CONFERENCE COVERAGE INSIDE

AUGUST 2016 | VOLUME 24 No. 7

The NEW ZEALAND BeeKeeper

Excellence award to Dr Mark Goodwin
Plant & Food Research

It pays to read the label
D. N. MacLeod

Naati Beez planting Trees for Bees
Linda Newstrom-Lloyd et al.

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Front cover: At the ApiNZ National Conference in Rotorua, Dr Mark Goodwin of Plant & Food Research received the inaugural Apiculture New Zealand Peter Molan Award for Excellence in Apiculture Science. Report on page 15. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

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APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE REPORT 2016

Sarah Dewes, Tracey Friend, Kim Poynter and John Hartnell, ApiNZ Conference Steering Committee 2016

Change is never easy, but this year's conference was something the whole industry should be proud of. It laid down a foundation of unity, camaraderie and learning that set a new benchmark for the apiculture industry.

When the planning began some 11 months ago, our small team set a goal to deliver an outstanding conference, and we acknowledge the interim Joint Executive Council for having the courage to support the concept tabled. It was a step away from history, but paved a pathway which others could follow when organising such a large event. Our goal from day one was 1000 attendees: this was achieved and surpassed—thank you for your support in making this happen.

Success can be judged in many ways, but nothing tells the story better than the 'buzz' that descended on Rotorua. Registrations topped 1400 and this was increased further with the addition of close to 175 trade representatives.

The Rotorua Energy Events Centre (EEC) is an excellent conference venue as it has the ability to seat 900 to 1200 people in the plenary room, support a Trade Exhibition which can cater for 100 trade stands, plus six industry good information and learning centres. We thank the EEC team for their efforts throughout conference—a job well done.

The opening moment—a spine-tingling Māori powhiri—and a passionate address by Rotorua Mayor Steve Chadwick, certainly set the tone for an informative programme covering three full days.

Our thanks must first go to our international speakers: Dr Medhat Nasr from Alberta, Canada; Dr Gordon Wardell from California, United States of America; and Dr Peter Brooks from the Sunshine Coast University, Queensland. Their presentations provided the basis for considerable discussion and raised new awareness on a number of key topics.

We acknowledge and thank the Honourable Jo Goodhew, Minister for Food Safety; her address had a clear message for all stakeholders: traceability, food security and the requirement to ensure this industry delivers on its promise. Government's recognition of ApiNZ and the progress which has been made over the last 12 months was very encouraging for all industry stakeholders.

Left to right, ApiNZ board member and conference steering committee chairman John Hartnell presents the 'Unsung Hero – Buzziest Bee' Award to Dr John McLean. Rose West of Comag Agencies Ltd is at right. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

Our national speakers encompassed a line-up of talent, from science to practicality, and there was something for everyone. The conference theme was "Bee Business" and the presentations, workshops and posters delivered great value for all attendees.

The full conference was professionally videotaped and will become part of an education programme which will be rolled out over the next 12 months across the regional hubs. The videos will provide a wonderful education library for future generations and a permanent record of all presentations. Keep in touch with your regional hub for details.

Entertainment and awards

We can't overlook the Gala Dinner and Awards night. It was a fantastic evening with over 400 attendees enjoying an excellent dinner, entertainment and fun. Our Charity Auction raised close to $35,000 for KidsCan, another spectacular achievement which means the KidsCan programme will now be delivered to another four very worthy schools. Our thanks to all who supported the auction.

Regarding the awards and presentations, there were many memorable moments from Dr John McLean, who received the 'Unsung Hero – Buzziest Bee' Award, and the presentation of the inaugural and prestigious ApiNZ 'Excellence in Apiculture Science' Award

and grant to Dr Mark Goodwin, sponsored by Watson & Son Ltd. We congratulate and celebrate all award winners who are all very proud and worthy recipients. Further details of industry awards are published in this edition of the journal, and more reports will be published in the September journal.

Sponsorship funding

A conference of this size requires considerable funding and half of the budget requirement was delivered by our key sponsors and the trade exhibition partners. Without them we would not have been able to deliver the successful conference achieved. We acknowledge and thank you all.

Special mention must go to our 'Partner Sponsor' Manuka Health for their considerable support and generosity throughout conference. Their contribution to the "Trade Buzz" evening refreshments was a wonderful gesture and unexpected, so we thank the Manuka Health team.

To 'Platinum Sponsor' Comvita, our thanks for a wonderful Gala Dinner. The room looked spectacular, and the gift bags at the end of the night were a treat.

To our International Speaker, Gold, Silver and Bronze Sponsors, thank you for a great job that is hugely appreciated. Please see next page for a list of all sponsors.

To our Trade Exhibitors, what a spectacular trade show you delivered, our industry has never seen this level of support. We are confident that many orders were concluded and that the inquiries generated will deliver outstanding results. We hope to see you all in 2017.

Conference 2017

Planning for next year's conference is already under way; however, two hurdles must be addressed: the mid-year British & Irish Lions tour, which has placed enormous pressure on accommodation throughout New Zealand; and the expectation of industry of bigger numbers of both delegates and exhibitors. With this in mind, the ApiNZ Board has given its approval to bring Conference 2017 back to Rotorua. While disappointing for some, it is a logical solution as venue options are limited at this time.

Thank you.

Bruce Wills (left) and three of the Māori Cultural Entertainers during the pōwhiri on 19 June 2016. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

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THANK YOU

to our sponsors for your support at our 2016 National Conference

The New Zealand Apiculture Conference 2016, held at the Rotorua Energy Events Centre had over 1,400 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 2017.

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APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

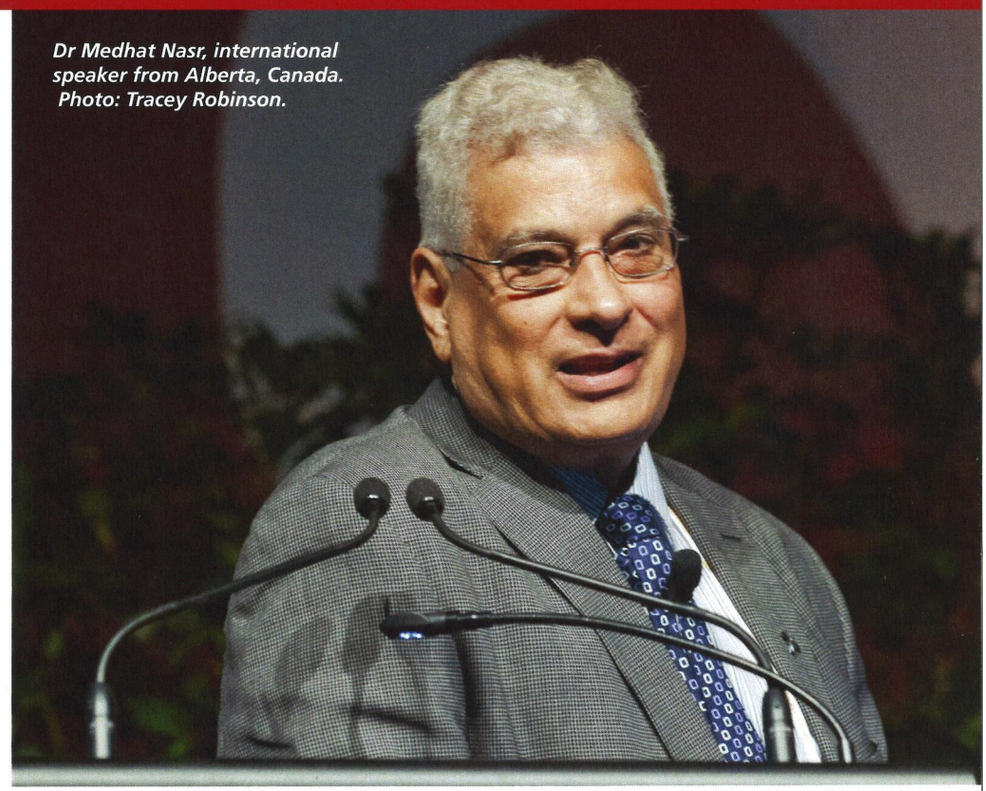
WHAT A CONFERENCE!

Frank Lindsay, Life Member

The ApiNZ conference is over, and what a conference! 1400-plus registrations gives an indication of the interest in beekeeping both from hobbyists and the commercial sector. A greater number of sponsors presenting their goods were happy with the outcome. Our conference is attracting more overseas visitors each year. One said it beats what you see in some northern hemisphere countries.

Sunday was directed towards bee health, Monday was focused on mānuka and Tuesday was more science-orientated but had practical applications for beekeepers. Each day there were important gems of information but you had to be there and listening. The steering committee's forethought to have the seminars videotaped means they will be available to hub committees to play at meetings, so those who couldn't make it and those who did will be able to see these again and pick out those important bits of information.

Here are my thoughts on some of the presentations I attended, and some general observations.



Dr Medhat Nasr, international speaker from Alberta, Canada. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

Colony losses

Dr Medhat Nasr, one of the overseas guest speakers, told us that beekeepers in Ontario had reduced winter losses simply by monitoring varroa levels through the season. We have to be proactive and initiate treatment when the threshold is reached; seven mites in an alcohol wash (if I remember rightly) is a much lower level than has been published previously. We need to treat early to have an excess of young bees going into winter with high levels of vitellogenin *[a protein present in the blood, from which the substance of egg yolk is derived: Wikipedia]* Our overseas speakers have advised us to treat early for years, but perhaps the new entrants to the industry haven't heard of it or taken the message on board.

