debt' (high-interest debt such as unpaid credit cards, and hire purchase that's no longer interest-free) as soon as possible and avoid acquiring any more.

Focus on becoming mortgage-free as soon as possible and definitely by the time you intend to stop working. Debt can be very hard to pay off once you have retired.

While being debt-free including owning a mortgage-free home in retirement is an essential part of retirement savings, you'll want to save extra unless you're happy to live on NZ Super alone. (For a couple where both qualify, NZ Super pays around \$523 a week.)

Consider joining a retirement savings scheme such as KiwiSaver. With KiwiSaver, your money grows because your employer has to contribute (a minimum of 2%) and the government contributes 50 cents for every dollar you pay up to \$1,042. There's also the \$1,000 kick-start which the government pays when you join. At 64, it's still worth joining KiwiSaver because of the extra contributions you receive.

Review your retirement plan whenever your circumstances change so that you can continue to reach your savings goal. Planning ahead now will provide stability and peace of mind during retirement. Make a retirement plan and start building a nest egg so your retirement can be one you look forward to.

Sorted is New Zealand's free independent online money guide, run by the Commission for Financial Literacy and Retirement Income. Sorted has a range of free calculators to help you make financial decisions at sorted.org.nz/calculators.

[Editor's note: abridged from media release provided by Sorted, 29 March 2012.]



WEATHER

Adios La Niña

Neutral conditions prevail in the tropical Pacific (no La Niña or El Niño), after the end of the 2011/12 La Niña event.

Near New Zealand, lower than normal pressures are expected to the north of the country, with higher than normal pressures over southern New Zealand.

The NIWA National Climate Centre's outlook for early winter, May to July 2012, indicates air temperatures are likely to be average or above average over most of the country, except for near average in the east of the South Island. Seas around New Zealand are likely to remain near normal or slightly cooler than normal during early winter.

Early winter rainfall is likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island, and near normal in other regions. Similarly, soil moisture levels are likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island and near

normal in other regions. However, river flows are likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island, normal or below normal in the west of both islands, and near normal in the north and east of the South Island.

© Copyright NIWA 2012 (National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research, National Climate Centre), abridged from 'Seasonal Climate Outlook: May–July 2012'. See <http://www.niwa.co.nz/climate/sco/seasonal-climate-outlook-may-july-2012> for full details.



Start next year's planning now

By Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

Winter is upon us but during the warmer part of the day the bees are still flying, bringing in pollen and nectar from gorse and tree lucerne.

In the coastal forests, kohekohe is about to flower and (surprise, surprise) kowhai is flowering in the cities. That cold spell in March has fooled them into flowering out of season.

Varroa and robbing

Most beekeepers will have removed their autumn varroa treatments (if they were put in) in late February and hopefully they will have reduced the number of mites to less than 50 mites per hive. However, in my area I have experienced a long robbing season. You could see bees hovering at every hive entrance and crack, looking for an opportunity to get into the hives.

During early May when the weather was mild I was out checking some of my apiaries and some hives are not faring so well. Bees have moved away from the miticide strips in some hives and are now showing signs of PMS. A few more than usual are dead to varroa—the hives looked OK with lots of bees when the strips went in but perhaps I put them in too late. Some hives have reduced from two full supers of bees down to five-frame nucs with brood in two frames. They still have a super of honey so with luck they will recover during the winter.

Then there are the other hives that have taken advantage of the unprotected honey stores and have moved them into their hives. Generally with robbing, there are lots of dead bees around but when hives are weakened with varroa, there's very little external sign that anything is going on except for the flying activity of the bees. At mid-morning on an overcast day there was a lot more activity

in an apiary than I would have expected, and on inspecting the hive found the hive's defenders dead on the bottom board and all the honey reserves gone.

If your bees have been robbing another hive (on inspecting it you will see a lot of uncapped honey in the hive), the mites from that hive will have hitched a ride back to your hive. Mite numbers can easily increase by 100 or more per day so within a couple of weeks your hives will be under threat again, which means an additional treatment is required.

Before varroa arrived, once a hive was set up for the winter, nothing more was needed until the spring inspection. Now we have to keep an eye on them; i.e., monitoring the varroa fall every week or so by placing a greased piece of coreflute on the bottom board of your hive or doing a sugar shake.

If you don't wish to do this, perhaps you should add another treatment in the form of some strips, especially if you are in the lower half of the South Island where you are still facing the initial wave of varroa invasion. After mites arrive you will get a 'winter honey flow' from your bees robbing the dying ferals, and if you don't protect your hives you will lose them.

