



# AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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Volume 2 Number 4

July - August 2009

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# AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



## Season

Reasonable rains inland and heavy rains in some Coastal regions have given many drought affected areas a good boost of winter - early spring growth.

Canola crops are just beginning to flower and look good at time of writing this report. Concern is felt that the official forecast indicate another El Nino event which would put many of the areas under stress when the weather warms up in September.

Spotted Gum on the South Coast is drawing to a close with some disappointment as yields were down, given the heavy budding. Bad weather, early flowering did not help.

Heavy rainfall on the North Coast has not helped hives over the autumn - winter, however will ensure species that are carrying bud for spring-summer flowering should yield to their potential (Mahogany, Grey Ironbark, Red Gum etc.).

Inland has seen lack of bud, giving fairly poor results, with White Box not yielding much and in some cases reducing bee populations, and Stringy Bark just giving winter stores.

## Crop

Honey stocks held by beekeepers are quite low given that quite a few did not get their normal production last season.

Prices appear to be holding around the \$3.20-\$3.60 with a slight premium for specialty honey (Yellow Box \$3.80-\$4.00).

## Annual Conference

This year's Conference had a very informative line-up of speakers, many from overseas. Registrations for Conference were slightly down (around 140-150), which will make this the first Conference for many years which did not cover costs.

Speakers gave a lot of valuable information on value adding and promotion of the health benefits of different honeys, the increasing importance of hive health (Nosema Ceranae and AFB) and the option to export to niche markets to get a fairer return for your product.

## Executive

The State Executive has a new member, with the nomination and election of Laurie Kershaw from Bungendore in the South of the State. Thank you Laurie and welcome to the Executive.

Robert Seagrave decided not to nominate and we thank him for his support and assistance whilst on the Executive.

## Conference Sponsors

I would like to thank the following Conference Sponsors for their generous support: Almond Board of Australia, Beechworth Honey, Bee Build, Bindaree Bee Supplies, Capilano Honey, Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies, Leabrook Farms Honey, Redpaths Beekeeping Supplies, Trevor Monson - Pollination, VIP Packaging, Wesfarmers.

## AHBIC Review

At the AHBIC AGM the Review was discussed and the results were that only a couple of the recommendations were adopted with the corresponding constitutional changes to be proposed and presented to members.

At present the draft constitution only helps to disenfranchise NSW, which constitutes 43% of the Honeybee Industry, and efforts will be made (at the reconvened AGM to be held on 12 October) to have NSW properly represented. If this cannot be achieved, then NSW will have to reconsider whether its interests will be served by remaining a member of AHBIC.

## Imports

Chinese honey is uppermost in most of our minds at present with many packers using the product. It is hard to see how Chinese honey could comply with quality assurance standards that Australian produced honey has to meet with B-QUAL.

Trace back would be impossible, and as has been reported, residues of banned chemicals have been found in the product. NSW State Executive plan to form a small working party to investigate the quality of the imported honey and ensure that it meets Australian standards, otherwise it should be rejected by Biosecurity Australia.

## Sprays

Beekeepers should be aware that due to the milder winter, aphid and grasshopper spraying could be widespread and all beekeepers should make themselves aware of what areas may be target areas for these activities.

## Almond Pollination

Many hives (60,000) have been taken to Almond pollination. There was doubt about whether pollination would proceed due to the financial collapse of Timbercorp. However, the receivers negotiated with the banks and others, so pollination could proceed, to maintain value of the assets. Beekeepers, on short notice, moved hives into Almonds to assist this process, although they will miss the last of the Spotted Gum and payment for pollination may barely cover value of honey foregone. This was done to ensure that such a valuable asset to Australia is not lost.

**Bill Weiss**  
**State President**



# BUSHTELEGRAPHBEEHIVE

ABC Radio National – 14 August 2009

[www.abc.net.au/rn/bushtelegraph](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/bushtelegraph)

**We thought the best way to find out about the importance of the honey industry in Australia would be to get our very own beehive.**

Over the next 12 months our Bush Telegraph beehive will be moving around the countryside in the trusty hands of beekeeper Steven Goldsworthy.

Our hive has a very important job to do. Aside from making honey, beehives are vital for the many food crops that rely on bees for pollination.

We'll be following every move of our hive: it's going to be pollinating almond plantations along the Murray River in northern Victoria, canola crops in southern New South Wales and kiwi fruit in north-east Victoria, and then it'll be making honey in native red gum and stringy-bark forest.