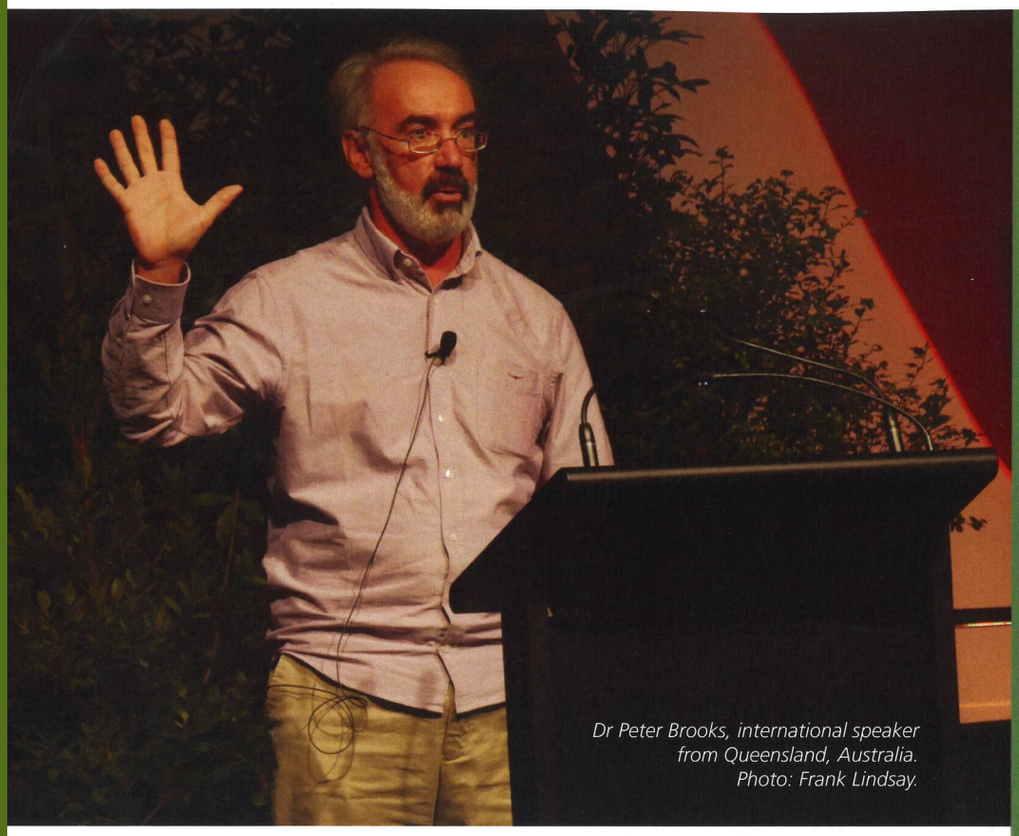
We all need to learn basic bee biology. This was evident when a question from the floor couldn't be answered. Why does a bee clear the pollen from the nectar in its stomach while it's flying back to the hive? You can't blame our scientists from not immediately knowing this as they do not deal in this information very often, but every beekeeper should know as it is part of the process for turning nectar into honey. As a guess, the bee uses the pollen grains for food, so perhaps it's something to do with putting in a pristine product in the cells so that it won't cause it to granulate quickly.

Dr Nasr also mentioned the correct way to ventilate the hive. This is very important for Canadian beekeepers, as their hives are buried in snow for most of the winter. Under snow the temperature remains at a constant 4°C, not like our hive temperatures, which go up and down with each winter storm. Their problem is the time spent under snow. If it doesn't clear on time, hives can starve.

Dr Pike Brown of Landcare Research spoke about the New Zealand Colony Loss and Survival (NZ COLOSS) survey. What was perhaps a surprise to me was the amount of hive starvation our survey showed. Is this a new trend associated with autumn splitting and wintering in singles? Ten years ago, beekeepers who reduced their hives to singles would shake the extra bees in front of the hive. When the hive was full of bees, the extras would beard up the front until the ageing bees disappeared. This left the single hive full of bees, which allowed them to regulate the temperature in most of the hive. Warmer winters mean that some flowering shrubs are providing nectar and pollen out of season, perhaps stimulating brood production, which means the bees chew through their honey reserves earlier. Winter hives in areas where you can access them in the wet, so you can provide emergency feed and winter hives strong. ***[Editor's note: please see articles on pages 25 and 33.]***

Dr John McLean spoke about willow aphids. He told us that we can no longer use the hefting method to determine a hive's winter weight. Up to one third of the honey

continued...



Dr Peter Brooks, international speaker from Queensland, Australia. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

stored could be useless to the bees, as it is indigestible melezilose from the willow aphid honey dew.

Dr Megan Grainger of Analytica Laboratories spoke on the topic of 'Assessing the potential activity of your hive'. The science behind the mānuka plant/shrub was interesting, especially the methods we can use to determine the level of activity in individual bushes or a representation of an area. The flower doesn't produce nectar until the flower has been open a week, which was news to some. Just looking at the flower can tell a beekeeper whether that bush is likely to produce nectar with DHA (dihydroxyacetone). The clue was in the photographs used in the presentation.

Dr Mark Goodwin told us of his research into the problems with hives dying in the Coromandel and other parts of the North Island last spring. Although only partway through his research project, Mark took a punt to say that *Nosema ceranae* was perhaps behind it and made the observation that we were all losing a box of honey due to nosema. The Plant & Food Research trial, which has been sterilising brood frames by heat treating them to 50°C, showed that clean frames doubled brood viability. The take-home message is that we all have brood boxes in storage, so perhaps we should be sterilising them. In Australia, the beekeepers have an easier tool to use. They have gamma radiation available to sterilise AFB hives, which also kills the other pathogens like nosema as well.

Perhaps one of the commercial beekeepers out there sterilising supers could write an article on how they do this on a large scale. In Europe, hobbyists use acetic acid to fumigate dead-out hives for nosema and wax moth but the downside is that acetic acid is corrosive to metal and concrete. For those who don't want to use acetic acid, cull dark frames out of the system.

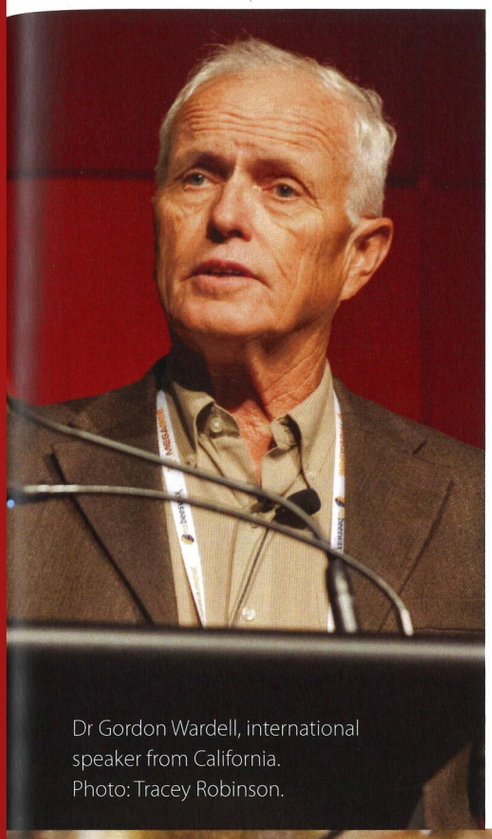
American foulbrood

What was horrifying to some of us was that two thirds of the audience left just before the AFB presentations. AFB is up there with varroa as our most serious disease, costing us between two and three million dollars per year in lost hives and production, yet many weren't there to listen. Yes, Rex Baynes could clean up his presentation, and instead of reiterating the year's statistics that have already been in the April edition of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper*, he could pick out a few topics and expand on trends, or perhaps tell us what he's planning for the next season.

What those people who left missed was Marco Gonzalez's presentation of his activities in his region. Marco is an Apiculture Officer with AsureQuality Limited, and has just taken over responsibility for monitoring the lower North Island. Marco's presentation showed known 'hot-spot' areas in the lower North Island and the South Island.

Why would beekeepers move hives into these areas for the odd chance at mānuka if they knew they were likely to get AFB? Maybe they won't get AFB initially, but it will show during the next year. Contaminated honey supers are even harder to identify and take out of the system, unless beekeepers employ some sort of identification/tracing system, and of course, they ensured that the same frames went into the same boxes. Otherwise, it's even harder so an apiary quarantine system would have to be employed, which is hard for those that migrate hives from region to region.

Rex asked how he could improve the AFB website. One person suggested that some of the important aspects from the website could be in different languages to suit the changing dynamics of our population: Chinese, Korean, Arabic and Filipino. Some of these people have hives, which is great, but they are unlikely to be registered and these beekeepers may be using treatments that they use in their home country.



Dr Gordon Wardell, international speaker from California. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

Almond pollination in the USA

Dr Gordon Wardell from California gave us a presentation from a beekeeper's point of view on almond pollination. Beekeepers move hives into dump yards, where loads of 400 hives (a semi-truck load) are set down on brown grass (not a flower in sight) for two to three months waiting for the almonds to flower.

In the meantime, the hives have to be fed to get brood rearing going so the hives are strong and hungry for pollen when they are put in. A gang of 18 does this, taking a month to go around all the hives before starting the process again. The beekeeping industry is talking to the almond industry about each other's problems. They have reduced accidental poisoning of hives due to tank mixes from thousands of hives to just 500 hives lost last year. The smaller kill this year was due to overspraying from a grape property next door, so this was a huge achievement. What was new information to us is the effect that fungicides are having on the flower style, turning it to a mush and making the flower harder to pollinate.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES

How could the organisers improve the conference? Here are a few minor suggestions.

- Set up the presenter's rostrum differently so presenters don't have to turn to change slides.
- Put a big screen in the sponsors area so they can see what's going on.
- Consider making available an early session the evening before for meeting the overseas speakers. The speakers could introduce beekeeping practices in their countries and describe their research, followed by a question-and-answer session on their beekeeping activities. At present, individuals with questions have to talk to them during breaks, which limits everyone's time to socialise. An early session would allow those interested more time to see and talk to them.

This photo, taken by Frank Lindsay, won the 'Close-up' category of the Ecrotek National Photography Competition for 2016. See report on page 17.

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APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

RESULTS OF **NATIONAL HONEY SHOW 2016**

Maureen Conquer, Apimondia New Zealand representative, Wild Forage Ltd.

Following is the edited text of a speech presented by the chief judge of the National Honey Show sponsored by 100% Pure New Zealand, and held as part of the Apiculture New Zealand conference, Rotorua, 21 June 2016. The full list of results follows on from the speech.

Left to right: *National Honey Show judges Dr Karyne Rogers, Alessandro Tarentini and chief judge Maureen Conquer at work. Some of the trophies can be seen in the background. Photo supplied by Maureen Conquer.*

As chief judge, it is my pleasure to announce the results of the ApiNZ National Honey Show awards 2016.

I would like to acknowledge the sterling support of my fellow judges Dr Karyne Rogers from GNS Science and for our international perspective, Alessandro Tarentini from Arataki Honey Hawke's Bay.

It is truly exciting to see how the level of quality each year lifts ... it makes our job more challenging to select that extra-special entry, and in so many classes there was only one point of separation.

The aim of this national competition is to encourage our producers and packers to strive for the highest quality possible and for us as an industry to have pride and celebrate that success. I believe New Zealand produces some of the finest honey in the world—let's be proud of that and protect our global reputation.

Each and every winner today is to be congratulated and admired and believe me, there were so many so close. Fantastic—thank you to all participants.

All entries are blind-tasted so there is complete anonymity until the final scores are tabulated and referenced. Lynn Green again has made this all magically happen; thank you Lynn.

Every entry is individually and independently judged and scored, then added together for the final results.

If you as individual beekeepers have good examples of interesting or rare monofloral honey, we would greatly appreciate if you would share. Please contact me or one of my fellow judges.

One final thank you to the awesome conference organising team and the staff here at the Rotorua Events Centre. Everything has flowed seamlessly.

[Editor's note: Some gold award recipients generously agreed to open their honey for general tasting after the awards presentation. Once again, Nelson beekeeper Jeff Lukey also assembled a collection of monofloral honeys which were available for tasting.]

continued...

