



AUSTRALIA'S
HONEYBEE NEWS

"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 1 Number 4

July -August 2008



Monsanto GM Canola in NSW & Victoria Page 10

The Impact of Logging on Nectar Production by Eucalypts Page 20

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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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COVER: Flowering Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) Photo courtesy: Dr Brad Law

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Season

Spring conditions in NSW are generally giving hives breeding conditions. Rainfall has been light although reasonably widespread inland, allowing crops (canola, faba beans) to get by in the north. Heavy rains in patches on the coastal areas should ensure a better Spring for these regions.

Recent extremely cold weather has inhibited some white box and ironbark production which was producing useful honey flow conditions. Almonds are beginning to flower at the time of writing and most hives will be on site by 7/8 August).

Prospects for the NSW late Spring and Summer honey crop will be generally limited to ground flora (canola, curse) if decent rain falls soon, and add pockets of bud on some eucalypts (yellow box, river red gum, coastal ironbark).

Honey Prices-Stocks

Recent firmer prices (\$3.00+) have dug out most of beekeeper stocks. With future prospects fairly limited, prices should remain firm or improve a little more, however packers have been reluctant to pay more and some indicate they may drop prices. This could mean they do not have need of Australian honey.

AHBIC-FCAAA

The Annual General Meetings of both AHBIC and FCAAA were held recently in Melbourne. The resolutions which originated from the Crisis meeting and NSW Annual Conference were carried by support from most states.

The FCAAA office bearers elected at the AGM are President - Bill Weiss, Vice President - Ian Zadow, and Secretary - Roxanne Fewster.

AHBIC office bearers are Chairman - Lindsay Bourke, Deputy Chairman - Ed Planken.

As FCAAA president I attended the official launch of the report from the Federal inquiry into Beekeeping at Launceston Tasmania. The launch was performed by Dick Adams, Chairman of the Inquiry, and his presentation showed his commitment to seeing that the Honeybee Industry receives the appropriate assistance to allow it to carry out tasks required by agriculture into the future.

Copies of the report and recommendations are available and will be a good tool for lobbying

Government Agencies to retain access to Honeybee resources, and to demonstrate to the public, how important the Honeybee Industry is to society.

New Transport Legislation

The National Transport Commission has drawn up new laws for truck drivers. These recommendations have been agreed to by most states. NSW has not signed off on these laws yet. The Livestock Transport Association is lobbying to have these adopted by NSW with some modifications.

Accredited operators may still be able to travel up to 14 hours; this accreditation can be obtained through RTA and may be of benefit to some beekeepers. The Executive will write to the authorities to attempt to ensure the Honeybee Industry is not unduly affected. However it must be recognized this issue is much bigger than the Honeybee Industry.

Plague Locusts

The Plague Locust Commission has issued preliminary warnings of layings in the Autumn, which, if enough rainfall occurs, may lead to locust spraying later in the Spring. The larger areas of egg beds appear to be in the Central West, South to the Border. Maps have been printed in the Land newspaper the past few weeks. We will try to include updates as they become available.

GM Canola

This issue contains a map and a list of areas in NSW and Victoria where Monsanto GM Canola has been sown. Beekeepers can avoid these areas if they desire.

Executive

The State Executive is to meet on the 13 & 14 August in Orange. It is hoped a meeting can be arranged with some of the DPI biosecurity staff on the Wednesday afternoon 12 August, prior to the executive meeting. AFB control and Varroa management will be discussed.

2009 Conference

The 2009 Annual State Conference will be held at Penrith Leagues Club in Sydney on 9/10 July 2009. NSW will also host the FCAAA and AHBIC Annual General Meetings.

Bill Weiss
State President

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

David & Margot Blues
Shannon Schmidt

Fairlight
Collaroy

THANK YOU

Thank you to the Northern Tablelands Branch for their generous donation of \$1,000 to the Crisis Meeting as well as \$2,000 to the Clemson Fund.

Thank you also to the Western Plains Branch for their donation of \$300 to the Clemson Fund.

29th Annual Field Day 2008 Beekeepers Field Day

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SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER 2008

Programme:

- 9.15 Welcome
- 9.30 Hive manipulation for beginners
(in field) Nick Annand
- 10.30 Morning Tea (bring your own)
- 11.00 Swarm prevention
- 11.30 Small hive beetle update
Nick Annand
- 12.00 Anit-bacterial honey research update
Shona Blair
- 12.30 Lunch (bring your own)
- 1.30 Queen breeding and grafting
John Banfield & Don King
- 2.30 Discovery of new exotic bee
John Gollan
- 3.00 About us - NSWAA - Don King
Amateur Beekeeping - Jim Wright
- 3.15 Question time

Raffle: 8 frame box of bees

UNFINANCIAL MEMBERS

Association fees were due and payable on 1 March 2008.

If you have not paid your fees for 2008 this will be your last edition of *Australia's Honeybee News*.

No further reminders will be sent.

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NSW DPI NOTES

Doug Somerville, Goulburn

OTC

Oxytetracycline is a restricted veterinary product available for the treatment of hives with EFB. The use of this chemical to 'control' AFB is not permitted by law and frankly is a fairly dumb exercise.

OTC does not kill the spore stage of AFB and countries that have adopted the use of antibiotics are experiencing resistance and contamination problems. Removing hives from an apiary infected with AFB and destroying the colonies are by far the smarter long term strategies to deal with this disease. Whenever a beekeeper uses OTC, the following extraction, whether one month or six months later should be handled as contaminated. When selling this honey the buyer should be made aware of this fact.

If a honey packer has a batch of honey rejected due to OTC residues in your honey, you may be liable for thousands of dollars. Think about it?

SHORT COURSES

The NSW DPI conducts a number of short courses on the calendar between now and Christmas, including:

- Beginning in bees
Tocal 13 & 14 September
- Beginning in bees
Camden 15 & 16 November
- Beekeeping as a business
Camden 27 & 28 September

For more information refer to the NSW DPI website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au or contact 1800 0250520.

JOHN RHODES RETIRES

After 40 years of combined service in NSW DPI & Queensland DPI John calls it a day. John came to NSW in 1997 and has been based at Tamworth during his employment. Notable projects that John can take credit for include his research into queen bees and drones, bees on cotton and the PrimeNotes on Pesticides available on the NSW DPI web site, and a major source of important information for beekeepers and growers alike. John has returned to Queensland, the past and current staff of NSW DPI that had the pleasure of working with him wish him well.

PESTS & DISEASE COURSE

Nick Annand and I conducted the first 'Pests and Diseases of Honey Bees' course in mid May with the NSW Apiary inspectors as our first set of students. All participants satisfactorily completed the assessment tasks. The course was conducted over two days. It is envisaged that we will make this course available 'some time' in the future. This depends on the demand for such a course. To this end Nick and I would like to receive expressions of interest from anyone wishing to attend this course and how far they are willing to travel to attend; Nick's phone number is 02 6330 1210 or myself on 02 4828 6619.

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

A column by Greg Roberts



Crisis Meeting

Good results are still coming through from the NSWAA Crisis day, I understand that Woolworths are about to add honey to their *fresh foods* promotion.

World Report

One report out of China is predicting a decline in production for 2008 and that some local processors may even experience a rare shortage of honey. Argentina's 2008 crop may not reach the 60,000mt of which more than half is already sold, mainly into Europe. Prices in Argentina are reported to be higher than the US domestic price of US\$1.50 to US\$1.60 per pound (approximately AUS\$3.71 to AUS\$3.96 per kilo) for bottling grade honeys. One thing that is very common around the world is the massive colony losses, This I believe may be one of the major reasons why the world could experience further shortages of honey - it's just common sense no bees in boxes, no honey production. This shortage I believe could also extend into crop pollination.

As I mentioned in my last report the US Department of Agriculture was to conduct a referendum to see whether the US honey industry want a honey packers and importers research and promotional levy. This referendum has been carried out and 78% of the votes lodged were in favour of this programme

GM Canola

I was asked by the NSWAA for my assistance regarding beekeepers identifying GM canola crops. Remembering that beekeepers have the responsibility under their vendor declarations on the sale of their honeys to identify GM products for marketing purposes. In most declarations it is beekeepers responsibility to know if they are within 5km of a GM crop. A meeting was set up with the National Executive of the Oilseed Federation and Monsanto; this meeting took place on 20 May in Sydney. The meeting was very fruitful and their Executive went away with a greater understanding of apiculture's place in agriculture. Monsanto did agree to supply us a map showing areas of high and low density of GM crops in NSW and Victoria. There is approximately 950ha of GM canola planted in both states.

Beekeepers need to question farmers whether they, or their neighbours are growing GM canola. You should also record this information, the date, property name and neighbours name and property in your QA program. Even though the risk may be low you could be held responsible for unidentified GM products in non-GM marketplaces.

