



AUSTRALIA'S
HONEYBEE NEWS

"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 1 Number 1

January-February 2008



Page 10

Pollination and the Varroa Mite

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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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COVER: Bee pollination in a Cherry orchard at Orange, NSW - Photo: Fred Benecke

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Season

This season has been a difficult season for beekeepers, with production down, costs up and now, honey prices down. The industry is in crisis!

Honey Prices

It is disturbing to see so many beekeepers (especially younger members) under so much stress, even to the point of leaving the industry due to low prices during a low production period. Such market corruption deserves serious investigation.

The Executive proposes to hold a Crisis Meeting in conjunction with this year's State Conference.

World prices are increasing due to shortages of honey worldwide (Argentina prices - AUS\$2.97 per kilo) yet Australian prices have dropped in recent months. Most packers have indicated they have negotiated price increases with their customers in recent months due to the drought. I wonder how those customers would react if they knew that honey prices have dropped at farm gate by as much as 90c per kilo?

Small Hive Beetle

Hive beetles are causing increasing damage in the North East of the State. Coastal areas have had extensive damage from beetles with nukes becoming quite hard to maintain. Nearby tablelands areas are also being impacted so hives containing beetles have been relocated from Coastal areas to inland sites. Higher moisture levels inland are allowing beetles to lay eggs and damage hive material.

Also now that EI (Equine Influenza) is just about wrapped up, DPI will be urged to mount more task force operations against AFB.

Australia's Honeybee News

As you will be aware, this issue has undergone a change, both in name and size. This has been brought about by the retirement of Betty and Bill Stratton who have prepared *Honeybee News* for printing as well as organized the printing since the Journal's inception. On behalf of the Executive and members, we thank Betty and Bill for their help over the past eight years in making our Journal a successful publication and wish them a long and happy retirement.

Margaret Blunden, who is our present Editor, has indicated she will continue as Editor and has also taken up the role of preparing the Journal for printing.

Sydney Show

Arrangements are well underway for the Sydney Show stand. We are still a little short on volunteers so if you would like to visit the Royal Easter Show and help out get in touch with one of the Executive or Secretary, Julie.

Again this year we have been promised donations of stock from Beechworth Honey, Capilano Honey, Leabrook Farms Honey, Podargus Apiaries, Rain Forest Honey and R Stephens. This is a tremendous help to the Association. Thank you for your generosity as it allows us to keep membership cost to a minimum.

2008 State Conference

The Hunter Valley Branch will this year host the Annual State Conference at Nelson Bay RSL Club in beautiful Port Stephens on 22-24 May. Planning is well in hand and we have invited a guest speaker from the USA, David Westervelt, to speak on Small Hive Beetle and Varroa. David will also be giving an informal talk on Wednesday 21 May at 7pm.

Forests NSW have kindly donated 250 tube stock trees to be given to everyone who registers for Conference.

Bee Sites

Forests NSW, National Parks and RLPB are requesting that beekeepers work to the guidelines of the conditions on bee site permits and display warning signs on the approaches to occupied bee sites on any of these agencies lands.

These signs are available from Bill Stratton (02) 4421 4198 or you may get them made up yourself. Ensure they comply with the format and size required.

Beekeeper Training

The new training package for trainee beekeepers is complete and plans are underway for this to be launched at our Conference.

Bill Weiss
State President

NEW JOURNAL

Welcome to the new year and this the first issue of *Australia's Honeybee News*.

It is our hope that the Journal will continue to grow and be an instrument drawing us together as well as a means for communication of news, information and networking.

Hope you like it!

Please let us know what you think and how we might continue to develop and improve.

Margaret Blunden
Editor

SYMPATHY

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs Guilfoyle (Mrs G to the staff of John L Guilfoyle & Co) on 9 January 2008 at the age of 90. Mrs Guilfoyle attended hospital with a minor infection and was found to require a "small" operation however her condition rapidly worsened resulting in her death in a very short time.

Mrs Guilfoyle was a well known identity to most Queensland beekeepers, indeed to many interstate beekeepers. When you visited John L Guilfoyle & Co, you could bank on her being at work and instant recognition.

We extend our sincere sympathy to John, Jan, Kym, Ross and their families.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:
Norm Johnson Sawtell
Norm Thomas Westdale

SHOW REMINDER

The Sydney Royal Easter Show runs from Thursday 20 March – Wednesday 2 April.

Thank you to those that have already volunteered. However, we still need workers for 22, 23, 24, 25 & 30 March.

Accommodation is paid for by the Association and will be at Ashfield Manor, Liverpool Road, Ashfield.

We are very grateful for our volunteers. They do a wonderful job promoting and selling our unique product.

Julie Lockhart, State Secretary
Ph: 02 9631 3934 Email: nswaa@bigpond.net.au

2008 STATE CONFERENCE

The NSW AGM will be held at the Nelson Bay RSL Club, Shoal Bay Road, Nelson Bay on Thursday 22 and Friday 23 May 2008.

David Westervelt, our Guest speaker from the USA, will give an informal talk on Wednesday 21 May commencing at 7.00pm.

The next edition of Australia's Honeybee News will include an Agenda and Pre-Registration Form.

Accommodation

Nelson Bay is a very popular town with all levels of accommodation available. For information and maps contact Port Stephens Tourism on **Freecall 1800 808 900** or visit their website www.portstephens.org.au

CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP

Would you like to sponsor Conference 2008?

In past years, many industry people have sponsored our Conference papers via an Ad which has been a wonderful support and we would like to continue.

We would also like to offer beekeeping entities an opportunity to sponsor an amount they choose.

This sponsorship money could be used to sponsor our many speakers we get to Conference.

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Fishing Trip

Expressions of interest are required for a day fishing trip. If we have enough people a day can be arranged at a cost \$130 per head.

Contact: Don King Ph: 02 4943 1033 (evenings)
or Col Wilson Ph: 02 4930 4950

Ladies Excursion

There will be an excursion on Friday 23 May to Morpeth, an historical town near Maitland, renowned for its craft shops and homemade goods. There will be a guide available to take the group around the town.

On the return trip the bus will stop for lunch at *Smarty Plants*, a large modern nursery with a huge homeware/gift shop and coffee shop. Cost \$35 (includes lunch) Bookings required by 5 May.

2008 BEEKEEPING FIELD DAY

In conjunction with the NSW Apiarists' Association Annual Conference, the Hunter Valley Branch will host a Field Day on Saturday 24 May 2008 at Williamtown, approximately 25 minutes drive from Nelson Bay.

Gates open 9.00am.

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VALE

MICHAEL (Mike) NELSON



We were deeply saddened by the news that reached us that Michael Nelson had passed away (Aged 65) in the early hours of November 19th 2007.

Michael was an amazing beekeeper. He began his involvement with bees as a teenager starting with 2 hives and over the years built up to 450 hives in 1970 when he went full-time beekeeping leaving his employment with Tebbutt's General Store. The decision was a big one for him given that he had a young family to support and was leaving a secure position. He credited the decision to Peter Porter from Geurie and Ian Lummis, Gilgandra, plus the support of his wife, Marlene.

Michael was a great listener with an excellent memory for detail. He benefited from wise counsellors like the late Merv Goodwin who imparted in him an incredible understanding of honey producing flora, flowering times and the effects of changing weather conditions. He remained a close friend of Clem Marriott, a highly successful beekeeper from the Central West of NSW and over time developed close friendships with other beekeepers throughout Australia. Always talking bees, conditions, marketing etc.