LIST OF RESULTS

Vickie Wade (centre), winner of the Supreme Award at the National Honey Show, with chief judge Maureen Conquer and Sean Goodwin of sponsor 100% Pure New Zealand Honey. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

(Numbers refer to combined judges' scores)

Classes 1–3 were sponsored by Pure Source Skincare

Class 1: Liquid Honey–Light	
1st Vickie Wade, Urban Honey, Auckland	282
2nd Dan Russell, Te Akatea Apiaries, Ngaruawahia	276
3rd Allen McCaw, Milburn Apiaries, Milton	274

Class 2: Liquid Honey–Medium	
1st Vickie Wade, Urban Honey	292
2nd Rodney Dreaver, Bee My Honey, Leeston	277
3rd Darren Clifford, Taylor Pass Honey Company, Blenheim	274

Class 3: Liquid Honey–Dark	
1st Vickie Wade, Urban Honey	282
2nd Darren Clifford, Taylor Pass Honey Company	278
3rd Rodney Dreaver, Bee My Honey	277

Classes 4–6 were sponsored by Arataki Honey Hawke's Bay

Class 4: Naturally Granulated Honey–Light	
1st Paul Badger, Gisborne	281
2nd Jeff Lukey, Nelson	273
3rd Trevor Corbett, Canterbury	265

Class 5: Naturally Granulated Honey–Medium	
1st Kim Poynter, Rotorua	277
2nd Murray Ellwood, Mountain Valley Honey, Nelson	252

Class 6: Naturally Granulated Honey–Dark	
1st Kim Poynter, Rotorua	264

Class 7 was sponsored by New Zealand Beeswax Limited

Class 7A: Creamed Honey–Light	
1st Allen McCaw, Milburn Apiaries	291
2nd Darren Clifford, Taylor Pass Honey Company	276
3rd Rodney Dreaver, Bee My Honey	274

Class 7B: Creamed Honey–Medium	
1st Darren Clifford, Taylor Pass Honey Company	276
2nd Vickie Wade, Urban Honey	273
3rd Ormsbees Honey and Services, Tauranga	268

Class 7C: Creamed Honey–Dark	
1st Jody and Ralph Mitchell, Kaimai Range Honey, Tauranga	279
2nd John and Pauline Bassett, Coromandel	271
3rd Vickie Wade, Urban Honey	266

Class 8 was sponsored by Honey New Zealand

Class 8: Chunk Honey	
1st Vickie Wade, Urban Honey	295
2nd Dan Russell, Te Akatea Apiaries	291

Class 9 was sponsored by New Zealand Beeswax Limited

Class 9: Traditional Whole Frame Honeycomb	
1st Vickie Wade, Urban Honey	281.5

Class 10: Traditional Honey Comb Section	
1st Dan Russell, Te Akatea Apiaries	296

Class 11: Honey Cut Comb	
1st Russell Marsh. Marsh's Honey, Ettrick	298
2nd Dan Russell, Te Akatea Apiaries	293
Highly Commended: Vickie Wade	281.5

Class 12 was sponsored by Honey New Zealand

Class 12: Beekeeper's Special Reserve Honey	
1st Jeff Lukey, Wakefield, Nelson	287
2nd Jody and Ralph Mitchell, Kaimai Range Honey	279
3rd Murray Ellwood, Mountain Valley Honey, Nelson	275
Highly Commended: John & Pauline Bassett	274

Class 13 was sponsored by Honey New Zealand

Class 13: Inter-Bee Club Trophy	
Auckland Bee Club	295

Class 14 was sponsored by Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies

Class 14: Natural Beeswax Block	
1st Vickie Wade, Urban Honey	292
2nd Jody and Ralph Mitchell, Kaimai Range Honey	241

Class 15 was sponsored by New Zealand Beeswax Limited

Class 15: Pollen–Cleaned and Dried	
1st Martin Lynch, Sweetree Honey, Waikato	267

Class 16 was sponsored by Wild Forage Limited

Class 16: Products of the Hive	
1st Martin and Stephanie Lynch, Sweetree Honey	248

Class 17 was sponsored by Airborne Honey

Class 17: Airborne Commercial Monofloral Honey
1st Wouter Hyink, Waikino Honey, Waihi
2nd Shaun and Martina Lawlor, Gore

Class 18 was sponsored by Hartnell and Associates

Class 18A: Honey Beverages–Alcoholic	
1st Karyne Rogers, Wellington	296
2nd Kim Poynter, Rotorua	280

Class 18A: Honey Beverages–Non-Alcoholic
No award

SUPREME AWARD

The Supreme Award 2016, 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 Supreme Award was presented to Vickie Wade from Urban Honey, Auckland (1724.5 points).

Runner-up: Darren Clifford from Taylor Pass Honey Company, Blenheim (1639 points).

Third place: Jody and Ralph Mitchell from Kaimai Range Honey, Tauranga (1560 points).

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APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

DR MARK GOODWIN RECEIVES PETER MOLAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Media release, Plant and Food Research, 24 June 2016

Editor's note: *At the conference in Rotorua, long-time honey bee researcher Dr Mark Goodwin of Plant and Food Research was awarded the inaugural Apiculture New Zealand Peter Molan Award for Excellence in Apiculture Science. We congratulate Mark on this well-deserved accolade. Following is a media release from Plant and Food Research.*

For almost thirty years Dr Mark Goodwin has been protecting the kingdoms of queens and the health of their loyal subjects, often during times of foreign invasion. But while the realms he has dedicated his career to are small, their influence on the world is significant.

Dr Goodwin is a scientist at Plant & Food Research specialising in honey bee and hive health, and the pollination services these colonies provide.

His research has put him at the forefront of the fight against pests and diseases such as *Varroa*, American foulbrood and, most recently, *Nosema ceranae*. He was recognised this week with the inaugural Apiculture New Zealand Peter Molan Award.

The award and associated research grant recognises outstanding contribution to science which advances the apiculture industry, and was presented to Dr Goodwin at the recent Apiculture New Zealand Conference.

Honey bees play an important role in the pollination of many crops of significance to the New Zealand economy. The insect has been exposed to many threats, which has subsequently translated into potential challenges for successful fruit and vegetable production.

Of particular significance, Dr Goodwin was a key contributor to far-reaching work on kiwifruit pollination, and has conducted important research in honey bee toxicity. His research has often led to changes in industry practice and policy. He has also been a leading spokesperson for the apiculture industry.

Dr Mark Goodwin, inaugural winner of the Apiculture New Zealand Peter Molan Award for Excellence in Apiculture Science. ApiNZ Board member Barry Foster is at right. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

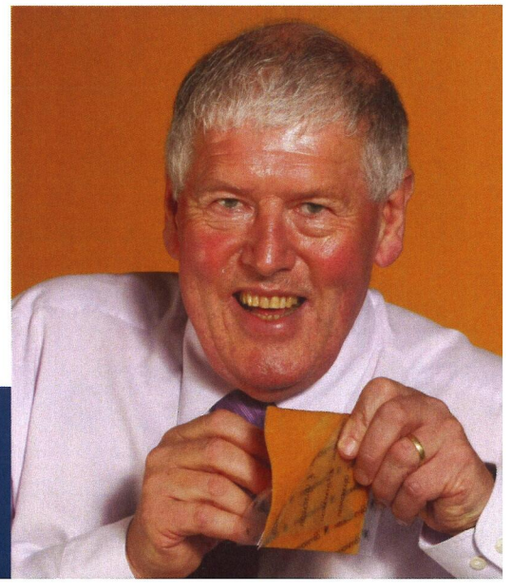
"The New Zealand apiculture industry has seen many challenges over the years, but Dr Goodwin's research has consistently played a major role in ensuring that these issues have not overwhelmed it,"

says Plant & Food Research's General Manager of Science (Sustainable Production) Dr Roger Williams.

"It's great to see his contribution recognised by the industry in this way."

The late Dr Peter Molan, for whom the award is named in honour of, is recognised as a pioneer of New Zealand's apiculture industry, particularly in his work on the health benefits of mānuka honey.

The late Professor Peter Molan, MBE, pictured below, in 2008 with a Medihoney Antibacterial Honey Gel Sheet he developed in association with Comvita to be used as a dressing. Prof Molan gained an international reputation for his pioneering work into the antibacterial properties of manuka honey. Photo: Rhys Palmer. Photograph sourced from http://www.waikato.ac.nz/news/archive.shtml?article=768.



Source

Going in to bat for the bees. Media release, Plant & Food Research, 24 June 2016. Retrieved 1 July, 2016 from http://www.plantandfood.co.nz/page/news/media-release/story/going-in-to-bat-for-the-bees

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APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS 2016

Mary-Ann Lindsay, Life Member

The eighth annual National Photographic Competition, sponsored by Ecrotek Beekeeping Supplies, was held as part of the Apiculture New Zealand conference in Rotorua. Winners were announced at the gala dinner on 21 June 2016.

The competition was open to all members of Apiculture New Zealand.

The judges were Tracey Robinson (a Rotorua photographer who won the New Zealand Professional Photographer of the Year award in 2015), John Hartnell and Fiona O'Brien. Photos were judged on composition, treatment of subject matter, and quality and presentation, with a maximum score of 100 points.

Some of the prize-winning photos will appear in future issues of the journal. And it's never too early to start thinking about entering next year's competition. Pop a camera in the truck and snap away!

A total of 40 photos were entered in the competition in these classes:

A. **Close-up** (subject must relate to beekeeping)

B. **Scenic** (an apiary subject such as flowers, hives, etc.)

C. **Portrait** (person, beekeeping procedure, honey or hive by-product processing in appropriate setting)

D. **Essay** (a set of 4 to 7 pictures depicting a beekeeping story)

E. **'Oh Darn!'** (for all those 'oops' moments that occur in beekeeping!).

Dave Wrathall of Ecrotek Beekeeping Supplies with Frank Lindsay, overall winner of the Ecrotek National Photographic Competition. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

CATEGORY RESULTS

Close-up	
1st	Frank Lindsay
2nd	Hamish Milner
3rd	Jody Mitchell

Scenic	
1st	Bill Busby
2nd	Frank Lindsay
3rd	Jody Mitchell

Portrait	
1st	Jody Mitchell
2nd	Frank Lindsay
3rd	Mark Hardgrave

Essay	
1st	Mossops Honey
2nd	Hamish Milner
3rd	Jody Mitchell

Oh Darn	
1st	Mana Kai Honey
2nd	Jody Mitchell
3rd	Frank Lindsay

People's Choice (based on the number of votes cast, for all classes above)
Mana Kai Honey

Overall winner: Frank Lindsay

(More conference coverage on page 31.)

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IN THE NEWS

BEEHIVE THIEVES ARRESTED IN WHANGANUI

New Zealand Herald

Two men have been arrested after being caught with 65 stolen beehives, prompting a call for public vigilance.

Whanganui police said the beehives had been taken from a property in Kai Iwi.

Two Whanganui men, aged in their late 20s, were arrested on Monday after police received information from the owners of the hives. The hives were later recovered from a Turakina property.

Police said reported beehive thefts in the Central Districts had been increasing, and it was a timely reminder for people to report any suspicious behaviour involving hives.