Just one sidenote, President Bill Weiss invited me to participate in this meeting. The meeting took place on the 13th floor of an office building in Milsons Point, Sydney, both Bill and myself got into the lift with two other people, a pregnant woman and a young Englishman. Somewhere between the ground floor and the 13th floor the lift got stuck, the young Englishmen used very bad language on

the intercom; however the pregnant woman remained quite calm, which we were most grateful for. After some time Bill proved his leadership qualities and pushed the lift's STOP button - miraculously the lift continued on its journey. We also had a plan B worked out - if the lift fell we were all going to jump before it hit the ground!

Emerald Furrow Bee (*Halictus smaragdulus*)

Another exotic insect has been discovered in NSW. At first it was thought to be an unidentified native bee but later this was found to be incorrect. This metallic green bee which is about 6-8mm long is native to Western Palaearctic from Spain to Portugal in the west, through the southern part of Europe and to Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. In Germany it's known as the Smaragdallas Furchenbune, which translates to Emerald Furrow Bee. There is very little known about this bee but it is believed that their system is broken down into caste of queens and workers and it is hard to distinguish between them, it is also thought that individual females may change their caste during their lifetime.

I spoke to John Gollan from the Australian Museum in Sydney, who first discovered this bee while surveying invertebrates as part of his PhD. He was trapping insects and trapped over 600 bees representing 17 different species, 22% of these were the Emerald bee. John believes that it is well established in the Hunter Valley and with the Australian climate he believes that this species has the potential to spread over a much wider area and may cause significant environmental damage. Although I thought that John had little understanding of pollination especially when it came to weeds.

Just to correct an ignorant statement made at an interstate beekeeping conference, Greg Roberts was not the National Chairman at the time of the Small Hive Beetle incursion, this beetle was first identified in 2002 however I did move a motion from the NSWAA's State Conference to have an inquiry into the Small Hive Beetle incursion, this motion was passed but got very little or no support nationally. I believe all incursions, no matter how big or small no matter what industry they have affected should be followed through by an inquiry, this is the only way biosecurity is going to work successfully. The Emerald furrow bee is not on the exotic disease and pest list of Animal or Plant Health, but if we are to keep the Varroa mite out of Australia we should be trying to find out how these insects are breaking our borders. Should someone from industry or our research body contact John Gollan? He just may be able to help.

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)

It is concerning to hear rumours coming from NPWS staff about removing beekeepers from all National Parks. Under the existing NSW Government there has been a massive grab of forested lands for conservation purposes. The first rumour came from National Park's staff who supposedly

have had complaints about the cost of maintaining roads for beekeepers. I have a number of National Park sites and I don't know of any roads that are maintained for my purpose, in fact the opposite applies. I have evidence of bee sites with access closed off, this is totally against the National Parks Beekeeping Policy and if the sites cannot be maintained then it is the responsibility of National Parks to relocate those sites. There are also rumours of a compensation package for loss of beekeeper income in the event that bee sites are to be removed.

The Commonwealth Government has just released its report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources. On page 82, recommendation 5.3.78 "*The committee recommends that the Australian Government, in conjunction with State and Territory governments, establish guidelines for beekeepers access to public lands and lease hold lands, including National Parks, with the view of securing the floral resource of the Australian honey bee industry and pollination dependant industries.*"

There is well over 300 new National Parks of which there is a large number of traditional bee sites within this tenure. The beekeeping industry in NSW cannot survive without access to these lands. One reason honey bees were introduced into Australia in 1822 was to overcome problems being experienced with food crops such as many of your fruit and vegetables that rely on pollination, similar problems were being experienced with seed set of legume pastures. Today the Commonwealth Government's inquiry estimates that the honey bees contribution is directly related to between \$4-\$6 billion dollars of agricultural production. This is mainly due to crop pollination, which would not be possible without industry access to all tenures of forested lands. Beekeepers need access to forested lands for honey production and to maintain the good health of bees for pollination.

There was research promised in 1998 when the NSW Government changed the National Park Beekeeping policy as the existing research was described as unreliable science at a press conference. Since then Goodman's research, based around commercially managed bee sites, showed that feral bees were not an issue. Paton's research described feral honey bees as a self perpetrating problem. Spessa's work around commercially managed hives showed no significant effect on native insects. Beekeepers are in the forest only when there is an abundance of flower and the latest research by Dr Brad Law shows that after birds, flying foxes, insects and honeybees have fed there is still a large abundance of nectar in the flower at the end of the day.

With the world entering into some food shortages and one expert predicting that the world will have to double its food production by 2050 and also with the recommendations of the Commonwealth Government's Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources, it may be about time that some State Governments take a look at the management of some conserved lands. Changes to legislation to protect existing bee sites would be in the community's benefit. Would it also be possible for the Commonwealth Government to find some legislation, such as National Resource Act and use this Act to protect existing bee sites in conserved lands?

Greg Roberts is a commercial beekeeper and former NSWAA and National President and National Chairman.

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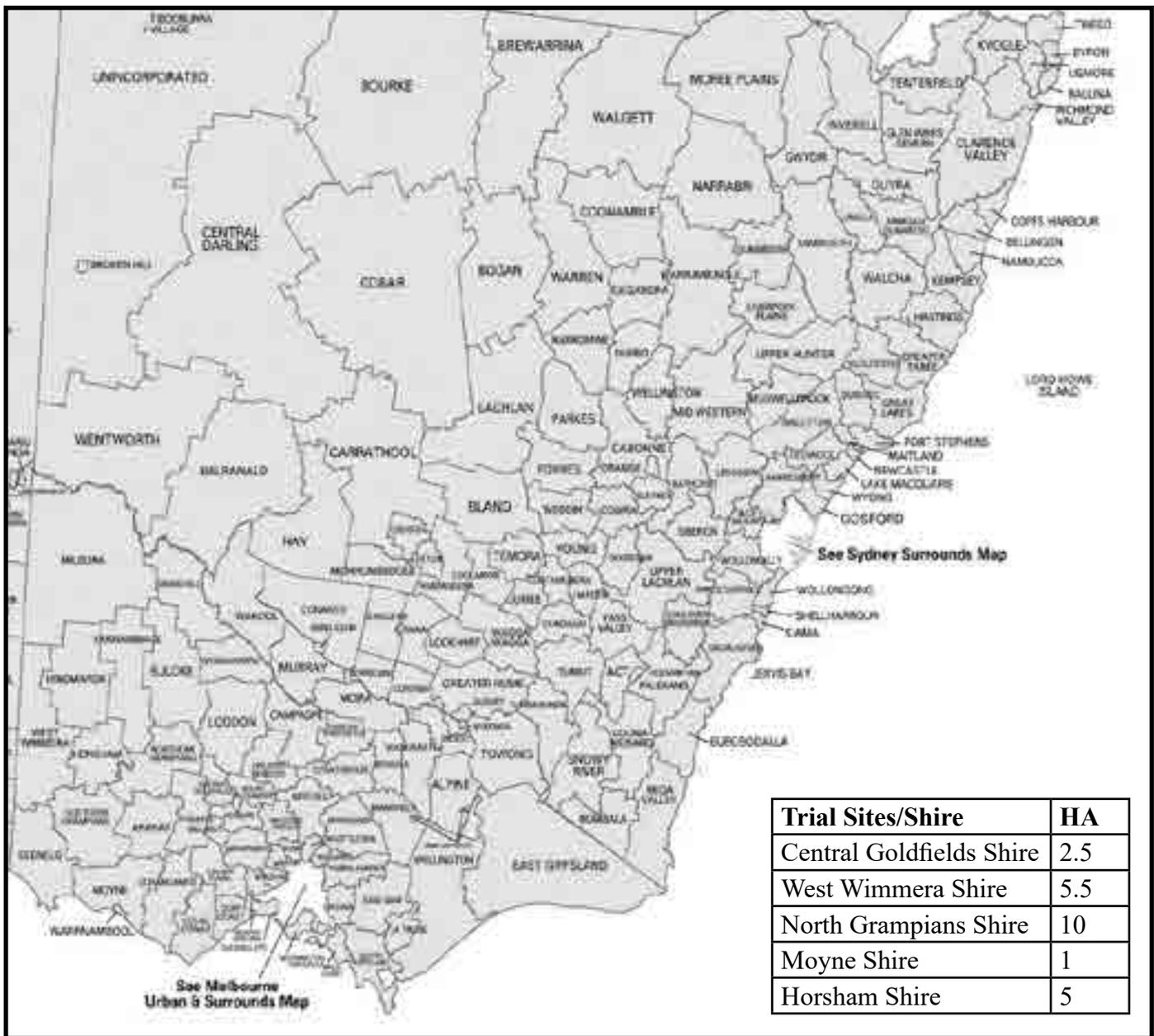
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AFB— Barrier Systems

American Foul Brood (AFB) disease is considered one of the major diseases of beekeeping in Australia. The bacterium, *Paneibacillus larvae*, is ingested by the developing bee larvae. The bacterium multiplies to the point where it eventually kills the bee larvae. Fortunately it is a manageable disease as long as beekeepers follow a set of best practices. The core practice for all beekeepers is to regularly inspect the brood combs for signs of the disease. When colonies with infections are identified they should be removed from the apiary at the earliest opportunity to reduce the chances of transferring the disease throughout the beekeeping operation.

