

DISCUSSION PAPER

ownership of research,

Proposed members
AIRC

PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BEEKEEPING
INDUSTRY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

14/7/89.

AIRC.

ARAC.

TO NBA EXECUTIVE MEMBERS,

THIS PAPER WILL FORM THE BASIS OF
DISCUSSIONS WITH "NZAPA" MEMBERS WITH
WHOM WE WILL BE MEETING AT 10.30 am.
- MONDAY 24th JULY AT DUNEDIN.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Allen McCaw.
NBA-PRES.

SUMMARY

This discussion paper is the result of Goal E, Objective 1 in the 1989 Beekeeping Industry Plan which is to prepare a proposal for facilitating the establishment of an industry research committee.

The possible objectives of such a committee are as follows:

- 1) To referee, for the Executive, research proposals submitted to the Trustees through the Executive of N.B.A.
 - A) Assess the scientific merit.
 - B) Costings
 - C) Value to Industry
- 2) To advise and aid researchers in making research applications.
- 3) Prioritize research
- 4) Rationalize research
- 5) Promote apicultural research
- 6) Lobbying

7) Joint Venture
The possible organization of the committee has also been discussed.

If all the objectives are to be met, the committee should be small

with its members chosen on their ability and enthusiasm to achieve the committee's objectives rather than to represent particular organizations.

To save on costs the committee can probably function with just one meeting a year with all other business conducted by phone.

INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper is the result of Goal E, Objective 1 in the 1989 Beekeeping Industry Plan. Goal E is to improve the industry's research policy and Objective 1 to prepare a proposal for facilitating the establishment of an industry research committee.

There are three apicultural research committees already operating in New Zealand. These are:

- 1) The Ruakura Apicultural Research and Advisory Unit Research Committee which is convened by MAF Ruakura to oversee the Apicultural Research Unit's experimental programme. Its membership consists of representatives of the NBA, NZKA, MAF Ruakura, and DSIR.
- 2) The Invermay Apicultural Research and Advisory Unit is convened by MAF Invermay to bring together all those in the South Island that have some interest in apicultural research and education. These include MAF, Telford, NBA, and Otago University.
- 3) New Zealand Association of Professional Apiculturalists (NZAPA). This is a loose association of people with an interest in apicultural research. Unlike the other two associations NZAPA is not a MAF convened body. However, at this stage it effectively exists in name only.

None of these organizations are part of the NBA although representatives of the NBA are members of the first two. Therefore these committees would ~~do~~ not perform all the requirements of an industry research committee in their present form.

There are a wide range of options for an industry research committee depending on the committee's objectives. Four of these options are presented below. The first objective is to referee research proposals and the second also to advise researchers. The third incorporates the first two and adds the improvement of the cost effectiveness of apicultural research and the last adds some general advisory objectives.

OBJECTIVE 1

To referee, for the Executive, research proposals submitted to the Trustees through the Executive of N.B.A.

If this is to be the only role then a committee may not be required. The Executive could pass the proposals on to the people they consider to be the most suitable to act as referees. This is the same system operated by the editors of most scientific journals. It has the advantage that it would involve minimal costs. The level of refereeing required has been discussed under Objective 2.

OBJECTIVE 2

To referee research applications submitted to the Trustees through the Executive of the National Beekeepers Association, to advise researchers, and assist in setting research priorities to aid researchers in making applications.

The added objectives of setting research priorities and assisting researchers in making submissions mean that this objective may best be handled by a small committee.

Referee Research Applications

A) Assess the scientific merit.

The scientific merit of many of the projects will need to be assessed. Any assessment should include:

- 1) Whether the methods are scientifically sound.
- 2) Whether the objectives are obtainable with the given methods.
- 3) The likelihood of success of the project.
- 4) Whether the research is a repetition of previous work.
- 5) The applicability of the research to beekeeping in New Zealand.
- 6) e.t.c.

It is not envisioned that the committee would provide a complete assessment of all the projects submitted as it could not encompass sufficient expertise. It may therefore often be necessary for the committee to use outside referees. In all cases the applications must be kept confidential unless otherwise specified by the researchers. Care must be taken in this as it may affect the likelihood of being able to gain patents for any of the ideas.

