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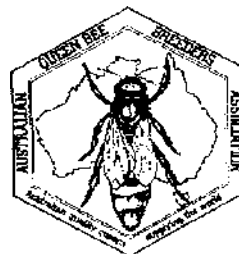
Volume 4 Number 1
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011

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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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COVER: The dreaded Asian Honey Bee (*Apis cerana*)

Photo: Nick Annand (I&I NSW)

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Season

The season has turned from dry to wet to even wetter in many areas. Constant rain and flooding has curtailed honey production in many areas during spring-summer. We are getting reports of hive losses, possibly 1,000 hives, due to floods in the Northern border area, with hives working Silver-leafed Ironbark. Prior to Christmas a number of hives, 200-300 were believed to have been lost in the Castlereagh-Bogan flood event.

The floods have caused widespread destruction. Beekeeping losses are yet to be fully assessed, but there will undoubtedly be significant impacts on the Industry. There is some consolation with the wetter season allowing bees to breed much better than previous years and queen rearing is so much easier.

Honey Supply

Honey supply is generally below average and there are not a lot of prospects for Autumn to change the production figures.

Suspension of Imports

The USA has suspended import of Australian queens and packages. Negotiations are underway however the window for packages (Jan-Mar) is closing quickly. This will put operations involved in packaging under extreme pressure.

TAFE

A number of branches are investigating Chemical Courses limited to fumigation, chemical storage and handling. Lismore TAFE has agreed to run a course on 5 March. Contact your branch for more information.

Royal Easter Show

"Honeyland" will again be present at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Honey stocks are being prepared and everything will be ready for 14 April 2011.

The Executive work hard preparing for and during the Show, but desperately needs extra volunteers to help out during the Show. Remember the profits from the Show are what help keep our membership fees so low. If you find you can help out for 1-2 days please contact the Association Secretary Julie Lockhart on Ph: 02 9863 4338.

2011 Conference

Arrangements are well underway for this year's Conference to be held in Dubbo on 19 & 20 May with a Trade Show during Conference as well as a Field Day organised by the Western Plains Branch on Saturday 21 May. A preliminary Conference program is published in this edition.

Australia's Honeybee News

This issue of *Australia's Honeybee News* is a special edition (assisted by I&I NSW) and is being sent to all registered beekeepers in NSW. I&I have paid for the extra copies to be sent out in an attempt to inform non members of the New South Wales Apiarists' Association, that there is an Association to help and represent them, and to allow them to keep up with changes within the Honeybee industry.

The State Executive encourages all beekeepers to join the New South Wales Apiarists' Association and support those who are representing you.

On behalf of the Association I would like to thank I&I NSW and their dedicated staff for their support with this special edition.

Centenary Conference 2013

The State Executive has decided to do something special for the 100 year celebration of the Association in 2013. The Conference is to be expanded and will be an Australian Congress.

It is envisaged to run the Congress over 4 days at our normal time being late May and will be held at the Canberra Exhibition Park (National Show grounds). This is a wonderful venue with plenty of room and has caravan and camping facilities free for patrons. There is ample accommodation nearby at motels etc.

There will be many International and highly respected Australian presenters booked for this auspicious occasion.

GET WELL

On behalf of the Executive and Members I would like to send our best wishes to our Secretary Julie who is recovering at home after surgery.

ASIAN HONEY BEE (*Apis cerana*)

Following a meeting of the Asian Honey Bee National Management Group on Monday 31 January it was decided that it is no longer technically feasible to eradicate Asian honeybees. **The Asian Honey Bee was declared ENDEMIC on 1 February.**

A full copy of the Government Communique is included in the AHBIC Report as well as a response from the Hon John Cobb MP, Opposition spokesman on Agriculture.

Bill Weiss
State President

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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

SPECIAL EDITION

Welcome to this special edition of Australia's Honeybee News. To our Members, Subscribers and Advertisers thank you for your ongoing support. To our new readers we hope you enjoy.

The NSW Apiarists' Association, with the assistance of Industry & Investment NSW (Formerly DPI NSW) have mailed a copy of this special edition to every registered beekeeper in NSW.

Included in this edition are a variety of articles on a range of subjects including Education, Bee Diseases, Branch News, AHBIC News and another in our series of stories about the older generation of beekeepers.

You are invited to join the Association and attend the Annual Conference to be held in Dubbo in May. There is a pull out section in the centre of the Magazine with full details.

All members receive a copy of the magazine and it is also available to non-members by an annual subscription of \$36.00.

Margaret Blunden
Editor

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SHOULD YOU JOIN THE NSWAA?

I am a 3rd generation full time beekeeper, I've began going to bees at a very young age, which made my choice to be a beekeeper as my career. While working with my father and two brothers with the bees, was when I started making up my own bees at the age of 16 years old. Once I got my bees I than had a responsibility to myself and other beekeepers so I had to register my bees with the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) today they are called Industry and Investment (I&I).

I&I play a very important part of our industry and you should work with them and communicate with them as I&I are there to advise and help out with your industry. Once you register your bees with I&I they know who you are and have all your information on record and if there is a problem in the bee industry you can be contacted. (ie AFB outbreaks or worse VARROA outbreak and any news breaks with AG FACTS).

While it is important to be registered with I&I it is just as important to join your NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION (NSWAA) where there are five beekeepers nominated as your executive council, from here there are ten local branches after you register with NSWAA which you can nominate one as your local branch and join. From there you will have voting rights.

Now you have done all of the above you now have a voice through your local branch level or at state conference level. Any problems should be brought to your branch meetings and the branch then informs the NSWAA executives. If there are any changes to the industry that you hear about this is where the NSWAA council can talk to the right people in the right places to try to help the industry, as government bodies today work better with associations not individuals.

1. Some of the benefits of being a member of NSWAA you get a copy of *Australia's Honeybee News* every second month which keeps you informed with industry news
2. By using your membership number you can get a better package on your insurance for your business
3. Currently if you are a financial member you can purchase IBC honey containers at a cheaper rate and that cheaper rate is on 205 litres containers as well
4. There are more benefits to mention so it is your benefit to join the NSWAA and find all the benefits yourself

One thing I would like to say is when I was a part time beekeeper attending branch meetings and state conferences my voice was heard the same as the commercial beekeepers. This shows you don't have to be a commercial beekeeper to attend your local branch and your state conference. By attending either local or state meetings you may not always learn a lot, but sometimes you may learn some important information from overseas visitors or just our local I&I people or another beekeeper you may not have seen before but heard how informative he or she is and here is your chance to make contact just from being a member of your NSWAA and LOCAL BRANCH and attending meetings or state conference.

It is most important to have an open mind of your own, if you've heard from another beekeeper that has voiced their opinion about what the NSWAA has not done unless you attend the meetings you will be misinformed, so this is why it is important to be a member. More members the

Association has the stronger the voting power is and better you are heard at the government level if NSWAA has to take any issues to government parties.

I was asked to write an article for this issue of the Journal it was left up to me to chose the article, I chose this one as I believe all beekeepers should be working together for the good of the industry, so this is why industry would like to see more register beekeepers become financial members of NSWAA and there is more to be gained by going this way.

I am one of your five executive councillors who started out as a part time beekeeper and in 1994 became a fulltime beekeeper and now am working with NSWAA to hear any problems beekeepers may have in this great beekeeping industry we all have today.

These are just a few things why I see it is important to be a member of NSWAA, with Varroa knocking on our doorsteps I believe anybody keeping bees should be a member to keep up with what is going on and with Australia's Honeybee News you have I&I input which you don't get if not a member.

This is the first article I have written and I do prefer beekeeping better to trying my hand at this.

Mal Porter

President - Central Tablelands Branch

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Apis cerana

By Bill Weiss

During presentations by Nick Annand (I & I NSW) and Dr Denis Anderson (CSIRO), the importance of the impact that *Apis cerana* will have on the East Australian Beekeeping Industry was sheeted home to me.

Denis and Nick have spent some time in the Solomon Islands where *Apis cerana* had displaced *Apis mellifera*. They were involved in an Australian Centre for international Agricultural Research (ACIAR) project to investigate the possibility of bait station eradication of *Apis cerana*.

Denis Anderson gave an overview of *Apis cerana*'s climatic spread. He told of *Apis cerana*'s ability to acclimatize into the highlands of New Guinea, so they are not limited to warm tropical environs.

The swarming habits of *Apis cerana* are evident from the North Queensland example where 333 (at 13/1/11) swarms and nests have been detected and eradicated since May 2007, which are believed to have emanated from one (1) incursion.

There is concern that *Apis cerana*, once established in a region, may render *Apis mellifera* queen rearing less successful if *Apis cerana* drones can mate with *Apis mellifera* queens. This mating would make the queens less fertile making them less productive and possibly sterile if only mated to *Apis cerana* drones. Effectually, areas with *Apis cerana* populations established, may render the area to exclude *Apis mellifera*.



Apis cerana



Apis Mellifera

Apis cerana is not a commercial alternative to *Apis mellifera* as they produce extremely small honey crops and are hard to manage, because of inherent swarming and absconding when manipulated. The frequency of swarming, their attraction to colonise in man-made structures, as well as their aggressive temperament, will make them a major public nuisance and their pollination ability is very questionable.

This information, if thought about logistically, poses a more difficult problem for East Australian beekeepers. If the eradication attempt in Cairns presently in place, is abandoned and the pest (*Apis cerana*) is declared endemic, then within a few short years *Apis cerana* could establish throughout most East Coast regions and hinterland ranges. This spread would put enormous pressure on *Apis mellifera* due to the potential build up of large numbers of swarms and established colonies of *Apis cerana*, foraging and competing for restricted resources.

Varroa has long been described as our biggest threat, and this is true. *Varroa* will wipe out all colonies not treated to control *Varroa*. Effectively all feral colonies of *Apis mellifera* will succumb to *Varroa*, also managed colonies not treated.

Beekeepers, as individuals, can effectively manage hives (albeit at a cost) against *Varroa*, however, they cannot manage hives against the onslaught of *Apis cerana* if the present incursion in North Queensland is not controlled, is declared endemic, and allowed to spread down the East Coast. Beekeeping in Eastern Australia would cease to exist as we know it.