Luckily this disease is difficult to spread. The primary methods of spread are by the transfer of infected materials and by healthy bees robbing from diseased bee colonies. Apiary hygiene will ensure that any AFB infections within a beekeeping operation are kept to a minimum. Washing sticky hands (gloves) between hives, not exposing combs to robbing bees, picking up hive scrapings (burr comb) and placing it in a sealed container immediately, will all facilitate a low risk of spreading disease even in an apiary with infected hives.

One of the principle means by which the disease is spread is via contaminated equipment. Unfortunately it is not always possible to know if equipment is contaminated with AFB spores. It is better to be cautious to prevent spreading the disease from infected to healthy colonies.

One system of management worth implementing is a "barrier system". The working definition is simple – "there is some degree of segregation of hives, apiaries within a beekeeping operation whereby material from one hive/group/apiary is only interchanged with that hive/group/apiary".

An individual hive barrier system is where frames and boxes from the same hive are always returned to the same hive. This can be difficult to achieve in a large beekeeping operation, but not impossible. Smaller hobby beekeeping operations are in a better position to keep supers and combs in single non-interchangeable units. Commercial beekeepers with mobile extracting plants are in a good position to extract honey on the site of the apiary and return the extracted frames and boxes to the same hives. This system is the ultimate barrier system.

A more popular barrier system is usually practiced by beekeepers with several loads of bees. Each apiary is identified as a separate entity and materials are only interchanged within each apiary and not between the separate apiaries. Thus, in the event of finding AFB in one hive, you can be reasonably confident that the disease has not been transferred to another apiary by the transfer of contaminated equipment.

A barrier system can extend to a much larger population of hives/apiaries by including two or three apiaries within each group where material is interchanged, but the usefulness of this system then becomes much reduced.

If you are buying second hand equipment then it is always a good management practice to keep this material separate (barrier system approach) from all the other beekeeping equipment (boxes, combs, lids, bottoms) for at least twelve months. This should include at least two extractions of honey from any supers of combs.

HIVE/APIARY IDENTIFICATION

A number of methods of identifying individual hives or specific apiaries are possible. One of the most common is to paint all the materials (lids, boxes, bottoms) the same colour, having a different colour for each apiary.

If introducing the system for the first time into a mixture of coloured boxes, then stencil a large letter or number on each hive/box, e.g., A, B, C. Some beekeepers have gone to great lengths to individually bar code each hive. This technology is available and worth investigating if you desire a high level of information. For example, it would be possible using this system to keep track of the productivity and queen status of each individual hive.

DOWN SIDE

The very concept of a barrier system is, by definition, one that restricts the interchanging of material. Thus, there may be cases when one apiary is in need of extra supers and none are available for that particular load of bees, but supers are available from different loads. This is when a degree of discipline is necessary and the apiary requiring extra supers needs to be extracted rather than using the supers from another load of bees.

The potential shortage of supers can be overcome by increasing the number of boxes of combs per apiary. This then creates a further problem of storing combs not in use.

For a barrier system to be effective, complete discipline must be imposed with no interchange of equipment and an efficient comb storage system to prevent wax moth damage.

CONCLUSION

Barrier systems are a very common management strategy in agricultural systems, particularly in intensive livestock businesses. Commercial beekeeping is an intensive livestock system, with the opportunities for pests and diseases to become a major problem a strong possibility. By adopting a barrier system, you will reduce the risk of spreading pests and diseases throughout the beekeeping operation via the transfer of equipment thus making the clean-up, particularly for AFB, that much more manageable.

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MAKING BIOSECURITY WORK

By Dr Mark Lawrie, President, Australian Veterinary Association (AVA)

With the release of the results of the Callinan Inquiry into the equine influenza outbreak and the recent Hendra virus incident in a veterinary clinic in Queensland, the issue of biosecurity is at the forefront of our minds. While our hope is that we never again see such outbreaks, we must remain ever vigilant to the possibility that we may, and have the capability to respond to it.

Prevention of disease, so that effects to our economy, environment and public health are limited at worst, and eradicated at best, is a major task and one which Australian veterinary service providers strive for every day. The awareness and vigilance these professionals demonstrate in control and eradication measures is second to none.

This was demonstrated only recently by excellent biosecurity awareness, coupled with the rapid response measures in place during July's Hendra outbreak in Queensland.

Fortunately, the recommendations of the Callinan Inquiry into equine influenza have been fully supported by government. The AVA's submission to the Inquiry included detailed recommendations particularly around pre-border, border and post-border levels of the quarantine continuum. We also provided expert testimony directly to the Inquiry.

The AVA has also made a submission to the Beale review, the independent inquiry into Australia's quarantine and biosecurity systems set up by the Federal Government, in an attempt to address best practice in quarantine and biosecurity matters.

With the report due to government by the end of September, we want all agreed recommendations implemented as quickly as possible. To allow this to happen the AVA is advocating a task force be formed with appropriate experts to perform the detailed work needed for the implementation.

The AVA has stressed the need to provide Animal Health Australia (AHA) with a coordinating role in the recommendations. This will mean an injection of Commonwealth funding for training of veterinary pathologists as well as for the maintenance of a central database on animal diseases in Australia.

Other measures included in our submission to Beale include the enhancement of state and territory biosecurity resources and integration of jurisdictional and federal efforts, involving funding for surveillance and response measures.

The need for regular meetings of Australian Chief Health and Chief Veterinary Officers and state and territory counterparts is crucial to monitor international trends in zoonotic diseases (those able to be transmitted from animals to humans) and to address the risks for the transmission of emerging diseases.

Crucially we see the shortage of veterinarians in rural practices as an issue to be addressed and have conveyed this in our submission. The role former public sector vets played in responding to the equine influenza outbreak was crucial in securing the containment and the rapid eradication of the virus. Serious resource cuts in the government veterinary area, including the research sector, and lack of support in rural areas have created large gaps in profession.

With the release of the Beale report, the AVA expects to see a more inclusive system of biosecurity measures.

When you consider the impact diseases such as avian influenza, rabies, mad cow disease and the Hendra virus, could have on humans, responding quickly and effectively to ensure containment and eradication are essential.

As the profession charged with effecting control over animal diseases, veterinarians across the country need acknowledgement of the role they play in biosecurity matters.

Creating teams which break open the information silos across health care professions, both human and animal, across state borders and across government and non-government sectors will be vital for an integrated, harmonious and efficient biosecurity system.

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Australian Honey Bee Industry Council - Funding Crisis

DISCUSSION PAPER

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 While the present crisis of funding for the industry peak body was the result of most producer suppliers of Capilano Honey Ltd deciding not to continue to authorize the Company to collect a peak body voluntary levy at the point of delivery, there is evidence of resistance for some time by many other producers and some packers not to cooperate in the subscription and collection of the peak body voluntary funding levy. The decision by most Capilano suppliers has brought sharply into focus, the fragile and insecure nature of peak body funding that is reliant on voluntary contributions, because of the significant volume of levy income involved in this case.
- 1.2 Whether the company intends to continue to subscribe the .5 of a cent per kg packer component of the combined producer/packer voluntary levy is unknown to the writer.
- 1.3 The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, (AHBIC) has sought approval for a combination of possible future voluntary and statutory funding arrangements, and suggests some restructuring of the peak body. The following commentary examines some of the reasons for declining voluntary funding support, discusses how compliance may be improved, and explores how a restructured model of the peak body has potential to provide satisfactory long term solutions.

2. VOLUNTARY LEVY COMPLIANCE

- 1.1 Historically, a voluntary levy on honey production funded the operation of the industry peak body from 1979 until 1997, assisted through 1996-97 and 1997-98 by the ministerial redirection of 10% of statutory levy collected by the Federal DPI for honey promotional purposes. In each year, the statutory levy yielded \$42,000 + for FCAAA (former peak body) administration purposes.
- 1.2 The FCAAA voluntary levy rate over 18 years was gradually increased, without affecting compliance, to .5 of a cent per kg. Fifty percent of the voluntary levy subscribed by honey producers was directed to the FCAAA Contingency Fund, initially to fund legal costs associated with the action to question whether the biological control of echium species (Patterson's Curse) would be in the public interest. Later, the fund guidelines were widened to allow funds to be withdrawn to defend against serious risks to the industry (eg. resources and bio security issues). The guidelines did not provide for peak body administration costs to be met from the fund.
- 1.3 Voluntary levy compliance rate until 1997-98 was assessed at 90% of eligible potential revenue, considerably higher than had been achieved by other primary industry peak bodies for any purpose.
- 1.4 The high compliance rate was achieved by a well coordinated exercise undertaken by peak body member bodies (state beekeeping associates) to secure the goodwill of mainstream packers and producer packers in each state to help fund the peak body by encouraging and collecting from suppliers a voluntary levy on production at the point of delivery, in addition to the various statutory levies already being collected.
- 1.5 It should never be underestimated or undervalued just how important it is for the good will and cooperation of mainstream packers to be secured and maintained for the collection of the producer voluntary levy. Paradoxically, it is a strength, and a weakness, of the peak body funding base. A strength, because it is from this point of collection the majority of funding revenue derives. A weakness, for if producers' and packers' good will erodes for any reason, so to does the peak body revenue base. The cooperation and good will of packers since 1979 has been the lynch pin of peak body administrative function and must be acknowledged, and that includes the enormous and sustained levy collection role performed by Capilano Honey Ltd, and other long term mainstream participating honey packers.

