

The NEW ZEALAND BeeKeeper

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Information on industry unification

Ricki Leahy and the NBA Management Team

Conference coverage

Various authors

Lotmaria passim identified

Dr Oksana Borowik and Dr Mark Goodwin



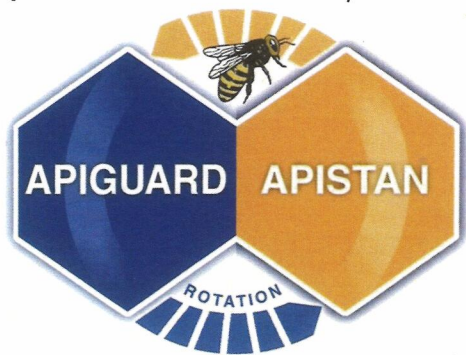
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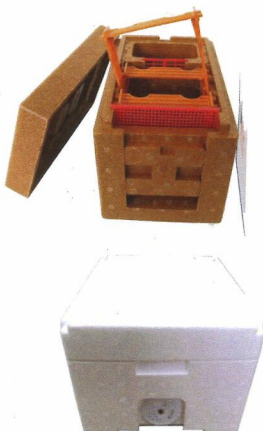
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overwhelming agreement for industry unification	4	Photo competition results 2015	17
Have you seen willow honeydew honey this season?	6	Roy Paterson Trophy	17
Alert for all beekeepers: quality data needed	7	Results of National Honey Show 2015	19
Honey bee parasite <i>Lotmaria passim</i> identified in New Zealand	9	Testing for thixotrophy	23
Redefining our future	11	Letters to the editor	23
Reflecting on a successful conference	13	Reducing CFUs in your honey	25
Bee Aware Month 2015: Feed the bees	16	From the colonies	26
Wellington club stalwart passes away	16	A new season begins	29

Front cover: Inspecting the entries for the 100% Pure New Zealand National Honey Show 2015, held as part of the New Zealand Apiculture Conference, Wairakei Resort Taupo, June 2015. Left to right: chief judge Maureen Conquer, judge Claudine McCormack and Dr Karyne Rogers. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

OVERWHELMING AGREEMENT FOR INDUSTRY UNIFICATION

Ricki Leahy, NBA President

Conference a huge success

By all accounts the New Zealand Apiculture Industry Conference was a huge success and the largest conference ever, with about 830 registrations.

As usual, there were a wide variety of interesting apiculture-related seminar topics well presented by very good speakers, both local and from overseas, ensuring that everybody came away well enthused and stimulated with heaps of new information.

The conference organising committee, comprising members of both the NBA and the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group (FFBIG), the Rotorua Honey Bee Club and the Waikato Domestic Beekeepers Club, did a fantastic job of bringing it all together. The committee did an exemplary job with the day-to-day managing of the programmes, ensuring that everything seemingly ran smoothly.

Wairakei Resort Taupo proved to be an awesome venue and it was well suited for purpose. There was plenty of space for the seminars and indeed, the sponsor trade displays that offered the usual smorgasbord of beekeeping gadgetry for all to ponder.

For anyone involved in some way with bees, I thoroughly recommend you make the effort, maybe next year, to attend. There really is no other time in the year that we have the opportunity to walk around this 'supermarket' that boasts such innovative ideas.

Executive Council changes

Only one change has been made to the Executive Council (EC) this year, with Kim Poynter stepping down after having been seconded onto the council at the beginning of this year. Kim was instrumental in helping us address the issues and extra workload involved with industry unity. A big thank you to Kim, who really put her heart and soul into the task. Kim's business expertise, experience with governance issues and sheer energy has been a very much-appreciated contribution.

Kim has also been very active as a member of the Interim Working Group (IWG) representing the hobby sector, and hopefully her skills and knowledge will continue to benefit us all.

The East Coast Ward was unsuccessful in nominating a ward representative, which gave the EC an opportunity to make another secondment. Barry Foster put his name forward and the EC agreed unanimously to second Barry onto the EC, in effect replacing Kim, giving us another full executive. It is an absolute pleasure to welcome Barry, our immediate past president, back onto the Executive.

Industry unification

It was overwhelmingly agreed at conference and at the AGM that the industry will form a single united body to represent all sectors within our industry. There is now a peg in the ground with the goal of a launch date planned for 1 April 2016. This is acknowledged to be a 'big ask' but also a worthwhile and achievable target. Timelines will need to be worked out in the first instance to manage how this goal is to be achieved.

The decision was made that the NBA will be used as the platform for this new entity, as per the industry model broadly presented before and also at conference. More importantly for NBA members is that several key structural changes such as a new constitution, new sector and focus groups, along with a full rebranding, will be undertaken.

This process is well under way. The Interim Working Group has been seeking expressions of interest from people with the necessary skills, time and energy to apply for appointments on an interim Industry Governance Board (IGB). It is understood and agreed that the IGB has the ability to make decisions and to work in an independent fashion. Apart from anything else, the IGB will be tasked with fitting workable rules into the seams of a rewritten and future-focused constitution.

All these and other future industry decisions will be the responsibility of the IGB.

In the meantime, the NBA is still governed by the rules of its present constitution and we need to make the necessary steps, abiding by those rules, to transition into the new entity. This will mean that the new constitution and rules will need to be presented to all members and be voted on for acceptance at a special meeting or by a postal vote as outlined in our rules.

This will ensure that the IGB will focus on the best outcomes for us all. I expect regular industry updates will be given, ensuring we are all kept well informed of progress.

A meeting of both the NBA EC and the FFBIG Executive is planned for mid-August, to be held in Christchurch. This will create the opportunity for us all to understand what needs to be achieved to meet the goals of any timelines that may be required. After all, we are all seeking the same outcome, so let's make it easy for ourselves and move co-operatively along the same pathway together.

Bee Aware Month

September is Bee Aware Month (BAM), and the Management Team have been busy planning to spread the word about bees in New Zealand. This year's theme is 'Feed the Bees', and the NBA will be urging and educating New Zealanders to plant 'bee-friendly', to ensure our bees have enough food.

There are many exciting initiatives taking shape to get this very important message out there, so keep an eye out for information posted on the Bee Aware Month Facebook page, in this journal (see page 16) and in the media to see what's happening for Bee Aware Month 2015.

In the meantime, keep warm and enjoy the remaining winter days. There is always plenty of time to look at your hives when spring conditions start blossoming. Happy beekeeping.



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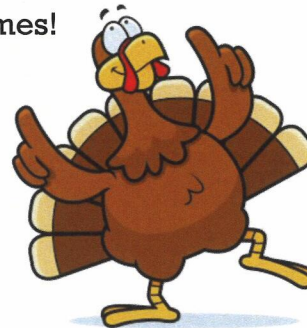
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HAVE YOU SEEN **WILLOW HONEYDEW HONEY** THIS SEASON?

Dr John McLean

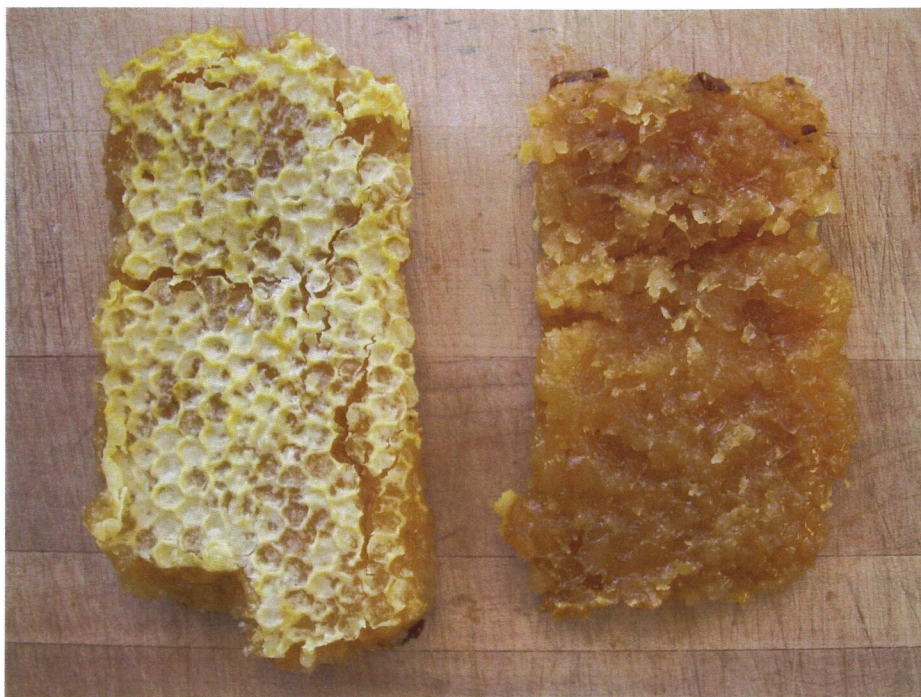


Figure 1. Top view and underside view of a hive tool scraping of willow honeydew honey from a comb.

Beekeepers, in the North Island especially, may have seen a different kind of honey in their frames this year. The cells may be capped but on closer inspection, it can be seen that there are many crystals within and little liquid honey.