In 1978 he upgraded his extracting facility installing electronically timed Pender 21 frame semi radials and then later a fully SS Beequip extracting system using 2 horizontal radials. During this time the hive numbers had reached 1200 +.

His long term friend, Warren Millington described Michael as ".....a great friend who only knew a day's work to be a Big Day or a Whopper." Ready to help his mates he had often explained to me that when he loaned a site to a

fellow beekeeper he always ensured it was a good one, you never knew when you might need the return of a favour. Another highlight to be enjoyed was his video record of beekeeping sites and honey flows worked over the years and the commentary that accompanied the video. Those records will be treasured by the family for generations.

Michael's main skills revolved around an uncanny ability to understand honey and pollen flora and then locate suitable sites and maintain the access by taking care of property owners, he was always looking to improve the welfare of his hives and had a philosophy "that nothing was too good for the worker." Mike was quick to move with the times and found his knowledge was increased by regularly attending the annual NSWAA meetings where he thrived on the informative programs and exchange of ideas with close friends such as Ian and Shirley Stephen's from Mole Creek, Tasmania.

His equipment was very well presented and maintained and he made a relatively easy transition to the B-Qual program some years back.

He was a member of the 1963-64 Premiership Winning Boggabri Rugby League team that won the Grand Final, Mike played in the forwards.

In 1966 Michael married Marlene, also from Boggabri in what might be called a marriage "made in heaven". His beekeeping skills were exceptional and the support he received from Marlene, even more so. Mike had three children, Sharon, Julie and son John. John has worked in the family business for 18 years and has taken over the responsibilities of the large operation since Mike became ill earlier in 2007.

Michael was a proud supporter of Capilano Honey Limited but not backward in offering advice when he felt it necessary. My personal association began in the mid 1970's and Michael and his family remain close friends.

Michael loved beekeeping but adored his family and not just his immediate family, a point so profoundly evidenced by the 600 friends and relatives who attended his funeral at the Sacred Heart Church, Boggabri.

To Marlene, John, Sharon, Julie and the entire Nelson family we extend our deepest sympathy at Michael's passing. He will be sadly missed.

Bill Winner

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Pollination and the Varroa Mite

The little mite that might be a big problem

A RIRDC Update

The humble honeybee is an oft forgotten but critical player in Australian farming. Pollination services, provided by farmed and feral European honeybee populations, were estimated to be worth \$1.7 billion to the 35 most important honeybee dependent crops¹ in 1999-2000.

Some of the serious pests and diseases that affect European honeybees are already present in Australia. However, there are several mites that are still exotic to Australia that pose a real threat of incursion. One of these is the Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*), which brings with it a huge threat, not only to honeybee producers, but to Australian agriculture more broadly. Asian bees (*Apis dorsata* and *Apis cerana*) are also carriers for these mites, as well as being considered pests in their own right. If they enter Australia and are able to establish, the impact on the honeybee industry and the pollination of many horticultural and agricultural crops could be devastating.

Research shows that Australian agriculture will suffer considerable and wide-reaching consequences from an exotic honeybee pest or disease incursion unless it can rely on a large and sustainable pollination industry.²

The likelihood of an exotic pest incursion into Australia is high, with the Varroa mite the greatest concern. The natural host of Varroa mite is the Asian honeybee. However, it has shifted hosts to the European honeybee and it is on this new host that Varroa has moved around the globe. Despite established surveillance at Australian ports, Asian bees carrying Varroa mites, could easily be transported to Australia undetected (for example, on a ship). A swarm of European honeybees carrying the Varroa mite could arrive in a similar manner.

The migratory activities of beekeepers and the difficult detection of the mite in early stages of infection are likely to allow the mite to spread rapidly before it is discovered. Any eradication attempt would be extremely costly. No country in the world has ever successfully eradicated the Varroa mite. New Zealand failed to prevent Varroa moving from the north to the south island despite the best efforts of authorities and industry. As a result, New Zealand's feral bee population, for example, has already been decimated by the Varroa mite and the price of paid pollination services is increasing rapidly due to the loss of incidental pollination.

A collaborative industry approach

Clearly there are threats ahead for agriculture and threats and opportunities for the pollination industry. A new industry alliance has been proposed to address these threats and opportunities involving all members of the pollination value chain.

At a workshop in April 2007 funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the honeybee industry and other pollination stakeholders looked at opportunities and threats to the pollination industry and set a course to develop paid pollination services as a self sustaining industry. Attendees

represented a range of bodies including the honeybee, horticulture, pasture seeds and grains industries, research and development providers, state and federal governments, and university research centres.

At this workshop, it was agreed that an incursion of *Varroa destructor* poses one of the greatest threats to Australian horticulture and other plant based industries. Varroa is already found in all Australia's neighbours and it appears inevitable that it will at some time enter Australia. It is expected that the Varroa mite will wipe out virtually all feral European honeybees (and the incidental pollination services they perform) and cause significant damage to the managed honeybee industry.

Given the infancy of the current paid pollination industry and the time required to build the demand for such services, a Varroa mite incursion is likely to cause considerable flow-on costs (including increased production costs, loss of output, and reduced quality of production) for those agricultural industries dependent on honeybee pollination.

The workshop identified a number of problems that currently limit the pollination industry's ability to reduce the risks imposed by exotic pests and disease. The current emergency response plan is considered inadequate and the honeybee industry lacks the resources and capacity to manage these risks without assistance. The honeybee industry has resources for prevention and emergency response planning and for research and development, but by necessity these are focused on honeybee industry needs. There is no capacity to also incorporate the requirements of the pollination industry.

Participants agreed on the need to develop a business plan that can be independently managed by an industry alliance - this project is known as Pollination Australia.

Pollination Australia is being directed by the Pollination Industry Steering Committee, which consists of representatives from the honeybee industry, pollination dependent industries such as horticulture, research and development corporations and DAFF. DAFF and RIRDC are providing support for the formation of the industry alliance and for development and endorsement of the business plan. It is expected that after the business plan is finalised by June 2008 it will be independently funded in the long term and managed by the industry alliance members.

The Centre for International Economics (CIE) has been contracted by RIRDC to help set up the industry alliance and coordinate the development of the business plan.

It's hoped the establishment of Pollination Australia will lead to:

- strengthened biosecurity arrangements that reduce the risk of exotic pest and disease entry and enhance preparedness for an emergency response;
- improved technical knowledge and skills to adjust to the presence of an exotic pest or disease in the

honeybee industry, to ensure industry survival and capacity to respond to increased demand for pollination services;

- improved skills and technical knowledge on the crop management required when using pollination services in pollination dependent industries;
- growth in the supply, and improved quality and efficiencies, of pollination services in anticipation of a sustained exotic pest and disease incursion; and
- an expected increase in demand for pollination services regardless of whether or not there is an incursion.

Pollination Australia is expected to help substantially reduce the impact of the arrival of the Varroa mite and the loss of incidental pollination services and reduced capacity for paid pollination, both of which are relied upon by Australian agriculture. Good preparation now by the pollination industry will provide direct cost savings for future agricultural production when the Varroa mite eventually reaches Australia.

1 Gordon, J., and Davis, L., 2003, *Valuing honeybee pollination*, RIRDC, Project No. CIE-15A, Pub No. 03/077.

2 Cook, D., D.L. Anderson, S.A. Cunningham, and P.J. Baro, 2005, *De-pollination of a nation: Estimating the economic impact of Varroa mite on major Australian crops*, CSIRO.