Thieves were likely to strike at night, when bees had returned to their hives and the chance of getting caught was lower. Beekeepers, on the other hand, tended to shift hives just before dawn and after dusk.

Detective Karl Reyland urged members of the public to be vigilant and report suspicious vehicles carrying beehives.

"If you are unable to phone police at the time, take a note of the type of vehicle, registration number, location and direction of travel. If possible note the description of the beehives including colour and numbers and then call police when you can."

Photos supplied by New Zealand Police.

SUGGESTIONS TO STOP THEFT

Get/make a stencil using lettering 75 mm high and start putting your registration code on the back and fronts of hives (second super) so they can be seen from the road when loaded. If you can, put your name and hive registration on the back of your vehicle so it can be clearly seen.

We would like the traffic police to pay greater attention to hive movements. If the number on the vehicle doesn't match up with the number on the hives or there is no number, you could be stopped and questioned.

Have a photographic record of your apiaries. Use your phone: it's quick and simple, and makes it easier to prove hives are missing.

Some beekeepers are having their frames branded by the manufacturer and some are having them made in their own colour. Start branding your gear, including the frames.

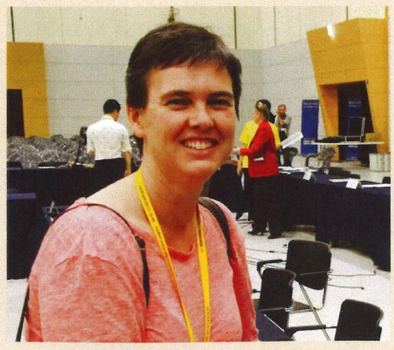
- Frank Lindsay, Life Member

Source

New Zealand Herald (July 14, 2016). Two arrested after being caught with 65 stolen bee hives. Retrieved July 15, 2016, from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11674749

If you wish to report information about the thefts of bees, beehives or honey to Police, this can be done anonymously by calling the Crimestoppers line on 0800 555 111. Crimestoppers is operated by an agency independent of Police and won't provide Police with any of your personal details.

APIMONDIA REPORT AVAILABLE ON APINZ WEBSITE



New Apimondia Oceania Commission President Jodie Goldsworthy at Apimondia 2015. Photo: Maureen Conquer.

Some of you might have had the pleasure of meeting Apimondia Oceania President Jodie Goldworthy at the ApiNZ National Conference.

Jodie has written a report that sums up the current situation of the apiculture industries in Australia and New Zealand. She also comments on the "incredibly successful Apiculture New Zealand National Conference in Rotorua".

Jodie's report also touches on the work of Apimondia, including a meeting of its Executive Committee in Rome, May 2016, the 2015 Apimondia Congress in Korea. Jodie also talks about preparations for the 2017 Apimondia Congress, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey.

To view the report, go to the Apiculture New Zealand website http://apinz.org.nz/2016/07/apimondia-oceania-presidents-report-july-2016/

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- **Essential Trace elements**

RECOMMENDED DOSE RATES

20mls per litre / 20L per 1000L added to syrup

PRODUCT ANALYSIS

Minerals and Trace Elements (mg/L - ppm)

Nitrogen 50.35	Phosphorus 10.07	Potassium 2134.84
Sulphur 271.89	Calcium 90.63	Magnesium 211.47
Sodium 1701.83	Iron 0.703	Copper 0.064
Manganese 0.041	Iodine 454.50	Molybdenum 0.01
Selenium 0.01	Zinc 0.360	Boron 6.060
Cobalt 0.010		

Vitamins Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B12, Fucoxanthin, Choline, Folic Acid

Amino Acid (mg/100gm)

Aspartic Acid 7.17	Threonine 1.72	Serine 1.91
Glutamic Acid 19.19	Prolin 0.90	Glycine 2.62
Alanine 8.64	Valine 1.90	Isoleucine 0.87
Leucine 1.71	Tyrosine 1.41	Phenylalanine 1.31
Lysine 1.85	Histidine 0.68	
Arginine 1.50	Cystine 2.05	
Methionine 0.47	Tryptophan 0.21	

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Stu Ferguson

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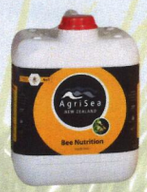

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FOCUS GROUP REPORTS: TECHNICAL

IT PAYS FOR **EVERYONE** TO **READ THE LABEL**

D. N. MacLeod, Technical Focus Group member

In the July edition of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper*, I wrote an article about the velvetleaf incursion and speculated on what might be in the coatings on this imported fodder beet seed. I stated, "As of 16 June 2016 we have not been advised by the importer, MPI or EPA about the nature of the coating on the imported fodder beet seed. Does anyone know if this coated fodder beet contained an insecticide?"

The July edition had not yet gone to press when I attended the Apiculture New Zealand National Conference. In a discussion with Green Party Member of Parliament Steffan Browning, he asked me to identify the chemicals used to treat fodder beet seed involved in the velvetleaf incursion. He shared with me and others a photograph of the label he had taken of a seed packet collected from a farmer during field inspections in Southland.

Velvetleaf is one of the worst weeds of cropping in the United States, causing yield losses of up to 35%. Velvetleaf has previously been identified in Waikato maize crops. It was first identified in South Island fodder beet crops in February 2016 (Environment Southland Regional Council, 21 April 2016). In a March 2016 media release, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) confirmed the presence of velvetleaf in Southland fodder beet crops (Ministry for Primary Industries, March 4, 2016). Soon thereafter, MPI identified the variety of Bangor fodder beet seed as one of the fodder beet seeds spreading velvetleaf (Ministry for Primary Industries, March 10, 2016).

Steffan Browning's photograph clearly shows that the label is for Bangor fodder beet seed from the supplier Maribo Seed, a Danish seed company. The label also clearly identifies the treatment pesticides used in the coated seed.

The pesticides are shown in the table below.

None of the three trade name products listed in the table is approved as hazardous substances by the EPA under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996, nor has any of them been registered as pesticides by MPI under the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Act 1997. Both Acts require compliance before sale and use of the product in New Zealand. Of the four active ingredients, there are Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) approvals and MPI registrations that cover a number of products containing either thiram or thiomethoxam.

DANATEX is a formulation not approved by either by EPA or MPI. Hymexazol has an EPA approval as a raw material/active ingredient only, and TACHIGAREN has no HSNO approval or ACVM registration. Tefluthrin has never been approved for any pesticide use in New Zealand, and the mixture FORCE MAGNA has no listed approval from the EPA or an MPI registration as an agricultural chemical. Telfluthrin (pyrethroid) and thiomethoxam (neonicotinoid) are insecticides toxic to bees. Thiram is considered non-toxic to bees. I cannot find any data on hymexazol toxicity to bees.

TRADE NAME	CHEMICAL NAME ACTIVE INGREDIENT	PURPOSE	CONCENTRATION
DANATEX	thiram	Fungicide	6 g/u
TACHIGAREN	hymexazol	Fungicide	14 g/u
FORCE MAGNA	thiomethoxam + tefluthrin	Insecticide	15 g/u + 6 g/u

continued...

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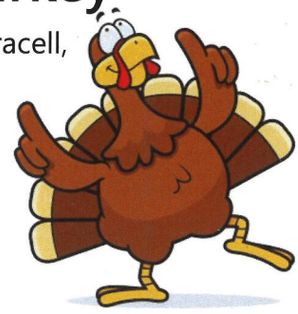

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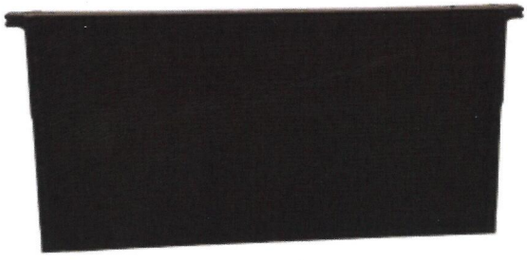

16 pallets	(288 cartons = 11,520 frames)	$1.78 + GST ea
8 pallets	(144 cartons = 5,760 frames)	$1.82 + GST ea
2 pallets	(36 cartons = 1,440 frames)	$1.86 + GST ea

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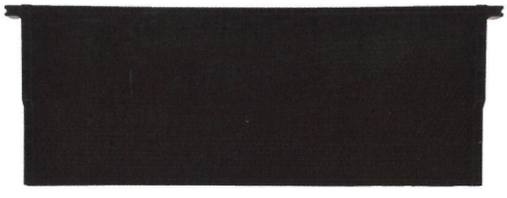

16 pallets	(288 cartons = 13,824 frames)	$1.78 + GST ea
8 pallets	(144 cartons = 6,912 frames)	$1.82 + GST ea
2 pallets	(36 cartons = 1,728 frames)	$1.86 + GST ea

We are moulding 24/7, but don't wait, order now! If you don't have frames in boxes when the honey flow hits you'll miss out. It's up to you to make sure you have the frames in place. Don't wait until it's too late. Get in the frame queue now! Call or e-mail us to discuss your needs.

We coat frames with beeswax too!

Paraffin Wax

With the price of oil creeping up, paraffin isn't likely to stay at these low prices for long. Stock up now. When it's gone its gone...

4 pallets (144 cartons = 3,600kg)	$2.79 + GST per kg
2 pallets (72 cartons = 1,800kg)	$2.89 + GST per kg
1 pallet (36 cartons = 900kg)	$2.99 + GST per kg

(Please note: Freight & refundable pallet charges extra)

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Maribo Seed specialises in producing sugar beet seed and fodder beet seed. Maribo Seed is owned by multinational chemical and seed company Syngenta, based in Switzerland. FORCE MAGNA, the insecticide seed coating used on Bangor fodder beet seed imported into New Zealand, is also a Syngenta product. Maribo Seed's website states that the company is active in coating and pelletising seeds.

Maribo Seed sold the Bangor fodder beet seed to another Danish company, DLF Seed, which sold it to their subsidiary in Christchurch, DLF Seed Limited, which imports the seed to New Zealand. This has been confirmed by newspaper reports (Scott, May 26, 2016) and by staff at DLF Seed Limited.

Syngenta's Australia media manager has advised me that Syngenta NZ had no idea its European chemicals were being imported into New Zealand as a seed coating until we asked them on 6 July 2016 to explain how and why this was occurring. DLF Seed has told me that these coatings have been used on fodder beet for the past seven years and shipments have never been stopped at the border.