***Apis cerana* was declared endemic on 1 February 2011 - we can only wait and see what the outcome for Australia will be now!**

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BEEKEEPING EDUCATION

Education can take on different forms. Most think of education in a formal sense referring back to their school days where you sit behind a desk and the teacher provides you with your lessons for the day. You are most probably involved in some sort of education process every day you get out of bed, either by reading the newspaper, a book or magazine, listening to the radio or watching TV.

When you wish to find out about a particular subject or learn a particular skill you may be more specific in your learning strategies and buy a book on your chosen subject, subscribe to a particular magazine, join a specialist organisation (such as the NSW Apiarist's Association, or the Amateur Beekeepers Association) search for information on the internet or attend a formal course (return to school!).

So what's on offer as far as formal courses are concerned for beekeepers in NSW?

Industry & Investment NSW (Department of Primary Industries – my department) conduct training short courses in four subjects including Beginning in bees, Queen bee breeding, Pests and diseases of honey bees and Beekeeping as a business.

TAFE offers a beekeeping correspondence course through OTEN (Open Training and Education Network). The local TAFE College may also offer chemical training courses. Two beekeeping associations currently provide training to new beekeepers including the Hunter Valley branch of the NSW Amateur Beekeepers Association and the ACT Beekeepers Association.

There is also the opportunity for individuals to enrol in a Certificate III in Agriculture with a focus on beekeeping. At present there are no full time courses in this field, but the opportunity exists to complete a certificate in Agriculture. Individuals need to contact the training providers – TAFE and Industry & Investment to negotiate what arrangements could be made.

Details of all these courses are as follows:

Industry & Investment NSW – Profarm beekeeping short courses.

(Refer: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/profarm or phone 1800 025 520)

Beginning in Bees

This is a two day practical beekeeping course designed for new beekeepers costing \$500. The course aim is to provide experience in handling bees and carry out general management practices on a beehive.

Areas covered include:

- identifying the bees life cycle
- identifying hive components
- use of the terminology used in keeping bees
- understanding how a colony works
- inspect and manipulate colonies
- the use of appropriate protective wear
- bee biology and seasonal management
- honey and pollen flora identification
- the relevant legislation appropriate to keeping bees

- pests and diseases affecting the keeping of bees
- extracting and storing honey
- purchasing hives and much more

All participants in this course receive a copy of the *Bee Agskills* book.

The course dates for 2011 are:

- Grafton 19-20 February conducted by Allan Thomas and Doug Richard, experienced amateur beekeepers.
- Camden 2-3 April, conducted by Des and Jenan Cannon, semi-retired commercial beekeepers.
- Paterson (near Maitland) 15-16 October, conducted by Doug Somerville, Technical Specialist Honey Bees and Nick Annand, Apiary Officer, both experienced staff within Industry & Investment NSW.
- Bellingen 15-16 October, conducted by Allan Thomas and Doug Richards.
- Camden 5-6 November, conducted by Des and Jenan Cannon.

Queen Bee Breeding:

This is a 3 day course designed for existing beekeepers to enable them to produce their own queen bees or scale up to become a commercial queen bee producer. The cost is \$665.

Subjects covered during the course include:

- Biology of honey bees including a study of the reproductive system
- Designing a breeding program and being able to identify suitable breeding stock
- Life cycle and genetics
- Managing drone mother colonies
- Nucleus colonies and cell raising colonies
- Considerations in mating yard design
- Introducing queen bees
- Banking queen bees
- Calendar of operations
- Markets for queens
- Catching, marking, clipping, caging, packing, mailing and transporting queen bees
- Export and importing queen bees

There is an emphasis on skills training, particularly the process of selecting the appropriate aged larvae to graft and the removal of this larvae from the brood cell into the artificial queen cup.

There is usually only one queen bee course each year held in the autumn. In 2011 this will be held at Richmond, NSW at Gretchen Wheen's property on 25-27 March and will be conducted by Doug Somerville and Nick Annand.

Beekeeping as a Business:

This is a two day course which involves no practical component. The cost of the course is \$520. This course has been designed to provide existing small scale beekeepers with an understanding of the issues to consider if they are increasing their involvement in beekeeping into a business. It is important that individuals fully comprehend the limitations and constraints that exist which will affect their ability to become a commercial beekeeper.

Subjects covered include:

- lifestyle considerations
- health issues
- specialisation options
- techniques to increase hive numbers and maintaining numbers
- constructing a site portfolio
- considerations for operating in different geographic regions
- disease and nutrition status of an apiary
- types of plant and equipment necessary
- quality assurance
- taxation and budgeting
- markets for honey
- industry networks

Only one course will be conducted each year. In 2011 this will be at Tamworth on the 31 August-1 September by Des Cannon.

Pests and Diseases of Honey Bees:

This course is designed for existing beekeepers and covers both endemic and exotic diseases. It is a two day course at a cost of \$480.

The course provides beekeepers with the skills to recognise, monitor and manage the impact of pests and disease on commercial honey bee colonies. It is also designed to promote awareness and surveillance for exotic pests and diseases threatening the Australian beekeeping industry. This course is registered under the Commonwealth Government's FarmReady program. Eligible primary producers can be reimbursed for the cost of this course (see www.farmready.gov.au). This course aims for each participant to be able to identify and manage the major domestic pests and disease of honey bees to minimise their impact. Subjects include:

- Seasonal cycle of honey bee colonies
- Why pest and diseases are important
- Management strategies for disease prevention
- Different pathogens and transmission methods
- Four main brood diseases
- Practical - opening a hive and inspecting for brood disease
- Adult bee diseases
- Hive pests
- Non infectious disorders
- Exotic pests and disease
- Surveillance programs for exotics
- Exotic incursion responses
- What disease, what causes disease

Participants receive course notes and manual.

The next course is scheduled for 10-11 August at Euston on the Murray River on the NSW side opposite Robinvale. This location has been chosen to provide an opportunity for beekeepers providing bees pollinating almonds to attend. Another Pest and Disease course will be held in spring with the location yet to be determined, Doug Somerville and Nick Annand will deliver this course.

TAFE Correspondence Beekeeping Course – through the Open Training and Education Network (OTEN)

Refer to www.oten.edu.au or phone 1300 421 805. This course is open for enrolment at any time of the year. OTEN allows you one year to complete this course from the date of your initial enrolment. The cost of this course is \$560. There are five units in this course. The course is completed by:

- assignment work which you send in for comment and assessment

- attendance at a two day practical session at Sutherland in south west Sydney

The **Amateur Beekeepers Association of NSW** (Inc) www.beekeepers.asn.au, have 7 branches including the Illawarra, Parramatta, Macarthur, Nepean, Central Coast, Hunter Valley and Northern Rivers. The Hunter Valley branch periodically have organised education programs. All the branches have regular meetings and field days. Refer to there web site for details.

The **Beekeepers Association of the ACT** conducts regular introductory courses comprised of four, half day sessions on consecutive Saturdays. The cost is \$195, refer to www.actbeekeepers.asn.au for more information on session content and enrolment details.

Chemical training: Beekeepers who use or store agricultural chemicals have legal responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (OH&S Act) and the Pesticides Act 1999. Part of these responsibilities is to complete a suitable training package for your level of chemical use. Training can be obtained by completing an accredited course such as Smart train or Chemcert. Contact your local TAFE or local provider of chemical training to find out costs, availability and dates.

Certificate III to Diploma: If you are interested in pursuing qualifications in beekeeping at Certificate III or above in agriculture, contact Charlie Bell, Education Officer at Tocal Agricultural College on 02 4939 8875 who will be able to discuss various options available. He is also available to discuss the Colleges skills recognition programs for Certificate III in Agriculture up to Diploma level qualifications including flexible trainee options.

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Mick Rankmore

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Industry and Investment – Primary Industries
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Ph: 02 6741 8374 Fax: 02 67424018 Mob: 0402 078 963
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Operational Plans are operations where several I & I NSW - Primary Industries Regulatory Officers (apiary inspectors) conduct high profile compliance operations in an area.

The objectives of these operations are twofold:

1. To provide advisory material to beekeepers on registration requirements and disease notification/eradication by holding an information meeting with interested beekeepers and
2. To investigate compliance with, and obtain evidence of breaches, of the provisions under section 6(1) – unregistered beekeepers, section 15 – unidentified brood boxes and section 22(1) – fail to notify AFB and take appropriate regulatory action where offences are detected

The major objective is to heighten future compliance.

These operations are a relative new concept for our Agricultural Compliance Unit. Operations have been conducted at Young, (2007), Alstonville (2008), Kempsey, (2009) Batemans Bay (2009), Inverell (2010) and Bathurst (- to operations March and November 2010).

Due to Industries concerns about the number of AFB infected apiaries detected, I & I NSW was asked to conduct follow up inspections in the same areas.

Follow up inspections occurred at Inverell and Bathurst areas. At the time of writing this article another follow up inspection was planned for the Kempsey area.

The results of the latest operation at Bathurst held in November 2010 indicate that there are still a number of beekeepers who are not complying with their responsibilities under the Apiaries Act. Only 42% of beekeepers fully complied with all the requirements of the Act, leaving 58% not fully complying. Breaches detected include keeping bees while unregistered, failing to notify American Foulbrood (AFB) and failing to correctly identify all brood boxes.

A Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) of \$550 was issued to one beekeeper who failed to notify AFB.

The take home messages from these operations are:

1. beekeepers must take responsibility for their own disease management
2. if beekeepers are sick/injured and/or are getting on in age or for any other reason they can not manage their apiaries, they should seek assistance before a major disease problem occurs.
3. beekeepers must consider the effect on the Industry and not just on their own apiaries

Other compliance outcomes this financial year

Due to a reported AFB neglected apiary in August 2010 in the Young area, three beekeepers were issued with a Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) of \$550 each for failing to notify AFB.

During March 2010 a beekeeper was issued with a PIN of \$550 for failing to notify AFB in the Bathurst area. One beekeeper was issued with a PIN of \$550 for introducing hives from Victoria into NSW with out a health certificate.

Numerous written cautions (warning letters) were also issued for offenses such as keeping bees while unregistered, failing to identify brood boxes and fail to keep bees in framed hives.

