

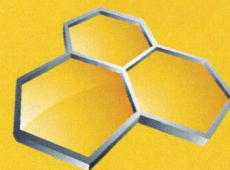
February 2014, Volume 22 No. 1

The NEW ZEALAND BeeKeeper

Finding consensus



- Insecticide concerns
- Manuka ID Project • More on GIA



HoneyNetwork

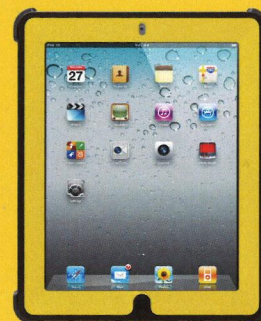
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Clover paddock in Palmerston North, 13 January 2014. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

Finding consensus

By Ricki Leahy, NBA President

It is true. Time stops for no one. I wrote this report in early January, after thinking that it would take forever before the deadline for this journal actually came around.

What happened to all that time? By Jove, it seems to really crank along! Perhaps the writing on this coffee mug I'm staring at has a clue: "the problem with doing nothing is that you don't know when you are done..."

Apart from all that, I have been thinking about things over the New Year. By all accounts, it will be another very hectic year for the Executive with some very important issues needing to be ironed out.

We were very occupied with all these matters last year but then, as happens every busy part of our season, we all become fully involved in our own beekeeping activities. And, might I add, so we all should. So now we are all back into it and picking those processes up again.

For our next Executive Council meeting in March, we plan to stay overnight in Wellington, giving us extra time to discuss such things as the GIA, subscriptions, and many other issues needing time to formulate policy to present or reach agreement on, and taking full advantage of the entire Executive being together. "Good luck!" did I hear you say?

Manuka honey standard

The big issue looming for manuka honey producers and packers is the need to reach some sort of consensus regarding a manuka honey standard. There are some very strong and varied opinions throughout the whole industry, and indeed amongst our own members, which makes the process quite complex and sensitive for us all.

MPI is nudging this process along in conjunction with the Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC). Our NBA representatives on this Council (Neil Stuckey, Fiona O'Brien and Pam Flack), along with the other members of the BPSC, will be very busy finding a suitably accommodating solution.

The problem at present is that there are no universal set standards, which is allowing some people, either knowingly or not, to sell honey as manuka that clearly is nothing of the sort. This confusion exists with the labelling of both the table manuka and the more highly valued 'active' manuka honeys.

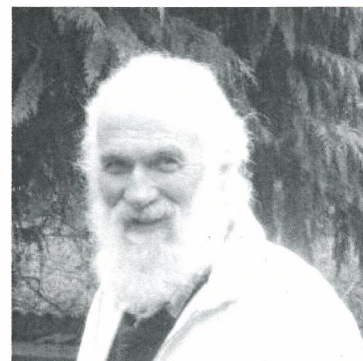
Huge investments have been made over the years by many businesses and individuals to develop and promote manuka products and to create global markets. Consideration will need to be given to protecting those investments and to minimising damage to those markets.

Without a recognised standard, it is practically impossible to reach a scientifically based verification that proves (or otherwise) the authenticity of any given sample. So it is very important that a negotiated agreement on the standard is reached sooner rather than later.

The ability to test manuka honey, using a recognised standard and approved method by laboratories globally, is what needs to be achieved. This will then instil confidence in the authenticity of the manuka honey product for both the producer and trader, and also the final consumer. If these tests are easily available and reasonably economical, the market will develop the ability to discourage any fraudulent intent and thus re-establish the assurance it so needs.

GIA and biosecurity

During this year we also will continue to explore the whole GIA biosecurity issue. I must say how pleased I was that some comments and questions from members around this subject were published in the December 2013 journal. Your opinions—whether for or against—must be encouraged, as we all need to start thinking and debating the subject. This journal is probably the best place for us to do that, but please play the ball and not the player. I'm certainly thinking of



our CEO, but mainly the good folk at MPI who actually are very approachable, professional and helpful.

An important part of any Government Industry Agreement, in my opinion, is developing a good working relationship between beekeepers and government; i.e., the staff at MPI. What happened in the past, for instance, with the Varroa Pest Management Strategy, has no relevance to what may be agreed to and how things may be managed in the future under a GIA.

To date, the GIA Working Group Committee has been busy with the details of the Deed, which takes a lot of reading and thoughtful understanding. There is absolutely no hidden agenda or intention by any of us on the Executive, or indeed by our CEO Daniel Paul, to hurry this process into some predetermined conclusion. Why on earth should there be?

We are also aware that there may be political implications in the whole structure and policy of GIA, which we definitely will need to negotiate before coming to any agreement. Other aspects, such as trade, should not compromise biosecurity measures. The last thing we want is our biosecurity to depend on the integrity of whoever may tick boxes in some overseas land.

I am very conscious that some members may be very hopeful that the industry could find a way to reach some sort of agreement over our biosecurity, and are pleased that we are attempting to work through some sort of process, at least to see what it may develop. These same members may also be comforted by the fact that we have got over the hurdle that could have been a future stumbling block. By that I mean that an arrangement has been made (the Bee Industry Advisory Council) for all affiliated beekeepers to know that there is a pathway for the industry to have a united approach, if or when that time arises. Happy beekeeping. 

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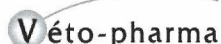
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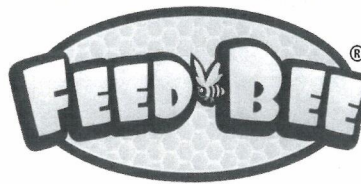
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Sulfoxaflor, dimethoate and the AVID® label

By Don MacLeod, Committee member

Following are three articles reflecting recent work by the committee on sulfoxaflor and organophosphate and carbamate insecticides. Beekeepers also are urged to read the approved label for the insecticide AVID® and follow the instructions on the label.

Update on Dow applications

Application ERMA200886

Application ERMA200886 for sulfoxaflor has been approved by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), with some restrictions as detailed below.

The Technical and Submissions Committee attended two meetings with Dow AgroSciences Limited (Dow), as well as the EPA hearing with respect to this product, where we expressed our concerns about its toxicity to bees.

The EPA's own risk assessment recognised that sulfoxaflor presents "high acute risks to honeybees (from exposure via oral, contact or food consumption);" (ERMA200886 decision, section 3.13).

There was some detailed discussion on the best warning statement to protect bees when sulfoxaflor is being used. Dow proposed that it only be applied below a defined temperature limit, but we pointed out that bees forage at lower temperatures.

Dow also showed the EPA that the metabolites of sulfoxaflor inside the plant are not toxic to bees, yet they claim it is a systemic insecticide. We are still trying to figure that one out!

But the EPA finally have decreed that this label warning is to be used for all products containing sulfoxaflor:

Label warning of effects on bees:

(1) A person must not supply GF-2032 to any other person unless the substance label shows the following statement (or equivalent):

This product is toxic to bees. Do not apply this product in areas where bees are currently foraging or to any plant or tree likely to be visited by bees—

(a) at the time of application; or

(b) before the spray has dried following application.

(2) A person who is in charge of GF-2032 must ensure that the substance label shows the information required by (1). (ERMA200886 Decision, section 4.8.)

Please note and follow with interest the court case in the USA, where beekeepers are appealing the USA Environmental Protection Agency's decision to approve this insecticide. (See <http://earthjustice.org/news/press/2013/beekeeping-industry-sues-epa-for-approval-of-bee-killing-pesticide>.)

Application APP201835- GF2574

This is an application by Dow AgroSciences to the EPA to approve the aerial spraying of Tordon™ Pastureboss™ herbicide, which is presently approved for ground spraying only.

Tordon™ Pastureboss™ herbicide is used to control thistles and other broadleaf weeds in pasture, and the label recommendation for ground spraying is to include Boost™, an organo-silicone surfactant.

The Technical and Submissions Committee acknowledges that the use of GF2574 (also known under the trade name of Tordon™ Pastureboss™) herbicide alone, and applied when the target plant is not flowering, will not adversely affect bees.

The active ingredient is not toxic to bees and the formulation should be tested for bee toxicity.

Our concern is the use of the spray tank adjuvant Boost™, an organo-silicone surfactant, which is known to be toxic to bees at the normal recommended use rate. (Goodwin and McBrydie, 2000).