VARROA DESTRUCTOR

A bee's worst enemy

The species of Varroa mite known as *Varroa destructor* is probably the greatest threat to Beekeeping in Australia.

Asian honeybees were the natural host of *Varroa destructor* until it jumped across to European honeybees in far north-east Asia. Since then it has spread to nearly every country in the world – except Australia.

It was found in the North Island of New Zealand in early 2000 and has since spread to the South Island. The European honeybee is unable to tolerate this mite.

Overseas experience suggests that should *Varroa destructor* become established in Australia it would spread rapidly and would, within two to three years, kill most colonies, managed or feral, not being treated with an appropriate chemical.

The Varroa mite has been the parasite with the most pronounced economic impact on the beekeeping industry worldwide. It may be a contributing factor to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which is threatening hives throughout North America.

In 2000, an Australian, Dr Denis Anderson from the CSIRO, was the first to identify the *Varroa destructor* species. He is a key international researcher on bees and the Varroa mite and is working closely with the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, Horticulture Australia and industry groups to establish Pollination Australia.

New Director-General for Department of Primary Industries (DPI)

Media Release - 14 December 2007

Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald today announced the appointment of Dr Richard Sheldrake as Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Mr Macdonald made the announcement, following the recent appointment of Mr Barry Buffier to take over the Leadership of the NSW Department of State and Regional Development.

“Dr Sheldrake has extensive experience in agriculture and has worked closely with industry to resolve difficult and sensitive issues,” Mr Macdonald said.

“He was Director-General of NSW Agriculture, he’s worked as a scientist, and also held a number of positions in the public sector.

“He was Director-General of the Department of Natural Resources and CEO of the Rural Assistance Authority and recently held the position of Deputy Director-General in the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

“Following the creation of DPI in 2004, Dr Sheldrake was responsible for the export and market team, Primex, and has worked with many of our key primary industries in regional and rural NSW.

“He will bring an enthusiasm and an understanding of the importance of primary industries to the economy of our State, in particular the economy of regional NSW.

“I welcome Dr Sheldrake into this challenging and important role and I know that the breadth of experience he brings will ensure that the Department will continue to provide excellent service to the primary industries of NSW.

“The appointment of Dr Richard Sheldrake and Mr Barry Buffier to lead these key Departments bodes well for the economy of NSW.”

Dr Sheldrake will take over a Department with more than 3,500 staff, assets of over \$2 billion, and revenue of \$1 billion per annum.

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DOUG'S COLUMN

Doug Somerville

Technical Specialist, Honey Bees - NSW Department of Primary Industries - Goulburn



Bad Beetles or a Gut Ache

This year's conference at Nelsons Bay in May will feature two subjects that should be or are currently causing significant concern to beekeepers within NSW. David Westervelt is from Florida in the USA and will cover a range of subjects over the two days.

Florida is the home of Small Hive Beetle in the USA. This pest was first officially identified in this state and has had the greatest impact on beekeeping in that state compared to the rest of the USA.

David works for the Florida Department of Agriculture, has been and continues to be involved in a range of research projects and has interests in commercial beekeeping operations. He is one for practical solutions that can be implemented and practiced by beekeepers. David was responsible for developing a hive beetle trap which is widely available in America.

Beekeepers in America have largely learnt to manage their bees around the problem of beetles. Measures adopted include:

1. **Keeping colonies as strong as possible**
2. **Regular re-queening programme**
3. **Place only enough comb (supers) on a hive for the bees to cover**
4. **Extract honey within 24-48 hours of removal from a hive**
5. **Clean up extracting shed – no slum gum, old combs, capping should be left around after the extracting process – remove/process within 24-48 hours.**
6. **Pay particular attention to the storage of combs with pollen. (similar storage techniques as used for wax moth)**
7. **Reduce stress levels on bees**
8. **Be mindful of high risk period (summer) when temperatures are consistently above 30°C and humidity is above 70%.**

Note: None of these measures includes the use of chemicals to kill beetles. Chemical impregnated strips are used to control adult beetles in the USA but this is only one element in a beekeepers control strategy to manage the impact of beetles.

In the Australian context there are now a number of various trap designs commercially available, all of which would appear to be successful in reducing adult beetle numbers.

A chemical to kill adult beetles is not yet legally available but significant research has been conducted by Dr Gary Levot (NSW DPI) to identify a suitable effective chemical and test a device to house the chemical. The research was funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC).

Unfortunately the chemical that has the most promise with the most effective results in relation to killing beetles is not allowed to be used in a beehive yet. The chemical manufactures have not supported the research and will not support its use or registration for use in a beehive.

Sufficient data on efficacy and residues has now been collected but until such time as a company allows is

registration for use in a beehive the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority will not issue a permit for its use by the beekeeping industry.

Thus for better or worse, beekeepers in the Australian context do not have a legal in-hive pesticide for use in the beehive. On the up side there is a lot, individuals can do to minimise the impact of beetles by following the eight points practiced by the American beekeepers.

Where does the gut ache come from?

Last year the USA beekeeping industry suffered from a condition they eventually termed CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder). Much speculation occurred as to its cause and Aussie bees were even implicated. There are two major beekeeping organisations in the USA, this year (January 2008) they had a combined conference with CCD as a major theme. The turn out by all reports was exceptional, an indication of the level of concern held by American beekeepers. David Westervelt our special guest speaker at our May conference will no doubt discuss some of the issues around the CCD phenomena. The paper that implicated Aussie bees suggested that an Israeli bee virus was strongly associated with CCD. One of the disturbing sets of results within the paper was the fact that 100% of the colonies said to have CCD also had *Nosema ceranae*.

This is a relatively new disease, closely related to *Nosema apis*. Initial survey results by Dr Michael Hornitzky (NSW DPI) indicate that both *Nosema* species are present in the eastern states of Australia. The results of the survey/study will also be featured at this year's conference. The research is being funded by RIRDC.

The worry with *Nosema* disease is that it is said to be far more virulent than *Nosema apis* and have a greater impact in the warmer months. *Nosema apis* traditionally has accounted for serious losses of bees in the late winter and early spring. *Nosema ceranae* may cause losses beyond this period and the losses may be more severe.

The issues with *Nosema* (either species) for the average beekeeper is the fact that in the majority of cases you will have 'no idea' that your bees are carrying a significant infection until the colony 'hits the wall', i.e. collapses. Good beekeeping practices will ensure problems in some cases are avoided. These include:

- a. Regular re-queening
- b. Maintain high levels of nutrition (pollen & nectar)
- c. Maintain strong colonies, particularly going through winter. (do not rely on the bees to replace deaths during the winter period)
- d. Minimise stress and disturbance.

Early indications are that *Nosema ceranae* may be a very significant problem for Australian beekeepers but in the majority of cases most beekeepers will not know they have the problem.

Hopefully I have given you at least a couple of good reasons to attend the conference in May this year and perhaps it would be wise to read up on management to minimise the impact of *Nosema* and invest in a microscope.

THAT'S MY OPINION AND I'M WELCOME TO IT

A column by Greg Roberts



The Passing of the World's Most Famous Beekeeper

It was sad to hear of the death of Sir Edmund Hillary, who along with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, conquered Mount Everest, May 1953. Sir Edmund's son Peter repeated this feat twice. For those who can remember Peter was our special after dinner speaker at our Year 2000 Conference, two honorable gentlemen.

