AUSTRALIA'S
HONEYBEE NEWS
"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 2 Number 1 January-February 2009

The Asian honey bee is noticeable smaller than the European honey bee with starker brown colouring on its abdomen.

Photo by Paul Zborowski

Apis mellifera - European honey bee

Apis cerana - Asian honey bee

AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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CONTENTS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Season
The season in New South Wales began with reasonable to good rains allowing Canola and other crops to be sown. Even though the southern half of New South Wales dried out, most beekeepers got some honey.

Canola, Mugga Ironbark, Yellow Box and River Red Gum has given most southern beekeepers near to a normal crop. Northern beekeepers have had a mixed result. The North Coast didn't do as well as expected for some and Northern Tablelands and North West gave mixed results. Some beekeepers are getting a reasonable crop (although below average) while others are down on normal production.

Honey prices remain in the AUS$2.70-$3.00 price range despite a world shortage and rising prices on world market (USA $4.00-$5.00). Australia's stocks are limited and packers may find honey very scarce by June-July.

If present weather patterns (hot-dry) continue then next year's honey prospects will be reduced as well.

At the time of writing this report the Inland and Southern regions are experiencing extreme heat wave conditions with bushfires breaking out in many areas. If the hot dry weather continues, more fires can be expected with resultant loss of honeybee flora.

Apis Ceranae
The incursion of *Apis Ceranae* in far North Queensland is on hold at the moment due to the extreme wet weather. However, prior to the cyclone's impact, surveillance had indicated a further nest.

The costs of this surveillance work are mounting and Queensland DPI has approached Animal and Plant Health Australia to have *Apis Ceranae* included in the cost sharing agreement with Industry.

Sydney Show
Preparations are underway for the Sydney Show. We have had some offers of honey to pack by two very generous beekeepers. Thank you to Craig Klingner and Bryn Jones. If you feel you can spare a drum or even half a drum for the Sydney Show please contact one of the Executive. Remember, we do make a reasonable profit from the Show ($10,000 -$15,000) which keeps membership fees down, as well as the promotion of honey value to the industry.

Conference
Conference this year is in Penrith (Western Suburb of Sydney) on 9 & 10 July. The University of Western Sydney has offered to hold an inspection of some of the research projects on honeybees being carried out by Hawkesbury Agricultural College on the Wednesday 8 July, prior to Conference.

We have secured two international guest speakers for the Conference this year. Heather Clay, the CEO of the Canadian Honey Council and also a packer from USA will attend and speak to the members.

Conference Sponsorship
In past years many industry people have sponsored our Conference via an Ad in the paperwork which has been a wonderful support and we would like to continue this.

We are offering beekeeping entities an opportunity to sponsor an amount they choose. This money will be used to sponsor our many speakers we get to Conference.

If you are interested, please contact: Julie Lockhart on Phone: 02 9631 3934 or Email: nswaa@bigpond.net.au

AHBIC Review
The ABIC Review Committee has advised that due to the Submission date being extended the Committee's recommendations will now be presented to the AHBIC Board in time for their next Board Meeting.

Vale
The Executive and members would like to extend their deepest sympathy to Phillip Elliott and family on the death of his wife and their mother, Vicki, who passed away suddenly on 8 January 2009.

Bill Weiss
State President

2009 STATE CONFERENCE

The NSWAA State Conference will be held at Penrith Panthers Club, Mulgoa Road, Penrith on Thursday 9 July & Friday 10 July 2009, followed by a Field Day on Saturday 11 July at the Hawkesbury Showground.

On Wednesday 8 July a visit to the Hawkesbury Agricultural College is planned as well as a "Shop till you Drop" outing for the Ladies.

This year NSW will also host the FCAAA and AHBIC AGMs which will be held on Sunday 12 & Monday 13 July at the same venue.

Penrith is the gateway to the West, a historical and vibrant city in its own right and one of the fastest growth regions in New South Wales.

Nestled in the foothills of the picturesque Blue Mountains, just 55 minutes west of Sydney.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is available at the Chifley (which adjoins the club)
Phone: 02 4721 7700 or Email:
reservations.penrith@chifleyhotels.com
(Ask for the NSW Apiarists' Conference Rate)

There are a large number of motels and other accommodation in the surrounding area.
For details contact: Penrith Valley Visitor Information Centre on
Phone 1300 736 836 or 02 4732 7671
Website: www.penrithvalley.com.au
Email: pentour@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

STOLEN BEEHIVE MATERIAL RECOVERED

Mick Rankmore,
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NSW DPI received information about a neglected apiary which only had 5 hives alive out of approximately 40 hives. The remaining hives were scattered about the site. The site was not leased to any beekeeper.

Given the state of the apiary and the fact that 9 different beekeepers registration numbers were observed on the hive material the situation was highly suspicious as it appeared to be stolen material.

The matter was reported to the Rural Crime Investigators (NSW Police). After investigation by NSW DPI and the Police the rightful owner was identified and contacted. The owner retrieved the material from the site.

The owner of this material was identified due to two factors:

- Some of the boxes and other hive material including frames, lids, and escape boards were identified with the registered owners number and
- Records kept by NSW DPI revealed history of some of the material being on sold to the rightful owner.

Thus this is an excellent case why it is important that all beekeepers correctly identify their hive material and notify NSW DPI of the disposal of their hive material.

Beekeepers should report all cases of stolen or vandalised hive material to the NSW Police Rural Crime Investigators (nearest Police station).

Correctly identifying hive material and reporting stolen hive material to NSW Police Rural Crime Investigators will assist in the retrieval of your hive material.

AQIS INTRODUCES NEW CERTIFICATION FOR EXPORT

Honey products with overseas ingredients

AQIS — the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service — has moved to protect the reputation of Australia's honey and honey products by introducing enhanced certification regulations.

The new rules affect export honey products that contain imported ingredients : AQIS now requires a certificate of analysis to confirm that the products are free from residues of banned drugs that have previously been detected in honey products repackaged and exported from Australia, or blended with Australian honey and exported.

Detections of nitrofurans in Australian honey caused disruptions to trade between Australia and Canada in 2003 and 2004, and in 2005 and 2006 AQIS's imported food program found nitrofurans in consignments of honey from China and Bulgaria. More recently, chloramphenicol residues have been found in Australian blended honey and propolis exported to the United Kingdom.

As far as AQIS has been able to determine, all of these cases involved repackaging of imported product or blending of imported honey with Australian honey. Investigations identified the imported components as the source of the residues.

The certificate of analysis must include chloramphenicol and nitrofuran antibiotics, and must meet the minimum performance criteria listed by the European Commission (Commission Decision 2003/181/CE of 13 March 2003, Off. J. Eur. Commun. L71 (2003) 17).

Sally Dean
AQIS Export Food Policy
Animal Products Market Access Branch
Email: Sally.Dean@aqis.gov.au

UK Co-op bans eight pesticides following worldwide beehive collapse

First UK supermarket chain – and Britain's biggest farmer – to prohibit chemicals implicated in the death of over one-third of British bees - 28 Jan 2009

The Co-op today became the first UK supermarket to ban the use of a group of pesticides implicated in billions of honeybee deaths worldwide.

It is prohibiting suppliers of its own-brand fresh produce from using eight pesticides that have been connected to honeybee colony collapse disorder and are already restricted in some parts of Europe.

The Co-op said it will eliminate the usage of the neonicotinoid family of chemicals where possible and until they are shown to be safe. The Co-op has over 70,000 acres of land under cultivation in England and Scotland, making it the largest farmer in the UK. Since 2001, it has already prohibited the use of 98 pesticides under its pesticide policy.

Simon Press, senior technical manager at the Co-op group said: "We believe that the recent losses in bee populations need definitive action, and as a result are temporarily prohibiting the eight neonicotinoid pesticides until we have evidence that refutes their involvement in the decline."

Laboratory tests suggest that one of the banned chemicals, imidacloprid, can impede honeybees' sophisticated communication and navigation systems. It has been banned in France for a decade as a seed dressing on sunflowers. Italy, Slovenia and Germany banned neonicotinoids last year after the loss of millions of honeybees. And the europena Parliament voted earlier this month for tougher controls on bee-toxic chemicals.

Paul Monaghan, the Co-op's head of social goals accused the UK government of failing to recognise that "pesticides could be a contributing factor" in the breakdown of nature's number one pollinating machine.