B) Costings

To advise on the validity of the costings in the research applications. This role is especially important with the advent of user pays and the large differences in costings

between different organizations.

Because of the limited size of the trust funds, in some cases it may be worth while to suggest ways of reducing the costs of some projects either by changing the methods or reducing the size of the projects. Also, it may be possible to arrange for resources from within the industry in lieu of cash, e.g. the use of colonies, provision of queens etc.

*division
committee
is not
a funding body
OR IS NBA
using the
best value
for money*

This information could then be provided to the applicant. It must however be noted that this type of approach is not commonly taken by funding organizations. There is usually no formal contact between funding bodies and applicants other than to say whether the application has been accepted.

C) Value to Industry

To assess the importance of the project to the industry. It is not intended that this role should involve determining whether the subject of the proposal is worth supporting, although this is possible if required. The assessment of the importance of the project should relate to whether the results of the project will go far enough in answering the question involved to be usable for the industry. e.g. although a project on A.F.B. may be seen as important to the industry its importance is also related to the applicability of the results which would depend on the methods used in the project.

ADVISORY

To liaise with researchers concerning research applications. There is a wide range of assistance possible from general assistance on submission procedures to advice on experimental design for beekeepers and researchers new to apicultural research. In most cases this could be achieved by putting the applicant in touch with the appropriate scientists. The initial steps that would need to be taken to achieve this objective would be to advertise the committee's existence and functions as widely as possible.

Also, the process of reviewing a research application will often suggest improvements that could be made to the proposed research programme. These suggestions could be returned to the applicant with the view to having them added to the proposal.

PRIORITIZING POSSIBLE RESEARCH AREAS.

To prioritize research areas. As the costs of producing funding applications is high, prioritizing research is important. Any priorities would of course be passed onto the Executive for their consideration. — IN CONSULTATION WITH THE EXECUTIVE

Priority lists are only ever suggestions to applicants as to the type of projects that are likely to receive the Executive's support. This does not prohibit research applications from other areas being accepted if they show

sufficient merit.

OBJECTIVE 3

As in Objective 2, plus to promote and improve the cost effectiveness of research for the benefit of the beekeeping industry.

This objective is inferred in Options 1 and 2. However, listed below are some more specific steps that the committee could take to meet this objective.

IMPROVE THE COST EFFECTIVENESS OF APICULTURAL RESEARCH

1) Prioritize research

To prioritize research to meet the industry's needs. At present most research priorities in New Zealand are set by the type of applications made to the trustees by individual researchers. Therefore, these priorities reflect both the researchers' research interests and their assessments of the major factors influencing the beekeeping industry. Although this system works reasonably well at the moment the assessment of the major factors affecting the industry might better be coming from the NBA and a Research committee. This would ensure that the most important problems would be dealt with first and thus improve the effectiveness of apicultural research in meeting the industry's needs.

✓
✓
It is important that all sectional interests in the industry have a say in the prioritising of research work. The procedure for this would be for the committee to formally request suggestions for research projects from both the producer organizations within the industry, executive, branches and individual beekeepers. This would ensure that the research carried out meets the industries needs and will provide useful P.R. within the industry for the role of research.

Requests for suggestions on research topics or areas should be requested on a yearly basis. These suggestions should also include work already being conducted to determine the importance the industry as a whole places on the projects currently being funded.

2) Rationalization of research

To co-ordinate trust fund, and non-trust fund sponsored beekeeping research for the benefit of the industry.

This might best be achieved by improving co-operation between apicultural researchers by promoting NZAPA activities. This function has become more important with the advent of user pays which results in competition for research funds between beekeeping researchers. Providing researchers with the industry research priority lists would also assist in coordinating research.

Another important area would be to take an overview of apicultural research in New Zealand to ensure that trained research staff are available in New Zealand to meet the industries' research needs in the future.

TO PROMOTE APICULTURAL RESEARCH

To encourage research of value to the beekeeping industry and apicultural research in general to provide trained personal in New Zealand.