Figure 1 shows a nice white capping, but the hive tool scraping off the comb reveals a really solid honeydew honey that is difficult to extract. The melezitose sugars cannot be digested by the honey bees, so they eventually need to remove it from the comb. You may have seen the white crystals left in the cells, on the baseboard of your hive or on the pellet under your mesh floor hives.

When the wets are set out for post-extraction cleanup by bees (and wasps), the sugar crystals are left behind, as shown in Figure 2.

Where does this sugar come from? The bees collect willow honeydew in the late summer and autumn from trees infested by the giant willow aphid (*Tuberolachnus salignus*). This is one of the largest known aphids (5.0–5.5 mm) and can be found on willow

branches in dense colonies. This aphid has a worldwide distribution and was identified for the first time in New Zealand in 2013, and soon thereafter was found to be distributed throughout almost all of New Zealand.

In Figure 3, note the very large adult aphid with the black tubercle on her back near the middle of the colony. No males are known for this species and the adults give birth to live young, a process termed parthenogenesis (see photograph in *The New Zealand Beekeeper*, June 2015, p.19). The nymphs have four moults before becoming mature. Most aphids are wingless (apterae) but later in the season a few of the adults will have wings (alatae), as can be seen in Figure 4.

The adult aphids have long hind legs and if a hand is passed over the colony they will 'wave' their long hind legs, a behaviour that may deter predators. Both adult forms walk up and down their host tree branches. I have caught several winged adults on sticky traps tied to branches. It is not clear to me whether they were fly-ons or walk-ons, as most were



Figure 2. Residual melezitose sugar in 'extracted' wet.



Figure 3. Colony of giant willow aphid on a willow branch collected May 30, 2015.

continued...

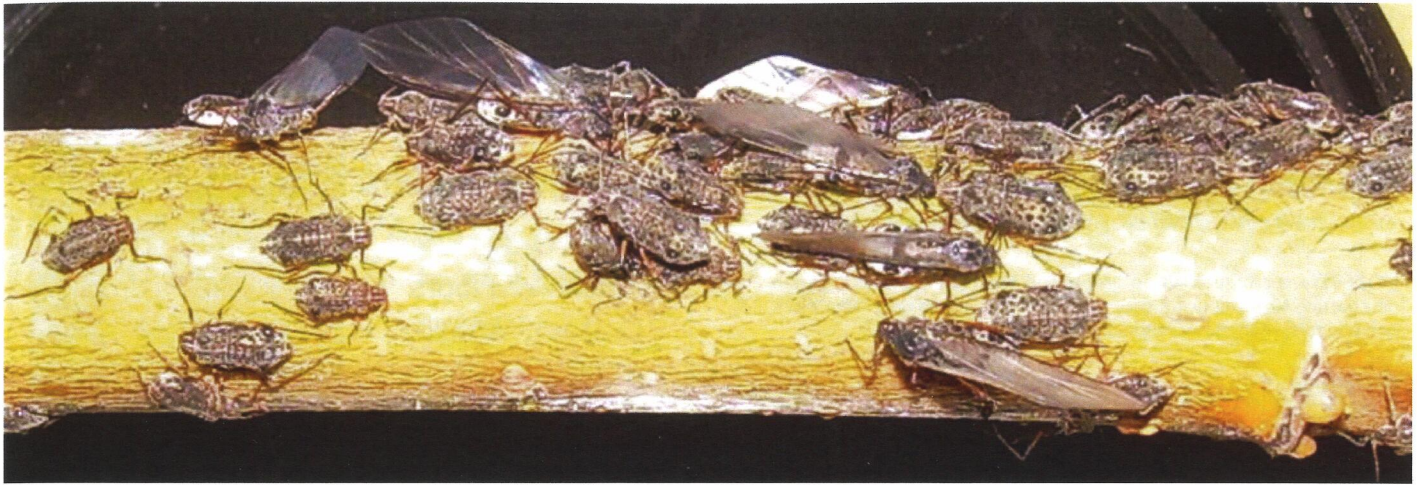


Figure 4. Colony of giant willow aphids with several winged adults collected March 23, 2015. Photos supplied by Dr John McLean.

captured near the branch side of the trap. Other aphid life stages have also walked, or fallen, on to the sticky traps. These aphids make a brown-red stain when squashed.

It is not known exactly where or how this aphid overwinters but recent observations published on the InfluentialPoints.com blog site give some indication of this insect's possible winter activity. See http://influentialpoints.com/Blog/Tuberolachnus_salignus_the_giant_willow_aphid_in_late_summer_2014.htm (Thanks to Stephanie Sopow from Scion for this blog reference.)

Adverse impacts

A major concern about the activity of the giant willow aphid is the impact that the aphid has on the health of its willow host. Beekeepers in many parts of New Zealand rely on willow pollen and nectar in the spring to build up their hives. The late summer and autumn feeding of the aphid removes vital sap from the willow trees, impeding the trees' storage of nutrients for the winter and early growth in the spring.

Farmers also rely on willows as shade trees, erosion control and stock feed in droughts.

Your NBA Research Committee would like to hear about your experiences with this aphid, from both the host tree decline aspects and also the impact of the honeydew honey in your hives in the autumn. Good winter feed? How well do the hives overwinter and start up in the spring?

Please send comments to me at: jands.mclean@gmail.com

NATIONAL BEE HEALTH SURVEY

ALERT FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS: QUALITY DATA NEEDED

Landcare Research is conducting a national Bee Health Survey to build a better picture of the state of New Zealand's bees and the challenges that beekeepers face. The survey is being co-developed by Landcare Research and a bee health advisory group with wide representation from government and industry.

Beekeepers will be invited to complete the survey beginning in late August. Thus, we ask all beekeepers to make careful notes of the following information during the first round of spring hive inspections:

1. How many operational production hives were there in each apiary when you wintered down in the autumn?

2. At your first spring inspection
 - How many of the colonies were weak?
 - How many hives were dead?
3. For the lost colonies:
 - How many had queen problems like drone-laying queens or no queens at all?
 - How many had dead workers in or in front of the hive?
 - How many had dead workers in cells and no food present in the hive?
 - Was varroa infestation an issue?
 - Did you observe a large amount of faeces inside the hive?
 - Was there another issue? If yes, please describe if able.

The survey process will ensure that individual names and any other sensitive information remain confidential. This data is routinely sought in international COLOSS surveys, and it will be summarised by area.

Data from later in the season may also be requested. Please keep detailed records for each of your apiaries for your own benefit, as well as composite data for the proposed national survey. This will enable sound judgments to be made on behalf of the whole industry.

Thank you.

Bee Health Advisory Team

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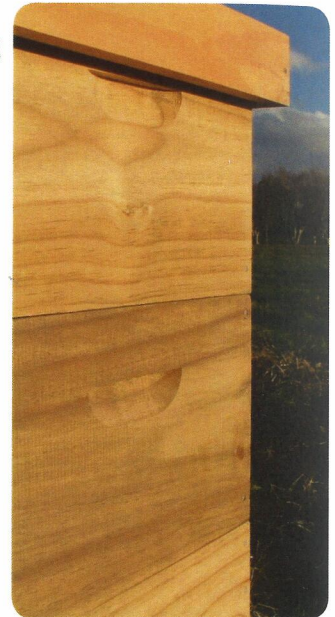
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PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

HONEY BEE PARASITE *LOTMARIA PASSIM* IDENTIFIED IN NEW ZEALAND

Dr Oksana Borowik and Dr Mark Goodwin

A few months ago a honey bee parasite, *Lotmaria passim*, was identified in colonies in the Coromandel. This was the first identification of this parasite in New Zealand.

What do we know about it and how will it affect New Zealand beekeepers?

In the previous spring season, beekeepers from the Coromandel peninsula noticed that honey bees disappeared from their hives for no apparent reason. Hives that had up to 10,000 bees when first visited only had a queen and several hundred bees left. The missing bees had flown away from their hives and died somewhere. This is the same thing bees do when a colony dies of the viruses spread by varroa. With only a few hundred bees and a queen left behind, the remaining bees were unable to attend to the brood and left the hives too weak to produce a honey crop.

Laboratory testing on the remaining bees showed extremely high levels of the honey bee gut parasites *Nosema ceranae* and *Nosema apis* and the presence of a unicellular gut parasite called *Lotmaria passim*.

Nosema apis was most likely introduced with the first bees brought to New Zealand over a century ago and is probably found in every hive in New Zealand. It negatively affects honey bee health but because it has no outward symptoms, beekeepers mostly ignore it.

In contrast to *Nosema apis*, *Nosema ceranae* was first recorded in New Zealand in 2010 in sick hives on the Coromandel. Scientists first identified *Nosema ceranae* in honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) in 2006 and believe it jumped from the Asian honey bee (*Apis cerana*) several decades ago and then spread around most of the world. Its effect on honey bees is poorly understood and has proven controversial. *N. ceranae* has been linked with Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), but the evidence for this link is disputed.

Recent studies demonstrate that *N. ceranae* can significantly accelerate aging in the honey bee and shorten its life span. These

studies have also shown that *N. ceranae* can act synergistically with other pathogens like *Nosema apis* and *Lotmaria passim*.