3. CONTRACTION OF THE VOLUNTARY PEAK BODY FUNDING BASE

- 1.1 Reasons for the erosion of the combined producer/packer voluntary levy funding base for the peak body include:
 - 1.1.1 Reducing economic viability for honey industry participants, producers and packers, is hurting both sectors.
 - 1.1.2 Over the last 10 years, the expansion or entry of more producers marketing product on the domestic retail and export markets has increased. While some eligible participants subscribe voluntary combined levies, many do not.
 - 1.1.3 A mainstream packer, subscribing combined packer/producer voluntary peak body funding levies, in a tight competitive marketing situation may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage when striving for market share against a packer who is not engaged in the subscription and collection of voluntary levies.
 - 1.1.4 Honey producer confidence in the peak body's effectiveness and transparency of function may have been gradually damaged through a lack of inclusive consultation with its honey production sector member body that is vested in the state beekeeping association constituents of the FCAAA. In 1996 and 1997, during the steering committee phase of the development of the new peak body, AHBIC, consultant Peter Lavery had this to say ... "the FCAAA, and other peak body member bodies, should come to the peak body as coordinated entities representative of the (each) sector as a whole." By and large, insufficient or inadequate briefing of FCAAA state association constituents about issues to be discussed or decided by

the peak body executive committee has not been conducive to producing well considered and coordinated input from the honey production sector member body.

- 1.1.5 There is a perception by some non cooperating packers and honey producers that through the largest by volume packer and voluntary combined levies subscriber, Capilano Honey Ltd, being authorized to attend peak body executive meetings (non voting), in addition to accredited packer representation, the integrity of peak body executive committee decision making is compromised. Disharmony within the peak body honey packing sector member body, (HP&MAA) led to the subsequent authorization for Capilano to attend peak body executive committee meetings independent of HP&MAA accreditation, becoming a catalyst for the negative perceptions of peak body function by some honey industry participants.

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1 Abundantly clear is that without a secure and adequate funding base, the honey bee industry peak body is limited in what it can do on behalf of the people it represents. With the Commonwealth's Parliamentary Committee report now tabled dealing with the future development of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries, with its \$50m a year proposed implementation package, the adequacy of peak body representation will be crucial to the future prospects of all honey bee industry participants, the long term viability of honey producers among them. At least for the time being, the engagement of a specialist advisor/lobbyist to assist the AHBIC to manage the national industry's case for the implementation of the parliamentary committee report recommendations would seem to be in the present circumstances a very sensible short term option to pursue.
- 1.2 Any issues anyone may have about AHBIC performance apart from executive committee liaison with sector member bodies are issues to be dealt with separately from the issue of reestablishing a secure funding basis. Without security, the peak body is functionally crippled, unable to perform at its best. The priority now is to try and achieve long term security.
- 1.3 The options are limited in number, and appear to be:
 - 1.3.1 Address the concerns of producer member body voluntary levy subscribers, and do this in part by effecting adjustments to the peak body organizational structure. Having effected organizational restructure, through the peak body's general council membership that includes principal state bee keeping associations, conduct a well coordinated program designed to maximize the recruitment of eligible peak body producer member body voluntary levy subscribers.
 - 1.3.2 Mindful of the precedent established by the Federal Government through 1996-98 to redirect 10% of statutory levies collected for the purpose of honey promotion to improve the administrative capability of the honey bee industry peak body at the time, it could be useful in the long term for the AHBIC to investigate what opportunities may still exist for again looking at this option. In doing so, it would be useful to reflect on the following:
 - 1.3.3 The Ministerial redirection of statutory levy funds for the purpose of assisting peak body administration occurred under the watch of The Hon Simon Crean MP, Minister for Primary Industries at the time. The Minister, recognizing the difficulty facing established small and emerging industries had in attracting sufficient voluntary funding support to assist industry promotion and development, as well as an underlying need for Government to be confident about policy advice coming from small industries not well resourced and structured, took action to address these issues. The intervention ceased following the transition of peak body arrangements to the AHBIC, and the change of governments almost simultaneously.
 - 1.3.4 There is another string to the peak body's lobbying bow if taking up this issue with the Federal Government. The Parliamentary committee report referred to earlier under recommendation 18 recognizes long term industry viability issues in respect of industry organization, marketing structures and the financial viability of producers and packers. Importantly, the report also recognizes that for paid pollination services to be viable, the honey production sector must also be viable. Government may therefore see intervention very much in the public, national, and industry interest, worthy of the support of all stakeholders. Government may well see, given the current circumstances, some other form of intervention as appropriate. A specialist advisor/lobbyist engaged by AHBIC would help to tease out these matters.
 - 1.3.5 A number of statutory levy arrangements service needs of the honey bee industry. None of these are particularly flush with funds available for percentage redirection, even if legalities could be overridden by Ministerial direction. The downside of establishing a statutory promotional levy on honey at this time is problematic as to whether a future arrangement would do anything to improve the viability of producers by increasing prices the present market pays for bulk honey at the farm gate. Evidence provided to the parliamentary committee of inquiry amply demonstrates the reasons for the parlous state of honey production viability, and the little capacity for producers and packers to do much about it. Implementation of some key parliamentary committee of enquiry recommendations, for example, the establishment of standards for Australian produced honey, which imports would be required to at least equal, could open up a retail market environment then responsive to promotional activity financed by producers.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

- 1.1 Requiring consideration are the issues discussed under section 3 of this paper. The question of honey production viability (3.1.1.) was addressed in evidence during the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry. This issue should be progressed during representations by the peak body during consideration of the Inquiry's recommendations by the Federal Government, assisted by the engagement of a specialist advisor/lobbyist. The success that the industry including the AHBIC has so far achieved through the Parliamentary Inquiry and the formation of Pollination Australia has not gone unnoticed by Australia's bee keepers, many who are eligible volunteer levy contributors of the future.

- 1.2 The issue of encouraging volunteer levy contributors (3.1.2 and 3.1.3) that includes the increasing number of producers engaged in retail honey marketing, should be addressed as part of a nationally coordinated strategy agreed to by all state bee keeping associations' executive councils, and implemented by designated persons in each state. Other peak body sector member bodies should do likewise.
- 1.3 AHBIC executive committee function in its decision making (3.1.4) needs to be more inclusive of its sector members bodies' constituents, including honey production sector state bee keeping associations who represent all prospective and participating voluntary honey levy payers. While management of some issues by the executive director and the AHBIC executive committee, day to day, require decisions to be made without wider consultation, when there is sufficient lead time for issues to be fully considered by sector member body constituents, then that process should be rigorously followed. A considered view on each issue can then be conveyed to respective elected sector member body representatives comprising the AHBIC executive committee for resolution. More sector member body inclusiveness in the decision making process is consistent with the 1997 AHBIC Steering Committee vision (Lavery) to produce well considered and coordinated input from sector member bodies. Failure to provide such opportunities for inclusiveness does not encourage compliance by prospective voluntary levy contributors.
- 1.4 The perception by some non cooperating honey packers (3.1.5) that AHBIC decision making could sometimes be influenced by a competitive voting or non voting packer at the peak body executive committee table is a major deterrent to the former entities contributing the voluntary .5 of a cent packer levy, and extinguishes the good will of some packers to encourage and collect voluntary levy from suppliers.
- 1.5 Historically, Australian producers and packers have enjoyed relationships based on mutual need – for packers, security of raw product supply, for producers a fair price for product delivered. Partnerships have often generated long term relationships and loyalties. It would not however be out of place to observe that conflicts do arise, and in the policy direction of the industry, what may be of most benefit to one party, may not always benefit the other party to the same degree. For example, the significant volume of honey imports now landing in Australia has meant that while some mainstream packers continue to pack only Australian produced honey, most by volume do not, and so reliance on Australian honey producers for supply has diminished.
- 1.6 There is the inescapable fact that the honey bee industry, if it is to be funded substantially in the future by voluntary subscription from producers, must continue to rely heavily on the good will of mainstream packers to collect levy at the point of delivery.
- 1.7 It is also crucial that the reverberances of tension between some packing sector participants does not continue to work against the peak body's capacity to secure the good will of packers and producers from cooperating in the collection of voluntary levy. The standing aside of packing sector representation from peak body executive committee function appears to be the only option available to producers to provide remedy for this situation.
- 1.8 It is also important however that the Australian honey packing and marketing sector must continue to have the means to help develop policy within the sector, and for the opportunity to have policy considered within the structure of the peak industry body.