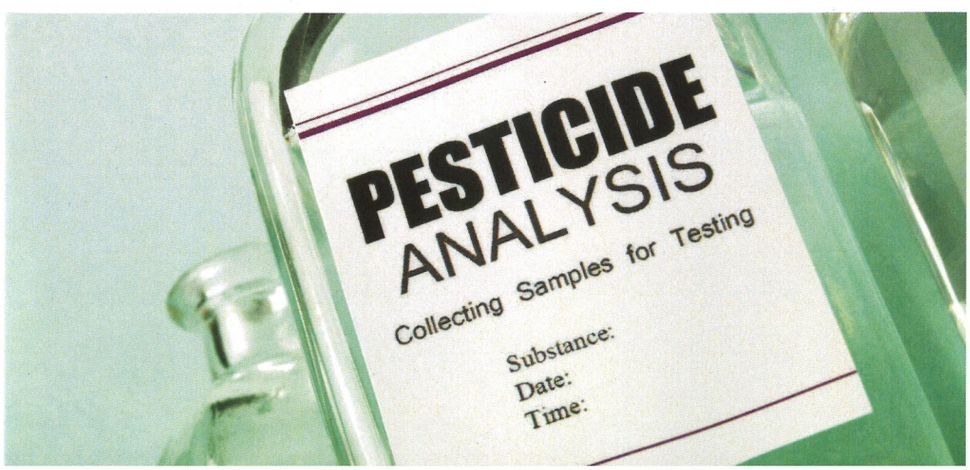
Despite all our legislation and regulations overseen by MPI and EPA, these pesticides turn up in New Zealand and have been dispersed widely in our environment. How can this happen?

To find out, I had to ask some of the key folk involved. On 27 June 2016, the Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ) office sent some simple questions seeking public comment from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI), Agricultural Chemical and Animal Remedies Manufacturers (AGCARM) and the NZ Grain and Seed Trade Association (NZGSTA). Replies were required by 6 July in order to meet publication deadlines for the August 2016 edition of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper.*

NZGSTA has worked with New Zealand seed coaters and chemical suppliers (AGCARM) in the past to publish an instructive bulletin, *The Guide to Seed Treatment Stewardship.* On 1 July 2016, NZGSTA's General Manager Thomas Chin reported to ApiNZ that:

1) The NZGSTA was not aware of these imports and of other unregistered pesticide products being imported into the country.

2) As the NZGSTA is a voluntary trade organisation, with no authority over importers, we suggest that further queries related to specified brands be directed to the importer.



On 7 July 2016, AGCARM's CEO Mark Ross sent me a short email before the journal deadline:

> The Ministry for Primary Industries is responsible for the registration and compliance of agrichemical products in New Zealand. Agcarm is supportive of MPI and works with them to shape policy to meet the shared goals of health and safety to people, the environment and the food chain. As the peak voice for the crop protection and animal health industries, Agcarm promotes the responsible use of agrichemical products, along with ensuring robust regulatory systems for product registrations. We recommend that Apiculture NZ follow this up with MPI as the registrant of ACVM products. Agcarm does not endorse the use of unregistered products in the New Zealand Environment, nor is responsible for monitoring the importation of such products.

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) got back to us on 6 July 2016 with a brief statement from Ray McMillan, Acting General Manager of Hazardous Substances and New Organisms:

> The Environmental Protection Authority's job is to protect the environment, and we follow up on any alleged breaches of the law.
>
> The formulations Danatex, Tachigaren and Force Magna do not have HSNO approvals. We will investigate this matter with the help of more information from Apiculture New Zealand, which we have requested.

continued...

We have an active compliance and enforcement function, and work together with other government agencies to ensure the rules are known and enforced.

Comment

Coated seed when treated with an insecticide is a hazardous substance—it is Class 9 ecotoxic to invertebrates and the intended use is as a biocide (to kill pests). You cannot find an approval for a hazardous coated maize seed, grass seed or brassica seed on the EPA website, as the EPA only approves the pesticide used in the coating. A manufactured article is exempt from the HSNO Act 1996 (Environmental Protection Authority, 2011). But coated seed is defined as a particle, and under the HSNO definition is not a manufactured substance. The EPA manages the pesticide used for the coating by approving that alone.

Why the delay in the EPA investigation of this import of coated seed treated with a non-approved pesticide? MPI identified velvetleaf in fodder beet seed in Southland in February 2016; it is now July as I write this.

The EPA advised me on 8 July that it had contact from MPI early on concerning the introduction of a new organism, velvetleaf. EPA had no contact with MPI about the seed coating containing pesticides and were first aware of it when we told them on 27 June (telephone conversation with Ray McMillan).

It is our belief that the team at MPI that is doing the difficult but necessary work on eradicating the velvetleaf incursion has missed the boat completely with respect to the pesticides in the seed coating not being registered. MPI has not issued us with a statement nor answered our questions as of 8 July 2016.

We are flabbergasted that a multinational company can get two things wrong with the one import—velvetleaf plus non-approved pesticides! And it could have been stopped at the border if only someone had read and understood the label.

Acknowledgements

Steffan Browning MP, Green Party, for taking the photograph and sharing it.

Natasha Thyne, Apiculture New Zealand Management Team, for following up with those from whom we sought statements.

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THE NZ BEEKEEPER E-JOURNAL

With the transition to Apiculture New Zealand, the Executive listened to the calls to reduce the subscription costs of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* for non-commercial beekeepers. The only way they could do this was to provide the 11 issues of the Journal electronically, as the cost to produce it made up most of the old NBA subs.

However, there remains an option for a non-commercial to purchase a hard copy of the Journal for $57.50 with the membership, the level of subscription still remains lower than previously.

The New Zealand BeeKeeper Journal is available to non-commercial members online through a special link sent out by the Management Team.

Before you can access the journal via that link, members will need to create an account by clicking the Create Account button located at the top right corner of the apinz.org.nz website.

You will need to register your email address and a username. You will then be sent an email from the website team giving you a link to verify your email and create a password.

A password comes up automatically, but you can delete that and write in your own—make sure it is something you will remember.

The good news is: you only need to go through the account creating process once. Each month you will be sent a new link with the latest issue and you can then log on to your existing account to view it.

Once you have signed in you can set your computer to remember your login, which means you will automatically go to your account each time you return to the ApiNZ website or click on the journal link.

If at any stage you are having difficulty with this process, please do not hesitate to call us for assistance on 04 471 6254 (between the hours of 8.30-5.30 Monday to Friday) or email info@apinz.org.nz.

The ApiNZ Management Team

MPI/PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

NZ COLOSS: INDUSTRY COUNTING ON BEEKEEPERS

Ministry for Primary Industries

Beekeepers will again be able to help their industry to get an accurate fix on the number of bees lost from their colonies, with the second MPI New Zealand Colony Loss and Survival survey about to start.

Landcare Research has been contracted to carry out the 2016 survey. If you would like to participate, go to www.landcareresearch.co.nz/bee-health

The results of these annual surveys will form a baseline for monitoring managed honey bee colony loss and survival over time.

Last year's survey found New Zealand's honey bee colony loss was low to average compared with other countries—11% vs 17%.

The survey is scheduled to run from 22 August through to 30 November and Apiculture NZ is encouraging its members to join the MPI survey, adding to the 366 beekeepers with 225,660 hives who participated in the initial survey.

These participants represented around 7% of all beekeepers and 40% of the total number of hives in New Zealand in autumn 2015.

"This is an important survey for the industry and MPI, and we are encouraging all beekeepers to play their part and register for it," said Scott Gallacher, Deputy Director General of Regulation and Assurance at the Ministry for Primary Industries.

"We rely on bees to pollinate crops worth at least NZ$4.5 billion annually to New Zealand's economy. New Zealand exports of pure honey reached 9,046 tonnes and $223 million in the year to 30 June 2015."

Mr Gallacher said it is important for the industry to help develop a comprehensive survey of bee health and beekeeping practices.

"MPI can organise the survey, but its success is ultimately dependent on the number of beekeepers who are prepared to participate," he said.

The 2015 survey collected information about beekeeping practices, losses of production hives, nucs, splits, and tops over winter 2015, causes of losses, queen health, varroa treatments, supplements and feeding, loss of sites and overcrowding.

It found the most commonly reported causes of hive loss were: queen bee problems such as drone (male) laying queens, no queen and queen death; colony death; and wasps.

Other losses were attributed to hive thefts, changes in land access, nectar and pollination sources and overcrowding of apiary sites.

The 2015 Bee Colony Loss and Survival Survey can be viewed at: http://www.mpi.govt.nz/growing-and-producing/bees-and-other-insects/bee-colony-loss-survey/

TO PARTICIPATE, GO TO
www.landcareresearch.co.nz/bee-health

TREES FOR BEES CORNER

NAATI BEEZ PLANTING TREES FOR BEES FOR EAST COAST MĀNUKA SUPPORT

Linda Newstrom-Lloyd and Angus McPherson (Trees for Bees NZ); Ian Raine and Xun Li (GNS Science)

In keeping with these values, we designed a research project to assess local sources of native pollen and nectar by identifying pollen brought back to the hive. This information would then enable us to create plantations using local native plants to boost bee nutrition to support mānuka honey harvesting.

Our Naati Beez–Trees for Bees Pilot Project was funded by the Ministry of Primary Industries' Sustainable Farming Fund for one year starting in July 2015. The project was generously sponsored by Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou, Eastland Community Trust, GNS Science and the Native Garden Nursery in Gisborne. The Naati Beez team included Willie Kaa, Rangi Raroa, Rapata Kaa, and Maia Taaremaia, who assisted with the field work and research strategy.

We set to work collecting pollen loads (pellets) from hive traps and honey from uncapped honey cells. We extracted samples

Above: *Lana Hope and Willie Kaa at the Native Garden Nursery in Gisborne with locally sourced native plants donated to the Naati Beez plantation in Rangitukia.*

Below: *Ian Raine inspecting the pollen traps with Maia Taaremaia at the Rangitukia Naati Beez apiary site.*

from August to May fortnightly or monthly, depending on the season. We also collected plant vouchers for a pollen reference set.

The pollen in bee loads and honey was identified and a flowering calendar constructed by palynologists Ian Raine and Xun Li from GNS Science. Our botanist, Linda Newstrom-Lloyd, evaluated the plant list to prioritise the best pollen and nectar sources. Angus McPherson, our farm planting advisor, then assessed the candidate sites and designed new planting plans. We are grateful to Lana Hope from the Native Garden Nursery in Gisborne, who donated 395 locally sourced native plants to support the project.

The first stage of planting was completed on 24 May this year. We installed the four best shrub and four best tree species: *Hoheria populnea* (lacebark), *H. sexstylosa, Hebe stricta* (koromiko), *Vitex lucens* (puriri), *Pseudopanax arboreum* (five-finger), *P. lessonnii* (coastal five-finger), *Coprosma robusta* (karamu) and *Pittosporum eugenioides* (tarata). See Page 5 in the new Trees for Bees booklet *A guide to planting for bees* for information on the flowering calendar (McPherson, et al., 2016). (E-mail newstrom.lloyd@gmail.com if you did not get a copy of this guide at the Apiculture New Zealand conference this June.)

Later in June we shared our methods and results in a workshop for local landowners at O Hine Waiapu Marae in Rangitukia. The research was fully successful in identifying good native bee forage plants, including some surprises such as nikau palm. Second- and third-stage plantings of different species are planned so that we can increase plant diversity to improve bee nutrition.