Our hive will not be on its own, and won't get any special treatment. It will be one of around 300 hives Steven Goldsworthy places in various locations, and it will face many challenges along the way. Low rainfall is reducing the flowering of native forests, making it harder for bees to produce honey. Steven will use instincts honed over many years as he picks just the right time and place to move the hive.

Steven, like other beekeepers, lives in fear of a devastating parasite, the Varroa destructor mite. Australia is the only country still free of this mite, but it could arrive here at any time. The Varroa destructor has the potential to devastate hives, and apiarists are forced to use chemicals to control it.

We'll take delivery of our Bush Tele Beehive on August 14 in Kyneton Central Victoria. You can follow the journey of our hive around Victoria by reading updates on the ABC Rural blog and on our Bush Telegraph Facebook.

The hive will start its journey in Robinvale, Victoria.

## BEEKEEPING TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

Bendigo TAFE (BRIT) is providing the opportunity for full qualifications in Beekeeping primarily through traineeship programs. We currently have more than 10 people working toward either their Certificate III or IV in Agriculture (specialising in Beekeeping) from businesses based in Mildura to the Mornington Peninsula. Please let your members know that we are keen to discuss with them their training requirements; some examples have been to date, how to gain formal recognition for the skills they have already developed or assisting in the training of new employees. Bendigo TAFE looks forward to hearing from more Beekeepers in the future.

**Doug Baker**

Program Manager Primary Industries  
Land, Food and Manufacturing  
Bendigo TAFE  
1300 554 248

# HONEYBEE BLUES

*This documentary was shown to attendees at the RIRDC Research Field Day.*

*Honeybee Blues* tells the story of the world's disappearing European honeybees and the efforts of CSIRO scientist Dr Denis Anderson to save them from annihilation. From the native bush and orchards of Australia to the industrial farmlands of the United States and the highlands of Papua New Guinea, this new documentary portrays the battle by the last country on earth to remain free of the devastating Varroa Destructor mite.

The documentary is directed by Stefan Moore. It will be screened soon on SBS, although the broadcast date is not yet known. DVDs will be available to purchase from Screen Australia.

**For further inquiries please contact the producers:**

Anna Cater - mobile: 0403 186 206

Email: [anna@mitrafilms.com.au](mailto:anna@mitrafilms.com.au)

Susan MacKinnon - mobile: 0407 484 451

Email: [s.mackinnon@ozemail.com.au](mailto:s.mackinnon@ozemail.com.au)



Is it a bee? Is it a cab?  
No, it's Beecab!

A London taxi has been specially customized by artists and scientists for Festival, the festival that celebrates the art of being an insect coming, to London's Southbank Centre in September 2009 to celebrate insects in the arts and the art of being an insect.

The theme of this year's Festival ([www.pestival.org](http://www.pestival.org)) is the collapse of bee colonies around the world. To raise awareness of the plight of bees, one of London's iconic black cabs has been transformed into a bumblebee in full flight, and even has a working beehive in the front seat.

British beekeeper and 'Beecab' driver, Steve Benbow, said: "Bees and cabbies have more in common than you might think – the way bees navigate is very similar to the way cab drivers get round London. They both service the city, and with the Varroa mite wiping out wild colonies of bees, urban beekeeping is more important than ever."

Beecab will be appearing around London until the end of the summer when it arrives at Festival 2009.

*Photo courtesy: Wellcome Images UK*

# BEEKEEPING

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# THAT'S MY OPINION

By Greg Roberts



## Almond Pollination

At the time of writing this report I have just finished delivering beehives to almond orchards. I have the editor of the *Australia's Honeybee News* on the phone about the lateness of my report, she is a stickler for protocol and deadlines.

We are all aware of the financial problems of Timbercorp limited; however there have been eleventh hour allocations of moneys for beekeepers to pollinate the almond crop. There have been thousands of beehives transported to the almond areas. If any of our industry leaders had any criticisms of beekeepers abilities to work together then they themselves can take a lesson from these beekeepers.

There has been tens of thousands of kilometres traveled by beekeepers delivering hives to almonds, and as a past industry leader it was great to see beekeepers working together and in some cases forming convoys helping each other obey the road rules and work diary responsibilities. Beekeepers, keep up the good work and take care when pulling off the almonds, you are setting a good example on behalf of our industry.

## Climate Change

In 2007 I wrote an article posing the question should the beekeeping industry have a position on climate change. I myself am not a believer in global warming but I believe in climate change in my opinion there is a difference just ask the next dinosaur you see. I also believe with climate change governments of the world will have an enormous problem that they will have to handle with kid gloves and that is food security.