The best way to achieve this is to investigate ways of providing new sources of income for apicultural research. This function is very important given the limited nature of the Trust funds. There are a wide range of other sources of funding including.

1) There are a large number of other trust funds that provide research funds for primary industry research. Beekeeping research would qualify for many of the trusts.

2) There are a number of other primary industries involved with beekeepers that currently have money available for research, e.g. Kiwifruit Marketing Board, Apple and Pear Marketing Board, Nashi Council, Dairy Board, Summerfruits Association, e.t.c. All of these bodies would consider funding appropriate beekeeping research programmes.

3) The lotteries board provides large sums for research. There is no restriction on who can apply, however applications are usually for equipment rather than for salaries.

4) The New Ministry of Science is establishing a source of contestable funds which the Beekeepers association will probably have access to by making joint submissions with government research organizations.

5) There is the option of royalty sharing agreements with government research organizations or other bodies where the costs of the research and the profits from the research are shared in some way.

Further promotion of Apicultural research may also be carried out through the Universities. Post graduate thesis are a good way of getting research done for minimal cost. The way to promote apicultural research is to provide the universities with lists of possible research topics both through official channels and personal contacts within the Universities. Having both a topic and a student interested in conducting the research project makes it a much simpler matter to find sources of funds, other than the industry trust funds.

Lobbying

To negotiate with Government departments with regard to the establishment and maintenance of research positions. There

is a place for the committee in taking a major role in these negotiations.

OBJECTIVE 4

As in Objectives 2 and 3, plus to offer advice to the beekeeping industry and other researchers.

National Beekeepers Association.

To provide advice to the N.B.A. There may be occasions when the advice of the research committee may be of value in assisting the Executive in its decision making process.

Research Projects not associated with the NBA

To provide a source of advice for beekeepers, students and scientists on research projects they may be contemplating. The committee would be a readily identifiable body for people outside the New Zealand industry to contact.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

ALIGNMENT

The committee would be part of the NBA with all public functions being through the executive unless otherwise requested. Although this may restrict some of the committee's functions and membership it would ensure that the committee was always working to advance the interests of the National Beekeepers Association. It would also offer some measure of anonymity as the committee's activities may not necessary be in the committee member's employer's best interests.

MEMBERSHIP

The possible membership of the committee depends on the committee's objectives.

If the function is just to assess research applications (eg Options 1 and 2) then the list of possible members is wide. Option 1 does not require a committee and Option 2 probably only a two or three person committee.

The list of possible members becomes very restricted if all the possible Options are to be included (ie Options 2 - 4). The committee members would be asked to donate a good deal of their time to the NBA and to work in the Association's

interest. This would present problems in co-opting people that are not associated with the NBA already.

There may be a problem with vested interest. Any person who is likely to be requesting research funds from the NBA, or belongs to an organization who may, will have a vested interest in the proceedings of the committee. This is the same problem that most committees face (Exec included).

Any effect of this is minimized by using a committee. The Kiwifruit Marketing board, Apple and Pear Board, Nashi council, and Summerfruits Association have research committees containing representation from research organizations. It is unlikely that they could function effectively without it.

A second approach would be to not include any person who may have an interest in the proceedings, however the small size of NZ means that this would seriously reduce the effectiveness of the committee. This would not be a problem if the committee's role is just to assess research proposals but will be if it is to have any other functions.

The committee would obviously have to include at least one beekeeping member of the Exec or Association to act as convener and possibly also secretary. The remainder of the committee should be as small as possible to perform the required functions. It would probably not be necessary to chose members to represent specific organizations i.e. Advisory services, marketing, MAF Tech, D.S.I.R. etc. If

most or all of the options are to be included then the commitment required means that members would be better chosen for their ability and enthusiasm to perform the committee's functions.

MEETINGS

It should be possible to carry out the functions of the committee with just one meeting a year. This meeting could coincide with the NBA conference to reduce travel costs as most of the members should be attending conference in any case. Such a meeting would be mainly for planning. Most of the other functions of the committee could be carried out by phone or fax when the need arises.