This is a first step toward building bee plantations with 100% native plants to support mānuka honey harvesting. We still have a few questions to be resolved for both spring build-up and autumn bee feed (e.g., the importance of gorse and other weed species, and the low diversity of native autumn-flowering species). We will report further as our methods are perfected and more results come to hand. Installing native plants for spring and autumn forage is a much-needed solution that can help to reduce overcrowding and competition for wintering sites due to the expansion of the mānuka industry.

Reference

McPherson, A., Newstrom-Lloyd, L., Gonzalez, M., & Roper, T. (2016). *A guide to planting for bees.* [Booklet]. Trees for Bees NZ, June 2016.

Rangi Raroa and Angus McPherson examining **Coprosma robusta** *(karamu) hedge with plastic sleeves for protection from rabbits and hares at the apiary site in Rangitukia. Photos: Linda Newstrom-Lloyd.*

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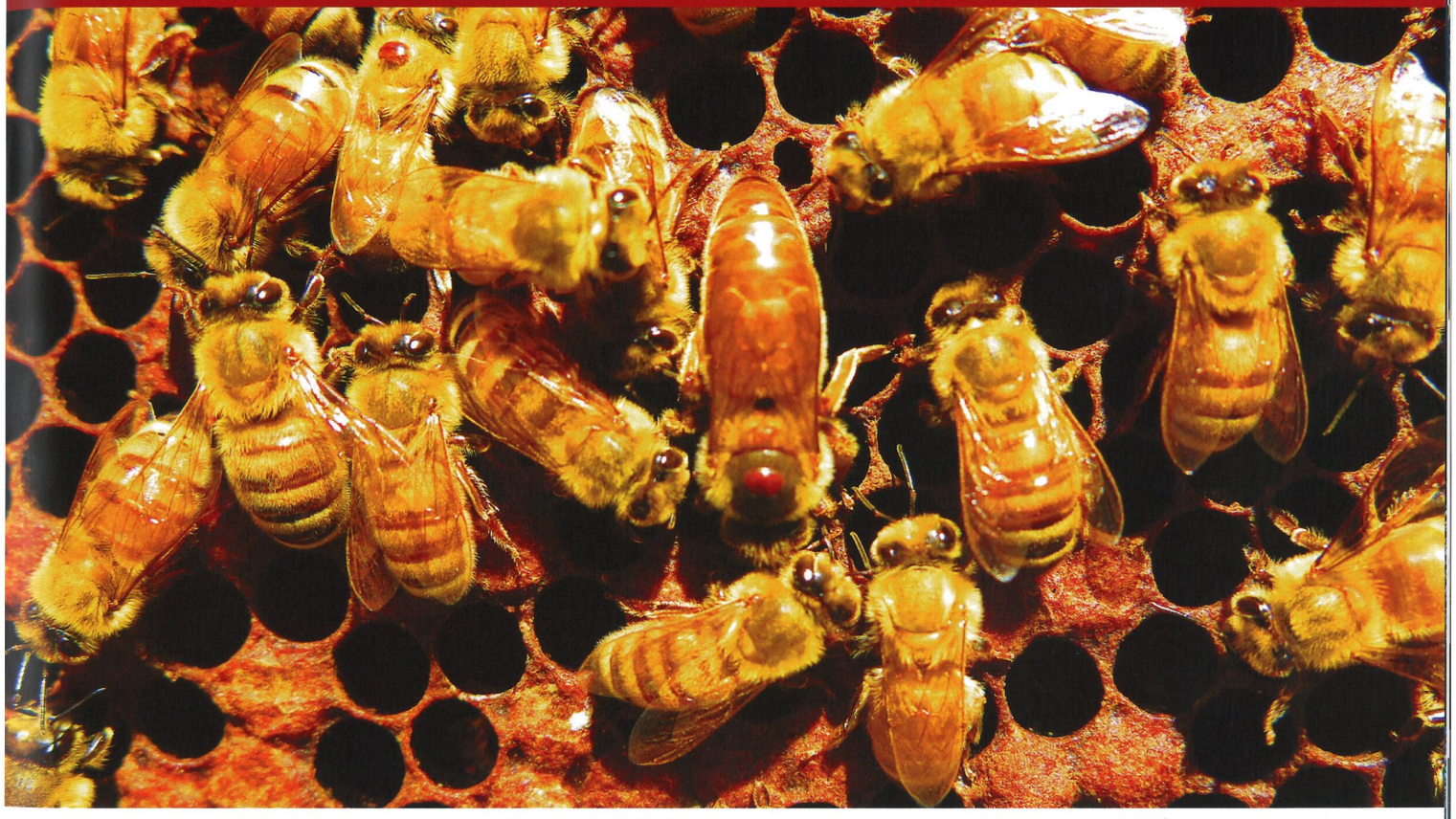
RESEARCH

VARROA MANAGEMENT SURVEY: HAVE YOUR SAY!

Your views and input on varroa management are sought to help drive research directions. Have a say by participating in an online survey. Go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ApiNZ16Beekeeper



A queen bee crowned with a varroa mite. Note the presence of another mite on one of the workers at the left. Photo: Norbert Klose.

At the Apiculture New Zealand National Conference at Rotorua in June, Plant & Food Research and the ApiNZ Research Focus Group hosted a workshop on integrated management of varroa. The workshop presented some future options for varroa management and gathered feedback from the 300 workshop participants.

A summary of the information gathered from the workshop and the Survey Monkey will be presented in future editions of *The New Zealand BeeKeeper*, and will be made available online and used to steer the direction of future research.

The increasing resistance of varroa mites to the synthetic miticide treatments could mean annual hive losses of more than 30 percent, as seen overseas. This would seriously jeopardise both honey production and crop pollination.

Although an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to varroa has been suggested since it was found in New Zealand, we have lacked the tools needed to implement this approach. At the workshop, presentations outlined how the use of modern technology in an IPM programme might include:

- remote varroa monitoring to determine which varroa treatments to apply, and when
- a data pipeline to develop and evaluate new varroa control methods.

Feedback was sought on the overall goal for varroa management, how important it is compared to other bee health issues, the value of the different approaches, and new ideas.

The online survey has 12 questions that will help us better understand the costs of varroa management, important features of new tools and how you would like to hear about and be involved in research.

Please help us by completing the survey at:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ApiNZ16Beekeeper

APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

ROY PATERSON TROPHY 2016

John Maslin, Wanganui Chronicle

Watching beekeepers prepare hives and thinking there had to be a better and more cost-effective way is gaining a Whanganui company international recognition within the industry. Local businessman Rob Bartley is directly involved in the honey industry, running hundreds of hives in the Waimarino. But it was his invention that was named winner of the Roy Paterson Trophy for innovation presented at the Apiculture New Zealand conference in Rotorua this week.

Hiveplus is a company working under the umbrella of the Bartley Group, and manager Lynda Hocquard was at the conference to accept the award.

Ms Hocquard said interest in the hive tray Mr Bartley invented was "overwhelming".

The simple plastic tray replaces a convoluted and expensive base currently used on hives. It has a removable plastic strip along its front which beekeepers can turn over for summer or winter conditions. It also features a ventilation panel underneath to regulate hive temperature.

"Instead of fiddling with little bits of timber and buying mesh, this plastic tray does all of that and very cheaply. It's such a simple solution."

Not only has it been created in Whanganui but another local company—Axiam Plastics—is producing it.

Mr Bartley said his honey business has 400 hives in the Ruatiti area and that would increase to 800 this season.

"I was watching our beekeepers making up hive bases and I thought there had to be an easier way. We came up with a couple of prototypes and took them to Axiam," he said.

He said it wasn't just the national award that mattered. There had been "huge interest" from New Zealand and international beekeepers. Samples of the Whanganui product have gone to honey producers in Israel, the Philippines, Australia and Canada.

Apiculture New Zealand Board member Ricki Leahy (left) presented the Roy Paterson Trophy to Rob Bartley. Hiveplus manager Lynda Hocquard is at right. Entertainer Ben Hurley is in the background. Photo: Tracey Robinson.

Mr Bartley said the design has been patented.

He said Hiveplus had been established to specifically target the beekeeping industry and more products were on the drawing board.

[Editor's note: the online version of this article also contains a video in which Hiveplus manager Lynda Hocquard explains how the hive tray works. See link at right.]

Source

Maslin, J. (2016, June 23). Invention hits the sweet spot. *Wanganui Chronicle*. Retrieved June 29, 2016, from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/wanganui-chronicle/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503426&objectid=11661795.

RESEARCH

COLOSS VARROA CONTROL TASKFORCE WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Michelle Taylor, Plant & Food Research

The following report provides a brief summary of a COLOSS varroa control taskforce workshop held in Croatia recently to assess alternative methods of varroa control.

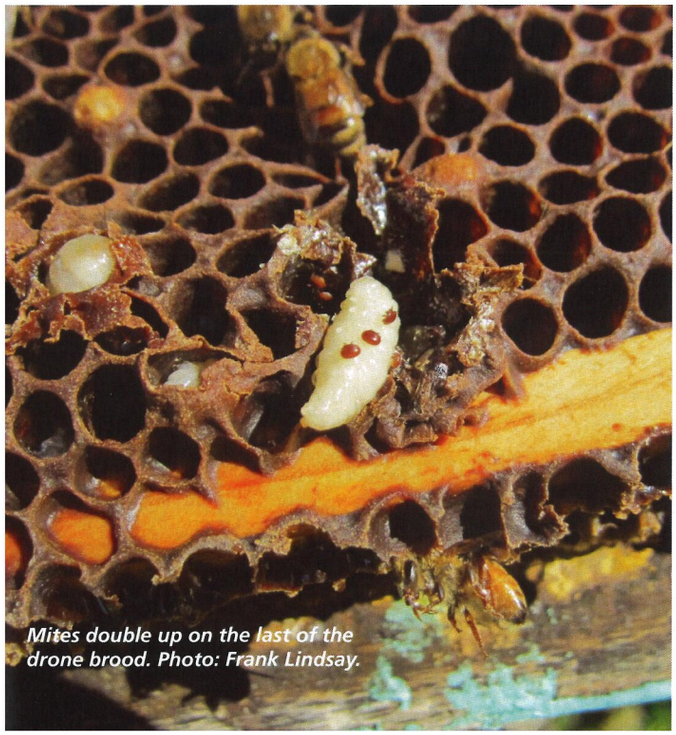
Introduction

COLOSS consists of about 80 members from around the world, predominantly Europe, that conduct research with the aim to prevent honey bee COlony LOSSes. Research trials are currently conducted under five taskforces:

1. Varroa control (the workshop being reported on)
2. Honeybee breeding
3. Wasps
4. Monitoring
5. BRAP (Bridging of Research And Practice).

Each taskforce meets at least annually to report on research trials, discuss and set research priorities and plan for future collaborative research.

Taskforce 1 held their varroa control research workshop in Unije, Croatia, from 19 to 20 May, 2016. I was asked to attend the workshop and identify the varroa research being conducted through COLOSS, raise awareness of New Zealand beekeeping and bee research and identify any potential collaborations. My attendance was funded by Plant and Food Research (PFR), the New Zealand Honey Trust and individual beekeepers. The Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ) Research Focus Group assisted in sourcing the funding.