The concern is that aerial application to control thistles and other pasture weeds will be conducted in New Zealand hill country that may be adjacent to manuka areas where many beehives are present. Thirty years ago this was an unlikely risk, but today the risk to honey bees is quite high, due to the increased demand for manuka honey.

Dow AgroSciences has no bee warning statements or environmental hazard data on the Boost™ label or Safety Data Sheet.

The EPA has not, to date, acted on their own Authority recommendation 7.1 in the decision for APP201365. The recommendation 7.1 is to reassess the use of surfactants when used as spray tank adjuvants. (See EPA decision APP201365, section 7.1, page 27, 10 December 2012.)

The Technical and Submissions Committee has made the following recommendation to the EPA with respect to this application:

"That if the EPA approves the use of GF2574 for aerial application with the addition of adjuvants, then it must not be applied whilst the target species are in flower. The control should point out that spray application must not be conducted between bud burst and petal fall of the target species. Note: this control should also be applied to the existing approved ground spraying use with respect to approval HSR100379."

We await the EPA's Evaluation and Review Report on this application.

All documents can be read on the EPA website with respect to this application: <http://www.epa.govt.nz/search-databases/Pages/applications-details.aspx?applID=A PP201835#> →

EPA to fix omission

In 2013, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) completed a review of organophosphate and carbamate insecticides in use in New Zealand.

These products have been used widely in New Zealand for about 30 years but as they are highly acutely toxic to bees, wildlife, and humans, they are being phased out of use worldwide. As insecticides, they have been shown to be very effective as they work by irreversibly blocking the enzyme acetylcholinesterase, which is critical to nerve function in both insects and humans. This action has also identified potential risks for brain development in small children.

The Technical and Submissions Committee was aware of the EPA reassessment process and the purpose of the reassessment. We considered that as the toxicity to bees was well known, the committee would add nothing to the process; therefore the NBA never made a submission.

Dimethoate is a widely used insecticide that kills insects both on contact and systemically (through the plant). Dimethoate is effective on a wide range of insects including aphids, thrips, planthoppers and whitefly. (See <http://www.pan-uk.org/pestnews/Actives/dimethoa.htm> and <http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/profiles/extoxnet/dienochlor-glyphosate/dimethoate-ext.html>)

The EPA decision was made and as a result the EPA published a set of guidance documents. Roger Bray read the document on dimethoate and raised the flag on this issue.

Prior to the EPA reassessment decision, products containing dimethoate were always recognised as systemic, and the label has had the warning *"TOXIC to BEES. Spray must not contact plants from 7 days before flowering to petal fall, if the plants are likely to be visited by bees."* (Refer to <https://eatsafe.nzfsa.govt.nz/web/public/acvm-register> for details of the three ACVM-approved labels for dimethoate.) This is recognised by the EPA as a Section 49 control for systemic insecticides under the Hazardous Substances (Classes 6, 8, and 9 Controls) Regulations 2001.

The EPA-published guidance document for dimethoate published last year (2013) failed to recognise that this product was systemic

and a review of the EPA reassessment decision omits this control to protect bees completely. (See EPA's decision on Application APP201045 at http://www.epa.govt.nz/search-databases/HSNO%20Application%20Register%20Documents/APP201045_APP201045_Decision_FINAL.pdf)

The Technical and Submissions Committee contacted the EPA with concerns to the fact that an earlier control had been omitted with respect to their decision. Our concerns were:

- 1) that we did not expect that controls already in place would be replaced or omitted, and
- 2) the proposed controls for protecting bees would put bees at risk if spraying occurred during flowering or the plants were to be visited by bees immediately after spraying.

We also noted that this could apply to other chemicals in the reassessment.

The EPA said we should apply for a modified reassessment, but this process can only be done when there is new data. The systemic nature of this insecticide is, in fact, old data that has been known for years. There was also the issue of cost, which we were not happy to pay.

After further discussion, Dr Richard Mohan, Senior Hazardous Substances Advisor for the EPA, confirmed by email on 10 December 2013 that:

- 1) "At this stage we are in agreement with you that the control should not have been removed.
- 2) We are currently in the process of deciding what our options are to rectify this. We have until mid-2015 before the new controls come into force which provides us with some time to correct this, without increasing the risk to bees.
- 3) We shall contact you early in the New Year to let you know what our exact plan is."

Without observant members of the NBA, we would not know what is going on. But a special thank you to Roger Bray for spotting this issue.

Always read the approved label

I received a call in early October 2013 from a Bay of Plenty beekeeper who was supplying hives for the pollination of avocados. His

query concerned the use of the insecticide AVID® and the difference between what is stated on the label of the can and what is stated in the latest edition of the *Novachem New Zealand Agrichemical Manual 2013*.

AVID® is a Syngenta Crop Protection Limited product. The Syngenta AVID® label, as registered and approved by MPI, is very clear with respect to its warning. The warning reads: *"Toxic to bees. Spray must not contact plants in flower if they are likely to be visited by bees."* (Syngenta AVID registered label P004648, 18 June 2011.)

The *Novachem New Zealand Agrichemical Manual 2013* contains a summary of four registered insecticides containing abamectin; namely, Apostle™, AVID®, Vantal and Verdex® 18EC.

The warning about bees from the *Novachem manual 2013* states the following: *"Toxic to bees on contact but the residual effect disappears after a few hours. (Novachem New Zealand Agrichemical Manual, 2013).*

I cannot explain the difference in the two statements with respect to the AVID label. I do know that Syngenta upgraded their registered label in 2011 and it appears the *Novachem manual* has not been updated with the warning that is now on the label.

Now which is correct, Syngenta's registered label or the *Novachem manual*? Both are very different in their recommendations with respect to protecting bees.

It appears that New Zealand Avocado (Avocado Industry Council) has used the *Novachem manual* as its source of information in developing the Avogreen spray programme. That is, they have used incorrect information.

The MPI-registered label for AVID® is approved by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority under the auspices of the ACVM Act 1997 and follows EPA guidelines as required under the HSNO Act 1996. It is, in fact, a legal document.

The *Novachem manual* is provided by a private company and they state quite clearly they are not liable for anything they write. You can read their disclaimer on their website: <http://www.novachem.co.nz/Disclaimer.aspx>

The content of the Novachem manual is not checked by any government agency and is not audited by any third party for accuracy. Additionally, the publishers of the Novachem manual state clearly they are not liable for any mistakes they make.

If in doubt about a chemical treatment being applied that may adversely affect your bees, ask to read the actual label. Do not rely on the content of the Novachem manual.

Beekeepers should be concerned to see a publication such as the Novachem manual has a very different recommendation to that written on the Syngenta AVID® label. I believe that you should stick to the Syngenta label recommendation as that is approved by the MPI and the EPA.

Registered pesticides under the ACVM Act 1997 have all their labels published on the Ministry of Primary Industries website: <https://eatsafe.nzfsa.govt.nz/web/public/acvm-register>

Products that are called surfactants, plant health elicitors, mineral additives and foliar nutrients that may be applied during

flowering of plants and crops are not registered. Obtaining the official label is difficult, but we are working on that issue.

Insecticides and products that are used with surfactants and spraying oils should not be applied to flowering plants. They should only be applied before flowering or after petal fall.

Likewise, New Zealand Avocado spray programmes should be following Zespri's lead in not applying any insecticide during flowering when pollinating bees are present.

Finally, we must recognise that abamectin is very toxic to bees, and testing on citrus foliage in the USA has shown that this bee toxicity can remain for two days after spraying. (See http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/chem_search/cleared_reviews/csr_PC-122804_24-Feb-10_a.pdf)

In November 2013, Syngenta's John Yates confirmed by email that this product is toxic to bees after spraying: "Your enquiry has raised a number of issues which we are addressing with various people within the industry. As you are aware, bee studies for abamectin (caged studies) suggest a 24 to

48 hour period should elapse before bees come into contact with treated plants." We have had good communications with Syngenta and will continue to discuss this issue before next season's avocado pollination commences.

I will leave the last word to Nufarm, which markets an abamectin insecticide in the USA and not in New Zealand. Their warning to protect bees is also very clear. Following is the Nufarm label for abamectin approved for use in the USA, which states very clearly: "This product is highly toxic to bees exposed to direct treatment or residues on blooming crops or weeds. DO NOT apply this product or allow it to drift to blooming crops or weeds if bees are visiting the treatment area." (See <http://www.cdms.net/LDat/ld9OR002.pdf>)

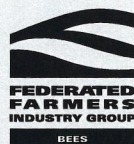
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Goodwin, R. M., & McBrydie, H. M. (2000). Effect of surfactants on honey bee survival. *New Zealand Plant Protection*, 53, 230–234.

