



AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 3 Number 1

January - February 2010



(Left to right) Marianne Peso, Craig Klingner, Charles Peyvel, Casey Cooper Charlie Casido, Bill Weiss, Ron Clark, Carl Cooper, Jacky Bourke, Rod Bourke (sitting) Doug Somerville and Sue Cobey

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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

The Journal of the NSW Apiarists' Association Inc. (NSWAA)

Published Bi-Monthly ISSN 1835 6621

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COVER: AI Course participants at Gretchen When's property at Richmond

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The opinions expressed in articles published in *Australia's Honeybee News* are those of the authors and do not imply the endorsement of the NSWAA for the promotion of any product, goods or services mentioned unless specifically stated.

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Printer: Farrell Printers PO Box 253 Croydon NSW 2132
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Season

Conditions have improved in most areas of the State with some rain falling in the major beekeeping areas. Heavy rain has been experienced along the Coastal fringe and some inland areas both Northern and Central getting heavy falls over the past 2 months. The Southern inland has not received any big falls and still requires more.

Most beekeepers have been able to gather some honey and this has been going straight to packers. In general, honey stocks held by beekeepers, would be quite low. Packer stocks vary from low to moderate, with some packers quite aware that winter- early spring stocks will be low and they are actively buying honey to improve their supply.

Prices paid by some packers have dropped mainly driven by their inability to pay; other packers are maintaining or slightly lifting prices to secure stocks they require.

An interesting exercise on your calculator is worth doing if you become unhappy with the price being offered for your honey and you have the ability to borrow money. For example an operation producing 300 drums of honey can borrow the full value \$324,000 of this crop for 12 months for around \$26,000 which works out at .28c/kilo. If you consider that some time in the near future (within 12 months) that honey prices will improve by the .28c/kilo or more than this could improve the market and give you a better return. Price movements in recent years have been quite dramatic with prices ranging from \$1.80 kilo to \$2.80 within months in the past.

Sydney Show

This year the RAS has included a live bee demonstration in keeping with their aim to have more interaction between agriculture and the public. This is good for the beekeeping industry to highlight the need for honeybees by the community however it will stretch our already overworked volunteer pool. Anyone who feels they could help for 1-2 days at the *Honeyland* during the Easter Show in Sydney please contact the Secretary or one of the Executive and we will guarantee you a good time.

Remember that *Honeyland* is our window to the public of New South Wales and if more people understand the need for honeybees in society then they may vote accordingly. The profits from *Honeyland* assist with running your Association.

Conference

Plans are underway for this year's Conference which is to be held at Port Macquarie. A change to the format is proposed this year, instead of a field day on the Saturday we plan to allow trade displays in a section of the conference venue and be accessible during conference.

This format is utilized by many large conferences by various industries so we agreed to trial this for the next conference.

In keeping with utilizing part of the Wednesday, prior to conference, to give a more in depth look at various

subjects than what can be presented during the two days of conference, the Executive is considering having AFB control as the topic for this extra forum.

The time has come for Industry to make up its mind whether it wants to change and come to grips with AFB. There has been much time devoted to AFB by past Executives.

The Executive has been discussing a new action proposal to reduce AFB and requires New South Wales beekeepers to give some thought to this proposal, as the Executive believes that the Industry is at a crossroads. If beekeepers do not believe something more has got to be done, then there will be no turning back.

AHBIC

As a result of the AHBIC Review carried out last year, the process for appointing the AHBIC executive has changed. Levy payers with at least 2 years Industry Association experience can now nominate for an executive position. Please do not be apathetic as you get the representation you deserve. There is provision for a total of 6 members on this board. The Chairman is a separate nomination specifically for that position.

Bee Sites

The Lachlan LHPA has reviewed its Apiary site policy and decided to eliminate many sites. This occurred due in some part by beekeepers arguing over sites, placing hives along stock routes well away from their marker pegs. Apiary sites under their new policy are proposed to be 5kms apart. This is a waste of resources for the Apiary Industry and our Industry cannot afford to lose resources in this way.

The State Executive plans to meet with the LHPA Authorities and negotiate the allocation of Apiary sites to be in line with State Council LHPA recommendation; that sites be no closer than 1.5kms dependant on terrain.

Pests & Disease Courses

It is evident when speaking with beekeepers that many do not understand how some pests and diseases work (AFB). To assist Industry to address this problem, Doug Somerville has put together a series of "Pests and Diseases of the Honeybees" courses. These courses are designed to help beekeepers understand how pests and diseases spread and affect the hive. The courses are free to Primary producers and a certificate will be available to beekeepers who demonstrate an ability to recognize the pests and diseases of the beehive.

This certificate may be the basis for beekeepers to furnish an annual certificate of inspection of their apiaries as part of a new AFB control program.

I urge all beekeepers to avail themselves of these courses as cost of future courses may not be reimbursed.

Bill Weiss
State President



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SYDNEY SHOW

The Sydney Royal Easter Show runs from Thursday 1 April till Wednesday 14 April 2010.

Included in this edition is a *Volunteer Form* for those who would like to help out by selling honey and promoting the industry. If you are considering it and have not been before make a decision to come to Sydney and give it a go.

If required the Association will provide accommodation at Ashfield Manor which is only a short train ride from the Showground. You will be amongst friends and will certainly gain from the experience.

This year as well as selling honey we will have a live bee display manned by beekeepers giving four demonstrations per day. This means we need plenty of volunteers as we expect a big interest in honey and the information we can supply visitors to the Show about our Industry.

Julie Lockhart

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

TRADE SHOW

20 & 21 May 2010

The NSW Apiarists' Association are planning to have trade displays at the 2010 Conference in Port Macquarie.

The displays would be in a section of the Conference venue and be accessible during the Conference.

For more information and to register your interest please contact:

Julie Lockhart - nswaa@bigpond.net

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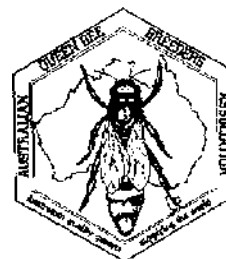
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CONFERENCE SPEAKER

*Jerry Bromenshenk from USA will be a guest speaker
at the NSWAA 2010 Annual State Conference*

Jerry Bromenshenk
Research Professor
Education
B.S. Montana State University
Ph.D. Montana State University



My research interests encompass the fields of ecotoxicology, population dynamics, and environmental chemistry. Current projects include real-time monitoring of the effects of natural and anthropogenic stressors using hives fitted with electronic sensors and chemical sampling probes, developing methods and facilities for assessing the risks to bees of genetically altered microbial pesticides, and modeling the population dynamics of mites in honey bee colonies.

All of these projects are aimed at using bees to evaluate environmental impacts as part of an ecological risk assessment. Our research involves developing and testing computerized data acquisition equipment to provide continuous, accurate, and precise field and laboratory measurements. It also includes development of computer models that simulate the responses of honey bee colonies to environmental stressors. The initial model, PC BEEPOP, is a PC-based model and an expert system used for environmental risk assessments, for research, and to teach principles of apiculture, population biology, and ecotoxicology.

Presently, we are using Artificial Neural Networks to evaluate and to model complex data sets encompassing bee activity, colony homeostasis and productivity, weather, and volatile chemicals found in hive atmospheres.

Additional information about our bee research and MORE 's activities can be found on the home pages of Computerworld Smithsonian and University of Montana at: <http://innovate.si.edu/nom.inee/ee4.htm>, <http://grizzly.umn.edu/biology/bees> and <http://grizzly.umn.edu/biology/more>.

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BEE BREEDING AND GENETICS

A number of major events came together in December at Richmond NSW, all focussed on honey bee genetics and bee breeding. The events were, a seminar held on Saturday, 12 December at the University and two instrumental insemination courses – an introduction course and a more advanced course. All events were designed to lift the skills and knowledge of these subjects within the Australian beekeeping industry.