GM Moratoria Lifted

The moratoria have been lifted by the NSW and Victorian Governments on genetically modified (GM) canola. The Australian Oil Seed Federation believes that this decision "will provide the Australian Canola Industry with the opportunity to exercise choice, and will provide the Australian Canola growers with more opportunity to maintain and improve competitiveness." Some of the benefits to canola growers are cleaner paddocks and lower weed control costs, managing herbicide resistant weeds, less chemical use and potential higher grain yields.

GM Canola crops have been thoroughly assessed and approved by the Federal Government for both human and environmental health and safety. Two GM Canola crops have been approved for commercial release in Australia. The Oilseed Federation believes that this decision by the NSW and Victorian Government is an important step forward and provides the opportunity for productivity and environmental benefit for the Australian Canola Industry.

Within society GM is a very emotional issue which tends to overlook the science of research and also labelling regulations. The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council is developing a National Code of Practice which I am highly critical of the content. Should we be more proactive and address such national issues as GM and other modern day environmental issues relating to national and international environmental issues and agreements?

Beekeeper management will need to have some guidance and education on the guidelines for growing commercial GM crops if we are to meet our QA obligations.

Overseas Honey Contamination

Honey from Argentina has been found with Tylosin residue in some exports to Europe. I hope that the Australian Honey Bee Industry's National Residue Committee has this under control and have warned the Australian Government that this honey is still on the world market and could be

dumped in many countries including Australia. We have already experienced imports into Australia of contaminated honey. Tylosin and other such products which are used internationally are banned for use in Australia.

International Honey Producers Crisis

Compared to production costs Beekeepers internationally are receiving very low commodity prices. This at a time when Richard Fisher from the Dallas Reserve Bank is warning Governments around the world that rises in grocery prices may have a greater affect on World Economies than fuel prices and interest rates. His predictions are already proven to be right in some economies also Professor Snow Barlow from the Melbourne University has warned that by the year 2050 world food production will have to double to meet the needs of growing wealthier societies.

In the last publication of Honeybee News, President Bill Weiss mentioned "*the effect of pressure from supermarkets had reached a point that they were impacting on the sustainability of the Beekeeping Industry*". It is my belief that internationally the corporate world from marketers to retailers need to stop and think that they cannot continually reap huge profits out of producer's pockets without any consideration to the sustainability of the producer sector. The massive gap between farm gate and retail honey prices combined with high fuel costs, changing climate, increasing bee diseases and declining resource bases are some of the reasons why I have predicted for over two years that 2008 would be the beginning of a decline in world honey production and in the long term may lead to a world shortage of honey.

One other effect on international honey production is the growing demand for sugar for ethanol fuel production. It is not uncommon around the world for beekeepers to remove all honey stores and feed stores of sugar or corn syrup as a winter substitute for honey. With the increase of sugar prices some beekeeping nations can no longer afford this traditional method of wintering hives, so honey stores would have to remain to prevent starvation.

In Australia we all know too well the effects of drought, bushfires and other environmental issues have had on our production. China is experiencing the worst drought in living memory in some provinces the drought is so bad that there is not enough water to grow rice crops and rivers and streams are running the lowest again in living memory. Some Chinese honey exporters have shifted their business to provide for the local domestic markets as their 1.6 billion population is now consuming more of its local product. China's honey exports for 2007 were down by 26%.

North America's honey crops are down again for the second year running, this has been caused by many states experiencing the worst drought in a century. In California, wildfires have destroyed many potential honey crops and also orchards that beekeepers would be depending on for pollination. Depending on what reports you refer to Canada's production was down by 40%-60% from their previous season. In many European countries honey crops have failed because of similar reasons as Australia and North America.

Argentina has experienced the worst winter in twenty years, colony losses are as high as 60% in some cases and Argentinean exports for 2007 were down by 22% from the previous year. One problem that the Argentinean beekeepers are facing, which I believe will grow internationally, is the demand for grain not only for food production but also the growing market for bio fuels. World grain commodities have experienced the highest increase in over twenty five years and are still increasing. The subsequent effect on honey production is the increase in grain plantations especially in the Argentinean prairies which are replacing traditional cattle grazing country where honey production of sweet, dutch and white clover as well as alfalfa and some weeds take place. This has forced Argentinean beekeepers into high altitude country, producing a different variety of honey and higher altitude production is also more unreliable. It is reported that Argentinean beekeepers have applied to their Federal Government for emergency support in the form of twenty three pounds of sugar per colony, the local honey exporters have opposed this initiative on the grounds that it might add additional anti dumping duties on Argentinean honey exports to the US. If this is true then this would add more pressure to honey production in Argentina.

If I am right about a world shortage of honey then it may come fast and hard and may catch many people in the marketing world off guard. Recently milk prices have increased substantially for milk producers, experts are now saying that we are in the beginning of a world shortage of milk, **who would have thought that twelve months ago.**



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Notes from the NSW DPI Apiary Section

John Rhodes, Apiary Officer, NSW Dept. of Primary Industries, Tamworth – 31 January 2008.

Pest and disease course

A Pest and Disease Course is being prepared for presenting during the second half of 2008. It will cover a broad range of topics including the major brood diseases, adult bee diseases, pests of bees and hive materials, non-infectious bee disorders, exotic disease and pests, disease prevention, relevant Apiary Acts and legislation and sampling techniques. NSW DPI Apiary officers will be holding an initial course in May which DPI Regulatory Officers will attend.

The course will provide the opportunity for persons attending to be accredited for the "RTE 3415A – Manage pests and disease within the honey bee colony" Level III unit, AND "FDFOPTISP 2A – Implement sampling procedures" Level II unit, both courses have national recognition.

NSW DPI PROFarm courses 2008

For details on any of the following courses contact Mrs Kim Griffiths, Tocal NSW DPI, (near Maitland), phone 02 4939 8888.

Queen Bee Rearing	28 Feb-1 March
Tocal Ag College	
Beekeeping (Introduction)	15-16 March
Camden	
Beekeeping (Introduction)	25-26 March
Tamworth	
Beekeeping (Introduction)	27-28 March
Woolingbar	
Beekeeping as a business	13-14 September
Camden	
Beekeeping (Introduction)	13-14 September
Tocal	
Beekeeping (Introduction)	15-16 November
Camden	

Mark Johnstone Joins the NSW DPI Bee Team

Just before Christmas I was offered a short term contract with NSW DPI to help the Bee Industry Group with a number of projects, the major areas being:

- Review, format and present the Queen breeding course notes with a commercial outlook and provide more teaching material for the course being held at Tocal between 29/2/2008 and 2/3/2008.
- Be involved in construction of the "Beekeeping as a Business" course to be offered in the second half of 2008
- Produce a background document of the Beekeeping Industry in NSW
- To be involved in the review of material for the "Pest and Diseases Course" also being offered in the second half of 2008.

I started Beekeeping in the late 1970's when a school friend took me out for the day to help him, it turned out I was the person on the four framed hand-turned extractor. This

person was also half of Norgra Apiaries and thus began my long association with the Queen Bee Industry.

I studied pigs and poultry at HAC along with the odd bit of beekeeping, meeting and working for a number of beekeepers in the Hawkesbury. I worked in the poultry industry until 1986, building my bees and skills up to the point, I then went full-time beekeeping, both honey and Queen production.