Novachem New Zealand Agrichemical Manual 2013, pages 176–177, Abamectin. Published by Agrimedia Ltd., Christchurch.



The National Beekeepers
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Notice of the 2014 Industry Group Annual General Meetings

to be held at the
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Thursday 26 June 2014

- The AGM of Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group commences 8.00am
- The AGM of the National Beekeepers Association of NZ Inc. commences 10.00am

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*Entries from the Scottish National Honey Show, Dundee, July 2009.
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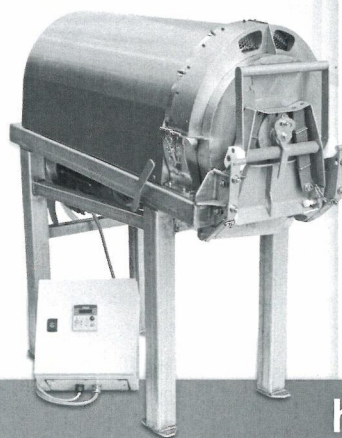
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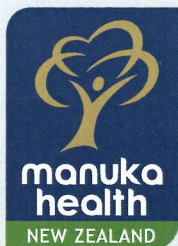
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"Many Thanks to all our current suppliers for their support during 2013"

More debate on GIA

The exchange of views between Brian Lancaster (writing for the Canterbury Branch) and NBA CEO Daniel Paul published in the December journal has generated further discussion: read on.

From Brian Lancaster, Canterbury Branch President

In relation to the Canterbury Branch colonies report I wrote for the December issue [*which we published as a separate article—Ed.*], I am very disappointed that Daniel Paul has considered the report as a personal opinion when in fact it is the Canterbury Branch's collective opinion. To this point I have only received positive feedback from members. By doing this, I can only conclude that Daniel is trying to reduce the opposition to GIA to one as opposed to accepting our branch is against it, which represents 10% of the NBA.

Doing due diligence is all very well, but as an industry what are we trying to achieve? This needs to be sorted out prior to any talks with MPI.

GIA is all about funding surveillance for early detection of an incursion so that a considered approach can be taken towards it. Most beekeepers would consider eradication the ultimate goal to protect the long-term viability of their businesses. After all, the New Zealand honey price is what it is because we have some of the healthiest bees in the world.

The CEO states that, unless we are part of GIA, we won't have any say in biosecurity. Is there anyone out there in the beekeeping community who actually believes we will have the ultimate say in an eradication

attempt when confronted with an incursion? It will become a political consideration not unlike varroa in 2000.

I ask all beekeepers to consider this: will kiwifruit growers allow an eradication attempt without bringing political pressure to bear against the decision? What about small seed growers in Canterbury? What about pipfruit growers in Nelson/Marlborough? What about stonefruit growers in Otago, to name a few affected parties? What about our own honey packers? Will they be happy with no or reduced product available for sale? These industries are not going to stand by idly and watch their income disappear down the drain without a fight. The attitude will be, "To hell with the beekeepers, there is a treatment for that." I thought we had a Wellington-based executive to help advise us on these considerations.

To be considering the value proposition, there must be a goal that is realistically obtainable. My question is, what pests and diseases that are out there can be successfully eradicated from a country once they are established? Unless you can come up with a list, what is the point of the discussions? (Excluding the Africanised bee, as I believe this would be taken care of on the 'public good' tab.) Our only protection is border security and we are not being asked at this stage for any input on this front.

In the second response from the CEO, Daniel states that MPI says things will be totally different. How can it be any different? Under the South Island Varroa Pest Management Strategy, we had a payment system, an objective, surveillance plan, but the Government left us high and dry. The definition of an idiot is repeating the same action and expecting a different result.

My challenge to the CEO is find 10 people in the South Island who thought they had value for money with regard to the South Island Varroa PMS, and why? It will be no different this time around.

Last year the NBA President said we would be consulted on whether we wanted to

join GIA or not. While I believe that may be Ricki's best intention, I would like to ask the CEO how the organisation intends to fund a consultation. I believe the last consultation the CEO arranged on our behalf cost the NBA approximately \$70,000. Now that the NBA has joined the Bee Industry Advisory Council (BIAC) in regard to GIA, will the other members be contributing, and by what amount?

With regard to the NBA disappearing, I would like to point out that Canterbury recently hosted the 100-year celebration of the NBA. We have survived funding problems in the past; it's the secretariats that come and go.

It's disappointing that the CEO considers he has a mandate from the last three conferences with regards to GIA. Waving posters round on stage at Napier and a five-minute question time from the floor after a presentation at Ashburton doesn't really get the feeling of the members. My main concern is that this approach will be applied to whether the industry as a whole wants to sign or not, especially as the NBA has no budget for a consultation, or have we, Daniel?

The Canterbury Branch looks forward to your response.

From Roger Bray, Central South Island Ward representative, NBA Executive Council

As the Central South Island Ward representative and a member of the GIA committee, I believe it is my duty to acknowledge the letter from our Branch President, Brian Lancaster, and the response from CEO Daniel Paul.

Firstly, I applaud Brian for his letter and the concern that he and the branch members have for the GIA process. I would also point out to members that, although there is a NBA 'committee' formed, there have been no meetings of the committee and little discussion on the role that NBA may have with GIA. The NBA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding that our association will look at all options with regard to GIA. →

Another interesting development is the formation of a new 'group' of four people to develop GIA, the Bee Industry Advisory Council (BIAC), which comprises the President and Vice President of both the NBA and Federated Farmers bee group. I was not at the meeting at which this group was set up (nor were some other EC members), so I am unaware how this 'group' will operate with regard to GIA.

I would agree with Daniel, who suggests the Canterbury Branch should be better informed than most of our members. Whilst I can only convey my impressions to the branch, I have been to various 'presentations' over the years and it is possibly a result of my concerns that Brian has written his article. I believe that I have presented a balanced view to the branch; of course, like Brian I am most disappointed at the 'value proposition' that we received from the Varroa Pest Management Strategy, which could now be considered a GIA 'trial'.

Daniel suggests that NBA is doing due diligence; this appears as though everyone is waiting for something to happen and then have a look at 'the proposal' to see if it has value for the beekeepers. However, it would appear that the initiatives for any GIA would come from industry, not government, so any options to explore will be provided by our personnel. The 'value proposition' that has been referred to is simply a process of determining if the benefits of being part of GIA are greater than the costs. To arrive at a position to assess the value proposition, there needs to be some work done on identifying and assessing both the benefits and the costs while reducing the element of risk.

The regulatory aspects of GIA have now been provided by Government. The next step, I believe, would be for industry bodies to assess the value of entering into GIA on a formal basis. One of the issues that would concern most industry groups is that government (through MPI) will still control the entry of risk goods, but there is an expectation that industry will 'pick up the tab' to (help) monitor for and respond to any incursions. One thing that some people see as a benefit coming from GIA is 'being at the table' with MPI: under GIA there will be many things that beekeepers will be responsible for and being 'at the table' will be a minor part of GIA.

Biosecurity is extremely important to the beekeepers of New Zealand. Beekeeping is also important to the food production of New Zealand. That any government is prepared to allow the importation of risk goods (bee products) and at the same time signal that (biosecurity) protection of industry will have to be initiated and funded by beekeepers seems hard to comprehend.

There are a great many unasked questions that need to be presented to MPI, and hopefully all primary industries take time to consider the ramifications of entering into the GIA 'system'. It does appear that this government is committed to 'assisting' the primary producers of other countries to market their goods in New Zealand, rather than providing some protection for our primary producers to enable them to offer to the world products that have few harmful pests and diseases.

As a ward representative, I believe that the views and input of our members should initially drive the position of the NBA before it is taken on a costly 'consultation' process with the rest of the beekeeping (and related) industries. If this work is going to be done by the BIAC, then the initial question is how will this be funded?

Brian has initiated some discussion on the GIA topic. We need to ensure that there is robust discussion within our members (as potential levy payers) and they signify that there is sufficient benefit, which they would support, to further develop the GIA concept.