Though *Nosema ceranae* is still an emerging pathogen, with much still to learn, there is even less known about the recently renamed trypanosome *Lotmaria passim* (Schwarz et al., 2015). Identified for the first time in New Zealand a few months ago, *Lotmaria passim* may have been here for a considerable time. It was first identified in Australia in 1967 (as *Crithidia mellificae*) and though it is found worldwide, has been pretty much ignored. Only recently has it been under scientific scrutiny, showing a positive correlation with *N. ceranae* (Runckel et al., 2011; Schwarz & Evans, 2013), in hives with CCD (Cornman et al., 2012), and associated with overwintering losses in Belgium (Ravoet et al., 2013).

Where does this leave us?

Though we have a large number of colonies that collapsed in the spring and high levels of gut pathogens reported from some of these hives, only a small portion of the affected hives has been tested. The colonies look like CCD colonies overseas, but the cause may not be the same.

It is tempting to assume that *N. ceranae*, *Lotmaria passim* and possibly also *N. apis* are the cause of what is happening. However at this stage we cannot rule out their presence as a side effect of some other cause.

Controlling nosema may be a way to prevent these losses, however, this has yet to be tested. Although products are used in many other countries that are reported to control nosema, there are currently no products registered for nosema control in New Zealand.

What does this mean for the beekeeping industry?

This is a very difficult question to answer at the moment, as we do not yet know whether depopulation events will occur again and if it does, how often and how widespread.

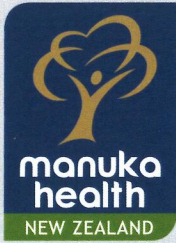
Plant and Food Research and co-operating beekeepers have started research with the aim to test the link between these pathogens and the depopulation events and to investigate other possible causes.

Acknowledgements

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INDUSTRY UNIFICATION

REDEFINING OUR FUTURE

NBA Management Team

The 2015 Apiculture Industry Conference marked the beginnings of sweeping and integral changes that will redefine the future of the New Zealand apiculture industry.

At conference, industry voted to progress plans to unify under one representative organisation.

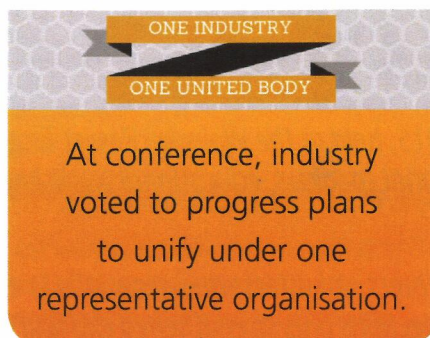
The 2015 NBA Notice of Motion read:

The EC recommends to NBA Members that they support the formation of the Apiculture Industry Governance Body (AIGB) with the proposed interim Industry Governance Board, acting in an advisory capacity, using the NBA platform (see notes) as a basis to develop the detail including funding models, for consultation and approval of the wider industry, using the model as recommended in the Catalyst Final Report (page 28) as a starting point.

Notes:

The points of agreement by the NBA EC that form the basis of the NBA platform are:

1. The current infrastructure of the NBA is utilised as the platform for the future organisation.
2. The NBA may be rebranded.
3. An interim Industry Governance Board (IGB) will be charged with developing the restructure/metamorphosis of the NBA in order to form the basis of an organisation that can effectively represent the apiculture industry in NZ.
4. The Interim Governance Board will comprise a 12 person board with an independent chair, as per the diagram and may provide support to each sector in voting for the Sector's Representatives.
5. The interim Industry Governance Board will be allowed to work independently in developing these proposals.
6. As part of its role, the IGB's duties would include, but not be restricted to, considering the organisation's constitution and rules, membership categories, subscription rates and/or other funding streams.



7. When formally constituted, it will become the body that represents beekeepers and others.
8. To facilitate the continuation of current and on-going projects during the interim period the NBA EC, Branch structure and existing sub-committees remain until the organisation is formally constituted and 'open for business'.

At the NBA AGM, members voted to support this. Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group and the Honey Packers and Exporters Association were also in full support.

The 2015 Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group Notice of Motion read:

That the FFNZ Bee Industry Group membership accepts the recommendations of Catalyst and endorses the proposal presented by Unification Interim Working group to all industry stakeholders, and they confirm their approval to proceed immediately with the formation of single inclusive peak industry body to represent all industry stakeholders.

Notes:

It is agreed that to facilitate the formation of the new entity as proposed in the motion, that the current infrastructure of the NBA may be utilised as the foundation platform; subject to the following provisions:

1. The NBA as it transitions in to the new entity will be rebranded/renamed to truly reflect the industry, across all sectors.
2. The NBA will be restructured, including a full revision the constitution, rules, membership categories, membership fees, ward and branch system, and future funding considerations to ensure we deliver an inclusive and forward thinking industry body.

3. The NBA restructuring process will be undertaken by an appointed interim Industry Governance Board (IGB) which will comprise of 12 members, inclusive of an independent Chairman.

4. The interim IGB will be permitted to work independently without interference from any of the existing industry groups and associations as they develop and finalise the new industry organisation structure and constitution.

5. Once the restructuring has been completed and reviewed, all industry bodies will immediately endorse the changes and recommendations tabled to ensure a swift transition to a fully re-structured and functional single national organisation.

6. That the target launch date for the new industry body is 1/4/16.

7. The FFNZ Bees Industry Group will remain active until the new industry body is operational.

Next steps

The Industry Unification Interim Working Group (IWG) is in the process of establishing an interim Apiculture Industry Governance Board (AIGB) which will be tasked with the establishment and roll out of the proposed industry body by 1 April 2016.

This month, a joint NBA and FF BIG Executive Council meeting will be held for the first time as part of industry unification work. The meeting is to plan all the work the two organisations need to do together to prepare for the establishment of the new industry entity. We hope to publish the resulting work plan in the October journal.

More information

If you'd like to know more, visit www.beeunified.org or email info@beeunified.org

[Editor's note: Diagrams and other information on the new structure can be found at www.beeunified.org.]



New Zealand Apiculture Conference 2015



Thank you to our sponsors for your support at our 2015 Conference

The New Zealand Apiculture Conference 2015, held at the Wairakei Resort Taupo had over 830 registrations with a vast array of interesting topics, international speakers, educational workshops, practical learning and superb camaraderie.

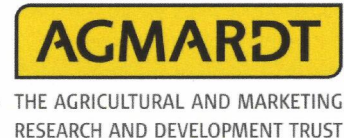
Thank you to our sponsors, speakers, presenters, volunteers and especially to everyone who attended. We hope you learnt something new and made new connections plus strengthened existing ones.

Looking forward to 2016.....

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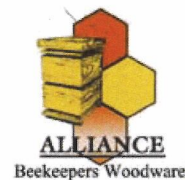


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NEW ZEALAND APICULTURE CONFERENCE 2015

REFLECTING ON A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE

Here are three perspectives from conference organisers and an attendee, respectively.

To Conference attendees, delegates, supporters and sponsors

The New Zealand Apiculture Conference 2015, held at the Wairakei Resort Taupo, will be recognised as a pivotal point for our industry.

It signalled a coming of age, as conference attendees, delegates and supporters came together to celebrate all that is good about our industry and to lay down in broad terms the blueprint for our future. Thank you for participating and making history possible.

Some people ask, "what does success look like?" We can now confidently reply, "Conference 2015". Over 830 registrations, a vast array of interesting topics, international speakers, educational workshops, practical learning and superb camaraderie.

On a more formal basis, it is appropriate that we acknowledge the financial support and commitment of our many sponsors who generously gave their time to share with you their knowledge and products. Please accept our thanks.

A special mention must go to the team from Manuka Health. Not only were they one of the two principal conference sponsors, but their contribution and commitment as a member of the Conference Organising Committee, and to deliver the queen raising workshops, was exceptional.

We are extremely grateful to those who donated to or participated in the conference auction. It was a huge success, raising over \$30,000 for the local rescue helicopter team: an outstanding result. In addition, our heartfelt thanks to those who donated to the Vanuatu Cyclone Pam bee industry appeal; this is a true humanitarian cause.

To our speakers and presenters: your contributions exceeded our expectations. Thank you.

And lastly, a conference of this size and success is not an accident; it takes the dedication and commitment of a united and focused conference committee team to deliver what is now being described as the best conference on record. We thank them sincerely for their absolute professionalism and organisational skills.

Unity is the future. It is a conscious decision to put aside past differences and move forward as one. We applaud our industry leaders for embracing change and delivering on their promises to progress this vital step for the betterment of all.

We have a wonderful industry, brimming with success, but still offering huge opportunity for those who are prepared to do the work.

Enjoy the year ahead. We look forward to sharing your stories at Conference 2016.

**Cameron Martin, Chairman,
Organising Committee**

What a conference!

Conference is over for another year. And oh, what a conference! Wairakei Resort Taupo put on the best weather for our week, along with one of the best venues that I have ever been to. We had over 830 people registered for the week, and Tuesday had over 500 people for the day.

Why was this conference so successful? Was it the central area that most people in the North Island could drive to, or was it our expanded conference programme or our lineup of good overseas speakers? Almost all of the feedback forms were positive, but the questions we posed to participants did not answer these specific questions.