Our compliance activities are on going and if necessary legal action will be taken when breaches of the Act are detected. In most cases for first offences a written caution may be issued. For second offences a Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) may be issued. The penalty varies with the different offences. In more serious cases a Penalty Infringement Notice may be considered as a first option or even prosecution if warranted.

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NOEL and BARBARA BINGLEY

By Jennifer Poile

A story of work ethic and family values

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Noel and Barbara Bingley at their home “Weerona” near Queanbeyan in southern NSW. I was fascinated with their story, of how they started beekeeping with a few hives and no real knowledge of beekeeping. Over the years they have built up a family business involving three generations of the family working together and running a large, modernised beekeeping operation.

Noel Bingley was introduced to bees while pursuing a career in carpentry soon after finishing school. “I was working on a job in Sutton (near Canberra) with Fred Butt, the local builder and he said to me ‘why don’t you get some bees?’ that was the start of it”, Mr Bingley recalled to me. “Beekeeping got right into my system after that and the bees became my number one priority.” Mr Bingley managed to acquire a few wild bees from the bush, the first being from his family’s property located near Queanbeyan, NSW. After a while Mr Bingley had built his 40 odd hives up to 250 at the same time, working as a builder. “It was like that right up until I got married” The marriage to the lovely Barbara saw a turning point to Noel’s career as he made the decision to give up building and become a full time beekeeper. “I was tempted to stay with carpentry but I’m pleased I didn’t. Bees were my real interest.” Mr Bingley was attracted by the life style that would allow him to work according to the sun and not by the clock, a work ethic that he has carried through all his life. “When you’re working bees you look at the clock and you say, ‘geez I’ve only got an hour of daylight left’ but when you’re working in the building game, it’s like ‘I can go home in half an hour’; that’s the difference” he said with a laugh. From these beginnings, Noel and Barbara Bingley have put together one of the most successful and well known beekeeping business in Australia.

When remembering back to his first year as a beekeeper, Mr Bingley said “I would have liked to have had a record of everything that we did. I could have made a fortune! The day to day occurrences, gee whiz!” He describes the equipment and machinery used as almost nonexistent. “Looking back, everything was a bit archaic, but it was the norm for those days. We had a rattle-dang old Bedford truck that could only take 70-80 hives and every time we shifted once, it took two days to fix it! But even when we progressed to a new Bedford truck it wasn’t much better. It was just the era. You couldn’t do much about it,” he said. The Bingley’s relied on man power to load and unload the bee hives which lead to medical problems later on in life such as arthritis and back pain. “The boys say ‘Well dad why did you do it?’ If I had my time over I don’t think I would have, except that I love the bees.” Other equipment used included a 2 frame extractor set up in a tent for on the spot extracting. There were not many chemical sprays around as pests and diseases didn’t pose the threat they do today. “I dread to think what’s going to happen when varroa mite gets in here (Australia).” He said. “I don’t think that it’s a case of ‘if’, it’s more of a ‘when’.” The varroa mite, currently present throughout the world, including our close neighbours New Zealand and New Guinea is capable of causing a disease called varroatosis which, if left untreated will kill the colony. Mr Bingley believes that the consequent use of chemicals to treat the pest will be expensive and also threaten the “Clean Green” image that Australia holds. “This will affect the unique status of Australian honey on the international and national market. It’s scary alright.” However it is the small hive beetle that currently threatens the Bingley’s hives, mostly affecting those located in the coastal regions. “Awful things, just like maggoty sheep.”



Gradually the equipment and machinery used by the Bingley’s has progressed, leaving Mr Bingley fascinated by the range available and how this era has boosted production. “You can get at least one third more production from the same number of bees, just because of mechanisation. It makes all the difference in the world! The newest trucks don’t even have a clutch in them; automatic. If anyone told us that we would be running trucks like we are now I would have laughed at them.” Another noticeable difference is how, with a modern vehicle, drivers don’t get so tired and long journeys only take a couple of hours. Barbra recalls how Noel used to be away three weeks at a time, “now the boys are usually able to work it into a Monday to Friday week.”

The process of extracting the honey progressed over the years from a 2 framed “tent a-fare” to a caravan where they ran up to 900 hives with equipment that was described as a bit better than what was used in the tent, “but only to a degree”. In the late 70’s, a ‘central extraction plant’ was built on the Bingley property. It has now been updated & equipped with a horizontal 192 frame extractor. By this time, Mr Bingley was heavily involved in the beekeeping industry. “I was on the local branch executive, then on the state executive for many years. I was president for two terms during the 70’s. The association used to do trading, and that was a headache. I think the executive spent more time trying to organise some financial returns from trading rather than on industry problems.”

Mrs Bingley has also been involved in the industry since the late 70’s where she worked at conferences on the registration desk. Barbara takes pride in her involvement in the Sydney Royal Easter Show where she has been making creamed honey and wrapping honey comb since 1982. “Arthur Scattergood, a beekeeper from Queanbeyan, was involved with helping the Southern Districts do their competitive display honey and he got us interested in it. He showed us how to work with honey for showing purposes, that’s how we got involved,” she said. Tips for showing honey included such things as how to maintain the desired temperature, to ensure that you fill the jar all the way to the top, to continue to skim the air bubbles off the top and ensure that the jars are nice and clean. Barbara’s number one tip is: “If you want to do competitive honey, you have to start early!” Barbara enjoys talking to the general public at the show, and clearing up the many misconceptions about honey, especially the misleading health risk information, such as the effects of eating Patterson’s Curse honey. Barbara humbly admits; “We’ve been the Most Successful exhibitors since 1974.” The family would hate to

see the section of competitive honey die at the show, after working so hard with other beekeepers to get the section in the first place. "You only put in the best you can, and if someone does the best they can, then there is no reason they couldn't beat us. No reason in the world. If they can beat us fare and square then I don't mind," adds Mr Bingley.

"It has been a terrific industry to be involved in because you see so much!" Mrs Bingley has thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to travel all over Australia attending most conferences and even international beekeeping trips. "We've been to China, New Zealand, USA and Canada a couple of times," she said. "We are fortunate to have had beekeeping friends in nearly every state in Australia who are always saying 'come and stay with us.'"

There were many interesting characters that Mr Bingley came across and worked with too, ranging from an Irishman that "downed his tools" right on knock off time, leaving a box half painted; to the character who never washed himself; the sleepwalker that camped on a steep river bank and the young bloke who expected a bonus for all the stored honey in the shed that he had nothing to do with producing. Then there were the honey buyers that always forgot the chequebook when you delivered honey, and then only sent you half of it when they finally did pay. But some were really reliable with the chequebook but they never payed that much! "It's been an interesting show!"

The Bingley's relied on suppling honey to a few outlets in Canberra and Sydney for their main income until the early 70's when they joined Capilano Honey Limited. In 2010 the Bingley's made the decision to switch from Capilano to Superbee. Mr Bingley works bees in many geographical locations across the southern half of NSW and into Victoria. "We go from as far down the south coast as Eden for Iron bark as well as North East Victoria around Yackandandah for Red Stringy Bark and all the Kiewa Valley," he told me. "At Bendigo last year we were getting Yellow Gum and Iron bark." Two thirds of the Bingley's hives are located near Cooma and Jindabyne at the present moment with the remainder near Cootamundra. However, the Bingley's prefer to work as close to home as possible. A normal production year would produce approximately 350 tonne, with the best seasons reaching towards 400 tonne, and in the drought years more towards the 300 tonne mark.

Mr Bingley is thankful for the help and support of his family over the years, from his father's help in the early days, to Barbara's continuous support over the years raising the children; doing the books and distributing the honey to the local outlets. Two of his sons; David and Neil are actively involved in the business as well as his enthusiastic grandson Brett, who is very talented at queen grafting and helps to run the family's 320 nucleus colonies. ("I think any queen bee that is bred closer to the locality to which you work performs better, than say, ones that have come out of Queensland, for here. That's my opinion.") All the children helped out from an early age on weekends and school holidays in the extraction plant where Noel spends most of his time these days, leaving the travelling to David, Neil and Brett. Noel's second son: Ian, become extremely allergic to bee stings, the first alarming reaction occurring on a bee site near Michelago where he shot up with welts all over him. At the age of 14 an allergy specialist suggested that he leave home and Barbara recalls; "Ian said to us 'what's the good of me leaving home' because, as he got older he was riding his bike and got stung, he was at a swimming pool, washing the car... Leaving home wasn't the answer," she explained.

"Though all the time he has walked through the shed and around the yard, I don't think he has ever been stung!" Mr Bingley added. "He got stung on a motorbike when he was an apprentice mechanic and he managed to come home and passed out on the floor. Thankfully our daughter, Dianne and a friend were at home and they rang the district nurse. He nearly died. He's really allergic to them."

Mrs Bingley speaks of Sam, another enthusiastic grandson interested in the beekeeping business who is currently in his last year of an apprenticeship in welding and is working full-time in a business in Queanbeyan. He has been encouraged to continue in this direction of pursuing a trade after achieving his High School Certificate as a backup. "We certainly encouraged all the boys to do a trade." Mr Bingley agrees, saying that this would be his advice for anyone getting into the beekeeping game.

"You don't know what the future holds. At present time you either have to be big or you're not in it. All the rules and regulations, stipulations about clean rooms that you need to have mean that you have lay out a lot of money. If you are only a medioca sized beekeeper or a bit better than a backyarder, you can't afford to put in the infrastructure to carry it." Mr Bingley believes that this is just one example of how the industry has changed over the years.

The constant threat of pests and diseases and the introduction of exotic pests like Varroa in the future are other issues facing the industry. "Another concern of this modern world is that young beekeepers miss out on a lot of the fundamental experiences needed to become a good beekeeper due to commercialisation," he explained. "If you're living there with the bees and extracting on the spot you get a better understanding of them. But for the ones starting up fresh, they miss that especially when they're starting up in a reasonably commercial way. You can't buy experience or knowledge or understanding. If you want to grow into a commercial person you should get a job with a beekeeper that has got a good reputation, it would certainly do you a lot of good."

I would like to thank Noel and Barbara Bingley for inviting me to their home and sharing with me some of their wonderful stories.

I believe it is one of the great stories of work ethic and family values that has become the face of the beekeeping industry in Australia today.



