CORRESPONDENTS

IN DEFENCE OF MANLEY

Sir,

In the article about Manley frames David Williams asked why the M.A.F. was encouraging the use of Manley self spacing frames for honey production.

I cannot speak for all my colleagues but my reasons for suggesting new beekeepers go the Manley way are because I believe that honey, where possible, should only be extracted from white, not old brood comb. At least this applies in the Canterbury district which produces top grade white clover honey and doesn't want honey stained by storage in brood comb. Therefore as a person is forced to keep certain boxes for the storage of honey only, why not have the best, that being Manley.

David did not state that the Manley frame is self spacing, and anybody who has ever had to super up 200 hives and space all the frames by hand will realise just how easy it is to dump a Manley box on a hive and know it's spaced for honey production.

David also asked if there are any real advantages for the use of the ¾ depth box. All I can say is that even hobbiests get older, and the day comes when the ¾ depth is about all a person can lift.

My advice is, if you are building up your hive numbers and are interested in producing the best honey, think Manley, but if your hive numbers are static think carefully before introducing another non standard box into your system.

Yours,

John Smith
Apiary Advisory Officer

WHAT PRICING POLICY

Dear Sir,

It has come to my notice that the price for gate sales of honey this year is $2.00/kg.

The New Zealand beekeeper is peppered with concern regarding rising prices such as transport (fuel, tyres etc), sugar 100 per cent and of course inflation at approximately 18 per cent; yet the beekeepers themselves escalate their price by a mere 11 per cent.

I can only feel pity for those whose ambitions and livelihood are dependent on the sale of honey.

Yours,
M.H. Wood.
Ashurst.

HONEY FOR POTS

Dear Sir,

I should like to enlist your help, if I may.

I am a potter, for Billabong pottery as well as a small scale commercial beekeeper. We produce a lot of honeypots and honey jugs and sell some of our honey in these pots and jars. The market for honey in this part of America is very good, and since honey and pottery in concert help to sell each other nicely, I am trying to expand our honey line by adding some imported honeys.

In order to do this, I need suppliers. But our operation is relatively small; not big enough to justify the expense and complication of dealing through middlemen, and in fact I don't want it to grow big enough to meet that justification. Consequently, knowing no beekeepers in New Zealand, it occurred to me that through your magazine you might be able to recommend one or two New Zealand beekeepers interested in doing some small private export business with the U.S.A.

This approach to honey/pottery marketing is still experimental, as far as imported honey is concerned, and I wouldn't want more than 50 pounds from any one beekeeper at the start.

Although I have eaten and enjoyed New Zealand honey while in Christchurch and Wellington some years ago, the general acceptability of New Zealand honey by the American consumer is still unknown in this region. So given a starting point, we shall feel our way. Perhaps you can provide that starting point.

If you can help me at all please write to:–

James Dunn,
Billabong pottery.
Pegram Road,
Belews Creek,
N.C. 27009
U.S.A.

HFCS

Friend or foe?

THE LETTERS HFCS may not mean very much to beekeepers in New Zealand, but it is likely that we'll hear more of them in the future. They stand for "high fructose corn syrup". Normal corn syrup is largely sucrose or cane sugar, but this can be treated by either acid or enzymatic processes to yield a mixture of sugars in which fructose predominates.

Sound familiar? Well, these processes closely parallel the enzymatic conversion of plant nectar (mainly sucrose) by bees to yield honey, which is a mixture of sugars in which fructose predominates. Because the two end products are similar, HFCS can be used in many industrial applications instead of honey and can also be used to adulterate or "dilute" honey, or even to make a completely artificial honey.

HFCS is a clear, sweet, low-viscosity fluid which is hygroscopic and does not crystallise. Much like honey, it imparts a chewy or creamy texture when used in some baked or frozen goods, and it browns when heated. HFCS enhances fruit flavours, especially citrus, has excellent physical properties, and costs less than sucrose.

A large capital investment ($50 to 70 million) is needed to build an economical HFCS plant, so that in North America there are only about 13 in operation at the moment. However, the low price and over-production of corn by-products ensures that HFCS prices are below those of either beet or cane sugar.

Production in North America has approximately doubled every two years since its commercial introduction in 1967, with over a million tonnes shipped in 1978. In New Zealand HFCS is not yet in use, although soft drink manufacturers are giving it consideration.

This means to the beekeeping industry that HFCS may be either a friend or a foe. On the one hand, HFCS may be a cheap source of bee feed, no small thing in these days of rapidly escalating sugar prices. This, of course, can be only if HFCS is easily digestible by bees with no toxic residues (not yet determined), and if it becomes readily available in New Zealand.

The other side of the coin is the fact that HFCS may find many applications in the food industry for which honey is used now. Beekeepers must charge a certain price for honey, in order to stay in business, and if other suitable sweetners are available more cheaply then manufacturers may switch to those.

–from Andrew Matheson,

READERS QUERIES

David Williams, our resident hobbyist adviser, is willing to answer reader's queries about problems they have with their hives. "My articles are designed to be both practical and provocative," he says. "There may be many points amateurs would wish to raise and would do so if told to write in. I would be happy to provide answers to the best of my limited ability and can always call on the literature or the experts for the really tricky ones."