From Colin McLean, Great Barrier Island

I'd like to comment on Brian Lancaster's views and the response in the last *BeeKeeper*. Good on you, Brian, for standing up and speaking out: most people sit on the sideline.

While I don't agree with everything Brian has said, the direction of what he is saying is totally appropriate. The somewhat 'damage control' response by the CEO, while understandable, only goes to highlight the underlying issues that are causing all the problems; i.e., the way MPI decides to manage, and control, the changes they want to implement.

Biosecurity is MPI's responsibility and obligation both legally and morally. You would think they would want to do more to protect primary industry in New Zealand, given that the Government wants to grow this sector and it is where the wealth of this country exists. MPI is well aware of the damage and cost that varroa, Psa, and the tomato/potato psyllid has done to the whole country, yet there seems to be a change of policy where the Government thinks that those affected should be paying the cost—they already are.

The effect of exotic pests and diseases adds costs, reduces international competitiveness and limits growth. Sometimes the biggest advantage we have is we don't have some of these exotic pests and diseases here.

To be honest, this whole GIA process is mostly a distraction from dealing with the real issues right now. Two of these are EFB and small hive beetle, which I think pose the greatest risk to the beekeeping industry. Is there any plan or strategy in how we (i.e., MPI and the beekeeping industry) would respond to an outbreak? This is where we should be working together in a constructive and cohesive manner. Don't wait till it gets here; you will be too late!

There is a big disconnect between those writing the policy (or rules) and those working in the field. In reality, they don't communicate directly with each other, and other people are involved in 'delivering the message' without having any influence or power to change things. It doesn't work, guys, and it isn't working now. If you wonder why many people don't have any faith in the GIA process, you only have to look at how MPI has pursued its intent to develop an import health standard for honey. Is MPI acting in good faith, or does it have a predetermined outcome?

If we import honey, it will directly or indirectly increase the risk of us getting EFB. This is a very infectious bacterial disease. We don't import honey and we don't have this disease. To import honey is a major shift in policy and it is a game changer because it changes people's perceptions of whether they can bring honey into the country. Whether it is free of EFB or not won't even enter their mind. Where they bring it from

and whether they declare it, or not, won't be a part of their thinking, as people generally do something because that's what they want to do.

If MPI had a genuine intent to work with primary industries we could make a lot of progress. However, if the process has a political bias which influences the way things are done or on what the outcomes should be, then the result is something that is imposed on the people, and the effect is not positive progress, but more like paralysis. This 'take it or leave it' approach by MPI is an appalling way to deal with serious biosecurity issues.

From Daniel Paul, NBA Chief Executive Officer

Is GIA a good idea for beekeepers? Will it help us improve our biosecurity preparedness, and our readiness and ability to respond if there is an incursion? Will it mean we have more say, more influence, more chance of protecting our livelihoods?

Or will it just be a massive mistake? Will nothing change or improve, other than the fact that we now have to write out a cheque to protect what's ours anyway?

Everyone has an opinion, but despite what some people may think or tell you, no one in the NBA yet has the facts to answer those questions properly. And our industry is not alone.

Many other industries are still weighing it up, too. They, like us, simply don't yet know enough about how GIA will work to say categorically that it's a good—or a bad—idea.

Many industries are still in discussions with MPI, and with their own membership, about the pros and cons. And that's exactly the situation the NBA is in.

The Executive Council is in information-gathering mode, trying to get together the answers to the questions that beekeepers will ask. And a lot of that work has to happen this year.

As Brian suggests, no one wants to repeat the mistakes of the past and part of what the EC is trying to do is to figure out whether—

and how—GIA will be different. Whether—and how—it will be good for beekeepers or bad for them.

The other critical component is to answer the very question Brian raises about what happens to beekeepers if, for example, the kiwifruit boys or the small seeds growers (or any other industry, for that matter) decide they don't want what we want?

The EC is being cautious and you can't blame them for that.

Whether or not the NBA signs up to GIA—or whether we ditch it—will be your decision. The EC wants to ensure you have all the facts to make that decision. Not just opinion.

[Editor's note: see page 4 for more thoughts on GIA from NBA President Ricki Leahy.]



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Advance Notice to NBA Branch Secretaries

**2014 Annual General Meeting
Deadlines**

NBA Branch AGMs should be held by 1 May 2014

		Timing Prior to AGM	Completed by
2014 Annual General Meeting	Thursday 26 June		
Ward Rep nominations	To Executive Secretary	28 days	Thursday 29 May
Notice of Motions	To CEO	50 days	Wednesday 7 May
Proposals to alter Rules	To CEO	50 days	Wednesday 7 May
Branch Financial Reports	To CEO	50 days	Wednesday 7 May

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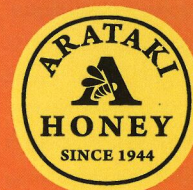


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Manuka ID Project

By John Rawcliffe, UMF® Honey Association (UMF®HA)

Following is a brief overview of the Manuka ID Project being conducted by the UMF®HA.

Objectives of the project



1. Authentic manuka honey collection: the independent certified collection of authentic manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) honey.
2. Other endemic monofloral honey species collection: the independent certified collection of other monofloral honeys that are known to contaminate manuka honey.

September 2013

March 2014



Project timeline.

Nectar collection

The nectar collection is progressing well, albeit with some early challenges. However, we are getting good samples, which we hope will give us an accurate fingerprint of the raw chemical components of manuka honey when analysed. We have also

almost completed the collecting of other monofloral nectars.



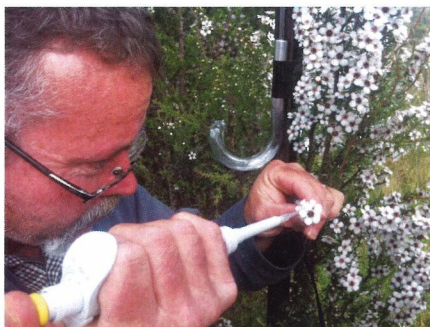
Northland Manuka honey in glass vials. Each label has a unique 2D QR code which can be scanned for identification and is linked to the project database.

A constraint that we identified through the Northland collection was that one or two people would not be able to achieve all our collection objectives. Subsequently, we have reallocated tasks and have been fortunate to obtain the services of a graduate from the University of Auckland to collect nectar across all our targeted floral species.

It is important to collect the nectar at various times and locations to identify any potential sources of variation in terms of chemical composition.

In December 2013 and January 2014, well over 4,500 kilometres were covered in the pursuit of manuka nectar in the South Island. The act of collecting nectar from the manuka tree is a very slow and laborious task.

Completing it brought the realisation of the amount of work the bee does to collect nectar, and the environmental conditions that are required for this process to occur. By late January 2014, these nectars will have been analysed and a far greater



Dr Jonathan Stephens pipetting manuka nectar.

understanding of what is behind this unique product will have been achieved, although it may be nearly impossible to fully understand nature's secret.

Honey harvest and extraction

We have harvested nine supers from three 'Clean Hive Manuka' sites in Northland. These were extracted in the KVM facility in Okaihau. (A clean hive site is where we have placed a fresh box with new frames to ensure no cross-contamination from other honeys has been introduced. The box has a unique identifier, and the site has been independently audited.)



If you look closely you will see some nectar!

The extracted honey was homogenised and placed in two different containers: 250g plastic honey pots and 250ml glass vials. The latter are easier to use for laboratory testing.

As well as the three clean sites, we have harvested two commercial sites (two frames from each) and also some rewarewa frames from the Central North Island.

As with other steps in our processes, we have refined our techniques as we have gone through each process for the first time. The extraction process is very time consuming, especially the requirement to thoroughly clean the equipment after each batch. However, it is important that these processes are adhered to in order to preserve the integrity of our samples.