The challenge for the AHBIC would be how to dissipate concerns of those packers and producers not presently cooperating in the collection of voluntary levy, and to do so in a way which will not alienate the good will of cooperating packers and producers. This paper, under section 6, proposes that the peak body organizational structure be modified, and in doing so, provide some workable solutions.

6. PROPOSED PEAK BODY RESTRUCTURE MODEL

- 1.1 This paper proposes that a honey bee industry policy advisory mechanism be established, responsible for the development of all beekeeping industry policy for consideration by the AHBIC, whether on referral by the executive committee, or generated from within the policy advisory group.
- 1.2 The policy advisory mechanism consists of representatives of the honey packing and marketing sector, and all production sectors.
- 1.3 Where agreement on any issue under consideration by the policy advisory panel is difficult to reach, a power of veto exist in the interest of producing unanimously supported policy recommendations.
- 1.4 The AHBIC executive committee consist of 5 persons, elected at AHBIC general council annual meetings, comprising the chairman, deputy chairman, and 3 committee persons, nominated by respective member bodies.
- 1.5 The AHBIC membership consist of 3 member bodies representing:
 - The honey production sector
 - The queen/package bee production sector
 - The crop pollination sector
- 1.6 Voting entitlements at each annual general meeting remain as presently prescribed for the production sector member bodies.
- 1.7 Redefine the executive director administrative role with each member body.
- 1.8 A committee be empanelled to draft constitutional amendments for consideration.
- 1.9 The honey packer voluntary levy of .5 of a cent per kg be eliminated.

Linton Briggs, Executive Member VAA Inc

Footnote: Approved by the VAA Inc. and tabled at AHBIC and FCAA Annual General Meetings, Melbourne, 13/14 July 2008.

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL REVIEW

The July 2008 AHBIC Annual General Meeting resolved that a review be undertaken of the peak body's organizational structures. The review will also investigate and make recommendations about future funding of the organization which has historically relied substantially on the subscription of voluntary levies by industry participants.

A discussion paper tabled at the AHBIC AGM by the Victorian Apiarists' Association, dealing with the funding crisis and proposing a way forward through structural reform of the peak body has been provided to all editors of the Australian beekeeping media for the information of beekeeping industry stakeholders.

The Review Committee comprises: Mr Bill Weiss (Chairman), Mr Linton Briggs, Mr Stephen Fewster, Mr Ken Gell.

The review committee needs to know what you, as members, expect of AHBIC and FCAAA. If you consider we need both bodies. If you consider we need packers, pollinators and queen breeders as separate member bodies. What form the peak body should be that you would consider making contribution to for funding of that body.

Inquiry Terms of Reference

1. What structural changes are necessary, if any, to help improve the function of the peak body?
2. What structural changes are necessary, if any, to help improve peak body voluntary levy collection?
3. What other options for peak body funding need to be investigated?
4. What administrative changes are necessary, if any, to improve communication and feed back from AHBIC sector member bodies – (honey production (FCAAA), crop pollination (NCPA), queen/package bee production (AQBBA), honey packers and marketers (HP&MAA)?
5. The role of FCAAA (principal state beekeeping associations) in the structure and function of the peak body.

Submissions from Australian honey bee industry stakeholders are invited to be lodged by the 30 November 2008. The review committee will publish its findings and recommendations by the end of January, 2009. All replies to remain confidential. Submissions may be mailed or posted online to the following addresses:

Mr B Weiss
Chairman, AHBIC Review Committee
206 Lambeth Street, Glen Innes NSW 2370
Phone/Fax: 02 6732 1263 Email: beeweiss@yahoo.com.au

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THE IMPACT OF LOGGING ON NECTAR PRODUCTION BY EUCALYPTS

Bradley Law

Forest Science Centre, NSW Department of Primary Industries, PO Box 100 Beecroft NSW 2119

A characteristic feature of the Australian environment is the prevalence of nectar-rich plants with flowers visited by diverse species of vertebrates such as honeyeaters, lorikeets, bats, gliders and possums. Although the Australian forest landscape is dominated by tall eucalypt trees, little is known about nectar production in the canopy of these forests; mainly because accessing the canopy in tall forests is a major logistical problem. As a result it is unclear how various forest disturbances or the prevailing climate affects nectar production in trees, the latter being especially relevant to climate change scenarios.

At the NSW Department of Primary Industries we have recently completed research funded by the Honeybee program of RIRDC and Forests NSW to, for the first time, quantify the effect of logging on canopy nectar production in tall forest trees. The two eucalypt species chosen for research, Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata* and Grey Ironbark *Eucalyptus paniculata*, are both of prime importance to nectarivorous wildlife, the timber industry and beekeepers. Of the 26 floral sources identified by beekeepers as the major honey sources, 14 are exclusively forest species, indicating the importance of State forests as the major honey resource for the apiary industry in NSW. However, beekeepers have expressed concern about the effects of logging on nectar production, especially the perception that young trees do not produce as much nectar as mature trees. While State Forests already have a number of management practices in place to retain nectar-producing trees during logging operations, there is no information on how much nectar is produced by retained trees or young trees re-growing after logging. It was the aim of this research to promote sustainability in forest management and to raise the awareness of forestry organisations that the nectar resource requires careful management in State forests. It also aims to raise the awareness of beekeepers about current forest management by quantifying nectar availability under different logging histories.

To successfully measure nectar in the canopy of tall forest trees a combination of cranes and cherry-pickers was used. These mobile towers allowed nectar to be measured on a number of sites within a range of forests that had experienced different logging histories, thus allowing an investigation of how nectar production varies under different conditions. As well as using such novel methods, the project was undertaken over a number of years that spanned bushfires, drought and periods of heavy rain that washed out field work. These various environmental conditions proved useful in the long run in helping to isolate the effects of different weather patterns on nectar production.

For spotted gum, we sampled large and small trees in 2005 using cherry-pickers and cranes in three replicate sites in each of recently logged, regrowth and mature forest. We found that neither logging history nor tree size significantly affected over-night nectar production in bagged flowers.

However, when nectar production was scaled up to the forest stand (incorporating number of flowers per tree and trees per ha) mature forest produced almost 10 times as much sugar per ha as recently logged forest, with regrowth being intermediate. Less nectar after logging is explained by the fact that regrowth canopy is mainly formed by small and medium sized trees and we found that these trees flower less often than large trees. At the compartment scale (200-400 ha of forest), the difference between mature forest and recently logged forest was reduced to a factor of two times when the extent of areas left unlogged under NSW's current forest management practices was considered (~39 % of a compartment). Areas reserved from logging in NSW include riparian buffers, high conservation old growth forest, over-ridge connection corridors, threatened species habitat as well as habitat trees and recruits within logging zones.



One distinctive characteristic of *C. maculata* nectar in 2005 was its high sugar content (40-60 %), much higher than the concentrations measured in 2003 (mean = 18 %). Nectar was not a limiting resource in 2005 as extensive flowering was recorded across the south coast and we found that nectar was only slightly depleted in unbagged flowers measured in the morning and the afternoon. Logging history had no effect on the degree of nectar depletion. We estimated that, on average, mature spotted gum forest produced a vast resource over-night that is by far the greatest nectar energy density yet published: 35,000 kJ ha⁻¹. Flowers measured in 2003 provided a strong contrast with only occasional stands of trees flowering, much less sugar per flower early in the morning and virtually unmeasurable quantities after 0930 h. At such times nectar is limiting, with morning nectar presumably depleted most quickly in areas recently logged. Models of nectar production collated over both years, using climate and site variables, indicated nectar volumes and sugar concentration respond differently to environmental conditions. Predicting the

nectar resource, which is made up of both components, was most consistently related to recent conditions that were unfavourable to foliage production. In general, more nectar was produced after a week of colder than average mornings regardless of rainfall or after warmer mornings if rainfall in the previous month was below average and there were few flowers on the tree.

Our results for grey ironbark showed similarities to spotted gum with regard to the impact of logging, but the species differed markedly in other aspects of nectar production. We again used cherry-pickers and cranes to measure nectar production in large and small trees in replicate sites in each of recently logged, regrowth and old regrowth forest over three consecutive years (2004-2006). Nectar was produced during both the day and night, unlike spotted gum which has been observed previously to mainly produce nectar over-night. We found great similarity in nectar production between autumn flowering in 2004 and late-winter flowering in 2005, but these differed considerably from early summer flowering in 2006. Low average floral sugar levels in the early morning bagged flowers in 2004 and 2005 (1 mg sugar per flower) corresponded to the low levels for spotted gum in 2003 (1 mg sugar), while the sugar-rich nectar in grey ironbark in 2006 (5.3 mg sugar) was similar to spotted gum for 2005 (4.8 mg sugar). This means that nectar in grey ironbark flowers was a limited resource in 2004, to a lesser extent in 2005, but not in 2006. Nectar standing crops were determined by an interaction between environmental conditions that influenced nectar production and the feeding activity of flower visitors at the time, which itself is affected by prevailing temperatures and nectar attributes, such as sugar concentration and regional availability.