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CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

The following are just some of the Guest Speakers who will be presenting at the 2011 State Conference

Dr Denis Anderson

Dr Denis Anderson is currently using molecular and physical methods to investigate the ecology, epidemiology, invasiveness, co-evolution and control of exotic parasitic bee mites and their Asian honeybee hosts. He is also gathering information on the reproductive system of the Varroa mite that could lead to new innovative control methods. His research on exotic bees and bee pathogens is helping to prevent a future decline in pollination services. Dr Anderson holds a Bachelor of Science (Hon) and completed his doctorate on viruses of Australian honey bees in 1985. He has been with CSIRO Entomology since 1989 and is regarded as one of the world's leading experts on varroa.

Dr Doug Somerville

Dr Doug Somerville is the Technical Specialist for Honey Bees for the Division of NSW Primary Industries based at Goulburn. He is the main contact between the beekeeping industry and the NSW DPI for beekeeping education, extension and industry liaison. He is actively involved in numerous research projects and has a particular interest in honey bee nutrition and floral biology. Doug has a good working knowledge of the issues affecting the Australian beekeeping industry.

Michelle Taylor

Michelle Taylor is a scientist with the apiculture team at Plant and Food Research, Hamilton, New Zealand. Over the past 11 years she has been involved with the NZ response to varroa, including slowing its spread, assessing sustainable varroa control methods, and beekeeper education. In 2003 PFR established a breeding program to select for honey bees tolerant to varroa. This program will be released for industry uptake in spring 2011. She also conducts research on pollination (kiwifruit, avocados, carrots, small seeds, almonds, berries etc) effects of chemicals on honey bees, honey bee management practices and honey research.

Simon Oliver

Simon Oliver is an Agricultural Protection Officer (Policy) within a unit known as General Emergency Preparedness and Response for Industry and Investment NSW (I&I NSW) - Primary Industries based at Orange. He is a key contact between the beekeeping industry and I&I NSW for information on plague locust control program within NSW. He is actively involved in various aspects of emergency management in NSW including preparedness and response to flood, fire and pest insect incursions. Fifteen years service with the now Livestock Health & Pest Authority as a ranger provides a practical background.

Gerald Martin

Gerald Martin is currently the Chairman of Honey Bee Industry Strategic Plan Implementation Committee. He is also the Chairman of RIRDC Pollination Australia Research & Development Committee. He has been heavily involved in industry politics and was involved with the SA AFB program.

Mick Rankmore

Mick Rankmore is the Regulatory Specialist, Apiaries for I&I NSW, Primary Industries Division based at Gunnedah. He is responsible for coordinating compliance services delivered to beekeepers state wide via the Senior Inspectors who supervise the Agricultural Compliance Officers. Part of his role is to ensure that industry understands policy and legal requirements and their obligations. In recent years Mick has coordinated special apiary compliance operations in various locations across the state in response to Industry concerns about non-compliance with the NSW Apiaries Act 1985.

Tiffane Bates

Tiffane studied Multidisciplinary Science at Curtin University, finishing with an honours degree in Environmental Science. For the last six years Tiffane has been working as a queen bee producer and breeder and set up her own bee business - BeeHerd. She has been the Apiary Manager at CIBER (Collaborative Initiative for Bee Research) for four years. Last year Tiffane spent three months travelling around the world on a Churchill Fellowship researching breeding honeybees for disease resistance.

Dr Max Whitten

Dr Max Whitten BA BSc PhD FAA AM is Chairman of the Wheen Foundation. He is also Adjunct Professor, Dept of Integrative Biology, University of Queensland. He was formerly Chief of CSIRO Entomology and Professor of Genetics at University of Melbourne.

Max was the first Chairman of the Honeybee Research and Development Council. His research interests centred around genetic means of controlling insect pests and the ecological genetics of pesticide resistance. Max has been an amateur beekeeper since his school days in Mittagong; and during his professional life he has worked to assist Australian beekeepers and, more recently, with pollination dependent industries. He received the Goodacre Award in 2009 for his services to the beekeeping industry.

Steve Broadbent

Steve Broadbent holds an honours degree in Applied Biology majoring in Entomology and Biocide Science. Steve worked as a government Research Entomologist in the United Kingdom before joining Rentokil in Australia as Technical Manager. He later spent 9 years with Wellcome Australia where he launched their Environmental Health Products. Steve then spent 8 years as an Industry Consultant. Steve is now the Regional Director for Ensystex responsible for Australia, Asia, Africa and the Middle East the company responsible for the new registered hive beetle trap.

David Guez

David Guez is currently working with a colleague at the University of Canberra on a project which investigates the modification of honeybee foraging behaviour induced by Juvenile Hormone Mimics (JHM) exposure, using Radio Frequency Identification technology. The aim of this work is to determine whether or not JHM's may have a role in Colony Collapse Disorder.

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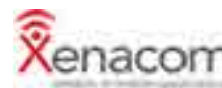
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NSWAA BEE TRADE SHOW



BEE TRADE SHOW 2010 - Buzzzzz was in the air throughout the Bee Trade Show, Port Macquarie. Each day beekeepers and friends were able to chat with the Trade Show Exhibitors. The atmosphere was a hive of activity with a variety of trade exhibitors registered. Each exhibitor uniquely promoted their business. Independently, they inspired beekeepers with ideas that enhanced individual bee requirements.

Throughout the conference lucky door prizes were drawn. These prizes were kindly donated by the Trade Show Exhibitors. Many thanks to the following businesses for their support:

AJ Beetle Eaters, Avant Equipment, Beechworth Honey, Beetltra Pty Ltd, Dalrymple View Pty Ltd, E C Tobin & Son, Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies Ltd, Hunter Valley Apiaries, Hydes Creek Woodworks, Industry & Investment NSW/Primary Industries, John's Heritage Honey, M & K Stafford Engineering Pty Ltd, NSWAA, Saxee's Sap, Schultz DSL Australia, Steritech Pty Ltd, Valley Industries, Westfarmers Insurance (WFI) and Xenacom.

BEE TRADE SHOW 2011

We look forward to the upcoming Bee Trade Show to be held in the "Starlight Room" on 19 & 20 May 2011. The "Starlight Room" is adjacent to the Conference within the Dubbo RSL Club. Conference morning teas will be served both days at the Bee Trade Show venue.

As an extra special bee get-together, on Thursday 19 May a wine & cheese night has been organised to commence at 6pm. The evening is kindly sponsored by Stuart Ecroyd, Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies Ltd.

This will be a great opportunity to chat with the Trade Show Exhibitors, fellow beekeepers and enjoy refreshments served with cheese /nibbles, in a buzzy environment.

To register a Bee Trade Booth, please contact:
Therese Kershaw Phone: 02 6236 9137 or email:
ltkershaw@bigpond.com



Bee Trade Show

DUBBO R S L Club
"Starlight Room"
19 & 20 May 2011

In conjunction with
NSWAA AGM / Conference

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Bee Trade Show

Ecroyd Wine & Cheese Night

DUBBO RSL Club
"Starlight Room"
Thursday 19th May
6pm





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Full Beekeeping Supplies Range – Of course we supply a full range of Beekeeping Supplies – the above is just a small selection. Please visit our website www.ecroyd.com to view the entire range, or ask your supplier specifically for **"EBS" products**.

NSWAA Conference – We will be attending the NSWAA Annual Conference being held in Dubbo in May where we will have key items on display – we look forward to meeting you there – or "afterhours" at the "Ecroyd Wine & Cheese Night" at 6pm on Thursday 19th May.



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NICK'S NEWS

from I&I NSW

Nick Annand

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



A NEW TOOL TO WIN THE BATTLE WITH SHB

The affect of small hive beetle (SHB) continues to expand and spread across the state since its initial identification in Australia back in October 2002. Since the arrival of SHB much of the eastern side of Australia has experienced drought conditions up until 2009. However in 2010 thankfully we have seen a turn around with widespread rainfall throughout the eastern states, with a bit much in some areas causing flooding and resulting in hive losses amongst other problems. From these eight years of experience we have learnt that SHB are more successful when conditions are hot and humid. This is reflected in the areas SHB have caused the most grief to beekeepers ie. along the north coast of NSW and southeast QLD. So with the rains have come better breeding conditions for SHB resulting in higher populations, causing more damage to beehives, stored combs and in honey sheds across much of the state. This summer SHB are being a nuisance in areas where they were previously not considered a problem (even Goulburn).

The number and speed at which SHB can reproduce is incredibly terrifying. When conditions are favourable (hot and humid) the eggs of SHB can hatch in less than 24 hours and the larvae can grow to full size within 5 days. It is estimated that as many as 6000 SHB can develop from a single frame full of stores and brood. So being conservative, even if you halve the estimate a possible 24000 SHB larvae (3000x8) could leave a hive to pupate in the soil from a single 8 frame hive. One hive breaking down with SHB can substantially add to the population level in an area. The development speed of SHB from egg to adult is heavily influenced by temperature and can be as short as 23 days at 34°C. High level successful reproduction of SHB can occur between 25-35°C and 80% relative humidity.



Photo 1 - A single box hive that was killed because of AFB had approximately 30-40 adult SHB introduced into it in an incubator at 32°C. This is five days later.

The SHB larvae carry a yeast that they inadvertently contaminate the honey in the combs with. The yeast (*Kodamaea ohmeri*) causes the honey to ferment and bubble and ooze out of the cells. The larvae wandering around the combs further spread the fermenting honey giving a wet "slimed" appearance, hence where we get the term slimed

out. It appears the growth of the yeast provides nutrients that benefit the SHB development. The SHB larval damage tends to cause the colony to abscond from the hive leaving the SHB to party on.

With such large numbers of potentially new SHB it is recommended that action is taken to kill the larvae in infected colonies. This can be achieved by removing the hive from the apiary and placing the hives/combs in <5°C until larvae are dead. This takes about 1 to 2 days. If the hive material is not badly damaged it can be reused. Do not try to save old brood combs that are due for replacement. This is best done slowly (a few frames at a time placed in a strong hive) at times of the year when SHB pressure is low. If the SHB larvae have already started leaving or have left the hive to pupate in the surrounding soil, a soil drench (Permethrin) can be applied to kill the SHB. For further details on the soil drench either contact Doug Somerville or myself or read the APVMA permit no. 11297.



