

February 2015, Volume 23 No. 1

# The NEW ZEALAND BeeKeeper



Challenges  
and change

- Industry unification project information
- Canterbury Branch varroa field day • Requeening advice

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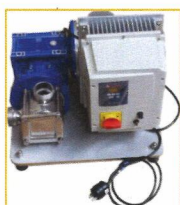
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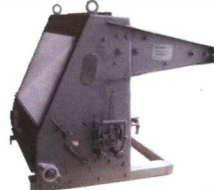
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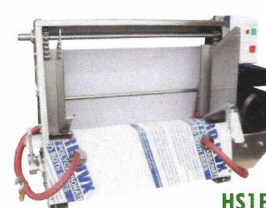
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Front cover: A smoker sits atop a hive in Featherston, Wairarapa.  
Photo: Ervin Manjares.

# Challenges and change

By Ricki Leahy, NBA President

At last, summer has arrived after one of the most challenging springs for many beekeepers.

We probably regret those hives that swarmed on us and are rethinking what else we could have done to entice the bees to stay at home. At least beekeeping isn't boring.

As one would expect, the break over Christmas and new year has put a wee handbrake on the Interim Working Group's proceedings for about a fortnight. Even so, things have been ticking along steadily. As I write, there isn't anything particular to report, except that a face-to-face meeting will have taken place by the time you read this.

This meeting will have enabled the Interim Working Group and the team from our independent facilitator, Catalyst® Ltd, to meet each other face to face and make some basic decisions about scoping and the way forward. I'm certain that the momentum being created will be maintained now that Catalyst has been charged with the task of delivering a proposal to all industry stakeholders to establish and achieve a fully funded industry group structure.

### Change is necessary

Our industry has changed and we all need to change also. The bee industry has become a lot more profitable over the last decade or so: you could say that we have become more recognised as the key to the success of the majority of the primary industries, as a result of the good pollinating work by our bees. All of our product values have increased and remain firm. Beekeeping, if managed properly, can be very financially rewarding. Yet, as a whole, for some reason we continue to behave like we are a poor industry. We really can't face the future being so dependent on voluntary inputs: it's simply not sustainable.

We need a fully funded industry group structure, which will only be realised when some fundamental changes take place. We

also need to consider that the costs of making these changes will be a collective investment towards our future in creating a stronger platform for future growth and prosperity.

So if you are in business and making a living from your bees or from bee products, please consider donating some funds to help the Interim Working Group work through this process. Remember, we are volunteers from within the industry trying to do the best for us all. We need your support, so if you are doing 'all right', please be generous about donating even hundreds or thousands of dollars. Please think about the values that advocacy has had—and will have—to the future success of your business. All of us have been sent information as to where and how to donate: please refer to the insert in this journal and contribute if you can.

### Beekeeping ethics

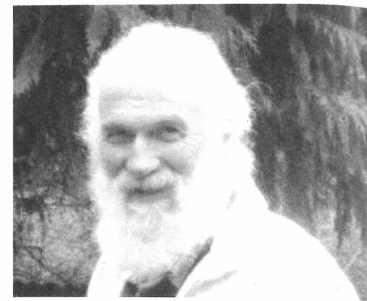
I am constantly reminded about how things used to be in the 'good old days', when we all looked out for and seemed to be more caring and respectful of each other. In those times there was much less pushing into other beekeepers' 'territory' along with those accompanying accusations of chequebook bullying.

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**"...hopefully the practice of good ethics will lead to more good ethics."**

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The NBA Management Team has also conveyed a growing concern about the increasing number of complaints regarding beehives being placed inconsiderately on sites where bees are causing a nuisance and disturbance to other people. Often it seems that the offending beekeepers do not have



any permission or agreements to have hives there.

Regrettably, affected landowners, neighbours, other beekeepers and even councils are requesting that some sort of action be taken. What should we do? Surely it's best for all if these situations never arise.

Maybe we should figure that it isn't too late. If we haven't yet made our New Year's resolution, make one now. Perhaps ethics, the moral beliefs of right or wrong, is a good topic for us all to think about and resolve to change.

Don't get me wrong. I know we can't expect to hold down a whole lot of area with just a few hives, and I do understand how landowners naturally desire to see a return from as many of the activities on their farms as possible. It is a changing ballgame out there: like anything in life, change is constant and if we have the desire to survive, we simply have to cope and adapt to whatever changes are thrust upon us.

We need to realise that this may mean that we need to adopt a different partnership arrangement with landowners. But surely we can display ethics that don't, for instance, involve a local beekeeper being totally squeezed out, possibly one who has been there for decades or even generations. These people quite likely live in the same community and the beekeeper's kids probably ride on the same school bus as, say, the landowner's kids. Surely there is room for some basic ethics to be displayed.

Just as love grows more love, so hopefully the practice of good ethics will lead to more good ethics.

### Beekeepers' misfortune

On another note, it was very distressing to have heard that another honey house has

*Continued on page 6*

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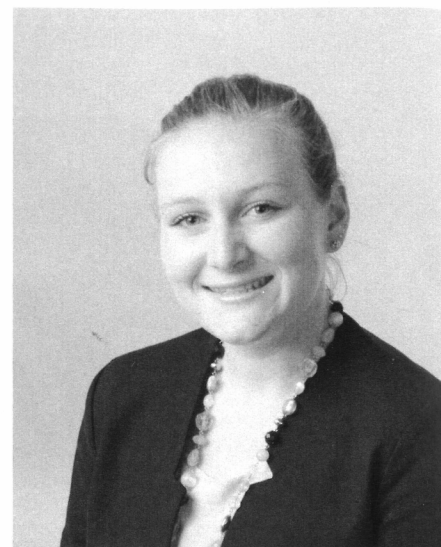
## NBA MANAGEMENT TEAM

# New Executive Secretary

Lauren Crimp is our new Executive Secretary at the NBA.

Lauren has a Bachelor of Communication in Public Relations from Massey University, and during her studies she had a number of volunteer positions doing communication work for community groups.

Lauren's administrative and organisational skills will keep everything ticking here at the NBA. She looks forward to meeting some of you in future, and learning all the ins and outs of the beekeeping industry!



*Continued from page 4*

burnt to the ground. All our sympathies go out to Murray and Russell Poole from Alexandra, who, most unfortunately, lost everything in their shed to the fire. Best wishes that they can get back up and operating again. It is heartening to hear of the support being offered to extract honey and supply supers, as well as all of the usual kinds of support we give each other in such circumstances.

Anyway, I hope the season has picked up for us all after that very unsettled start. Happy beekeeping.



## NBA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

# What is an animal?

By Don MacLeod, Committee member

The next time you are talking to your bee-friendly local MPI official, ask them for their definition of an animal.

You may find that your local MPI official is somewhat confused, as they administer a number of Acts with different definitions.

The Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Act 1997, defines an animal broadly: "animal means any living stage of any member of the animal kingdom except human beings." (ACVM Act 1997, Section 2, Interpretation.)

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 specifically excludes insects such as honeybees, and

also all life stages in the hive: "(c), any animal in the pre-natal, pre-hatched, larval, or other such developmental stage" (Animal Welfare Act, 1999, section 4, Interpretation). So a person using a pesticide that kills your bees or wipes out your hive is not liable for any cruelty to honey bees.

The Animal Products Act 1999 specifically includes insects. "[A]nimal means any member of the animal kingdom, and includes— (a) any mammal, bird, finfish, shellfish, reptile, amphibian, insect, or invertebrate: (b) any other creature or entity that is declared by the Minister by notice in the Gazette to be an animal for the purposes of this Act;—" (Animal Welfare Act, 1999, section 4, Interpretation)

Dr John McLean, our bee-friendly entomologist, describes the policy dilemma illustrated in the Animal Welfare Act 1999:

*"So in the Animal Welfare Act 1999, the government is only concerned with*

*arthropods that have five pairs of legs (crayfish, lobster or crab—they just happen to be edible). If the arthropod has only four pairs of legs (spiders) or only three pairs of legs (insects), they are not an animal. Likewise if the arthropod has more than five pairs of legs, then as a slater (7+ pairs), centipede (one pair per many segments) or millipede (two pairs of legs per segment) then they are not an animal either. What it is to be an uninformed policy developer hiding in the office towers of Wellington!"*

For your information, MPI has no enforceable Act to manage pesticide use that causes death to managed beneficial animals such as pollinators like bees or bumble bees.



# Building a H&S industry document

By the Publications Committee

## Let's build an industry document for health and safety.

We have all seen the publicity generated and employers hit with financial penalties when things go wrong in the workplace.

All commercial beekeepers should have everything documented in their Health and Safety plans so that their employees are aware of all the hazards they may face; however it's quite a job to think about and document everything.

We would like beekeepers who have noted some of the more unusual and obscure hazards to write and let us know about them, including how they addressed these hazards. We can publish these in *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* so beekeepers can incorporate them into their Health and Safety plans. Write

to [editor@nba.org.nz](mailto:editor@nba.org.nz) or refer to the contact details for Nancy Fithian on page 3.