As the conference co-ordinator, I wish to thank all of our conference organising committee for their assistance. Having over 20 of us involved in key areas (as well as additional volunteers) made the whole experience enjoyable, as each person took



on a small area of responsibility and delivered what was required.

The team was fantastic! For many of us there was disappointment that we were unable to participate in the programme that we had put together for everyone, but our compensation was seeing people moving around the venue with smiles on their faces.

If a couple of people need to be acknowledged and thanked for their work, they must be Fiona Black and Tracey Friend. Fiona took on a large slice of the organisation in doing registrations and sponsors (along with Stephen Black). Fiona was unflappable. Tracey took on the huge job of packing the bags for the delegates. Tracey also organised the dinner evening with a nice balance of entertainment, as well as the auction that raised so much for the air ambulance.

Also key for me was that we pulled into the committee members from the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group, Rotorua Honey Bee Club and the Waikato Domestic Beekeepers Club. At times it was difficult to



Brett's winning bid was \$6,900. The hive was painted by a young graffiti artist, and contained a bottle of spirits produced by Joe Peeters. Photo: Frank Lindsay. continued...



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co-ordinate, but we learned to work together for the conference, and it gave me confidence that we can be a unified industry again that looks after the needs of all sectors.

The second group that must be thanked are all of the sponsors who participated in conference: without them participants would find conference very expensive. Sponsors' funds generally cover the cost of the venue and some expenses for overseas speakers. With the extended programme, we had most sponsors set up on Saturday and packed away on Wednesday.

Two of our sponsors were involved with the conference committee—our gold sponsor Manuka Health New Zealand Limited, with Richard Hopkins and Gabriel Torres, and Natural Sugars (NZ) Ltd, with Stuart Fraser.

Manuka Health went over and above what we expected of a gold sponsor. Gabriel got involved in the committee at a time when we were looking at what we wanted in our workshops and what we could do for our practical beekeeping theme. Queen raising was identified, and we found we had a very experienced queen producer in Gabriel.

Could we do a workshop in mid-winter and have larvae available? Only those who raise their own queen bees will realise how much work went into putting this workshop together.

And so huge thanks must go to the team at Manuka Health for making this workshop possible, along with John Bassett, as the workshop was oversubscribed and we had to turn many away. Stuart Fraser helped put us in contact with printers so we could handle our printing requirements efficiently and cheaply. Therefore, involvement of sponsors in the organisation of conference was invaluable, in that it helped us to ensure sponsors' needs were met and we used their contacts to our benefit.

For those of you who did not make it to the conference, you missed out on one of the best. To those of you who left it to the last minute to come, you made us and the hotel staff work really hard to meet your needs. We ask that next year you make up your mind early to come and make the organising team's job much easier. Last-minute printing orders, finding enough food for the masses and tight deadlines are good for no one.

We'll see you next year as the industry moves together as one once more.

**Jane Lorimer, Conference Coordinator,
NBA Life Member**



*Wairakei Resort Taupo proved to be an excellent choice of venue.
Photo: Jane Lorimer.*

Setting a benchmark

Congratulations to the Waikato Branch, Waikato Domestic Beekeepers Club, the Rotorua Honey Bee Club and the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group, all of whom helped with the smooth running of our New Zealand Apiculture Conference. What a great event. Over 800 people registered—a record for our industry—and we maxed out the holding capacity of the main auditorium. Guests and presenters attended from Australia, the USA, France, Abu Dhabi and Indonesia. A group of South Australian beekeepers also were observing the conference, as they will be running an Australian national conference in Canberra in 2017.

The Taupo weather was perfect for the week, although a little bracing in the morning until the frosts lifted. Everybody had an opportunity to network, exchange ideas and techniques and chat with the sponsors. I talked with the sponsors and most were very pleased with orders and the prospects for future orders. The place was buzzing, making it hard for some of us with old-age deafness to hear during the breaks.

The overseas speakers gave excellent presentations keeping us abreast of new research and basic fundamentals, as did some of our local academics. I was especially pleased with the programme as bee and plant biology was well covered, something we don't normally cover that well.

I hope that regional councils will see the good side to most of the willow species, as they are a keystone species to our bee industry

by providing early pollen and nectar that kickstart our bees in the spring.

The morning session given over to industry unity was overwhelmingly supported by a show of hands by those attending, giving industry leaders the mandate to proceed at speed.

Most impressive was the age of the beekeepers attending: young faces clearly outnumbered the grey heads, which bodes well for our industry. One young fellow had kept bees for only three weeks, so he must have learnt heaps.

The number and standard of the honey and photo competition entries climbs each year, making it harder for the judges to select winners. Congratulations to all of the winners and to Carol Downer for being the overall winner of the competitions.

One of the outstanding contributions was the auction of goods at the gala dinner. Sponsors had donated some very impressive products that raised over \$30,000 for the local helicopter rescue service—perhaps a reflection of the prosperity manuka honey has brought to our industry.

The benchmark has been set for the next conference committee to meet or beat.

Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

A big thank you to the Industry Working Group for all the time and effort put into gathering information and preparing the proposed future industry structure.

BEE AWARE MONTH

BEE AWARE MONTH 2015: FEED THE BEES

NBA Management Team



Bee Aware Month is back! This September, we'll be spreading the word about **feeding the bees** with information about what and when to plant, and how we can keep our backyards buzzing from Cape Reinga to Bluff.

We are in discussions with a major supermarket chain that would like to help show New Zealand what foods we'd be without if it weren't for bees. Palmers Garden Centre is also on board, so keep an eye out for their special Bee Aware Month promotions. We are also looking to launch a nationwide initiative with wildflower seeds to create highways of food for our bees.

Make sure you like the Bee Aware Month Facebook page to keep up to date with the latest news and activities. Don't forget, if you want to help feed the bees, you can purchase wildflower seeds from our online shop: www.nba.org.nz/shop

OBITUARY

WELLINGTON CLUB STALWART PASSES AWAY

Information provided by the Wellington Beekeepers Association



Andrew Beach demonstrating the lighting of a smoker for a video for beginner beekeepers, produced by the Wellington Beekeepers Association. Photo: Richard Braczek.

Andrew Beach, a long-time member of the Wellington Beekeepers Association and a founding member of the Buzz Club Otaki, passed away on 24 May 2015.

Andrew, who was born in England, also served as a trainer for AFB recognition courses in the region.

To quote from the Wellington Beekeepers Association newsletter, Andrew "made a major contribution in various roles most notably as president for seven years. More recently he took the club beginners

sessions and starred in the club's video for beginners... He took part in all club activities and was very generous of his time, willingly sharing his extensive knowledge. With a dry sense of humour Andrew always told it how it was. He will be greatly missed by us all."

Source

Wellington Beekeepers Association newsletter. Farewell to Andrew Beach. June 2015, page 5.

NEW ZEALAND APICULTURE CONFERENCE

PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS 2015

Mary-Ann Lindsay, NBA Life Member

The seventh annual apiculture industry photography competition, sponsored by Ecrotek Beekeeping Supplies, was held as part of the Conference in Taupo, June 2015. The competition was open to all members of the NBA and the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group.

The judges were John Hartnell and Tracey Friend. Photos were judged on composition, treatment of subject matter, and quality and presentation, with a maximum score of 100 points.

Sixty photos were entered in the competition in these classes:

- A. Close-up (subject must relate to beekeeping): 26 photos
- B. Scenic (an apiary subject such as flowers, hives, etc.): 15 photos
- C. Portrait (person, beekeeping procedure, honey or hive by-product processing in appropriate setting): nine photos
- D. Essay (a set of 4 to 7 pictures depicting a beekeeping story): five photos
- E. 'Oh Darn!' (for all those 'oops' moments that occur in beekeeping!): five photos.



CATEGORY RESULTS

Close-up

- 1st Peter Boutelje
- 2nd Carol Downer
- 3rd Jody Mitchell

Scenic

- 1st Rotorua Honey Bee Club
- 2nd Dan Russell
- 3rd Chris Warren

Portrait

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd: Jody Mitchell

Essay

- 1st Hukanui School
- 2nd Val Nicholson
- 3rd Frank & Mary-Ann Lindsay

'Oh Darn!'

- 1st Fiona O'Brien

People's Choice (based on the number of votes cast, for all classes above):
Jody Mitchell

Overall winner: Jody Mitchell.

Thank you to everyone who entered, and congratulations to the winners.

It's never too early to start thinking about entering next year's competition. Pop a camera in the truck and snap away!

[Editor's note: some of the prize-winning photos will appear in future issues of the journal.]

Left: 'Oops a daisy: it's easy to lose focus.'
This entry, from NBA Waikato Branch member Fiona O'Brien, was judged the winner of the 'Oh Darn' category in the Ecrotek apiculture industry photography competition, June 2015.

ROY PATERSON TROPHY



Waikato Branch Conference Co-ordinator and NBA Life Member Jane Lorimer presenting NBA Life Member Bob Blair with the Roy Paterson Trophy. The handcrafted timber trophy was made by John and Peter Berry from Arataki Honey, Hawke's Bay.
Photo: Frank Lindsay.