Logging history and tree size, when taken individually, had no significant effect on nectar production per flower in grey ironbark. Instead, drought was the major influence on nectar production. Little nectar was produced under any logging history in droughts, while during good conditions nectar production varied depending on logging history. When scaled up to the forest stand, logging history had a marked effect on nectar production with old regrowth forest producing seven times as much sugar per ha as recently logged forest, with regrowth forest 15-20 years old being intermediate. However, at the compartment scale, the difference between old regrowth forest and recently logged forest was reduced to a factor of two times when the extent of areas left unlogged under current practices was considered.

Environmental correlates of nectar production per flower in grey ironbark were primarily related to drought. Sugar-rich flowers were only found when our drought index indicated better than average conditions for up to 12 months prior to flowering. The negative effect of drought is surprising as the species is more drought-tolerant than co-occurring species and it clearly differed from the factors that influenced nectar production in spotted gum. We can summarise the differences between the two species as follows: the winter-flowering spotted gum appears to maximise nectar production when conditions are unsuitable for growth, such as when it is dry or cold, while the slower-growing grey ironbark, which can flower in a variety of seasons, yielded its richest nectar in summer that was warm and moist.

Given the variability in flowering and nectar production between years we also benchmarked our nectar measurements with the amount of honey produced by local beekeepers as determined by questionnaires distributed to them. Local beekeeper records revealed that spotted gum flowering in 2005 had honey yields (54 – 83 kg/hive from April-October) above the typical maximum values reported for the species. This confirms the prolific and extensive nature of the flowering in that year. In contrast, during the poor flowering year of 2003 few hives were deployed in the forest and no honey production was reported at this time. For grey ironbark, the yearly differences in the quantity of sugar produced per flower were related to considerable variations in honey production. In particular, summer 2006 saw prolific honey production close to the maximum previously reported for this species, reflecting the copious, sugar-rich nectar that we measured. Differences in honey production in 2004 and 2005 were apparently related to nectar standing crops rather than actual nectar production.

Honey productivity was comparable across the three treatments of logging history and comparisons of the estimated requirements of hives with the amount of sugar produced by the forest indicate that the spotted gum forest in 2005 was producing excess nectar for commercial honeybees (and other nectar-feeders). This demonstrates that, when flowering is prolific, good honey yields can be obtained from recently logged and regrowth sites. Yet in years when flowering is less prolific (e.g. 2003), nectar may be limiting and retained areas of unlogged and regrowth forest are very important in ameliorating the effects of logging in such years.

We estimated that a hive of commercial honey bees produced about 1 kg honey/ha/month during 2005 and that a 1000 ha spotted gum forest flowering from April-August could yield 5 tonnes of honey. Given a wholesale price of spotted gum honey in 2007 of \$2.20 per kg, this values the spotted gum honey resource per 1000 ha of spotted gum forest in 2005 as \$11,000. It should be noted that 2005 was a prolific flowering year for spotted gum and there was little blossom in the immediately preceding years.

The Australian environment is a complex place and it is important for forestry organisations to be fully aware that the nectar resource requires careful management. It is just as important for beekeepers to remain up to date about the many recent changes in current forest management.

We suggest that forest managers should focus on minimising nectar depletion in poor flowering years when the nectar resource is limiting. This stresses the importance of an existing prescription that retains mature trees of locally important flowering species (currently six per ha) in the net logging area. It also suggests that over-stocking of commercial hives should be avoided to minimise nectar depletion in such years. Feral bees are likely to be a problem about which little can be done.

Reference

Law, B. and M. Chidel. 2007. *The impact of logging on nectar producing eucalypts*. Publication Number 07/138, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Canberra. <http://www.rirdc.gov.au>

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AUSTRALIAN PLAGUE LOCUST COMMISSION (APLC)

Autumn Report – (next report in Spring)

The adult locust population increased to high densities in the eastern Riverina of New South Wales during March. This was primarily the result of the aggregation of locusts that fledged in this region in late February and early March, but some migration from the Central West in early March may have contributed to the increase. Concentration and swarm density adults with developed eggs were widespread in Murray, Wagga and the western part of Hume Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB) districts, but numbers had declined to medium densities by the end of April. Egg laying began in the Riverina in late March and continued during April and into early May. A potentially serious nymphal infestation with many bands is therefore expected to develop in the Riverina in October and November.

Redistribution of adults during April produced a widespread medium density population in the southern Central West and Riverina of New South Wales, and in North Central Victoria at the start of May. Some egg laying has occurred in all these regions and more localised medium density hatchings, with bands developing in some locations, is likely in spring. Highest density spring hatchings are expected in Murray, Wagga, southern Narrandera, western Hume and Riverina RLPB districts, where hatchings will begin in early October with a peak in mid-October. Landholder identification and control of small bands on farmland will be critical to minimising the impact of locust nymphs on crops and pastures during October and November.

Locust density remained low in the Northwest Plains and northern part of the Central West of New South Wales during April, following the decline in early March. Medium to high density adults developed in southern Forbes and Condobolin, and in Molong RLPB districts, and extended into the western edge of Gundagai and Young RLPB districts. Spring hatchings from autumn egg laying will begin in late September in these areas. In the Far West and Far Southwest regions of New South Wales nymphs fledged in the Wanaaring–Tibooburra area and the Menindee–Ivanhoe area during March, which produced small areas of high density adults in the Wilcannia–White Cliffs and Sayers Lake–Darnick areas in early April. Egg laying may have occurred in the White-Cliffs area during April.

In Victoria, reports of adult locusts between Echuca and Wodonga in North Central Victoria began in late March. The population in Victoria is primarily the result of migration from adjacent areas of the Riverina in March and April, but low numbers of adults could have migrated into this region and bred at low densities from as early as January. There were further migrations of adult locusts into Victoria during April and surveys identified a widespread medium density population in the area bounded by Wodonga, Wangaratta, Rushworth and Echuca, with up to Concentration density adults in some locations. There were also reports west of Echuca, and as far south as Nhill in Northwest Victoria in late April. The presence of occasional nymphs indicates egg laying occurred in some locations in Victoria from late March

and continued during April. Medium density nymphs and some small bands are likely to develop in November.

Locust densities in most regions of Queensland and northern South Australia declined to very low levels during April apart from some low density adults and occasional nymphs near Cunnamulla in Paroo Shire, South Central Queensland.

All locust activity must be reported to your RLPB or NSW Department of Primary Industries.

A toll-free call to the Australian Plague Locust Commission can be made on 1800 635 962. An answering machine is attached for after-hours calls.

Reports can be sent through the APLC web page at www.daff.gov.au/aplc

CROP REPORT

North Coast

Since the last report further good rains have occurred that will help spring buildup. Macadamias are having an early flowering and many growers are asking for bees to be placed early, this is creating conflict for some beekeepers as they want to be elsewhere, but wish to retain their sites. One reference in *Insect Pollination of Cultivated Crop Plants* by the United States Department of Agriculture indicated a commercial apiary beside plantings of Macadamias could increase yields by 59% compared to previous years when no commercial bees were present.

Many north coast beekeepers moved to South East Queensland where there has been excellent production from winter flowering Ironbarks with good prospects to follow on the same sites. Coastal heath has been useful and great hopes are held for a good crop of Jelly bush after last season's failure and plentiful rain since Christmas.

Central West

Patches of Red Gums are budding, both *Eucalyptus dealbata* and *Eucalyptus blakelyi*. Yellow Box has some trees flowering yet in the same paddock other trees of Yellow Box have very small buds.

Some beekeepers in the middle of August will be migrating to early crops of Canola however the area planted is not extensive. Paterson Curse still requires more rain in most areas.

Sydney and the Central Coast

Large areas of Forest Red Gum *Eucalyptus tereticornis* are well budded for spring build up. Narrow leafed Ironbark *Eucalyptus crebra* has been yielding. Wattles are providing good pollen supplies.

Bruce White



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MORE THAN HONEY

A new report on the honey bee industry



Des Wilmot, Crop Pollination Association, Lindsay Bourke, AHBIC Chairman, Dick Adams MP, David Llewellyn MP, Bill Weiss, President FCAA & Julian Wolfhagen, President Tasmanian Beekeepers at the launch in Launceston on 22 July 2008.

Dick Adams, Federal Member for Lyons, was today very pleased to launch the Primary Industries and Resources Committee report, "More than Honey", to David Llewellyn, Minister for Primary Industries and Resources and members of the beekeeping, forestry and agriculture community in Tasmania.

The report was tabled in Canberra in June, and addresses the challenges facing the honey bee crop pollination and related industries in Australia.

"I am asking the State Minister to work with me to help implement the recommendations in the report."

Dick Adams said that the report contained 25 recommendations, including:

- Providing funding and organizational resources to establish and run Pollination Australia;
- Establishing guidelines for beekeepers access to public lands, including national parks;
- Providing incentives for the planting and conservation of melliferous flora;
- Maintaining and enhancing the National Sentinel Hive Program;
- Fast tracking the pre-registration of pesticides to combat the Varroa incursion;
- Establishing and funding a national endemic pest and disease control program;
- A request that the ACCC investigate pricing practices;
- Improve product standards for imported honey; and
- Better product labeling.