One of the suggestions to come out of the Bee Products Standards Council (BPSC) meeting in November 2014 was to advise employees in possible tutin-infested areas not to taste the honey from the frames as they go through the uncapper. It's very tempting to just taste a different-coloured honey in a frame to determine what it is, but there is significantly greater risk when honey is eaten directly off the comb, especially in a hot, dry season.

With this year's poor honey production, bees may turn to other sources and one of these could be honey dew off tutin bushes. A little reminder to staff wouldn't hurt.

A human pharmacokinetic study of tutin in honey showed there is a lag time of 4.8 hours after ingestion and another 14 hours after that when a second more severe peak occurs

due to delayed absorption (Fields et al., 2014). The authors stated, "The evidence from the 2008 honey poisoning episode indicates that the onset of tonic-clonic seizures, which were observed in 4/11 confirmed cases, was consistently not less than 12 h after honey consumption".

Signs of tutin poisoning include giddiness, increased excitability, stupor, violent convulsions, vomiting, seizures and coma. If tutin poisoning is suspected, seek medical assistance immediately on becoming unwell.

### Reference

Fields, B. A., Reeve, J., Bartholomaeus, A., & Mueller, U. (2014). Human pharmacokinetic study of tutin in honey; a plant-derived neurotoxin. *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, 72, 234–241. Retrieved December 7, 2014, from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority website [www.nzfsa.govt.nz](http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Response to 'The future of the NBA'

By Mark Ross, General Manager, Policy and Advocacy, Federated Farmers of New Zealand

I am writing to you to correct a statement in the letter to the editor written by Mr Ian Berry, NBA Life Member on 'The future of the NBA'.

In Mr Berry's letter he makes the statement that "the introduction of genetically modified

crops into New Zealand is apparently favoured by Federated Farmers". This statement is incorrect.

Federated Farmers policy on Genetic Modification has not altered for over eight years. A key part of the policy is that each individual case of genetic technology will be considered on its own merits if considered appropriate. Our policy does not favour the introduction of genetically modified crops into New Zealand as alluded to by Mr Berry. We do endorse individual farmers' rights to determine what technologies are used in their production systems.

As a general statement, Federated Farmers does see the potential that gene technology has to benefit New Zealand producers, providing appropriate controls exist to ensure the safety of human health and the environment. Regulatory frameworks established to scientifically assess and manage any risks to the health and safety of people and the environment from the application of gene technology is recognised and supported by Federated Farmers.

[Editor's note: please go to page 18 for an additional response from Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group.]

# News from the EPA

## New Hazardous Substances 0800 number and email address

There is a new 0800 number for EPA hazardous substances queries.

The new number is 0800 HAZSUBS (0800 429 7827) and the new email address is hazardous.substances@epa.govt.nz

All technical queries on hazardous substance applications and compliance can be directed to this number.

## Update on proposals for EPA Notices

The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act) is being amended to improve its workability and make it easier for people to understand their obligations for hazardous substances. Part of this reform is the development of EPA Notices, which will simplify the HSNO Act's key requirements.

The first consultation document provides our proposals for four EPA Notices:

1. hazard classification system
2. labelling
3. safety data sheets
4. packaging.

Submissions on this document are due on 20 February.

Submissions on the second consultation document (Enforcement officer qualifications) are due on 9 February.

EPA encourages all interested parties to provide feedback. Keep checking <http://www.epa.govt.nz/hazardous-substances/hsno-reform/Pages/Get-involved.aspx> for their release.

## HSNO Monitoring Report 2014 released

The EPA released its 2014 report on Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO) in early October 2014.

See <http://www.epa.govt.nz/news/news/Pages/HSNO-Monitoring-Report-2014-.aspx> for details.

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# Replace those swarm queens

By Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

This season I have been in a rebuilding phase to make up for some of the losses that mites caused when I couldn't treat hives on time due to a bout of ill health.

I have been making five-frame nucs (four with bees and brood etc., and one of foundation to allow for expansion), and adding either queen cells or virgin queens from some of my early-swarming hives. I placed some of these nucs on my front lawn to mate, as the land next door used to be a drone-congregating area until they built houses on it.

Drones are just as important as queens when selecting progeny to breed from. German research has found that we need 10,000 drones in a congregation area for good matings but drones are a fairly fragile beast: as many as 50% never make it to full maturity. Therefore I need at least six frames of drone brood in hives around these nucs. These drones should have been raised without the use of miticides, but I can't do that as the hives would soon be swamped with mites.

A lot of my hives have a drone frame (an empty frame without wires) so that I can reduce mite numbers by cutting out capped drone brood. Instead of producing chook food, I have been bringing the odd frame home from some of the better-looking colonies and putting them in my garden hive to flood the area with drones.

I was quite pleased with my results: the queen mated and built up to a point where there was brood on all frames before I transferred them to full-size boxes.



*A brood frame from one of my nucs. This is what yours should look like. Photo: Frank Lindsay.*

At the same time, I was called about a couple of swarms and because they were close by, I elected to collect them myself. One went into rejected frames (too much drone brood) and I placed the other onto foundation frames to see what would happen. Both swarms were fairly small and headed by a virgin, so presumably mated with my drones.

The results were quite interesting. My queens were laying out full frames after a month, while these smaller swarms, which were two weeks behind in their development, only had patches of brood in frames, and their laying pattern and the bees were definitely inferior. One queen started laying two or three eggs in chains in each cell and ended up with what looked like a drone layer until she was able to control her egg laying. Observably the second and third eggs were unfertilised; hence the drones in the worker cells. I decided to allow her to keep laying instead of giving her a royal squash and after a week she was laying a single egg in every cell.

The initial results from these swarm queens weren't that good: spotty brood and bees showing paralysis, which is something I have seen only in a couple of my hives every now and then.

The moral of the story (and why it's recommended) is that all swarm queens should be changed for ones that are produced by a queen breeder. Alternatively, use your best bees to produce replacement queens so you are constantly upgrading your bees.



## Prepare for the honey and photo competitions!

Summer is a good time to start preparing for the national honey competition and the Ecroyd/Apiculture industry photography competition, both of which will be held at the New Zealand Apiculture Conference, Wairakei Resort Taupo, June 2015.



Visit [www.nba.org.nz/events](http://www.nba.org.nz/events) for a sample of the schedule, rules and entry forms for both competitions.

# Canterbury Branch field day report

By Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

The Canterbury Branch hosted an education field day on varroa control methods at the Hornby Workingmen's Club, 23 November 2014, as a response to unusually high hive losses during the winter.

It was suggested that most of these hive deaths were related to varroa re-invasion, and beekeepers were not monitoring after the application was removed to see that it had worked. The Branch invited beekeepers from throughout New Zealand, who told of their experience with different methods and provided information freely.

Brian Alexander started off by telling us how he dealt with finding strip-resistant mites and his choice of treatment was now Apiguard® a thymol-based mineral oil paste. With continuous brood rearing in his hives (Northland), he had to apply six treatments to get and keep mite levels low. Although expensive, his hives were looking as good as ever coming into spring.

Warren Hantz explained how he uses Apivar®. This type of strip takes time to build up in the hive as it requires continuous contact with the bees, so should be placed in between frames of brood. However, the bees sometimes move away from the strips, negating the treatment, so overseas beekeepers recommend that they be repositioned after a month so bee contact is maintained. Beekeepers in the North Island had experienced problems initially with this treatment until they learnt how to use it. Because of its slow build-up, hives with very high mite numbers can be damaged before control is established. Apivar® can be ineffective during periods of high humidity

and on wet days. Hives should have plenty of ventilation. The recommended dose was one strip per five frames of bees. Warren was putting four strips in a hive and getting good results.

### Nutrition and AFB control

Dr John McLean gave us a run-down on the nutritional requirements of a hive and which pheromone products and pollen supplements were out there to support bee development. The best by far is natural pollen, so plant for your bees. John recommended that we should advise farmers to use the Trees for Bees website for ideas as to what to plant. Trees for Bees has set up some trial farms. It will be interesting to see the results as these plantings mature. *[Editor's note: see articles about these trials in the June and July 2014 journals.]*

Quentin Chollet, an apiculture officer withASUREQuality Limited, Lincoln, told us not to take our eyes off AFB, which is mostly a beekeeper-spread disease. There was quite a bit of robust debate around the subject. Marco Gonzalez showed us how we can use an ultraviolet light torch to identify AFB scale, which changes the black larvae to a creamy white under the light. Caution must be used as pollen and moulds can also fluoresce white, thus confusing the issue, but it's a very good tool to use when assessing dead-outs.

### FGMO foggers and oxalic acid vaporisers

Jeff Robinson (of Country Calendar fame) showed us the oxalic acid vaporiser he was using. There are several on the market, based on a hot pad heated by a diesel glow plug heater. He was vaporising two grams every four days to get control. His method was to chock up the front of the hive with a wedge so he could get the vaporiser in the entrance and on to the middle of the bottom board, then covered the entrance with a cloth while the acid vaporised. The vaporiser was operated via a 12-volt battery. This method would require a bank of them for a commercial beekeeper but was ideal for the hobbyist. One must wear the correct face mask as the fumes are deadly. Marco Gonzalez (an apiculture officer with

ASUREQuality Limited) pointed out that a code of practice needs to be developed for this treatment method.

