

AUSTRALIA'S
HONEYBEE NEWS

"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 6 Number 1
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2013



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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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COVER: Mr Keith McIlvride OAM (1933-2013)

Photo: Courtesy of Mr Paul McIlvride

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



2013 is here and with it has come the type of challenges only Australia's climate can produce. From heat waves and massive fires to record breaking floods within a couple of weeks is hard to comprehend. To my knowledge in NSW there has been minimal losses of hives thankfully, however burnt resources and access to them have certainly been affected.

Politically things have been quite over the Xmas/New Year break, but in the last couple of weeks we have started re-engaging with all agencies.

Honey production across Australia seems to be down in most states; some regions of inland southern NSW and Victoria have been particularly poor. In the years prior to major honey imports such conditions would have seen a spike in honey prices, however in this day and age I fear our industry is slowly slipping into the trap of so many other Aussie agricultural industries, having to operate in a market where sub-standard and cheap imports are holding back the price of our top quality agricultural commodities.

There is talk already of next year being a good year. I have heard this over the years too many times, the only good year is when it's over and in the drum.

AHBIC has undergone some change recently. The previous Executive Director has left and Trevor Weatherhead has been appointed as temporary Executive Director until such time as a permanent one can be appointed. What is needed in this position is someone with passion, drive, political savvy and the ability to command respect when presenting themselves. We all hope AHBIC finds this person sooner rather than later.

Sydney Show: Planning is close to complete for this year's show. The show stand is a major fund raiser for NSWAA as well as a source of untold publicity for the Industry in general. A huge thanks to the individuals and companies that have already pledged donations of product or time, without a lot of help and donated stock *Honeyland* would certainly not be viable. To those people that haven't helped out or donated in previous years please consider helping NSWAA out in one of its major fundraisers. Bruce White is again the coordinator, so please contact him or myself for further information.

Conference is also approaching and from our part mostly organised. This year will be a three day event with a BBQ, wine and cheese night and conference dinner on in the evenings. A trade show will be run throughout the conference. It is hoped this year will far exceed conferences of the past as we will be celebrating 100 years of beekeeping representation in the State of NSW.

NSWAA Executive has been working closely with NSW Forestry on the State Beekeeping Policy. Within the next couple of weeks the first draft will be prepared and it is hoped by Conference we will be able to put forward the policy for perusal and final alterations by industry.

An inclusion in the policy will be that on "very high" fire danger days NSWFF will request that beekeepers do not enter forests to work except for the removal of bees that are in danger of being destroyed due to fire or the watering of bees. This is a recent request of NSWFF and as responsible users of forestry regions I believe we should adhere to this request in the interest of safety for all.

The AFB workshop that I have been involved in through AHBIC is coming together well. I really hope for the industry's sake

that people from all sides of the equation can come together and forge a way forward nationally. IF IT IS POSSIBLE.

There is coming up a series of meetings/workshops regarding the new super agency Local Land Services, I encourage everyone to attend if it is possible. This new agency is a combination of part of the old DPI, RLPBs and CMAs. The big issue for us is the future of the old TSR network a massive resource for our industry.

The next executive meeting will be held in Orange on the 18 February if any member has some concerns or issues they would like to have dealt with please contact myself or any of the Executive to raise these issues, we are here to work for the industry and its members.

Lastly on behalf of the Executive and the entire industry I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the families of three of our industry members who have recently passed away, Norm Mackay, John Williams and Keith McIlvride. John was the secretary of the Sydney Branch and was responsible for building the "beezebo" used at *Honeyland* for bee demonstrations. Norm served as an executive member of the CAA, in pre-NSWAA days. Keith was a past president and life member and an enormous contributor to the industry. All will be sadly missed. Our sincere condolences to families and friends.

Craig Klingner
State President

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NSWAA PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

<p>Current Clause 3(b) All Apiarists resident in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory shall be eligible for Financial Membership provided they have duly completed a Form of Application for Membership setting out the total number of hives of bees owned or controlled by the Applicant. All persons who were Financial Members at 1 June 1933 shall be known as Foundation Members. Ordinary membership is available to individuals, partnerships or companies, providing that only one member of such partnership or company shall have the right to participate in ballots according to the constitutional rules for balloting.</p>	<p>Proposed Clause 3(b) All Australian Apiarists shall be eligible for Financial Membership provided they have duly completed a Form of Application for Membership setting out the total number of hives of bees owned or controlled by the Applicant. All persons who were Financial Members at 1 June 1933 shall be known as Foundation Members. Ordinary membership is available to individuals, partnerships or companies, providing that only one member of such partnership or company shall have the right to participate in ballots according to the constitutional rules for balloting.</p>																																		
<p>Current Clause 7(a) The Association shall elect, at each Annual Conference, a Council consisting of five Members, hereafter set out, who shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election. No Member of the Association shall be eligible for election to the Executive Council unless he or she has been a Financial Member for at least two successive years immediately prior to the date of the holding of the Annual Conference at which Nominations, for election, are received.</p>	<p>Proposed Clause 7(a) The Association shall elect, at its first Annual Conference, a Council consisting of five Members. No Member of the Association shall be eligible for election to the Executive Council unless he or she resides in NSW or the ACT and has been a Financial Member for at least two successive years immediately prior to the date of the holding of the Annual Conference at which Nominations, for election, are received. Each member shall be elected for a 2 year term and must retire from office at the Annual Conference held at the end of such 2 year term, but if eligible, may seek reappointment. At each Annual Conference the number of members of the Executive Council that must retire will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the Annual Conference held in 2013, two members must retire; • at the Annual Conference held in 2014, three members must retire <p>this two year pattern will repeat thereafter. The members who must retire are those who have held office the longest since last being elected or appointed. If 2 or more members have been in office for the same period, those members may agree which of them will retire. If they do not agree, they must draw lots to decide which of them must retire.</p>																																		
<p>Current Clause 7(b) The Executive Council elected by Conference shall itself elect its President and Vice-President and the full Council shall then consist of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President 2. Vice-President 3. Three (3) Councillors <p>Subject to this Constitution, the management and control of the Association shall be vested in the Executive Council who may make regulations to govern any matters not directly dealt with in these Rules.</p>	<p>Proposed Clause 7(b) The Executive Council elected by Conference shall itself elect its President and Vice-President and the full Council shall then consist of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President 2. Vice-President 3. Three (3) Councillors <p>Subject to this Constitution, the management and control of the Association shall be vested in the Executive Council who may make regulations to govern any matters not directly dealt with in these Rules. No member of the Executive Council shall serve more than 5 consecutive years as the President.</p>																																		
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<p>Current Clause 9(c) That the fees be tied to Consumer Price Index (CPI) to the nearest \$5.00.</p>	<p>Proposed Clause 9(c) The Executive has the right to increase subscriptions provided that rise is tied to Consumer Price Index (CPI) to the nearest \$5.00. A vote of Annual Conference is required if a rise greater than CPI is proposed.</p>																																		
<p>Current Clause 10(h) All questions at Conference, or other meetings may be decided by a show of hands but, on the demand of 12 Financial Members, a Ballot shall be taken in which the voting power shall be on the basis of:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Affiliated/Retired/Student</th> <th>1 vote</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 to 200 hives</td> <td>2 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>201 to 400 hives</td> <td>4 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>401 to 700 hives</td> <td>6 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>701 to 1000 hives</td> <td>8 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1001 to 1500 hives</td> <td>10 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 1500 hives</td> <td>12 votes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This voting power shall also apply in all polls and postal ballots.</p>	Affiliated/Retired/Student	1 vote	1 to 200 hives	2 votes	201 to 400 hives	4 votes	401 to 700 hives	6 votes	701 to 1000 hives	8 votes	1001 to 1500 hives	10 votes	Over 1500 hives	12 votes	<p>Proposed Clause 10(h) All questions at Conference, or other meetings may be decided by a show of hands but, on the demand of 12 Financial Members, a Ballot shall be taken in which the voting power shall be on the basis of:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Affiliated/Retired/Student</th> <th>1 vote</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0 to 10 hives</td> <td>1 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 to 200 hives</td> <td>2 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>201 to 400 hives</td> <td>4 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>401 to 700 hives</td> <td>6 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>701 to 1000 hives</td> <td>8 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1001 to 1500 hives</td> <td>10 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 1500 hives</td> <td>12 votes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LIFE</td> <td>maximum number of votes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This voting power shall also apply in all polls and postal ballots.</p>	Affiliated/Retired/Student	1 vote	0 to 10 hives	1 votes	11 to 200 hives	2 votes	201 to 400 hives	4 votes	401 to 700 hives	6 votes	701 to 1000 hives	8 votes	1001 to 1500 hives	10 votes	Over 1500 hives	12 votes	LIFE	maximum number of votes		
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<p>Current Clause 13(d) To receive all monies on behalf of the Association and pay the same to the credit of an account in the name of the Association, at such Bank as the Executive Council may direct, such account shall be operated solely by cheque, signed by the Secretary, and one other Member of the Executive Council.</p>	<p>Proposed Clause 13(d) To receive all monies on behalf of the Association and pay the same to the credit of an account in the name of the Association, at such Bank as the Executive Council may direct, such account shall be operated solely by cheque or electronic banking, signed by the Secretary, and one other Member of the Executive Council.</p>																																		



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BUILDING LOCAL LAND SERVICES UPDATE

The *Local Land Services* Stakeholder Reference Panel keeps you informed of the progress towards the development of the new *Local Land Services*, as announced by the Minister for Primary Industries on 4 October 2012.

Chaired by NSW Natural Resources Commissioner, Dr John Keniry AM, the Panel is working with community and stakeholder groups to identify how *Local Land Services* can best deliver valuable services to the people of rural and regional NSW.

CONTINUING 2013 CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

The purpose of these workshops is to allow community and stakeholders to have their say on the four main pillars of *Local Land Services*: boundaries, governance, services and the rating framework.

The background papers on each of these pillars will be placed on the Have Your Say site during January 2013 for participants to read prior to attending the workshops. John Keniry will host the workshops, which will be facilitated by Mick Keogh, with other members of the Panel in attendance.

The Panel encourages everyone to come along and be involved. Dates and locations for the consultation Workshops are listed below. More information, including RSVP for each event, is available on the Have Your Say site.

2013 Community Consultation Workshops

Date	Time	Location
February 26	8-11 am	Moree RSL, 3 Albert St Moree
February 26	3.30- 6.30	Glen Innes & District Services Club, 120 Grey St
February 27	2- 5 pm	Gunnedah Services Club 313 Conadilly Street
March 14	9- 12 noon	Wentworth Town Hall, Cnr Adelaide St & Short St
March 15	9- 12 noon	Broken Hill Musicians Club, 276 Crystal Street
March 18	1- 4 pm	Grafton District Services Club, 105-107 Mary St
March 19	9am-12pm	Coffs Harbour Ex-Services Club, Cnr Pacific Highway & Vernon Street
April 8	1- 4 pm	East Maitland Bowling New England Highway
April 9	2- 5pm	Penrith, Nepean Rowing Club, Bruce Neale Drive

GET IN TOUCH

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Apimondia Congress Package, Ukraine

9 Day package departing 28 September including 5 day Congress in Kyiv

Post-Tour in Crimea, Ukraine

7 Day Escorted Tour departing 5th October

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VALE

KEITH MCILVRIDE

26 August 1933 - 5 January 2013

Keith devoted the latter part of his working life to beekeeping and to beekeepers. He did a lot for both. I'll talk about some of his achievements, but first let us think about how he was able to achieve so much.