The story starts like this: in January 2009 myself and Warren Taylor were attending the American Beekeeping Conference in Reno, Nevada; Warren, in conversation with Dr Sue Cobey asked her if she would she be interested in coming to Australia to teach an instrumental insemination course, Sue is a well respected teacher of instrumental insemination of queen bees with a world wide reputation for excellence; Sue's response was favourable and Warren 'kindly' gave me the task of coordinating the event.

On return to Australia I approached the NSW Apiarists' Association executive with the idea. Gretchen Wheen agreed for the courses to be held at her property at Richmond.

Later once the courses looked like they would get support it became apparent to me that the presence of Sue Cobey provided an opportunity to hold a seminar on bee breeding and genetics on the Saturday between the courses. This met with wide support amongst the cartel involved in putting the courses together. Gretchen suggested a call to Max Whitten to assist with speakers and organising the seminar. Another call to the University and Michael Duncan organised a lecture theatre. Twelve speakers would eventually front up for the seminar.

The insemination courses

The courses were never going to be cheap. The costs were quite considerable and the numbers at each course needed to be kept low for quality time with Sue Cobey.

The teaching room was fairly basic you might say at the beginning of the year but by the time of the course it was an extremely presentable facility, totally cleared out of all 'bee junk', nut harvesting machines, etc; fitted out with new furniture, air conditioning, etc.

The insemination courses were fully booked with two participants from WA, another from Vic, a third from NZ, and the rest from NSW. Sue conducted the introduction course over 4 days and the advanced course over 3 days providing participants with ample opportunities for practice.

Warren Taylor provided the virgin queens and drones for the courses. Bill Weiss and Carl Cooper were kept busy running back and forth between the bees, catching drones and queens and supplying the teaching laboratory. The location at Gretchen Wheen's property was perfect.

Australia's Honeybee News January/February 2010



Sue giving expert advice



A very attentive class!



Bill & Carl gathering bees



Carl overseeing the workers!

Some notes provided by Sue at the course:

- Instrumental insemination is a reliable method to control honey bee mating, essential for research and stock improvement.
- Different methodologies used in the treatment of queens have a significant affect on performance rather than the insemination procedure.
- The ability to harvest, store and ship semen rather than live bees is a realistic option.
- A major component of queen longevity is the number of sperm cells stored in her spermatheca.
- The presence or residues of miticide treatments used to control varroa mites in colonies raising queens and drones, reduces their fertility and longevity.
- Queens inseminated at 5–10 days had similar numbers of sperm cells stored in their spermatheca and similar survival rates compared to naturally mated queens. Younger or older queens, when inseminated, stored significantly less semen.
- Only about 10% of sperm cells collected by free flight mated queens are stored in the spermatheca, the rest are discarded.
- Queens normally store between 4–7 million sperm in their spermatheca.
- Queens are vulnerable during introduction and early establishment, the time when queen pheromone production is developing and maturing.
- Genetic diversity enhances colony fitness. Several studies have shown that adaptability, productivity and survivability tend to be greater in out-crossed stocks.
- However, beekeeping practices designed to reduce labour, increase efficiency and provide convenience in scheduling, often provide sub-optimal conditions for queen development and sperm storage in the spermatheca.

Some of these key points would appear in talks on the Saturday.

The seminar

Over 100 people attended from all states of Australia including New Zealand.

Professor **Ben Oldroyd** from Sydney University began the sessions with a talk titled, 'Difficulties in breeding honey bees'. Some of Ben's points within his talk included:

- Four major difficulties with bee breeding:
 - identify superior individuals;
 - control of mating;
 - inbreeding;
 - funding.
- Bee colonies are a collection of families which presents a major problem in bee breeding.
- Expression of genes is dependent on environment and cooperation of different families within the colony.

Dr **Peter Oxley** from Sydney University talked on the genetics of hygienic behaviour. This behaviour holds a lot of promise and hope within the beekeeping industry as a mechanism to reduce a colony's susceptibility to bee diseases and pests. Some families of bees are very efficient at identifying dead or sick larvae and brood and are quick in removing this material from the colony.

All colonies are hygienic but some are very slow, thus presumably disease is likely to have a greater impact on these colonies and reduce their productivity. Means by

which the variation in hygienic behaviour can be measured is a strong point of interest by queen bee breeders. Two methods (either pin prick test or freezing) have been used in the past to kill a patch of brood and replace it in a colony. Hygienic behaviour is measured by the speed with which the dead brood is removed. A third method of genetic testing was the subject of Peter's studies. He believes that there are possibly five genes that influence hygienic behaviour in bees.

Dr **Andrew Barron** from Macquarie University provided an argument on 'honey bee population dynamics – why do colonies collapse?' Colony collapse events are nothing new, but they do seem to be increasing in frequency and severity. A colony collapse could be caused by any factor(s) that either, reduce brood rearing below that needed to support forager losses, or increase forager losses above that supported by brood production. Andrew listed the possible culprits as; known diseases, new(ish) diseases, pesticides, modern beekeeping, climate change or simply a 'storm of problems' which are combining to create a more hostile environment for bees in general.

Susan Cobey in her talk covered a range of subject matter, but with bee breeding at the core. Sue presented information on genetic diversity, the raw tools for selection, and breeding varroa resistant bees.

There are 26 subspecies of the genus *mellifera* recognised worldwide, but only a small subset of these subspecies exist in the USA and Australia. The global spread of pests, parasites and pathogens of honey bees has been spectacular and, in many cases, devastating.

Honey bee colonies are super-organisms, with intra-colony diversity which increases fitness. Traits vary across subfamilies and there is measurable variation in the adaptive nature of these various traits. There are also indirect genetic effects whereby workers from one subfamily can learn from the activities and experiences of other families and individual workers.

Workers fathered by different drones but with the same mother, specialise in different tasks. By increasing task diversity, a more efficient worker force may increase, providing a degree of disease tolerance and ability to adapt to various changes.

The queen mates with 1–60 drones, averaging 10–20. This is the highest mating frequency among social insects. Multiple mating increases brood viability. Genetic diversity promotes stable thermoregulation of a cluster of bees during winter, a diverse workforce, communicates more efficiently, enables a better division of labour, store more pollen, and has a noticeable reduction in the severity and prevalence of diseases.

Sub-lethal effects of chemical exposure are now considered a major problem:

Neurological effects – impaired visual sensory, reduced memory and learning performance, communication difficulties, and spatial orientation.

Queen effects – mating, signalling (to drones and workers), egg production/laying, early supersedure.

Brood effects – delayed development, growth abnormalities, reducing longevity, increased mortality.

This increased exposure to chemicals in general is likely due to a combination of treatments applied by the beekeeper to primarily manage varroa mite populations, plus exposure to a range of chemicals used in the environment mainly in an agricultural setting.

Breeding varroa resistant/tolerant bees has to be a major pathway for further development by bee breeders. What does this mean?

- bees resistant to viruses;
- grooming behaviour, auto or self grooming or nest mate grooming, removing mites;
- hygienic behaviour where nurse bees identify infested pupae, uncap, remove and discard the infested pupae;
- brood volatiles that are not as attractive to female mites.

Sue summed up; stating that bee breeding was the best long term solution to dealing with mites.

Dr **Michael Hornitzky** provided an overview on the role of the quarantine facility at Eastern Creek. This facility was built in 1981 and contains 12 flight cages for holding imported queen bees in nucleus colonies while their larvae can be harvested for grafting and removal from the facility.

The facility was built to allow for the importation of desirable genetic stock, while reducing the incidence of unauthorised imports. Unfortunately, a knee-jerk reaction in early 2009 by AQIS, with no consultation with the State Departments of Agriculture or Australia's bee scientific community, the facility was closed due to the perceived risk from Colony Collapse Disorder being reported in the USA. Although the industry has lobbied to reopen the facility, attempts have been unsuccessful to date.

Two Federal politicians were in attendance, Mr **Alby Schultz** MP, officially launched the Wheen Foundation, and Mrs **Louise Markus** MP, the local member talked about Gretchen Wheen, the person. Alby, in his presentation, stated that both political parties were characterised by a pathetic response to the Australian beekeeping industry enquiry.