We have placed great emphasis on ensuring that we have protocols in place that verify the authenticity and provenance of all our samples. We take geo-tagged photos for each location where we take samples, and we ensure that each sample is uniquely →

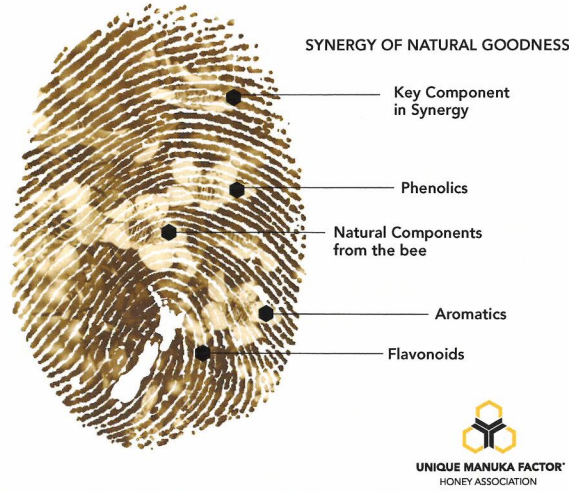
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labelled and that there is no chance of tampering from the collection site through to secure storage. This is important to ensure the integrity of the testing; i.e., we know exactly what the sample is and the exact location of where it was collected. This is linked to a unique code to which other variables are linked.

For example, we will be testing the physical properties of the honey at the time of extraction. When correlated with HPLC-

MS testing, which we will do on the same samples, we hope to establish a very strong method of determining the composition of harvested manuka honey.

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Who do you call?

Recently the Secretariat has been receiving a lot of calls regarding hive registration and pest management issues, most of which we are unable to answer as those issues are dealt with by other entities. So, to make it easier for you to know who to call for what we thought we would give you an easy reference guide.

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Report on the 43rd Congress

By Maureen Conquer (Maxwell), President, Apimondia Oceania Commission

The 43rd International Apimondia Congress was held in Kiev, Ukraine, from 29 September to 3 October 2013.

Over 8000 beekeepers, scientists, apitherapists, and vendors headed for Kiev's International Exhibition Centre. Unfortunately, most of us arrived at the same time, which created some Eastern Bloc-style havoc at the registration desks on the opening day!

However, once in the door we enjoyed an absorbing five days of networking, honey sampling, workshops, scientific presentations, round-table discussions, as well as the World Honey Awards and trade displays.

The main headings for presentations came under bee biology, bee industry economy, new technology and quality standards, bee health, pollination, beekeeping for rural development and apitherapy. English is the mandatory language spoken, with simultaneous translations into six different languages.

Four-hour round-table sessions were conducted in smaller side auditoriums, addressing beekeeping in the Ukraine (the world's fourth largest producer, with over 400,000 beekeepers), organic beekeeping, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and global markets, and pesticides. I moderated the discussions on Global Honey Adulteration.

At the biennial general assembly, delegates from 120 countries supported the importance of more promotion of bee health in today's intensive and often pollinator-unfriendly agricultural climate.

At the closing ceremony, Apimondia President Gilles Ratia declared "Apimondia

to support 100% the European Food Safety Authority's stance on neonicotinoids", and he spoke strongly about the industry concerns about beekeeping and GMOs.

During the closing ceremony, the regional presidents were required to present our individual portfolios for the next two years. Mulufird Ashagrie from the African Commission will be promoting the inaugural ApiAfrica Symposia in Tanzania 2014. Jose Gomercindo Correa da Cunha from the American Commission stressed the importance of research into neonicotinoid use and bee health. Cleofas Cervancia from Asia spoke of measures to prevent introduction of invasive species to her continent. Phillip McCabe from the European Commission is working to support young beekeepers' education, cadetships, world competitions, and industry support and sponsorship for the next generation of beekeepers. My portfolio from Oceania is to work on international harmonisation of honey standards and ways to fight honey adulteration to maintain our industry's reputation, integrity and market confidence.



The regional presidents speaking about their Commission's portfolios. Left to right: Maureen Conquer, Phillip McCabe, Jose Gomercindo Correa da Cunha, Mulufird Ashagrie and Cleofas Cervancia (at podium).

Dr Karyne Rogers' reports were received with much interest and we were able to discover other honeys worldwide also producing false positives for C4 sugars. So the European laboratories are now on the alert for improved testing techniques.

It was excellent to have New Zealand at the table for these discussions and to see the respect with which our industry is held on the world stage.

I also was judging at the World Honey Awards. There was a stunning array of




Yue-wen Chen from the University of Taiwan (at podium) with Maureen Conquer during a round-table discussion on honey adulteration. Dr Karyne Rogers of GNS Science is in the foreground.

honey, meads and hive products on display with judges from 33 different countries represented. Maybe at the next congress we can have some New Zealand entries to feature in the medal lineup.

A hectic social programme complimented the scientific congress. Some very fine musical and dance entertainment was included in the opening and closing ceremonies, which were attended by over 2000 people.

Our next biennial congress in 2015 will be held in South Korea and the General Assembly has voted that the host city for 2017 will be Istanbul, Turkey. All conference-registered attendees will soon be able to download all presentations from the Apimondia website.

Those attendees from our part of the world were certainly entertained with new ideas, philosophies and concepts. The Apimondia experience is always very interesting with technical tours around the host country pre- and post-congress. 



Some of the judges at work at the Apimondia world honey awards. At left is Robert Chlebo from Slovakia, one of the judges of the mead competition. All photos supplied by Maureen Conquer.

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FROM THE COLONIES

Hawke's Bay Branch

Normally at this time of year beekeepers would be discussing honey crops and weather, but the only subject I hear from anybody at the moment is who has moved hives into someone else's territory. Some smaller-scale beekeepers have lost up to half their sites to aggressive takeovers from outside the district. Even when the beekeepers haven't lost their own sites, they have been faced with up to 200 hives dumped across the fence.

One area I know produces manuka only about one year in five and I wonder who will pollinate the farmers' clover when the cowboys are gone. Why they want to target areas that don't produce active manuka and also predominantly kanuka I don't know, but I have never talked to so many upset and angry beekeepers. Hive numbers in the last 15 years have doubled and doubled again, the gaps have all been filled up and too many hives just means nobody gets anything.

I guess some of these people will just say it's good business practice, but as branch president I'm the one who has to listen to people whose livelihoods are being destroyed, I'm the one who has to try and talk them out of inappropriate retaliatory action and I'm the one who loses sleep worrying about the situation.

I have always been proud to be a member of the beekeeping community but certain people are now bringing the whole industry into disrepute, whether by their actions towards other beekeepers or their total disregard for public safety. They make me ashamed.

- John Berry, Branch President

Southern North Island Branch

Planning meetings are being held to ensure that the 'New Zealand Apiculture Industry Conference' will have something of interest to all in the beekeeping industry. The Small and Hobby Beekeepers day has been held on the Sunday since this branch started the programme in Masterton. This time the session is planned to carry over to Monday, so that there will be more for 'small beekeepers' and hobbyists to see and hear about.

Honey flows have been intermittent. Hot weather followed by wet and cool spells,

so I hope that boxes are being filled. From 8-10 January I travelled around our area and I could see that many beekeepers are optimistic for a good honey flow, judging by the number of supers stacked on hives. The manuka harvest is hard to predict because of the weather patterns. The early flow was good, but the main flow in the backcountry usually occurs about now and this wet weather will not help.

- Neil Farrer, NBA Life Member

Nelson Branch

Like much of the country, Nelson hasn't had a great deal of festive joy with the weather. Yet we can be grateful that we've so far managed to avoid our seemingly now annual 100-year flood. (Touch wood.)

The rain may now be benefitting any apiarists who are currently collecting pastoral pollen, but the effect on this season's honey crop probably won't be so pleasing. It is still too early to tell though, with the better part of January still ahead of us.

So for now we'll cross our fingers and sharpen our hive tools, and hope for a more drawn-out flowering than last year's comparatively short floral affair.

- Nahum Kelly

Otago Branch

The season that started with much promise with great early season weather has rapidly turned poor. Actually, it's now looking to be one of the worst seasons in years for many in Otago and Southland, unless we see a huge

improvement in the weather within the next few weeks.

A lot of hives are barely feeding themselves at the moment. Personally, I am feeding quite a few and often redistributing honey amongst hives in apiaries to be sure none starve in the upcoming week of rainy weather. Big strong hives eat a lot of honey in a week with little incoming food.

With this rain there is still potential for a pasture crop later in the summer but it will be very dependent on settled sunny weather, which is nowhere on the horizon yet.

- Peter Sales, Branch President



We want your photos!

The Publications Committee welcomes photos for the journal. Pop a camera in the truck and snap away when you find something interesting. Please provide a caption and the name of the photographer so we can credit them.