During the lunch break, I demonstrated the Burgess fogger, using food grade mineral oil (FGMO) as the mite knockdown agent. Most beekeepers with foggers use it as part of a series of treatments used to combat mites. FGMO gives only a one- to two-day knockdown of phoretic mites. A code of practice has been registered with MPI to use FGMO; however, most were not applying the fog correctly. You should use a single squirt on the top bars of a nuc, two squirts in a single hive and four squirts, one second apart, in a hive two or more supers high.

Hold the fogger 600 mm out from the entrance so a cool fog is introduced into the side of the hive entrance. Only about 10 percent of the fog goes into the hive. It coats the bees, which blocks the mite's spiracles (openings to the trachea), causing the mite to suffocate. Slippery bees also assist by causing the mites to drop off.

Many were using a fogger instead of a smoker when they visit hives on their normal cycle. **NB: overuse can kill a colony.** *[Editor's note: see Appendix 6 (pages 165–170) of the revised edition of Control of Varroa for the Code of Practice for FGMO, developed by the NBA.]*

Jeff Robinson demonstrated the oxalic acid vaporiser, something he couldn't do indoors. It takes two minutes to heat and treat a hive. I have used a different type of vaporiser, a JB200 vaporiser manufactured by Heilyser Technology, in Sidney, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The Heilyser vaporiser is heated using a Primus® bottle and tip. (This is a lot more fiddly and requires more gear than Jeff's vaporiser.)

With the JB200, the hive is blocked completely, the hot oxalic vapour is pumped in and the hive left sealed for 10 minutes so the oxalic acid crystallises again on the inside surfaces of the hive. Two grams gives a seven- to 10-day knockdown of mites. Five grams gives the same control but like all organic methods, more doesn't mean better control; in fact, it frequently means dead →

bees and queens. I felt Jeff wasn't sealing the hive for long enough so wasn't obtaining the best results. My method required me to put the vaporiser in a big empty fruit can during fire restrictions, as it is worked close to the ground with a naked flame.

For the commercial beekeeper, the Italian firm Lega has produced a vaporiser that fits on the end of a Steinel® 2000-watt hot air gun (available in New Zealand). If you are contemplating purchasing one, buy the vaporiser only and have it sea freighted to New Zealand, as air freight costs a fortune.

In the past, I found I needed a five-kilowatt generator to work the Steinel® hot air gun; however, since the field day I have found the new Bosch 630 DCE fits the vaporiser perfectly and runs OK on my 2.6-kilowatt inverter generator.

The procedure is to heat the gun for five minutes at the highest temperature setting to get the vaporiser up to temperature and then put in the bowl containing the oxalic acid in (maximum of 22 grams). Then, using the lower switch air setting (II), reduce the gun-setting temperature to 500°C so it keeps the vaporiser at 190°C. This way the oxalic acid vaporises as it's boiled off without burning. (You need some sort of thermometer to monitor the temperature.) Lega recommends that the vapour be applied inside the hive for 30 seconds, which gives about a two-gram treatment.

Oxalic acid can be applied a number of times weekly/monthly in the autumn until varroa mite drop is less than one per day. Ideally it works best during the broodless period and would require more visits if there is brood in the hives. *An organic vapour mask is essential, as this stuff can kill you in relatively low concentrations.* It costs around \$2,000 to set up but after that it's five cents per hive treatment, plus time and travel.

Perhaps this is a better treatment than using a fogger as it gives a longer knock down period and doesn't attract fire engines but a fogger can stop robbing as it disrupts the hive. The beauty of the treatment is that it doesn't require the hive to be opened but as Marco Gonzalez stated, it will require someone to prepare a code of practice for this particular use of oxalic acid.

## ApiLife VAR® and similar products

After lunch, I talked on my use of ApiLife VAR®. When considering using vapours for a treatment (thymol, formic acid, etc.), regard it as being just like water. If water flows out of the hive, your treatment won't be so effective. You want to hold it in the hive as long as possible. Closing the entrance down, tipping the bottom board back slightly at the entrance (or introducing an entrance block to create a pool of acid on the bottom board), and eliminating top ventilation are all essential. Vapours last longer and work better in cooler temperatures (10–25°C).

ApiLife VAR® consists of a number of chemicals (thymol, menthol, eucalyptus and camphor) on a wafer which is broken up and applied immediately over the brood nest frames. Commercial beekeepers have found it better to only break the wafer in half and repeat three to four times, 20 days apart. For a large hive with high mite numbers, use a full wafer initially.

Trevor Cullen told me there are only three rules when using thymol—don't get it in your eyes, don't get it in your eyes, don't get it in your eyes. Wear protective gloves and don't store any product in the cab of the truck. A little bit on your clothing goes a long way.

Ross McCusker demonstrated drone brood management and formic acid using slow-release pads and oxalic acid dribble methods. Ross was an organic beekeeper who, until recently, had been succeeding in keeping his hives organic. But Ross found that using organic treatments were time consuming, and results were not consistent.

Ross demonstrated an oxalic acid dribble method using a spray pump. He measured the amount to start with to get that correct and demonstrated how to quickly apply it across the frames. It was perhaps one of the easiest treatments to use when hives were broodless, but he emphasised that the liquid must be at 35°C for the bees to take it up when it's frosty. If it's colder, it just runs off the bees and out the front of the hive.

I was very impressed with his formic acid treatment method and the way he had set up a pump to deliver the correct amount of acid into a plastic bag containing an absorbent board (pinex) before the bag was

heat sealed. He sets up hives using a top rim (top eke) to hold the pad, which gives an air space for the acid to evaporate; plus he also reduced the entrance to 17 millimetres. His long-acting pads needed a cut on the top of each side of the plastic bag so air flowed in and vapour flowed out of the main bottom slot, evaporating about 12 grams of acid per day. These work like the MiteGone™ pads and for background information, I suggest a visit to the MiteGone website (<http://www.mitegone.com>).

MiteGone pads are available in New Zealand from NZ Beeswax. Ross had tried these out initially but found them fragile and didn't stand up to the knocks of commercial use, so adapted this present method. Ross found he could extend the treatment period by adding more acid to the bags.

Ross also explained his drone brood treatment method. He places an empty frame on the outside of the brood nest, which he cuts out completely before the drones have an opportunity to emerge (18–24 days). This method is very effective at keeping mite levels low.

Dr John McLean then gave us a biology lesson, telling us about the tastes and smells in the life of a bee.

Marco Gonzalez wrapped up the day's presentations with a discussion of the recent winter hive deaths in the region and answered questions from the floor.

The day finished with afternoon tea and a talk with the sponsors: BeeLine Supplies Ltd equipment was available from Brian Pilley; Russell Berry couldn't be there to show Arataki propolis mats so Roger Bray assisted; NZ Beeswax Ltd displayed Apivar® and Honey-B-Healthy™, and the Canterbury Branch had a display table. Thanks to AsureQuality for providing the visual aids. I spotted a new type of cell protector developed by Martin Laas that was saving him considerable time in his queen rearing. Brian Pilley has these for sale.

This was a very enjoyable field day with a full exchange of ideas. What perhaps wasn't stressed enough was that all beekeepers start treating hives at the same time starting

*Continued on page 13*

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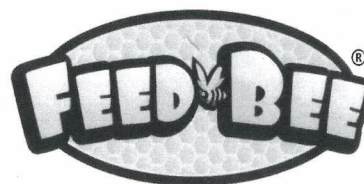
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Continued from page 11

mid February. Coordinate hive treatments in an area. One untreated hive can take down an apiary in the middle of winter by your bees robbing the dying feral hives. I now do a quick check of my hive bottom board slides during June to identify those apiaries that need re-treating.

Thanks to the Canterbury Branch for inviting us and for their hospitality and to the Brays for their tour of Christchurch. The broken buildings have mostly been cleared and new ones are arising from the dust (and I do mean dust) in the middle of an empty city centre. What I really noticed was the absence of birdlife around Christchurch—I only saw the normal introduced seedeaters. Plant more nectar trees that provide flowers during the whole year and enjoy the resurgence of our native birds. We have tui, the odd bellbird, waxeyes, grey warblers plus the local imports: blackbirds, thrushes, sparrows and finches. There's birdsong at dawn and into the evening. I feel you are missing this in Christchurch.



## Thanks to Trevor Cullen

Many of you would have read in the December journal that Trevor Cullen is retiring from Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies after 25 years after selling the business to Bruce and Susan Clow.

Trevor has also retired from NBA's Publications Committee.

We thank Trevor for his many years of advice and support to the committee, for advertising in the journal and for his generous sponsorship of conferences.