Mail your questions to: "A Fresh Start", 26 Otonga Road, Rotorua. They will be answered by Mr Williams personally and suitable ones submitted for publication.

PROTAGONIST OF MANLY FRAMES

Dear Mr Williams,

I reply to your article in the March Beekeeper re Manley frames.

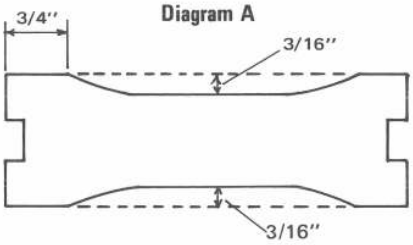
I am no expert on them or beekeeping but have been keeping bees for some 26 to 27 years. At present I run about 2000 hives.

I first became interested in the Manley frames when they were first mentioned. I had bought in a number of hives and the standard full depth supers I found in some cases were only 9 1/8" – 9 ¼" deep and as they were sound I decided to cut them down and try these new fandangle frames called "Manley".

As I manufacture all my woodware, I cut out the end bars the same shape as those in your photo in The Beekeeper but after the first crop and the propolis, I found them near impossible to part with ones bare fingers.

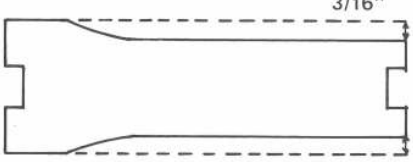
As I liked them, I tried a modification and found it very successful. What I did was to rebate each side.

Diagram A



This design works well and parts well but is difficult to cut out and there is a lot of fun when we put them back in the supers after extracting. The little lugs at the bottom seem to get crossed and tangled and now I cut out an easier type which is the same shape as the "Hoffman".

Diagram B



This is the design I now make and we have about 5000 supers of them.

When well filled, we would extract about 20 kg or more of honey. I find that the bees fill and cap them quicker as the bottom of each frame is the last capped. I also find that the ¾ super is capped a lot sooner than the full depth.

For extracting, they are very much quicker to uncap by hand as we have not yet got an automatic machine. I can uncap over 12 supers of full depth per hour but with ¾ depth, I can do over 20.

For supering up for the crop, they are much quicker as there is no time spent spacing frames. When full they are lighter than full depth but still a good weight, also perhaps you have a little more control over size on hives as ¾ size is a little less space.

We do not have queen excluders and put the ¾ depth on in most cases as 4ths but quite a few go on as 3rds.

We as yet have had very little brood in the ¾ depth supers. It may be the way I work my hives. I run them in a double full depth brood nest with 10 frames each and eight to the crop supers. With a bit of a squeeze I can fit 11 frames in the standard super and at times I find this helpful as there is no burrcomb.

Also in spring the same number of bees can cover a larger area then if the frames are spaced nine to the super – less bees between the frames.

There are a few drawbacks with the Manleys, one is if you have hives near manuka, you cannot extract, but I put them on as feed with a hive mat between, and that overcame that! Also you cannot put a frame down into a full depth if you need more feed, but I have had not trouble in that line yet.

I hope my comments will be of help.

Yours,
T.D. Rowe,
Eltham.

It was good to get your letter. A more sensible one I couldn't have hoped for and I think that all other beekeepers will be interested. You tell us why you took on the Manley, how, what the result was, what you had to change to make the system work best for you, and the advantages and disadvantages.

An excellent presentation.
Yours,
David Williams.

Dear Mr Williams,

Having read about the health-promoting properties of propolis, I wonder if you can tell me how to prepare it. How can it be liquified for application to wounds, and how can it be taken internally – apart from chewing and chewing the sticky lump?

Yours,
Dawn Barry,
Stewart Island.

You ask how to prepare propolis for health purposes. As far as domestic processing in small quantities for your own needs:

For internal use, put propolis in the fridge overnight and then break it up into a fine powder by grinding it gently on a suitable piece of clean wood with some suitable object – I use a bone handle of a knife myself.

The resulting powder may then be gathered up and kept in the fridge until needed, when it may be lightly sprinkled on some bland food and eaten. Alternatively it may be mixed with a teaspoonful of honey. There seems to be no benefit from using the freezer section of the fridge rather than the chiller.

Do not try to powder with a hammer. Granules go everywhere while the bulk tends to merely clump on the hammer head.

For external use a little propolis should be put in a small bottle or jar with a little methylated spirits and shaken. Not all the propolis will dissolve but sufficient to turn the spirits brown. This solution may be applied as needed.

Boiling in water is useless. The propolis does not dissolve into the water but remains as a brown sludge, while the wax that is inevitably mixed with the resin forms a scum round the side.

I hope this helps a little. There are many more complicated ways of rendering down propolis but the above are the simplest and most practical.

Yours,
David Williams.

NEXT ISSUE

The next series will go right back to the beginnings and tell the potential beekeeper how to take up the hobby. These articles will be based on notes prepared for the Rotorua Club and will hopefully be of interest even to those now safely established.