Elliott Carnell, coordinator of Pesticide Action Network (Pan) Europe, said he hoped the Co-op's pioneering stance would persuade the UK government to back the proposed European legislation. "The government has fought against any attempts to protect bees, which pollinate a third of the average diet. It argues that banning pesticides jeopardises crop yields, but if that was the case why would a leading food retailer be introducing this measure?"

The pesticide ban is part of the Co-op's 10-point Plan Bee launched today, which includes £150,000 for research into the impact of pesticides on the decline of honeybees in England, where more than a third of hives were wiped out last year. It will also give away bee-friendly wildflower seeds to Co-op members and customers.
www.guardian.co.uk

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THAT'S MY OPINION

By Greg Roberts

Victorian Bushfires

On the 7 February I was staying at a Motel on the New South Wales/Victorian border, having beehives in the mountains I had made a decision to stay out of the forest and off the roads because of the extreme weather conditions with temperatures exceeding 45 degrees. That night, because of the smoke rolling in, there was an eerie red moon which seemed to be issuing nature's warning that when everything is right everything can go wrong. Because of more than ten years of below average rainfalls and weeks of extreme heat I had a gut feeling that this was the beginning of something bad.

At the time of writing this report there are 181 confirmed deaths, thousands homeless, over a thousand homes destroyed and thousands of hectares of farmland, forests and plantations burnt, some of which is valuable beekeeping country that will be lost to the industry for years. There are still many major fires burning out of control and it would be impossible to assess any beehive losses at this stage.

Authorities are expecting the death toll from the Maryville fires to reach about 100 of its 500 residents. Bendigo fires were stopped one block from the main street and I understand there are major forests burnt in this district. The Yackandandah and Beechworth fires are still burning at this stage; because of road closures it is impossible to assess any beehive losses in this area.

I spent time with firefighters and fire victims and the one thing they all have in common is the disbelief and shock on their faces - there are thousands of fire victims that will need financial help, the beekeeping industry is an industry that cannot survive without access to natural resources and the support of the general public.

There is a Victorian Bushfire Appeal being run by the Red Cross their number is 1800 811 700 or go to redcross.org.au please give what you can.

Beekeepers should also remember that there has been a huge loss of natural resources in these fires and there will be beekeepers who may need a loan of some bee sites or may need help to sugar feed hives.

Royal Commission

Australia is the land of bushfires, we will always have fires however we can reduce the intensity of these fires with adequate land management practices. Hazard reduction is one way of reducing the forest fuel load and fire is not the only way of reducing some of the hazards. I was involved heavily with the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) in NSW and for years I have been critical of some of the land management practices but at this time of national grief it is not proper for me to raise these issues now. However, the Victorian Government has announced a Royal Commission into the Victorian bushfires, there may also be a Parliamentary Inquiry.

The beekeeping industry must have some involvement in these inquiries, the Victorian Apiarists' Association (VAA) will no doubt be involved but it also should be supported by the NSW Apiarists' Association (NSWAA) and the Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Associations (FCAAA) and the Australian Honeybee Industry Council (AHBIC).

On behalf of *Australia's Honeybee News* we offer the Victorian community our sincere condolences and our support to the VAA.

Insurance

At times like this you really find out the good and bad of insurance policies. Some years ago when I was NSWAA State President we were directed by our membership to put together a comprehensive beekeeping insurance package. A committee was formed made up representatives from the state executive, branches and members from insurance brokers association and insurance agent's association, there was also a member from NSW Department of Agriculture (DPI) to act as an advisor. This committee met on many occasions and developed the *Beesure* insurance package; this package served the industry well during the Black Christmas Bushfires.

The recommendation of this committee was to use insurance brokers as they have greater legal responsibilities to their clients. This package was put forward and accepted at our state conference; however before we could try and take Intellectual Property (IP) out on the package it was released to a private insurance company.

I would advise beekeepers to really study their insurance policies because it is too late when you want to make a claim to find out if your package is adequate or not and I recommend using a brokerage for greater protection.

Greg Roberts is a third generation beekeeper, former NSW and National President and former National Chairman

EUROPEAN FOULBROOD
Investigating control measures

Russell Goodman, Ben McKee, Peter Kaczynski, May 2004
RIRDC Web Publication No W04/092 RIRDC Project No DAV 157A

SUMMARY OF FULL REPORT

Introduction
The endemic, bacterial honey bee brood disease, European Foulbrood (EFB) (*Melissococcus pluton*) can seriously affect honey bee colonies and reduce honey production. The disease may be controlled by the antibiotic, oxytetracycline hydrochloride (OTC). This report describes field and laboratory studies that investigated OTC residues in honey, efficacy of reduced doses of OTC to inhibit development of *M. pluton* and, control of EFB through altered honey bee nutrition and pH of honey bee larval guts. An improved hemi-nested polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for detection of *M. pluton* is also described.

Antibiotic residues in honey extracted from hives treated with oxytetracycline hydrochloride Field trials were conducted to investigate the extent of OTC residues in honey extracted from hives treated with the antibiotic. Thirty-six hives with no history of OTC treatment during the previous thirteen months were randomly allocated to treatment and control groups. OTC was applied to each treatment group using one of three OTC products in either sugar syrup or caster sugar. Prior to treatment, honey from individual hives was sampled and tested by microbial inhibition test (MIT) for OTC residues. Antibiotic activity was identified in honey from 67% of individual hives. However, OTC was not detected when pre-treatment honey samples from all hives of each treatment group were combined and then tested by HPLC. This was considered to be a result of dilution of the antibiotic caused by the combination of the samples.

OTC treatments were applied on 16 December 1998 and the hives moved to a tea-tree (*Leptospermum obovatum*) and messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) nectar flow at Moyston, Victoria, on 9 January 1999.
Extraction of honey occurred on three occasions when the combs in the super above the queen excluder had filled with honey. For the first two extractions, honey from the supers of all the hives of a treatment group was blended, sampled and tested for OTC. For the third extraction, honey from all treated hives was blended and tested. Residues were detected in honey in all treatment groups at the first extraction but not at the second and third extractions. Residues were higher in honey derived from sugar syrup treatments (mean 0.34 mg/kg OTC; range 0.28-0.41) than that of the caster sugar treatments (mean 0.065 mg/kg OTC; range 0.05-0.093).

OTC degradation studies First extraction honey from each treatment group was stored in pails in a shed at ambient temperature to mimic customary industry storage practices. OTC residues were present in honey of all treatment groups sampled exactly twelve months from the date of application of the OTC (mean of 0.19 mg/kg OTC - sugar syrup treatments and mean of 0.03 mg/kg OTC - caster sugar treatments). There was greater degradation of OTC in the same six lines of honey stored at 22ºC than those stored at ambient temperature. At the twelve month sampling point for honey stored at 22ºC, OTC was below the level of detection in two of the three caster sugar treatments but present in all sugar syrup treatments (mean of 0.12 mg/kg). In a separate laboratory trial, six floral type honeys spiked with OTC were placed in constant temperatures of 22ºC and 35ºC. HPLC analysis of these honeys, sampled 70 days postspiking, confirmed a greater rate of degradation of OTC at the higher temperature.

In another trial, residues were detected by MIT in OTC contaminated honey stored at 25ºC for almost 18 months. OTC was not detected at the post-treatment sampling points of approximately 13, 8.5 and 3.5 months for the same line of honey stored at 30ºC, 35ºC and 40ºC respectively. Apart from the 25ºC honey, the concentration of hydroxymethylfurfural at these sampling points exceeded the maximum level of 40 mg/kg permitted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This confirmed that long term heating of honey to accelerate degradation of OTC would render the product unacceptable to markets.

OTC in larvae of colonies treated with the antibiotic A successful HPLC assay was developed for determining the concentration of OTC in larvae sampled from honey bee colonies treated with the antibiotic. The assay proved advantageous over conventional MIT screens but only when the antibiotic was at relatively high levels.

Experiments were conducted in autumn and spring 2000 to determine the concentration of OTC in larvae sampled from honey bee colonies treated with various doses of the antibiotic in caster sugar.

On each of six days immediately after treatment of colonies, mean concentrations of OTC in larvae were significantly greater ($P < 0.05$) for the 1.0g OTC double-storey hive treatments than for the 0.5g OTC double-storey hive treatments, usually by a factor of 2 to 3.