The Roy Paterson Award was instigated to remember the late Waikato beekeeper, apiaries inspector and inventor and his work with the beekeeping industry. The award is for innovative ideas or inventions to help New Zealand beekeepers.

The winner for 2015 was NBA Life Member Bob Blair, of Auckland, for developing a bee feeder utilising a wick.

Bob explains the theory behind his method:

"A friend and I had a discussion on varroa and bees.

One area was the number of ways to feed bees and the problems arising from feeding. This became the deviation from the varroa mite and needed some thought.

The concept of wicking is not new. Our grandparents developed it for use in kerosene table lamps, which is sound engineering, as well as attractive works of art.

The thrust to this method is to give bees access to liquid refreshment without drowning.

If there is enough interest in it, the attachment will be made in commercial quantities."



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NEW ZEALAND APICULTURE CONFERENCE

RESULTS OF NATIONAL HONEY SHOW 2015


 100%
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HONEY

Maureen Conquer, President, Apimondia Oceania Commission

Following is the text of a speech presented by the chief judge of the 100% Pure New Zealand National Honey Show, held as part of the combined industry conference, Taupo, 24 June 2015. The full list of results follows on from the speech.

Thank you to all contestants for making it our best show yet. This competition is about taking pride in your fabulous products and taking pride in our industry. New Zealand produces some of the finest honey and bee products in the world. Bee proud and strive to always represent us in the global marketplace as a premium producer and marketer.

I wish to thank all our sponsors, especially 100% Pure New Zealand Honey, without whom this competition would not be able to take place.

Thanks also to our wonderful data analyst, Lynn Green, and my fellow judges:

- Claudine McCormack, a very experienced judge and honey technician from the South Island
- Alessandro Tarentini, from Italy, who has a master's degree in Food Science on the subject of honey analysis, and is a member of the prestigious Italian Honey Tasters registry.

This year we also were assisted by Dr Karyne Rogers. Karyne is very experienced in the analysis of honey and is studying the art of honey judging.

So arguably our jury has some of the finest honey palates in the country.

We were impressed, and in several classes were seriously challenged to select a winner as the quality was so high. I thank you for that challenge and encourage each and every beekeeper here to submit in the future.

Congratulations to all contestants for a very successful show.

We also [had] a special treat. A very special thanks to Jeff Lukey from Nelson, who again brought us a selection of monofloral honeys for tasting.



Ain't life sweet? Judging is a tough job but someone has to do it! Left to right: Alessandro Tarentini, chief judge Maureen Conquer and Claudine McCormack. Photo supplied by Maureen Conquer.



Chief Judge Maureen Conquer announcing the results of the 100% Pure New Zealand National Honey Show 2015, with a beautiful array of trophies in the foreground. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

continued...

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LIST OF RESULTS

Class 1: Liquid Honey–Light

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland)
2nd Allan Pimm (Bay of Plenty)
3rd Arataki Honey Rotorua

Class 2: Liquid Honey–Medium

- 1st Carol Downer
2nd Jody and Ralph Mitchell (Kaimai Range Honey)
3rd The Honey Company (Blenheim)

Class 3: Liquid Honey–Dark

- 1st The Honey Company (Blenheim)
2nd Carol Downer (Auckland)
3rd Ruth Thomas (Rotorua)

The winner's trophy (sponsored by the New Zealand Honey Company) for the overall highest scoring liquid or clear honey (by one point) was awarded to The Honey Company (Blenheim).

Class 4: Naturally Granulated Honey–Light

(sponsored by Arataki Honey Hawke's Bay)

- 1st Arataki Honey Rotorua
2nd Allan Pimm (Bay of Plenty)

Class 5: Naturally Granulated Honey–Medium

(sponsored by Arataki Honey Hawke's Bay)

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland)
2nd Arataki Honey Rotorua

Class 6: Naturally Granulated Honey–Dark

(sponsored by Arataki Honey Hawke's Bay)

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland)
2nd Arataki Honey Rotorua

Class 7: Creamed Honey

(sponsored by New Zealand Beeswax Limited)

- 1st Allan McCaw (Milton, Otago)
2nd Jane and Tony Lorimer (Waikato)
3rd The Honey Company (Blenheim)

Class 8: Chunk Honey

- 1st Arataki Honey Rotorua
2nd competitor disqualified: not in regulation jar

Class 9: Traditional Whole Frame

Honeycomb (sponsored by New Zealand Beeswax Limited)

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland)
2nd Arataki Honey Rotorua

Class 10: Traditional Honey Comb Sections

- 1st Danny Russell (Ngaruawahia)
2nd Dale Deluca (Blenheim)

Class 11: Honey Cut Comb

- 1st Danny Russell (Ngaruawahia)
2nd Arataki Honey Rotorua
3rd Carol Downer (Auckland)

The Trophy, sponsored by the NZ Comb Honey Producers Association, goes to the highest scoring honeycomb, which was produced by Danny Russell from Ngaruawahia.

Class 12: Beekeeper's Special Reserve

Honey (sponsored by NZ Honey Packers and Exporters Association Inc.)

- 1st Jody and Ralph Mitchell (Kaimai Range Honey, Bay of Plenty)
2nd Martin Lynch (Sweetree Honey, Waikato)
3rd Jody and Ralph Mitchell (Kaimai Range Honey)

Class 13: Inter Bee Club Trophy

(sponsored by Honey New Zealand)

- 1st Bay of Plenty Bee Club: produced by Jody and Ralph Mitchell
2nd Auckland Beekeepers Club: produced by Carol Downer
3rd Marlborough Bee Club: produced by Derryn from Putake Honey

Class 14A: Natural Beeswax Block

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland)
2nd Jody and Ralph Mitchell (Kaimai Range Honey, Bay of Plenty)
3rd Arataki Honey Rotorua

Class 14B: Brood Wax Block

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland)
2nd Jody and Ralph Mitchell (Kaimai Range Honey, Bay of Plenty)

The Beeswax Trophy, sponsored by Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies, goes to the highest score in both classes 14a and 14b.

Winner: Carol Downer

Class 15: Pollen–Cleaned and Dried

(sponsored by New Zealand Beeswax Limited)

- 1st Jane and Tony Lorimer (Waikato)
2nd Allan Pimm (Opotiki, Bay of Plenty)
3rd Martin Lynch (Sweetree Honey, Waikato)

Class 16: Products of the Hive

(sponsored by Wild Forage Limited)

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland)
2nd Joe Peeters (Bay of Plenty)
3rd Gary Sinkinson (Feilding)

Class 17: Airborne Commercial Monofloral Honey

(sponsored by Airborne Honey)

This entry requires a minimum batch lot of 1200 kilograms or four drums. Two core batch samples are submitted with supporting documentation to Airborne Honey one month prior to the main competition. This winning honey is released as a special edition monofloral with surrounding marketing and publicity for the beekeeper, and a premium price of \$1 a kilo above the current market rate is paid for this honey.

- 1st Tony Taiaroa (Waikari Apiaries, North Canterbury), with a pure clover honey.

Read on for the results of the Supreme Award ...

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

We will have more conference photos in the September issue.

If you've been inspired by reading about the success of the 2015 conference, make sure you register early for the 2016 conference.

And it's not too early to start thinking about submitting entries to the honey and photography competitions and the Roy Paterson Trophy for the 2016 conference. Keep an eye on the conference website www.apicultureconference.co.nz for entry details.

SUPREME AWARD

The Supreme Award 2015, sponsored by 100% PURE NEW ZEALAND HONEY, goes to the highest scoring exhibitor overall, taking into account the sum of the top six scores of an individual exhibitor.

The trophy was presented to Carol Downer by Sean Goodwin, CEO of 100% Pure New Zealand Honey.

The top three scorers were:

- 1st Carol Downer (Auckland): total score 1738 points.
- 2nd Arataki Honey Rotorua: total score 1687 points.
- 3rd Jody and Ralph Mitchell (Kaimai Range Honey, Bay of Plenty): total score 1626 points.



Carol Downer (left) won the Supreme Award at the 100% Pure New Zealand National Honey Show 2015. The trophy was presented by Sean Goodwin, chief executive officer of 100% Pure New Zealand Honey. Chief Judge Maureen Conquer is at right. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

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BURNING QUESTIONS

TESTING FOR THIXOTROPY

Professor Peter Molan

A reader has asked Peter Molan to explain the testing method for thixotropy in honey, and how this method could be used to determine if rewarewa or honeydew honey is being sold as manuka honey.

Professor Peter Molan says,

Thixotropy is the property of a substance to form a gel when undisturbed but have the gelling disrupted by agitating (e.g., by stirring or vibrating). It is measured by measuring the viscosity with the gel undisturbed by having the rotor of a viscometer running at a slow speed, then by measuring the viscosity with the rotor running at a high speed. The difference in viscosity between the two measurements of viscosity gives a measure of

the thixotropy. Measurement of thixotropy is offered as a commercial analytical service by Analytica Laboratories, at a low cost.