Dr **Max Whitten**, as one of the Board members of the Wheen Foundation, spoke about the Foundation and its future role within the beekeeping industry. During the day Max was presented the Goodacre Award which is the highest award the beekeeping industry can bestow on a person for their contribution to the honey bee industry.

After lunch the technical talks resumed, with **Sue Cobey** providing a brief on the situation historically in the USA. In 1922 the US banned the importation of bees. Since then they have got tracheal mites, varroa mites, small hive beetles, viruses (numbers unknown) and nosema ceranae. Clearly, the 1922 import ban did not work and probably encouraged the illegal introduction of bees from around the world.

Due to the need to focus on breeding superior bee stock to deal with these issues, crossing the best stock available in the USA with the best and hoping for the best is no longer a viable long term strategy anymore. Importing desirable genetic material must be a consideration and to this end Sue has developed protocols for the shipment of semen.

Interestingly, in her talk she mentioned bee viruses as a concern, as they potentially have the means of possibly

infecting semen. Even so, she stated a case where hives infected with adult bee paralysis virus was cleaned up by requeening the colony and providing it with good nutrition.

The statement made by Sue that 'currently honey bees are welfare bees and can't live without us', was probably one of the most significant statements all day.

Dr **Alexandre Christino** from the Brain Institute at the University of Queensland talked on genomics and environmental response in the honey bee. The bee genome has been mapped with a total of 10,000 identifiable genes.

Honey bees have 160 olfactory/odour receptor genes. Bees locate food sources by smell. This means that bees can be trained to learn and respond to specific odours. Bees can detect unhealthy brood through smell; this then enables them to remove this brood. Honey bees have few immune genes but by smelling and removing unhealthy brood they have developed a social immunity.

Des Cannon, the Chair of the Honey Bee Committee on the Research Council asked the question, 'do we have enough genetic diversity within the Australian bee population to mount a breeding scheme for when varroa mites arrive in Australia?' Varroa mites, in his talk, were regarded as the single biggest threat to the Australian beekeeping industry. He did also state that the current government is appalling in its lack of support for the beekeeping industry.

Linton Briggs, a long time queen bee breeder provided some history on the past cooperative and institutional breeding schemes in Australia. The concept of a bee breeding scheme in Australia was born in 1976, principally driven by a workshop/school conducted in Queensland. By 1983 the quarantine facility for bees was operational in Sydney. Funds were made available in 1986 from the Honey Research Committee to set up a breeding program based at Hawkesbury. This consisted of 30 lines which were selected from 48 queen mothers recruited from around Australia, the USA and NZ.

A similar program was established in WA in 1987. By 1992 the research committee made the decision not to fund either scheme, as the belief was that the research and development role had been fulfilled.

The stock from the eastern states scheme was sold off in 1993. A consortium bought many of the key lines and continued the program in a private capacity. A similar situation unfolded in WA and the consortium in WA continues to provide breeder queens. Another scheme was initiated in the eastern states in more recent years. These consortiums are apart from the individual beekeeper efforts aimed at breeding superior stock.

Daniel Weaver was one of the last speakers for the day. Danny operates a queen bee rearing and breeding enterprise in Texas USA, imports Australian packages and owns a honey production enterprise.

Danny again followed a similar theme to other speakers, discussing varroa. The USA has been dealing with varroa for more than 20 years. He believes that finding bees that are resistant to varroa mites may be a very long way off.

He draws the parallel that 'we still haven't found sheep that are resistant to wolves'. He also stated that the pin prick and liquid nitrogen tests to determine hygienic behaviour were poor tools to use for basing selection of breeding stock. His focus was on survival. Buckfast bees were demonstrated to be resistant to tracheal mites. In 1989 varroa was found in Florida, the mite 'moved like wildfire' across the USA. In 1992 his company made the decision to put considerable effort into breeding resistance to varroa.

The chemicals used to control varroa mites were obviously having an adverse impact on queens. He identified 1,000 hives in his operation and left them untreated for varroa for nine months, after which 100 remained alive with only 50 of these being considered productive. But in his opinion only five colonies were demonstrating varroa resistance.

My thoughts

- Varroa mites are the number one single threat to beekeeping internationally.
- Bees resistant to varroa are still a long way off, in the context that colonies have to be productive for honey and reasonably docile.
- There is clearly a major dilemma in selecting stock for specific traits, as this will eventually reduce the genetic diversity. Genetic diversity was described as necessary for the honey bee to survive and thrive.
- Screen bottom boards were mentioned by a few speakers as a means of assisting bees to keep mites under control. They continue to work all year with or without chemical treatments to a hive. Basically a no-brainer, all beekeepers should consider replacing traditional bottom boards with screen bottom boards.
- Being able to send bees to the lab to test for hygienic markers is still many years away, and even if this was a service available, the mechanism of mite/disease resistance is complex and as such the test results may be of limited value.
- There are two choices with breeding superior bees – either have a group effort, or leave it to individuals. Both have merits, but what was apparent was that multiple breeding schemes need to be occurring concurrently to ensure the depth of genetic diversity remains.
- With the group or individual breeding program model, finance is a big issue. The market wants production queens now and is generally reluctant to pay a premium for superior stock. Those involved in breeding programs are doing so for the personal rewards rather than financial returns.

The organisers

As stated the ideas behind these events were born in early 2009. The key organisations and persons who made these events happen were, the NSW Apiarists' Association particularly Bill Weiss and Carl Cooper; Gretchen Wheen for providing her property and working very hard to prepare the class room; Warren Taylor for providing the virgin queens, the drones plus assisting in the planning process throughout the year; and Max Whitten for coordinating many of the speakers for the seminar and facilitating the launching of the Wheen Foundation.

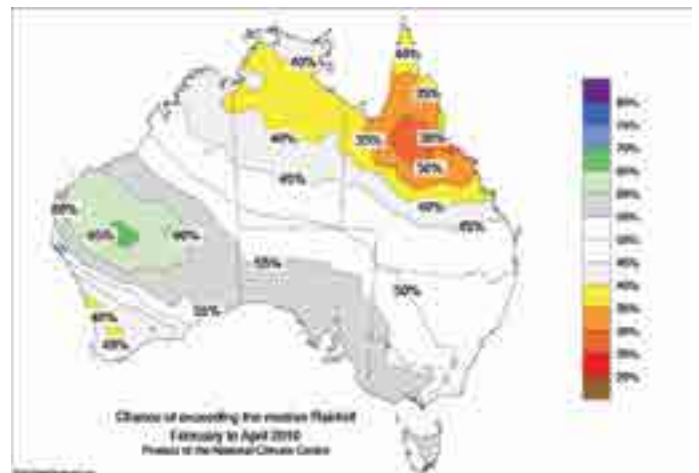
NATIONAL SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK

PROBABILITIES FOR FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2010

CONTRASTING SEASONAL RAINFALL ODDS FOR LATE SUMMER TO MID-AUTUMN

The national outlook for total rainfall over late summer to mid-autumn (February to April) shows contrasting odds across the country: below average falls are more likely in northern parts of both Queensland and the NT, whereas a wetter than normal three months is indicated for northwest and central WA.

The pattern of seasonal rainfall odds across Australia has been produced using recent Pacific and Indian Ocean temperature patterns, with the warm Pacific (El Niño) having the greater influence.



The chances of exceeding the median rainfall for February to April are between 30 and 40% over a broad region covering north Queensland and much of the northern NT (see map). In one part of north Queensland the chances drop below 30%.

This means that for every ten years with ocean patterns like the current, about six or seven February to April periods are expected to be drier than average across this broad area of northern Australia, while about three or four periods are wetter.

In addition, there is a moderate tendency in the odds favouring a drier season in a small section of southwest WA, although totals are normally rather low for this period in that part of the country.

Contrasting this, the chances are between 60 and 70% for above average February to April falls in a band stretching from the northwest to the interior of WA.