In another experiment conducted in late spring 2000 0.3g and 0.5g OTC treatments dissolved in 200 mL of distilled water were applied to double-storey hives. Although the mean level of OTC in larvae was generally higher for the 0.5g treatment, the difference was not significant (at $P < 0.05$) on any day after treatment of the colonies. The estimated levels of OTC immediately after treatment (day=0) were 55.7 and 38.5 mg/kg respectively, which were not significant (approximate l.s.r. = 10.1). The 0.3g and 0.5g OTC treatments also gave higher estimated levels of OTC at the time of treatment (day=0) and equal or higher OTC levels on the first two days post-treatment when compared with the same doses applied in caster sugar to two-storey colonies. However, by day 3 the concentration of OTC in larvae treated with OTC in water was considerably lower than that in larvae fed with medicated caster sugar.

The results indicated that 0.3g, 0.5g and 1.0g doses of OTC in cater sugar or water, delivered sufficient antibiotic to exceed the 1-2 µg/mL minimum inhibitory concentration of OTC to *Melissococcus pluton* by a minimum of 4 times on the day immediately after treatment. However, because the results of the three above experiments were based on the assay of whole honey bee larvae, it is suggested that further work be conducted to confirm their validity relating to the concentration of OTC in the honey bee larval guts.

Efficacy of low doses of OTC for control of European Foulbrood Field trials were also conducted to determine if doses of OTC lower than those stipulated on OTC product labels, could reduce the incidence of clinical symptoms of EFB in honey bee colonies. Singlestorey colonies infected with EFB, many with advanced disease, were treated with either a standard 0.5g dose or a reduced dose of 0.3g or 0.4g. All treatments had statistically significantly less diseased and dead larvae than the controls at the 12 and 22 day post-treatment observations, but not at the 41 day post treatment observation. Neither dose enabled all colonies to totally clean up the disease.

Adult bees consumed very little, if any, of OTC antibiotic extender patties, possibly due to the inclusion of hydrogenated cotton oil rather than the Crisco® vegetable oil normally used as an ingredient of USA patties.

It was concluded that until the efficacy of low doses of OTC for control of EFB are further investigated using laboratory reared honey bee larvae and subsequent field trials, the current 0.5g and 1.0g doses administered to single-storey and double-storey colonies respectively were appropriate for control of EFB in Australia.

Effect of nutrition and environmental factors on incidence of the brood disease European Foulbrood in commercially managed honey bee colonies In a major field trial conducted during 2000 and 2001, commercially managed honey bee colonies were fed either 1.0g OTC; protein dietary supplement, or, left as untreated controls to determine the effect on the incidence of EFB. The application of OTC resulted in total protection against EFB for all 27 treated colonies in 2000 and for 12 of 13 treated colonies in 2001. Over all the observations during 2001, the mean incidence of EFB in colonies fed protein supplement was 9% lower than the controls, but this was not statistically significant. However, significant differences ($P<0.05$) in the incidence of EFB occurred between colonies treated with OTC and colonies fed protein. Significant differences ($P<0.05$) also occurred between control and OTC treated colonies on 10 October and 28 October2001. The percentage of colonies infected with EFB at any one observation was as high as 24% in protein supplemented colonies and 43% in control colonies.

The mean number of combs of adult bees and brood in colonies of the three treatment groups did not differ significantly at any of the eleven observation dates over the two years of the trial. This suggests that regardless of antibiotic treatment or supplementary feeding of colonies, other factors such as nectar and pollen resources may have influenced the number of combs of brood and adult bees. There was a significant relationship ($P<0.05$) between the mean number of days with rain per month and the increased incidence of EFB in colonies given protein supplement (r=0.583) and control colonies (r=0.590). No relationship was found between temperature and the incidence of EFB in supplemented colonies and control colonies (r=-0.121, $P=0.632$) even though maximum temperatures were on average lower in spring 2001 than those of 2000.

The experiment illustrated the devastating impact EFB can have on colony size and honey production.

The mean number of combs of adult bees in infected colonies at the completion of spring 2001 was 7.9. This was 5.6 combs (41.5%) lower than the trial average of 13.5 combs. The average honey production of diseased colonies was 2.63 kg, which was 8.67 kg (77%) lower than the trial average of 11.3 kg per colony. However, these differences, were not significant ($P>0.05$) due to the small data set associated with each treatment. There was no significant difference ($P>0.05$) in spring honey production between the three treatment groups.

There was no significant difference in the incidence of *Nosema apis* spores in adult bees sampled from colonies fed protein supplement and adult bees sampled from the other two treatments. The mean crude protein levels of adult bees collected from colonies of the 3 treatments at the completion of the trial in 2001 were 16.34, 16.22 and 15.86 g/100g, respectively and were not significantly different ($P=0.815$). In another separate small trial conducted in autumn 2002, there were no significant differences in the crude protein levels of adult bees and larvae sampled from untreated control colonies and colonies fed protein supplement.

Honey bee larval midgut pH Honey bee larvae, approximately 4-5 days old, were sampled from randomly selected colonies at five commercially managed apiaries in central and western Victoria. The grand mean of pH of gut contents of all larvae sampled from all five apiaries was 6.329. In addition, the mean pH varied significantly ($P<0.05$) between apiary locations (range 6.258 to 6.506). This variation may be a result of honey bee foragers having access to different pollen and nectar resources at these apiaries.

Interestingly, two apiaries had the same plant species and even though they were approximately 100 km apart, the mean pH of larval guts was similar at 6.277 and 6.258 respectively.

In laboratory studies, *M. pluton* grew well on culture medium of pH 6.6. Adjustment of the same medium to pH 4.0 and pH 8.0 resulted in no growth of *M. pluton* indicating the sensitivity of the organism to pH. The studies also indicated that honey bee larvae have a capacity to buffer their diet and consequently may not be adversely affected by changes in pH of larval food, as previously suggested by other researchers.

Development of an improved hemi-nested PCR assay for detection of M. pluton in honey bees and their products An improved hemi-nested PCR assay capable of detecting *M. pluton* in honey bees and their products was developed and found to be more sensitive than the standard culture assay. The improved PCR detected *M. pluton* in 55 (70%) of 80 samples of extracted honey while culture assay detected the organism in only 22 (30%) of the same samples.

In epidemiological studies, the PCR confirmed that honey bee larvae, individual body components of adult bees, pollen, brood comb cells that contained a freshly laid egg, and broodnest honey sampled from infected honey bee colonies were contaminated with *M. pluton*. The bacterium was detected in larvae, adult bee digestive tracts and rectums, plus broodnest honey sampled from healthy colonies, confirming the existence of sub-clinical populations of the bacterium. However, *M. pluton* was not detected on adult bee mouthparts and legs, pollen or brood comb cells containing eggs sampled from healthy colonies. The Australian States with the highest percentage of samples of apiarist extracted honey infected with *M. pluton* were South Australia (100%), Victoria (89%) and New South Wales (67%). The improved hemi-nested PCR was considered to be extremely useful for conduct of further epidemiological studies of EFB and efficacy of potential new EFB control measures.

Laboratory rearing of honey bee larvae Honey bee larvae were successfully reared in the laboratory from an age of less than 24 hours to the stage of defecation and commencement of pupation. Successful inoculation of laboratory reared larvae with suspensions of *M. pluton* derived from naturally diseased larvae proved to be very effective in causing disease. These procedures will enable fast, relatively inexpensive studies to be conducted on the effect of nutrition and other potential treatments for control of honey bee larval diseases under fully controlled laboratory conditions. Such studies will largely replace costly field and cage trials that are invariably affected by uncontrollable factors such as variable pollen and nectar resources, weather conditions and other honey bee diseases.

The studies showed that larvae inoculated with *M. pluton*, contained substantial bacterial populations within the gut contents (food) and peritrophic membrane. They exhibited clinical symptoms of EFB identical to those of naturally infected larvae. Defecation and subsequent pupation in laboratory reared larvae occurred 24 to 48 hours later in those infected with *M. pluton* than in control larvae.

There was a clear relationship between the number of *M. pluton* organisms present in the food fed to larvae and the mortality of larvae. Mean lethal doses of *M. pluton* were extrapolated with an LD50 = 1.08x105 and LD100= 2.31x105 organisms/mL.

Survey of apiarists A survey of Victorian apiarists indicated that 62% of respondents treated colonies with OTC only when EFB symptoms were present in the brood while the remaining respondents treated colonies prophylatically before symptoms were evident. Forty-nine percent of respondents chose to spot treat only colonies infected with EFB rather than blanket treat all colonies in an infected apiary.