First of all he was keen. Keith bought unbounded enthusiasm to whatever he did and, it must be said, equally unbounded determination.

He had the happy knack of quickly understanding the problem at hand. Keith was one of those people who could go straight to the core of a problem and see what had to be done.

And he was very intelligent. He had great mental capacity – I mean he taught himself computer programming in his spare time! Make no mistake; Keith was a very smart bloke.

Finally, in this little list of Keith's outstanding characteristics, was his honesty. His genuine, sincere honest-to-God attitude came across to people. They trusted him.

These characteristics shone through in Keith's career and this is the way I'll remember him. Bouncing about and giving his all to the job at hand.

Keith became serious about keeping bees almost 40 years ago. Later, when he took up queen breeding, it didn't take him long to realise that since bees mated high in the sky it was nigh on impossible to control the breeding process. But mating could be conducted in the laboratory if one had the right gear and a high level of skill. So Keith bought the artificial insemination equipment and learnt the tricky art of using it.

He also realised that he didn't know enough about genetics and set about teaching himself. He became friends with Dr Rob Page, then of the University of California at Davis, one of the world's leading behaviour and population geneticists and Keith was happy to share what he learned with anyone who would listen.

Keith was elected to the Executive Council of the Commercial Apiarists' Association of NSW at its 1982 Annual Conference. He was appointed Vice-President and two months later Honorary Secretary. As it happens the Association was in deep trouble. It had lost its way and was heading for bankruptcy, mainly through its trading activities. Then along came Keith with carte blanche to fix things. He was granted full powers to make decisions on behalf of the Association on all matters concerning trading.

Keith was not a professional secretary nor did he have extensive experience in beekeeper organisations – so it was all pretty new to him. And he worked without pay! He was, never the less, the right man at the right time. He discontinued trading, raised funds from members through

the voluntary levy, established "Honeyland" at the Royal Show and convinced creditors that the Association could pay its debts if granted time. In time the Associations' creditors were paid and the solvency of the CAA restored. He then resigned when a new Secretary was recruited.

Keith served as President of the Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Associations (FCAAA) from 1989 to 1991 and began his long battle to bring greater financial responsibility to that grossly underfunded body.

Keith was a member of a three person delegation that visited Russia in 1990 to examine bee breeding stock and to arrange for exchange of selected queen bees. The other two members of the party were Bruce White and Ian Coffey, the team leader.

He was recruited, by the World Bank to help establish beekeeping as a kind of cottage industry in an area of Indonesia. He and Mala spent two years living in Indonesia – a new experience for them both.

Keith was elected President of the NSWAA in 1994, only days after it was announced that the Australian Honey Board was to be finished up. This created confusion and divisions in the industry which Keith helped sort out. He served two terms and simultaneously remained active in the affairs of the Federal body, attempting to improve its financial management.

Out of all this, he was instrumental in establishing the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), the peak industry body that came into being on March 1 1998.

Keith became Chair of Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's Honeybee Research and Development Committee (HBRDC) on July 1 1999. He immediately set about making the results of research more readily available to beekeepers and to the public at large through a wide range of valuable publications. As well, and at no cost to the committee, he devoted months of his time and skill in producing a CD containing results of all of the projects ever sponsored by the committee up to that time.

He was outstandingly successful as Chair of HBRDC and gave an enormous amount of time and energy to the organisation. Keith forged strong links with research personnel and organisations and was highly respected in the scientific community for his impartiality and basic common sense.

Keith's services to the industry were formerly recognised when he was awarded an OAM in the 2004 Queen's Birthday Honours List. I should add that he was already a Life Member of the NSW Apiarists' Association and the recipient of the Goodacre Memorial Award. Keith was quite a bloke.

Fred Benecke

TRIBUTE TO Keith McIlvride

I first met Keith McIlvride in 1989. I was invited to New South Wales to receive the Alan Clemson Memorial Foundation Award. I was the second recipient, though the first and second awards were given simultaneously. That is because the first recipient was supposed to be Harry Laidlaw. Harry had contracted shingles and was unable to travel so he suggested to Keith that I be given the award instead. Harry was my best friend, mentor, and collaborator. Keith's solution was to give the first two simultaneously. Keith made sure that I felt like the award was all about me, not about being the substitute for Harry. I was very grateful and felt very honored.

During that first visit to Australia, I participated in a workshop at Keith's bee yard in Thirlmere. He showed me his queen rearing operation, the computer program he wrote to keep track of his breeding records, and asked me a million questions about honey bee biology, genetics, and breeding. He also took us for a tour of the Gold Coast and to Canberra where we met more beekeepers and sampled their hospitality. We made many new friends some of whom my wife, Michele, who accompanied me, has stayed in contact with over the years.

I was taken by Keith's enthusiasm, self-taught knowledge of computer programming, genetics, and bee biology, and his love for what he did. Keith invited me back to Australia two more times over the years, and he and Marla visited us in California, when I was at the University of California at Davis. We became great friends.

Keith was unmovable in his determination, ever positive, and always moving forward. He had enormous energy. He was extremely passionate about the bee industry, taking on the tough leadership responsibilities needed to effect positive change. Even after his disease had left him unable to continue his beloved queen rearing, he assumed major responsibilities for bringing Apimondia to Melbourne in 2007. As his disease progressed we kept in touch. Sometimes he would ask me a question about biology or breeding. I sent him scientific papers I had written and he commented on some of them. He never lingered about his disease or let on about its severity. It was a non-issue until the end. We last heard from Keith October 16, 2011:

"Dear Rob and Michele,

Sorry for being a little late in letting you know the sad news. I have been moved into a Nursing Home after a couple of moves thru Hospitals.

I am now permanently set up in Queen Victoria Memorial Gardens. It is a very nice place.

Marla has spent some time in hospital after a fall. She is back home with a number of items to help her.

I will write again soon, love Keith and Marla"

He never did. I will miss him.

Robert Page

Foundation Professor of Life Sciences
Vice Provost and Dean
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Arizona State University USA

SEMINAR ON FUTURE OF HONEYBEE STOCK IMPROVEMENT & SALE OF BREEDER QUEENS

Date: Saturday, 23 March 2013,

Time: Seminar commencing at 9.00am

Location: University of Western Sydney, Richmond

Sponsor: The Wheen Bee Foundation

Sale of Breeder Queens: commencing at 3.00pm

Program details, registration costs etc can be found on the Wheen Bee Foundation Website: <http://www.wheenfoundation.org.au/>.

Background: The Wheen Bee Foundation was created in 2009 following a generous bequest from Gretchen Wheen, and her cousin, Frank. Gretchen hoped that the Foundation would continue her life's work on honeybee stock improvement.

Unfortunately, Gretchen passed away on 6 January 2012 before her dream was fully realised. This one day seminar is dedicated to her memory, and the visionary role she played in supporting our beekeepers. The seminar will take stock of where Australia stands today on honeybee stock improvement and where we should head in the future. The path forward will require close collaboration between researchers, queen breeders and beekeepers not only in Australia but globally.

The detailed program, and registration arrangements, will be posted to the Wheen Bee Foundation website as speakers and the location within the University of Western Sydney are confirmed. Speakers will include researchers, queen breeders and practicing beekeepers from Australia and NZ. Lunch, morning and afternoon tea will be provided. Registration costs will be set only to recover provision of refreshments.

After the seminar, a sale will take place of breeder queens from stock donated to the Foundation by a consortium of beekeepers. This progressive group originally purchased the stock from the Eastern States Honeybee Improvement Program when it terminated in 1995. This program, funded by the then Honeybee R&D Council, ran from 1984 to 1994. Further selection for improved performance continued for another 10 years. More details of these quality lines will be given during the seminar.



Gretchen Wheen sharing thoughts on food security with Governor Marie Bashir at the launch of Tanya Crother's book "Arthur Wheen: Letters from the Front" on 5 October 2011. This was the last outing of Gretchen before her death on 6 January 2012. It was an event which gave Gretchen much pleasure. Not only because it celebrated the life of her father, Arthur Wheen; but more because the Governor converted the launch into a discussion about the importance of food security, something very dear to Gretchen.



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DOUG'S COLUMN

Doug Somerville

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

doug.somerville@industry.nsw.gov.au



RADIO NATIONAL

On Christmas Eve (24 December 2012) ABC Radio National ran a story on the massive bee poisoning that happened on the south coast back in June.

The story started for me when Wendy Roberts rang me on the 18 June asking me where to send samples of bees that had been sprayed for analysis. Over the next few days I received several calls from beekeepers and the media, although unfortunately I was not in a position to greatly assist. I flew out for the New Zealand Beekeeping conference on the 20 and effectively was not back in my office (or New South Wales) until the 19 July.

My advice in June was for all affected beekeepers to contact the police and report all malicious damage or theft. As far as pesticide damage to bees is concerned, beekeepers should contact the EPA (Environmental Protection Authority). NSW DPI has very little scope to deal with such matters as occurred in June and mainly provide assistance to any police enquiry or assist EPA in sample collection.

Anyway, June 2012 is now history, but in the spring I received a phone call from an ABC reporter, Nancy Notzon. Nancy wanted to come down to Goulburn (from Sydney) and interview me on my take of the story. I agreed and we sat and had a chat for over an hour.

Nancy had already talked to several beekeepers and interviewed three – Lindsay Bourke, Chair of the Australian Honey Bee Council; Pat Roberts, a commercial beekeeper with his extracting facility at Temora; and Graham Manns, a commercial beekeeper operating near Gundagai.

Nancy initially pursued a line of questioning with a theory that the perpetrator of the bee poisoning on the south coast was due to competition for sites. I emphasised that there was no evidence to support any of the views being expressed.

From one person or another I had different beekeepers state their opinion on who they believe was responsible. I think I had been given up to six (6) suspects through the beekeeping discussion channels. I couldn't help but think of a case where for years beekeepers were pointing a finger at a particular beekeeper on the south coast (the fellow is now deceased) when, in fact, the beekeeper responsible for the hive interference and thefts had been travelling under the radar for years.

The following transcript appears on the ABC website. Simon Santow is the presenter and Nancy Notzon the producer:

"Worth about 5 billion dollars each year, Australia's beekeeping industry has long been wary about the various threats to its existence. But besides pests, fire and floods, there's now the spectre of possible sabotage. Nancy Notzon travels to Tasmania and to country New South Wales as she attempts to get to the bottom of some mysterious goings on that's left many apiarists scratching their heads. She looks at a number of cases where bee farmers have had hives destroyed in mysterious circumstances.

TRANSCRIPT

SIMON SANTOW: It's a mystery that has authorities stumped. Hello, Simon Santow with a Radio Current Affairs Documentary.

Beekeepers, or apiarists as they're sometimes known, are still reeling after a mass killing of honey bees on the New South Wales South Coast last June.