Depending upon where you live in New Zealand, you could use an evaporation acid type of treatment but these are more suited for the warmer parts of New Zealand in winter. Of course, if your hives are isolated from other apiaries and all swarming was controlled last season, you may not need to take any precautions against re-invasion.

Feeding

Hives in the urban areas will continue brood rearing, albeit at a much-reduced rate, stimulated by the dribble of nectar and pollen available to the bees from neighbour's gardens. This could mean that the brood area could be as small as a hand or as large as two or three frames of brood. To maintain brood rearing requires one cell of honey for each new bee, so it doesn't take long for a single super hive to use up its stored honey.

Regularly check the weight of your hive by 'hefting' it. Standing at the side of the hive, place your fingers in the top super handhold and try lifting the back of the hive off the ground. A two-storey hive full of honey is difficult to lift up. If the hive is fairly easy to lift, take off the roof and inner cover and look for sealed honey frames. You want a super full on a two-storey hive and about six frames for a single super hive. If there's less than this you should feed them. (You can look further into the hive if the bees are flying and it's not cool on your arms with your sleeves pushed up. If the bees are in a tight cluster, don't disturb them.)

"Feed the strongest sugar solution you can make."

There are several methods to get sugar syrup into hives, but perhaps the best is to use a bottle or pail feeder directly over the top super. Punch a dozen tiny holes with a thin brad in the top. When the feeder is inverted, a small quantity of sugar syrup will run on to the top frames until a vacuum is created, which will alert the bees to the sugar syrup supply.

The best time to feed is the late afternoon or evening so the excited bees don't fly out looking for the source of nectar. Put another super on top so the container is completely covered and no other bees can find it. If you are going to feed the hive for a while, use a cover board with a hole in the centre between the top of the frames and the pail feeder, or just cut a hole in a sack and put this over the frames. That way, the heat from the bees is maintained in the hive and changing the pail will not unduly disturb them.

Feed the strongest sugar solution you can make. Fill a container seven-eighths full of white sugar and then fill the container full with boiling water and stir until the sugar is dissolved. When the solution cools to where it's warm, put it into the feeder on your hive.

There are other types of feeders (frame feeders), but these are placed on the side →

of the hive. Bees might not feed from these when it's cold, as they have to move too far from their cluster position. You also don't want to lose any bees to drowning.

If you have to feed, consider giving the hive a little extra top ventilation so the evaporated water is vented out of the hive. When you lift off the crown boards, there shouldn't be any moisture in the middle of the board directly over the cluster. A little around the edge is OK but not in the middle. Put a matchstick under each corner of the crown board to provide more ventilation if the hive is damp.

Most of the four-frame nuc hives have now used the honey in the outside frames to make bees. These should be replaced with new frames of capped honey, which should carry the bees through for another couple of months. Others still have plenty of honey so don't need any attention. I have been pushing groups of nucs together and adding a little insulation under the roofs to keep some of the heat generated by the bees in the hive. I have been using a foil-coated bubble wrap plastic that is used for keeping products warm or cold.

There's an easier way to keep nucs warm during the winter: put them on top of a strong hive separated by a split (division) board. The hives require less feeding and come out stronger in the spring as they are heated by the bees in the hive below.

Making up gear

During the winter beekeeping activity doesn't really stop—it just moves indoors. Beekeepers make up gear ready for the start of the next season just three months away.

A lot of new beekeepers started last year and they will have to think of how they will operate a full-size hive. Generally a four-frame nuc will build to a two-super hive during the season if started in October. Next season the hive will start with 25,000 bees so will build much quicker and if swarming is controlled, the hive will need another three or four supers to store the honey crop in.

We actually trick the bees into storing more honey than they need to winter over with. The ideal size for a hive is about 40 litres and that is how the full-depth Langstroth hive was developed. So this is the size of the bait hives we put out to collect swarms. Once the bees settle into their home we extend the

size of the hive by adding more supers. The bees will continue to work until their home is full of honey.

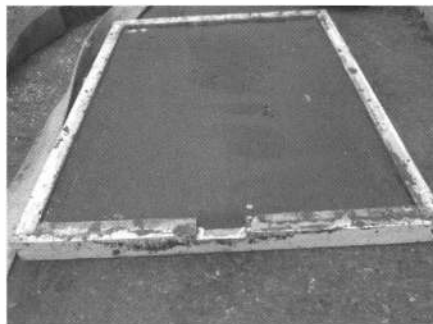
Once the bees have filled the space within the hive with honey and pollen they stop working, so as the bees half fill the top super we add another and they will keep working and storing more honey. These are the basics. There's a little more to it as the timing and positioning of the new supers are also important, but you will learn this as you gain experience.