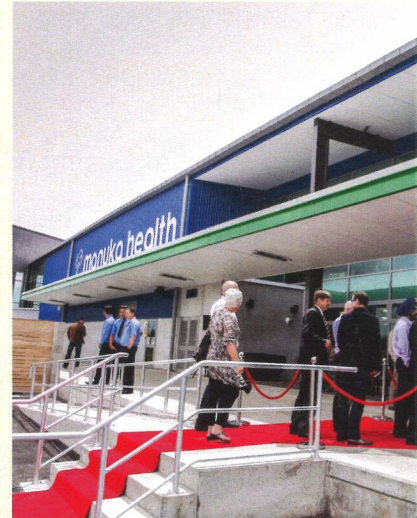
Enjoy your retirement, Trevor: you've earned it!

## New Manuka Health facility

Courtesy of Manuka Health

As reported in the December 2014 journal (page 30), Manuka Health launched its brand new \$10-million dollar, purpose-built honey processing and distribution centre in Te Awamutu on 21 November 2014.

We didn't have enough space to run photos, so here's a sampling of events on the day.



Top left: MP Barbara Kuriger addressing the crowd (Barbara and Chairman Ray Thompson) officially opened the facility. Top right: Guests entering the new Manuka Health Manuka honey processing and distribution facility.

Below: The facility in Te Awamutu. Photos: Frances Krefl.



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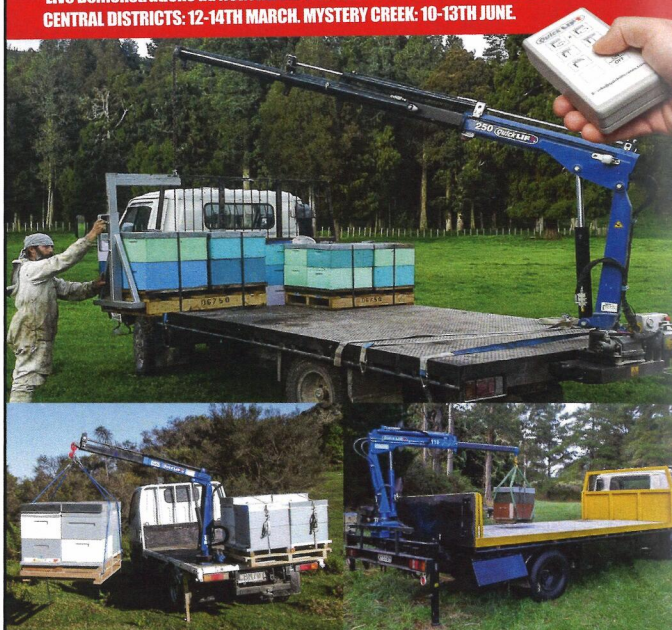
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# Requeening your beehive

By Gary Jeffery, Mountain Beech Apiaries, Westport

We requeen our beehives for various reasons. In this article, I will suggest some tips appropriate to each situation.

Before doing that, here is some advice on a method I use to place a queen in a hive. There are a lot of methods, but I usually just open up some honey at the top of a brood comb and put the cage on its side in the space provided.

My theory is the bees will clean up the honey and the bees in the cage will eat some as well, thus giving both groups a similar smell. Avoid getting honey into the cage on the bees inside.

Bob Davidson (Senior) used to put about 50 or so bees in a small, brown paper bag (with a few little holes in it for ventilation) from the hive the queen was intended for. He then dropped the queen out of the cage into the bag, closed it and gave it a number of shakes before placing it between a couple of brood frames. The bees would chew the bag to let the queen out.

Others say it is best to spray the bees in the hive with a lavender-scented aerosol, including the queen and bees in the cage, but don't spray too much on the queen. Then open the queen cage and let the queen run out into the hive.

I am not recommending any system as all have their benefits (and possibly, faults). Every beekeeper will guarantee his or her method is the best.

I have never lost a queen when I just dug a hole in some honeycomb. I pressed the queen into the honey and smeared honey over the top of her. Yes, it's a barbaric system, but I only use it for a queen I don't care about.

### Requeening for various situations

As I stated at the beginning of this article, we requeen our beehives for a number of reasons:

1. because the hive is queenless
2. the queen is getting too old to lay properly
3. to reduce swarming
4. to replace a queen in a bad-tempered hive.

Following are some requeening methods to deal with each of these situations.

### Queenless hive

Often someone rings up to say their hive is queenless and they need a new queen. Afterwards, they might ring back to say that the new bees are quite nasty and blame the new queen.

Often a hive swarms leaving behind a virgin. The virgin will mate and generally starts laying about the time the last of the old brood hatches, but with no brood, the beekeeper thinks the hive is queenless.

A virgin can be difficult to see and if you open the hive in the middle of the day, the virgin might be away mating. While you are looking through the hive, the queen might take to the air and return after you leave.

When you receive the new caged queen, open the hive and place the cage on its side on the top of the brood nest so the air can carry the scent of the queen to the bees in the hive. If the bees stream towards the cage, then your hive is actually queenless and you can introduce the new queen as planned.

If, however, the bees seem to ignore the new queen, then it is likely that there is a virgin present and you will have the job of finding and killing her before adding the caged queen. You often have to go through the hive many times to find a virgin and sometimes you will have to sieve the bees through an excluder. If you do this, avoid using excessive smoke or the queen will fly.

If you find and kill a virgin, then the introduced queen is nearly always accepted.

### Replacing an old queen

It will be obvious if the queen is getting too old to lay properly. The brood will be patchy or the area of brood is not increasing as quickly as it should.

In the past, queen bees usually did quite well into their third season. Nowadays, requeening in the second season is usually recommended, as the queen can be affected by factors such as mite treatments and moving hives to additional honey flows that keep her laying longer.

If the hive starts making queen cells to swarm, requeening is the easiest solution. However, remember the queen will nearly always be killed if queen cells have been started in the hive. The solution is to put the caged queen into the brood nest but leave the candy end closed. Break down any queen cells.

After about five days, shake all the bees off the combs to make certain there are no hidden queen cells. Break them down and then you can open the candy end of the cage and put it back into the hive.

If a queen is VERY valuable (such as a breeder queen), it could be worthwhile leaving the check for a full week, before checking for more queen cells. Don't wait any longer, as a virgin might have hatched in the meantime.

If you have a breeder queen, another idea is to make up a nucleus of field bees only; i.e., with no brood from which to rear a queen. Then you can introduce the queen in the normal way.

A good strain of bee sometimes supersedes in the autumn. If you come across a nice single queen cell in the late summer or autumn, you can probably leave it and will be rewarded by a nice young queen to head the hive into the winter. Hives seldom, if ever, swarm in late summer.

### Reducing swarming

Hives rarely swarm if the hive is headed by a new season's spring queen. However, when

*Continued on page 17*

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## April issue deadlines

The April issue of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* goes to all registered beekeepers in New Zealand.

The deadline for articles (and for reserving advertising) is 6 March 2015. Articles and advertising material received after 12 March might not be published.

### Contacts

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*Continued from page 15*

I was in Invercargill I collected a swarm that built up and swarmed again that season. Bees have a habit of changing the rules when you think you know everything bees are likely to do. They obviously have read a different book.

Some strains swarm far more than others and need different management if you are to obtain a crop. The Italian strain of bee can usually be persuaded to remain in the hive as long as you give the hive plenty of super space. But if the bees start to seal honey in brood frames just above the brood, swarming is likely. Try putting some new frames among the others in the brood nest to break up the honey pattern.

Italian-type bees usually send out the old queen with a large 'prime' swarm and the first virgin that emerges will sting the queen cells that have not yet emerged. If you kill that virgin and requeen at that stage you will not lose much of your crop, as then you have only lost one emergence of field bees.

If you wait until the new queen starts to lay, you will have also lost a complete emergence for several weeks thereafter.

The black races, however, often will hold the virgin queens in their cells, stopping them from emerging. After the old queen takes her prime swarm, the black bees will let a virgin emerge, which will fly away with a secondary swarm. They may do this several times and the parent hive will get progressively weaker as each swarm leaves. It will leave little more than enough bees to fill the brood nest for winter.

If you gain a swarm, it is a good idea to requeen it: this hive is very likely to swarm again next season, as the swarming instinct appears to be inherited.

### Replacing a queen in a bad-tempered hive

In the past, Italian-type bees were the main variety brought into New Zealand. I remember that Miss Shepherd from Rangiora used to import Caucasian bees to use in her rata sites near Otira, as they could survive better in the colder mountain conditions. However, crossing this strain with the Italian strain gave a rather bad-tempered bee and she had trouble keeping her workers because of them.

In the early days, the English and German strains were also brought into New Zealand, and even the French strain by French settlers in the Akaroa area. Most of these strains crossed with each other, resulting in a nasty-tempered bee.

Imports by beekeepers were stopped about the time I was working at Wallaceville Research Station 40 or more years ago, as it was recognised that we could end up with nasty diseases like Acarine (caused by the tracheal mite *Acarapis woodi*) if unregulated imports continued. [Editor's note: refer to the article on the tracheal mite by Quentin Chollet in the November 2014 journal.]

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## "Requeening nasty-tempered hives is not a straightforward affair."

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More recently, Carniolan semen was allowed in, as we were told that it would bring worthwhile characteristics to our bees. However, one characteristic is a tendency to swarm excessively, and another is a nasty temperament similar to that from crossing with other strains, as has occurred with earlier imports.