Up to 1997 when I was one of the many that got Ross River Virus, I exported queens to Canada, Korea and the Middle East as well as helping other Queen breeders to supply queens, nucs and packages to both local and export markets. As a member as AQBBA for a number of years I represented the association at BICC meetings.

Following leasing most of my bees in 1998 I re-entered the poultry industry working in Sydney, Central Coast, Tamworth, Victoria and Casino/ Lismore areas until June last year.

I have now leased some bees and started to work my own bees part-time. During my ten years back in the poultry industry I was heavily involved in training, development of SOP's and ISO manuals and was also ISO auditor. During my time out of commercial bee keeping, I kept contact with many friends in Bees watching with interest Queen and Honey prices, Markets and the effect of SMB.

My contact details at Richmond DPI office are:

Ph: 02 4588 2131 Fax: 02 4578 2528

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Historical presence of Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus in the United States

Yamping Chen and Jay Evans*

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Abstract

High bee colony losses in the United States this past year can be attributed in part to an unresolved syndrome termed Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). An extensive genetic survey found one virus, Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV), to be strongly associated with CCD. Using DNA sequencing and phylogenetic analyses, we provide evidence that IAPV was present in US bees collected several years prior to CCD, and prior to the recent importation into the US of honey bees from Australia and New Zealand. While downplaying the importance of bee importation for the appearance of CCD, these results indicate an urgent need to test specific strains of IAPV for their disease impacts.

Honey bees are of great agricultural importance in the US and worldwide (Morse and Calderone, 2000), and are continually threatened by parasites and pathogens. During the winter of 2006-2007, a rare and extreme syndrome of honey bee losses was observed. This syndrome, labelled Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), is defined by a rapid depopulation of adult bees in colonies, often leaving a substantial standing brood of healthy larvae (<http://www.ento.psu.edu/MAAREC/ColonyCollapseDisorder.html>). Survey evidence suggests that roughly 25% of beekeepers have suffered the effects of CCD, as defined by characteristic traits and colony losses of >50% (van Engelsdorp *et al.*, 2007). Many beekeepers lost substantially more than 50% of their operations. While events similar to CCD have occurred in past decades (Wilson and Menapace, 1979), the severity of this event has caused appropriate concern nationally and internationally.

Recently, an unprecedented 'metagenomic' approach was used to detect parasites and pathogens in bees associated with CCD and controls (Cox-Foster *et al.*, 2007). This study described numerous microbes from bees, some known as pathogens and others that had not been seen prior in honey bees. One striking result was the right correlation between Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV), an unclassified Dicistroviridae virus, and CCD. IAPV was detected in 25 of 30 (83%) CCD-affected honey bee colonies but only once in 21 healthy colonies (Cox-Foster *et al.*, 2007). This virus was also found in package bees imported from Australia and isolates of royal jelly imported from China. The identification of IAPV

as a newly described virus for the US, its association with an important disease, and implications for both bee management and trade issues, have all led to intensive efforts to study this virus. These efforts are focused on past and present worldwide distributions of IAPV, on determining mechanisms by which this and related viruses can cause disease, and on determining whether IAPV strains differ substantially in their impacts on bees.

To help address these questions, we screened honey bee samples collected in California, Maryland and Pennsylvania from 2002 to 2007 for the presence of IAPV. The genetic relationships of different IAPV strains were studied by sequencing one section (the 5'UTR) from the IAPV genome for isolates collected from 33 US honey bees (out of several hundred screened bees). The results from this survey indicate that IAPV has been circulating in US bee populations since at least 2002, and forms a worldwide species that is greatly diverged from the related Kashmir Bee Virus. Specifically, IAPV isolates from this study can be split into four distinct clusters supported with bootstrap statistical values > 55%. These clusters reflect collections from California, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Israel. CA and PA isolates each formed separate lineages with strong bootstrap support, while the Maryland and Israeli lineages were less well defined. Israeli samples, including the strain first named as IAPV, are not distinct from the US isolates as a group.

We also sequenced the entire genomes of IAPV isolates from California, Maryland and a Pennsylvania apiary with a history of Australian importation and CCD symptoms, using a combination of long-template RT-PCR, primer walking, and Rapid Amplification of cDNA Ends (RACE) methods (protocols available from Y. Chen). These three complete genomes, when compared to the definitive (Israeli) IAPV genome sequence, show 4.2 – 4.7% divergence at the NA level, while all IAPV strains showed >25% divergence from Kashmir Bee Virus. Genetic heterogeneity across the studied 5' region is interesting in that this region is involved in the initiation of protein translation, and genetic variability of this region may lead to different pathogenicities. Further analyses are needed to explore the implications of these and other genome sequences for virulence traits of IAPV.

Our results show that IAPV in the US predates both the latest incarnation of CCD and the importation of Australian package bees. Nevertheless, we caution that much work is still needed to absolve or implicate this virus, or specific imports, in CCD. Most importantly, experimental studies are ongoing to determine the relative virulence of imported or domestic IAPV strains, and such studies will provide the best evidence for making importation and management choices.

Viruses with minimal genome sequence differences can show greatly different levels of virulence, and all isolates of IAPV we studied showed at least some sequence variation. Given its observed association with CCD, this virus remains an important candidate for honey bee disease.

Acknowledgements: We gratefully acknowledge Jeff Pettis for guidance. Haim Eftat for Israeli bee samples, Michele Hamilton and Dawn Lopez for laboratory assistance.

References: Cox-Foster, DL., Conlan, S., Holmes, E., Palacios, G., Evans, JD., Moran, NA., Quan, PL., Briese, T., Hornig, M., Geiser, DM., Martinson, V., van Engelsdorp, D., Kalkstein, AL., Drysdale, A., Hui, J., Zhai, J., Cui, L., Hutchison, SK., Simons, JF., Egholm, M., Pettis, JS., Lipkin, WI., (2007) A metagenomic survey of microbes in honey bee colony collapse disorder. *Science*. 318 (5848): 283-287.

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QUEEN BEE BREEDING WORKSHOP

SATURDAY 12 APRIL 2008

The Australian Queen Bee Breeding Group will be holding its inaugural workshop on Saturday April 12, 2008. Members of industry are invited to attend at a cost of \$20.00 which includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch.

The venue will be the Stephen Roberts Lecture theatre, Zoology Building, University of Sydney.

Proposed Programme

9.30am	Welcome Prof Ben Oldroyd
9.40am	Outline of current bee breeding programs in Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Better Bees (John Davies)- AQBBG (Bruce White)- Jo Horner
<i>11.00 am</i>	<i>Morning tea</i>
11.30am	General problems in bee breeding and promise for the future (Ben Oldroyd)
<i>12.30pm</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
1.30pm	Report on Black Bee genetic variance (Peter Oxley)
1.45pm	Report on genetic variance in the West Australian Bee Breeding program (Nadine Chapman)
2.00pm	Report on mating control by Jo Horner's method (Ben Oldroyd or Peter Oxley)
2.15pm	Report on the hygienic behaviour genes, Spivak stock (Peter Oxley)
2.30pm	Visit to the Social Insects laboratory (DNA Robot, sequencing machine, bee house etc)
3.15pm	Report on the honey production of the AQBBP lines. Bruce White and Ben.
4.00pm	Reports from assessors <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wayne Sawdy- Lindsay Bourke
5.00pm	Experiences in dairy cattle (Prof Frank Nicholas, University of Sydney)

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants are invited to the Forest Lodge Hotel for drinks and dinner (at own expense).