Thousands of hives were destroyed and the livelihoods of many people in the industry were jeopardised.

Naturally, police are taking the incident seriously but so far they have come up with few clues on who was responsible and what their motivation was.

One theory is that it was all about sabotage but who was the target - a competitor or the industry as a whole?

Nancy Notzon has this investigation.

(Sound of puffing and bees)

LINDSAY BOURKE: Now if you get stung, don't pinch it. Do not pinch the sting because you'll just get all the venom in. There's more on there, see they just keep doing it to you. This happens to beekeepers all day, we get stung all day.

NANCY NOTZON: It's a cold spring day in Tasmania as beekeeper Lindsay Bourke checks his hives in a wet paddock in Launceston.

How many times have you been stung in this visit?

LINDSAY BOURKE: Four. I've sort of got a chance of it up my sleeve (laughs).

NANCY NOTZON: Lindsay Bourke collects honey to make all sorts of products, from beer and mead to creamed honey and spreads.

He's also the chairman of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council.

LINDSAY BOURKE: Lots of people are in the industry, but it depends on what degree they're in the industry. We have 10,000 beekeepers in Australia and 1,850 are commercial beekeepers and you know, so that leaves over 8,000 smaller beekeepers and hobbyists who really enjoy their craft.

But once it becomes commercial then it's different. You know, we really have to work our hives hard, it's hard for us to sit back and enjoy it as much as we did when it was a smaller scale cause we have to make ends meet.

NANCY NOTZON: The honey bee industry might be niche, but it's worth big bucks - between \$4 and \$6 billion a year to the Australian economy.

It doesn't just make honey. It's also used for crop pollination which helps ensure the production of most of the food we eat.

LINDSAY BOURKE: For our food production and associated, it's 60 per cent. It's about 30 or 40 per cent directly of what we eat and the other is for our stockfeed and things like that. You won't get lucerne. I mean, it'll run out and then you'll need to have, you know, you'll have to pollinate lucerne seeds to grow a new crop. So, about 60 per cent of our food relies on the honey bees pollinating.

NANCY NOTZON: For such an important industry, it's hard to imagine there's a serious threat to its existence, a threat that makes the odd sting seem pretty insignificant.

The industry is facing many problems - everything from a decline in available flowers to competition for bee sites. Then there are bushfires, floods, pests, disease, accidental poisoning by crop spraying, pricing issues, imports and even vandalism. And now, there's one more problem - sabotage.

LINDSAY BOURKE: There was a poisoning up on the mainland, Batemans Bay, recently. But that wasn't done by farmers or anybody else like that. I firmly believe that was a malicious act.

PAT ROBERTS: I think in all honesty, it was just, they just went out to teach the largest beekeepers a lesson.

NANCY NOTZON: Pat Roberts is a successful apiarist, based in Batemans Bay on the New South Wales' south coast. He processes his honey in Temora near the Riverina city of Wagga Wagga.

PAT ROBERTS: And I'll give you a look what goes on in here. Now, a few bees, don't take any notice of them, they won't hurt ya. They're like a dog.

NANCY NOTZON: Now in his 70s, Pat Roberts has more than 55 years of beekeeping experience.

PAT ROBERTS: That one over there is spinning now, spinning all the honey out. By the time they get this one loaded up, that one'll be finished. A bit noisy in here.

NANCY NOTZON: Pat Roberts is one of seven apiarists targeted in what's thought to be the biggest ever attack in the history of the Australian honey bee industry.

On a winter's night last June, Pat Roberts' bees were sleeping in bushland outside Batemans Bay. They'd been making honey from the area's winter flowering spotted gum tree.

Someone armed with what's thought to be backpacks of poison, made their way up the twisting roads through the Murrumbidgee National Park and the Kioloa, Boyne and Benandarah state forests.

They found their targets, even those deep in the bush, and sprayed.

It's not known how many people were involved in the attack or how long it took, but by the time it was finished, nearly 2,500 hives across several sites were targeted and millions of bees were dead.

The impact was devastating.

PAT ROBERTS: I got a phone call from all places, from over Thailand. It was on the Saturday afternoon. Wayne Ashfield rang me up and he said, "I heard the bees are dying on the spotted gum". My answer's always, yes, they gotta die somewhere. Then the following day I got another phone call saying, from Greg I think, or it might have been me son-in-law, Laurie, saying there were bees getting sprayed all over the place.

So I went out, I heard on the Sunday, went out on the Monday, I went around I think to about five loads of bees and none of them were sprayed. I thought, this is good, they haven't touched ours. Then I come up Livingston Creek Road and there they are, all dead.

I started going round the rest of them, into the national park, went around about another five loads, nothing touched, and I had a load right up in the bush. I nearly never stopped. I thought no one's going to find them. And I thought, I better duck up and find, have a look. Here they are, they were all sprayed.

So the big worry was how many more did they get.

NANCY NOTZON: All up, Pat Roberts lost 240 hives and about \$90,000, not including the value of lost production.

PAT ROBERTS: Now we gotta make up new hives to replace those and they won't come into production for, I don't know, it may even be 12 months. Where, actually, the boys are just doing

it at the moment. But it'll, it would work into I'd say probably a quarter of a million dollars.

NANCY NOTZON: The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) ordered all affected hives to be destroyed.

PAT ROBERTS: See the DPI told us that we had to burn all the boxes, burn all the frames and any honey that was in it burn it because they didn't want any contaminated honey getting on the shelf. So we had to burn everything. That was about the hardest thing in the whole lot.

We had to put one family off because with that many bees gone, we didn't have the honey flow going through to, you know, for the whole lot of them.

NANCY NOTZON: So, you actually had to let workers go?

PAT ROBERTS: Yeah, one family, yep.

NANCY NOTZON: Are they back with you now?

PAT ROBERTS: Not yet, nup. Those hives will take a fair while to recover.

NANCY NOTZON: But recovery is hard, especially with the threat of another attack lingering.

Just a few months after his hives were destroyed, Pat Roberts started getting strange phone calls. One caller left a voicemail including what seemed to be spraying sounds. That recording is now with the police. But while this attack represents the biggest on the industry, it's not the first.

Graham Manns works near Gundagai in the Riverina region of New South Wales, and like Pat Roberts, puts bees in the bushland near Batemans Bay. Four years ago, his bees were hit hard.

GRAHAM MANNS: 2008 was a huge shock. I couldn't believe is this what the industry's come to?

NANCY NOTZON: In this attack, the hives were opened and poison poured directly in. It was a smaller assault than 2012, but Graham Manns' loss was huge: 400 hives gone and a damage bill of \$200,000.

GRAHAM MANNS: I really hoped, and everything went quiet for those four years, and I was hoping that that person had just got it out of the system, realised that he'd done such a terrible bloody thing, and put it away. But whether someone else has copied that idea or whether he's done it, or whether that person or persons have done it again, it come back to me like a bad nightmare.

When I was getting the news, I thought, oh well, we've been hit too. But when we got round all our bees at the coast we found we weren't, which was a shock but a huge relief too.

My stomach rolled again when I got the news that other people were getting sprayed. One of the people who told us, not only one, actually several of them said to us afterwards, that were sprayed this time, was that the lack of sleep, the headaches, the worry, the stress, they knew how I felt.

NANCY NOTZON: Apiarists are a hard bunch to track down, moving their hives several times a year to follow floral resources. It makes the job of investigators more difficult, as they try to gather statements, clues and evidence.

A clear motive for the attacks still hasn't been established and far from proving anything, theories about the attacks have people talking. Everyone seems to have their own idea about who might've done it or what might've happened. There's lots of opinions but no hard evidence.

But there's a common thread through all of these theories. Many people, like Pat Roberts, believe it was an insider.

PAT ROBERTS: Well last reports I had, I don't know if it's right or wrong, but I read in a bee journal, that it was 2,400 hives got sprayed. But if you're going to spray or poison 2,400 hives, you're gonna get stung more than once so it has to be someone in the industry.

A lot of people said it could have been greenies, but it's not greenies because greenies, they'd have to get stung that many times and you know, most people don't like getting stung. So we honestly think it was in the industry.

NANCY NOTZON: Beekeeper Graham Manns believes the recent attack is linked with what happened to him in 2008.

GRAHAM MANNS: Yes, the connection, I believe, personally, I personally believe the connection is jealousy.

NANCY NOTZON: Why?

GRAHAM MANNS: Well, I think it's a little bit, the whole society today that people see what somebody else has worked many years for, and they wonder why they can't have it. And when they try to get it, it is a hard slog. When I first started I had 300 hives and it's taken me 36 years to get to 2,000, and the sheds and everything and the equipment that I have now. It doesn't happen overnight. You can't, it's not dished up on a silver plate.

You have to get out, you got to get off your bum, you gotta work bloody hard. You gotta put in the hours, you gotta put in the effort and it's not easy sailing. There's a lot of times that things go wrong. You have bad years, you make bad decisions. And things sometimes go pear-shaped. But you fight back and wherever you're willing to keep fighting back.

NANCY NOTZON: Over the years there have been cases of beekeepers stealing honey, hives and bees from other apiarists. In 2007, a Queensland beekeeper was actually murdered for his honey.

DOUG SOMERVILLE: That was seriously extreme, when a guy gets killed because another beekeeper wants to steal his honey out of his shed. Thankfully the police were successful in identifying who did it and as far as I know he's still locked up.

NANCY NOTZON: Doug Somerville is the technical specialist for honey bees at the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries. He's also got a few hives of his own.

DOUG SOMERVILLE: There's certainly always bees somewhere in the country that are getting unwanted attention. Personally, I've had beehives blasted with shotguns, I've had high powered rifles shot through them, had kids stone them, I've had them flooded, I've had them stolen. The only thing I haven't had them so far is burnt but there's plenty of blokes that have had bee hives burnt.

So getting unwanted attention is not unusual but it is unusual to have it in such large numbers.

NANCY NOTZON: Tensions can rise within the industry over bee sites, or occupational permits in national parks and state forests. Not all sites are used every season, as some flowers only bud every few years.

Lindsay Bourke, chairman of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council says he's seen plenty of fights over access to sites.

On that issue of access to forestry, how much of a problem is that? Are you losing a lot of sites?

LINDSAY BOURKE: Well, we were, especially in one state, Queensland. It was due to finish in 2022-24. It was really bad, really bad, because you need, you need access to forest to get the honey for the bees and then if your bees are healthy then you can go out and do some crop pollinating and then you got to get back to the forests again.

That's how beekeepers in Australia have always made their living and we leave a small footprint. We are the eyes and the ears of the bush, we are a benefit to forests and we're in danger of losing access in the forests into Queensland. Hopefully that is being reversed at the moment.

It's happening in New South Wales, too. AHBIC, we have put a submission into the New South Wales Government about that on behalf of our beekeepers and we're prepared, we've offered to come and meet their ministers. That is really hard for our beekeepers, especially the ones in Victoria as well. They need to go up there.

We're a free country and New South Wales beekeepers come to Victoria and Victorian beekeepers go to New South Wales and we should be able to get access into those forests.

NANCY NOTZON: Forests New South Wales says it's working with the apiary industry over streamlining access to beekeeping sites.