Across the rest of the country, the chances of exceeding the median February to April rainfall are between 40 and 60%, meaning that above average falls are about as equally likely as below average falls.

Full details of the 'Pest & Diseases of Honeybees' course were published in the Nov/Dec 2009 edition. To Book Contact: Kim Griffiths, Tocal College on 1800 025 520

Tamworth - 9/10 Mar
Dubbo - 20/21 Apr
Grafton - 17/18 Aug
Griffith - 14/15 Sep
Kempsey - 19/20 Oct

Glen Innes - 11/12 Mar
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Lismore - 19/20 Aug
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HONEY PRODUCTION REPORT

NORTHERN NSW

Honey production in the north of the state has been reasonable given the budding and weather restrictions!!

With almost a non-existent spring inland (largely due to dry weather all over the state), thousands of hives migrated to the north coast Oct/Nov chasing Mahogany and early Grey Iron Bark. The combination of a breeding tree and a honey tree proved a fruitful one and with the follow on of small amounts of Apple, Brush Box and Spotted Gum bees ticked over nicely. Since the New Year however rain has almost stopped conditions on the coast and bees are sitting idle. Beetle damage for some was as usual a huge problem and for others was almost non-existent which is something all involved can't explain.

Before the New Year rains any chance of an autumn/winter crop was all but gone. Still to date there are no real stand outs, there is some patchy bud and growth on White Box in places, the rain was too late for Bloodwood in the Pilliga however the scrub is looking the wettest it has been for 5-6 years. The Channel country is the only other possibility with reasonable rain over the last 6 weeks; however it has been a long time between drinks out there!

The vast majority of beekeepers have had a fairly ordinary spring, from what I have heard honey stocks on hand are much lower than previous years.

Craig Klingner

SOUTHERN NSW

Bees that were on the spotted gum on the south coast, moved to the almonds in early July. The bees were strong and had excellent pollination results. Large movements of bees moved onto Canola but with little rain crops were poor. Bees gathered fair honey and very minimal swarming occurred. After Canola there was patchy Salvation Jane which carried the bees on and produced two supers of honey in some areas. The season fell short because of lack of continual rain.

The decision was to either sit tight or move bees to the patchy Grey Iron Bark, Grey Messmate and Yellow Stringy Bark on the South Coast. The bees did fairly well and production was worthwhile. Short budding Black Apple, produced a terrific crop, providing the bees with good pollen and a couple of boxes of honey, following that was Sydney Peppermint.

With the hot, humid weather the hive beetle was in heaven causing many problems with full production hives completely slimed out in few days. It was time to move on away from the hive beetle problems and onto the Red Stringy Bark. The flowering occurred earlier than usual in early January with extremely hot conditions. The flowers produced an abundance of honey in a majority of areas. Most of the bees that stayed away from the coast moved onto Blackberries in the high country close to their Red Stringy Bark country for adequate breeding conditions.

Others migrated out to the River Gum and yielded a good box of honey until heavy storms cut the flow short. Our season was about average, with recent good rain. We hope to see it continue, to see a wet winter to return a good spring for our farmers.

Laurie Kershaw

SYDNEY BASIN

Bees have been doing very well in areas where Black Thorn *Bursaria spinosa* has been flowering. Grey Box *Eucalyptus moluccana* is budded and just starting to flower. Narrow leaf Ironbark *Eucalyptus crebra* is heavily budded following the excellent rain fall over the last month. Small Hive Beetle has not posed a significant problem except where beekeepers have been storing sticky combs.

CENTRAL TABLELANDS & CENTRAL WEST

This area has experienced very poor production since the end of September. Some beekeepers are moving onto Red Stringybark *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* however many are concerned it is starting to grow and may not yield.

Following heavy rain in Mugga Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* country beekeepers will be hoping it will bud and provide an autumn nectar flow. Reports indicate American Foul Brood in a problem in the area and all beekeepers should check hives prior to winter for this serious disease and attend the Pest and Disease courses being run by the Department of Industry and Investment.

CENTRAL COAST

Bees are in good condition Red Bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera* is budded and about to flower. The heavy rain in the area should see Banksia *ericifolia* flower during the autumn, winter months. Scribbly Gum *Eucalyptus racemosa* is also budded for an autumn flowering. Belbowrie *Melaleuca quinquenervia* is also likely to bud following above average rainfall.

Bruce White

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LATEST BEEKEEPER STATISTICS

3/02/2010	Number of hives	Total beekeepers				Total hives			
				cf 9/12/08	cf 1/02/06			cf 9/12/08	cf 1/02/06
Hobby	1-10	1,845	63%	1.9%	-4.9%	8,003	3%	0.1%	-0.4%
Amateur	11-40	480	16%	-0.3%	-1.6%	10,629	5%	0.0%	-0.4%
Semi-commercial	41-200	345	12%	-0.4%	-1.7%	37,459	16%	-0.3%	-1.4%
Part-time commercial	201-400	113	4%	-0.2%	-0.6%	36,068	15%	-0.5%	-1.7%
Full-time commercial	401-1000	118	4%	0.0%	-1.4%	79,891	34%	1.0%	-10.5%
Large commercial	>1000	38	1%	0.0%	0.2%	63,695	27%	-1.6%	5.8%
Total		2,939	100%	1.1%	-9.8%	235,745	100%	-1.4%	-8.6%

SUMMARY

Beekeepers up 1.1% in past year - down 9.8% in 4 years

Hives down 1.4% in past year - down 8.6% in 4 years - 79% of beekeepers are hobbyists or amateurs

5% of full-time commercial beekeepers have 61% of hives - 21% of beekeepers (commercial) have 92% of hives

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BEEKEEPING IN URUGUAY

by Bruce White

The territory now occupied by the Republic of Uruguay was discovered in 1516 by the leader of a Spanish expedition named Juan Diaz de Solia.

Uruguay in South America is bordered in the north and north eastern frontiers by Brazil and separated from Argentina by the Rio de la Plata River in the south and the Rio Uruguay in the west; the east is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean.

Uruguay covers 176,215 square kilometres, there are no impenetrable forests or deserts regions or mountains; the highest point is Cerro Catradel altitude 513 metres. The climate is similar to Australia. Over 80% of the population lives in towns mainly on the Atlantic coast with 44% living in the capital Montevideo.

About 17% of the population live in rural areas despite the fact the economy depends to a large extent on agriculture. The countryside is ideal for livestock and cropping enterprises with many rivers criss-crossing the country. Property sizes are much smaller than in Australia with owners making a living from small holdings.

From Australia flying time to the capital Montevideo is about seventeen hours via New Zealand and Chile. A highlight is flying over the Andes Mountains that were snow covered and they are as spectacular as the Rocky Mountains in Canada.

I was asked by Ariel Martinez Director of Red Apicola to conduct a training course for Commercial beekeepers accompanied by my wife in December, he was an excellent host along with the coordinator Miss Carolina Ricca and translator Mr Enrique Neme Ortiz.

The course was attended by 42 beekeepers and honey packers over 3 long days. In 2000 I conducted two training courses and it was very pleasing to revisit, see the progress being made and meet those beekeepers I had previously met and some new ones.

The current Uruguayan Minister for Agriculture, Mr Andres Berterreche, had attended one of the courses in 2000. He, much to the delight of the beekeepers, attended the 2009 course at La Paz 130km from Montevideo, one afternoon he spoke to the beekeepers attending. It was very pleasing to see a Minister for Agriculture so interested in the welfare of the beekeeping industry.

The bees are *Apis mellifera mellifera* and *Apis mellifera lugustica* they appear to be much more aggressive than the stock used in Australia and in some parts of Uruguay that borders Brazil (where I visited in 2000 but not this time). Africanised stock is present and slowly spreading.

The larger beekeeping enterprises run many more colonies than Australian beekeepers; one I visited owned by Fernando Roth operates 9000 colonies. Apiary sizes are much smaller than in Australia due to the smaller farms and more aggressive bees.