Dilution of manuka honey with other types of honey is easily detected by measuring thixotropy because the other types of honey are not thixotropic. Ling heather honey is the only honey besides manuka that is thixotropic, but much less so. Some degree of dilution of manuka honey by ling heather honey would not be detectable by measuring thixotropy but would be detectable through its flavour and aroma and through the presence of chemical marker components that are unique to ling heather.

Do you have a burning question about beekeeping? Are you worried about your beeswax? Mystified about moths moving in? Need help dealing with varroa and other pests? Well fear not, help is at hand. Every keen beekeeper has a list of questions they'd love to know the answers to. Luckily, the NBA has local beekeeping brainboxes on hand to answer any beekeeping-related queries, from giving your hives a helping hand to sussing out your swarms. Whatever your question, simply email it to editor@nba.org.nz and we will post the answers in a future issue of The New Zealand BeeKeeper.



The boys filling nucs. Photo: Crystal E., Waikino.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A STRONG AND BUOYANT INDUSTRY

Allan Pimm

I have just come away from what has been a very successful conference. The atmosphere was buoyant and I would have to say the beekeeping industry is in a very confident space.

During the conference the speciality groups met (e.g., pollination, packers, etc.), in the same way as has happened ever since I started attending conference.

Several sponsors I have spoken to in recent days say they really enjoyed the unity of the industry and are already looking forward to being part of future conferences.

Both the NBA and BIG presidents stated during seminar forums that there was no fighting between the groups.

For the life of me I can't understand where the hype around creating a unified industry has come from. (Surely to have unification there must be disunity.) Perhaps someone who was not at Wairakei can explain to me where the disunity of the beekeeping industry is (except amongst individuals disputing sites, etc.) because none of the people I approached at

I can't understand where the hype around creating a unified industry has come from.

conference, including the presidents, could actually tell me where the disunity is and therefore what we are uniting.

The media has got hold of the fact that the beekeeping industry is not united and has made our industry look like a pack of uncoordinated individuals, which I don't believe is true. We have a strong and buoyant industry with a very exciting future.

I look forward to anyone being able to explain what it is and why we are trying to unify something which to my mind is already unified at an industry level.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

BEE DISEASES: LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Gary Jeffery

Reading about the recently identified disease, *Lotmaria passim*, made me think back to early 'diseases' that threatened to pose quite a serious risk to the beekeeping industry. New beekeepers nowadays will not have heard about them, as they no longer are seen.

One condition was found in Canterbury, and was called simply 'Canterbury disease'. The brood appeared similar to the type of brood found in brood nests affected by varroa mites, with unsealed brood looking rather peculiar, possibly because of starvation. A form of parasitic mite syndrome (PMS) brood that we see before the sealing stage.

There was the suspicion that Canterbury disease might have been the result of poor mating, approaching a drone-laying condition. For a while EFB was suspected. It's never seen nowadays.

About 30 or so years ago, we had a condition that we called 'crawling disease'. The hives usually collected a good crop and looked quite normal until late summer (usually late February). Then, without any indication that anything was wrong, most of the bees suddenly crawled out the front of the hive and died, leaving only a small nucleus-sized group of bees with the queen that could survive the coming winter, if nursed carefully.

Crawling disease to me resembles the disappearing colonies noticed in big numbers recently. Possibly related to the new disease, or combined with one of the nosema species.

We made certain never to breed from any hives, regardless of the crop performance, if they had any relationship to hives that exhibited the crawling disease. I have not

heard of anyone noticing that condition in the following years, and I trust new hive losses will soon follow those past trends and fade away into a far-distant memory.

I encountered external acarine mites (*Acarapis* spp.) for the first time about 40 years ago. I was actually called in to look for internal acarine mites (i.e., the tracheal mite, *Acarapis woodi*) but found the external ones in the process. It looked like part of the bee until I poked it.

The external acarine mite is now widespread in New Zealand, but I haven't heard that it has caused any problems.

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BUSINESS

REDUCING CFUs IN YOUR HONEY

Frank Lindsay, NBA Life Member

Congratulations to Tony Tairora, winner of the gold medal in Class 17 of the 100% Pure New Zealand National Honey Competition 2015 (Airborne Commercial Monofloral Honey, sponsored by Airborne Honey Limited). The competition was held as part of the New Zealand Apiculture Conference. Tony had produced a beautiful clover honey, which will now be packed and sold at a premium.

One of the disappointing aspects of this competition was the number of entries excluded because of high CFUs (colony-forming units). CFUs estimate the number of living bacteria or fungal cells in a sample. Several of the countries we export to are looking at the number of CFUs in honey.

How do CFUs get into your honey?

The bees polish the cells before they put nectar in the cells, so these are being introduced after the cells have been capped. Part 2 of the Risk Management Programme (RMP) covers cleaning of the honey processing plants. Sanitise and wash down twice before use. Continually wash your hands in water. (Incidentally, don't use antibacterial soap as residues could end up in your honey through sticky hands.) We all clean our plants well but it seems several are missing the point that honey can also be contaminated from hive to factory.

Honey can also be contaminated from hive to factory.

How are these CFUs being introduced?

Honey can be contaminated by these means:

- the method you use to enable bees to escape from the honey supers
- the use of queen excluders to exclude pollen from honey supers
- the way you take off honey and how you handle it. All surfaces must be clean and supers should be covered during loading. If any honey collects in the drip trays, this also can add to the contamination of your honey.

The old method of removing honey supers during the flow and allowing the bees to clear themselves is no longer acceptable, especially if you allow them to clear as you drive back to the factory. Several beekeepers have been ticketed for insecure loading for not netting their loads, and you can be sure traffic enforcement officers in other districts will be doing this shortly.

Blowing bees out often breaks the propolis seal, which allows the frames to move during transporting, thus squashing the remaining bees that cluster together. Squashed bees during loading or during transporting add CFUs.

The person in charge of the uncapper is the most important person in the plant as far as CFUs are concerned.

Preventing contamination

Australian beekeepers mainly use clearer boards. Honey supers are lifted and an empty super is placed immediately over the queen excluder, then the clearer/escape board and the honey supers are added. They generally camp out overnight and collect the honey early in the morning, while it's still cool. Others place clearer boards on a load (120 hives or whatever a truck and trailer will carry), then go back to an apiary they put clearer boards on the day before and remove the honey.

To prevent contamination during transport, many beekeepers now shrink wrap honey supers before they go on to the truck.

The person in charge of the uncapper is the most important person in the plant as far as CFUs are concerned. I realise that getting the frames through the plant and out again as fast as possible is very important, but this person should remove any squashed bees by cutting out the wax surrounding it as well. Frames with pollen or with patches of brood should also be excluded.

If you can't do these things, perhaps you should invest in an Archimedes screw honey separator to take most of the wax out of the process early

and put the cappings honey in a different tank from the honey out of the extractor.

Whatever your size, perhaps it's time we measure our honey for CFUs every now and again as the honey goes through the plant. It's a way of monitoring your plant procedures, as well as that of your workers.

Ant incursions

Another problem most of us haven't experienced before is ants coming into the honey house. I'm also finding them in the top of hives above the split/crown board. If you are not careful, ants can be brought back into the honey house.

The spread of these Argentine 'honey ants' means we must not leave any honey droplets around after a day's extracting. Our Australian cousins have dealt with ants for years and employ high-temperature power washers to clean their plant top to bottom, walls and floor, everyday at the completing of extracting. The way to get rid of ants is **"don't feed them"**.

Ants also don't like wet conditions. Tanks have to be covered so the honey doesn't take in extra moisture. If this measure doesn't work, call an exterminator to spray outside around the boundary of the honey house. (*NB: only registered chemicals can be used in the honey house.*) Soapy water also works well on ants trapped inside.

Whenever I find an ant colony under my hive roof, I squash as many as possible, then put green grass or a green branch under the roof. The high humidity makes them decamp.

[Editor's note: For more information about Argentine ants, refer to the article 'Argentine ants in New Zealand hives' on page 19 of the March 2015 journal.]

Whatever your size, perhaps it's time we measure our honey for CFUs every now and again ...

BRANCH REPORTS

FROM THE COLONIES

Waikato Branch

Crikey, it is amazing what a holiday does! And then the conference—fabulous!! Really great to see the industry finally getting it together.

I went to the New Zealand Tree Crops Association's (NZTCA) annual sale as I have a large reserve over the road going to rack and ruin. I decided to get the guys to slash and burn all the gorse (I know, I know, good bee food!), the blackberry and creeper stuff and it now looks a hundred times worse! So far the council hasn't figured out who did it!

Anyway, the NZTCA's sale was brilliant (no, I am not a member but I will be soon). Not only were the prices very low, but the variety of plants was mindboggling. Some I had never seen on sale before (galingal root, for example, used in Asian cooking). Not sure if this is good for bees, but I digress! They also had all the other lovely bee food, like five finger, tagaste, fruit trees, flaxes, hoheria, all for very little cost. So go if you see an ad in the paper for one of their sales.

The bees are all snuggled down now—hopefully not dead! And if you are not on holiday, there are all those other chores to catch up on. Ordering new gear, cleaning the sheds, and writing up health and safety material so everyone is on the same page when going to use the Ezyloader or nail gun or checking out new sites. And of course, taking some honey to your site farmers.