There was a strong indication that 'good conditions' (as provided by good nectar and pollen flows) were very important as a means of minimising or preventing the incidence of EFB. However, most respondents indicated that the feeding of protein supplements to improve nutrition did not appear to prevent the occurrence of EFB. Keeping colonies on sunny, warm, sheltered over-wintering and spring apiary sites was also important. Most respondents practiced regular replacement of aging broodnest combs in an attempt to lower the population of *M. pluton* in the hive. Regular queen replacement was viewed as an important management tool and some automatically requeened EFB infected colonies.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Beekeeper,

At their Annual Delegates Meeting on January 10th 2009, the British Bee Keepers Association executive learned just how divisive their pesticide endorsement policy really is: they got their way, but with only a 60/40 majority - hardly a resounding success. Despite their arrogant censorship, both on their web site and in their newsletter, and full-bore propaganda from the current president and others, they have won a Pyrrhic victory: they are left with the knowledge that nearly half of their branches contain a majority of members who disagree with their flagship policy.

Of course, they may yet appreciate the damage they have done and recant, but I won't be holding my breath.

So where does this leave British beekeepers who do not wish to be represented by an association whose governing clique seem to care more about their own agenda than either the welfare of bees or the views of their members? Disappointed, disheartened and disenfranchised.

We all have to go with our consciences on this issue. For myself, I cannot belong to any organization that wishes to associate itself with the likes of Bayer or Syngenta - companies that spend millions on lies and propaganda to persuade people that their toxic rubbish is somehow 'good for you' - and in the case of Bayer, frequently caught out and prosecuted for killing and maiming its victims. If the BBKA want to be mentioned in the same sentence as that form of pond slime, then they too become tainted, as far as I am concerned.

I will not be renewing my membership of BBKA, as I believe they have shown themselves to be unworthy to represent British beekeeping. Their refusal to support the German beekeepers after the disastrous Bayer poisoning incident last May; their inability to admit that ANY pesticides may be a problem for bees; their arrogant censorship of comments from their website and refusal of any exec member to join in discussion of the subject on their forum; the utter lack of any response from president Tim Lovett to questions and comments from many people; enough is enough. Until I see serious reforms I will have nothing to do with them.

Bees are under threat - we all know that - and if we use our common sense to look at what has changed in the world between 1850 and today that could be contributing to their decline, two principal factors are clear: big changes in the way bees are 'managed', and the more recent but pervasive spread of chemical agriculture.

Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is a key indicator of madness. It's time to take off the blinkers and re-think the way we do things.

With best wishes for the coming season,

Phil Chandler
www.biobees.com

See also:
Yorkshire Post http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/Bee-keepers-abuzz-over-pesticides.4862872.jp

Pesticides in beehives http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/blogs/bees/honey-bee-pesticides-55081801

GM Crops Implicated in CCD http:/www.naturalnews.com/025287.html

DOUG'S COLUMN

Doug Somerville
Technical Specialist, Honeybees - NSW Department of Primary Industries - Goulburn

EUROPEAN WASPS ATTACK HONEY BEES

European wasps will prey on honey bee colonies and will consume the entire colony under some circumstances. In New Zealand, European wasps are considered a major pest of bee hives. In fact, it is impossible to keep bees in some locations due to the presence of wasps. Bee hives have to be moved or the effort to find and destroy wasp nests needs to be invested if some sites are to be used by beekeepers.

European wasps are a colony forming insect that can expand from a single female "queen" wasp in spring, to a colony composed of many thousands of individuals by autumn.

IDENTIFICATION
European wasps *(Vespula germanica)* are approximately the same size as a worker honey bee.

The wasp has a very distinctive bright yellow and black coloured body, with bright yellow legs. The queen wasp is also about the size of a queen honey bee with similar markings. Queens may be seen in the field in late autumn, winter and very early spring. The European wasp has a number of prominent black and yellow stripes across the abdomen, with six black spots on the yellow stripes on the abdomen.

THE NEST
Nest are usually found in raised ground which is well drained, but occasionally can be found in the cavities of houses or similar. The nests are not as a rule visible and can be difficult to locate. They are usually found by following the profuse flight activity of the foraging field wasps returning to the nest. Wasps do not usually forage further than a kilometre from their nest, and most activity will be concentrated within 500 metres.

The nest is made from paper type materials. Frequently, worker wasps can be observed on old weathered power poles or fence posts removing the wood fibres. These fibres are returned to the colony and glued together to either form the brood cell structure or the protective outer layer of the nest.

Colonies can successfully over-winter, depending on food availability and temperatures. In these cases, the nest structure can become quite massive after several years. Ultimately, control of the wasp should be aimed at the destruction of nests in autumn before new queen wasps disperse from the colony to over-winter as single solitary individuals.

Also, the colony has its greatest population at this time and should be a lot easier to locate due to the high volume of worker wasps leaving and returning to the nest during the warmer hours of the day.

DESTRUCTION
European wasps can sting, and on mass if their colony is disturbed. Thus, if you are able to locate a wasp colony, it is highly recommended that you wear all your beekeeping protective clothing if you intend to attempt to destroy the colony.

An appropriate insecticide (ask your local garden centre or hardware business) should be liberally applied to the nest. Leave for several days to determine its effectiveness before re-applying the insecticide, if necessary.

All the appropriate precautions should be followed when handling pesticides and chemicals, and they should only be applied by an accredited person.

Locating the nest or nests of wasps may not be possible or feasible. European wasp traps are available from some hardware and garden centres, which can be effective in reducing the numbers of foraging worker wasps, but will not eliminate the nest or the wasp problem. One or more traps could be placed around the bee hives that are experiencing wasp problems. These should be checked on a regular basis and the attractant replaced and the trapped wasps disposed of.

Strong colonies of honey bees are more likely to be able to defend themselves against wasps attacking individual bees and robbing the food stores of hives. Reducing the entrance gap of the hive will also assist bees in being better able to defend the colony from wasps.

THE PUBLIC
Wasps have a very wide and varied diet. This can include nectar and pollen, other insects (grubs, etc), dead meat or fish. They can be a major nuisance around pet food bowls, barbecues and garbage bins. Given this wide variation in diet, they are able to source food from several sources which invariable means they will come in contact with people.

European wasps are able to sting multiple times and still survive, unlike honey bees that can only sting once then die.

European wasps are a prescribed pest in NSW and, as such if the location of a nest is known to exist on a specific property, then the owner of that property has a legal obligation to destroy the nest.

HISTORY AND SPREAD
As the name suggests, European wasps originate from Europe. An individual queen wasp can initiate a colony and create the basis of an incursion. They were thought to be first introduced into New Zealand in 1945 by plane. In

1959 they were found in Tasmania, then in 1977 and 1978 they had spread to Perth in Western Australia, Adelaide in South Australia, Melbourne in Victoria, and Sydney in New South Wales. By 1987 they were established in the Central Tablelands of NSW, and by 1991 they had spread to the Northern Tablelands.

Even though the spread of this pest has been relentless, there is still plenty of evidence that they will spread even further afield, particularly along the north coast of NSW into south east Queensland.

In areas they have been established for many years (over 20 years) such as the Southern Tablelands, they have not been successful in spreading out into the countryside, although evidence in the last few years suggests that this may now be happening.

Logically, any animal will inhabit a location eventually if given an opportunity if there is sufficient food, if there is a suitable location to build a home (nest), if the weather/ climate is suitable and if the predator/ pest/diseases that attack the animal are not significant enough to eliminate it. The European wasp is now to be found in a number of agricultural areas of the southern Monaro, rural areas of the Southern Highlands, and within the Kosciusko and Namadgi National Parks. Thus, there is every likelihood of the European wasp continuing its spread across rural New South Wales.

If the New Zealand experience is anything to go by, we will see European wasps become an increasingly major pest of honey bees in New South Wales, particularly during the autumn.

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HONEY LAUNDERING

A sticky trail of intrigue and crime .....

Seattle Post –Dec 2008

SULTAN - Seven cars with darkened windows barrelled east toward the Cascades, whizzing past this Snohomish County hamlet's smattering of shops and eateries.

The sedans and sport utility vehicles stirred up dust as they rolled into the parking lot of Pure Foods Inc., a Washington honey producer.

Out popped a dozen people in dark windbreakers identifying them as feds -- agents from Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Some raced to the loading docks. Others hurried through the front door. All were armed.

The man who runs the business, Mike Ingalls, was stunned. "I just sell honey -- what the hell is this all about?" he remembered asking, as he was hustled into a tiny room with his office manager and truck driver.