It says in one region in New South Wales, more than 40 per cent of beekeeping sites aren't used as they're not considered viable for honey production or are difficult to reach and have limited road access for large trucks.

National Parks told the ABC it allows existing beekeeping sites to be maintained if they're consistent with the objectives of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, even when the land is transferred to them from State Forests.

Some beekeeping sites in the Batemans Bay area are highly coveted.

The Department of Primary Industries', Doug Somerville.

DOUG SOMERVILLE: Every four years spotted gum will flower to some extent down there. It might be a heavy flowering, it might be a light flowering but it will flower fairly regularly, which is unusual for eucalypts. But it will be highly sought after when it does flower because it's a winter flowering plant and there is not much else around in the state, particularly the southern part of the state, that's worth chasing at that time of year.

So from that perspective, they are high value sites for that event.

NANCY NOTZON: If you were an apiarist in NSW in this area, you'd want to have an occupational permit in that area?

DOUG SOMERVILLE: Oh, highly desirable.

NANCY NOTZON: Many of those holding permits on desirable sites on the south coast have done so for generations. They're not about to give them up.

Beekeeper Pat Roberts says he's got no idea who might be behind the attacks on the south coast, but he doesn't believe it's a coincidence the people who were targeted in the attacks at Batemans Bay are among the most successful in the industry.

To do well in the business is hard physical work, sometimes seven days a week, and knowing different behavioural patterns of plants can take decades to learn properly.

Graham Manns is a veteran of the industry.

GRAHAM MANNS: One of the problems with getting into beekeeping, I find, is that people don't realise how hard it is, how much work's involved in beekeeping. And how much experience you need to be able to work those bees successfully.

You'll find most successful beekeepers within the industry either employ overseas employment or are family orientated that have a base workforce of family that have grown up within the industry, have seen what it's all about and taken it on board as what they're happy to do.

But it is impossible, nearly impossible to find a really good worker. It's not the money, it's the attitude towards the work. It is hard, physical work.

NANCY NOTZON: The mysterious goings on at Batemans Bay are forcing tighter security measures on the industry - a trend already felt hard by some beekeepers.

PAT ROBERTS: Yeah, I have a lot of cameras on the bees. One on every load, some loads I have two on. And it's just become a practice. The vandalism is huge. People running over with 4WDs, pushing and shoving them around with their windows wound up and being real heroes seeing the bees all loose out of the boxes. Wow, tough guys.

NANCY NOTZON: How many bees do you lose to 4WDs?

PAT ROBERTS: Some years none, some years you could lose half a load. Just smashed and run over and pushed around. And it's hugely damaging and disheartening but we tend to fight back and with the use of these cameras, people are going to start getting caught.

NANCY NOTZON: As for the investigation at Batemans Bay, it seems there's still no clear answer.

And as Doug Somerville from the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries believes, there are no winners in making accusations without hard proof.

But the poisonings are forcing some hard questions about the industry and related bodies. Forests New South Wales is now looking more closely at its own permit system. After the attacks, it wasn't able to give police exact information about who was renting which site, whose bees were where, and if anyone was onsite at the time of the crime.

There also seems to be a lack of communication between Forests New South Wales and beekeepers. Meanwhile, the police investigation continues. But for those like apiarist Pat Roberts, an arrest can't come soon enough.

PAT ROBERTS: Our biggest worry is, is it over? If the police don't catch them, if they got away this time, it'll happen again. That's what I think, that's my biggest worry.

SIMON SANTOW: Nancy Notzon with that investigation.

You've been listening to a Radio Current Affairs Documentary."

Some observations:

- 1) If you are ever interviewed for radio or television, be careful what you say, as the transcript of this story clearly shows how bits are cut and pasted into a story that the producer wants to portray.
- 2) The point made by Graham Manns needs to be highlighted. Every year I talk to enthusiastic recreational beekeepers who are considering the possibility of escalating their interest into a commercial beekeeping venture. In Graham's words, "it is hard, physical work".

- 3) How many bee thefts, poisonings, malicious acts on bee hives go unreported to the authorities. I know from personal experience how unrewarding it can be to report an incident to police. But, in my case, several other beekeepers also reported thefts in the same area and this sparked interest from the local detective, who eventually had enough evidence to take a beekeeper to court.

Mick Rankmore, NSW DPI Regulatory Specialist Honey Bees contacted the police recently for figures on stolen and vandalised bee hives. Records on the COPS database from 1 January 2002 to 5 December 2012 list 100 events. Theft incidents of bee hives, bees and/or honey = 64, and damage the bee hives = 36. The estimated cost associated with these events was close to \$750,000 over the 10 year period. A conservative estimate of the number of hives stolen was 3,312.

Note: these are the cases reported to police, thus actual figures are likely to be much greater.

- 4) If your bee hives, etc., are stolen, vandalised or interfered with, report it to police. They can't do much if they don't know what's happening. If your bees suffer from a pesticide related matter, contact the EPA on 131 555.
- 5) Seriously, it's time to decide what security or surveillance strategy you are going to adopt. A few beekeepers historically have played with a few cameras in remote sites, but it is clearly time to up the ante. Remote cameras are becoming cheaper and the choice is increasing. At this year's state conference in Merimbula there will be a presentation on this very subject. The person delivering the talk, I'm told, will also bring along various cameras for sale. This is a good enough reason alone to attend the conference in May.

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2013 CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

The Executive has invited several overseas speakers to the 2013 Conference. They will include the following:



DR GARRY LEVOT

Graduated from the University of NSW in 1983 with a PhD in Applied Entomology.

Appointed in 1984 to a position of Entomologist with NSW Department of Agriculture to work on insecticide resistance in the Australian sheep blowfly.

Promoted to Principal Research Scientist in 2002.

Research Experience with NSW Dept of Primary Industry

- Insecticide resistance management and the control of flystrike on sheep
- Insecticide resistance diagnosis, measurement and management in sheep lice
- Control strategies for the small hive beetle
- Integrated control of nuisance flies on poultry farms
- Chemical control of external parasites of commercial poultry
- Development of 'best practice' wet dipping procedures for lice control on sheep
- The environmentally considerate disposal of spent sheep dip washes
- Wool residue consequences of on-farm insecticide treatment of sheep
- Occupational health and safety considerations of applying pesticides to sheep

Current research projects:

- Commercialisation of the small hive beetle harbourage (funding – RIRDC/NSW DPI/ENSYSTEX Australasia PL)
- A field survey of blowfly resistance to dicyclanil and cyromazine (funding - Australian Wool Innovation/NSW DPI)
- LICEBOSS™ (funding - Australian Wool Innovation via the Sheep CRC/NSW DPI)

PETER BRAY



Peter grew up in a beekeeping family that packed and marketed its own product. The business was started by his Grandfather and partner in 1910. Airborne is New Zealand's oldest honey company and "Airborne" brand is NZ's oldest surviving brand of honey. More on company history here can be found at: <http://www.airborne.co.nz/history.shtml>.

Peter spent 5 years in Australia, from 1976, driving bulldozers on NSW soil conservation work (Goulburn), mining (Tasmania) and construction (Dartmouth Dam, Victoria and the last two years at Gatton Ag College.

Peter was a member of the New Zealand National Beekeepers Association Marketing Committee from its inception in 1985 and during the period when the industry implemented its marketing initiatives for Manuka in the 1990s. He is currently a member of the NZ Bee Products Standards Council (the interface between government and industry). Peter operated 6,000 hives until selling off to concentrate on marketing in the late 90s.

In his spare time, he travels outback Australia with a camera in a "Troopy" and off road camper trailer www.pbase.com/peterbray, <http://www.panoramio.com/user/1555020> and he is also a keen cyclist, windsurfer, fisherman and boatie.

DR BEN MCKEE

Ben has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science Degree (Honours) and a PhD in a field of study related to the honey industry. He is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Previously, he has worked with the University of Melbourne and within the Victorian Department of Primary Industries. Ben has worked with Capilano for over 10 years, in Operations management and now as CEO, he originates from a family that has been involved in beekeeping for 5 generations.

DR KARYNE ROGERS



Dr Karyne Rogers is a Senior Scientist at GNS Science in Wellington, New Zealand. Karyne is an environmental scientist who uses isotopes to trace pathways of nutrients and contaminants into food chains from plants, soil and aquatic systems. She also verifies claims of origin and authenticity of high value foods such as honey. Although she has been involved in honey testing and research at GNS Science for the last 15 years, more recently Karyne has been working with New Zealand bee keepers and exporters to investigate why New Zealand honey is routinely failing AOAC C4 sugar tests which are mandatory for many export markets including China, Europe and USA.

Talk 1. Removing market access barriers from flawed sugar tests

In 2012, there have been several significant border fails of exported New Zealand Manuka honey around the world. Since publishing a paper in 2010 on 'False positive sugar tests in Manuka honey', Karyne has been working with industry and government authorities to resolve market access issues which have affected more than half of all honey destined for export. She will discuss which honeys are prone to failure and discuss the mechanisms surrounding this, and provides a warning that Australian bee keepers may experience the same problem.

Talk 2. Feeding bees - the pro's and con's

We all know bees need to be fed for survival, but a beekeeper's feeding regime and hive management practises have a direct effect on the honey and its export potential. This talk will discuss the effects of certain activities such as sugar feeding, protein feeding, pollen feeding and pollination and how they affect the outcomes of your honey quality.

Preliminary Conference Program

Day 1

Wednesday 22 May 2013

8.00am	REGISTRATION	
9.00am	Call to Order - official business and reports	Craig Klingner
9.45am	AHBIC Report	Lindsay Bourke <i>Chair</i> AHBIC
10.00am	RIRDC Honeybee and Pollination Report	Dr Michael Hornitzky <i>Chair</i> RIRDC Honeybee Advisory Committee
10.15am	Official Opening	Alby Schultz Federal Member for Hume
10.30am	MORNING TEA	
11.00am	Changes at NSW DPI and the impact on industry	Tim Burfitt <i>Manager Intensive Livestock Industry Development</i> NSW Department of Primary Industries
11.15am	NSW Department of Primary Industries - Research & Advisory - Regulation	Dr Doug Somerville <i>Technical Specialist (Apiculture)</i> NSW Department of Primary Industries Mick Rankmore <i>Regulatory Specialist Apiaries, Agricultural Compliance</i> NSW Department of Primary Industries
11.40am	AFB National Management Strategy	Craig Klingner <i>President</i> NSW Apiarists' Association
11.50am	Implementation of the NZ AFB pest management strategy	Byron Taylor <i>Apiculture Officer,ASUREQuality NZ</i>
12.20pm	Nominations for Executive Council	
12.30pm	LUNCH	
2.00pm	An overview of beekeeping in South Africa	Dr Mike Allsopp - Browns Bees Australia Visiting Speaker <i>Senior Researcher and Head of Honeybee Research Section,</i> Agricultural Research Council, Stellenbosch, South Africa
2.45pm	Colony Collapse Disorder	Dr Jeff Pettis - Capilano Visiting Speaker <i>Research Leader</i> Bee Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture
3.15pm	Theft and vandalism in the bee industry	Detective Senior Constable Phil McCloskey NSW Police Force
3.30pm	Why surveillance could be a good idea for your business	Glenn Shean
4.00pm	Emotional resilience - do I have it?	TBC
4.30pm	General Business	
6.00pm	BBQ Event - sponsored by Santos Limited	