"We rely on the honey bee industry, not only in Tasmania's world famous honey, but also to pollinate many food crops.

"Without honey bees, many of Australia's agricultural industries would not be viable, and the Nation's food security would be at risk.

"In Tasmania, agriculture, Government and forestry work together to secure resources for the honey bee industry. Tasmania can be a leader in the honey bee industry", Dick Adams said.

Mr Adams emphasized that there was a clear need to invest in biosecurity measures, especially the National Sentinel Hive Program, and research and development for the industry. Saying that only through such investment would the honey bee industry and pollination dependent agricultural industries remain strong and viable into the future.

"The Varroa destructor mite poses a real threat to the future of the honey bee industry.

"Tasmania is ideally placed to take advantage of the cooperation between various sectors to ensure that the honey bee industry grows and prospers", Dick Adams said.

Copies of the report can be obtained from the committee's website at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/pir/honeybee/report.htm>

For a hard copy please contact:

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources
PO Box 6021, House of Representatives

Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600
Phone: 61 2 6277 4500 Fax: 61 2 6277 4424
email: pir.reps@aph.gov.au

OBITUARY

STEVE TABER

1924-2008

Mr Stephen Taber III, a world-recognised honey bee researcher, of Elgin, South Carolina, USA died on 22 May 2008 aged 84.

Steve became interested in bees at an early age, using the banks of the Broad river in Columbia as his research yard. He graduated from University High School in 1942 and enlisted in the US Navy the same year where he served until the end of the war in September 1945.

In 1950 he graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a BS specialising in Bee Research. His first position was with the Entomology Research Division of USDA in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After 15 years in Baton Rouge he was transferred to the USDA Bee Research Centre in Tucson, Arizona where, in his words, "he was his own instructor."

After his retirement from USDA he moved to California and founded "Honey Bee Genetics". Steve travelled extensively teaching, lecturing and researching. He lived in France, continuing his genetic research with bees, for a few years before returning to the Columbia area.

Some of his students are leaders in the world of beekeeping research today. His book, *Breeding Super Bees*, will attest to some of his research and his studies around the world. His articles and research publications are still being referenced by honey bee researchers worldwide. Articles written by Steve, and his collaborative efforts with others, appeared in numerous publications for over 50 years. They include *American Bee Journal*, *Gleanings in Bee Culture*, *Journal of Economic Entomology*, *Journal of Apicultural Research*, and *Beekeepers Quarterly*. He wrote a monthly column for the *American Bee Journal* for 23 years from 1980 to 2003.

One of his students writes "Taber was the most brilliant and wonderfully eccentric bee researcher, ever. He also was the best teacher; he made us question everything we knew or took for granted, and then transformed those questions into creative and constructive research problems – all while teasing and yelling and laughing wildly and free."

The life and legacy of Steve Taber is one that will remain in the hearts of those who knew him. His knowledge and mannerisms have moulded the lives of all those he touched. He will never be forgotten.

Adapted from the American Bee Journal – July 2008

NSW Government strengthens exotic disease response laws in the wake of EI

*From the Office of the Minister for Primary Industries
19 June 2008*

The Iemma Government will make sweeping changes to laws that govern the State response to exotic disease outbreaks like horse flu, foot and mouth disease and mad cow disease, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said today.

"The NSW response to EI was swift and highly effective, but these changes will further improve the response to any future emergency disease outbreak," he said.

"The changes to the *Exotic Diseases of Animals Act 1991* that went through the Lower House yesterday, will further improve the speed and effectiveness of our response to exotic and emergency disease outbreaks," Minister Macdonald said.

"We are streamlining the response and taking precautionary action early to make sure we are ready in the event a devastating exotic disease makes its way onto our shores.

"This means extending the reporting duty of private veterinary practitioners of suspected infection and providing additional powers to prevent the spread of diseases.

"Compensation arrangements will be clarified, new offences will be introduced for providing false or misleading information (maximum of \$22,000 or six months in prison) and provision for issuing penalty notices for minor breaches of the Act will be introduced."

Mr Macdonald said the State Government will extend the limitation period for commencing prosecutions under the *Exotic Diseases of Animals Act 1991* and the following Acts from six months to two years:

Apiaries Act 1985;
Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986;
Non-Indigenous Animals Act 1987;
Noxious Weeds Act 1993;
Plant Diseases Act 1924; and
Stock Diseases Act 1923

"These changes will bring NSW into line with national emergency disease management," Minister Macdonald said.

"We need to be vigilant and take all precautionary measures we can to prevent disease reaching our shores and containing any outbreak in the unfortunate event one occurs."

RECIPES

HONEY PRAWNS

Serves 6

1.5 kg green prawns
(tails intact but heads and shells removed)
Oil for deep frying
4 tablespoons honey
3 chillies, seeds removed and finely sliced
2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Batter
1 cup self raising flour
¼ cup cornflour
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup water
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon oil

Make batter by sifting dry ingredients into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and gradually stir in water, lemon juice and oil.

Coat prawns in batter, deep fry at 180°C for 2 minutes then drain.

Heat the honey in a shallow frying pan or wok, add chillies and prawns and toss to coat prawns. Serve immediately sprinkled with sesame seeds.

BANANA & BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

Makes 12

2 cups self raising flour
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2/3 cup rolled oats
2 eggs, lightly beaten
200g tub natural yoghurt
80g margarine, melted, cooled
2 medium ripe bananas, mashed
1 medium green apple, peeled, grated
½ cup honey
¾ cup fresh or frozen blueberries

Preheat oven to 190°C (170°C fan-forced). Line twelve 1/3 cup capacity non-stick muffin holes with large paper cases. Sift flour and cinnamon into a bowl. Stir in ½ cup rolled oats. Make a well in the centre. Add eggs, yoghurt, margarine, banana, apple and honey. Stir to just combine. Fold in blueberries. Divide mixture between paper cases. Sprinkle tops with remaining oats. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden and a skewer inserted into 1 muffin comes out clean.

Remove muffins to a wire rack to cool.

Muffins can be frozen for up to 3 months.

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CHANGES TO RURAL LANDS PROTECTION BOARDS

Rural Lands Protection Boards will be undergoing major structural changes over the next 12 months to bring a better, more modern service to landholders. RLPBs provide the frontline biosecurity field presence in NSW and this focus will be strengthened further as a result of a series of recommendations contained in an external review of our system.

The number of boards of directors in the state will reduce from 47 to 14 while the local shopfronts across the state will remain open and the number of vets and rangers involved in animal health and pest control work will be maintained.

Same strong frontline local service

NSW is in the enviable position of having an animal health and pest animal and insect control system built on local knowledge and service delivery. Under the changes, all shopfronts will remain across NSW. Board membership is to be restructured and importantly will continue to allow for local producer input and representation.

Same strong biosecurity focus

RLPBs will continue to be the frontline public animal health and pest animal and insect management service. Our biosecurity role will be bolstered as vets and rangers are freed up to spend more time on our core functions.

What is changing

- the number of boards will reduce from 47 to 14 while all local shopfronts across NSW will remain open, ensuring that our local knowledge, experience and responsiveness are maintained
- there will be an even greater focus on our core biosecurity function (animal health and pest control)
- vets and rangers will spend more time in the field and less time in administration
- there will be no reduction in numbers of field staff involved in biosecurity functions (animal health/pests)
- TSRs are to be ceded back to Department of Lands where they place an unreasonable financial burden on boards
- the election and selection process for directors will be restructured.

Why the changes were necessary

The State Council of Rural Lands Protection Boards recognised it was time for our organisation to undergo an external review to set our future direction and enhance our efficiency, effectiveness and relevance across the state.

This was the result of a number of factors:

- the continued increase in administrative costs to the organisation
- unsustainable financial position of some Boards

- unsustainable rate increases in some areas
- changing demographics of ratepayers
- new primary production and information technologies
- national biosecurity priorities.

When the changes are likely to occur

- new boundaries are being fine-tuned in consultation with existing boards this year
- new boards, with new names, are expected to begin operations 1 January 2009
- TSR changes are not being considered until mid 2009.

RLPB CHANGES – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I continue to do business with my local RLPB during these changes?

It is business as usual at local Rural Lands Protection Boards during the change period. For assistance with issues such as livestock health, controlling pests, drought assistance, access to TSRs, stock movement and stock identification contact your local Board.

If there are only 14 Boards, how do I get help with something affecting my property?

Even though the total number of boards is being reduced, local offices and shopfronts will remain open. The purpose of these reforms is to improve local service delivery.

Will District Veterinarians still be available to come to my property to investigate a flock or herd health problem?

District vets will still be out in the field right across NSW. They will continue to be available to investigate flock or herd health problems, provide advice on livestock health and keep producers informed.

Will I have to pay more for this service?

If you currently pay RLPB rates, you are able to access the services of a District Veterinarian free of charge. This will not change. As before, for individual animal health problems you should contact a private practitioner.

Will my RLPB still be able to help me with pest control?