Accommodation (if required): There are several hotels and guesthouses adjacent to the University - The Alishan Guest house has single rooms from \$55 (share facilities) to \$88 (en suite) www.alishan.com.au - The Forest Lodge Hotel is pub style Telephone: 02 9660 1782. There are also the usual hotel chains around Central Station.

Parking: On campus is permitted but expensive. Because it's a weekend, you should find free parking on Glebe streets.

Public Transport: The closest station is Central. 435, 436, 437, 440 and 461 busses along Parramatta Road will take you to the University. Ask the driver to let you off at the Foot Bridge Theatre. Enter the University and turn right on Science Road. The Zoology Building is on the right 100m down the hill.

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Will Australia learn the lessons of horse flu?

By Dr Diane Sheehan, President, Australian Veterinary Association

While there is still a great deal of vigilance required from horse owners and hard work to be done by animal health professionals, 2008 has arrived with genuine hope that equine influenza can be eradicated.

Those who were at the front lines fighting the outbreak will be happy to see the tail-end of 2007, which will go down as the worst year for Australia's quarantine and bio-security in living memory.

While no people were physically harmed, and few horses are thought to have been killed, this outbreak will leave emotional and financial scars on thousands of people associated with horse industries in NSW and Queensland. The cost to taxpayers will ultimately run into the hundreds of millions - and it is not so long ago that nobody could say with any confidence whether there would be a Melbourne Cup in 2007.

The good news is that 2008 may yet be remembered as the best year for Australia's quarantine and bio-security - but this depends on whether governments have the will to demonstrate that lessons have been learnt.

In decades past, the predominant employer of veterinarians was government departments. It was these animal health professionals who helped to create Australia's animal health status that is now envied around the world. Government veterinary services on the ground have since been gradually depleted, while senior public service positions in government departments have been taken over by bureaucrats.

Investment in Australia's human health has increased significantly over recent decades, but this has not been reflected by government investment in animal health surveillance and research.

What gives us grounds for optimism is the fact that governments appear to have learnt the hard way about the potential catastrophic consequences of taking the management of bio-security away from animal health professionals.

As bad as the equine influenza outbreak was, it could have been so much worse. An outbreak of foot and mouth disease, for example, could have led to the deaths of millions of livestock, and devastated our multi-billion dollar meat and livestock export businesses, and the hundreds of rural communities that depend on them. An outbreak of FMD in the United Kingdom in 2001 is estimated to have cost \$A60 billion, and even caused the postponement of the election.

Worse still, is the entirely feasible possibility of the spread of a disease that can be transferred from animals to humans - known as zoonotic. The list of zoonoses is a long one, including such diseases as anthrax, avian influenza, BSE, bubonic plague, ebola, rabies, and yellow fever, to name a few.

In a world where the transport of humans and animals is now commonplace, there is nothing fanciful about the emergence of a devastating zoonotic disease. The West Nile virus is one such disease that swept through the

human population of the United States in 2002, leading to thousands of serious cases and at least 280 deaths.

More than 70 per cent of all new diseases in humans are known to be zoonotic, meaning that the barriers between human and animal health are increasingly recognised internationally as being redundant.

In Australia, the old barriers between human and animal health are still very much in place, meaning that we are clearly trailing the rest of the world when it comes to best practice in combating new diseases.

This is nowhere more apparent than in the fact that Australia has no equivalent to the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) that have emerged around the world to combat new diseases. In the US, the Atlanta CDC embodies the one medicine concept by drawing together all health professional disciplines with the common goal of combating disease. It leads the world in disease control and bio-security and is a model now being followed in Europe, Canada, and China.

Australia has a unique environment, and circumstances that demand the establishment of our own Centre for Disease Control to protect our interests in animal and human health. We will not begin to approach world's best practice in animal or human health, without the establishment of a CDC.

A national body such as this would have the advantage of being able to form a single repository of knowledge, as well as providing the means to manage outbreaks and cut through the inevitable red tape and factional interests that emerge during a disease outbreak. A CDC would confirm Australia's reputation as a leader in animal health, welfare and bio-security and help to re-establish the confidence of our rural communities in our quarantine and bio-security services.

The decisions we make this year will be crucial. This will either be remembered as a disastrous year of missed opportunities, or as the year when Australia made the right decisions to meet the bio-security challenges of the future.

MEDIA RELEASE - 21 January 2008

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is calling for qualified animal health professionals to be put back in charge of bio-security, as part of a wide ranging submission to the federal inquiry into equine influenza. The major recommendations of the AVA submission include the establishment of a task force to review and audit quarantine arrangements, and the development of a Centre for Disease Control (CDC).

For further information contact:
Gavin Atkins – Media Officer
The Australian Veterinary Association
Phone: 1300 137 309 Direct: 02 9431 5060
Fax: 02 9437 9068 Ph: 0439 628 898
Email: gatkings@ava.com.au

HPMAA President's Report - February 2008

This report covers the period 1 November 2007 to February 2008

Firstly (albeit late), a Prosperous New Year to all the readers. One asks, how can we be prosperous when the country is in drought, fierce competition exists between honey sellers, costs keep rising to mention just a few items that impact everyone? Well every negative situation can be turned into a positive one and history shows that some people became millionaires in the great depression years or at times when others did not see or seize the opportunity. While honey production currently looks short, the spring season ahead is shaping up much better after all the rains etc. New players are looking at coming into the supermarket arena in Australia so that will all make for changes in the future.

Noted points for the period are as follows:

The National Retail Market

Looking at the scanned sales data for the national market on honey sales, the following can be gleaned. For the full calendar year of 2007 the main brands changed in total volume (kilo's) sold by a drop of 503 tonnes representing 5% of the volume. Private labels grew around +10.9%. Private labels are packed by all of the four major packers in differing volumes so total volume sold per packer will vary. (*sources – AZTEC data, and market information*).

Something also interesting to note, is this research from previous data collation (*source - Retail World National annual market reports*):

By Dollar Value	Clear Honey tracking	Variety Honey tacking	Creamed Honey tracking	
year	%	%	%	%
2000	77.4	18.0	4.6	100
2001	76.9	18.6	4.5	100
2002	77.2	18.3	4.5	100
2003	77.9	17.5	4.6	100
2004	79.2	16.6	4.2	100
2005	79.8	16.0	4.2	100
2006	78.9	17.0	4.1	100
2007	77.1	18.9	4.0	100

By Volume - tonnes	Clear Honey tracking	Variety Honey tacking	Creamed Honey tracking	
year	%	%	%	%
2000	80.1	15.5	4.4	100
2001	79.6	16.0	4.4	100
2002	80.2	15.5	4.3	100
2003	80.0	15.8	4.2	100
2004	82.2	14.0	3.8	100
2005	82.1	14.0	3.9	100
2006	81.5	14.8	3.7	100
2007	80.9	15.6	3.5	100

What the above shows is that the mix of sales have remained constant over the years except for creamed honey which is showing a decline (except in WA where it has risen). Blended honey still rules the day. Of further interest is that for the last 4 years the volume sold through supermarkets remains constant at around 9,300 tonnes, down on the previous five years of approximately 12,000 tonnes as shown below.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
TOTAL MARKET	\$57.4m	\$60.4m	\$63.8m	\$72.0m	\$94.8m	\$92.1m	\$89.3m	\$87.3m	\$85.5m
Value Change +/-	5.2%	4.9%	5.6%	11.60%	33.00%	-3.10%	-3.10%	-2.70%	-2.0%
Tonnes	12,049	12,181	12,321	12,268	10,205	9,422	9,337	9256	9298
Volume Change +/-	1.8%	1.1%	1.0%	-0.8%	-16.7%	-7.20%	-0.90%	-1.20%	0.50%

It is fair to say that this data on the national market does not reflect the total Australia consumer market for honey sales, but rather the mainstream consumer market via supermarket sales. It suggests more sales are occurring at a farm gate & grower's market level and most packers would agree it is in these markets that varietal honey selling seems to largely occur. Supermarkets are the mainstay of our industry to sell the volume produced.