Three days before the April 25 raid, customs had persuaded a federal judge in Seattle to issue the search warrant shoved in Ingalls' hands. But it wasn't until Ingalls read "Attachment D" that he understood why investigators were seizing his business records, passport, phone logs, photographs, Rolodexes, mail and computer files -- almost anything that could be copied or hauled away.

He was suspected of trafficking in counterfeit merchandise – a honey smuggler. A far cry from the innocent image of Winnie the Pooh with a paw stuck in the honey pot, the international honey trade has become increasingly rife with crime and intrigue.

In the US, where bee colonies are dying off and demand for imported honey is soaring, traders of the thick amber liquid are resorting to elaborate schemes to dodge tariffs and health safeguards in order to dump cheap honey on the market, a five-month investigation has found.

The business is plagued by foreign hucksters and shady importers who rip off conscientious US packers with honey diluted with sugar water or corn syrup - or worse, tainted with pesticides or antibiotics. Among the findings:

- Big shipments of contaminated honey from China are frequently laundered in other countries -- an illegal practice called "trans-shipping" -- in order to avoid US import fees, protective tariffs or taxes imposed on foreign products that intentionally undercut domestic prices.
- In a series of shipments in the past year, tons of honey produced in China passed through the ports of California, after being fraudulently marked as a tariff-free product of Russia.
- Tens of thousands of pounds of honey entering the US each year come from countries that raise few bees and have no record of producing honey for export.
- The government promises intense scrutiny of honey crossing our borders but only a small fraction is inspected, and seizures and arrests remain rare.

The feds haven't adopted a legal definition of honey, making it difficult for enforcement agents to keep bad honey off the shelves.

Around the globe, honey laundering is so rampant that crackdowns are being pushed in a number of countries, including Russia, India and Australia.

In the wake of the Wolff case, Russia's Interregional Beekeepers Organization held a rare meeting with US and Russian trade officials in June, with both sides pledging to combat Chinese smuggling operations.

It's a big problem, investigators say. While very little Russian-made honey is exported, according to the Federal Customs Service of Russia, records obtained show that more than 11 million pounds of honey purportedly originating in Russia entered the US last year alone.

In February, the Australian Supreme Court imposed almost a half-million dollars in fines against two companies that shipped 1.8 million quarts of Chinese honey to the US after falsely relabeling the honey as Australian.

Earlier this month, the Indian government passed legislation aimed at preventing its ports from becoming laundering points for Chinese honey. The national Directorate of Revenue Intelligence found that through mid-November this year, 471 out of 665 honey shipments that listed India as the country of origin actually came from China.

The US imported 237 million pounds of raw honey last year. But honey brokers, bee experts and foreign customs officials say they're suspicious that seven of the top 12 countries appear to be exporting far more honey than their domestic bees produce or their export agencies acknowledge. These countries include Vietnam, India, Thailand, Russia, Taiwan, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Countries that have few if any commercial beekeepers, such as Singapore, are now exporting significant quantities of honey, records show. That includes the Grand Bahamas, which has been listed as the country of origin for honey shipped into Houston, authorities say. "I have a difficult time seeing the Grand Bahamas as a major honey producer," said David Westervelt, a Florida state apiculture inspector. "It's an island. You move bees on there and they'll die."

And other countries that locally produce mostly dark, strong-tasting honey, such as India, Vietnam and South Korea, are shipping tons of the more marketable white honey. Vietnam is now the No 2 honey exporter to the US, second to Canada. But Vietnamese honey officials say much Chinese honey is being trans-shipped through their country, citing 24 containers that arrived in Los Angeles earlier this month.

"When the Chinese first got into trouble with this antibiotic adulteration, all of a sudden Vietnam became a major exporter of honey to the United States," said Mike Burgett, professor emeritus in entomology at Oregon State University who has monitored Southeast Asian beekeeping for 27 years. "I know damn well that the Vietnamese bee industry cannot be pumping out that much honey."

Falsifying records to get honey illegally into the US is a common practice, said a former Shanghai honey shipper. "In Vietnam, the Chinese honey became Vietnamese and in South Korea the papers were changed to say it came from Russia," said the former shipper, who asked not to be identified.

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ELUSIVE ASIAN HONEY BEES

Queensland Government - Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries - 5 February 2008

COMMUNITY vigilance and science are two vital weapons in the challenge faced by Biosecurity Queensland in eradicating Asian honey bees in the Cairns area.

The accumulated knowledge of the pest bee has proven invaluable as Biosecurity Queensland plays a real-life game of "Where's Wally?" in both the suburban streets of Cairns and the farm and bushland to the city's south. Recent rain and flooding is hampering surveillance, but the hunt continues after some foraging bees were found in January.

"Sometimes it feels like we are looking for a needle in the haystack," said Biosecurity Queensland surveillance manager Wim de Jong.

"But the more we learn about the bee and the more the public is aware of the threat it poses to the bee industry, the quicker we are able to detect and destroy nests. "It is important to anticipate their movements and stay on top of them."

Biosecurity Queensland initially thought the bees were eradicated with the destruction of the seventh nest on Admiralty Island in November 2007. Follow-up surveillance detected no pest bees for the first eight months. Then the Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) reappeared in the Green Hill and Gordonvale areas south of Cairns.

Since July 2008, Biosecurity Queensland teams have destroyed 10 nests and swarms on two fronts – four in the Gordonvale/Aloomba area and six in the Cairns city area. DNA tests show that the bees killed this year are related to the initial incursion detected in May 2007.

The Cairns incursion, detected in a boat mast in Portsmith, was one of the first major challenges for Biosecurity Queensland when it was newly formed as part of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries at the start of 2007.

The first five nests were located on Portsmith business sites. Through the surveillance technique known as bee-lining, the last two nests destroyed last year were found in dead trees amid dense mangroves on Admiralty Island across Trinity Inlet from Portsmith.

Biosecurity Queensland surveillance manager Wim de Jong, had doubts that all the bees were destroyed last year. "Bees don't like rain and will hide during the wet season," Mr de Jong said. "Surviving queens would have the opportunity to breed up and swarm. The Cairns area is surrounded by ideal bee habitat, so it is not unreasonable to expect bees to have swarmed to areas where there is a lot of cover."

After a response to an incursion has been completed, it was standard biosecurity procedure to continue a surveillance program for at least 12 months. Mr de Jong led the surveillance program. This involved ongoing searches and trapping over a 10km radius from known nests, and promoting public awareness.

The detection of IP8 – Biosecurity Queensland lingo for the eighth Infested Property – at Green Hill was the result of a call from a cane farmer. He felt the bees he saw on his property were different to ordinary honey bees. His vigilance led directly to the reporting of a swarm of Asian honey bees three days later. Sweep netting located more Asian honey bees near Aloomba and bee-lining led to discovery of two nests in trees in forested areas near Walsh's Pyramid.

Meanwhile back in town, six nests were located in the inner-city suburbs of Bungalow and Parramatta Park not far from the original incursion site at Portsmith. The quick action and professionalism of the biosecurity surveillance response team enabled these nests to be quickly eradicated.

Operations manager for the response Ian Rodger said the team was dedicated to a search-and-destroy campaign.

"The general public are very much a partner of Biosecurity Queensland in this campaign as they are our eyes and ears." "Residents are at their homes seven days a week and know what's going in their yards," Mr Rodger said.

"It is vital that people understand the need to be vigilant in their backyards and homes if we are to completely eradicate this pest. We don't mind if we get hundreds of calls. We will follow up every one of them. *'Bee alert'* is a catchphrase we would like everyone to remember."

The Asian honey bee under the spotlight in Cairns is the Java strain and tests so far have shown it does not carry the *Varroa destructor* mite. "The mite is actually the real villain of the piece," Mr Rodger said.

"In Asia, the Asian honey bee and the varroa mite co-exist and the mite is less of a problem. When the mite builds up numbers to a critical point in an Asian honey bee nest, the bees abandon that nest and set up elsewhere leaving most of the mites behind.

"But they always carry a few with them and the whole cycle starts again. The bees' ability to readily swarm is a naturally-developed coping mechanism for the bee over centuries of co-habiting with the mite," Mr Rodger said.

Primary Industries and Fisheries Minister Tim Mulherin said if the mite gets into Australia it will become a major threat to the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*). "The Asian honey bee has the potential to ruin Queensland's honey industry because our native bees have no coping mechanism or tolerance to the mite.

"There are more than three thousand beekeepers in Queensland and more than 120-thousand hives producing around 75 kg of honey per hive annually," Mr Mulherin said.