Interest is being shown in the Italian race, excellent queen rearing methods are being used, Cloake starter finisher hives and six way ideal queen mating nucs. All hives

are of the Langstroth standard. There is some interest in importing breeder Queens from Australia.

Uruguay is aiming to have one million hectares of eucalyptus plantations; currently they have nine hundred thousand hectares.

The main species are:

Eucalyptus globulus globulus (Tasmanian Blue Gum)

Eucalyptus grandis (Flooded Gum)

Eucalyptus madenii (Maidens Gum)

Eucalyptus tereticornis (Forest Red Gum)

Eucalyptus saligna (Sydney Blue Gum)

Eucalyptus robusta (Swamp Mahogany)

Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gum)

Eucalyptus viminalis (Ribbon Gum)

Eucalyptus rostrata (sub species of River Red Gum)

Plantation planting spaces vary - if trees are spaced 3x2 that gives 600 trees to the hectare; 3x3 - 1300 trees to the hectare and 4x3 - 1000 trees to the hectare.

Timber companies are experimenting with hybrid eucalyptus for future plantation use. Many farmers as well as the Government have planted eucalyptus as shelter and shade trees along road ways. In some areas the countryside is very similar to Australia, many of the species that have been planted are not the species listed above, and these all help supply nectar and pollen for the bees. Harvest time depends on their use and this restricts the plantations benefits for honey production.

Beekeepers working the plantations for honey production as occurs in Australia with eucalyptus forests, the production varies greatly between the eucalyptus, in the case of Flooded Gum *E. grandis* yields can vary from zero to 100kgs per hive, *E. globulus globulus* 0-40kgs per hive from older plantations close to the sea, *E. globulus globulus* is often harvested after 7 years re-growth from the root stock harvested again after 7 years and another re-growth from the original root stock in another 7 years.

Tree density in plantations is very much higher than occurs in a natural forest in Australia and this results in very little understory plants that are often very valuable in giving colonies an alternant source of pollen and nectar when the eucalyptus flowers in forests.

Extracting plants are of a high quality, honey packers buy the honey and it also appears as though beekeepers join groups that also bulk buy honey as well as market honey and other products. One group had recently purchased 2000 pollen traps as a management tool for collecting pollen when pollen was plentiful. Ground flora and Eucalypt honey is the main honey produced.

Problem appears to be marketing and the huge increase the hectares planted to Soybeans on previously valuable ground flora country. The Soy bean crop gives farmers high returns that are little value to beekeepers, pesticide use can be high. This oil seed crop is used for chemical, industrial and in the food industry. Currently six hundred and fifty thousand hectares are under Soybeans mainly due to a mandate from the government that 2% of all diesel sold contains 2% bio diesel increasing to 5% in 2012.

Significant strengthening of the Euro gives European packers and importers a significant price advantage in purchasing Uruguayan honey. Uruguay exports up to 95% of its honey production, mainly into Europe.

Uruguay underwent two years of severe drought resulting in the loss of about half the hives. This last year has seen a return to much more normal seasons, with some beekeepers concerned wet weather my impact on the yields of *E. grandis* honey this autumn.

Colony Collapse Disorder has not been reported in Uruguay even though it has been associated closely with Varroa by many researchers. Varroa is a significant problem because the mites build up resistance to the treatments being used. Four different chemical controls are being used along with four organic controls with strict controls in place concerning their use.

Nosema ceranae is present in Uruguay and when the disease gained a lot of publicity recently they were able to check an 18 year old sample that showed N. ceranae. So it had been present in Apis mellifera for many years before being detected in that part of the world.

The beekeepers of Uruguay were very interested in beekeeping in Australia and are keen to meet as many as possible before or after Apimondia in Argentina in 2011 and as Colonia das Sacramento is only a 30 minute ferry trip across the widest river in the world to Buenos Aires.

We visited Colonia it is an exciting tourist town, with English menus and entertaining waiters with wonderful hats. If you like coffee it is the place to go; we drank litres of it with boiled milk.



Bruce, Lynn & Enrique with a colourful waiter

La Red Apicola appreciated the training I provided and are looking forward to me returning in the future. Beekeepers would benefit by visiting Uruguay and learning how they manage such large beekeeping business even though the apiary sizes are small.

The Uruguayans are wonderfully hospitable people, not in a hurry but the evening meal can start about 9pm up till midnight, so expect long nights and they are like beekeepers all over the world love to talk long into the night, on our last night we went to bed at midnight and they were still going at 4am but were bright eyed and bushy-tailed the next morning for the lectures.



Flying over the Andes



Inspecting an Italian breeder hive with Fernando Roth (in blue shirt) owner of 9,000 hives



Bruce & Enrique with the Minister for Agriculture, Mr Andres Berterreche



Enrique with cut plantation logs of Eucalyptus tereticornis

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Chris Kath

General Manager Mob: 0421 620 419 or chris@superbee.com.au

Russell Pout

Production Manager Mob: 0411 425 182 or russell@superbee.com.au

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INTERNATIONAL SNIPPETS

USA

The Global Honey Market Forecast to Exceed 1.9 Million Tons by 2015 - 9/2/2010

A new report by California-based Global Industry Analyst Inc. (GIA) says the market is being primarily driven by increasing awareness levels and health consciousness among the consumers, leading to increasing demand for healthy and natural food products. In line with the trend, several honey producers are launching new products and varieties at regular intervals. The increasing trend of organic and healthy spreads is expected to continue giving rise to new variants and flavours in the global honey market.

"Increasing preference among consumers for honey-based products, is leading to a boost in the variety and assortment of honey based food products, baby products, yogurts and drinks," the report, which GIA is selling for \$3,950, says. "Moreover, honey contains antioxidants, minerals, vitamins and proteins, making itself an appealing ingredient as compared to artificial sweeteners."

INDIA

Local Honey Has Equal Medicinal Properties as the Manuka Honey of New Zealand

Doctors from Nair Hospital tested the Indian honey on 226 patients and found that it had incredible healing properties. The findings were recently presented in the Second International Honey Conference in Malaysia. Dr Sunita Deshpande of the hospital's microbiology department and her 6 doctorate students tested nine types of Indian honeys. "We found all Indian honeys have almost equal properties as the New Zealand's Manuka honey," said Deshpande, who presented the research paper in the conference.

NEW ZEALAND

Honey Trade with US Threatened By Honey 'Laundering' - 5/2/2010

Beekeepers are warning the country's growing honey trade with the United States will suffer if Australian honey products are allowed into New Zealand.

The National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand (NBA) said tonight that Australian honey was being mixed with international honey and exported as an Australian product.

"If Australian honey imports are allowed into New Zealand, New Zealand risks becoming a 'honey laundering' hub, a situation that would severely damage our honey exporters," NBA joint chief executive Gemma Collier said. New Zealand exports about \$4 million worth of honey to the US in 2009. This is up from just under \$2.5 million in 2008.

"The US market is growing steadily, especially the Manuka honey sector, and any risk to it is extremely concerning to the beekeeping industry," Ms Collier said. She called for the continued and indefinite suspension of all honey imports from Australia. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry extended the suspension of honey imports from Australia by up to two years in September 2009.

As a result of "honey laundering", Australia was now on a US watch list of 13 countries whose honey products must be checked carefully on entry, Ms Collier said.

"Establishing tracing and certification processes to ensure exported honey is solely of New Zealand origin would add significant extra costs to industry participants." Ms Collier said allowing imports would also likely lead to a number of dangerous diseases and pests being introduced.

"This would have far-reaching negative impacts on New Zealand's \$71 million honey export industry, not to mention our agricultural and horticultural industries, which underpin our economy.

ISRAEL

Almond Tree's Secret Weapon - 2/2/2010

Has the almond tree developed a unique way of drawing potential pollinators? A group of researchers at the Department of Environmental and Evolutionary Biology and the Department of Science Education at the University of Haifa-Oranim speculate that the toxin called amygdalin that is found in almond tree nectar is in fact an evolutionary development intended to give that tree an advantage over others in its surroundings.