The number of honey supers you need will be less if you aim to extract each super as it is filled and capped by the bees. You will also have to decide on what size of honey super you want to handle. Most will go for a three-quarter-depth super as they are lighter than a full-depth super. I prefer three-quarter-depth honey supers but these can still weigh up to 28 kilograms when full of honey. Don't worry about the weight: if you don't think you can carry a full super of honey, individual frames can be removed and put into another box.

You will also need to purchase new frames to put in these supers. Decide on what sort you want. You can opt for manufactured plastic ones, or perhaps you want to use wooden ones with wax foundation sheets.

Plastic frames have several advantages: all they need is a cover of wax and they are ready for use, but their disadvantage is that the bees will only build out the frames on a strong honey flow. Wood and wax frames have to be assembled but the bees accept them more readily than the plastic ones.

If you want to go the plastic way (these frames are really suited to manuka honey production), purchase them early and let them air to get rid of that new plastic smell and they will be accepted by the bees better after they are wax coated.



Both sides of the split boards I use.
Photos: Frank Lindsay.

Therefore it's important to start next year's planning now. If you started with a single hive last year, you should consider having an extra brood super. Hives tend to swarm when they get to 40,000 bees (mainly due to overcrowding) and if the hive makes preparations to swarm, you need to split off four frames of brood and bees plus a queen cell to reduce the population in the main hive.

The split hopefully will develop into a new colony once the new queen has emerged and mated, but need not be a new hive if you only want one. At the beginning of the main honey flow, this nuc hive can be combined back on to the main hive again, boosting the population by another 15,000–20,000 bees. These will all turn into nectar gatherers (a form of a two-queen hive).

If this is what you have in mind, you won't need to go to the extra expense of purchasing extra bases and roofs but you can make split boards, which will serve as both base and lid. These can be purchased but I feel they are a bit flimsy for commercial use, as they don't take the handling we commercial beekeepers give them. Mine are made from 25-millimetre timber with the six-millimetre bee space on one side that also has a 25-millimetre entrance. The other side is much deeper to give the split board strength.

These boards serve as a crown board in the hive, with the entrance slit downwards providing top ventilation. When you want to make a split to alleviate swarming, the board is turned over with the entrance placed to the back and you have another hive on top separated by the split board. Come the honey flow, the board is removed and replaced with two sheets of newsprint and the board goes back on top to provide top ventilation again.

EDUCATION

Those who wish to make all their new woodwork can get the dimensions from any New Zealand bee book or from the book *Starting with Bees*, which every new beekeeper should have (available from the NBA). Frame dimensions have to be accurate, so I prefer to purchase them.

If you are going to use a saw bench, make sure you are fully conversant with all the safety gear or get instructions on how to safely work a saw bench. There's plenty of information on the Internet if you can't talk to anybody locally. Refer to www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis16.pdf or search 'table saw safety' on YouTube.

Use earmuffs, safety spectacles, and sharp tungsten blades. Be sure to use push sticks as the saw blade can't tell the difference between wood and a finger. I wear a leather apron also, especially when continuously cutting small stuff that can kick back at you.

Things to do this month

Render down cappings and old combs. Make up new equipment for the coming season. Check the effectiveness of your mite treatments.



Uniting hives

By Gary Jeffery

I have sometimes seen advice that if a nucleus placed above a hive with an old queen below is united with newspaper between the two hives, the young queen will take over and replace the old queen.

A number of years ago Vince Cook, the apiary instructor for North Otago, did an experiment about uniting hives. Vince took

30 hives, each with a three-year-old queen. He set up tops above each colony with new queens and left them until the tops had a full box of bees and brood.

Vince then united the tops to the hives below using newspaper. Upon examining the hives some time later, he found that only one third had young queens while the remaining two thirds still had the three-year-old queens.

The moral of the story is to find the old queen before uniting hives if you want to guarantee the hive will be going into the new season with a young queen.



INTERNATIONAL BEEKEEPING NEWS

Apimondia international events

The Apimondia Executive Council members and the Apimondia Office Rome *[take]* this opportunity to remind you that in the current year there are still three more Apimondia international events to take place:

4-6 October 2012: 1st ApiEcoFlora International Apimondia International Symposium - San Marino

E-mail: apiecoflora2012@cvb.sm
Internet: www.apwiecoflora.com
<http://www.apiecoflora.com>

15-18 October 2012: 4th Apimedita & 3rd Apiquality Apimondia International Forum - Zhengjiang (China)
E-mail: china-apiculture@263.net
Internet: www.apimedita.org
<http://www.apimedita.org>
www.apiquality.info
<http://www.apiquality.info>

16-18 November 2012: Breeding, Selection and Honeybee Health Apimondia International Symposium - Québec (Canada)
E-mail: Pierre.Giovenazzo@bio.ulaval.ca
Internet: www.craaq.qc.ca/le-calendrier-agricole/apimondia-symposium-2012/e/1205
<http://www.craaq.qc.ca/le-calendrier-agricole/apimondia-symposium-2012/e/1205>

[agricole/apimondia-symposium-2012/e/1205](http://www.apimondia-symposium-2012/e/1205)

We hope that you will be able to join any of these events as they are part of the initiatives and services Apimondia has specifically organised for the benefit of its members in particular and of the international beekeeping community at large.