Domestic Honey Pricing

In the last report a good bit of effort was put into explaining pricing mechanisms that effect ultimate farm gate values. At the end of the article it stated that "No doubt we will see a correction in the market in 2008 as packer loyalty shifts dependant on prices paid, supply changes, different players emerge, etc". To a degree we have definitely seen this occur in the marketplace. Has this influenced prices up or down? The short answer is no but some beekeepers have moved camps to obtain the best value they could under trying production circumstances. So for the period pricing overall has remained static.

International Honey Pricing

At a supermarket level in mainstream locations and stores around the world, prices remain largely unchanged. On the global bulk honey scene I can report that the world price has continued to rise (even if it is still small). Late or reduced crops are now occurring in a number of producing countries adding to the pressure of upward price movements. The effect for Australia is that we will be a little better off if the rest of the world moves up but that is also dependant on our dollar becoming weaker in the world market. Overall it looks more promising.

Import / Export

The ABS import data shows honey coming into Australia for the December quarter was at 332 ton (down 58% on the previous quarter). The volume trend can be seen below.

Month	Combined Imports Tonnes	Combined Exports Tonnes
Dec-07	332	
Sep-07	790	1,208
Jun-07	151	1,320
Mar-07	261	1,580
Dec-06	169	1,665
Sep-06	161	2,332

Of the main imports in the last quarter, 29% came from Argentina, 25% from China and 25% from New Zealand with the balance from various sources. The average imported value was \$6.70 per kilo however when taking out the abnormal items and the Manuka imports from New Zealand, the landed port price is closer to \$2.32 per kilo (remember that's a landed to Australia price which includes the honey, drums, costs, freight and the sellers margin). Guess it makes the honey cheap! The imported honey data for the period was not released at the time of writing.

Eduard Planken – President HPMAA



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Superbee Honey Factory

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Cnr Newell Highway and Landrace St, Forbes, NSW 2871

Superbee is moving!

Superbee has purchased a new factory in Forbes, NSW and will be commencing fit out of this site starting in October, with relocation of our production plant from Qld to Forbes scheduled for January 2008.

We will be able to take deliveries of honey at the Forbes site from November onwards, so if Forbes is more accessible for you, please give us a buzz to discuss delivery details.

Superbee will continue trading at our Sunshine Coast site until the end of December 07, following which all manufacturing operations will relocate to Forbes.

For those suppliers who still have empty drums at our Sunshine Coast site, please contact us ASAP to discuss retrieval arrangements for these.

The new factory is much larger than our existing site and will give us the capability to continue to expand the company. We hope that our existing suppliers (as well as some new ones!) will continue their strong support of Superbee and we look forward to a happy working relationship for many years to come!

Our new address is: Cnr Newell Hwy & Landrace St, Forbes, NSW 2871

To discuss spot sales or longer-term supply contracts, please call us on:

Ross Christiansen – Director
Chris Kath – General Manager

Mob: 0413 861 997
Mob: 0421 620 419

LAURIE AND PAULA DEWAR RECOGNISED FOR CELEBRATING AUSTRALIAN FLAVOUR IN KALBAR



Yellow™ and White Pages® directories honour Australia's food and beverage industry heroes

Australia is certainly spoilt for choice when it comes to food and drink. This year, Sensis is recognising local food and beverage heroes across the country on the covers of the 2008/09 Yellow™ and White Pages® directories, with Kalbar residents Laurie and Paula Dewar featuring on the cover of this year's Beaudesert directory.



Laurie and Paula exemplify this year's cover theme 'Celebrating Australian Flavour' and were humbled to learn of their selection to feature on the front cover, having been nominated by members of the local community.

Laurie and Paula are one of the top honey producers and queen bee breeders in Australia and have made a significant contribution to the honeybee industry. Their bees produce various types of honey including blue gum, ironbark, brush box and yellow box making more than 60,000 kilograms of honey a year, which they supply to a major honey packer. A small amount is also sold at their local fruit and vegetable shop.

Laurie and Paula are life members of the Queensland Bee Keepers Association and Laurie is a foundation member of the Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association. He currently chairs the Beekeepers Industry Consultative Committee (BICC), which advises the Queensland Government.

In 2001 Laurie received the Order of Australia medal (OAM) for his work within the honeybee industry and for being the driving force behind the development of the B-QUAL food safety program, which guarantees that honey is safe to eat. In 2005 at the International Bee Conference in Dublin, the international judging panel declared the honey Laurie entered was the best light-grade honey in the world.

"We hope that every time someone uses the phone directory they are reminded of the significance of the honeybee to the food chain. More than one third of the food we eat requires pollination which honeybees do while gathering honey," Laurie said.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to be contacted by Australian beekeepers or beekeeping companies interested in establishing some sort of business arrangements.

I have lived in Australia for more than twenty seven years and since returning to Argentina in 2002 I have got myself involved in beekeeping. I am currently working together with a beekeeping partner with extensive beekeeping experience and practical knowledge.

We are interested in setting up business on both ends Australia and Argentina and are seeking to exchange views, personal experiences and information towards that purpose.

Please, contact me at ricardotorbidoni@gmail.com

Kind regards, *Ricardo Torbidoni*
Buenos Aires, Argentina
2 February 2008

Hi Margaret

Capilano drops price

It should come as no surprise to anyone who has read our past reports as to what is driving the honey price down. Low returns in the market place mean low beekeeper prices. Foreign exchange currently has a big negative impact on exporters. In the Australian market we have more competition between packers for private label because the number of packers trying to win that business has grown substantially. In the 'Honeybee News' you printed the report from the HPMAA where you quote Eddy Planken as stating that there is little return from private label. He is correct.

You have the supermarkets driving the shift to private label in many products, including honey.

Why should industry pick Capilano to be responsible for dropping prices? Each packer is responsible for its own price. It is the industry that is supporting the growth in number of packers in the belief that more packers will compete for their honey. Does industry really think that more packers equals more demand - so prices should rise? Has industry forgotten that packers still sell to the same small number of supermarkets and that when supermarkets have more suppliers to choose from prices are likely to fall !!!!!

At the current time we have the aftermath of drought and a serious shortage of honey and in a truly absurd way we have a bidding war between packers for supply of honey when the number of supermarket buyers has not changed and is not likely to change. The onset of the next season after the rains we have had in most States probably means a return to larger crops we are used to. Packers that picked up new suppliers but don't get new supermarket buyers will have to work out what they do with their new suppliers or will they simply discount their honey to win business?

Capilano is in a more competitive market for the private label business and the message we have sent out for 2 years is that the supermarket landscape has changed. We will meet the competition and our business is changing to do that.