Photo 2 - A frame from that box showing the SHB larval damage known as "sliming"

Research by me and others and anecdotal reports indicate hives are most susceptible to SHB larval damage when low in bee numbers for what ever reason (queenless, diseased etc). Nucleus and queen raising colonies generally are also more susceptible than standard hives. Maintaining strong healthy hives helps prevent SHB damage. Acting early when you see a hive in decline can prevent potential SHB problems. However even strong colonies can breakdown because of the SHB and are particularly vulnerable after hive manipulation on very hot humid days when bees are hanging outside.

Minimising SHB damage to hives needs to be tackled on many fronts as there is still no single solution. This may include hive management strategies incorporated with the use of control devises. Most SHB control devises target the adult SHB and try to reduce the SHB population in the hive so the remaining SHB can be better managed by the bees. Most of the control devises rely on bees harassing and forcing the SHB to seek refuge in locations where bees can not gain access. The size difference between the SHB (smaller) and bees is utilised with access holes sized to restrict bee entry.

Three commercially available devices I am aware of in NSW include:

- AJ's Beetle Eater (which sits between the top bars of frames).
- Beetltra (a sliding draw that is attached under the bottom board).
- a flat reservoir trap produced by Tobin and Sons (Raglan) that sits on the bottom board via the hive entrance.

All three of these traps require a medium such as lime, vegetable oil or diatomaceous earth be placed into a reservoir so when SHB come in contact with the medium they die.

Another soon to be released and looooong awaited commercial device that has been in the developmental and commercialisation stages for many years is a SHB harbourage designed and developed by Garry Levot of I&I NSW. It will be sold under the name of Apithor. The Apithor sits flat on the bottom board of the hive. The harbourage contains C-fluted cardboard that the SHB can walk through which is impregnated with an insecticide. Direct contact with the cardboard results in the SHB's death. Trial work by Garry Levot using the Apithor produced 90+% reductions, making it very effective at reducing the adult SHB population in the hive. Each Apithor is a one use item that requires no protective wear when handling that can be disposed of in the rubbish at the end of its use.

The company Ensystex Australasia has taken up commercialisation of Apithor and was expecting to start the first commercial production run in mid February. If all goes well Apithor should be available and on sale in Australia in the first week of March 2011.

Apithor will be available and distributed from one location in Sydney. The Apithor will be sold in packs of 20 for \$4.95

per Apithor or \$99 per 20 pack plus postage and handling. Only one Apithor is required to treat one hive and can be left in the hive for up to three months. Leaving them in the hive for longer will encourage resistance build up of the SHB to the chemical, reducing their long term effectiveness. So for the amateurs it may well be best that the local beekeeping branch buys a pack that can then be distributed to those that only need a few.

Orders can be placed by calling 133536 and for more information go on line www.apithor.com.au. Hopefully Apithor will provide the protection to beehives from SHB that many beekeepers have been desperately waiting for, with minimal risk to the operator, the hive and hive products.

For any further questions or advice on SHB management please feel free to call me -Nick Annand on Ph: 02 6330 1210 Email: nicholas.annand@industry.nsw.gov.au

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The Crop Pollination Association AGM will be held in conjunction with NSWAA State Conference in Dubbo in May 2011. We will also be at the NSWAA Field Day on Saturday 21 May 2011

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The Australian Queen Bee Breeding Program (AQBBP) is currently undertaking the reproduction of the continuation stock for the program.

During this time, extra queens will be inseminated and these will be available for sale to beekeepers. They will be queens that have been inseminated with pooled semen. You will be able to choose the line you wish if there are ones available from that line. The inseminated queens will not have been tested.

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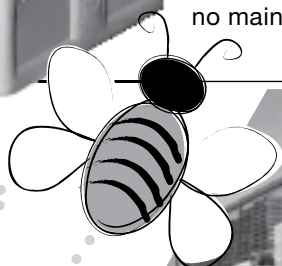
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
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NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

NORTHERN TABLELANDS

The Northern Tablelands branch of the NSW Apiarists' Association consists of members from Glen Innes, Inverell and surrounding districts as well as some members from further afield. Our president and treasurer are members of various committees and in these roles represent the beekeeping industry in a positive way.

We hold quarterly meetings and endeavour to make these as informative and interesting as possible. Guest speakers are invited to talk about items of interest to beekeepers.

Our branch is also fortunate to have the President of the NSW Association within our ranks to keep us up to date on the big picture happenings within the honey industry. These meetings provide a great opportunity for apiarists to network and discuss issues that affect their operations. Our annual meeting and Christmas Party are always a good time and provide a fun social outing where we enjoy a meal and some Christmas cheer together.

The Northern Tablelands branch members also make up a good part of the volunteer team that runs the *Honeyland* stand at the Royal Easter Show and this annual event is enjoyed by everyone that assists.

We welcome new members no matter whether you have one hive in the backyard or hundreds of hives. More members mean a bigger pool of knowledge and experience to draw on in the interests of keeping our industry alive and well.

Tina Woolfe

Secretary

Ph: 02 6732 3168

WESTERN PLAINS

The Western Plains branch are hosting the 2011 Conference Field Day at Dubbo in May.

A warm welcome is extended to all beekeepers

All enquiries contact:

President: Bryn Jones Ph: 02 6887 2638

SYDNEY

The Sydney Metropolitan Branch meets on the 1st Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October & December at the Uniting Church Hall, Church Lane, Top Ryde.

At most meetings there is a guest speaker - Our guest for February was Dr Clive Wakes-Miller, a retired GP from the UK who has been involved with bees for 40 years. His talk was very enjoyable and informative as he travels the world observing bees and beekeeping methods.

The Next Meeting is Tuesday 5 April and a warm welcome is extended to all Amateur and Professional beekeepers.

Kevin Haswell

President

Ph: 02 9724 9185

PS: An invitation has been extended from the Macarthur Beekeepers Association who are hosting this year's Amateur Beekeepers Association field day on Saturday 19 March - 9.30am start. Address: The Mens Shed, Exeter Street, Camden (Gregory's maps ref: 447-14b and 476 14k).

SOUTHERN TABLELANDS

The Southern Tablelands branch would possibly be one of the largest branches within NSWAA. The area we service is from Potts Point in Sydney to Candelo in the south, to Weethalle in the west and southwest to Gundagai. The area, I'm told is similar in area to England, which includes all beekeepers in that area.

The branch holds a total of 4 meetings spaced out through the year with an AGM held once a year, April or May, and held at a different venue each year. The current Branch executive is President Laurie Kershaw, Vice Presidents Reg Marsh and Brett Bingley, Secretary Bill Stratton, Treasurer Therese Kershaw. Laurie Kershaw is also on the State Executive so we have our 'finger on the pulse' of our industry and by the way, we are all volunteers. All positions are vacant at the AGM, and all members are encouraged to volunteer their services for the coming year, all will be assisted by the past executive in all aspects of the running of the branch, so if anyone feels they can contribute to the branch, they will be made most welcome.

At our branch meetings the executive endeavour to get a guest speaker from various associated industries to keep the members informed with the 'up to the minute' information that may assist them with the running of their business. After the meetings, most members and guests attending stay for a meal at the venue and socialise.

All beekeepers are welcome to attend any of our meetings. If at some time throughout the year we are having a guest speaker of note, we inform all the beekeeping publication editors of the upcoming event, and extend an open invitation to all beekeepers or anyone interested in the subject to come along.

We try and hold a 'hands on' field day every couple of years to keep abreast of the way things are done today, the 'modern way'. Guest speakers usually attend from various industries and fellow beekeepers are encouraged to show others their way of doing things, so as to share knowledge with one another.

All registered beekeepers are encouraged to join the NSW Apiarists' Association branch near their area, they will be made most welcome.

Meetings are another excuse to meet up with fellow beekeepers from different parts of the Southern Tablelands and the world, all beekeepers are equal whether they run a few hives or many hundreds, when it is all boiled down, we are all passionate of what we do, 'BEEKEEPING'.

Bill Stratton

Secretary

Ph: 02 4421 4198

MID NORTH COAST

A warm welcome is extended to all beekeepers

All enquiries contact:

President: Paul Costa Ph: 02 6561 7365 or
Secretary: Daniel Costa Mob: 0429 617 365

TAMWORTH

A warm welcome is extended to all beekeepers

All enquiries contact:

President: Ray Hull Ph: 02 6760 3634 or
Secretary: Peter Murphy Ph: 02 6766 3115

NORTH COAST

The branch meets every second month and like all the branches gives a chance for beekeepers to socialise. As well the meetings allow for members to air their views on the issues of concern.

One of those issues here has been Bell Miner Associated Dieback. Although this dieback tends to mostly affect the gums, many grey ironbark have also been lost and some ironbark sites are no longer viable. The branch is represented on the Dieback Working Group, making sure that beekeeper interests are kept to the forefront in the Groups attempts to enhance forest health.

We are also represented on the North Coast Rural Producers Committee. This is a DPI committee and has representatives from any rural interest group that is willing to participate. It mainly acts as a conduit for us to pass concerns up the line and to receive briefings on government initiatives and proposals pertinent to rural communities.

Like most branches we hold field days in association with the department officers and we are at present organising a chemical users course with the local TAFE College.

The Branch has arranged for Paul Moosberger, Head Teacher Primary Industries Wollongbar TAFE to present a chemical users course:

When: Saturday 5 March 2011

Time: 8.30am - 4.00pm

Cost: \$150 per person

Topics: Legislation, label interpretation, environmental issues and fumigation

To book contact Paul direct on Ph: 02 6620 4745, Mob: 0404 158 849 or Email: paul.moosberger@tafensw.edu.au

All beekeepers are welcome.

In an attempt to educate the general public as well as the farming community in 2010 we took a stall at Primex, a major farm field day for those on the land. One of the aims was to educate both consumers and farmers in the value of bees in pollinating so many of the fruits and vegetables we eat daily.

The move to plantation forestry is also a concern. Whilst we do have access to National Parks and are generally on good terms with them, we are fearful that if more forests are to be passed into the hands of the Park service, the physical access to sites may be reduced if roads or tracks are closed.