With kind regards and looking forward to meeting you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Apimondia Executive Council
Riccardo Jannoni-Sebastianini - Apimondia Secretary-General
Filippo Jannoni-Sebastianini
Ulrike Nöhner



AsureQuality announces new CEO

Media release, 17 May 2012

AsureQuality is pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Thomas as its new Chief Executive Officer, commencing 5 June 2012.

Michael was previously with PGG Wrightson based in Christchurch where he held Group General Manager roles in Agri Services, Financial Services and for the South American Operation. During his time with the company, he had responsibility for over 1800 staff and \$700 million annual revenue.

Prior to this, Michael spent 10 years in group general management positions in Australia's leading Agri services company Landmark, and parent company AWB (Australian Wheat Board).

Michael brings to AsureQuality a unique blend of strong industry knowledge and involvement in the food and agricultural sectors, both in New Zealand and overseas; and will continue to extend the breadth and quality of the company's services in Australasia and internationally.

The Board is delighted to recruit such an experienced and highly-regarded chief executive to lead the next phase of the company's development, and looks forward to another successful year of trading with Michael at the helm.



AsureQuality is a commercial company owned by the New Zealand Government providing food safety and biosecurity services to the food and primary production sectors. It carries out food quality and safety testing for producers, processors and Competent Authorities around the world.

For more information please contact:
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RESEARCH

Pesticides in pollen and bee bread

By D. Sammataro, J. A. Yoder, R. Simonds, E. Olson and G. Degrandi-Hoffman, Carl Hayden Bee Research Center, 2000 E. Allen Road, Tucson, AZ 85719-1596

Thirteen specific fungi were identified in bee bread, including: *Absidia* sp., *Alternaria* sp., *Bipolaris* sp., *Fusarium* sp., *Mucor* sp., *Penicillium* sp., *Rhizopus* sp. and *Trichoderma* sp., *Ascosphaera apis* (chalkbrood disease), *Aspergillus flavus* (stonebrood disease), *A. niger* and *Cladosporium*. All were identified by culturing on potato dextrose agar and modified Melin-Norkrans agar.

Samples of bee bread were collected from colonies pollinating California almonds and from colonies in Arizona. Quantitatively, bee

bread samples from California featured a reduced number of isolates of major fungal components (*A. niger*; *A. flavus*, *Aspergillus* spp., *Penicillium* spp., *Cladosporium* spp., *Rhizopus* spp.) than samples of bee bread from Arizona colonies. This is corroborated by results of our enumeration study where the total number of conidia in bee bread from California was nearly 3–5x less than number of conidia in bee bread from Arizona.

We tested the effects of fungicides on these bee bread fungi in the lab and found there was reduced growth and proliferation of fungi, which resulted in the production of fewer conidia, their primary mode of spread. Thus, fungal levels can be greatly reduced in bee bread. This may be a result of reduced amounts of conidia in a treated habitat; i.e., bees bringing pollen back to the colony that is coated with fewer conidia in a fungicide-sprayed habitat.

Our results show that *A. apis* was the fungus that was the most vulnerable of the bee colony fungi in that: 1) most of the bee colony

fungi produced growth inhibitory substances against *A. apis*, sup-pressing spread and conidial output, thus there is overlapping sensitivity to chemical mediation by a wide range of fungi; 2) the presence of other fungi (*A. niger* and *Rhizopus* sp.) suppressed radial growth of *A. apis* by > 40%, which was the largest reduction in growth experienced by any of the fungi tested; and 3) a mycelium of *A. apis* was capable of being exploited and easily overgrown, with *A. apis* offering little resistance in the way of territorial defense once it establishes. The most versatile fungus was *Trichoderma* sp. in that the presence of this fungus had controlling effects on nearly all of the 13 fungi. If these fungi are missing, *A. apis* could increase.

Reference

Sammataro, D., Yoder, J. A., Finely, J., Simonds, R., Olsen, E., & Hunt, G. J. (2011). Pesticides in pollen and bee bread. [Abstract 26, 2011 American Bee Research Conference, January 6–7, Galveston, TX]. *American Bee Journal*, May 2011, 507–518.



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