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NATIONAL BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION of NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

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Memo

To Executive Secretary, for distribution to Executive
From Nick Wallingford
Date 9 November 1995
RE: **Two Rural Radio interviews, midday Wednesday 8 November 1995**

Item one:

Brian Crump: First let's just focus on the bee side of the equation. The Ministry of Agriculture is testing its disease surveillance and quarantine methods with a full check of beehives in Manawatu and Horowhenua. They've set up headquarters in Palmerston North. MAF Quality Communications Manager Peter Grace says they're checking for European foulbrood disease, but are also using the exercise to train staff and beekeepers to respond to the more deadly exotic European foulbrood disease. He says it is not in New Zealand and that is the way MAF wants to keep it. But he says the exercise has produced a number of apiaries suspected of having American foulbrood.

Peter Grace: We have 47 people involved and they're split into teams of mostly 3 people, a couple of MAF people and industry people. They're allocated areas to go to and apiaries to visit and they go to those places and check all the hives at those places and we're getting some suspect samples back.

Jill Galloway: How many apiaries are of concern with European foulbrood?

Peter Grace: Yesterday we visited 88 apiaries. We found 24 which appear to have some sign of American foulbrood.

Jill Galloway: Was that a surprise?

Peter Grace: Not for this area, no. This area is known to have a higher than average incidence of American foulbrood.

Jill Galloway: What will happen to those hives should they be found to have American foulbrood?

Peter Grace: They will be burnt.

Jill Galloway: How important is it to see how this sort of exercise works if you were actually looking at controlling or trying to find European foulbrood disease?

Peter Grace: Well, it's important because this kind of exercise always finds areas or ways that we can actually improve the way we do things, so that when, or should it come to us having to control the real thing, European foulbrood, we can be sure that we can really do it properly.

Brian Crump: Peter Grace, MAF Quality Communications Manager talking to Jill Galloway.

Item 2:

Brian Crump: And the Apiculture Services Manager for the South Island, Robert Rice, says while New Zealand is trying to eradicate American foulbrood, the European strain would be a more difficult prospect.

Robert Rice: American foulbrood is a bacterial disease which infects bees. It's a spore forming organism which simply means that it can live very long in the environment, but the disease isn't terribly infectious. While it is transmitted from hive to hive this doesn't happen very rapidly. The campaign that New Zealand has adopted which is effectively burning all hives which are infected with American foulbrood is a very effective and clean way of controlling it. European foulbrood on the other hand is an organism which is easily destroyed but very contagious. And unlike American foulbrood if European foulbrood were to get into New Zealand it would spread very rapidly throughout the beehives in New Zealand. The burning technique would not necessarily control the disease. We would find ourselves like in the other countries in the world and would have to use antibiotic control. New Zealand doesn't want to do this because New Zealand honey is free of antibiotics and we wish to keep it that way.

Jill Galloway: Foulbrood as a disease suggests something that attacks the larvae. What does it actually do?

Robert Rice: American foulbrood attacks the larvae, but European foulbrood is more interested in what the bees feed the larvae. It grows inside the larvae's gut and increases in number by reproducing on the food that is in the larvae's gut. So in effect, it competes with the larvae for the available food resource and in effect starves the larvae to death and so the larvae dies.

Jill Galloway: Something we don't want in New Zealand really?

Robert Rice: New Zealand is one of the few countries left in the world that is free of European foulbrood and the Ministry of Ag is intending to keep it that way.

Brian Crump: Robert Rice from Lincoln University, and he was also talking to Jill Galloway.

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