Enjoy the downtime—it's not that long!

- Barbara Cahalane

Bay of Plenty Branch

Many BOP members attended the conference at Taupo. We all commend the organisers for a great event.

Our Branch took out the Interclub Honey Trophy with a rewarewa honey produced by Kaimai Range Honey. Ralph and Jody Mitchell also took out another seven honey awards: great work, guys.

Here in the Bay, bees are wintering well with good winter pollen coming in on the fine days.

We had a local branch meeting in Katikati with representatives from FMG Insurance and HazardCo attending. After learning new health and safety requirements and business

owner and director responsibilities, we all became worried so finished the meeting with a beer and a pork roll.

With the coming kiwifruit pollination season looming a few months away, we need to have serious discussions with orchardists who insist on covering their complete orchards in netting. I hope pollen dusters do the job, as I do not see much enthusiasm from beekeepers to pollinate these orchards.

Most members are trying to have a few days' holiday as spring is approaching fast.

- Bruce Lowe

Poverty Bay Branch**Conference**

Congratulations to the organising committee for a very interesting, well-run conference. All the hard work paid off and conference was very well attended.

Winter

The weather, apart from a few cold days, is turning out to be similar to last year—very warm, mild and dry. As at the beginning of July I can drive onto all my apiary sites, which is most unusual. Let's hope the spring is not as wet and cold as last year, but nature has a way of balancing things out!

Giant willow aphid (GWA)

GWA showed up again in Poverty Bay over the late January/early February period. During February, March and into April, the hives stored large amounts of this willow honeydew and went into the winter very heavy. Some has even been stored up in the feeders. Most beekeepers had fewer problems with autumn extraction due to removing the last of their honey earlier than last year.

The only positive is that many beekeepers in this area have fed little or no sugar syrup this autumn. The big concern is that we do not yet know how the willow trees will be affected by the aphid long term.

[Editor's note: see page 6 for an article on GWA and willows.]

Bee loss trial

We are running a trial in conjunction with Victoria University to attempt to determine the cause of unexplained autumn bee losses

that have occurred on the Poverty Bay flats over many years since 2003. We have been collecting bee and pollen samples over summer and autumn for testing. Hives were affected in late May this year, which is later than a similar occurrence last year. Samples are still being tested and no results are available yet.

Trees for Bees

Trial hives are wintering well with weights from 60–79 kg. We're looking forward to an improved flowering this spring as the plantings start to mature.

AFB recognition training and test

Date: 12 September 2015

Contact: Paul Badger (details on page 31)

Registration deadline: 29 August

- Paul Badger, Branch President

Southern North Island Branch**Flood damage**

Wanganui has featured in the news with the floods. A depression sat over the middle/lower North Island during the weekend of 20–21 June, drenching the countryside. Rivers on both the west and east coast rose quickly. The flooding was higher and caused more damage than the 2004 flooding. Other areas of Taranaki, Manawatu, and Wellington also suffered from the heavy downpours. But in our case we had twice the normal monthly rainfall in 24 hours. We live in interesting times.

The removal of the willows to free up the water flow has caused the riverbanks to scour out and has even changed the riverbed in some places. Parts of hillsides in places have gone completely into the river, taking out sections of access road with it.

Many beekeepers in our area are counting their losses. Hundreds of hives have been swept away by the Wanganui, Waitotara and Whangaeu rivers. The worst area is the Waitotara Valley, where the river peaked at 15.5 metres above normal, 48 kilometres upstream, taking out all the apiary sites on the flats and on the lower flood plain. Farmers lost stock and valuable winter feedstock as well.

Between 2,000–3,000 hives are estimated to have been lost in the Waverley, Wanganui,

continued...

Mangamahu, Turakina, Feilding and Bulls areas. Members were wading waist-deep in water rescuing hives. Some just couldn't be saved, as it was too dangerous.

Further down on the sand country, hives drowned in hollows when the groundwater came up and had nowhere to go. Some areas were a metre deep, causing hives to float off their pallets to be caught on fence lines or on banks, but they were still damaged.

We are now trying to get to apiary sites: many are still inaccessible as we write. In some cases hives have survived in spite of the mud and water, but unfortunately many are lost.

It's going to take a while for beekeepers to come back from these losses, but the promise of manuka honey will see these areas repopulated with hives again until the next flood takes them away. Memories are short and risks are taken when the financial returns are high.

Conference

The flooding started on Saturday, 20 June, the day before the Apiculture Conference at Wairakei Resort Taupo.

Four of us from Wanganui had all sorts of adventures to get to conference. Neil drove through 10 different flooded areas just to get onto State Highway 1. Then the Desert Road was marginal as well.

But once we arrived, the conference at Wairakei was outstanding, with a record number of registrations. A huge contrast to the New South Wales Apiarists' Association Conference in Penrith (Sydney), where I understand there were approximately 155 registrations.

Australian beekeepers have a lot of catching up to do, and they certainly want to do more with their so-called 'manuka' honey from Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales. But although they only get \$5 to \$6 per kilogram of honey, they also get up to 200 kg of honey through five or more honey flows, so they are doing all right. The new code of practice they are debating will have implications for us later on. Much of it is reasonable and good beekeeping practice.

Other Branch news

On the brighter side, the branch is planning another Camp Rangī weekend in late February 2016.

At our AGM, the older guard has moved over to allow the younger members to take over the running of the branch. Frank Lindsay has handed over the secretarial duties to Kate

Smith after 22 years. Peter Ferris and Neil Farrer are stepping aside from principal roles but are still there to help and guide members. We are also looking at leadership training for our younger members to better equip them for their roles.

Dr Linda Newstrom-Lloyd has been a regular guest at our branch meetings, giving us updates on her willow research. Congratulations to Linda on producing her booklet, *Winning with Willows*. This should be a good resource for farmers planning the replanting of hillsides after all the erosion.

Just recently, cuttings of the main willow pollen varieties mentioned in the booklet were taken for distribution and propagation to the Trees for Bees trial farms.

- Neil Farrer and Frank Lindsay,
NBA Life Members

Nelson Branch

Winter is here. It's cold, as expected, but that allows for a bit of recuperation from the busy bee season. Cold is an effective way of killing many bugs and diseases, so I am generally a fan of hard winters. Most beekeepers appear to have been working on repairing supers, building new frames and other bee equipment.

Reports from the conference indicate it was great. Lots of practical workshops combined with the usual seminars. Many important discussions for the future of the industry and good networking. An excellent array of trade displays has also been mentioned.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend, as I was in North Carolina at a blackberry and raspberry conference. One of the things I noticed while in the USA was how aware the public were about honey bees and colony collapse. Many people I talked to once I indicated I kept bees were keen to know how things are in New Zealand: are our bee colonies dying, what pesticides do we use, and how often do I get stung (some questions don't change wherever you are).

Over half the larger fruit/vegetable roadside stalls/markets I visited had glass display hives with active colonies. This bee awareness, education and presence of display hives was fantastic. While New Zealand has definitely raised the profile of bees over the past few years, there clearly is more that can be done. How often do you see display hives in New Zealand? Imagine the interest and public knowledge gained if your local greengrocer had one!

- Jason Smith

Canterbury Branch

If there was any doubt last month about whether winter had arrived, there certainly isn't now. On 18 June, our area had quite a significant snowfall that stuck around for well over a week, bringing severe frosts. Many were without power and water for over a week. The Mackenzie Country had record low temperatures down to -18 to -20°C.

Despite the inconvenience, the snow will help replace some of the moisture deficit of the last two years. There has been more snow predicted as I write this, but hopefully it will miss us this time. It is cold!

I have noticed and had reports of eucalyptus in flower through autumn and early winter with bees working them. We have some grand old trees flowering at times when pollen is critically required. Sadly, they are gradually disappearing from the landscape. They don't always stand up to some of the strong winds we have had and the chainsaw.

I have been collecting seed from trees for future planting. It would be interesting to hear of any one's experience of growing eucalyptus from seed. A good article topic for *The New Zealand BeeKeeper*, perhaps? [Editor's note: any volunteers? My contact details are on page 3.]

With the rise of interest in people attending beekeeping training courses, I have noticed that more people are having trouble maintaining their beehives. The last two seasons have been difficult with production down. This, mixed with a lack of experience, would have contributed to have loss of hives in the hobbyist community.

Looking back over the years of my providing beehives for pollination services, I would have to say that overall, this service has had an adverse effect on the hives. They come out of pollination weaker than when they went in and need attention before the wintering operation. There are some hidden costs in doing this, I feel.

- Noel Trezise

PROOFREADER WANTED

We are looking for someone to assist with proofreading the journal. Experience not essential. Broadband is preferred, as is access to three-way calling for the occasional teleconference.

If you are interested, please email the committee chairman, Frank Lindsay at lindsay.apiaries@clear.net.nz



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ABOUT THE APIARY

A NEW SEASON BEGINS

Frank Lindsay, *NBA Life Member*

It's cold outside with a good dusting of snow on the lower North Island ranges and foothills, with the promise of more to come. However, spring is not that far away. One of the early flowering willow's catkins are budding up already while in the middle of the cluster, the queen has started laying again.

