

Ag. 53/6/4

16 June 1955

Mr K. Everett,
C/o Pebbly Hills Forest Service,
Hedgehope,
No. 2 R.D.,
INVERCARGILL.

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of 6 June regarding importation of queen bees from Australia.

Any beekeeper who desires to import queen bees from Australia should first make written application to the Director, Horticulture Division, Department of Agriculture, Wellington for the necessary authority to import, stating the variety (race) and the number of queen bees, also the name and address of the breeder of the bees.

I attach for your information a copy of the conditions which must be complied with in any case where authority is granted. Any authority to import issued by this Department would be subject to a successful application for an import licence from the Comptroller of Customs, Wellington.

There is no evidence that the Italian bees raised on Kangaroo Island, South Australia and elsewhere in Australia are as good for New Zealand conditions as the best strains of bees raised in New Zealand. In fact all reports regarding queen bees imported into New Zealand from Australia during the past ten years have been very unfavourable. Our experience has been that original imported stocks seldom do well in honey producing hives, and that it takes years to develop strains best suited to our conditions. Conversely Australian beekeepers may find the same with any imported stock from New Zealand. As indicated at the Gore meeting, I am of the opinion that it would pay many producers to club together and place firm bulk orders regularly each autumn for early spring delivery of young queens, and by arrangement put into the pool each year one or two selected breeders from their own stocks. It may pay any strong group of South Island producers to set up some competent beekeeper for this purpose if sufficient queens cannot be obtained from those already established in this class of business. Young queens suitable for New Zealand conditions can be bred in the North Island, particularly North Auckland, early enough each season for South Island requirements.

In the circumstances I would not recommend the importation of queen bees for introduction to honey producing hives in New Zealand.

Your interest in this matter is appreciated and I have sent a copy of this correspondence to Mr I. W. Forster, Apiary Instructor, Oamaru who may be able to assist you with information that will enable you to overcome your stock problems.

Yours faithfully,

^{M.S.}
(T. S. Winter),
Superintendent, Beekeeping Industry.

Encl.

Mr I.W. Forster,
Apiary Instructor,
Department of Agriculture,
OAMARU.

For your information and any action you consider desirable. The poor performance of young queens raised last season appears to have been general and not confined to any particular breeder. I understand Mr Everett's apiaries are situated in your district. If not, would you please pass this correspondence on to Mr Line. Following is a copy of the le

Reply:

"I would like to inquire as to what restrictions, if any, there are on importing Italian queens from Australia. The idea is to get them flown over in the spring in time for two queen hives.

If this can be permitted your comments on this would be appreciated particularly as to the recognised leading and reliable Australian breeders among any New Zealanders who may have tried this. So far south as Garston where I have my outfit it's practically impossible mating queens consistently early enough.

Though I was not at the Gore field day I gather you may have advocated two queen hives there. My experience in procuring queens is that all the prominent queen breeders tried are putting out some poor stuff. With the short early flows of the past two seasons queens arriving in November are definitely a liability even as a gift.

If the future in this country brings an enlarged source of good queens at the right time such will have a tremendous effect on production and efficiency here. Anything in the way of a positive lead from the Department would have widespread benefit to more than queen breeders and would be a practical way of contributing to reducing costs."

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 (T. S. Winter),
 Superintendent, Beekeeping Industry.

Wellington,
 16.6.55