Requeening nasty-tempered hives is not a straightforward affair. First you have to find and kill the queen. I find it best to smoke a black hive quite heavily before opening it, and repeat several minutes later. Then when you remove the lid smoke quietly to settle the bees down. Do not smoke heavily as the aim is to keep the bees on the frames, not in the air where they are out of your control.

Next, as you remove each super, quietly smoke the hive again until you reach the brood nest. Then gently remove each brood frame and look for the queen. If you have gone through the brood nest (perhaps twice) without finding the queen, then resort to the next method; i.e., sieving the bees.

As the bees will probably be getting a bit nasty by this time, you want to make sieving as easy as possible. I prefer to lift the brood super (or supers) off the floorboard and place a good excluder on the floor. Then put an empty brood box on the excluder.

Next, shake all the bees off the brood combs in front of the hive and, giving a little gentle


smoke, chase them inside on to the floor. The empty brood frames are then put into the empty brood chamber in the order you removed them from the brood super.

Eventually all the brood combs will be back in the hive and the bees will go back onto the brood through the excluder. Leave the hive until late afternoon.

Next, in the evening, quietly lift the brood boxes, etc off the excluder. By then (all going well), there will only be the drones, the queen and a few worker bees with the queen.

Take the floorboard and excluder together some distance away from the hive, where you can carefully separate the excluder and floor to find and kill the trapped queen amongst the drones.

You are aiming to achieve a nice, quiet hive that needs only an occasional puff of smoke, and without having to use gloves except if the bees get upset when robbing starts at honey crop removal time.

You will want to use your veil as an accessory to use occasionally, perhaps when weather conditions are not favourable. We want a bee that can be worked in all weather conditions without getting distressed, yet still obtaining a good honey crop. 

## We've grown!

You might have noticed that this issue (as well as the December 2014 journal) is larger than usual.

Due to the demand for advertising in the journal, the decision has been taken to increase the length of the nine regular issues from 28 to 32 pages from now on.

The April and October journals will expand from 56 pages to 64.

This change will enable our valuable advertisers to promote their products and services to you, and will also help us to publish more articles, reports and photos.

Enjoy!

# At the table, or on the menu?

By John Hartnell, Chairman, Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group

It is with a tinge of sadness that I read the comments of Mr Ian Berry, in the December 2014 *BeeKeeper* journal.

Clearly, to continue down the same historical pathway has little, if any, value to our industry and only serves to remind us that some prefer division to inclusive unity. Beekeeper numbers continue to increase—now over 5,000—however, fewer than 20 per cent are members of any beekeeping industry organisation.

Membership numbers are a reflection of the lack of value that industry stakeholders see in the current models available. The status quo is not delivering tangible benefits and it is time for a complete review of our industry structure and funding mechanisms. I am pleased to report that this is under way now.

Without a single unified industry organisation, we risk not having a voice or seat at the table, whether it is market access, biosecurity, environmental protection standards, regional councils and district plans, just to name a few. We must strengthen our position as substantial stakeholders in New Zealand's economy, and we must deliver value if our position is to be respected both nationally and internationally.

Mr Berry raised some points to which I will respond.

**Genetically modified organisms:** FFNZ Bees are absolutely opposed to their introduction. We submit on every application through the EPA. We sit at the FFNZ table and are the ears and eyes of the bee industry on this subject. Our stance is respected by the EPA, and at the FFNZ National Council as we apply logic and common sense to fight for the future of many similar industries that are subject to this challenge.

**Introduced biological organisms:** we are faced with increasing pressure on our historical pollen resources such as broom and gorse. We recognise that the changing footprint of agriculture and horticulture has had an impact on our industry. While advocating for the retention of these plants, we have taken the initiative and in 2009 we commenced the 'Trees for Bees' programme. This has seen the development of regional planting guides, on-farm demonstration sites and the raising of awareness across the country, both urban and rural, of the need to support our bee population. This, I believe, is proactive and shows leadership.

**Relationships with farmers:** As beekeepers we are, in the majority, guests of the farming community. We use their land in pursuit of our beekeeping goals; yes, the farmer benefits but so do we as beekeepers. While we advocate for the retention of many key pollen and nectar resources, it is a hard argument when we look at invasive plants like blackberry and thistle. We should all be encouraging the simple principle that "if you remove a plant beneficial to the honeybee, then replace it with a less invasive alternative".

**Pesticides and their impact on the honeybee:** FFNZ Bees are extremely proactive on this issue. We submit on every EPA application to introduce new chemicals and insecticides that impact on bee health. Where able, we work alongside the NBA on key issues to add weight to our stated position. Much of our work focuses on the correct labelling information and the education of those who apply chemicals to crops, whether horticulture or agriculture. It is not just about on-farm application. Another key issue is seed coating technology and the integrity of the product at the point of planting. There are many parts to the picture and all must be considered. To halt the use of any product currently in use we need facts, not just hearsay. If possible, these facts must be New Zealand based and scientifically proven.

**A fresh start:** FFNZ Bees membership has clearly stated their position that the industry needs a fresh start. They voted at their 2014 AGM to support the change process and become founding members of a new, all-inclusive industry organisation, if this is what the independent consultation process determines is the best way forward. In our opinion, a fresh start will take more than the amalgamation of the two existing industry organisations, as that in itself will not deliver what Conference 2014 very clearly asked for.

Historically, beekeeping was a family-based business but in the past 10 years the industry has seen massive change. Incomes have grown substantially. Direct revenue from the sale of our products and services are predicted to hit \$300 million in 2015. Large corporates and smart marketing companies generate and represent a substantial portion of our revenue stream and can rightly claim key stakeholder status in our industry. The beekeeping industry is not what it was and being a good beekeeper is no longer enough. Beekeepers need skills and expertise to be able to deliver high-quality retail products to global markets. We need professionalism, respect and pride in our industry.

A single apicultural industry entity that incorporates the interests of all will make us a stronger stakeholder group and help us achieve these goals. Utilising an independent consultant will ensure that the recommendations made covering both structure and funding represent the views of the whole industry and reflect their wishes.

Change is never easy; however, we must consider all the facts and act in the best interests of the whole industry: this is our responsibility.



## Creating a platform for growth and prosperity

By Jane Lancaster, Catalyst®Ltd

At the 2014 New Zealand Apiculture Conference, industry stakeholders gave clear direction that a new way forward was required for the structure and funding of the industry.

Subsequently, an interim working group (IWG) comprising nominees from the National Beekeepers Association (NBA), Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group (BIG), the Honey Packers and Exporters Association (HPEA) and the hobbyist sector was convened under the chairmanship of Kim Singleton. The Industry Unification Project commenced with the goal to achieve a **"fully inclusive, fully funded industry group structure that will be a strong platform for future growth and prosperity."**

Because of the complexity and personalities involved at industry leadership level, the working group was unanimous on the need to have skilled independent facilitators from outside of industry to consult widely and gather information on what the industry requires with regard to future structure and funding. Catalyst® Ltd was appointed to this role.

### Snapshot of the industry

The honey industry worldwide is on a wave, and New Zealand is riding it. Global prices have more than doubled from just over US\$3000 a tonne in 2000 to over US\$7000 a tonne in 2010 (UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, FAOStat 2011).

The New Zealand honey industry is prospering from these global trends (Coriolis, 2012). Offshore demand for New Zealand honey has grown steadily. Between 2000 and 2010, the Free On Board export value

has grown at a compound 30% a year. In 1990, just 14% of the crop by volume was exported, but in 2010 well over half was exported.

In addition, New Zealand honey commands a premium over honey from other countries, with an average export price of US\$10.50/kg in 2010. The next highest is France, with an average price of US\$6.30.

Gross industry income is now \$271 million and the industry produces 15,000 tonnes honey annually. Gross beekeeper income is \$174 million.

In New Zealand over the last 10 years there have been three massive changes:

1. about 1800 new beekeepers, most of these hobbyists, making a total of about 5000 beekeepers
2. over 200,000 new hives, a 70% growth to a total of about 0.5 million hives
3. the economic success of the manuka industry.

Despite the growth achieved, the New Zealand apicultural industry is not well positioned for continued growth and is facing some significant challenges that need to be addressed by the industry together.