"The estimated gross value of Queensland's honey and beeswax industry was $10 million in the last financial year. "But honeybees not only produce honey, they play a vital role in the balance of nature with about 65 percent of Australia's agricultural crops relying on honey bees for pollination.

"Queensland's agricultural industry is worth about one billion dollars annually and Asian honey bees need to be eradicated," he said.

Mr Rodger says if the mite enters commercial or hobby hives it will destroy them as it is doing right now in New Zealand and the United States. "This will impact severely on our ability to produce honey and to provide pollination services to the agricultural and horticultural industries.

"It will impact directly on the natural pollination of our native flora as the feral honey bees will die out," Mr Rodger said.

Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) are slightly smaller than the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) and its abdomen has a more distinctive brown and yellow stripes.

Mr de Jong recently attended the 9th Asian Apicultural Association (AAA) Conference and Exhibition in the city of Hangzhou, China in November. Organised by the Apicultural Science Association of China (ASAC), the international event was an eye-opener for him.

"I certainly gained some insights into the behaviour of various species of Asian honey bees," Mr de Jong said.

"In Asia, the Java strain of *A. cerana* is considered the vermin of the bee world. The bees honey is considered second-rate," Mr de Jong said. "The Chinese told me what we already knew from our own experience – this Java strain was a prolific swarmer and you need to act urgently. We have to be mobile and quick in destroying the nests and swarms to prevent further swarming."

Mr de Jong said while the popular bee in Asia is the strain known as *A. cerana cerana*, they actually prefer the European honey bee (*A. mellifera*) to the Java strain of *A. cerana*. In fact, some talks at the conference were devoted to the European honey bee.

"The bee industry in Asia is keen to control the varroa mite in their countries because of its damaging impact on the European honey bee as well as their native species," Mr de Jong said. "They use chemical impregnated sticky traps in their commercial European honey bee hives to control the mites."

This information will add to that already accumulated since the Cairns incursion was detected. DPI&F veterinary officer Jack Shield, with the benefit of Mr de Jong's experience and expertise, compiled two documents covering this information – a report on last year's response and a guide to identifying *A. cerana*.

Surveillance methods used by Mr de Jong and his teams include sweep netting and flower inspections for foraging bees, scenting (using melted bees wax and honey to attract bees), sticky traps, syrup feeding stations to attract foraging bees and the use of rainbow bee-eater birds.

These techniques help Biosecurity Queensland officers to establish a bee-line and to follow the bee's flight path which eventually leads to the nest. But the most important part of surveillance, Mr de Jong reiterates, is public reporting.

The public support to the campaign to date has been fantastic. In fact, of the 17 nests and swarms destroyed, 10 were a direct result of public call-ins. I cannot express my appreciation enough to those residents who have supported the Biosecurity Queensland response program," Mr de Jong said.

"We don't want Asian honey bees in our country and we certainly don't want any parasitic mite gaining a foothold in our industry."

A new documentary film now in production includes scenes of the Asian honey bee response team out in the field in the Cairns area.

Sydney-based filmmaker Stefan Moore, director of *The Cars that Ate China* and executive producer of the popular ABC television series, *Bush Mechanics*, and his crew have filmed Biosecurity Queensland teams at work for a documentary for SBS Television.

Mr Moore sees Australia as the "last bastion of a clean bee industry". He is keenly interested in Biosecurity Queensland's surveillance activities in far north Queensland.

"The varroa mite and colony collapse syndrome have had a devastating impact in America and New Zealand," Mr Moore said. "Australia has so far been untouched by these scourges. What Wim de Jong and Biosecurity Queensland are doing is extremely important to keep Australia's vital bee industry clean and safe."

"I congratulate them on their efforts. Their work will make a significant contribution to the story we are telling in this film."

The documentary will be screened on SBS in mid-2009.

Residents who believe they may have Asian honey bees on their property are urged to contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

2009 FIELD DAY

Expression of Interest

For stallholders to attend

The NSW Apiarists' Association Inc

Beekeeper's Annual Field Day
Hosted by Sydney Metropolitan Branch
On Saturday, 11 July, 2009

To be held at:

Hawkesbury Showground
Racecourse Road
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(Opposite Richmond RAAF Base)

An open invitation is extended to all
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Also, limited stalls will be available for:

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Wednesday 8 July 2009

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See next edition for cost and registration details.

Organized by: Lynn White
for the NSWAA Sydney Branch
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SEASONAL OUTLOOK

NEW SOUTH WALES

Southern NSW
Prospects for autumn are very few and far between on the tablelands. Bloodwood on the coast has potential, weather permitting. Spotted gum still looks like the most likely to produce a reasonable honey crop this winter, a good fall of rain is needed now before flowering commences late March.

Northern NSW
Conditions have deteriorated rapidly during the last few weeks. Almost too late for rain in the channel country for Napunyah to have much potential for winter.
Neil Bingley

North Coast
Production has not been good - beekeepers will be hoping Tea Tree *Melaleuca quinquenervia* will bud. Red Gum *Eucalyptus tereticonis* is budding and will start to flower in May/June.

Patches of Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata* will flower during the autumn. The flowering of Bloodwood *Corymbia gumnifera* has been poor.

Sydney Basin and Central Coast
A significant flowering of Grey Gum *Eucalyptus punctata* has provided a worthwhile extraction and is still flowering. Bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera* is flowering but it has not been a general flowering in most areas.

Depending on weather conditions Banskia may flower during the autumn, mainly *Banskia ericifolia*.

Central Tablelands and Central West
Since the last edition Yellow Box *Eucalyptus mellidoria* has provided beekeepers with a major honey flow and is still flowering in the higher areas of the tablelands. In the same area Eucalypt Apple is starting to flower to be followed by Ribbon Gum *Eucalyptus viminalis*. Storms have resulted in Skeleton Weed *Chondrilla juncea* providing pollen.

Beekeepers are hoping Mugga Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* will bud for the autumn.
Bruce White

QUEENSLAND

Darling Downs
Production during December-January has been well below average, with small quantities of Silver Leaf Iron Bark, Coolibah and Carpet Weed being produced. Prospects for autumn looks very poor, with Mallee Box budding very disappointing. Hopes were held for a big Soapwood crop, but with insufficient rain, this is not likely to eventuate. (Much to the Packers relief.)

Channel Country
Some areas have received very good rain, while others have received no rain at all. Consequently this area will have mixed prospects for winter.

Wide Bay Burnett and South East Coast
Brush Box and Grey Iron Bark produced a below average crop during December-January. Prospects are poor with Gum Topped Box and Bloodwood having little or no bud. White Mangrove is well budded in some areas, however this honey is not a popular flavour. Early Spotted Gum does not appear to be budded, but the mid winter flowering areas have reasonable bud.

Central Queensland
The northern areas of Central Queensland have had excellent rainfall and will hopefully be inducive for Narrow Leaf Iron Bark to bud for winter. Bloodwood is well budded and looks a good prospect for early February.

Overall Queensland production for February-March: Below average.
Roy Barnes

DPI NEWS

Nick Annand, Livestock Officer (Bees)
Bathurst - (02) 6330 1210

Plague Locusts

Locusts are still causing troubles out in the western districts so the eradication campaign continues. So if you have bees in areas that locust maybe a threat be sure that all land caretakers are aware of the presence of your hives, are aware of the dangers of insecticide use in proximity to bees and that they have your contact details and will use if spraying is required.

Further information on pesticides and honey bees can be obtained from the NSW DPI website:

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/65963/Pesticides---a-guide-to-their-effects-on-honey-bees-Primefact 149---final.pdf

Information on the locusts and there location can be found on: http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/insects/general/locusts

RECIPES

Honey in some way every day .....

CHICKEN WITH HONEY
Serves 4

3 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1 x 1.5kg chicken
2/3 cup chicken stock
½ cup white wine
125g seedless green grapes halved
200g natural low-fat yogurt

Place honey, mustard, salt, pepper and soy sauce in a small basin and mix well. Spread the mixture over the chicken, place in a roasting pan and pour in the stock.

Roast in a preheated moderately hot oven, 200°C, for 1 to 1 ¼ hours, basting occasionally. Carve and arrange on a warmed serving dish; keep hot.

Pour the wine into the roasting pan and stir to mix in the juices. Bring to the boil, add the grapes and check the seasoning. Stir in the yogurt. Pour over the chicken to serve.