Conference Program

Day 2

Thursday 23 May 2013

8.30am	REGISTRATION	
9.00am	Making the most out of Australian honey	Dr Shona Blair <i>Chief Executive Officer</i> The Wheen Bee Foundation
9.30am	The future of the Australian honey packing industry	Dr Ben McKee <i>Chief Executive</i> Capilano
10.00am	Asian market potential for Australian Honey	Karla Hudson <i>General Manager</i> Superbee Honey Factory
10.30am	MORNING TEA	
11.15am	Truth in labelling	Glenn Locke <i>Senior Food Safety Officer</i> NSW Food Authority
11.30am	Removing market access barriers from flawed sugar tests	Dr Karyne Rogers <i>Senior Scientist - Environmental Isotopes, Outreach Scientist and Te Pap Scientist-in-Residence</i> National Isotope Centre, New Zealand
12.00pm	Marketing the uniqueness of honey	Peter Bray <i>Managing Director</i> Airborne Honey Limited Supported by Weerona Apiaries - Neil Bingley
12.30pm	LUNCH	
2.00pm	The prebiotic potential of Australian honeys and what that means for industry	Dr Nural Cokcetin <i>PhD Candidate</i> School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences University of NSW
2.30pm	Pests and predators of beekeeping in South Africa	Dr Mike Allsopp - Browns Bees Australia Visiting Speaker <i>Senior Researcher and Head of Honeybee Research Section,</i> Agricultural Research Council, Stellenbosch, South Africa
3.00pm	Small hive beetles – Why Apithor?	Dr Garry Levot <i>Principal Research Scientist, Microbiological Diseases and Diagnostics Research</i> NSW Department of Primary Industries
3.30pm	Pathogens of Asian Honey bees	Dr John Roberts CSIRO
4.00pm	Marcus Oldham College	Jay Hughes 2012 Marcus Oldham Scholarship recipient
4.10pm	General Business	
4.30pm	Close	
6.00pm	WINE & CHEESE NIGHT Pre-dinner drinks will be served from 6.00pm	

Conference Program

Day 3

Friday 24 May 2013

8.30am	REGISTRATION	
9.00am	Feeding bees - the pros and cons	Dr Karyne Rogers <i>Senior Scientist - Environmental Isotopes, Outreach Scientist and Te Pap Scientist-in-Residence</i> National Isotope Centre, NZ
9.30am	Extraction audits	Byron Taylor <i>Apiculture Officer,</i> AsureQuality NZ
10.00am	The Cape Honeybee Problem	Dr Mike Allsopp - Browns Bees Australia Visiting Speaker <i>Senior Researcher and Head of Honeybee Research Section</i> Agricultural Research Council, Stellenbosch, South Africa
10.30am	MORNING TEA	
11.15am	New Zealand industry past and present	Peter Bray <i>Managing Director</i> Airborne Honey Limited Supported by Weerona Apiaries - Neil Bingley
11.45am	Banning of Australian bee imports into the US	Dr Jeff Pettis - Capilano Visiting Speaker <i>Research Leader</i> Bee Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture
12.00pm	Speaking with a Strong Voice – Building and Maintaining Successful Industry Representation	Greg Mills <i>Livestock Officer Industry Development (Economist)</i> NSW Department of Primary Industries
12.30pm	LUNCH Close of poll for Executive Council	
2.00pm	Plant Health Australia Industry Biosecurity Plan	Greg Fraser <i>CEO and Executive Director</i> Plant Health Australia
2.15pm	Asian honey bee T2M program Varroa strategy National Bee Pest Surveillance Program Biosecurity Implementation Current Research proposals	Sam Malfroy <i>Project Officer</i> Plant Health Australia
2.45pm	The African Bee experience with varroa and AFB in South Africa	Dr Mike Allsopp - Browns Bees Australia Visiting Speaker <i>Senior Researcher and Head of Honeybee Research Section,</i> Agricultural Research Council, Stellenbosch, South Africa
3.30pm	The changing face of varroa	Dr Jeff Pettis - Capilano Visiting Speaker <i>Research Leader</i> Bee Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture
4.00pm	General Business	
4.30pm	Close	
7.00pm	ANNUAL CONFERENCE DINNER Pre-dinner drinks will be served from 7.00pm	Dinner prompt at 7.30pm

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Memories of Norman Douglas Mackay

3 December 1926 - 6 January 2013

Norman was the 4th born in a family of 5 children and lived in Seymour Street, Bathurst. He started school in Howick Street then went to Bathurst Public and Bathurst High School. At Bathurst High he played football in the Astley Cup Rugby League team.

At 15 he left Bathurst and headed to Young to start his 4 years training to be an Apiarist. It was in Young that he met Barbara at a local dance. They married 4 years later and move to Bathurst where Barbara still lives in the home that Norman built at 44 Esrom Street.

Norm was a highly knowledgeable beekeeper and was happy to share his knowledge and time with up and coming beekeepers. Especially in the art of Queen raising, in which Norm was somewhat of an expert. After many years of honey runs to the city selling his product to numerous health food stores – which Norm found socially satisfying but time consuming, he was head hunted by Capilano Honey who were trying to establish themselves in the industry. Capilano knew that if they had Norm on board that many beekeepers would follow his lead.

Norm also gave his time freely to many other community activities, such as the Acclimatisation Society (including stocking trout streams and being a voluntary fishing inspector) this interest then turned Norm into a highly skilled fisherman and fly fisherman, and again he shared his knowledge with other aspiring fly fisherman – he used to make his own flies from the family pet's hair!

Norm's other social activities included gold panning and sapphiring, which he made a family affair. Not happy with just washing the sapphires the normal way – norm invented a sapphire washing machine, which was a combination of Barbara's old twin tub washing machine, international valve springs, scrubbing brushes and his fire pump. Many family members wear jewellery today as a result of Norm's sapphiring expeditions.

Norm was a very active member of the Bathurst Rotary for many years. A few of his humorous activities during this time involved a time when Rotary was in charge of the Bathurst Air Spectacular where Norm was in charge of the port-a-loos and he couldn't work out why he was given the smelly end of the stick! On one occasion he was taking a homeless boy from Hargreaves house on a fishing and picnic day and the boy threatened to jump out of the car if Norm didn't give him a smoke. Thankfully Norm wasn't smoking at this stage. When he was in charge of the guest speakers he invited a highway patrol officer along to explain how the RBT would work, only to have a fellow Rotarian walk out when the officer was introduced to speak. Norm later found out that the police officer had booked his colleague earlier in the week!

Norm took up golf at the age of 40 and as with all his endeavours applied himself until he played off single figures and won a B Grade Bathurst Championship. He was a member of the board at the Golf Club for many years. He began mentoring his grandson Clinton in the game of golf at the age of 11, and was extremely proud that at age 14 Clinton could beat him. As well Norm was an accomplished snooker player – again to the championship winning level.

Norm served one year on the Commercial Apiarist's Association Executive, was a very active member of the Bathurst Branch of the CAA and many committee meetings were held at his home.

Norman has 2 daughters- Robyn and Lee, 6 grandchildren (Tracy, Amy, Clinton, Jasmine, Bryden and Jared and 6 great- grandchildren (Keisha, Bailey, Abby, Shyla, Billy and Jay) all of whom he loved dearly and was extremely proud of.

Local beekeepers, many of whom he had helped formed a guard of honour at his funeral.

Bruce White

In Loving Memory of John Edward Williams

18 June 1939 – 1 February 2013

Mr John Edward Williams passed away peacefully on Friday the 1 February. John will be sadly missed by his large family and many friends. John was born to Margaret and Harry into the Williams family of 5 brothers and 5 sisters.

John was born at Lane Cove, moved to Sodwalls with the family in 1951, then to Doonside in 1953 and Schofields in 1969 with his mother on a 6 acre property, after his dad's death, where he started his own business Starlight Engineering.

During his lifetime he tried his hand at jackerooing on a sheep station at Cobar, became a toolmaker and technical officer and continued studying over the years in photography, lapidary, computing and beekeeping where he owned about 40 hives. He was a tireless community worker, trying to improve other peoples lives, as a counsellor for 30yrs with St Vincent de Paul Society and maintaining local church grounds

John worked as a volunteer apiary show steward at the Royal Easter Show for 15yrs, Hawkesbury District Show for 20yrs plus, apart from being a long standing member of Sydney Metropolitan Branch of the NSWAA as treasurer, the QBBA, being involved with small hive beetle surveillance in 2002 for 8 days, travelling overseas to Apimondia conferences and designing and maintaining many show cabinets and 'The Beezeebo'. He was also a very competent photographer and many of his photos were used in beekeeping magazines.

John was very fastidious in all the work that he performed in that it must be good quality and occasionally he would slip in the odd joke or two when you least expected.

On the 1 February 2013 as John was sleeping peacefully he very quietly slipped away on his final journey along life's highway.

The life and legacy of John Edward Williams will remain as beautiful memories for us all to cherish and remember. His wealth of experiences, knowledge, strengths and mannerisms have influenced the lives of all he has touched. John will never be forgotten in our lifetime. May he forever Rest in Peace.

Our winged thoughts go to all the family and friends.

Eric Whithy



Ref: 0201

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NICK'S NEWS

from DPI NSW

Nick Annand
Livestock Officer (Bees), NSW Department of Primary Industries, Bathurst
Ph: 02 6330 1210 Email: nicholas.annand@dpi.nsw.gov.au



QUEEN BEE BREEDING COURSE

It is fast approaching the time of the year that Doug and I run a 'Queen bee breeding course,' the only one for the year. So if you would like to learn how to produce your own quality queen bees either for your own hives or as a business, please join us. The course will be held at Wheen Foundation property at Richmond (North West Sydney) on the 20th, 21st and 22nd of March, 2013.

The three day program is a mix of theory and a lot of hands on practical skills. Each participant receives a set of comprehensive notes and a grafting kit which they use repeatedly to learn the skill of grafting young larvae. The subjects covered include queen rearing principles, grafting, producing queen cells, nutrition and disease management, biology of honey bees, genetics, breeding programs, managing drone mother colonies, nucleus colonies, handling queens and markets.

This course covers and enables completion of the national unit of competency AHCBEK407A – Rear queen bees, and assessment is provide during the training.

The course positions are limited to 16 participants but we do need more than 10 to run the course. The course costs \$610. If you are interest in attending or wish to know more about the course, please contact:

Kim Griffiths
Phone: 1800 025 520 or 02 4939 8881
Email: kim.griffiths@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Or see our PROfarm website:
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/profarm

HOSPITAL YARDS FOR AFB INFECTED HIVES

A hospital yard, as the name implies, is an apiary site used to put sick/dying diseased hives. In the Australian context they are used mainly for American foulbrood disease (AFB) infected colonies. These sites are usually fairly isolated yet close to home for ease of access. This enables the beekeepers to more easily do what is required to rectify the problem. Beekeepers create and use such sites to remove the threat of further AFB spread through their "clean apiary" by removing the infected hives to an isolated location. These sites allow the beekeeper to remove the queen and hatch all the brood in the colony enabling the extraction of all the honey from the hive. This is necessary if the equipment is being prepared for irradiation and allows some recouping of losses because of AFB. Hospital yards are commonly employed beekeeping practise and if used correctly are a valuable management tool.