If you're thinking big (such as a potential front cover photo, which we always need), these need to be as large as possible (3MB or larger if possible), in portrait format (vertical rather than horizontal), and ideally 300 dpi (dots per square inch). Regular digital photos are only 72 dpi, so are not suitable for the front cover.

Email them to editor@nba.org.nz



A glimpse inside the beehives of Christchurch beekeeper Stefan Florea. Stefan, formerly from Romania, used to run 100 hives there and is working toward building his hive numbers in NZ.

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BK52

Full-on beekeeping

By Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

January is usually full-on beekeeping, trying to keep ahead of the honey flow for most beekeepers. In Wellington, the weather has been windy and wet for most of the flowering period of the manuka, so prospects for a honey crop here don't look positive.

I had looked forward to Ken Ring's prediction of a fine, hot December and January but unfortunately, his predictions haven't been accurate for my area. So I have been catching up on some of last year's winter work. The extracting plant has been cleaned, the RMP documentation has been completed and we are ready to start extracting.

Advice for cleaning frames

I've also been cleaning up some old dark frames, removing the wax for melting out and getting those that pass the 'whack' test (a whack with the side of the hive tool to see whether the end bars break) rewaxed and put back into service again.

I have found that by leaving the frames out in the sun for half an hour, the comb softens enough to allow it to be removed without breaking the wire. It also helps if the frames are mostly wired with stainless steel wire. All that is required is to run a heat gun along the top-bar groove a few times to soften the wax so that it comes out cleanly with a hooked tool. Tweak the wire a little by putting a loop in between the holes in the end bar to tighten it up again, using the thin end of an old dental probe. Embed the frame with new wax and it's ready for use again. (Only put

foundation frames into the hive if there is a honey flow on; otherwise, the bees will chew holes in the new wax.)

I clean my plastic frames with a hive tool. I press the sharp end of the hive tool down at the base of the frame so that most of the comb is cut off cleanly. Frames seem to clean more easily from one end so if I find it's hard to scrape off, I swap the frame around (end bar to end bar) and it comes off pretty easily. I then waterblast them to remove any pollen left in the indents of the plastic frame, and apply hot wax with a paint roller. The woolly rollers are better and can be cleaned when they become clogged with a little Handy Andy® in warm water. Rollers last quite a while that way.

The only problem I have found with the paint roller is that now the handle has plastic fittings to support the roller and these will melt if left in the hot wax for too long. I use an old electric frying pan to melt the wax (set on 3 or 4) but again, it can't be left in too long.

"...every beekeeper in the surrounding area must treat for varroa at the same time..."

Treating varroa

There are several things to consider this month. According to California beekeeper Randy Oliver (www.scientificbeekeeping.com), the best time to treat varroa is 18 February. Randy selected February as this allows two mite-free brood cycles of bees to be produced, which are your winter bees.

This advice may not apply to some North Island beekeepers as hives have brood in them all year round. What is most important is that every beekeeper in the surrounding area must treat at the same time; otherwise, you are wasting your time and money, as drones flying between hives will soon repopulate your hives again with mites.



Start making nucs

It's also a good time to start nucs for replacement queens or to carry them over the winter as replacement stock for those hives that go queenless or become drone layers. The only problem is that these nucs can't be left in apiaries with strong hives nearby, as they may rob them as soon as the honey flow is finished.

I'm looking to start nucs with a frame of honey and pollen, one of emerging brood with an extra shake of bees and a ripe queen cell, plus a couple of newly drawn frames. If the queen fails to mate, I'll add another queen cell a couple of weeks later and another shake of bees to give the bees another chance at producing a mated queen. If things don't go to plan, I'll perhaps only lose a frame of honey if they get robbed out but while the honey flow continues, the hives will be producing a few drones. However, from now on, the quality and number of drones diminish in your production hives.

Queen breeders don't rely on production hives for drones, preferring to use specially fed selected stock so they can keep on producing queens late into the season.

Remove your honey crop

It's now time to remove your honey crop. Many new beekeepers make the mistake of removing frames of honey before it has matured and before the bees have fully capped all of the cells. I live in a high-moisture area and a majority of our honey comes into the honey house with a moisture content at or slightly above 18.5%. Therefore I have to dry the frames by stacking the supers slightly offset in a room with a dehumidifier to remove an additional one percent moisture. It doesn't sound like →

much, but this represents 10 litres of water removed from about 70 supers. I actually read the moisture difference between the outside frames and the middle frames in a few supers to give me an idea of what the average moisture content will be when the honey is extracted. (Outside frames are higher in moisture.)

The method you use to remove the fully capped supers is also important. I use escape boards to remove bees from the honey supers. I have a lifter on the back of my small truck and can lift off most of the honey supers in one action. This makes it easy to inspect the hive for AFB before the escape boards go in. If it's warm at night, I'll add another super under the escape board to give the bees in the honey supers somewhere to go.

Often when it's warm during the night, the bees are reluctant to leave the honey supers if the hive is already crowded with bees. The extra super is not necessary when the nights are cooler, as the bees start to form a loose cluster that allows more bees into the brood supers. I use a couple of circular escapes in my boards, but other devices are just as effective.

For those semi-commercial beekeepers without a lifter, you can purchase a pair of gigs from Gary Tweeddale that lift up to six three-quarter-depth supers at once (not really recommended) in order to slide an escape board underneath. Keep your chin clear as you slowly release the levers, settling the honey supers back on to the hive again. If the lever slips or is released too quickly, the handle could clout you under the chin. I use escape boards because I have enough of them to do two apiaries at once, which eliminates the necessity of a second trip (putting them on and taking them off with the honey). Once two apiaries are fitted with escape boards, and the honey is removed from one apiary, the same boards are put on to another apiary. And so the process goes, leapfrogging each apiary and eliminating the need for a second trip.

For hobbyists, this is perhaps the safest way to remove honey in a built-up area, as there is very little disturbance of the bees. Put them on in the evening, leave for 36 hours and remove early in the morning so the frames can be extracted while they are still

warm. This makes extracting a lot easier; i.e., cold frames take longer to extract.

There are things to watch out for, of course. The escape must go on the right way up or it doesn't work. Porter escapes use a one-way trap, with lightly tensioned brass levers to prevent the bees getting back into the escape. These are set at a pencil width but you need a couple of escapes in each board in case one gets blocked by a drone. There are other types that work just as effectively and you can also make your own.

Other things to watch: you must totally seal the honey supers (no holes or cracks in the honey super) because once the bees are escaped, other bees will rob the exposed honey. You also can't have any brood in the honey supers as bees won't leave brood. No brood or frames with pollen (not even a little) should be extracted as they can contaminate the honey. Scrape out the brood and place the frame below the escape board so the bees can clean up the frame, ready for the next extraction, or leave pollen frames for winter food.

Commercial beekeepers' hives are placed well away from houses and public places. These beekeepers generally blow the bees out of the hives, which is quick and simple, but leaves a lot of bees in the air for a while until they sort themselves out. The beekeepers carry a stand to place the supers on, which also has a shoot that directs the blown bees into the entrance of the hive. Some use a chemical like Bee Go®, a product that you don't want to spill in your vehicle as it's very difficult to remove. Specially designed cloth-impregnated top boards are placed on the hives for a couple of minutes and as the chemical evaporates, it drives the bees out of the super. Even though it has a foul odour, it's not on the hive long enough to contaminate the honey, but is best used by skilled operators.

During a heavy flow, supers of capped honey frames can be removed and upended on the hive roof for five to 10 minutes. By this time the bees will have left the super and gone back into the hive. The flying bees are not interested in these exposed supers as they are too busy bringing in nectar, but this operation can only be done during a heavy honey flow. Again, this method is only used by experienced beekeepers as it can initiate robbing if the flow suddenly stops.

Use a minimum of smoke—just enough to control the bees. Too much smoke and you can spray ash all over the frames. Ash is hard to remove by filtering, so you can end up with black spots on top of your honey. Honey can also take on taints and excessive smoke can end up in the honey flavour. The idea now is to get your honey off early so that varroa treatment can be applied to the hives. Some treatments (strips) can be applied at the same time as the split boards are put on, as the board isolates the honey supers from the bottom brood supers. If you don't use lifters, inspect the hive for AFB after the honey supers are removed. Use a blower to remove the few straggler bees left in the super immediately above the escape board, then use a board to cover the supers to prevent any dust contaminating the stack of supers.