The new season has begun. Older bees are dying so a few are evident on the landing board. It's been too cold for the undertaker bees to clear them away. On the odd fine day a few bees are flying, bringing in water and perhaps a little nectar and pollen.

In my garden, snowdrops are already in flower and I even saw kowhai flowering in city gardens. Generally when plants flower out of season, they don't produce nectar. All the winter-flowering trees and shrubs mentioned last month are still flowering, just waiting for a bee visit.

Prepare for spring

It's time to get everything ready for the coming season: when September arrives, there will be very little time for this type of work. Prepare replacement frames (wire but don't wax them) or give plastic frames a good coating of wax and allow them to air. Remember, half of the wax in a foundation sheet or on a plastic frame is used by the bees to start drawing the cells, so don't skimp on wax.

Boxes should be assembled and skew nailed to provide greater rigidity (five on each corner—three on the handhold side and two driven in from the side). I like to use flathead galvanised 60-mm decking nails, as these hold better in our soft pine. Brand the boxes, then paraffin wax-dip the assembled boxes at 130°C for five minutes. Once out of the dipper, paint with a water-based paint while it's still hot. Give it another coat immediately so the outside is well sealed. The paint is drawn into the timber as it cools, sealing the wood and weatherproofing it.

It's about now that the bees start to really use their winter stores.

During a fine spell of weather, visit the apiary to check each hive's weight by hefting them. Make sure they are still difficult to lift, meaning they have honey reserves inside. It's about now that the bees start to really use their winter stores. The bees increase the temperature inside the cluster to 35°C so they can maintain brood rearing, and each bee reared uses a cell of honey and pollen. If the hive is really light, take it back to an apiary where it's much easier to feed and look after.

Feeding top-bar hives

A lot of top-bar hives die during winter because the cluster doesn't naturally move

sideways across the hive to another honey frame. In his book *Top-Bar Hive Beekeeping*, Wyatt Mangum recommends that the beekeeper should move bars with honey against the cluster to assist the bees. Do this every three weeks to prevent the bees dying from starvation. You may see the first signs of starvation when opening a hive. A few bees will fall off the frame as you remove it. The other bees are barely moving and may have their heads in the cells.

If the hive runs out of supplies, add thick sugar syrup in an upended Agee jar with small brad holes in the top. Lay a trail of syrup so the

continued...

John Bassett's divided top feeder.



bees find the bottle. An alternative is to use a top feeder (see photo on the previous page) and for a top-bar hive, just move a bar aside to create a gap for the bees to come up into. Again, advertise the presence of the syrup by leaving a syrup trail from the cluster to the feeder.

I have even brought home a starving hive, put it in a garage beside a heater and dribbled a little warm sugar syrup over the bees. By morning I had a good hive again. This year I had a small nuc die in a Langstroth hive, despite there being a super of honey in the super above them. The bee numbers were just too small to move en masse to the feed just 600 mm above. The message: winter hives strong.

In regular Langstroth hives, the bees gradually move up into the honey super above as the stores diminish but hives will often run short of food during a wet spring. As they begin to starve, they stop brood rearing and will cannibalise the developing brood. This creates a brood break that will affect the final honey production of the hive, so it's important to keep them well fed.

Feeders

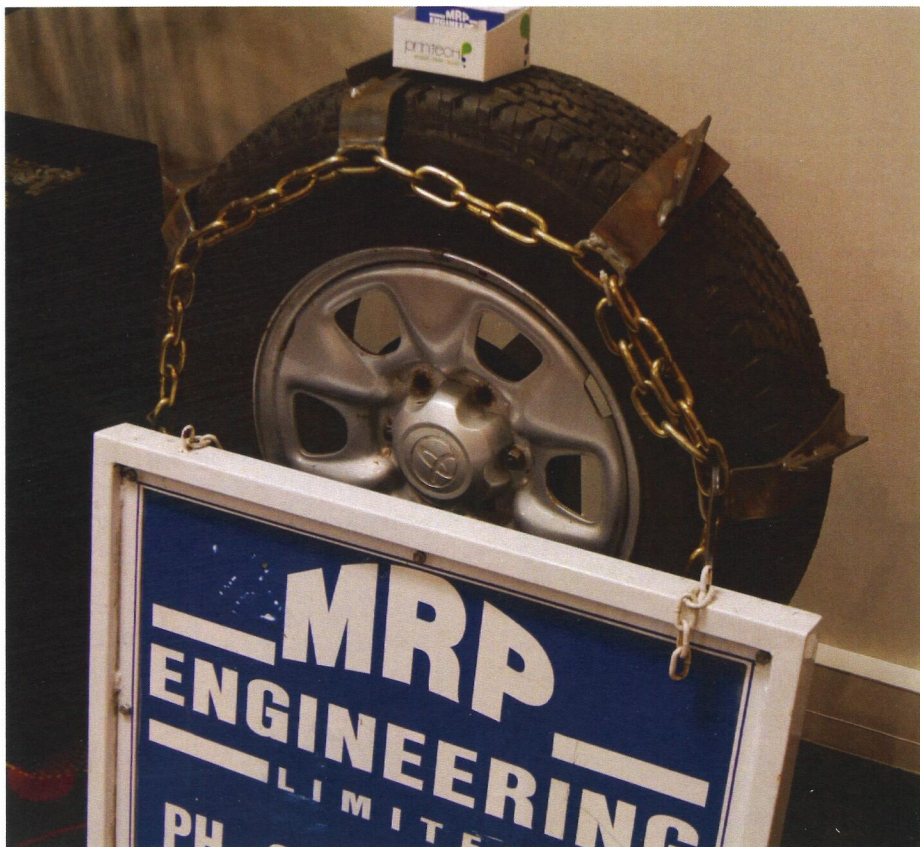
There are a number of feeders on the market. I like top feeders as they are easy to use and you hardly disturb the colony.

John Bassett uses a double-end type, which has the advantage of feeding both raw and liquid sugar at the same time. The feeder has the bee-way in the centre, which makes it readily available to the cluster. John has successfully used this feeder over many years. He reports that he usually fills one end with raw sugar in autumn or late winter to provide 'backup' stores, then adds liquid to the other end on subsequent feeding rounds.

The feeder as pictured is made 90–100 mm deep and will hold a quarter bag of raw sugar (six kilograms) and about five litres of syrup. John also found that a short length of plastic tree-stocking mesh with a piece of 25 x 12 mm timber stapled inside it made an excellent bee ladder.

If the weather prevented the servicing of hives, the bees switched to the raw sugar. Bees require a lot of energy to process raw sugar, but they soon learn to add moisture to the sugar crystals so they can use it.

Some beekeepers just use raw sugar in their feeder as it doesn't cake hard and attracts moisture. The only disadvantage when feeding raw sugar is that it's not easy to top



A different type of chain, as exhibited at the New Zealand Apiculture Conference 2015, Taupo. Photos: Frank Lindsay.

up without bees getting buried.

Only strong colonies should be fed raw sugar. Bees will stop using raw sugar as soon as fresh nectar becomes available. It can also be used to retard a strong hive if it is bolting ahead.

Chains

Chains are an asset in the spring, as well as using the idle gear to get to apiary sites. Just let the vehicle move across the paddock on fast idle. Don't use the accelerator as you will lose grip. A heavier type of chain was on display at the conference that could assist in sticky circumstances.

Farmers don't like torn-up paddocks, just as you wouldn't like your lawn cut up. If you get stuck, a winch, tie downs or two fencing strainers and a roll of wire can get you out. Just remember to place a heavy coat or the truck's floor mats on the wire to stop it whipping around should it snap.

If you really get stuck, go cap in hand to get the farmer's assistance. A tractor will get you out in a few minutes. A pot of honey goes a long way in paying for their inconvenience.

We have all been stuck at one time. Generally you get nearly all the way out, except for the last bit before the gate. Take the initiative if you think the paddock is likely to be sticky

Farmers don't like torn-up paddocks, just as you wouldn't like your lawn cut up.

and put the chains on well before you need to use them. This also saves you from getting covered in mud once you are stuck.

Things to do this month

Make up and prepare equipment for replacement or for additional hives. Check hives after storms.

Check hive weights. (Some commercial beekeepers are starting three- to four-weekly feeding rounds.)

Check several hives in each apiary for natural mite fall—high numbers indicate robbing or poor autumn treatment. (For those in the deep south, a winter honey flow is also a sign of robbing, so check for varroa.)

Stimulate your queen breeder and drone production hives so they get building rapidly, ready for the first queen matings in October. (Hives further north could build a lot earlier.) Drones take 40–50 days to mature. You can't produce mated queens without mature drones.

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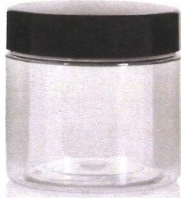
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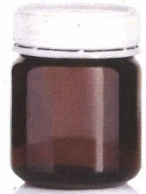
360ml Round Pot



500gm Round Jar



340gm Round Jar
(coming soon)



250gm Round Jar



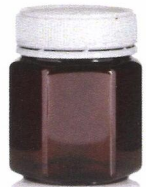
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1kg Hex Jar



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500gm Square Jar



250gm Square Jar

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