Unfortunately not all beekeepers management of their hospital yards is adequate hence the writing of this article.

Firstly AFB is a notifiable disease under the *Apiaries Act 1985*. There is a requirement under this Act for beekeepers to notify within 24 hours of the presence or suspected

presence of the disease. Penalties for failing to notify can be as high as \$2200. This includes all beekeepers no matter whether a hobbyist with one hive or the biggest beekeeper in NSW. Notification can be done by informing an apiary inspector or by submitting a sample to the NSW DPI laboratory.

It is also illegal to knowingly keep AFB infected hives on land without written approval from an inspector. So if you wish to create a hospital yard for your AFB infected hives inform the apiary inspector of your plans at the time of notification so they can issue a direction allowing for this to occur.

Hospital yards are only to be used for hives with adequate numbers of bees in them to enable the colony to protect its self from being robbed by other bees for the short period the hive will be in the yard. If an AFB infected hive is found with low bee numbers it should be closed up, preferably once all the bees have return for the day, and killed ensuring it is bee proof to prevent the possibility of any robbing. This applies to any hive at any location including the hospital yard.

A beehive being put into a hospital yard should be there for as short a time as possible. The queen is removed and within three weeks all the brood should have developed and hatched. The queen can be removed and killed at the time of the identification of AFB or upon removal of the hive to the hospital yard. A follow up hive inspection to remove all queen cells is required about 12 days after the queen has been killed. Allow 24 days for drones to hatch if there is drone brood present. Each individual hive should never need to be in the hospital yard for longer than one month. Once all brood is hatched kill the bees in the hive, extract the honey and store the gear in a bee proof manner ready for preparation for irradiation, burning or burial. It is very important to ensure that no robbing of the honey from infected hives occurs at any time through the process.

The other thing to be mindful of is that the hospital yard may remove the risk of infection from your apiaries but where you place those hives maybe in the vicinity of other beekeepers apiaries. Also there will be feral colonies in the area that have the potential to pickup AFB from you hospital yard if mismanaged which may create a risk to you and others using that locality later on.

AFB infected hives at hospital yards should **never be allowed to die out** as a result of the AFB. This is negligent and careless and will probably cause the spread of AFB.

It is very important that if using a hospital yard for AFB infected hives manage it carefully and ensure you are not allowing any further spread of AFB into any other bee colonies, managed or feral. What you do may unknowingly have a major impact on you or other beekeepers hives later on. Failing to manage the situation appropriately may also attract legal action from the department.



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Thinking beyond the package



SICK BEES

PART 13

SIMPLE MICROSCOPY OF *NOSEMA* FOR BEEKEEPERS

by Randy Oliver - ScientificBeekeeping.com



It is greatly surprising to me that with the great interest by beekeepers in *Nosema ceranae*, how few actually make the effort to monitor the levels of this parasite in their colonies! Even more surprising is that, despite the considerable expense, many blindly treat their colonies without having any idea as to whether their bees are actually infected!

In my last articles, I addressed the importance of monitoring infestation levels of the honey bee parasite *Varroa*. Now I'm going to move on to the next common parasite—nosema—of which similar monitoring allows one to make informed management decisions. It is far better to learn to monitor nosema levels yourself than it is to depend on sending the occasional sample off for testing!

Checking for *Nosema* infection level does not require laboratory expertise, and the cost of a good microscope can be quickly recouped by not wasting your money on unnecessary treatments, or from avoiding colony loss. Unfortunately, many beekeepers are intimidated by the thought of learning how to use a microscope, get frustrated due to unfamiliarity with the necessary techniques, or have trouble identifying the spores. I hope in this article to guide you step by step through the entire process of monitoring for nosema.

Equipment needed



Equipment for lab or field testing of nosema spores. If you plan to take the scope into the field, purchase a battery-powered scope and a protective case (I like the knockabout aluminum case that can be carried in my truck). The 60ml syringe can be purchased at any farm store.

The photo above shows all the equipment you will need. I highly recommend the Omano OM36L microscope (shown), which has binocular eyepieces, battery power for field use, and a mechanical stage for moving the slide around (Microscope.com offers a “Beekeepers Special” for \$349). For some reason, the optics of this particular scope really make nosema spores stand out! My advice is to pay the money for a decent scope, as this is likely the only one that you will ever purchase, and you

don't want to be stuck with one that does not live up to your expectations.

You can save money by getting a monocular (single eyepiece) scope (the OM136C costs \$179 for the basic model). Whatever you buy, I do recommend that you get a scope with an adjustable condenser.

Taking bee samples



Begin by taking a sample of at least bees 50 from the entrance of the hive. These bees will be the oldest bees, and therefore the most infected. Kill the bees in rubbing alcohol or freeze them.

Tips:

1. It is easiest to collect bees with a vacuum (search “Suckabee” at ScientificBeekeeping.com), but they can also be swept with a brush into an open jar of alcohol.
2. If there are not enough bees, stand in front of the hive for a minute or two, then step aside and allow the rush of returning foragers to land.
3. Or, block the entrance with screen (not a solid block) and return in a few minutes.
4. Blow into the entrance to get guard bees to rush out (wear a veil!).
5. If you can't take bees from the entrance, then take them from under the lid, but realize that your spore counts will be substantially lower, by about tenfold. However, sampling of bees from inside may give you a better idea as to whether the colony is seriously infected!
6. Samples can be kept in alcohol or frozen indefinitely until you process them.

Processing the samples

It is far better to view many samples quickly than to spend a lot of time with fewer samples, due to the inherent variation in samples from hive to hive, and week to week. I've switched to the really quick and clean “ziplock method,” which I learned from labs in Canada and Australia.



Dump the drained bees onto a white plate, then spread them out into a single layer, so that their legs aren't all stuck together.



A plastic fork is very handy for sorting the bees, due to its light weight. You can count bees quickly five at a time into groups of ten. Count out at least 50 if possible. If the number of bees is something other than 50, *write the number down at this time* so that you don't forget it when it's time to add the water!

Samples smaller than 50 bees can be badly skewed by one highly-infected bee. A single bee may contain 500 million (500M) spores. That means that it alone will contribute an average spore count of 10M spores per bee to an entire sample of 50 bees, *even if not a single other bee is infected!* Therefore, the larger the sample size, the more accurate the results. ***Don't place too much stock in the count from any single sample!***



Place the counted sample into a ziplock bag. Crush the drained bees (no liquid yet) by rolling over them firmly with a round quart jar (this works better than a rolling pin). Roll them with considerable pressure until there is no more crushing sound and

their guts are all squeezed out of their bodies and mashed up. Tip: roll away from the edges of the bag, otherwise the seams will occasionally blow out.

Now add 1ml of water per bee. If there were 50 bees in the



sample, add 50ml. I like using a 60ml syringe (available from a feed store). Use the syringe to wash down the inside of the bag, being careful not to contaminate the syringe (I normally keep the syringe clear of the mouth of the bag). In a pinch, 1 tsp = 5ml. Mash the bag with your fingers until the water turns opaque.



If the water doesn't become opaque, you likely did not squash the bees thoroughly enough! It is important to thoroughly homogenize the sample at this point, as you will only be viewing a single representative drop of the liquid for spore counting. Take the handle end of the multipurpose plastic fork and dip



it into the freshly-mashed liquid (the spores settle out quickly when you stop stirring). Stir the handle around and lift it out, then touch it to a glass slide so as to place a drop of the liquid onto the center of the slide. Rinse the fork handle *immediately* so that it is ready for reuse! Set a cover slip over the drop and

lightly tap it with your finger so that it settles down.

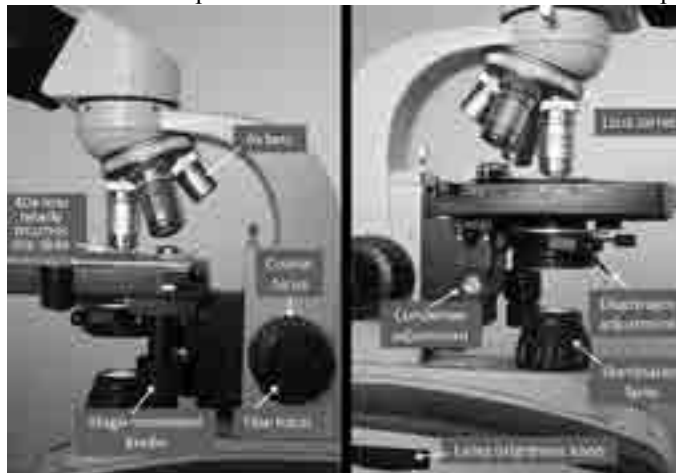
At this point, you can if you wish, filter the liquid through cheesecloth or a nylon stocking in order to remove most of the trash, but I generally find this to be unnecessary. If there are any bee parts under the cover slip, use a fresh drop, as the parts will hold the cover slip up and skew your spore count higher. If any water puddles around the cover slip, **blot it off with a paper towel so that it doesn't get on the microscope lens** (this is really important—don't ever shove a wet slide onto the platform, as it will crud up the lens).

Now here's the beauty of the ziplock method—once you've gotten your spore count done, you can simply zip the bag shut and toss it into the trash—no mess or washing up! It only takes me 2-3 minutes per sample turnaround, and a minute of that is simply waiting for the spores to settle.

Bringing the spores into focus

The following directions are specifically for the OM36, but will apply to most scopes.

Use the above photos to locate the different microscope



adjustments. After the first setup, very few subsequent adjustments are needed.

1. (Applies only to the first slide). Rotate the lens turret so that the 4x lens (the shortest one; with a red ring) clicks into place. The degree of magnification is the product of the 10x eyepiece (ocular) lens and the 4x objective lens in the nosepiece (turret)—in this case giving a magnification of 40x. At this magnification you can easily view bee body parts, but nosema spores would only be pinpricks.
2. Place the prepared slide (with a cover slip over the liquid, and any wetness blotted off) onto the stage, clipping it into the spring-loaded holder. Click on the lamp (at back of the scope base), and turn the lamp brightness to about the “4” setting. Adjust the slide location so that the light shines up through the center of the “gunk” on the slide.
3. Use the coarse focus knob to adjust the lens to about 7/8” above the slide.
4. Now look through the eyepieces, and turn the coarse focus knob back and forth slowly until the bee debris comes into focus.
5. Adjust the diaphragm (the size of the hole through which the light passes) lever toward the dark range, so that the debris looks “natural” and has clear texture.
6. Adjust the distance between the eyepieces until you see only a single, round image.
7. Looking through your right eye only, use the fine focus to adjust image until its sharp.
8. Now, looking only through your left eye only, turn the knurled ring on the left eyepiece until the image is sharp. You have now customized the scope for your particular eyes and interpupillary distance.
9. Now rotate the turret to snap the 10x lens (the next longer one; with a yellow ring) into place. Increase the light with

the diaphragm lever if necessary. Slowly turn the fine focus knob back and forth a bit until the debris pieces come into focus. Now you are viewing at 100x magnification, at which nosema spores are barely visible. Feel free to explore the slide at any time by using the stage adjustment knobs (note the since a microscope inverts the image, that the image moves “backwards” relative to the movement of the actual slide).