Mites double up on the last of the drone brood. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

Following is a brief summary of the topics covered at the 2016 workshop. The full report is available at http://apinz.org.nz/2016/07/coloss-2016-report/

The goals of the varroa control taskforce are to:

- increase effectiveness of beekeeping varroa management
- study the impact of acaracides
- understand mechanisms of varroa tolerance
- develop diagnostic methods
- develop breeding methods.

These goals are realised within working groups (WG) that are activated and retired as required. Currently there are three functioning WG (1, 2, 4), two newly established WG (5 & 6), and the possibility of a new WG (3). The research priorities are summarised below.

Working group 1: infestation assessments

Compare methods to assess varroa infestation levels: soap, alcohol, icing sugar and natural mite fall (NMF). They reported on a trial to identify the efficacy of icing sugar (I/S) at dislodging mites from bees in a sugar shake in relation to total colony infestation.

Working group 2: brood interruption

Compare management techniques to control varroa using oxalic acid or formic acid treatments associated with honey bee brood interruption. Brood interruption also interrupts varroa reproduction and can be achieved by either removing honey bee brood or temporarily caging the queen for 25 days. This forces the mites out of the cells and on to the bee, making mites easier to kill. In New Zealand a brood break can be created when replacing queens with cells in autumn and this can be conducted in conjunction with a control treatment. A protocol was established by COLOSS to compare trials across countries. There is potential for New Zealand to be involved in an international study in autumn. This will determine the effect of a brood break, by requeening with cells in association with a 4.2% oxalic acid treatment, on varroa control. *[Editor's note: we have only used 3.2% in New Zealand.]*

continued...

Working group 4: organic acid management

The goal is to identify intra-colony and environmental parameters to increase organic acid efficacy and produce base-line data.

Working group 5: new treatment assessments

The goal is to identify the effect of potential new varroa control treatment methods. Several proprietary formic acid products that are being sold in Europe were discussed. Most had limited research on efficacy, so it was no surprise that there were numerous accounts of associated colony loss due to the treatments being ineffective. Comparative analysis, as PFR have conducted on the generic organic treatments and synthetic treatments, was limited.

Presentations

Presentations were conducted by seven research organisations. Abstracts of the European research and my comments can be obtained from the full COLOSS report.

Victoria Soroker	The effect of oxalic and formic acid treatments in Israel
Vincent Dietemann	Formic acid dispensers' efficiency tests
Julien Vallon	Use of oxalic acid or formic acid (MAQS) in late spring
Michelle Taylor	Varroa control in New Zealand—what is next for commercial beekeepers?
Marco Pietropaoli	Icing sugar method: shaking the jar makes the difference
Michele Mortarino	Results of a WG4-FA trial in Northern Italy (absent)
Martin Gabel	Summer brood interruption for vital honey bee colonies (results and experience from a study in Germany)

Varroa survivor breeding programme

Unije was selected for the workshop as it is the location of the collaborative Varroa-survivor honey bee breeding programme between Italy, Germany (Stefan Berg) and Croatia (Nikola Kezic). The programme was established 17 years ago to select for colonies that survived varroa without chemical treatment. The longest surviving colony, hive 109, survived for seven years although the colony in the latter years was not in any condition to collect a sizeable honey harvest. These bees were not able to be bred from on the mainland.

If breeding for varroa control traits within New Zealand honey bees is considered important to an integrated control programme, then a varroa-survivor breeding programme is not a recommended option. Controlled selective breeding, as conducted in New Zealand, is discussed in the full report.

2016 COLOSS questionnaire on honey bee colony losses

COLOSS conducts an annual colony loss questionnaire to collate information from European countries about factors that may be influencing colony loss. The data is compared across countries and trends are highlighted. The results are published annually. New Zealand data could be included in the analysis if desired.

If you can see a mite on a bee, the hive has more than a 10% infestation: treat immediately. Photo: Frank Lindsay.

Varroa resistance to chemical control

The majority of the European beekeeping industries are hobbyist so the scale is completely different to New Zealand. However, they are experiencing varroa resistance to synthetic pyrethroids such as fluvalinate, flumethrin, amitraz and coumaphos. Most countries still appear to have one chemical that is more effective than others, so the majority of beekeepers are able to use one treatment per year of flumethrin, amitraz or coumaphos in conjunction with oxalic acid. German and Danish beekeepers also utilise a weather website to predict best application times for organic treatments.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

1. Use synthetic varroa control products in conjunction with oxalic acid, but expect colony losses of around 10%.
2. PFR's research on organic acids under New Zealand conditions needs to be published in academic journals, not just the MPI website, to move this research forward.
   - COLOSS formic acid trials showed the efficacy varied between 50 and 90% and that oxalic acid efficacy is also variable. This supports New Zealand research.
3. Research planned by the working groups that are relevant to New Zealand include:
   - Identifying the effect of brood interruption on varroa control when used in conjunction with oxalic acid.
   - Efficacy of proprietary formic acid products.
4. Upcoming conferences, workshops and websites are listed in the full report. Go to http://apinz.org.nz/2016/07/coloss-2016-report/

REGIONAL REPORTS

FROM THE COLONIES

AUCKLAND

Auckland temperatures can be different by several degrees depending where you are. The central city is warmer than the rural area, and the Waitakere Ranges are always at least one degree colder, catch heavy downpours and can give great displays of lightning. The Bombay hills area damp, cold and seem to love holding onto the fog during this time of year. The islands, such as Waiheke, always seem to be warmer and start warming up earlier than the mainland.

These small temperature changes and weather patterns see bees working differently in the various areas. Westerly winds in the Bombay or west coast areas means bees are in a tight cluster for most of the day and using up winter stores, while the city bees could be flying about well planted winter-flowering gardens with a reward of a frame of winter honey.

One thing's for sure—hives will all be affected by varroa, so start thinking about your spring treatments. I think most Aucklanders left varroa treatments too late again this year, and the result has been small clusters of bees going into winter. I wonder how they are going to get through the wet part of the seasonal winter/spring change.

So far we've had a mild winter, with a few big storms and very little frost. As I write this I have still seen wasps attacking a beehive—they don't seem to have read the books that say they should have finished for the season.

Thanks to the team who organised a great conference: it was a great central North Island venue.

- Kim Kneijber, Hub President

WAIKATO

I'm writing this during the first weekend of the school holidays. It is grey and bleak here but still the bees are foraging each day. Garden flowers are well worthwhile at this time of the year and some of the shrubby things may be worth planting in the vicinity of commercial apiaries as a source of winter feed, particularly in the northern areas. The go-to plants here today are rosemary *(Rosmarinus), Salvia roscida* (synonym *S. fallax*), and *Cuphea cyanea* (pink-flowered cigar bush). The wise bees don't go near the cigarette plant *(Cuphea ignea)*! The main bush species seem to be five-finger and lancewood.

The ApiNZ conference was a real treat, such a lot of people and some excellent speakers. It was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with friends old and new. The displays (and sales pitch) from the Industry Good and Trade sponsors were excellent and always buzzing with people. I also very much enjoyed the posters this year. A lot of work had gone into them and I hope they were closely studied by attendees. The New Zealand apiculture industry is definitely on the global map and we must continue to work hard to keep beekeepers, packers and marketers informed and enlightened.

To this end, the Waikato Hub has planned the year right through to the 2017 conference. The office holders met at conference and have met once since then. We have retained the central hub configuration, plus we will have (at this stage) three Apicell groups. The Apicells will be in Rotorua, Thames and Ohaupo and will meet every two months. September will be the first meetings, utilising three consecutive Saturdays. Over the year we are planning for half the Apicell meetings to be on a Friday and half on a Saturday. The September meetings will have a springtime theme and will use some of the video material from the conference speakers. However, the Apicell meetings will mainly be about beekeeper participation and an opportunity to meet, talk, listen and learn. Information will be emailed to our members as soon as it is finalised.

The Waikato will also have at least two central Hub meetings each year. These meetings will cover business matters including the AGM as well as an 'all-area' field day.

One of the issues we have is that there is currently only a committee of four. Therefore, we will be appealing for people to be co-opted as committee members. There will be some shoulder tapping in the next month or so. We will also appreciate hearing how other hubs are doing, and sharing information with them.

- Pauline Bassett, Life Member

BAY OF PLENTY

Bees are all wintering well. The Bay of Plenty has had a few exceptional frosts but the weather is all over the place. Some mānuka is flowering, willow already has buds emerging—it doesn't feel like the middle of winter.

It was great to catch up with everybody at the conference. Thanks to the organisers for a great job.

Time to go fishing, so see you next month.

- Bruce Lowe

HAWKE'S BAY

Hawke's Bay's drought finally broke and winter arrived with the rain in the last week of June. Hopefully there will be enough rain to take out some of the many wasp nests that are still active and impacting hives.

June also saw Hub members and other beekeepers submitting to the Hastings District Council on a bylaw that would have required a site permit at a cost of $180 each for all urban apiaries and most rural sites, including pollination sites. The Council were very receptive to our input, and they have now proposed a one-liner bylaw which simply precludes beekeeping where it causes a public nuisance—no permit or fee required. Our warm thanks to all those beekeepers who made written and verbal submissions. We couldn't have asked for a better outcome.

- Deanna Corbett

SOUTHERN NORTH ISLAND

Our meetings continue to be well attended. We will be discussing the events of the Apiculture New Zealand conference in Rotorua at our next meeting.

After all the great weather in May, most are finding that hives are doing very well. Now that the colder wet weather has settled in, it is back to feeding rounds again.

Many at Rotorua discussed the problem of new commercial beekeepers dropping off hives very close to existing sites. This causes problems over varroa treatments between apiaries and, of course, a higher disease risk. Also, the possible food sources for the bees are usually inadequate for the number of hives now located in the area, which usually results in difficulties with wintering over and later on, honey crops are greatly reduced per hive. Our area is no different to what has been recorded already from Hawke's Bay, etc.

We are concerned over the apparent lack of financial information released at the AGM, and the figures did not reveal what has happened to the Conference Funding Account that was established by our Branch. So we wait for the new Apiculture New Zealand Board to address the issues raised at the AGM, and subsequent e-mails to CEO and Board members.

- Neil Farrer, Life Member

NELSON

Based on the calendar we should have been in winter for a month or so, but the temperatures are clearly not reflecting that for June. Many deciduous fruit crops need some chilly temperatures during winter. Measurements of winter chill in the Nelson district show that so far this winter, we have 10–20% fewer chill units than the previous winter. Supporting this, other reports have indicated we are warmer than last winter by an average of 1.4–2.0°C. This is a concern, as milder winters allow more pests and diseases to survive to the next season. I for one definitely don't want more giant willow aphid and/or wasps starting in spring. Hopefully things chill down soon.

Most beekeepers appear to have been having a break away or working on repairing supers, building new frames and other bee equipment.