PEARS WITH COFFEE & HONEY SAUCE
Serves 4-6

6 ripe firm pears, peeled and cored
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 cup strong black coffee
½ cup honey
300ml whipped cream
Grated chocolate – for decoration

Brush pears with lemon and place in wide, heavy-based saucepan. Combine hot coffee with honey, pour over pears and poach, covered, until cooked - approximately 20 minutes.

Place pears in a shallow serving dish. Allow syrup to boil until thick - approximately 15 minutes. Pour over pears, cool, cover then chill.

Serve with whipped cream and grated chocolate.

HONEY ROASTED PINEAPPLE
Serves 4-6

6 slices peeled fresh pineapple, 1-2cm thick
1 vanilla bean, split lengthways
1 cup warm honey
4 cardamom pods, bruised
250g mascarpone
1-2 tablespoons white rum
60g toasted pecan nuts, coarsely chopped

Preheat oven to 220C. Halve pineapple slices and place in a single layer in a shallow ovenproof dish. Scrape seeds from vanilla bean into honey and add bean and cardamom pods. Pour honey mixture over pineapple and roast for about 8 minutes.

Turn and roast for a further 7-8 minutes until pineapple is soft and cooked. Discard vanilla bean and cardamom pods. Stir together mascarpone and rum in a bowl.

Serve the pineapple with juices poured over, topped with a dollop of mascarpone and sprinkled with pecans.

APRICOT JELLY
Serves 4-6

250g dried apricots, soaked overnight
Juice of ½ lemon
2 tablespoons honey
3 teaspoons gelatine, soaked in 3 tablespoons water

Place the apricots in a pan with the liquid in which they were soaked, adding more water if necessary to cover. Simmer for 20 to 30 minutes until tender.

Place the apricots and liquid in an electric blender with the lemon juice and honey and blend until smooth. Add the water to make up 3 cups if necessary.

Place the soaked gelatine in a bowl over a pan of simmering water and stir until dissolved. Stir in the apricot mixture.

Pour into a 4 cup ring mould and chill until set.

Dip the mould quickly into hot water to loosen and turn out onto a serving dish.

NUTTY HONEY FLAPJACKS
Makes 20

125g margarine
½ cup honey
½ cup raw sugar
3 cups rolled oats
½ cup chopped walnuts

Melt the margarine with the honey and sugar in a pan. Stir in the oats and walnuts and mix thoroughly. Turn into a greased 18 x 28 cm shallow tin and smooth the top with a palette knife.

Bake in a preheated moderate oven, 180°C, for 25 to 30 minutes. Cool for 2 minutes, then cut into fingers.

Cool completely before removing from the tin.

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Economic Value of Insect Pollination Worldwide Estimated at 153 Billion Euros

Avignon/Halle (Saale). INRA and CNRS French scientists and a UFZ German scientist found that the worldwide economic value of the pollination service provided by insect pollinators, bees mainly was €153 billion (Euros) in 2005 for the main crops that feed the world. This figure amounted to 9.5% of the total value of the world agricultural food production. The study also determined that pollinator disappearance would translate into a consumer surplus loss estimated between €190 and €310. The results of this study on the economic valuation of the vulnerability of world agriculture confronted with pollinator decline are published in the journal *Ecological Economics*.

Among biodiversity concerns, the decline of pollinators has become a major issue, but its impact remains an open question. In particular, the economic value of the pollination service they provide had not been assessed on solid ground to date. Based upon the figures of the literature review published in 2007 on pollinator dependence of the main crops used for food, the study just published in *Ecological Economics* uses FAO and original data to calculate the value of the pollinator contribution to the food production in the world. The total economic value of pollination worldwide amounted to €153 billion in 2005, which represented 9.5% of the value of the world agricultural production used for human food that year.

Three main crop categories (following FAO terminology) were particularly concerned; fruits and vegetables were especially affected with a loss estimated at €50 billion each, followed by edible oilseed crops with €39 billion. The impact on stimulants (coffee, cocoa…), nuts and spices was less, at least in economic terms.

The scientists also found that the average value of crops that depend on insect pollinators for their production was on average much higher than that of the crops not pollinated by insects, such as cereals or sugar cane (€760 and €150 per metric ton, respectively). The vulnerability ratio was defined as the ratio of the economic value of insect pollination divided by the total crop production value. This ratio varied considerably among crop categories with a maximum of 39% for stimulants (coffee and cocoa are insect-pollinated), 31% for nuts and 23% for fruits. There was a positive correlation between the value of a crop category per production unit and its ratio of vulnerability; the higher the dependence on insect pollinators, the higher the price per metric ton.

From the standpoint of the stability of world food production, the results indicate that for three crop categories – namely fruits, vegetables and stimulants – the situation would be considerably altered following the complete loss of insect pollinators because world production would no longer be enough to fulfil the needs at their current levels. Net importers, like the European Community, would especially be affected. This study is not a forecast; however, as the estimated values do not take into account all the strategic responses that producers and all segments of the food chain could use if faced with such a loss. Furthermore, these figures consider a total loss of pollinators rather than a gradual decline and, while a few studies that show a linear relationship between pollinator density and production, this must be confirmed.

The consequence of pollinator decline on the well being of consumers, taken here in its economic sense, was calculated based on different price elasticities of demand. The price elasticity represents the effects of price change on consumer purchase, that is, the percent drop in the amount purchased following a price increase of 1%. In our study, we assumed that a realistic value for the price-elasticities would be between -0.8 and -1.5 (for a value of -0.8, the consumer would buy 0.8% less of the product when its price increases by 1%).

These results highlight that the complete loss of insect pollinators, particularly that of honey bees and wild bees, which are the main crop pollinators, would not lead to the catastrophic disappearing of world agriculture, but would nevertheless result in substantial economic losses, even though our figures consider only the crops which are directly used for human food. The adaptive strategies of economic factors – such as re-allocation of land among crops and use of substitutes in the food industry – would likely limit somewhat the consequences of pollinator loss. Yet we did not take into account the impact of pollination shortage onto seeds used for planting, which is very important for many vegetable crops, as well as forage crops, and thereby the whole cattle industry, non-food crops, and perhaps most importantly, the wildflowers and all the ecosystemic services that the natural flora provides to agriculture and to society as a whole.

Courtesy : American Bee Journal

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AHBIC NEWS

Extracts from January 2009 update

QUEENBEE ACCESS – UNITED STATES

We can confirm that the US will continue to accept our bees under the December 9 2008 certification requirements as previously advised. The United States of America (USA) has provided a revised health certificate to Australia to enable trade to continue, effective immediately, during the critical honeybee export season. The certificate has been amended to remove country freedom for *Apis cerana* and to require that:

Within two years prior to export to the United States, there has been no detection of Asian honeybees (*Apis cerana*) within a 100 mile (160 km) radius of the premises from which packaged and queen bees are derived, nor have the bees transited any regions affected with Asian honeybees en route to the port of embarkation.

Accordingly, honeybees can be exported to the USA provided they meet the conditions on the certificate. If you have any queries, please contact AQIS on (02) 6272 4581.

AHBIC was heavily involved in ensuring the continuation of the United States trade and I would also put on record industry thanks to Dr Penelope-Jane Linnett, A/g Principal Veterinary Officer, Non ruminant Zoo Section, Animal Biosecurity, Biosecurity Australia. It is unfortunate that members do not appreciate what industry does for them until something goes wrong. AHBIC is a representative body – ask yourself what you have contributed to the long term future of the industry. Individually, we may do well some of the time, but collectively and with a united front, we achieve so much more.

ONE BIOSECURITY

The Independent Review of Australia's Quarantine and Biosecurity Arrangements report to the Australian Government has been released. In this edition we have re-produced the Executive Summary and major extracts from the Recommendations affecting the Honey Bee Industry - The document is available online at www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity or (Google: One Biosecurity).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Biosecurity management is a difficult & complex task

Australia's biosecurity regime seeks, through careful management, to minimise the risk of the entry, establishment or spread of exotic pests and diseases that have the potential to cause significant harm to people, animals, plants and other aspects of Australia's unique environment.

Australia's privileged pest and disease status confers significant economic, environmental and community benefits. It assists the competitiveness of Australia's agricultural exports in global markets. Benefits to the environment also accrue through reduction in the use of chemicals to control pests and diseases and the enhancement of all Australians' quality of life. The community values freedom from pests and diseases that cut short or affect the quality of human life in many other countries.