10. Now rotate the turret to snap the 40x lens (blue ring) into place, and adjust the fine focus slightly—the lens will barely clear the cover slip! Be careful not to focus down too far and crunch into the cover slip! At this magnification (400x) nosema spores are easily visible, but still small.
11. Use the stage movement knobs to locate a pollen grain or bee hair. Now adjust the diaphragm lever again to the optimal light level so that those objects are clear to see.
12. Now focus down (top of knob going toward the back of the scope) to the lowest level that objects are in focus and look for nosema spores. You must wait at least 60 seconds from when you first prepared the slide in order to allow the spores to settle—you can watch them as they fall to the bottom and suddenly come into focus!
13. Once you find spores (you may not find any in your sample), move the fine focus until they “glow.” Then adjust the condenser (this focuses the light beam) to the point where the glowing spores are bright against a relatively dark background. You can now fiddle slightly with the adjustments to get the best possible image in which the nosema spores stand out.
14. **Once you've made all the above adjustments, you can leave them set. Subsequent slides can simply be placed on the stage, and the only necessary adjustment will be the fine focus. Whew!**

Spore identification

Nosema spores have a few distinctive characteristics that will confirm your identification:

1. Nosema spores are still quite small even at 400x!
2. The spores are distinctive elongated ellipses—similar in shape to vitamin or fish oil capsules (but variable).
3. They will all be about the same size (*N. ceranae* spores are somewhat variable, especially bee to bee).
4. Most of the spores will settle to rest at the bottom of the liquid, and will thus all come into focus at the same level.
5. Note: in fresh bee preps (those not preserved in alcohol) the organisms in the gut are still alive, and the nosema spores will often jiggle and move about slightly.

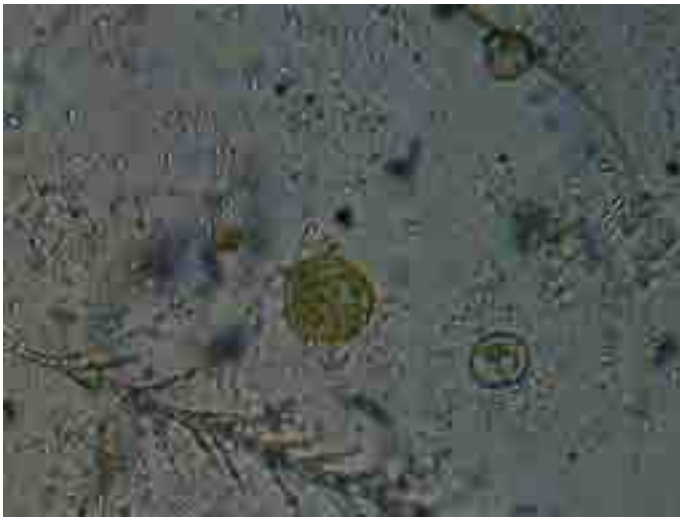
There are two distinctive characteristics that will confirm the identification of nosema spores—these can be best observed by jiggling the fine focus knob back and forth slightly as you view the spores.

1. **The spores will be clearly outlined with a smooth, dark elliptical line,**
2. **Then the outline will fade, and the centers will glow brightly. A spore must have both of these characteristics, as other objects will also have oval outlines or glow, but won't do both.**

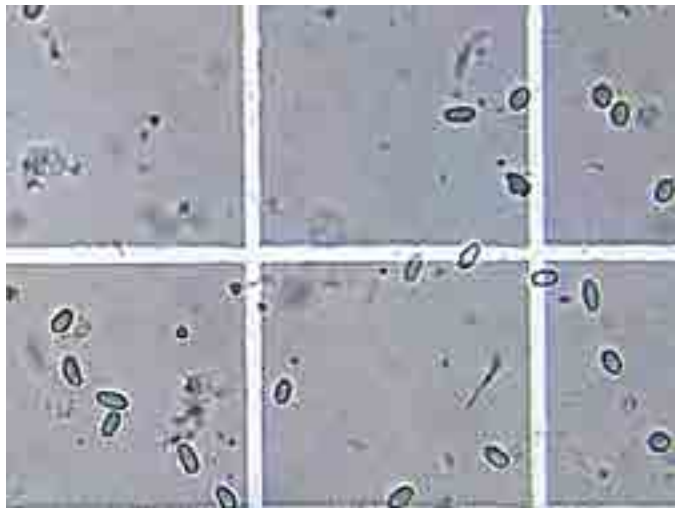
With practice, your brain develops a “search image” for the spores, and they begin to jump out at you from the background debris.

3. *Nosema ceranae* looks somewhat different than *N. apis* to the experienced eye—*apis* is a bit larger and broader, and the ends of the spores are “blunter.”

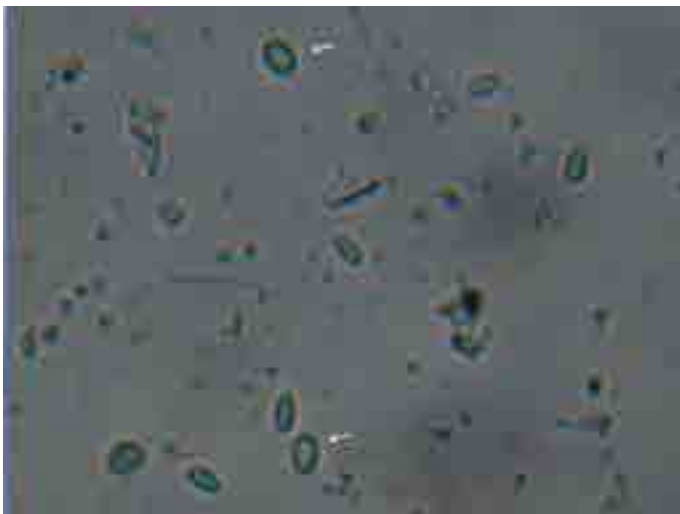
Note that I've adjusted the condenser and lighting to give me a



dark background that really shows the glow of the polar bodies in the center of the spores. These are typical *N. ceranae* spores—note their size relative to the bee “hairs” (one is feathery) and the yellow pollen grains. All photos are © the author, and were taken with a simple digital camera held to the eyepiece of the scope.



Note in this photo that *N. ceranae* spores are quite variable **and noticeably different from bee to bee**. Some will be extra long, pointed, or even curved like bananas! Note the spore at the lower far right, which is standing on end, rather than lying on its side, thus making it appear to be circular.



A slide containing both species of nosema—I’ve marked the two “fatter” *N. apis* spores with arrows. You’re unlikely to see *N. apis*, as *N. ceranae* has largely displaced it, although *apis* may pop up during cooler weather. There are indications that *N. apis* may be the more serious pathogen of the two.

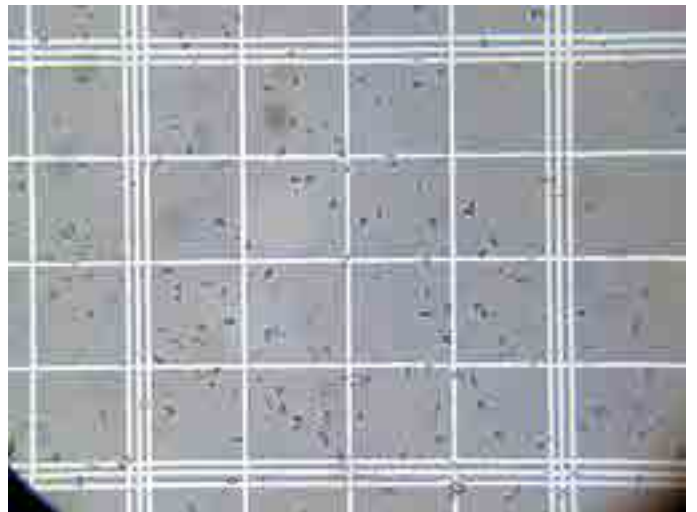
Counting the spores

I’m going to assume here that you’re going to simply do “field of view” counts on a simple glass slide, as I don’t feel that tedious hemacytometer counts are generally justified unless you are compiling data for research.

Use the stage adjustment knobs to “take a trip” around the slide. Pick an area to view that has a representative spore density.



This is a “field of view” at 400x of a filtered sample. You can see approximately 80 spores. If you divide the field of view number (in this case, 80 spores) by 5, the result is an approximation of the average spore count per bee in millions ($80 \div 5 = 16M$ spores per bee). This is all the accuracy that you need for management decisions. In fact, after several views, you will likely simplify counting down to one of three levels: none, a few, or too many. With practice, this triage can be done with a glance through the lens.



This is the view in a hemacytometer (for counting blood cells) of a droplet from the same sample as the above slide. There are 400 of the incredibly tiny squares in a square millimeter! Scientists accurately quantify counts by determining the average number of spores per square, and then multiplying by 4 million (in this case, the spore estimate would be about 14M based upon the mean of the 16 squares within the triple lines—very close to the estimate above; note that normally one would count a total of 80 squares).

If you do decide to get a hemacytometer, I recommend a Reichert Bright Line—order through a lab supply, but make sure that they call the manufacturer directly and ask them to ship one **with an extra dark background**.

Note that in the above photo, I’ve adjusted the scope such that the spore “outlines” are in focus, but the centers of the spores are not glowing much. Compare it to the following photo:



In this photo, I've adjusted the fine focus such that the centers of the spores glow, which leaves the outlines out of focus. If you *slightly* turn the fine focus back and forth, the spores will look like flashing lights, which really makes them stand out (just make sure that what you're looking at still has the smooth elliptical outline, as other objects will also glow).

For *Nosema apis*, the treatment threshold was considered to be a mean spore count of 1M per bee. On the other hand, there is considerable debate as to what constitutes a worrisome spore count for *Nosema ceranae*. At the time of this writing (9/16/2011) a few million spores (up to about 25 in a field of view) would be considered by many to be "normal" for field bees for much of the season, perhaps spiking to several million (100 or more spores per field of view) during spring when there are heavy pollen flows, but then dropping to near zero during summer. I cannot make recommendations, but post the latest information at ScientificBeekeeping.com.



If you really want to see a lot of spores, or if you wish to determine what **percentage** of bees are actually infected (the best measure of colony infection), then you must view the gut contents of one bee at a time. This is easily done by placing a drop of water on the slide, and then crushing and mashing a bee's abdomen into it. The number of spores can be quite impressive (don't even try to count them)!



The spores in this "gut squash" are too numerous to count. A prep from a highly-infected bee often has wall-to-wall spores. I call this my "Halloween" photo.



If you sample house bees, and see a great deal of pollen in the gut, then you have found a nurse bee, which are rarely infected. This nurse came from a sick colony, and is clearly badly infected with nosema (there also appears to also be an amoeba cyst at center lower right). Dr. Mariano Higes (pers comm) finds that when the infection spreads to the nurses that the colony starts to seriously go downhill; my own observations appear to confirm this.