For some years now I have been warning of a world shortage of uncontaminated honey. I have a belief that climate change has had an effect on the world's natural beekeeping resources and an increasing effect on honeybee diseases. It is interesting because of abnormal droughts that Argentina's wheat crop plantings are the lowest in one hundred years. This will no doubt have an effect on their honey production. In China the continuing drought, especially in northern China's wheat belt area, crops are failing and millions of people do not have access to adequate clean water. This will also have an effect on China's honey production.

Many years ago Einstein stated (he was referring to many species of bees) "If all the bees disappeared from the earth mankind would have four years to survive." This is because of bees pollination relationship with plant life both forest and agricultural. I believe it is possible with climate change that some pollination species throughout the world may become extinct and under good government managed honeybees may be needed for pollination purposes even within our National Park systems here in Australia.

One thing about climate change and food security, if there ever was a war fought over these issues it would be over food security not climate change.

## Imports

One of the many recommendations to the Commonwealth Government's report on beekeeping by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources is recommendation number 21 "The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop labeling standards to more accurately reflect the place of origin and composition of honey and honey bee products."

It has been reported that China, because of bad conditions has had a downturn in honey production. There has also been a report that some Chinese honey factories are no better than syrup manufacturers. In most cases this product has been produced for the Asian markets where honey syrup is used in volume as a drink. However there are some unscrupulous people in the world taking cheap advantage of this product.

Many suspect that this may include some Australian business people who are buying this product and adding a strong Australian honey to give it a "type" of honey flavour. If this is the case then these people I believe are breaking this country's labeling regulations. If there is a product made up of a honey syrup and a honey mix it should be labeled as such no matter whether this product is for shelf or industrial use. Recently I have been experimenting and I believe through a certain process that it may be possible to separate blended honey and syrup product without interfering with the container.

## Agricultural Industry Service Act 1998 No 45

Agencies around the world have been working together to clean up the dishonest marketing of some Chinese honey. In America three Chinese nationals were recently arrested for laundering Chinese honey. In Vietnam under new legislation individuals thought to be laundering Chinese honey have fled the country and are being pursued by international crime agencies. The Indian Government has issued a ban on blending of Indian honey with non Indian honey for exports. The good people of the Chinese honey industry have applauded all of these actions! Here in Australia the question could be asked are some of our importers one step in front of the jailer?

The Australian Olive Industry has employed a NSW Government State Food Authority to do testing of olive oil contents and have come up with a number of breeches of food labeling regulations. NSW Government is one of



the few State Governments that has legislation in place for agricultural industries to assist with these problems. This is Agricultural Industry Service Act 1998 No 45 where the NSW beekeeping industry through a service fee can employ such a body to test honey to make sure that the product in the jar is what the label states. This would only take a small short term fee on NSW registered beekeepers and would not interfere with any existing testing programs in place.

I believe the cleaning up of imported honey is the most important issue facing the industry today. If grass roots beekeepers won't support such short term schemes then the industry may be lost forever in their own wilderness.

With the assistance of Governments and some authority from industry I would give up if I could not achieve a Government to Government agreement between Australia and China that honey producers and good marketers could live with. However I don't think it is achievable through our National Residue Committee. On the issues of imports I believe they have failed the industry miserably and it would be in the industry's best interest if they all be given the big boot.

Australia is fast becoming one of the hardest countries to export from and the easiest to import an inferior product to.

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

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The government response to **The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources Inquiry Report on "More than Honey: the future of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries"** was released on 12 August 2009.

The government thanks the committee and the stakeholders who contributed to a significant and comprehensive report on the issues facing the Australian honeybee and pollination-dependent industries.

This response is available at:  
<http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/animal>

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## YOUNG AI QUEENS AVAILABLE FROM AQBBP

After several years of operations, the Australian Queen Bee Breeding program (AQBBP), run by the Australian Queen Bee Breeding Group (AQBBG), has been looking at the uptake of queen bees from the program. To date the number of evaluated queen bees sold has not been very high.

The AQBBG has asked questions of many queen bee breeders and beekeepers and the feedback has been that the evaluated queens that they purchased did not have a very long serviceable life. This is understandable as the queens, when purchased, are normally 12 months old and have been through a vigorous evaluation regime.