The branch meets on the last Friday of the even months except December, at the Woodburn CWA Hall, starting at 7.30pm. Prior to the meeting some members share a meal at the local hotel across the road and enjoy a supper after the meeting when record crops are gathered.

By the time you read this you will have missed out on the Beginning of Year Get Together. But never mind there is always next year. And we look forward to welcoming you to a meeting in the new year.

Geoff Manning
Secretary
Ph: 02 6663 5211

HUNTER VALLEY

The Hunter Valley branch meet at the Hexham Bowling Club, 290 Old Maitland Road, Hexham 2322 on the first Monday of February, April, June, August, October and December at 7.30PM.

AIM

- to keep members informed with latest bee industry news
- to help each solve beekeeping problems
- to be happy

COMING EVENTS

Assist with Tocal Beekeeping Field Day
(tentative date 29 October 2011)
Christmas Dinner – Dec 2011

All visitors welcome – hope to see you

President: Col Wilson 02 4930 4950
Secretary: Patricia Heenan 02 4997 5681

RIVERINA

The Riverina Branch was formed in the early 1980's to enable Riverina Apiarists to more easily attend meetings and keep up with what was happening in their industry and association. Really nothing has changed; we still exist to continue the same philosophy.

We are a small branch that has welcomed several new members within the past 6 months. We meet at the Commercial Club, Gurwood St Wagga Wagga approximately every three months. Our next meeting will be Monday 21 Feb 2011 with dinner at 6.30pm and the meeting to follow at 7.30pm.

Ours is a very sociable branch with most attendees enjoying a meal prior to the meeting. The meetings are usually quite topical and we regularly have guest speakers who are always enjoyed by those in attendance and we all learn from one another (the sharing of knowledge is a wonderful tool to have access to).

The Riverina branch in the past have held successful field days and we have also compiled a Honey Recipe Book which our members are very proud of. We are definitely proactive in promoting **HONEY**.

We invite all apiarists within the Riverina and surrounds to attend our meetings, even if you are not a member of NSWAA.

Please contact President- David Mumford 02 6959 2519 or Secretary- John Smith 0408 692 929 for further information.

David Mumford
President

CENTRAL TABLELANDS

Meetings are held on third Tuesday of January, April, July and October
October and January meetings in Orange
April and July meetings in Bathurst
Meetings start with dinner at 6pm for 7.30pm meeting
Annual dinner with a guest speaker held on third Friday of March

Anyone interested in bees are welcome to attend our meetings

ANNUAL DINNER

To be held on 18 March 2011, at Bathurst RSL Club, starting at 6.30pm
Guest speaker is – Geoff McSpedden

RSVP by 4 March to: Robert Porter 0427 259 617

President: Mal Porter 0428 375 383
Secretary: Robert Porter 0427 259 617

INTERNATIONAL HONEY MARKET REPORT

Ron Phipps - CPNA International Ltd, New York, USA
January 2011

CURTAILMENT OF CIRCUMVENTION

The second decade of the new century commences with indications that the two-tiered market between legal and illegal honey sales is, at last, crumbling. Beekeepers begin to feel hopeful that the unfair competition that plagued the first decade will fade into an unpleasant historic memory.

At the national beekeepers' convention held in January in Texas, agents from Homeland Security's ICE Division reported on the numerous arrests, confessions and/or sentencing of individuals in Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago and China who colluded to transship Chinese honey through third countries. Those countries include: Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Russia, Thailand, Myanmar, Taiwan and South Korea. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* published an article on January 5, 2011, that correctly described these convoluted and complex schemes of honey laundering as constituting the "largest food fraud in US history."

As Richard Adey of the American Honey Producers Association added, "To stop this laundering of honey, we must apply the principle that the owners of the chop shops must be brought under the arm of the law." The American honey industry anticipates that this is what will happen since the government, including Congress, is determined to put an end to honey laundering.

The aberrational data between honey production and exports in 2000 and in 2010 led to on-site investigations of alleged honey industries in Indonesia and Malaysia. Those investigations identified fraudulent activity for honey and other Chinese products subject to antidumping orders. Emails and articles from China flagrantly offer to ship Chinese honey to the US via Malaysia and reference Chinese honey exporters who are being compelled to sell their honey to the USA via India, Thailand and Malaysia.

With compelling evidence in hand, our government officials began discussions with foreign countries to put an end to these illegal practices which both violate international law and jeopardize national security by jeopardizing the security of the food supply. Current estimates are that annual food production valued at approximately 20 billion US Dollars depends upon pollination of crops by a healthy beekeeping industry. Those crops include foods with important health benefits, such as almonds, blueberries, cranberries, apples, citrus fruits, etc.

Recent import statistics indicate that Homeland Security is achieving tangible success in ending transshipments through Indonesia. Indonesian honey imports reached 17,000,000 lbs in September and were zero in October and November 2010. Imports from some other Asian exporting countries are projected for 2010 as follows: Malaysia 35,000,000 lbs, India 38,000,000 lbs. However, October November import statistics reveal that the pace of imports from those countries may be slowing somewhat.

This indicates there are real teeth to the efforts of ICE! Furthermore, during the January State visit of China's President Hu Jin Tao, the issue of illegal honey laundering was communicated to the US Senate and the US-China Business Council in Washington, DC. By raising this issue, there is the possibility that the Chinese government can become an active agent in preventing circumvention at its source within China.

The 2010 ban on Indian honey exports to Europe was discussed at the Apimondia meeting in Vietnam. The German laboratories in attendance indicated the ban will be in effect for at least two years. The ban was instituted because of several factors including: 1) inadequacy of a traceability regime in India for honey, 2) contamination with antibiotics and 3) contamination with heavy metals, including lead (the so-called China honey "tea test"). Within India there were widespread reports of a flood of cheap Chinese honey so severe that Indian authorities considered initiating their own antidumping petition in India against Chinese honey. While India and China are increasing their bilateral trade relations, such legitimate trade should not involve either the laundering of honey or the blending of

contaminated honey. The Japanese report that sophisticated honey factories in China are using advanced technology to ultra-filter honey removing pollens, contaminants, enzymes and/or adding other sweeteners to alter the chemical profile of honey.

True Source Honey in the USA has been established as part of the process to create a level playing field for honey buyers. The World Honey Congress is establishing an Ethical Trading group within Apimondia to work to eliminate unfair international trading practices which, if unchecked, will lead to "a March to Monopoly" by unethical companies. Leading members of the industry in Argentina and other countries will play an important role in Apimondia's sub-group to establish principles and policies to assure ethical trading in honey, a higher standard of business ethics and a firmer adherence to the rule of law in international trade.

Argentina

With below average crops in the US and Canada, hope was placed upon Argentina, especially for white honey, and early spring weather was favourable. But December witnessed drought and high temperatures day and night. Power and water shortages occurred throughout December, which is equivalent to June in the Northern Hemisphere. Crop estimates fell to 50,000MT and extraction slowed as beekeepers waited for honey to build up on the hives. During the first two weeks of January, rains returned and the prospect of extending the 2nd and 3rd extractions raised hopes for a crop up to 60,000MT. But there is no prospect of a bumper crop in the magnitude of 110,000MT or 242,000,000 lbs, as was achieved in previous years.

The number of hives has been reduced by at least 1/3 from peak levels. And much of the prairie lands that were used for clover and alfalfa production to support the Argentine's previously large cattle and dairy industries have been converted to soybean and grain production. Argentina has made a strategic decision to devote large tracts of its land to provide soybeans and other grains to the 3 billion people in China and India, both of which have low acreage per capita of arable land.

Even if Argentina abandoned this strategy, which is very unlikely, it would take a decade to convert the land with extensive irrigation systems from soybean back to pasture lands. This means that the ratio of white honey to extra light and light amber honey will become smaller.

The high temperatures and marginal rainfall of December means that for the 2010/2011 Argentine crop, sunflower will be a major nectar source and the international demand for white honey will substantially increase.

Major honey buyers anticipate a crisis of supply that will become evident by early March. That crisis will be especially acute for white honey whose prices are steeply rising. Those packers who were most dependent upon honey imported through Indonesia and Malaysia will be the first to feel and have to respond to the curtailment that was announced by ICE agents during their presentation to the beekeepers and the packers and dealers.

Currency rates will undoubtedly play a significant role in the prices for white honey. The US and Canadian Dollars have attained parity in 2011. In contrast, a few years back the US Dollar was much stronger, enabling US buyers to pay high Canadian Dollar prices to Canadian beekeepers and spend up to 25% less in US Dollars. Due to the threat of financial crisis in Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy, the Euro is much weaker than it was relative to the US Dollar. When the Euro enjoyed its advantage, the Europeans could afford to pay high US Dollar prices for South American honey from Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. For the moment, European buyers cannot play the role of pushing US Dollar prices high. But that could change as our country has a \$14 trillion national debt and a huge annual deficit. That debt and deficit makes it highly questionable how long the relative strength of the US Dollar versus the Euro can be sustained.

Brazil and Mexico

Brazil remains the chief source of organic honey. This is a very lucrative market which more and more packers are pursuing. Conditions in early 2011 look good in Brazil, including for organic white honey. Prices are, however, soaring, with white Brazilian organic honey approaching \$2.00/lb.

Mexico's early crop was shut down due to cold weather and high moisture. The prices for conventional Mexican honey as the year began were even higher than for Brazilian organic white honey. The abrupt curtailment of "Indonesian white" honey imports generated desperation to secure Mexican and Brazilian early crop.

Vietnam

The Vietnamese honey cop started late. They are cognizant of the need to be careful with the early honey crop as the bees emerge from wintering. The high prices of sugar made wintering bees more expensive than in previous years. As the 2011 crop begins, the bee hives are strong, but the weather is a major variable.

Nineteen honey exporters met on Jan 11, 2011 to strengthen their traceability regime and their quality control system. The conference included participation by the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, Customs and ICE and the Vietnamese Veterinary Department. The goals of the meeting were: 1) prevention of transshipment of honey to the US market and 2) establishing the traceability of honey in Vietnam.

In 2010, the Vietnamese exported 22,500MT of honey. Ninety percent of these exports went to the US market. Beekeepers in Vietnam, to their credit, have been working with ICE agents, who have visited many producing areas from south to north and secured samples from a wide range of floral sources.