### Addressing the challenges together

These challenges include:

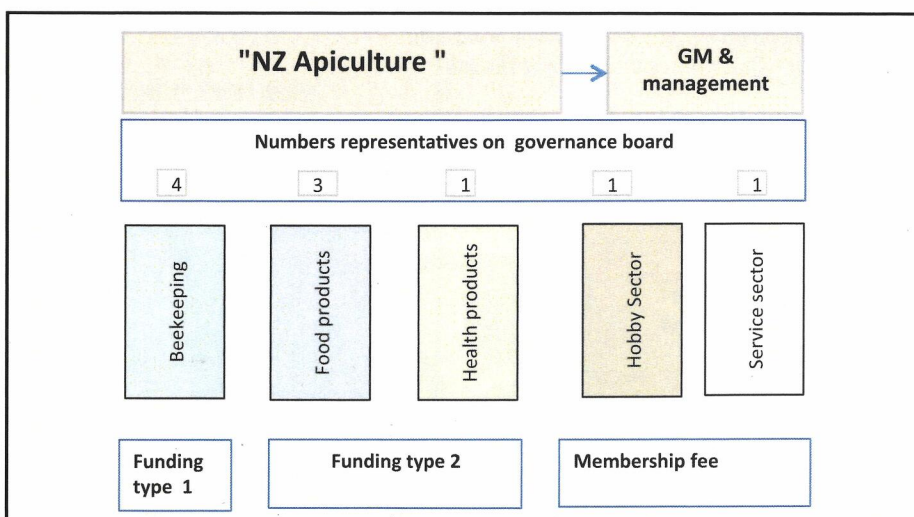
- divided representation
- under funded research & development
- bee health & disease management
- biosecurity
- international market access for our products
- 'truth in labelling' and NZ honey standards: taking responsibility for the quality we sell as market authorities are demanding Government-endorsed standards
- GMO/GE: maintaining NZ's key position in the food chain, delivering GMO/GE free food to the world
- a major shift in labelling laws with regard to health statements (effective January 2015)
- need for increasing industry training and disease recognition education, across the whole industry
- industry recognition across horticulture, agriculture, government and country.

### Foundation principles for a united Industry

There is a consistent view within the industry that the new body will encompass the full array of services and products offered from

*Continued on page 21*

### Model 1



Model 1 promotes and captures full industry inclusiveness in membership and funding, and has higher transition requirements from the current industry structure.

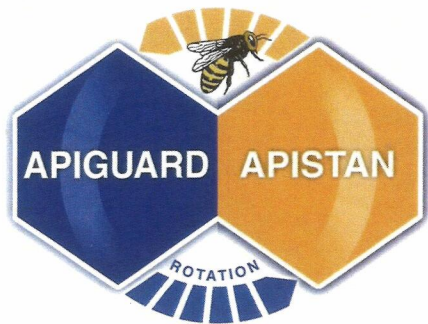
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**Apiguard** is best used when the weather is warm and consistently over 15C. Place the trays or spread some gel on the top of the brood box frames with room for the bees to get at the material. The concentrated natural ingredient encourages the bees to try and move the product out of the hive. This distributes the vapours of the thymol based **Apiguard** throughout the hive killing up to 97% of varroa mites.

In ten to fourteen days, check the hive and add another tray or more gel. This will complete the treatment. If you want to be sure to cover two full worker brood cycles, treat again in fourteen days. Use the full recommended dosage each time. Don't skimp—your bees and hives and honey crop are too valuable to try and save a dollar or two on an incorrect treatment.

A good rotation plan is to use **Apistan** in the autumn (or any time you discover increased mite concentrations) and **Apiguard** in the late spring/early summer just prior to the honey flow.

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When used according to the instructions, **Apistan** leaves NO residues in the honey. (If someone says otherwise they are either fools or deliberately trying to mislead you.) **Apistan** in the measured dosage strips and inserted into the hive as per the instructions is harmless to humans and honeybees. **Apiguard**, being a natural product derived from thyme is non-toxic to humans and does not affect honey or wax. It is approved in Europe as a varroa treatment for hives in organic honey production.

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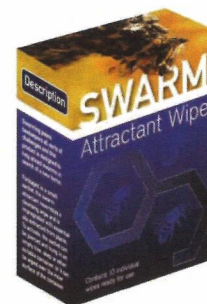
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Continued from page 19

beekeeping and pollination through to food and health products, and including hobby clubs and service companies.

Membership will be open to all industry participants. Funding structures are yet to be determined. If at some future stage levies are supported, it is likely that a levy will be on just the commercial part of the industry, and may be on apiarist and honey product manufacturers or apiarists only.

## A new way forward

What would a unified industry look like for structure, representation and funding? The IWG has recommended two models for consideration by the industry.

In Model 1:

"NZ Apiculture" is the peak body which administers the industry, and has governance representation as shown in the diagram on the previous page

"NZ Apiculture" would employ a dedicated management team, to represent the apiculture industry in all matters on a full-time basis

"NZ Apiculture" would collect funds from:

- apiarists with hives <50, including hobby sector
- apiarists with hives >50, including honey producers and contract pollinators.
- bee products processors/manufacturers
- service sector.

It is suggested that funding from apiarists "type 1" is based on number of hives, and funding from bee products. "Type 2" is based on volume of products produced. Other industry sectors would pay a membership fee.

During the transition to this model, the existing structures of BIG and NBA would manage voting for governance representation on "NZ Apiculture" without limiting full industry participation. Similarly for bee products and industry organisations like HPEA and UMFHA.

"NZ Apiculture" would eventually take on the management of membership and voting.

In Model 2:

"NZ Apiculture" has direct representation on governance from all commercial beekeeping, and bee products processors/manufacturers. "NZ Apiculture" would employ a dedicated management team as in model 1.

This model would collect funds "type 1" mainly from apiarists with hives >50. This includes honey producers and contract pollinators. This model reflects the view that funding should be collected at one point only.

Organisations such as Honey Packers and Exporters Association and Unique Manuka Factor Honey Association could continue,

as the food products and health products bodies, with elected representation on "NZ Apiculture".

There would be one beekeeping organisation. The hobby and service sectors could be represented as members of the beekeeping grouping.

## Industry survey

The industry survey will be seeking industry response to the models proposed above. The survey will be available electronically and in hard copy.

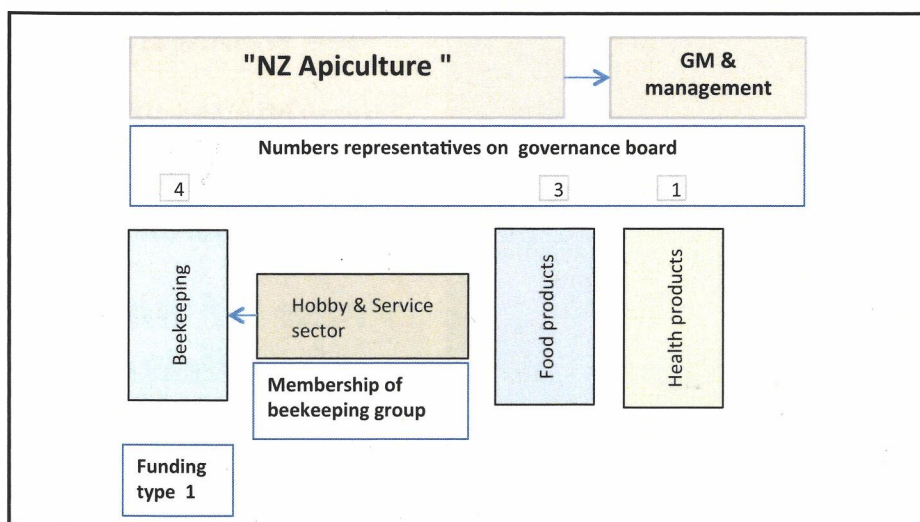
## Sources

Coriolis. (2012). *Investment opportunities in the New Zealand Honey industry*. Part of the Food & Beverage Information Project. May 2012 v1.01c.

UN Food and Agriculture Organisation  
FAOstat 2011 <http://faostat3.fao.org/home/index.html#ANALYSIS>



## Model 2



Model 2 has lower industry inclusiveness in membership and funding and therefore has the potential to be less effective to achieve the stated goal. It maintains some of the current structures and thus has lower transition requirements.

## Do you want to have your say in the industry's future?

### What do you need to do?

- Participate in the survey in February. We will endeavour to contact everyone involved in the industry but to ensure you do not miss out, we advise you visit the webpage at this time and register your interest online, or drop us an email.
- Visit the webpages [www.bpsc.org.nz](http://www.bpsc.org.nz) and [www.nba.org.nz](http://www.nba.org.nz) for the Information Paper on structure, representation and funding
- Follow us on Twitter @ ApicultureNZ.
- For more information you can contact us by emailing [consultation@catalystnz.co.nz](mailto:consultation@catalystnz.co.nz)

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1 December 2014

To all Industry Stakeholders

## A request for funding assistance

June 2014 was a milestone for our industry. After many years of segregation, industry stakeholders came together as one to learn, discuss and share thoughts and ideas at the first New Zealand Apicultural Conference held in Wanganui.

Attendance numbers throughout the conference exceeded expectations, and a big vote of thanks must go to the enthusiastic organising team who delivered an excellent programme.

The conference theme was *'Working Together'*. The discussions and debate certainly focused attendees on critical issues, and sent a very clear message to industry leaders that the status quo was not delivering the outcomes sought by stakeholders, particularly relating to inclusive unified representation and core industry funding.

In August 2014, an Interim Working Group (IWG) was formed to consider how our industry should best be structured, administered and funded. Appointees to the IWG included executives of the NBA, FFNZ BEES, the New Zealand Honey Packers and Exporters Association and the hobbyist sector.

After due consideration, it was determined that transparency and independence will be critical elements in the success of this review, and that this would be best achieved by the appointment of a suitable facilitation company from outside of the industry to undertake this task.