In the past, commercial beekeepers used to leave the supers open to allow the bees to escape on the way home. This method can cause accidents and bad publicity for the industry so is now frowned upon, plus it can lead to a traffic infringement notice for insecure loading. Cover your loads with shade cloth as a minimum.

Because I have had a smattering of AFB in three apiaries, I will be implementing a full quarantine system where boxes will be numbered and marked with an apiary code so they will be put back on the hives they came from.

Once the honey frames come out of the extractor, I'll be checking them as they go back into the supers and any old dark combs will be replaced with foundation. (My horizontal radial extractor allows me to return the frames to the super they came out of without any additional marking of frames.) I'll stack the old ones to be melted out later in the season to recover the wax and what's left in the cheesecloth bags will be spread on the garden as mulch. I'll return the wet (sticky) honey boxes to the hives they came from, which will stay on the hives until well after the robbing season has finished.

Although this creates a lot of extra work, hopefully it will isolate any problem hive gear in which AFB is found after robbing. If I find AFB in the coming spring, this method will make it easier to find the supers again that came from that hive(s) in the shed so that I can remove them from the operation.

Things to do this month

Check for AFB before removing any honey. Extract honey, remove comb honey (as soon as it's capped to prevent travel stain: bees have dirty feet). Rear autumn queens, introduce purchased queens, and produce replacement nuclei. Put on entrance closures to make the hive easier to defend. Don't allow robbing to start when the flow finishes by leaving honey exposed for too long. Estimate varroa numbers and treat hives that are reaching the threshold of five mites per 300 bees. If one reaches this threshold, treat all hives. Treat hives anyway with an alternative treatment to knock the numbers down if you are going to do a full treatment later.

Keep an eye out for wasps. I haven't seen many yet but they could be out there as it's been a mild spring. Nests are found in ditches and in banks within 500 metres. Kill them with a little insecticide powder down the entrance before they start producing new queens.

Missed off the Christmas shopping list

As you know, I provided a list of suggested books in my December apiary column. A

book I forgot to add to the shopping list is *Honey Farming* by R. O. B. Manley (ISBN 13: 978-1908904249). This book is for the up-and-coming commercial beekeeper.

Although written in 1944 and perhaps dated in some aspects of bee biology, this book offers advice that is relevant today for those contemplating going into commercial beekeeping. It describes Manley's early history, essentials, pasture climate and apiaries, apiary equipment, bee breeding and the passing seasons. These early chapters pass on knowledge gained through years of experience with Italian bees and the English countryside and honey plants. The advice given can be adapted to conditions in New Zealand; i.e., requeening, feeding, supering, wintering, etc.

Comments like "early flows can mean the bees eat out their honey reserves before winter" apply here as well. Our Langstroth full-depth supers are smaller than the Dadant supers, but recent trials with single super hives in the South Island indicated that the full-depth super is large enough to support a productive hive. It just needs a little more management in the spring to prevent

swarming. Ignore the AFB advice in Manley's book as we have regulations that require us to destroy infected hives.

One of the important pieces of advice he offers is to have adequate finance before starting in beekeeping, to cover the three-year build-up period where little extra honey (money) is produced. This still applies today. When I started beekeeping commercially, I had access to free timber. I just had to break up pallets to make supers and frames. However, I found my redundancy didn't cover our living expenses and extra gear requirements in the second year, so I applied for the dole to tide me over. I submitted a business plan, which was accepted, and I was grateful for the assistance. If I had read this book 30 years ago, I might have had an easier ride into commercial beekeeping.

This book boasts an excellent index. It is available on the Internet from several locations: Book Depository UK, Northern Bee Books and many others.



'Taking a peep'. This photo by Roger Bray was judged as first equal in the Portrait category of the fifth annual Ecroyd/NBA photography competition, held on 18 June 2013 at the NBA Conference, Ashburton.

Bee sensors take flight to help farmers

News release from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), 15 January 2014

Thousands of honey bees in Australia are being fitted with tiny sensors as part of a world-first research programme to monitor the insects and their environment using a technique known as 'swarm sensing'.

The research is being led by CSIRO and aims to improve honey bee pollination and productivity on farms as well as help understand the drivers of bee Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a condition decimating honey bee populations worldwide.

Up to 5,000 sensors, measuring 2.5mm x 2.5mm are being fitted to the backs of the bees in Hobart, Tasmania, before being released into the wild. It's the first time such large numbers of insects have been used for environmental monitoring.

"Honey bees play a vital role in the landscape through a free pollination service for agriculture, which various crops rely on to increase yields. A recent CSIRO study showed bee pollination in Faba beans can lead to a productivity increase of 17%," CSIRO science leader Dr Paulo de Souza, who leads the swarm sensing project, said.

"Around one third of the food we eat relies on pollination, but honey bee populations around the world are crashing because of the dreaded Varroa mite and Colony Collapse Disorder. Thankfully, Australia is currently free from both of those threats."

The research will also look at the impacts of agricultural pesticides on honey bees by

monitoring insects that feed at sites with trace amounts of commonly used chemicals. "Using this technology, we aim to understand the bee's relationship with its environment. This should help us understand optimal productivity conditions as well as further our knowledge of the cause of colony collapse disorder," Dr de Souza said.

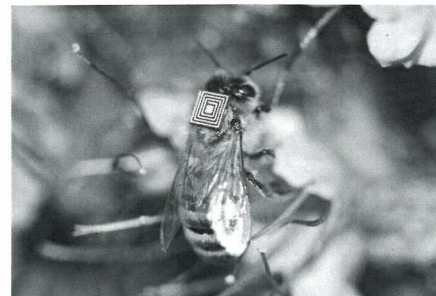
The sensors are tiny Radio Frequency Identification sensors that work in a similar way to a vehicle's e-tag, recording when the insect passes a particular checkpoint. The information is then sent remotely to a central location where researchers can use the signals from the 5,000 sensors to build a comprehensive three dimensional model and visualise how these insects move through the landscape.

"Bees are social insects that return to the same point and operate on a very predictable schedule. Any change in their behaviour indicates a change in their environment. If we can model their movements, we'll be able to recognise very quickly when their activity shows variation and identify the cause. This will help us understand how to maximise their productivity as well as monitor for any biosecurity risks," Dr de Souza said.

Understanding bee behaviour will give farmers and fruit growers improved management knowledge enabling them to increase the benefit received from this free pollination service. It will also help them to gain and maintain access to markets through improving the way we monitor for pests.

"We're working with the University of Tasmania, Tasmanian Beekeepers Association, local beekeepers in Hobart and fruit growers around the state to trial the technology. Many growers rely on wild bees or the beekeepers to provide them with pollinators so they can improve their crops each year. Understanding optimal conditions for these insects will improve this process," Dr de Souza said.

To attach the sensors, the bees are refrigerated for a short period, which puts them into a rest state long enough for the tiny sensors to be secured to their backs with



Bee fitted with sensor. Supplied by CSIRO.

an adhesive. After a few minutes, the bees awaken and are ready to return to their hive and start gathering valuable information.

"This is a non-destructive process and the sensors appear to have no impact on the bee's ability to fly and carry out its normal duties," Dr de Souza said.

The next stage of the project is to reduce the size of the sensors to only 1mm so they can be attached to smaller insects such as mosquitoes and fruit flies.

Background

Varroa mite

Varroa mites are external parasites of bees. The mites, which are about the size of a pinhead, use specialised mouthparts to attack developing bee larvae or adult bees, resulting in deformed bees, reduced lifespan and ultimately the destruction of the colony or hive. These mites are the most important pest of honeybees around the world.

Colony Collapse Disorder

Colony collapse disorder (CCD) is a phenomenon in which worker bees from a beehive of European honey bee colony abruptly disappear. Colony collapse is significant economically because many agricultural crops worldwide are pollinated by European honey bees.

Further images, audio files and B-Roll are available to download: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/at6uowrknigz17q/fJtucE66lh>

Source

CSIRO (2014, January 14). Abridged from the news release 'Bee sensors take flight to help farmers'.

How New Zealand got its honey bees

By Mary M. Bowman

The following article was originally published in the *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* in 1905.