You can also check for spores in dead bees on the bottom boards of deadouts, those that have flown out and dropped dead on the snow (above), and in dysentery samples scraped from the hive. You may be surprised how seldom you will find nosema spores! What I do often find in deadouts and dysentery are oval amoeba cysts (several times larger than nosema spores, and not glowing in the center).



Note that what I'm guessing to be amoeba cysts are larger and more oval than nosema spores, and don't glow in the center. I find these cysts commonly in dead winter bees and dysentery samples.



A gut sample from a deadout in winter, apparently with a bad amoeba infection.



In other samples of sick colonies I may find “fried eggs” as in the above photo, which Dr. Medhat Nasr identified as a species of amoeba. If you look at enough bee gut samples, you will see all kinds of infections, most of which I’ve been unable to identify.

I’ve shown many beekeepers how to quickly process bees for spore counts. I suggest that every bee club purchase a scope, and assign one member to gain proficiency at its use. At the break during your meetings, you can easily process a great number of bee samples in a few minutes (have everyone bring a counted sample in a ziplock bag). Such sampling will allow beekeepers to actually track nosema levels throughout the season, and determine whether it appears to be a problem in your apiaries.

You can also buy a microscope camera that will transmit the image on the slide to your laptop or to a digital projector for all members to view at the same time (as opposed to having a queue waiting at the scope). I’ve tried several digital cameras--be forewarned that the image will not be quite as clear as when viewed directly through the microscope lens, but definitely worthwhile as a training aid. Microscope.com offers the OptixCam series, of which I found the OCS-3.0 (\$329) easy to use and adjust.

Care and feeding of your microscope

Now that you’ve forked over your hard-earned cash for a shiny new microscope, treat it well for a long life. A microscope is a precision tool full of delicate parts. Don’t ever bang or drop a scope—those tubes may contain 15-20 lenses that can be jarred loose! A wise practice is to always carry a scope with both hands. Keep the scope covered or in a case when not in use. Dust, moisture, skin oils, and bee guts are the scope’s enemies! Wipe off any liquids with a soft cloth *moistened* in isopropyl alcohol. Never touch the lens surfaces with your fingers or regular tissue paper. Use only microscope lens paper or a Q-Tip, moistened in lens cleaner or alcohol.

Coming up

Now that you know how to determine spore counts, I will be following this article with a deeper look into our current state of knowledge of *Nosema ceranae*.

These articles were originally published in the American Bee Journal. All of Randy’s bee articles may be found at: www.Scientificbeekeeping.com. If you find these articles of use, Randy appreciates donations to fund his efforts.

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AHBIC NEWS - January 2013

NEW YEARS GREETING

On behalf of AHBIC, I would wish you all the best for 2013. The past year has not been without its challenges. However the New Year should be looked on as an opportunity to take our industry forward.

This year shapes up with some significant changes possible in our industry. To mention a few we have the AFB workshop in March which is looking at finding a solution to an ever increasing problem. We have the Transition to Management Plan for the Asian bee due to end on 30 June. The weather in some States is not what we would wish for and there have been bushfires in many States.

If you have issues that you feel need addressing please bring them forward so that they can be considered.

Lindsay Bourke - Chairman

NEW AHBIC CONTACT DETAILS

Trevor Weatherhead has taken over the role of Executive Director. The new contact details are:

PO Box 4253
Raceview QLD 4305 Phone: 07 5467 2265
Email remains the same: ahbic@honeybee.org.au
There is a redirection order on the PO Box in Sydney and the old phone number has a message on it.

AFB WORKSHOP

A workshop on AFB is being held in Canberra on 14 & 15 March, 2013. This is in response to the motion passed at the last AHBIC AGM setting up a Committee, under the Chairmanship of Craig Klingner, to look at a national approach to AFB. This is the first step in seeing what can be done.

An issues paper has been prepared by Michael Clarke and has been circulated to all participants from all States, both industry and Government.

Industry is fortunate to have the involvement and support of Plant Health Australia (PHA) and the Honey Advisory Committee (HAC) of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC).

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Over the past few months AHBIC has received many voluntary contributions. We would like to thank those who have contributed and also encourage others to contribute to help the work of AHBIC.

Many contributions have come by way of a direct debit into the AHBIC bank account. Unfortunately in many cases we do not know who has made that contribution as there was no name. If doing a direct debit please include your name so we know who it is.

2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2013 Annual General Meeting is to be held in Perth. The original dates set for the meeting were 4 & 5 July. This has now been changed to the 5 & 6 July. The Beekeepers Section of WAFF will hold their meeting on the 5 July. The combined dinner will be held that night. AHBIC will meet on the 6 July. The venue is:

Country Comfort Intercity Hotel & Apartments
249-263 Great Eastern Highway
Belmont WA 6014

I will advise of the booking procedures in the next newsletter and also by way of advice to member organisations and delegates.

REGISTRATION OF COPPER NAPHTHANATE

AHBIC has been successful in having copper naphthanate registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) for use in treating beekeeping equipment. The permit number is 13026 and is effective until 30 June 2022.

Unfortunately the 5% concentration was not able to be registered as it was not registered with APVMA as an Agvet chemical. An alternative 2% concentration was able to be registered. Full details are available on the APVMA website at <http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER13026.PDF>

INTERCEPTION OF ASIAN BEES (*APIS CERANA*) IN TOWNSVILLE

On Wednesday 9 January, some Asian bees (*Apis cerana*) were found flying at the port in Townsville around some containers that had been unloaded from a ship that had arrived from Dili. A swarm of almost 4,000 bees was found on Thursday and destroyed.

The bees were sent to Brisbane and the queen was found. No varroa or tracheal mites were found.

No live Asian bees have been seen in Townsville since the swarm was destroyed. Surveillance will be ongoing for the next few days.

The ship had gone from Port Moresby to Darwin to Dili and then Townsville. To me it is most likely that the swarm would have been loaded or came on board the ship in Dili. However, as a precaution, surveillance was also carried out in Darwin.

After leaving Townsville the ship headed back to south east Asia. No containers that had been unloaded had left the port prior to the finding of the Asian bees. All containers were thoroughly examined but no more Asian bees were found.

Another good find. The wharfies are certainly one of our best defences.

If anyone wants any other information, feel free to contact me at any time.

Trevor Weatherhead

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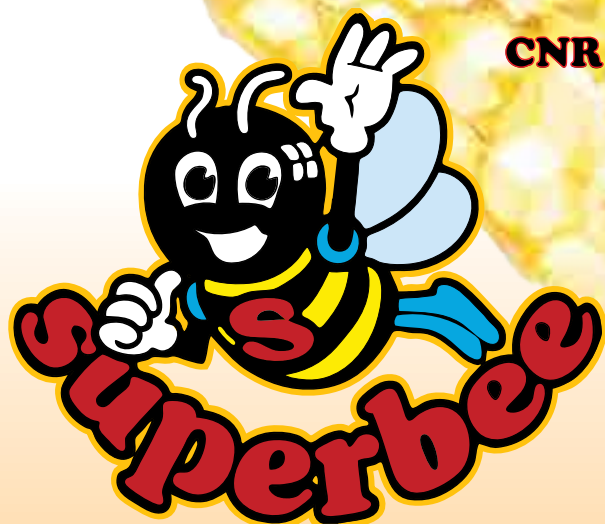
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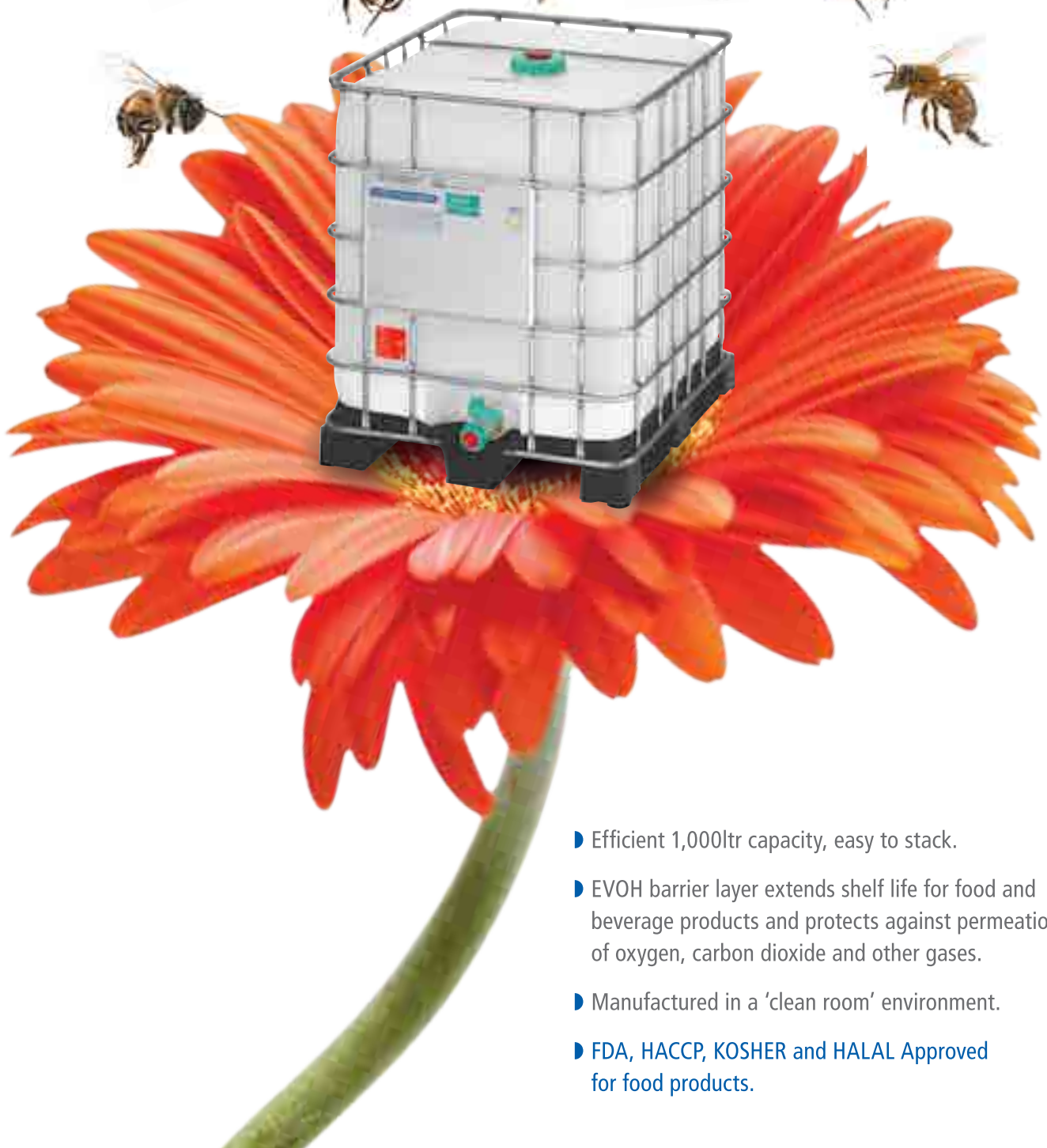
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