Previous studies have already shown that amygdalin can be found in almond nectar at a concentration of 4-10 milligrams per litre. It also known that the almond tree is the only plant to have this toxin in its flowers' nectar; in fact, the tree's subgenus classification is Amygdalus, after the toxin it produces. For small mammals this is a deadly substance and as it is highly concentrated in the seeds of unripe wild bitter almonds, these almonds are also dangerous for human consumption.

A group of researchers, headed by Prof. Ido Izhaki along with Prof. Gidi Ne'eman, Prof. Moshe Inbar and Dr Natarajan Singaravelan, investigated why it is that this plant produces such a potent toxin - a by-product of which is cyanide - in its nectar. They explain that the presence of amygdalin in the nectar is seemingly incompatible with the nectar's purpose of attracting insects to the flower to extract food and pollinate it and thereby contribute to the plant's reproduction.

The researchers exposed honey bees to plates of nectar that had varying concentrations of the toxin and a plate of nectar without the toxin. The team first monitored four different amygdalin concentrations, resembling the natural levels of the toxin in almond tree nectar: 2.5-10 milligrams per litre.

A second experiment monitored levels much higher than those found in the natural form: 5-50 milligrams per litre. In both cases and for each of the compositions, the bees preferred nectar containing amygdalin over the amygdalin-free option.

"It is difficult -- and sometimes impossible -- to determine the workings of evolution, but it is likely that amygdalin is produced in the almond nectar so as to give the almond tree an advantage in reproduction. Based on our observations, we can make a guess at which mechanisms come into play for amygdalin to provide this advantage," Prof. Izhaki explains.

For example, even though amygdalin is poisonous for mammals, it is not poisonous for insects, such as the honey bee, and it even produces a stimulant that attracts such

insects. Therefore, it is possible that the plant produces it so as to attract potential pollinators. Another possibility is that the almond tree has developed this substance in its nectar as a form of filter: it repulses “non-expert” pollinators, but gives access to the “experts” that have built up resistance to the toxin while providing efficient pollination services for the plant.

The research team, in collaboration with Dr. Malka Halpern, Dr. Yoram Gerchman and research students Svetlana Friedman and Yana Gerstein, are presently examining the possibility of there being an additional mechanism in play: that the nectar toxin prevents inhabitation of bacteria that could spoil the nectar’s quality and harm its appeal for potential pollinators, thereby impeding the tree’s chances of pollination.

“Pollinating insects have always been lacking, so plants have had to develop ways to take the lead in attracting those that are available, in competition with other plants. Otherwise, they will not be able to reproduce. This is more than just a hypothesis: it is a very practical theory.

For reasons that are not fully clear, there is a significant shortage of bees in the world. The worldwide scarcity of available pollinators severely harms agriculture and threatens supplies of produce for the human population. In California there are enormous almond groves that without bees will not produce fruit.

Due to the scarcity of bees, the almond farmers in California are compelled to import -- from as far away as Australia -- truckloads of beehives during the almond’s flowering season, so as to ensure pollination,” Prof. Izhaki stated.

UNITED KINGDOM

Government commission research into how to support new and existing beekeeper 12/2/2010

The project will be carried out with consultancy People Science & Policy to develop a better understanding of how to support new and existing beekeepers. The results of the study will be used to improve the advice and training available to beekeepers as part of the healthy bees plan.

The 10-year plan was launched a year ago by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government to recognise the importance of everyone with an interest in bees — including commercial and amateur beekeepers — working together to promote and improve honey bee health.

There is a strong public interest in honey bees together with increased interest in the environment and awareness of declines in the number of bees, which has encouraged more people to take up beekeeping.

New Patron for Bees for Development Trust 13/2/2010

The Bees for Development Trust is pleased to announce Sting as a Patron of the Trust.

Musician, actor and activist, Sting is a long time supporter of human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Live Aid and, along with wife Trudie Styler, founded the Rainforest Foundation in 1989 to protect both the world’s rainforests and the indigenous people who live there. We believe his involvement with Bees for Development will help highlight the Trust’s work in promoting sustainable beekeeping methods and livelihoods amongst some of the poorest communities in the world.

NICK’S NEWS

from I&I NSW

Nick Annand
Livestock Officer (Bees),
Industry and Investment NSW,
Bathurst
Ph: 02 6330 1210
nicholas.annand@industry.nsw.gov.au



CHANGING RULES FOR PHOSPHINE USE

At this time of year if you have any supers in storage you need to be managing the damage that both types of wax moth; greater wax moth (*Galleria mellonella*) and lesser wax moth (*Achroia grisella*) and also possibly small hive beetle (SHB) can cause to your combs. There are a few different ways to do this. One method commonly used by beekeepers is to fumigate with phosphine gas, but soon you will need to be accredited to use aluminium phosphide tablets.

Currently when using any agricultural chemicals you are required to have been trained and accredited to use them. The minimum requirement is a Level 3 certificate in chemical application attained from the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). SMARTrain® and ChemCert® are the two main training providers for this accreditation in NSW. The accreditation lasts for five years and then needs renewal. This can be done with a shorter refresher course.

Prior to now the use of fumigants such as phosphine for on-farm use within the rural industry was allowed under the above-mentioned accreditation because of an exemption that has been in place for the past two years. However the exemption period lapses on the 29 February 2011. After this date it is expected that every beekeeper using fumigants is appropriately trained. For the final year of the exemption, namely 29/2/10 to 29/2/11, any beekeepers who have not yet undergone the fumigant training will be expected to do so. Below I have included the Gazetted Exemption Order No. 002/08.

To make the training for the use and storage of fumigants suitable specifically for beekeepers (a fairly small market) Industry and Investment NSW have developed a unit relevant for beekeepers using phosphine fumigation that satisfies the WorkCover training requirement. This additional unit can be combined with the refresher course for farm chemical use. For beekeepers needing to do a refresher chemical application course that use or think they might use phosphine should combine the two. Because this course would be specific for beekeepers, to get this training done in your local area I suggest that you organise it through your local NSW Apiarists’ Association branch. Once we have adequate numbers (10 to 20) get the branch to contact either Doug Somerville or myself and we can organise for the course to be delivered to your area. This will then allow you to legally use and store Aluminium phosphide (phosphine) to control wax moth and SHB in stored supers.

Full details of the ‘Pest & Diseases of Honeybees’ course were published in the Nov/Dec 2009 edition. To Book Contact: Kim Griffiths, Tocal College on 1800 025 520

**Tamworth - 9/10 Mar
Dubbo - 20/21 Apr
Grafton - 17/18 Aug
Griffith - 14/15 Sep
Kempsey - 19/20 Oct**

**Glen Innes - 11/12 Mar
Bathurst - 22/23 Apr
Lismore - 19/20 Aug
Wagga - 16/17 Sep
Tocal - 21/22 Oct**

NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT GAZETTE No. 26

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATION 2001

Exemption Order No. 002/08

I, JOHN WATSON, General Manager, Occupational Health and Safety Division, of the WorkCover Authority of New South Wales, pursuant to Clause 348 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 make the following Order.

Dated this 25th day of February 2008

JOHN WATSON,
General Manager,
Occupational Health and Safety Division,
WorkCover Authority of New South Wales

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001

Exemption Order No. 002/08

1. Name of Order

This Order is the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 Exemption Order No. 002/08.

2. Commencement

This Order commences on the 29 February 2008, and has effect for a period of three years from that date.

3. Replacement of former Exemption Order

This Exemption Order replaces former Exemption Order No. 017/07, which is hereby withdrawn.

4. Exemption

Fumigant users specified in Schedule 1 are exempt from clause 270 (1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001, subject to the conditions specified in Schedule 2.

SCHEDULE 1

- 1) Users of the fumigants aluminium phosphide tablets by hand and chloropicrin by pressurised fumigation machine to control stored grain, invertebrate and vertebrate pests for on-farm use within the rural industry.
- 2) This exemption does not apply to fumigant users who use fumigants in a trade or business as a service to the rural industry.
- 3) Note: aluminium phosphide tablets produce phosphine.