Prices as the market opens are at historic highs for light amber honey. Inquiries for Vietnamese honey are exploding as Indonesia and Malaysia dried up as sources of circumvented honey. As demand for Vietnamese honey increases, prices are likely to continue to rise even above their historic highs with which new crop honey sales began in 2011.

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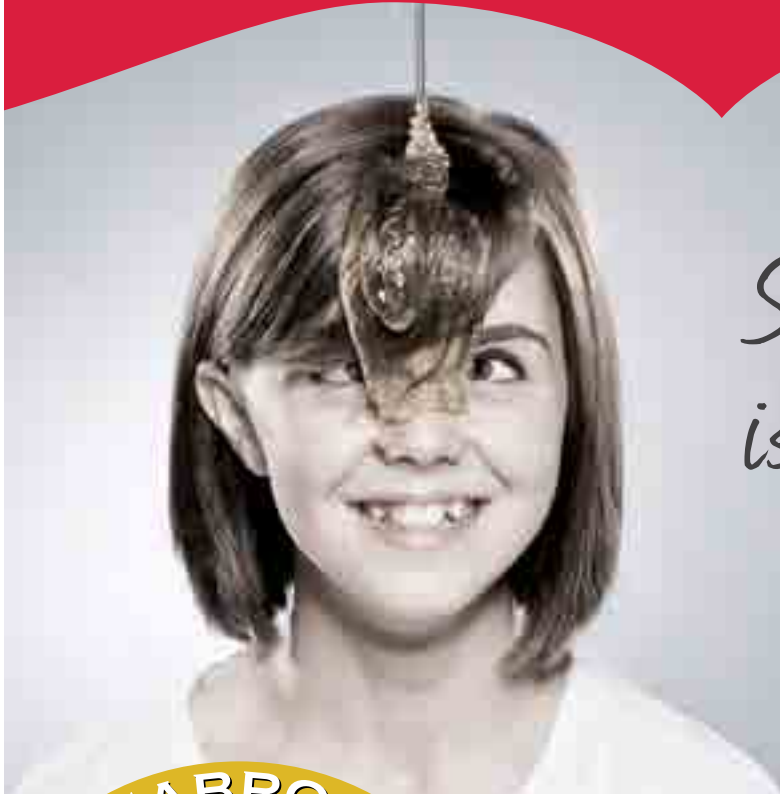
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The Wheen Foundation – the first 12 months

The Wheen Foundation was officially launched by Alby Schultz MP and Louis Markus MP at the Hawkesbury Campus of UWS on 12 December 2009. The launch was celebrated with a well-attended National Seminar on Bee Genetics and Stock Improvement.

In the preceding week an artificial insemination course for beginners was conducted in the laboratory at Gretchen Wheen's property; and in the following week an advanced AI course was held. Dr Sue Cobey from University of California, Davis USA led the course; and she was ably assisted by Dr Doug Somerville and beekeepers from NSW Apiarists' Association. Given Gretchen's long standing interest in queen rearing, artificial insemination and stock improvement, these were fitting activities to mark the Foundation's birth.



Gretchen Wheen

The core asset of the Foundation will be the property bequeathed to it by the generosity of Gretchen Wheen. In many senses, it is a living bequest because Gretchen serves as one of five Directors.

We are grateful that Gretchen is allowing elements of the property to be used for training purposes, placement of 'nucs' and hives for experimental and stock improvement purposes, especially for University researchers in the Sydney metropolitan area where space is limited or unsuited for honeybee studies.

Short and Long Term Objectives of The Foundation

Broadly, these include:

- Advancing scientific knowledge and research into bee keeping in Australia
- Providing means for research and development of the bee keeping industry in Australia
- Facilitating improved methods of bee keeping and promoting better standards of practice
- Promoting the marketing and advertising of products and by-products of the honey bee and pollination industry
- Providing means for the education, advancement, accommodation, training and support for beekeepers, researchers, teachers and operators in the honey bee and pollination industry.
- Collaboration with other entities to foster investigation into the capacity for European Honey Bees and Australian Native Social Bees to effectively improve production of plants through pollination

General Strategies for Achieving Objectives of The Foundation

These include:

- Preparing a Strategic Plan for the Foundation
- Providing improved on-site facilities for conduct of honey bee research and training
- Encouraging enhanced bee breeding to produce bee strains more resilient to pests and diseases.

- Garnering support from the honey bee and pollination-dependent industries
- Gaining the support of Government to implement the recommendations of the Federal Government's Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources 2008 report "MORE THAN HONEY"
- Educating the public and food retailers of the significance of honey bee pollination and the imminent threat to food production from pests and diseases
- Supporting establishment of a honey bee and pollination Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)

Principal Activities of the Foundation during 2010

These included:

- Forging contacts in the honey production, pollination and bee breeding industries at the industry, government and association level
- Running a small workshop in Canberra to identify threats and opportunities for honey production and pollination services, including a first pass at setting priorities for the Foundation
- In a joint effort with NSW Apiarists, conducting a National Seminar on Bee Genetics and Stock Improvement, and holding two queen bee artificial insemination schools (as mentioned above)
- Establishing of a "basic" website – to be a repository of information useful to industry, researchers and policy makers
- Actively support a bid for the establishment of a honey bee and pollination Cooperative Research Centre
- Providing input, in conjunction with AHBIC, into a Federal Government inquiry into the re-establishment of a national honey bee quarantine facility. (The Foundation aims to ensure the re-establishment of a bee quarantine facility to allow the importation of bee breeding material with the aim of improving the resistance or tolerance of bee strains in Australia to pests and diseases.)
- Managing issues relating to Gretchen Wheen's property which have arisen as a result of infrastructure and water rights. These required negotiations with the NSW Road Transport Authority and water authorities in order to protect the value and suitability of the property for future uses.

Some Challenges for The Foundation in 2011

These include:

- Preparation of the CRC bid in collaboration with RIRDC, Pollination Australia and AHBIC. Securing 'new' money for the CRC bid is a key role for the Foundation
- Continuing input into the AQIS Review of Quarantine Facilities
- Preparation of a Strategic Plan for the Foundation
- Receiving and maintaining the selected lines from the so-called 'consortium' stock. The breeding and stock improvement program was initially financed by the former Honey Bee R&D Council and subsequently purchased and maintained by a 'consortium' of beekeepers
- Organising overseas evaluation of the 'consortium' stock for varroa tolerance and releasing these lines to industry later in 2011.

DIRECTORS	Period of Directorship
Max Whitten AM	25 August 2009 to present
Gretchen Wheen	25 August 2009 to present
Jodie Goldsworthy	10 June 2010 to present
Linton Briggs AM	25 August 2009 to present
Colin Powell	25 August 2009 to present

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RECIPES



Sticky Pork

- 2 x 300g pork fillets
- 1/4 cup honey**
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- Vegetable oil for brushing

Place honey, soy sauce, oyster sauce, water, chilli and garlic in a bowl and stir to combine. Set aside.

Heat a large non-stick frying pan over high heat. Brush the pork with oil and cook for 1 minute on each side. Add the honey mixture to the pan, cover with a tight-fitting lid, reduce heat to low and simmer for 6-8 minutes or until the pork is cooked through and the sauce is thickened.

Remove from the heat, slice to serve and spoon over sauce. Serve with rice and green vegetables.

Easy Carrot Cake

- 2 cups self raising wholemeal flour
- 2 cups grated raw carrot
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 cup honey**
- 3/4 cup coconut
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups crushed pineapple
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Combine flour, cinnamon and honey. Beat in oil and eggs. Stir in carrots, coconut, pineapple and walnuts.

Cook in a 10 inch (25 cm) tin for 45 minutes at 180 °C.

Ricotta Honey Pancakes

- 1 cup ricotta
- 1 1/2 tablespoons honey**
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup self raising flour
- Pinch of salt
- Extra honey & whipped cream to serve

Beat one cup of ricotta, honey and egg in a bowl. Stir in milk, flour and pinch of salt.

Grease non-stick frying pan with butter. Cook pancakes over medium heat for two minutes on each side until golden.

Serve warm, drizzled with extra honey and a dollop of whipped cream.



AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

Mailing Address: PO Box R838, Royal Exchange NSW 1225
Telephone: 02 9221 0911 Facsimile: 02 9221 0922
Email: ahbic@honeybee.org.au Website: www.honeybee.org.au
Executive Director: Mr Stephen Ware

AHBIC NEWS

RESPONSE TO COMMUNIQUE ON ASIAN HONEY BEE (*Apis cerana*)

As you are aware on Monday 31 January 2011 there was a telephone hook up of the National Management Group (NMG). AHBIC was represented by Chairman, Lindsay Bourke and Executive Director, Stephen Ware. At that meeting Industry supported continuation of efforts to control and eradicate Asian Honey Bees. However under the auspices of the Plant Health Deed continuation of the eradication program required a consensus. After a vote of 6/4 against, it was decided that it was not possible to eradicate Asian Honey Bees. It is regrettable that some States took a short term view and did not support further efforts to eradicate. Industry continually argued that we needed to continue to try for the greater community good to eradicate.

INDUSTRY RESPONSE

Given the closeness of the vote by the National Management Group, AHBIC has written to the Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for the Environment and the Hon Joe Ludwig MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry requesting that the decision not to eradicate be reviewed.

In the absence of a positive decision Industry has called for the establishment of a federally funded management program to control and slow the spread of the Asian Honey Bee given its potential adverse effects to the environment, public health and the economy in Queensland.

INQUIRIES

In respect of inquiries from the public or the media in the first instance they may be directed to:

Mr Lindsay Bourke, AHBIC Chairman Mobile 0418 131 25
Email: queenvic@cradlemountainhoney.com.au and/or

Mr Trevor Weatherhead,
Chairman of the Quarantine Committee Mobile: 0427 960 735
Phone: 07 5467 2135 Email: queenbee50@bigpond.com

The following points are noted by your Industry

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council continued to support eradication and did so till the end and we firmly believe that the decision is not only bad for the Apiary Industry but is also bad for the following reasons and areas:

1. It is bad for public health

Industry commissioned a cost benefit analysis entitled '*Estimating the Potential Public Costs of the Asian Honey Bee Incursion*'. This report has two key findings of the potential public costs of the Asian Honey Bee incursion. The costs of public health impacts are conservatively estimated to range from \$84,114-\$88,636 per 100,000 people. The cost estimates for the public nuisance aspects are estimated to range from \$4,500-\$33,660 per 100,000 people.