The task of managing Australia's complex biosecurity regime has never been easy. In recent years, it has become even more challenging, principally for the following reasons:

- globalisation, which is integrating the world economy and increasing the volume and range of products traded internationally;
- population spread into new habitats and increasingly intensive agriculture, which increases the risk of zoonoses (that is, animal diseases capable of transmission to human populations) and complicates the ability to contain, and increases the impact of, a pest or disease incursion;
- growth in tourism, passenger and cargo movements, which increases the risks of exotic pest and disease incursions despite the best efforts of border security;
- the potential risk of agri-terrorism involving animal rights extremists or political terrorist organisations;
- increasing global movements of genetic material as farmers endeavour to increase productivity, which places particular demands on pre- and post border biosecurity services;
- climate change, which adds to the spread of pests and diseases (expanding range or habitats, changing migratory bird patterns, and weather events supporting the spread of disease vectors);
- an emerging shortage of highly qualified plant and animal pest and disease professionals—partly associated with 'baby boomer' retirements and partly the result of competing career alternatives;
- physical constraints for border interception activities, especially at major passenger airports; and
- financial constraints, as governments allocate scarce revenue among many competing demands.

In recent years, biosecurity events have received prominence in the media as never before, often for the wrong reasons:

- the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom, accompanied by graphic television footage of burning pyres of livestock carcases;
- the outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Europe and North America, a major animal disease, which has resulted in a number of human deaths and disrupted trade;

- the emergence of a highly pathogenic zoonotic disease in poultry flocks—the H5N1 strain of avian influenza—which gave rise to concerns of pandemic risks for humans;

- the outbreak in Australia of equine influenza, which led to widespread disruptions to horse movements, thoroughbred racing and recreational equestrian events—a necessary part of what proved to be a successful, if costly, eradication campaign;

- incursions, some of which have been eradicated, of several exotic pests and diseases into Australia, such as European house borer, tramp ants, sugar cane smut, grapevine leaf rust, citrus canker, Khapra beetle, and currant-lettuce aphid; and

- controversial and at times heated exchanges, before Parliamentary Committees, in the media, in the courts, and before the World Trade Organization, involving the potential import of products such as pigmeat, apples, prawns and prawn products, bananas, salmon and chicken meat.

Against this background, the decision to commission a comprehensive review of Australia's quarantine and biosecurity systems has been timely, the previous such review (undertaken by the Nairn Committee) having reported in 1996.

Major Recommendation extracts affecting the Honey Bee Industry

7.4.6 National Sentinel Hive Program

Given the substantial economic cost of a varroa mite incursion, the Panel's view is that appropriate monitoring and surveillance arrangements need to be in place to support early detection. The investment required for this is insignificant relative to the risk of losses to the Australian economy that could result from an incursion.

The existing National Sentinel Hive Program should be continued until a more comprehensive arrangement is developed based on an assessment of risks. This more comprehensive arrangement would most likely use a mix of approaches at or around possible entry points (ports and airports)—including sentinel hives and bait hives (traps) that contain pheromones to attract bees. The mix of hives and traps would need to be in sufficient numbers with regular inspection to increase the likelihood of early detection. To ensure that it remains risk-based and effective, the new comprehensive arrangement should be built into the Commonwealth's national monitoring and surveillance program.

7.4.11 Post-arrival quarantine stations

Having access to appropriate post-arrival quarantine facilities for imported animals and plants is a fundamental part of managing biosecurity risks.

The Panel recommends that the uncertainty of the Commonwealth operated quarantine stations should be resolved urgently. The Panel shares Commissioner Callinan's view that there has been an unacceptable delay in resolving the number of Commonwealth-operated stations and their lease tenure arrangements. Leases on existing stations are due to expire within the next few years and, given the time to establish alternative facilities, the Commonwealth is fast running out of time to make considered decisions.

The Panel believes the assumption that the Commonwealth should be exclusively responsible for services for high biosecurity risk plants and animals is flawed—an example of the successful private provision of such high-risk biosecurity facilities is the operation over many years of egg hatching facilities by major poultry businesses. The Panel reiterates the Nairn Report's conclusion that with appropriate auditing, there is no reason why private sector operators cannot also provide biosecurity services, even for high-risk imports.

Equally, the Panel believes there is a case for the Commonwealth to own and operate specialised facilities where monopoly rents might be charged (either to the Commonwealth in a lease-back arrangement, or to biosecurity customers) if such facilities were operated privately. In the case of low volume products, the private provision of biosecurity services may not be viable. One view is that such imports should simply be not allowed, but the Panel considers that facilities need to be provided to ensure a legal and biosecurity-safe method of importing organisms. An example is the importation of honeybee brood stock which could be smuggled into the country if no accessible, legitimate means were made available.

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Please note the discount is only available at Dulux trade stores. This is a great discount for industry, but only if you use it!

WORK WANTED

My name is Frank LAMI. I am 23 years and I am French. I am looking for a place in a bee farm. I am interested to learn new work method. I don't want money, but if you can give me a place for sleep and the meal, it could be nice. Now I am in Sydney but I can move everywhere. I did the same thing in New Zealand last year. I worked for three different bee farms: Mr Don Simm (400 hives), Berry brothers, (Arataki honey 1500 hives), Kintail honey (10000 hives). My parents are beekeepers and we have 200 hives. I am very interested about selection and queen breeding. If you are not interested about my proposition but you can give me beekeeper address for work, I will be happy. Thank you for your attention about my email.

Frank Lami lami_frank@hotmail.com

I'm 23 years, I'm from Belgium and I'm a beekeeper. In September, I'll come to Australia for 9 month, and I would like to find a job in beekeeping, because it's my passion and I can't imagine one year without my bees! Could you help me? Do you engage? Do you know some addresses where I can write? Thank you for your help.

Pauline Sovet pauline_sovet@hotmail.com

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
Congratulations to Dr Denis Anderson

At the December meeting of The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council an Award of Excellence was given to Dr Denis Anderson, Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO Entomology, for his long term service to the Apiary Industry.

The Award of Excellence is awarded each year by the AHBIC Executive for those who have made an outstanding contribution to Industry.

Denis's past and ongoing work on behalf of the industry was considered to be of such exemplary quality and his enthusiasm meant he was a standout for this award.

Dr Denis Anderson receiving his award from AHBIC Chairman, Mr Lindsay Bourke

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BOOK REVIEW

by Rosemary Doherty

The Honey Spinner

by Grace Pundyk

Grace Pundyk lives in Tasmania and embarked on this honey journey, as she herself says, "initially because I liked honey! Once when I was living in the Arabian Peninsula I tried Yemen honey. From that moment on wherever I travelled I always sought out the local honey - it told me so much about a place and its people, history, environment geography and mythology. But it soon became apparent there was a dark side to the industry (this was before vanishing bees) that I wanted to explore. Honey, assumed the most noblest and simplest of foods, is also subject to exploitation. So that was the premise of my journey, that became *The Honey Spinner*."

Grace Pundyk in China with Head Beekeeper

This engaging narrative follows Grace Pundyk's journey from the wild Yemeni deserts with its holy sidr honey and the alleged Al-Qa'ida link; to the jungles of Borneo, and from Russia to Tasmania's leatherwood forests, with many other honey-producing destinations in between. Grace follows the sticky trail of this ancient food, and the people who make their living from it, to uncover the truth behind this 'food of the gods'.

This is not a text book on beekeeping or a detailed travelogue of beekeeping around the world but rather a scrapbook of bits and pieces from her fascinating journey across the globe on the trail of ancient honey, vanishing bees and the politics of liquid gold.

She takes a warts-and-all look at the global honey market, with China as the largest honey producer and source of cheap exported honey; the US for its problems with CCD, mass-crop farming and lack of clear national standards; Italy for its progressive food labeling laws and slow food culture; England for its honey traders and marketers; Turkey as a land "overflowing with honey"; Australia for its outback and distinctive Tasmanian leatherwood honey; New Zealand for its healing Manuka honey, and Russia, for the alleged mafia control of its honey industry.

She has a witty and lyrical style in the retelling of the highs and lows of her journey.

My favourite chapter is the last chapter. Here she creates a "21st Century Honey Myth" in which she skillfully takes the ancient Gods Aristaeus (the God of Beekeeping), the beautiful Oak nymph Eurydice, Orpheus her lover and the Bee Goddess herself Artemus paralleling an ancient myth with a modern industry crisis.

This book is a must read for those who love this industry for its fascination, ancientness and worldly connections rather than the pure simple commercial ends.

Outback Hives Australia

Yemen Hives enroute

Siberia Honey for sale

100% natural Australian beekeeper honey!

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