The Apiculture New Zealand national conference in Rotorua was enjoyable, and it was good to catch up with a few people from different regions. It appears than very few, if any, were planning to reduce their number of beehives. Therefore, it is likely that New Zealand will reach 700,000 beehives by the end of year, as estimated by Rex Baynes. How this will impact on overwintering sites and our industry is an interesting debate. Based on land area, the USA would need to have nearly 26 million hives to have a similar density. That is over five times more than what they currently have.

The Nelson Beekeepers Club recently had a fun evening, with presentations on honey crystallisation, practical advice on building of boxes and frames, and finally a bee quiz.

- Jason Smith

CANTERBURY

The beginning of June began with a week of -3°C frosts. Since then we have had more mild weather with some nor'westerly warmer flows. Early July we were back to some frosts again. A mild winter so far. In the paper I read "Warmest month on record 13th month in succession".

Two years of drought in North Canterbury have made farming unsustainable, leading some farmers to have to abandon their farms. Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy announced the Government would provide assistance as the region reeled from the impact of a second year without significant rain. North Canterbury remains the worst-affected area. with rainfall only around 50 to 60 per cent of the long term average. Soil moisture remains significantly drier than normal, with some Canterbury wells showing groundwater at record low levels. I am still seeing farm shelterbelts being pulled out and burnt to make way for dairying.

Hives generally are wintering well. Some beekeepers have had to begin earlier than normal. We have seen larger amounts of brood in some hives for this time of the year. Bees are collecting gorse pollen here and there.

With Bee Aware Month coming up in September, we all have a chance to promote and encourage plantings of bee-friendly trees and shrubs, as well as the value of bees generally. Make the most of the opportunity. Anything is better than nothing.

- Noel Trezise

ABOUT THE APIARY

MONITOR HIVES DURING THIS MILD WINTER

Frank Lindsay, Life Member

The cold weather has finally arrived, with fronts distributing a dusting of snow on the mountain ranges. The previous warm spell has resulted in many spring sources flowering early, allowing the bees to bring in valuable pollen and nectar. In the cities, where it's warmer due to the amount of reflected heat off the roads and pavement, kowhai, koromiko and bottle brush are flowering well out of season. Tree lucerne, Spanish heath, kohekohe and camellia, which normally flower during autumn and winter, are also providing nectar and pollen (stimulating brood rearing), so the new season is under way.

I seem to be seeing far more shrubs flowering and wondered if this season is in advance of our normal season, so I asked a flower grower who was out picking jonquils. He was well covered in warm clothing, with a drip of sweat running off his nose. "No," he said, "we were picking these flowers at the same time last year." A five percent price increase at the market can make a great difference in his income. Seems that his profession can be just as fickle as beekeeping.

Wasps have also benefited from this warm weather. Nests that normally would have been killed by the cold, wet weather are still going strong, probing hives for a chance to steal their honey stores. Hopefully this present cold snap will put an end to their existence.

Robbing and mites

The other day I was called to stand up one of my hives probably knocked over by a cow having a scratch. I have left plenty of honey on my hives this winter, so I'll have stores available when I split them in the spring. This hive had brood in the bottom three supers, drones among the bees and drone brood on half a frame. The bees had built their first queen cell bud along the bottom of a frame. I took out a couple of frames of capped brood from this hive to strengthen a nuc and replaced them with drawn frames to give the bees some extra room and reduce crowding. I don't want them to swarm when the weather warms in the spring.

What alarmed me most was that the frames in the bottom super contained wet honey. The bees had been working kohekohe and tree lucerne, but this was just too much honey—the bees had been robbing something. A quick look around my nearby apiaries showed four hives dead, three by mites and being robbed. After a careful check, I put the spare supers with honey from the dead hives on nearby hives (all marked so they can be traced) and put the bottom two boxes into storage.

I cleaned the mesh bottom board slides on all hives in these apiaries and went back a week later to find a couple of hives had lots of mites on the slide. I stripped down these hives and put in miticide strips. It was 16°C, so no likelihood of chilling larvae.

A reminder to all beekeepers: don't skimp on strips. Follow the instructions on the packet and put in a full treatment as the mites are developing resistance. Give them a king hit and remove the strips within eight weeks, then monitor a couple of weeks later to see if you have reduced mite numbers. Those failing to check their hives could find it doesn't take long before they see hives collapsing. It was quite a shock to find dead hives, but it's been a very warm winter.

I also checked a few nucs. A couple that went into winter with laying queens now had drone-laying queens so I removed them and the bees from these nucs and merged them

continued...

with others. Some of these were fairly tiny so could do with the boost in bee numbers. For fun, I squashed one of the drone-laying queens on a post 50 metres from the apiary. The pheromones from this queen may entice a swarm to settle there if one comes off the apiary, which is insurance in case I fail to split the hives in time.

In talking to other beekeepers, their hives are pumping as well with boxes full of bees. Keep a close eye on your hives because once there's large areas of brood, they can quickly chew through their stores and starve.

Planning for the new season

During winter we plan for the coming season. We work out where we went wrong and, with luck, correct these errors so they don't happen again. Beekeeping is a long learning process. Sometimes we do it right. Often we get tied up putting too much time into our weaker hives instead of concentrating only on the good ones. Requeen those not going ahead and if they fail to take off, unite them. Take splits or nucs off your really good hives, not the duds. Remember the 80/20 rule: 80% of your time is spent on 20% of your hives. Make decisions early and get these out of your system.

Don't leave it too long before ordering new gear. Some of the bigger companies are in expansion mode and are dominating orders.

The photos above and on page 41 are of the same plant we and several others have purchased, minus the uncapper. This plant is designed and manufactured by John Bowland, Victoria, Australia.

Honey extracting equipment

There are a lot of new commercial beekeepers in the industry who may be thinking of extracting their own honey instead of having it contract extracted. There are advantages to be able to get your honey off early instead of waiting in line, but there are huge financial implications and lots of regulatory hoops to jump through, all involving lots of paperwork.

At conference we got a glimpse of what we would all like to end up with regarding extracting equipment, but needs must and we all start with the essentials and work to refine our processing equipment as we can afford it. It took me 20 years to get to where I am today, but in those days there wasn't the choice we have today.

Look across the Tasman at their honey processing plants and see what they do with very little labour; e.g., horizontal extractors that push the frames through without the need to handle them at each step. Their industry spent a lot of time perfecting equipment that can process honey quickly, as honey is removed every three weeks when there's a good honey flow.

This is a photo of Peter McDonald's plant in Victoria, Australia, designed and manufactured by Peter Cash. Two extractors are fed from one uncapper. The uncapper is on bearings so is moved between each extractor to load the extractors. There are also much smaller plants but all use the same principle.

Photos: Frank Lindsay.

I remember the old days where we didn't have wax spinners and fine filters. Honey was pumped into a big vat and allowed to settle overnight. Wax would come to the surface. The honey in the bottom of the tank would be clear and clean, so this was run off until tiny wax particles started to appear. Then the next day's processing was pumped in and so the process went on. Wax could be skimmed off to reduce the amount in the vat but it wasn't essential.

I remember visiting Arataki Honey's plant in the Hawke's Bay in the 1980s. It was at the end of their extracting season and they were digging wax out of their huge storage tanks with a shovel. Perhaps the most efficient bit of plant to become popular in the last 20 years is the Archimedes screw, which separates wax and honey straight out of the uncapper.

Educational resources for new beekeepers

For the new beekeeper, last year in Canada I purchased the *Ontario Beekeeping Manual*. They are not set up to automatically sell them overseas but if you are interested, contact them at http://www.ontariobee.com/outreach/manuals-books-dvds

Canada's beekeepers' association books give very good advice to newbies and those expanding their beekeeping. The information can be made applicable to New Zealand conditions: just reverse the calendar and add a few of our native species, and of course there's no worry about bears. Canadians have technology transfer teams made up of recent university graduates who go out and teach the latest beekeeping practices at field days.

We don't have anything like this in New Zealand, but we do have very experienced commercial beekeepers who pass on their knowledge at field days. We also have correspondence and practical courses in beekeeping run by a number of institutes, the Telford Certificate in Apiculture being one of the oldest.

Bee aware of biosecurity

The other day a beekeeping friend suggested that he could bring back a queen from overseas, to give me a rise and yes, I rose to the bait. He knew perfectly well the risks but perhaps a lot of the newer beekeepers may not know why we have such strict biosecurity rules.

We were lucky that it took so long for sailing ships to reach this country. Anything that was sick didn't make the voyage, so most of what was imported into the country was disease free.

This system didn't work so well in the 1870s, when hives of Italian bees came in with AFB. In those days, beekeepers were unaware of how this organism spread. New Zealand had lost 70% of our beehives by 1890. We had very few biosecurity breaches during the next 100 years, but that next one was a biggie when varroa arrived in 2000, perhaps by someone wanting a better queen bee smuggling one in, and more recently we found *Nosema ceranae*. Despite these incursions, we are still free of a lot of diseases and we would like to keep it this way.

At the moment the Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV) is keeping honey from being imported into New Zealand. There are border interceptions of risk goods every few days, some being honey, but a few get through our net.

Bees can carry a number of mite species; one, the tracheal mite *Acarapis woodi*, spends most of its life internally in bees' breathing spiracles. Viruses can be spread sexually. A queen bee could bring in a new virus, and even ants that have eaten the debris from inside a hive overseas could potentially bring in new bee viruses.

Our environment is very fragile: don't spoil it for future generations. We have spent millions trying to improve our bees and some of this research is paying off. Don't short-circuit this process by trying to bring in something you think might be better. Most bee species have been tried here in the last 140 years and what we have is the best that has adapted to our country.

The other major virus we have at present is hive theft. Brand all your gear, and go to page 19 for further advice on theft prevention.

Things to do this month

Make up and prepare equipment for replacement or for additional hives. Check hives after storms. I tie my hives with a nylon rope so the boxes keep together, even when on their side. Commercial straps are available.

Check hive weights: some commercial beekeepers are starting three- to four-week feeding rounds. Check several hives in each apiary for natural mite fall or do an alcohol wash—high numbers indicate robbing or poor autumn treatment. (A winter honey flow is also a sign of robbing, unless you are close to the South Island beech forests.)

Stimulate your queen breeder and drone production hives so they get building rapidly, ready for the first queen matings in October when temperatures reach 20°C. Drone production needs to be a month ahead of queens so they are mature and ready to mate.

Some of the trade displays at Conference 2016. Photo: Barry Foster.

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BEES GIVING LIFE

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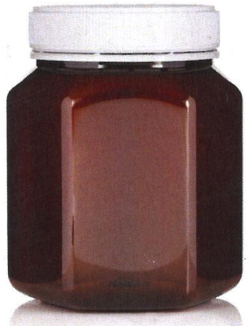
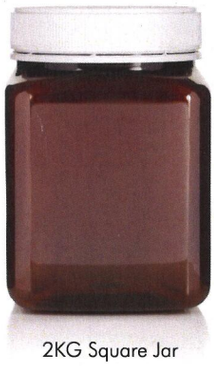


2KG Hex Jar

1KG Hex Jar

500g Hex Jar

250g Hex Jar



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