### The goal:

*"Deliver to all industry stakeholders a proposal to establish and achieve a fully inclusive, fully funded industry group structure that will be a strong platform for future growth and prosperity."*

The IWG can now confirm the appointment of Catalyst NZ Ltd to undertake this nationwide survey of all key stakeholders. This survey will be completed by 31 March 2015, at which time Catalyst NZ Ltd will deliver their recommendation.

The IWG is requesting the support of industry to provide the working capital needed to fully fund this project. This investment is a critical step, so please be generous with your contribution: you are the beneficiary of this work.

**As an interim step, we ask that you complete the funding pledge sheet inserted in this journal and return this to any of the e-mail addresses listed below.**

An independent accountancy firm will manage the financial requirements of this project. They will send out invoices relating to each pledge once the pledge form is received.

***Please participate at whatever financial level you see fit. It is your future, your industry.***

Should you be contacted as part of this survey, please be honest and frank with your interviewer, have your say and make your contribution.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS are available to address any of your questions:

Allen McCaw, HPEA	E: amccaw@clear.net.nz	M: 021 190 2785	
Dennis Crowley, NBA	E: crowleys@slingshot.co.nz	M: 027 286 3124	
John Hartnell, FFNZ Bees	E: john@hartnellnz.com	M: 021 578 754	
Kim Poynter, Hobbyist Rep	E: birchwoodfarm@xtra.co.nz	M: 021 926 937	
Kim Singleton, NBA	E: beewise2005@gmail.com	P: 09 536 6516	
Peter Bell, FFNZ Bees	E: bellshoney@xtra.co.nz	P: 03 435 0562	
Ricki Leahy, NBA	E: beechdew@farmside.co.nz	M: 021 523 930	P: 03 523 9354

Thank you

Kind regards



**John Hartnell MNZM**  
MEMBER – APICULTURAL INDUSTRY INTERIM WORKING GROUP

Box 31-209, Christchurch, New Zealand

P: 03 349 5590  
F: 03 349 5592  
M: 021 578 754  
E: john@hartnellnz.com

**FUNDING PLEDGE SHEETS may be e-mailed to:**

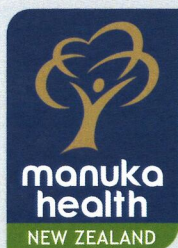
pauline@nba.org.nz  
prawlinson@fedfarm.org.nz  
nzhpa.secretary@xtra.co.nz

**Alternatively, post to:**

Apiculture Unification Project  
PO Box 31-209, Christchurch



"With these new mouse guards, it takes three of us to bring out the dead." This photo, taken by Waikato Branch member Fiona O'Brien, won first place in the 'close-up' category in the NZ Apiculture Industry/Ecroyd photography competition, held as part of the combined industry conference, Wanganui, June 2014.



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# FROM THE COLONIES

## Waikato Branch

Finally the weather has got it together and it is HOT! No more cold nights: we now have warm, humid days and lots of sunshine—and also a goodly amount of honey coming in—so smiles here in the Waikato.

The organising committee for the Conference have been pretty busy. They have sourced some really interesting speakers for us and are finalising the seminar and workshop time slots as we speak. It is looking to be a really informative four days. By the way, the venue for the conference is only five minutes away from Taupo township and it's a beauty.

Best go, as I have more boxes to pop on: a much better outcome than three weeks ago. Happy harvesting!

- Barbara Cahalane

## Hawke's Bay Branch

It has become increasingly difficult for me to find something to write. I am no longer willing to write anything that might help that section of the industry that has no ethical standards. As an industry we should be coming together but at both branch and national level we seem to be falling apart.

I have for many years advocated for a code of ethics and would be far happier belonging to an organisation that not only had a code of ethics but also barred those that did not comply. When I attend a meeting, I want to be able to help and to learn: not like it is now, where you have to watch every word you say in case someone uses that information against you or against other beekeepers.

With the current high prices for honey, it should be the best of times but instead it has become the worst. I have never seen so much stress amongst my fellow beekeepers.

- John Berry, Branch President

## Southern North Island Branch

Our season started off very badly with strong winds and cold weather. Finally the weather changed after Christmas and now it is all on. Some will have missed out on the early

manuka flows, as it was not warm enough even though there were plenty of flowers. On the warmer sand country along the coast, members are reporting an excellent flow of honey.

By the time you read this, our area will be either happy with the harvest or worried about the short burst and not enough honey. Many have experienced difficulties with queen introduction and/or queen cells. In my own case, some of the queen cells have taken and the new queens are performing very well, but others went either drone layer or did not mate well, making for an interesting summer season.

- Neil Farrer, NBA Life Member

## Nelson Branch

It's sunny and hot, which is perfect for this time of year. Bees appear to be doing well from most reports. There are definitely a lot more bees sitting on the outside of my hives, which is probably attributable to the temperatures of late. Well that's what I hope, or I need to get more honey boxes on.

Speaking of honey, there is some great flowering of manuka/kanuka in many parts of the region, showing up as almost like snow in a sea of green. Rata is also making a lovely display of red in parts of the bush where these trees are present. Pohutukawa nearer the coast is flowering brilliantly at the moment as well. Let's hope that all those flowers are proving a good source of nectar and eventually honey for the hives.

The Nelson Beekeepers Club recent 'Bee Tent' at the annual A&P show went well. There was plenty of public interest and excitement in the newly constructed display hive, bee gear and associated equipment. Such displays and shows, I feel, helps get an indication of the public's opinion on bees. Over the past few years there has definitely been an upsurge in the general knowledge and positive awareness of bees, which is great and long may it continue.

The best of the summer weather is still to come, so here's hoping it remains suitable for honey collecting and all things bee like.

- Jason Smith



*These photos were taken at 5 pm on 10 January in Te Kuiti, after a couple of bee trucks carrying full honey loads stopped to refuel. Please be considerate to the travelling public, and to the reputation of your beekeeping peers. Keep loads covered and don't refuel in public places if it is likely that bees will be left behind.*  
Photos: Stephen Black.

# Report on select committee hearing

By Roger Bray

A large portion of the work of the Technical Committee is committed to ensuring any new agrichemicals have adequate controls for the protection of bees.

However, any controls imposed for chemical safety work only if the applicator complies with the directions.

A large portion of bee deaths attributed to chemical poisoning result because an applicator fails to abide by the safe methods of applying sometimes very harmful chemicals.

As a result of the tragedy at the Pike River coal mine, where 29 miners and contractors perished in 2010, health and safety requirements relating to the workplace were placed under the spotlight. Numerous failures were highlighted both within the workplace and the regulatory agencies that oversee health and safety in the workplace.

The former Department of Labour came under criticism in how it handled its

regulatory functions, so its name was changed to 'WorkSafe', along with some new legislation proposed to address identified shortcomings of the former Department.

We appear to be in a situation where a failure to perform results in a name change and a rewriting of the rules in a different format, simply to address the obvious issue that 29 people may be alive today if safety procedures in the Pike River Mine had been a priority in the hazardous work environment. The Transport and Industrial Relations Committee, the Parliamentary select committee to which the Health and Safety Reform Bill was referred, considered submissions made to it relating to the proposed legislation.

The NBA Technical Committee spoke to its submission at Parliament on 1 December 2014 to express its concern that the proposed legislation has far-reaching responsibilities for WorkSafe in the context of environmental health and safety. Included in the environmental responsibilities that have been conferred on WorkSafe is the responsibility to see that controls that have been set for the safety of agrichemicals in the environment are being adhered to. This includes controls for the protection of bees.

Now that it has been over 18 years since the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act was enacted, it is gratifying to see that there is now some focus on monitoring and enforcing the

provisions of the Act. The protection of bees has mostly missed out on the monitoring and enforcement of safety provisions of agrichemicals during the last 18 years in a similar fashion that has been observed in the mining industry. It is such a pity that it has taken a tragedy to identify that people have not done the job for which they have been responsible.

The committee still has concerns whether WorkSafe is the most suitable organisation to monitor and enforce environmental issues, as its primary focus is on safety of people associated in a work environment, rather than the protection of the environment itself.

We do see the role of WorkSafe becoming complicated when it comes to monitoring such things as Environment Exposure Levels (EEL) that have been set for some of the chemicals currently in use today. For example, is a WorkSafe officer going to sample soil on farms to determine levels of residues of agricultural chemicals that have EELs set under the HSNO approvals?

The NBA submission to the select committee pointed out the expectations that beekeepers have for an enforcement agency of the HSNO Act (i.e., WorkSafe) for the protection of bees in their environment.

The select committee is scheduled to report back to Parliament on 30 March 2015. 

## Do we have your e-mail address?

There are a number of critically important issues facing the apiculture industry, among them being industry unification and the biosecurity Government Industry Agreements (GIA).

The NBA feels it is of great importance to keep its membership informed of these very important issues.

E-mail is by far the most effective and inexpensive form of communication. The NBA is pleased to have the bulk of members' e-mail contacts, but there are still a number we would like to have to ensure ALL members receive our regular communications.

If you think we may not have your e-mail address, or would like to add an additional address, please forward to us at [secretary@nba.org.nz](mailto:secretary@nba.org.nz)

We will add it to your profile: this will ensure you are kept fully informed of progress on any issue.