Pest control is a vital biosecurity function of RLPBs. As such pest animal and insect control has long been a priority and will continue to be so. If you need help controlling pests on your land, or are interested in joining a group control program, contact your local Board office.

Will I have to pay more for this service?

If you currently pay RLPB rates, you are able to access the services of our Rangers free of charge. This will not change. As is the case now, many Boards sell baits to landholders on a cost recovery basis.

Will RLPB rangers still be playing a role in plague locust control this spring/summer?

RLPB rangers and State Council have been working with NSW Department of Primary Industries on an action plan for plague locust hatchings in the spring of 2008. Our rangers will continue to be the frontline service for on-the-ground locust control.

Will I still get a rates notice in 2009?

Rates notices, and the requirement to pay rates by the due date, will continue to be part of your dealings with RLPBs. Early in 2009 you may notice a new name or logo on your rates notices. That will be part of the change implementation.

Will the rates I pay to the RLPB change?

It is expected that the cost savings associated with the RLPB reforms will help keep downward pressure on rates generally, but the individual new boards will address issues such as rates upon their formation.

Will I still have to fill out a land and stock return?

Yes. These documents, also known as annual returns, contain information essential for livestock disease control and surveillance.

What board district will I be in after the changes?

The IMC Review has proposed new boundaries for boards and regions. These can be viewed on our web site. However, some boundaries have been identified as requiring further consideration and local Boards are currently working with State Council to fine-tune the proposed boundaries. It is expected this will be finalised later in 2008.

When are the changes being implemented?

It is anticipated that the new boards, with new names, will begin operations from 1 January 2009. The exact boundaries of these new boards will be finalised later in 2008.

Can I still use a TSR?

Until the proposed changes to TSR management are finalised, you can continue to access TSRs as normal. Your local RLPB office can help you obtain a permit.

When will this change?

Any changes to TSR management will not be considered until at least mid 2009.

Will the TSR changes affect people wanting to move stock along public roads?

Each year people move stock along public roads and also use roadsides for grazing during times of feed shortages. This movement is controlled by a series of permits, which require approval from local RLPB offices. This will not change. For information on moving stock contact your local RLPB office.

Can I still get help filling out drought claim forms?

The processing of drought assistance claims is an area which will not change. If you require help filling out a drought claim, or with other drought-related issues, your local RLPB office will be able to help. It is important to remember that local shopfronts will remain open.

For more information contact your local RLPB office.

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ASIAN HONEY BEE SWARM DESTROYED IN QUEENSLAND

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland Government - Media Release - 3 August 2008

A SWARM of some 2000 Asian honey bees did not have a chance of forming a nest when Biosecurity Queensland officers caught up with them late Friday afternoon. The swarm is believed to have been associated with the nest found in an avocado tree on a Green Hill cane farm on Tuesday.

The property owner who reported the nest on his farm told Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Biosecurity Queensland officers that he was alerted to the nest because of swarming activity. The nest was destroyed on Wednesday and removed on Thursday.

Surveillance field officer Martin Bell was in the process of contacting neighbouring property owners on Friday when one advised him of a swarm on a tree 100m from the nest.

The Biosecurity Queensland team, led by regional project officer Ian Rodger, attended the site immediately and destroyed the swarm in a swift operation.

Biosecurity Queensland teams from the DPI&F have stepped up surveillance and would be establishing sugar-feeding stations throughout the Green Hill and East Trinity area. The nest found on Tuesday this week was the first detected since November last year and the eighth since

the initial incursion in the Cairns industrial suburb of Portsmith in May 2007.

Samples will be tested to determine whether these recent detections are related to the 2007 incursion rather than a new incursion.

“We still can’t say with certainty that they are related, however we are working on the basis that these detections are a continuation of last year’s incursion,” Mr Rodger said.

“We are especially grateful to the property owners who have played a key role in our response in the past week.”

If anybody in the Green Hill and Gordonvale area sees a suspicious bee nest, please contact the DPI&F urgently on 13 25 23.

Biosecurity Queensland surveillance manager Wim de Jong said Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) were smaller than the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) and had a different flight pattern.

“*Apis cerana* had stronger colouring markings and posed a significant threat to the Australian bee industry,” Mr de Jong said.

US CUSTOMS ARREST ILLEGAL HONEY IMPORTERS

CHICAGO - Two Chicago executives of a German-based food ingredients company were arrested on federal charges for allegedly conspiring to illegally import honey from China.

The honey was falsely identified as coming from other countries in order to avoid anti-dumping duties and was adulterated because it contained Chloramphenicol, an antibiotic not approved for use in food-producing animals, including bees.

Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents made the arrests on May 23, 2008. Both defendants are executives of Alfred L Wolff GmbH, the food ingredients component of Wolff & Olsen, a worldwide distributor of food products, including honey and honey-based derivatives. The company imported nearly \$30million of honey into the US since 2005.

If convicted the conspiracy charge carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Courtesy: US Department of Justice, Chicago, Illinois, USA

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July 2008

AHBIC OFFICE MOVE

Members are advised that the AHBIC office is now located at Suite 4, Level 2, 105 Pitt Street, Sydney. The telephone and fax numbers remain unchanged, and the email and postal address remain the same.

ELECTION OF AHBIC CHAIR

Following the AHBIC AGM held on 14 & 15 July 2008 AHBIC elected a new Chair in Mr Lindsay Bourke a Tasmanian honey producer, pollinator and packer.

Mr Bourke in assuming the AHBIC Chair thanked outgoing Chairman Mr Stephen Fewster for his efforts in leading the industry through some difficult times.

REVAMP OF AHBIC WEBSITE

AHBIC has taken the opportunity to revamp its website to better reflect and promote industry. The website address remains the same, but it has been substantially updated to better reflect industry's position as the producer of safe, wholesome food and an integral part of agricultural and pastoral industries through the provision of pollination services. AHBIC thanks Mr Keith McIlvride for updating the website.

ENVIRONMENTAL CODE OF PRACTICE

The Environmental Code of Practice prepared for industry by the NSW Department of Primary Industries was formally released at the Queensland Conference by Dr Max Whitten, retired former chief of CSIRO Entomology.

This was covered by ABC country hour and the local 'rural weekly' press. An electronic version of the Report will be available on the AHBIC website: www.honeybee.org.au

AHBIC EXECUTIVE

The Executive Committee of AHBIC for the coming year consists of:-

Mr Lindsay Bourke	Chairman	0418 131 256
Mr Ed Planken	Deputy Chairman	08 9271 8133
Mr Ian Stephens	HPMAA	03 6363 1170
Mr Bill Weiss	FCAAA	02 6732 1263
Mr Ian Zadow	FCAAA	08 8757 2435
Mr Warren Jones	NCPA	02 6887 2638
Mrs Paula Dewar	AQBBA	07 5463 5633
Mr Trevor Morgan	Capilano Honey	08 8626 1355

AUSTRALIAN QUEEN BEE BREEDING GROUP

The Australian Queen Bee Breeding Group (AQBGG) held its AGM on Sunday 13 July, 2008. The office bearers for the coming year are Bruce White – President, Trevor Weatherhead – Secretary, Bill Weiss and Laurie Dewar – Executive, Dr. Ben Oldroyd and Peter Oxley – Advisors.

Many matters were discussed. Renewal of membership will be sent out to members shortly and there will be a concerted effort to gain new members. So if you are interested in being a member of the AQBGG please contact Trevor Weatherhead on 07 5467 2135.

To fully reflect the nature of what the AQBGG is doing, it has been decided that it will be called the Australian Queen Bee Breeding Program run by the Australian Queen Bee Breeding Group.

With the advent of the new AHBIC website www.honeybee.org.au, you will see that there is a section there for the AQBGG. Have a look at what is there now and regularly check back as we will be updating it from time to time.

Stock is currently being evaluated in Queensland and New South Wales and will be made available for purchase later this year. Production records and purchase details will appear on the AHBIC website in the AQBGG section plus in industry journals.

Trevor Weatherhead
SECRETARY
23 July 2008



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Industry Member

Having just been elected as Chairman of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, I would like to thank Industry Members for their faith in me and to outline to you my views on the future.

Firstly we need to acknowledge the fact that we have very good friends in our Industry together with some brilliant and dedicated people. But we must stop fighting each other and work together as one.

We must look after our beekeepers. If we don't have beekeepers we don't have honey to pack and we will not be able to pollinate our country's crops.

The way of the world now is "user pays" so if Australian packers must import honey from overseas then it should be tested before it is released into our country – all honey should be tested before it is released, and this should be at the importer's cost and not somebody else's expense.

We have to re-build our Industry – no longer can we go on as before. We need more young people and new thinking. We need people to step forward to make a difference to our Industry.

Finally the AHBIC Executive will be seeking to put forward a blueprint for the future.

The AHBIC Annual General Meeting gave the Industry the general direction they sought our great Industry to move in. It is now time for the AHBIC Executive to build this foundation to provide a strategy and to communicate to all Industry stakeholders.

I thank Industry for its vote of confidence and look forward to communicating with you regularly.

Lindsay Bourke
Chairman
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council
29 July 2008

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