Most people whose faces time has turned toward the setting sun would feel gratified could they be assured that when the light of earth fades from the vision some one had been happier because they had lived; that some little spot of earth had been made better and brighter than they had labored in it. To few men has it been given to create a great industry to add to the wealth of a country and the welfare of its inhabitants by one unselfish, unpretentious service.

This opportunity came to my friend, Mr. Noah Levering, the founder of this society and how well he improved it, is the purpose of this paper to set forth. Mr. Levering's interest and enthusiasm in local history has been the inspiration of much useful and permanent work being done, in the preservation of landmarks and valuable records of the past, not only here but much more extensively in other localities in which he has lived.

When he related the story of how New Zealand procured its Ligurian or honey bees, which transformed it from an annual importer of red clover seed into an extensive exporter of that important factor of the dairy products of the country, as though it were an everyday affair, I was intensely interested. It was history interwoven with the industrial progress of two continents and worthy of record in the annals of this society, more permanent than the columns of ephemeral newspapers. At my earnest solicitation Mr. Levering was induced to furnish the notes from which this, brief account is written, of his very successful experiment in sending the little captains of industry across the equator

and eight thousand miles over seas to a foreign country.

For several years previous to 1880, when this shipment was sent, numerous trials had been made by the best apiarists of Europe and America in exporting the Ligurian bee to the island of New Zealand, but in every instance it had resulted in failure; when the hives reached their destination the occupants were dead. The success of the project was considered so essential to the welfare of the country, the Commissioner of Colonial Industries urged the appropriation of \$2500 to send a man to Europe on this especial errand. But, while the matter was under consideration private enterprise was at work striving to bring about its accomplishment. S. C. Farr, secretary of the Canterbury Acclimation society, had communicated with R. J. Creighton of the San Francisco Post, the official representative of New Zealand in that city. Mr. Creighton wrote to Mr. Levering, a pioneer bee keeper in Los Angeles county, then conducting a department of apiculture [sic] in the Los Angeles Herald, requesting his assistance, which was readily given.

Mr. Creighton ordered two colonies of bees sent to San Francisco early in July in time for the steamer Australia, which was to sail for Auckland [sic], under command of Captain Cargill. All the details were left to Mr. Levering's well known knowledge and experience in bee culture. He had hives constructed after his own plan, similar to those used in his apiary, except that special provision was made for ventilation in crossing the equator. An orifice was left in the side of the hive in front, covered with wire cloth. A small V-shaped box was placed over the opening on the outside with a sliding cover on top. The box was filled with sponge to be moistened occasionally with fresh water, which the bees could inhale through the wire cloth and which also cooled the atmosphere of their prison. A similar opening was left in the top of the hive, covered with [sic] wire and provided with a sliding lid for protection against possible cold. Several three-quarter inch augur holes in the floor permitted a circulation of air. The alighting board and the top board, each extended out

about four inches and the space between being securely covered with wire cloth formed an air chamber through which the honey-makers could circulate at will, or at the promptings of instinct, as the case may be. A sufficient amount of honey in old comb well sealed over, was provided for food, a frame or two of brood comb, empty frames and frames of empty comb, kept in place by wooden slats, filled the remaining space and supplied the working implements for the ever-busy and industrious inmates. About one-half the colony with a queen was put in each hive and the tops firmly screwed down; the object of dividing the colony being to obviate the heat that the whole would engender in crossing the equator, which would have melted the comb and caused the bees to perish in their own sweetness. In Mr. Levering's opinion the failures of other shippers were due to their putting an entire colony in a hive, which, with the honey and the comb necessary, could not withstand the heat of the equator; an important factor in the success of the undertaking which had been overlooked. After the bees were placed aboard the steamer a gentleman considered an authority on bee culture, assured Captain Cargill that they could not survive the voyage, owing to the faulty construction of the hives.


In October following, the Herald of Auckland [sic] announced the safe arrival of the Los Angeles county bees; a public demonstration of rejoicing was held and more orders for bees followed. In the course of a few months Mr. Levering shipped a number of colonies without the loss of a single bee, and the increase soon supplied New Zealand. Mr. Levering, having been so successful with Italian bees, was asked to send bumble bees, but after a long and fruitless search for them in Southern California, he was forced to abandon the project, as they are not natives of this part of the world.

Red clover had previously been raised in New Zealand, but produced no seed, there being no insect there to pollinize the blossom, consequently seed for each crop had to be imported from other countries. In 1889 the newspapers of Auckland [sic] stated that the island was then exporting →

clover seed of home raising. New Zealand is unquestionably deeply indebted to California and to Mr. Levering for the growth of its resources in apiculture [sic] and a very valuable and appetizing food product, but aside from newspaper glory, the mere price of the colonies of bees and the satisfaction of a deed well done there has been no substantial acknowledgement of the debt.

Source

Bowman, Mary M. How New Zealand got its honey bees. *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1905), pp. 208–210. Published by University of California Press on behalf of the Historical Society of Southern California. Early Journal Content provided courtesy of JSTOR. Article DOI: 10.2307/41168591. Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41168591>. This content downloaded from 210.246.60.80 on Wed, 30 Oct 2013 20:54:24 PM (EST).

[Editor's note: Thanks to Prof Peter Molan for sending the link to this journal.] 

Get snapping

Autumn is nearly upon us, so it's time to start taking some photos to enter in the sixth annual Ecroyd/NZAI photography competition, to be held as part of the New Zealand Apiculture Industry (NZAI) Conference, Wanganui, 22–26 June 2014.

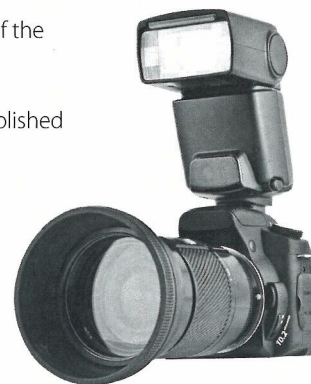
Entries will be accepted in the following categories:


- Class A. Close-up print.** Subject must relate to beekeeping.
- Class B. Scenic print.** Apiary subject such as flowers, hives etc.
- Class C. Portrait print.** Person, beekeeping procedure, honey, hive by-product processing in appropriate setting, commercial frontage or beekeeping base.
- Class D. Essay prints.** A set of from 4 to 7 pictures depicting a beekeeping story.

The photo competition is open to all registered members of the **NBA and BIG.**

As an added inducement, winning photographs will be published in *The New Zealand BeeKeeper*, perhaps even on the front cover if taken in portrait format.

For more information, contact Mary-Ann Lindsay, lindsay.apiaries@clear.net.nz





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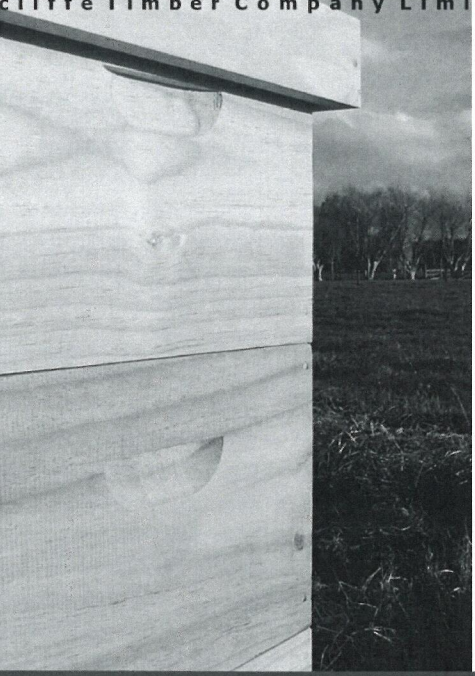
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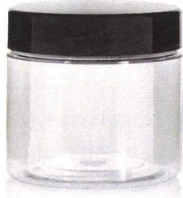
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If your details have changed, please email editor@nba.org.nz and secretary@nba.org.nz so that we can update your details in the journal and on the NBA website www.nba.org.nz.



360ml Round Pot



500gm Round Jar



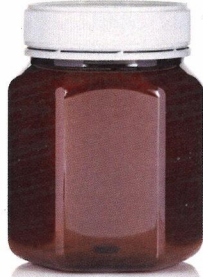
340gm Round Jar
(coming soon)



250gm Round Jar



2kg Hex Jar



1kg Hex Jar



500gm Hex Jar



250gm Hex Jar



2kg Square Jar



1kg Square Jar



500gm Square Jar



250gm Square Jar

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