SCHEDULE 2

- 1) The controller of premises where the fumigants are used must:
 - a. ensure that the fumigants are only used by persons authorised by the controller of premises;
 - b. meet the requirements of the Pesticides Regulation 1995;
 - c. have attained a qualification issued in accordance with Level 3 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certifying that the competency units RTC3704A, RTC3705A have been achieved;
 - d. obtain appropriate training in addition to the competency units RTC3704A and RTC3705A in the on-farm safe use and handling of the fumigants referred to in Schedule 1 within two years after the issue of this exemption;
 - e. instruct the persons authorised by the controller of premises and referred to in 1. a. of Schedule 2 in the safe use of the fumigants, and ensure that any risks arising from the hazards identified in accordance with such use have been assessed and adequately controlled, and those persons are advised of the controls;
 - f. be satisfied those persons can be relied upon to use the fumigants without placing the health and safety of themselves or others at risk; and
 - g. ensure those persons are made aware of the application and limitations of this exemption order.
- 2) The person so authorised to use the fumigants in accordance with clause 1. a. to Schedule 2 of this exemption must:
 - a. be not less than eighteen (18) years of age;
 - b. meet the requirements of the Pesticides Regulation 1995;
 - c. have attained a qualification issued in accordance with Level 3 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certifying that the competency units RTC3704A, RTC3705A have been achieved;
 - d. obtain appropriate training in addition to the competency units RTC3704A and RTC3705A in the on-farm safe use and handling of the fumigants referred to in Schedule 1 within two years after the issue of this exemption;
 - e. be able to communicate to a level that enables them to perform their duties safely; and
 - f. observe safe practices at all times whilst using the fumigants and take action to prevent any person being placed at risk.

5 Definitions

In this Order:

“rural industry” means in a workplace encompassing an area used predominantly for the production of stock or animal products (such as honey, milk or wool), rearing livestock or growing crops. This includes farms, orchards, vineyards, market gardens and forestry. This does not include workplaces solely processing or storing agricultural products.

“appropriate training” (in addition to the competency units RTC3704A and RTC3705A or equivalent in the on farm safe use and handling of the fumigants mentioned in Schedule 1), means training acceptable to the WorkCover= Authority of New South Wales (and that may be provided as part of the existing Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 3 competency units RTC3704A, RTC3705A or as separate training).

“controller of premises “ and “fumigant” have the same meaning as in the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.

THERE IS HOPE FOR THE BEES AFTER ALL

David VanderDussen, NOD Apiary Products, Canada

www.miteaway.com

Courtesy: Hivelights - February 2010

Varroa mites have and continue to be the biggest problem for bees around the world. The Varroa mite has been identified as a major contributing factor to the massive bee losses.

Hard chemical pesticides have been tried and used for many years BUT their usefulness has run its course. Varroa have developed resistance to virtually all of the traditional hard chemical pesticides available to control them – one of the reasons identified for sudden colony losses.

BUT there is hope on the horizon. A small Canadian company has developed, tested and trial run a new generation of Varroa mite control product.

NOD Apiary Products introduced MAQS™. The “Mite Away Quick Strip™” to the world on September 16th in Montpellier France at the 41st Congress of Apimondia.

MAQS™ is the first truly new Varroa treatment in many years. Many beekeepers have been forced by this lack of available and innovative treatments to rely on using chemical treatments that have not only been hurting their bees but contaminating wax and honey.

MAQS™ moves a giant step forward by allowing beekeepers to not only treat DURING the honey flow BUT to target the Varroa directly where they live and breed.

The MAQS™ is a single application treatment. The treatment period is only seven days, and upon completion the spent strip can either be left in the hive for disposal by the bees or can simply be thrown into the compost. It is 100% compostable.

MAQS™ has been shown to be exceptionally effective in killing Varroa under worker brood cap – while they are either being born or mating BUT doing all this without causing any significant damage to the pupating larva.

Trials have been conducted in Canada, Hawaii, Florida, Texas and three sites in Europe.

MAQS™ is a new formulation of Formic Acid and is “Patent Pending”. Each MAQS™ strip is less than 6mm/1/4 inch thick so that it fits easily into the bee space.

Each treatment consists of two strips placed either between brood chambers or on top between brood and honey supers. No additional equipment is required and excellent efficacy has been obtained in temperatures up to 33°C/92°F.

NOD is working to have MAQS™ available in January/February 2010 for general distribution as registrations are obtained.

RECIPES



Honey & Ginger Drumsticks

8 chicken drumsticks
1/3 cup honey
1/3 cup orange
2 tablespoons sweet soy sauce
3cm piece ginger, peeled, finely grated
2 garlic cloves
Salt & pepper

Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a large ovenproof dish with baking paper.

Combine honey, orange, soy sauce, ginger and garlic in a jug. Season with salt and pepper. Place drumsticks into prepared dish. Pour marinade over drumsticks, turning to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Bake drumsticks for 40-45 minutes or until cooked through and golden. Serve with steamed rice.

Sliced Tomato Platter

Arrange slice fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, feta sheese and ripe olives on a platter. Drizzle with equal parts of **honey**, tarragon vinegar and extra virgin olive oil. Sprinkle with fresh chives.

Honey, Date & Walnut Loaf

125g butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
2 eggs
1/3 cup honey
1 1/2 cups plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
250g pitted dates, sliced
1/2 cup roughly chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Grease and line a 19cm x 9cm loaf pan with baking paper.

Beat butter and sugar until light and creamy, using an electric mixer. Add eggs. Beat well to combine. Using a wooden spoon, stir through honey.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and a pinch salt. Stir through honey mixture until combined. Fold in dates and nuts. Spoon mixture into prepared pan.

Bake for 55-60 minutes until a skewer inserted in centre comes out clean (cover loosely with foil if loaf is browning too quickly). Cool 5 minutes in pan. Remove. Cool completely on wire rack.



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VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS AHBIC

The NSW Apiarists' Association encourages all honey producers to contribute to the funding levy for the administration of Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC).

Payment of this levy by all honey producers will ensure that the honey production sector continues to be represented at a national level.

Many NSW beekeepers already contribute to this levy through their packer but not all packers are collecting this levy from their suppliers – does your packer contribute?

The honey producer's voluntary contribution levy is 0.2cents per kg of honey produced and sold and can be paid by the beekeeper at six monthly or yearly intervals.

Send your contribution directly to the AHBIC Office or ask your packer to deduct and pay the levy on your behalf. AHBIC will forward a Tax Invoice/Receipt on all amounts sent directly to them.

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B-QUAL OVERVIEW

It is well recognised in the honey industry that quality standards in relation to food safety are demanded by customers, wholesalers and governments. Also, it is necessary to comply with the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Food Safety Standard, which requires food businesses to develop a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) based food safety programme.

B-QUAL Objective

B-QUAL Australia Pty Limited has been established by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council as an independently developed and audited food safety programme.

The project involves a three year programme with the ultimate aim of ensuring that in excess of 90% of all honey produced in Australia is quality assured for both domestic and export customers.

The specific requirements of the European Union (EU) for the export of honey and honey products (including organics) will be met. The requirements of FSANZ Food Safety Standard will also be developed. The adoption of these standards will enable continued market access both in Australia and overseas. The project will produce for industry to adopt, an auditable biosecurity plan.

It is also proposed that the adoption of a national quality standard will form the basis of an ongoing programme to ensure industry best practice and ongoing industry training.

Product standards include all facets of production and services of the industry including honey, queen bees, pollination and honey packing. The resulting system provides a self-policing means of ensuring standards are kept at industry best practice and meet the domestic and international market demands.

B-QUAL Mission

The purpose of B-QUAL is to accredit and have adopted a quality assurance programme for greater than 90% of the production of the Australian honeybee industry. The project will develop accreditation and train industry participants in QA standards, organic standards and biosecurity as well as providing on ongoing third party audit system.