Roger Masters, Managing Director
CAPILANO HONEY LIMITED
5 February 2008

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RECIPES

Apricot Lamb with Honey Sauce

(Microwave Recipe)

1.5 k leg of lamb, boned

FILLING:

1/4 cup buckwheat
1/3 cup dried Apricots, chopped
2 shallots, chopped
2 tablespoons pine nuts
1 1/2 tablespoons fruit chutney

HONEY SAUCE:

1 1/2 teaspoons soy sauce
1/3 cup orange juice
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
2 tablespoons water
1/4 cup honey

Cover buckwheat with water, stand 20 minutes, drain well. Mix all ingredients together. Lay lamb out flat, press filling all over, bring edges together, and tie up firmly with string. Place lamb seam side down on rack in shallow dish, cook on High 10 minutes, turn lamb, cook on Medium High further 10 minutes, turn again and cook on Medium High 10 minutes longer, or until lamb is cooked. Cover lamb with foil and stand until sauce is ready.

To make sauce: Mix all ingredients together, cook on High for three minutes or until mixture boils and thickens stirring occasionally. Serve with lamb.

Baked Bananas with Honey/Ginger Cream

Place 4-6 peeled bananas in a shallow casserole and sprinkle with honey. Pour over 1 cup orange juice and bake in moderate oven for about 25 minutes, spooning juices over bananas halfway through cooking time

CREAM:

1 cup thin cream
2 teaspoons honey
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

Whisk the cream, honey and ginger until stiff peaks form. Serve with baked bananas.

Fruit 'n' Honey Loaf

3/4 cup cold tea
1/3 cup honey
1 1/2 cups (250g) chopped mixed fruit
1 large apple, grated
1 egg
2 cups wholemeal self-raising flour

Combine tea, honey and mixed fruit in pan, bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for 2 minutes, cool slightly. Stir in apple, egg and flour, pour into loaf tin (base measures 11cm x 18cm). Bake in moderate oven for 50 minutes. Turn onto wire rack.

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AHBIC NEWS

Dec 07 & Jan 08 Excerpts

Outlook 2008 Conference

The ABARE Outlook 2008 Conference is to be held in Canberra on 4-5 March 2008.

Pollination Australia

Industry, government representatives and researchers continue to work on papers to be presented at the pollination workshop to be held in Canberra on 18-19 March 2008. It is hoped that the workshop will be attended by representatives of the plant industries heavily dependent upon pollination. The workshop represents an important stage in the development of Pollination Australia.

Queen Bee Breeding Workshop

A workshop for queen bee breeding is to be held at Sydney University on Saturday 12 April 2008. Any industry participants can attend at their own cost and details are contained in this newsletter.

New Chief Veterinary Officer

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has announced the appointment of Dr Andy Carroll as Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO). Andy will bring to the role a strong veterinary and senior executive leadership background.

Dr Carroll holds a Masters in Tropical Veterinary Science (James Cook University) and an Honours Degree in Veterinary Science (University of Queensland).

Between 1979 and 1985 he was a District Veterinary Officer with the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. He joined the Australian Public Service in 1985 working in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and its predecessors in a range of program management roles dealing with animal health and disease matters and food programs. Dr Carroll was promoted to the SES in 2001 as National Manager, Cargo in AQIS. He transferred to the position of National Manager, Border in 2004 where he has had responsibility for airline passenger and baggage clearance, international mail, the detector dog program and the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy.

Honey May Improve Insulin Sensitivity

Findings at the International Symposium on Honey and Human Health in Sacramento, California, suggest honey may help against diabetes, obesity and hypertension.

David Baer a research physiologist at the US Department of Agriculture showed how insulin resistance, a sign that glucose metabolism is breaking down, is not only related

to diabetes, but also to obesity, cardiovascular disease, stroke and hypertension.

"Controlling blood sugar is critically important for diabetics and maintaining good insulin sensitivity reduces the risk for diabetes in at-risk people," Baer said in a statement.

"Experimental evidence suggests that consumption of honey compared to some other sweeteners may improve blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity."

In addition, researchers are exploring honey's potential to improve chemotherapy-induced neutropenia, wound healing, restorative sleep, cough suppression and cognitive function.

Honey Proves a Better Option for Childhood Cough

Hershey, Pa – Now that the safety and effectiveness of children's cough medicines are in question, what can parents do to help their child deal with a troublesome cough?

A new study by a Penn State College of Medicine research team found that honey may offer parents an effective and safe alternative. The study found that a small dose of buckwheat honey given before bedtime provided better relief of nighttime cough and sleep difficulty in children than no treatment or dextromethorphan (DM) a cough suppressant found in many over-the-counter cold medications. Honey did a better job reducing the severity, frequency and bothersome nature of nighttime cough from upper respiratory infection than DM or no treatment. Honey also showed a positive effect on the sleep quality of both the coughing child and the child's parents. DM was not significantly better at alleviating symptoms than no treatment.

The results are published by Penn State College of Medicine researchers, led by Ian Paul, M.D., M. Sc., in this month's Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine.

In a previous study published in 2004, Paul and colleagues showed that neither DM nor diphenhydramine, another common component of cold medications, performed better than a placebo at reducing nighttime cough or improving sleep quality. However, honey has been used for centuries in some cultures to treat upper respiratory infection symptoms like cough, and is considered to be safe for children over 12 months old. Honey has well-established antioxidant and antimicrobial effects, which could explain its contributions to wound healing. Honey also soothes on contact, which may help explain its effect on cough as suggested by the World Health Organisation.

In the latest study, the researchers enrolled 105 children

between the ages of 2 and 18 at a single university-affiliated physician practice site. On the first night of the study, children received no treatment. Parents answered five questions about their child's cough and sleep quality as well as about their own sleep quality. On the second night, children received either honey, artificial honey-flavoured DM or no treatment about a half hour prior to going to bed. Parents answered the same five questions the following morning.

The randomized study was partially double-blinded: Medical staff did not know what treatment each participating family received when distributing their sealed syringe-containing envelope. Parents of children who received honey or artificial honey-flavoured DM in a measured syringe were blinded to their treatment group. Parents of children in the no treatment group received an empty syringe, and therefore were aware of their child's treatment group.

Across the board, parents rated honey as significantly better than DM or no treatment for symptomatic relief of their child's nighttime cough and sleep difficulty. In a few cases, parents did report mild side effects with the honey treatment, such as hyperactivity.

"Our study adds to the growing literature questioning the use of DM in children, but it also offer a legitimate and safe alternative for physicians and parents," said Paul, a pediatrician, researcher and associate professor pediatrics at Penn State College of Medicine and Penn State Children's Hospital. "Additional studies should certainly be considered, but we hope that medical professionals will consider the positive potential of honey as a treatment given the lack of efficacy, expense, and potential for adverse effects associated with the use of DM."

Potentially dangerous side effects of DM in young children include dystonic reactions, severe involuntary muscle contractions and spasms. Further, DM is commonly used as a drug of abuse by adolescents.

Cough is the reason for nearly three per cent of all outpatient visits in the United States, more than any other symptom. It is particularly bothersome at night because it disrupts sleep. Consumers spend billions of dollars each year on cough and cold medications despite little evidence that these drugs provide significant relief.

This study was funded by an unrestricted grant from the National Honey Board, an industry-funded agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Mr Rajeev Kurnar is a hard working experienced beekeeper in India who is looking for a seasonal or year round beekeeping job. He has a sound knowledge of beekeeping practices with experience in manipulating colonies and knowledge of bee behaviour (Carnolian, Italian, and Caucasian). He is physically fit for honey pulling and extracting honey, and also for disease checking, splitting hives, swarm control, feeding, wrapping etc.

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