### Temporary change of office location

Please also note the NBA's National Office has temporarily moved premises. We are now situated at:

National Beekeepers Association of NZ Inc.  
Level 4, 24 Johnston Street  
Wellington 6011

– NBA Management Team

# A superb honey dinner

By Maureen Conquer, President, Apimondia Oceania Commission

Airborne Honey hosted a wonderful 'Mid-Winter Honey Showcase' at Vinnies Restaurant, Auckland on 19 June 2014, attended by food writers and bloggers.

The dinner was preceded by a honey-tasting workshop. During the evening John Smart from Airborne Honey and I were available to answer questions and further educate on New Zealand monofloral honeys.

Geoff Scott, owner and head chef at Vinnies Restaurant, produced another stunning honey-inspired menu:

- olive oil octopus with thyme honey chantilly, with a salad of green and black olives, orange and fennel.
- rata honey and vanilla grilled quail, served with yellow beetroot, red onion

and elderflower jellies.

- Lemon & Paeroa sorbet.
- slow-cooked Silere merino lamb 'Brick' with Jerusalem artichoke, puy lentils, beech forest honeydew juices
- warm tawari honey banana tarte tatin with burnt butter ice cream.

Special thanks to Airborne Honey for a very successful evening of honey education from which all New Zealand honey producers stand to benefit.

Photos supplied by John Smart, Airborne Honey.



## HOBBYIST'S CORNER

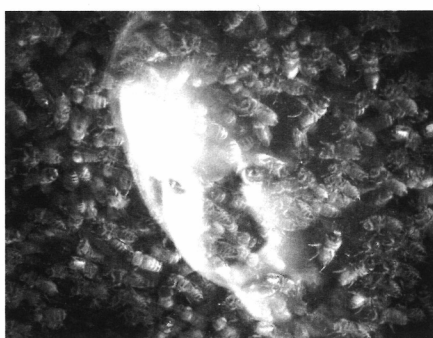
# Bee visitors have library humming

By Alison King, *Rotorua Daily Post*

There was a real buzz in the Rotorua Library on [2 August 2014]—both in sound and vibe as the Rotorua Honey Bee Club brought bees to the city.

The club brought more than 1000 bees to the library, giving the public a close look at the insects that keep fruit and vegetable gardens growing.

Club secretary Jude Thomas said people "made a beeline" for the display as soon as they walked through the doors.



Queen Bee: Ella Dodd, 10, got close to some bees when they swapped their usual environment for the library. Photo: Stephen Parker.

"We were busy straight through from 10am to 12pm," she said. "Bees appeal to people but there's that fear factor too because they have a sting. The kids would stand back but we encouraged everyone to get as close as they could without worrying about being stung."

She said children had studied bees at school and were able to describe the behaviour they were seeing. There was also honey tasting from hives kept in the Rotorua suburbs and Ms Thomas said they expected to increase membership as a result of the session.

She said they found the queen bee and were able to point her out to people. "The whole event was a buzz."

### Source

King, A. (2014, August 4). Bee visitors have library humming. *Rotorua Daily Post*. [Editor's note: Thanks to the Rotorua Daily Post for permission to print this article and to Rotorua Honey Bee Club president Kim Poynter for bringing it to our attention. Kim said, "The observation hive was such a hit, [the library has] asked us when we can go back again!"]





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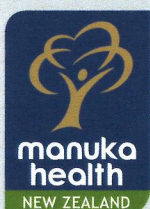
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# Tending and treating hives

By Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

As of early January, beekeepers on the west coast of both islands are in a better situation than those on the east whose pastures are drying off and going into drought, thus ending the honey flow.

Hopefully they were able to produce an early crop, while some in the west and around cities still have nectar coming in, although the pace has now slackened off in some regions.

February is a busy time in the apiary. We are taking off fully capped frames of honey, getting mite treatments in and preparing hives for winter. Leave enough honey for the bees to winter over on. I leave them one full-depth box completely full of honey, with some extra frames of honey in the bottom super. Most of this honey is used in the spring to produce bees but if a dribble of a flow continues after the main flow, this can stimulate brood rearing and the bees can consume their stores early. The result can be that hives, although strong, will need to be fed sugar syrup to supplement their reserves.

### Taking honey off

It's important to get honey off early in the morning before there's not a lot of bee flight activity, as exposed honey can stimulate robbing. If there are lots of bees with nothing to do, as soon as they get a sniff of honey they are out investigating: it doesn't take long for robbing to start. The hive bees try to defend their honey, resulting in a stinging mêlée. If this happens in the city, block the entrance with grass and turn the sprinkler on the hive.

**It's also crucial that every beekeeper inspects two or three frames of emerging brood for AFB before removing honey.** Miss a few cells and the disease is quickly spread to other colonies when returning the wets for the bees to clean out, or when putting them back on in the spring to stimulate brood rearing.

Hobbyists in urban areas should return wet honey supers in the evening as wet honey frames stimulate flight activity. If put on during the day, bees will soon be flying everywhere looking for the source near the hives, disturbing the neighbourhood.

**"It is essential that all beekeepers treat their colonies at the same time."**

February is about as late as you can naturally make up nucs with queen cells and get good queen matings. Drone production is easing off and unless you are feeding drone-producing hives, their production quickly ceases with the end of the honey flow. All hives should go into winter with a young queen or one with a beautiful laying pattern; i.e., hardly any missed cells. Young queens are less likely to swarm in the spring. Nuc boxes—in fact, all hives no matter what their size—should be full of bees going into winter.

It is essential that all beekeepers treat their colonies at the same time. Someone delaying for a month or two can negate everybody's mite treatment around them, with the result that we all start losing hives to varroa in June when mite numbers build up again. Coordinate treatment times with your neighbours and clubs so we all go into winter with very low mite numbers.

Californian beekeeper Randy Oliver, who has presented at the NBA Conference and at a Waikato field day, says that we all should



start treating on 18 February each year in order to get a couple of cycles of mite-free brood produced before winter.

I have cut this article short as I wanted to include my report about the Canterbury field day, which focused on varroa treatments.

**The most important thing is to monitor after the treatment is completed, especially if you are using alternative treatments.**

Alternative treatments can give only a 50 to 90 percent success rate, so you need to follow up on those hives where treatment hasn't been totally successful. Those in the upper North Island should also check for resistance to the strips. In fact, we all should. Don't assume your treatment has been successful. Bees can move away from strips.

### 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. Treat anyway with an alternative to knock numbers down if you are going to do a full treatment later.

Keep an eye out for wasps. I haven't seen many yet perhaps due to the wet spring, but they are out there. 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. It's also a good idea to put out mice baits in a plastic bottle so animals don't get at them. Rats and mice can do a lot of damage in a hive, so keep their numbers low.



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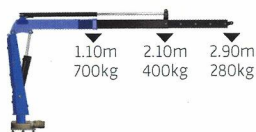
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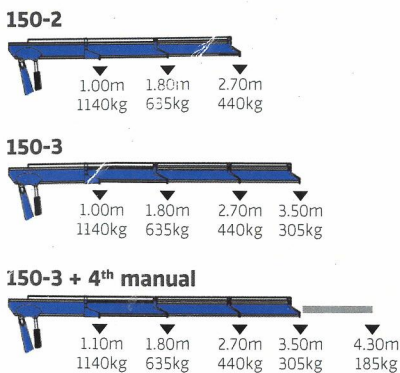
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## Quicklift 150

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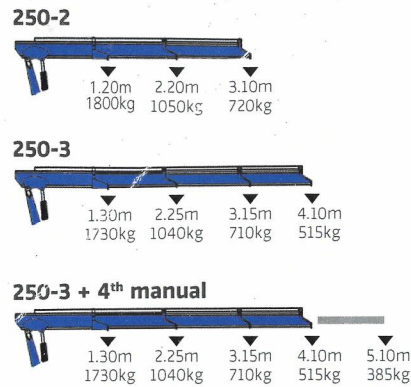
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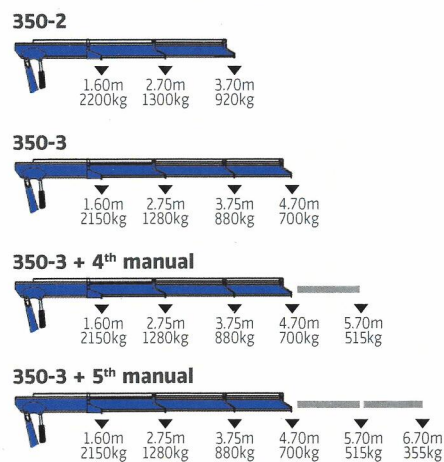
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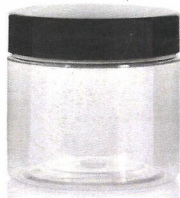
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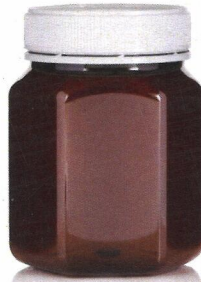
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