2. It is bad for the environment

If Asian Honey Bees are allowed to establish in Australia they will become the 'rabbits' of the insect world directly affecting thousands of Australian insects, birds and mammals.

In the insect world Australia has an estimated 3,000 species of native bees that totally rely on flowers for food. This is the most important group of pollinators of native plants in Australia. Beetles, wasps, ants, butterflies, moths and flies all rely to a varying degree on the nectar & pollen produced by flowers for a food source.

The evidence in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea where honey bees have all but been wiped out by the competition from Asian bees strongly indicates that our native fauna, reliant

on nectar, are at a huge risk. What is not understood very well is the role of nectar to Australian wildlife. We have over 100 species of native birds which frequently visit flowers including honey eaters (approximately 75 species).

Flying foxes move communal camps based on shifts in significant flowering events. This is likely to be impeded by the actions of the Asian Honey Bees. We have a number of nectarivorous bats and non-flying mammals who rely on nectar as a major component of their diet. These will be put at risk as Asian Honey Bees attack their natural environment.

3. It is bad for tourism

The pest itself however has particular ramifications for Australia's tourism industry. The Asian bee becomes a pest in urban areas through establishing nests in houses and its aggressive stinging behaviour. It will also disturb native fauna such as native bees, small marsupials and birds that nest in similar places.

The ramifications for tourism in Northern Australia are considerable – less native flora and fauna and visitors being regularly attacked and bitten by aggressive bees.

Apis cerana has shown an ability to colonise and establish nests in a wide variety of locations and situations, including in vehicles, boats, containers and machinery. In addition, swarms can lodge temporarily in similar locations, enabling rapid dispersal over potentially long distances through movement of infested vehicles or materials.

It is noted that *Apis cerana* is a stinging bee and when cornered will attack. There is now clear evidence that the Asian Honey Bee displaces native bees from their natural habitats.

The above information is provided to Industry so as you are aware of the Government decision to declare *Apis cerana* endemic. Industry is now fighting a rear guard action and hopefully unlike the Small Hive Beetle there will be some ongoing management of this pest so that it can in some way be contained and not impact adversely on Industry.

AHBIC is proud to be the Apiary Industry's peak representative organisation, a role played since it was formed in 1998 with many major initiatives achieved. Following the 2010 AHBIC Annual General Meeting it was recognised that AHBIC needs to increase its support and funding base to include all beekeepers.

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

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DAFF - 2 February 2011

The Asian Honeybee National Management Group (AHB NMG) met on 31 January 2011 to consider advice provided by the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests on the Asian honeybee (*Apis cerana*) incursion in North Queensland on whether it continued to be technically feasible or not to eradicate the Asian honeybee. The AHB NMG view is that it is no longer technically feasible to achieve eradication although consensus was not reached.

The Asian Honeybee is an invasive species which adversely impacts populations of European honeybees by competing for floral resources, robbing managed hives and transmitting disease. It is a natural host for varroa mite *jacobsonii* - a parasite that attacks developing bee larvae or adult bees.

Following the first detection of an Asian honeybee nest near Cairns in May 2007, a nationally cost-shared program aimed at eradication was implemented, led by the Queensland Government and overseen by the AHB NMG. Since that time, over 342 swarms or nests have been found and destroyed. None of the nests destroyed to date have carried any exotic mites of concern such as varroa, tropilaelaps or tracheal.

Activities to eradicate Asian honeybees in the Cairns region have been funded by the Australian Government, State and Territory Governments and the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) on behalf of its members at a cost of approximately \$3 million. Other industries reliant on bees and bee pollination services were approached at peak representative level to be involved in the management of the response but declined to contribute resources.

The AHB NMG's decision, that it is no longer technically feasible to eradicate Asian honeybees, is based on a number of factors including:

- the tendency for the bees to swarm;
- the bee breeds rapidly and can travel long distances, particularly with assisted movement on vehicles and trains; and
- limitations of current surveillance methods which makes it difficult to locate all nests and destroy them.

The AHB NMG agreed to recommend continued funding for residual activities being carried out

under the current program until 31 March 2011. It was also agreed that a group of Senior Biosecurity Officials should meet to determine whether any further national action is warranted.

The AHB NMG expressed its appreciation to the beekeepers of Cairns and districts and the Queensland Government staff for their hard work and perseverance in attempting to eradicate the pest.

The AHB NMG is comprised of the chief executive officers of the national and state/territory departments of agriculture and primary industries across Australia, representatives of AHBIC, Plant Health Australia and is chaired by the Commonwealth.

Further advice on Asian honeybees and response actions to date can be found on Biosecurity Queensland's website.

MEDIA RELEASE FROM THE HON. JOHN COBB MP

Labor Party Goes Sour on Asian Honeybee Control

The Coalition Spokesman for Agriculture and Food Security today accused the Labor Party of gross negligence which could potentially decimate the Australian bee industry and will have major public health implications.

The Department of Agricultural Forestry and Fisheries today announced that they are giving up on the eradication program for the Asian honeybee. "This is a decision which will have serious ramifications for Queensland and the rest of Australia, yet the Minister for Agriculture has hidden behind Department Bureaucrats when he should have had the courage to stand up and make the decision himself," Mr Cobb said. "Information coming from the Queensland Government is that they are horrified by the decision and rightly so."

Mr Cobb said according to Biosecurity Queensland the Asian honeybee is a natural host for the "Varroa Mite" a major threat to the Australian honeybee industry. "Asian honeybees also have an aggressive robbing habit taking honey from managed hives possibly causing hives to starve and there is now clear evidence that the Asian honeybee displaces native bees from their natural habitats by competing for floral resources," Mr Cobb said.

"One of the major concerns is the Asian honeybees (*apis cerana*) very aggressive nature especially when protecting hives and they are much more inclined to sting people and when cornered will attack. This is especially a concern with the increased incidence of anaphylactic reaction in allergy prone people and will become a major health risk as the Asian honeybee spreads rapidly across the country. "*Apis cerana* has shown an ability to colonise and establish nests in a wide variety of locations and situations, including in cars, boats, boxes and machinery. This enables rapid dispersal over potentially long distances through movement of infested vehicles or equipment."

"The pest itself has particular ramifications for Australia's tourism industry. The Asian bee becomes a pest in urban areas through establishing nests in houses and its aggressive stinging behaviour. It will also disturb native fauna such as native bees, small marsupials and birds that nest in similar places. "There is a clear public good in the government continuing to fund the eradication program but despite concerns from the bee industry and the Queensland Government, Minister Ludwig has just given up. "Not only has the current government failed to protect our borders by implementing the recommendations of the Beale review but the government now also refuses to spend the money required to eradicate problems if they occur. "The Agriculture Minister is proving as uninformed as the former minister when he should be doing his duty to protect Australia from exotic diseases and pest incursions," Mr Cobb said.

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CROP REPORT

NORTHERN NSW

Finally the skies are clearing and in the north we are getting some heat and summer. The rain over the last 3-4 months has been in most places unprecedented. Our hearts must go out to all people involved in the Queensland flood disaster along with those also affected in NSW and Victoria.

It is ironic that the same thing that everyone has been longing for over the last few years, consistent rain, is the same thing that can hold honey production up so severely. However, most in the north are looking to the positive side and hoping that the wet few months will finally jolt things back into gear.

Beekeepers who stayed out in the channel country produced reasonable honey in September/October/November. After the rain swarming and access were the big issues. Other than that small pockets of curse have been the only thing that has produced honey of any quantity to Christmas.

Brush Box budded on the coast only average and went to growth early, most coastal beekeepers reporting one of the worst spring/summers for many years due to too much rain. Silverleaf iron bark budded in the north west and produced well in most areas after Christmas, with rain cutting some areas short.

Prospects for the next 2-3 months look reasonable. Bud on Pilliga box and bloodwood is expected and most people are looking to the winter budders (Mugga/White box/Caley's Iron Bark/Blue Top Iron Bark) hopefully for some sort of a honey crop to the back end of the season. Let's all hope that the season settles down to an average one with some rain and some sun.

Craig Klingner

SOUTHERN NSW

Rain, rain and yet more rain. It's been years since we had experienced so much rain in such a short period of time. This has made honey production difficult for the past spring/summer season. With many beekeepers getting bogged and not being able to gain access to their beesites.

The swarming conditions this spring were huge. Especially with the bees that were in excellent condition that moved from the almonds onto Canola and/or Salvation Jane. No matter how you managed your bees, with a season like we have experienced, if you replaced the brood combs, extracted honey and removed bees from strong colonies it didn't control the will of the bees to swarm. This is what predicts the outcome of what honey is produced.

There was widespread production of Canola and Salvation Jane if beekeepers could keep their bees in their hives.

Bees are still gathering honey from Scotch Thistle, Blue Weed, Yellow Burr and Wild Turnip. These are keeping bees going well into the New Year.

Grey Iron Bark on the South Coast, with the aid of White & Blue Stringy Bark has produced excellent conditions for honey production, pollen and breeding.

River Gum areas had three major floods, causing beekeepers to act quickly. Floods caused great concern. The rivers burst their banks exceeding expectations. There have been reports of bees been flooded. To date, the weather temperature is cool therefore honey production is not occurring and trees are producing green growth in abundance.

Laurie Kershaw

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To All Industry Members,

As most of you are probably now aware Chris Kath has moved on from Superbee after a very successful 7 years. To those of you whom I have had the pleasure to talk to, I would very much like to thank you for your support and understanding during this transition.

After now settling into the new role, I'm looking forward to introducing myself to those of you who I have not yet had the chance to meet. By all means, please feel free to pop in for a chat or give me a call anytime.

I would like to say a big thank you to our Operations Manager, Russell Pout, who I am looking forward to working closely with. Many of you may already know Russell and I am hoping that the two of us can get around to visiting some of you in the coming months.

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