What does B-QUAL cover?

As the industry quality assurance program – B-QUAL includes the production and delivery of the:

- Industry Food Safety Plan
- 'Honey Quality Standard' booklet
- QA templates to assist beekeepers with the writing of a quality manual
- Training materials for industry facilitators
- Auditor training manual
- National 'Auditor Training Workshops'
- Templates will also include criteria for the production of organic honey.
- Development of an industry biosecurity plan

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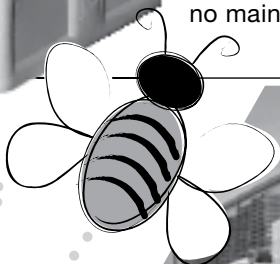
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AHBIC NEWS

Excerpts January 2010

INDUSTRY UPDATE ON BEALE REPORT

Following the release of the Beale Report Industry has been involved in a series of meetings with Government in respect of the report's implementation. The following provides a brief outline of the Government's commitment and outcomes to date:

1. In response to a review of the AusVet Plan Disease Strategy Manual for bee pests and diseases by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, DAFF has made applications for Emergency Use Permits for the chemicals required to conduct an emergency response to an incursion of Varroa or other parasitic mites. The APVMA advises that the permits are likely to be issued before the end of January 2010. At a meeting of the RIRDC Pollination Research and Development Advisory Committee held on 2 September 2009, it was agreed that industry would take responsibility for applications for Minor Use Permits to manage Varroa should the mite be declared endemic. The meeting agreed that Kevin Bodnaruk, advisor to Horticulture Australia Limited would be able to assist industry with their applications.
2. The Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) Parties' meeting of 27 October 2009 agreed in principle to the inclusion of honeybee pests and diseases in the EPPRD. Plant Health Australia has, over the past 6 months, consulted with EPPRD Parties to allow for the pests and diseases of honeybees to be included in the EPPRD. This would allow the pollination-reliant industries to participate in and contribute to the decision making and funding of a response to a pest of bees that would impact on the productivity and viability of their industries.
3. A working group of primary industries officials from the Commonwealth, states and territories is drafting the National Agreement on Biosecurity (the Agreement) and provided a draft to the Primary Industries Ministerial Council and Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council in November. The draft Agreement aims to strengthen the working partnership between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and identifies the roles and responsibilities of governments. The draft Agreement is supported by a number of schedules that outline the priority areas for collaborative effort between governments to improve the national biosecurity system. It is anticipated that monitoring, surveillance and diagnostics, information sharing and research and development will be included in the supporting schedules. Recommendation 53(f) of the Beale review focuses on post border monitoring and surveillance, the National Sentinel Hive Program and its eventual replacement with a more comprehensive approach based on an assessment of risks. The Australian Government is examining its options for post border monitoring and surveillance activities more broadly and, through the National Agreement on Biosecurity, it will see how these activities could best fit into the national biosecurity system. Future liaison with industry will occur to further develop policy directions established under the Agreement.
4. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke MP, has approved the expenditure of \$14.7 million from within the Department's budget to address priority issues identified by the Beale Report. One of these priorities will be to examine the current network of quarantine facilities for plants and animals entering Australia, to better plan for future needs. The work will include examining alternatives for the current five sites that have leases expiring in 2015. This includes the Eastern Creek facility that contains the bee quarantine facility in New South Wales.
5. Experts with DAFF have continued to assist Biosecurity Queensland with the response to the Asian honey bee incursion in Cairns. In particular, DAFF officers have assisted Queensland in preparing their case to the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) and have completely redrafted the Surveillance Plan to meet international standards and the requirements of the SAP. DAFF contributed two senior technical specialists and the secretariat for the SAP. Industry is also making representations to Government and Plant Industries re obtaining funding.
6. Horticulture Policy Branch within DAFF is funding of a study to: (i) determine the capacity of the honey bee industry to provide pollination services to the horticulture industries and, (ii) develop a contingency plan for the honey bee and pollination dependent industries in the event of a Varroa incursion. A steering committee has been established and a consultant has been retained. It is expected that the consultant's report will be submitted in July 2010.
7. DAFF has funded and conducted a training program for state/territory officers in the laboratory testing and detection of bee pests and diseases. This course was held in the laboratory of Dr Denis Anderson in November 2009. Each participant is now responsible for training three other staff members in the recognition of bee pests and diseases to increase Australia's laboratory capacity in this area.
8. DAFF is funding and conducting a training program for state/territory entomologists in the recognition and phylogenetic keying of bee species including pest bee species of concern to Australia including the Asian honey bee, the dwarf honey bee and the giant honey bee.
9. A DAFF scientist has participated in the project team lead by CSIRO conducting a review of bee surveillance in Australia. The draft report of this review has been submitted to RIRDC and a final report is expected in the next few weeks.

10. The first round of testing for the National Sentinel Hive Program under its new management structure has now been completed successfully. The transition to management by Animal Health Australia has proceeded smoothly.

CATEGORISATION OF EXOTIC INCURSIONS OF HONEYBEES - Trevor Weatherhead

There has been much discussion of late re the categorization of the current incursion/eradication of *Apis cerana* in Cairns. CCAHB has circulated the CIE/CSIRO 2000 document. These comments are based on that document and current knowledge.

In the document both *Varroa destructor* and *Apis cerana* (strains from Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, China, Taiwan Korea and Japan) are 20 percent industry, 80 percent Government. *V. jacobsoni* and *A. cerana* (strains from India, Malaysian Peninsular, Philippines, New Guinea, several Indonesian Islands plus the Torres Strait Protected Zone) are 50 percent industry, 50 percent Government.

The reason for the 50/50 for *V. jacobsoni* is "The mite completely lacks the ability to reproduce on *Apis mellifera*" and for *A. cerana* it was "All these strains, except for those from the Philippines, could introduce strains of *Varroa jacobsoni* which are harmless to *Apis mellifera*."

In light of the recent New Guinea experience, it is now known that *V. jacobsoni* can reproduce on *A. mellifera*. So it is now in the same category as *V. destructor* which is 20 percent industry, 80 percent Government.

The document also says in relation to *A. cerana* that "They could increase incidental pollination or could be hived and used for commercial pollination of some tropical crops". The experience with the current strain in Cairns, *A. cerana javana*, is that it is not conducive to hiving and swarms too prolifically to be of much use for pollination. The document also says "Establishment of these trains of *Apis cerana* would also have some effect on the community and environment. They could become a public nuisance around cities and towns due to their high swarming propensity. They would also compete for nesting sites, nectar and pollen."

Since 2000, there has been an application import bumble bees (*Bombus sp.*) to mainland Australia which has been rejected. There is a strong parallel between the reasons why bumble bees were not allowed to be imported and the risk of Asian bees becoming established on mainland Australia. These environmental grounds are the provenance of Government.

With the advent of this incursion in Cairns, there has been an opportunity to observe what the potential problems are if Asian bees did become established in Australia. The public nuisance is higher than has been stated in the CIE/CSIRO document.

There have been nests found in letterboxes, roofs of houses and walls of houses. This problem has been only with 55 nest and swarms being found. Imagine the public nuisance if it was declared endemic and allowed to multiply at will. There is a greater public nuisance problem in light of what has happened in Cairns than the original 2000 document identified. The problems can also be seen when the situation in the Solomon Islands is looked at.

So it can be seen that there are a lot more benefits that can be subscribed to the public and environment than was originally identified in the original document plus an update of the knowledge on *V. jacobsoni* and *A. cerana* now clearly justifies a 20 per cent industry, 80 per cent Government split.

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	WA Farmers Federation- Beekeeping Section	11 June	Perth
	Queensland Beekeepers Association	17 - 18 June	Ipswich
	Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association	19 May	Port Macquarie
	Honey Packers and Marketers Association	26 May	Sydney
	National Council of Crop Pollination Associations	17 June	Ipswich
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	Australian Honey Bee Industry Council	18 - 19 June	Ipswich

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