So, in response to the feedback, the AQBBP is offering AI queen bees for sale that have been inseminated from the top lines with pooled semen. These will be young queen bees which have not been evaluated. This will mean that they should live for a reasonable time.

The AQBBP will have young AI queen bees available that you can choose the line that you wish and these will be inseminated with pooled semen.

The cost for these young unevaluated AI queen bees will be \$500.

There is no GST on this amount as the AQBBG is not registered for GST.

There is the possibility that you can have a particular line inseminated with the drones of your choice of lines but a price for this would need to be negotiated.

Performance data, that has been gathered on the lines, will be made available on the AHBIC website under Queen Breeding Program.

It is hoped to have this in place shortly so you can consult this data to help in your selection of which line you would like to purchase.

Orders will need to be placed by 30 September, 2009. However, there will be some extra queen bees inseminated from some of the top lines and these will be available later if you do not get your order in by 30 September 2009.

**If you have any questions re purchasing  
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*Thinking beyond the package*



# EXPORT MATTERS

**Export Matters- Beeswax and bee by-products to the European Union, progress towards new regulation for the export honey industry and changes in AQIS.**

I would like to touch on two issues that will have an impact on exports of honey and bee products. These are the listing of establishments sending bee by-products to the European Union and the proposed Export Control (Honey and Bee Product) Orders.

The European Commission will be reviewing Regulation 1774/2002/EC in the near future. This regulation covers animal by-products, including bee by-products. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has received preliminary advice that the Commission will request a list of all establishments producing animal by-products that are eligible for export to the European Union (EU), including establishments exporting bee by-products.

AQIS will maintain a formal list of all apiary by-product establishments that want access to the EU and will send this list to the Commission. I have already contacted known exporters of by-products by email or telephone and thank everyone that has responded. However, the response was less than I expected and therefore I urge everyone that wants to be eligible to send bee by-products to the EU in the future to contact me. There is no cost linked to this listing.

Certain markets require regulatory control of honey by the exporting country and therefore AQIS has been developing a set of Export Control (Honey and Bee Product) Orders in consultation with the honeybee industry. These Orders will sit under the *Export Control Act 1982* and are necessary for market access to the EU, Canada and some other destinations. These Orders will only apply for honey and bee products intended for export and will have no impact on honey for the Australian market. The object of both AQIS and the industry has been to meet the requirements of overseas markets with as little cost to the industry as possible.

The development of these Orders is progressing and AQIS will be releasing an exposure draft package, which will explain the need for the Orders, the approach we have taken and a draft of the new Orders. Everyone can provide comment on this exposure draft.

On a final note, AQIS is changing. AQIS will become part of a Biosecurity statutory authority and will no longer be a Division of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The new authority will join AQIS with Biosecurity Australia and parts of Product Integrity, Plant and Animal Health Division, plus other areas with related responsibilities. The new body will have as one of its aims the provision of a seamless service for our export clients, covering animal health, food safety and market access.

I will remain as your contact for all policy issues relating to the export of honey, therefore please contact me, if you require further explanation of the information above. Contact your regional AQIS officer for general assistance in getting your product overseas.

**Fay Stenhouse, Residue Section  
Animal Products Market Access Branch  
Email: [fay.stenhouse@aqis.gov.au](mailto:fay.stenhouse@aqis.gov.au)  
Ph. (02) 6272 5965**

# NEW ZEALAND RECONSIDERS AUSTRALIAN HONEY IMPORTS

[www.tvnz.co.nz](http://www.tvnz.co.nz) - 7 July 2009

The New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is stepping through the process of potentially clawing back its approval of honey imports from Australia.

It is now giving "careful consideration" to an independent panel's report on the requirements governing future imports of bee products from Australia.

MAF developed and implemented an import health standard in 2006 – leading to the import of 2,000kg of Australian honey in December 2006 – but it was successfully challenged by the bee industry.

The National Beekeepers' Association – which took the case against MAF director-general Murray Sherwin – pointed to MAF's acceptance that honey imports meant *Paenibacillus alvei* (P.alvei) bacteria would eventually be introduced to New Zealand.

An Erma ruling on 12 February 2007, concluded the bacteria would be a new organism in New Zealand.

The beekeepers' view was that Australian honey should not be allowed in unless the risks of P.alvei had been considered by Erma – a view upheld by the Court of Appeal.

But then Biosecurity Minister Jim Anderton said the decision made the nation's border protection system unworkable.

"If the law is not amended, we will have an unworkable situation at New Zealand's border," he told parliament last year.

MAF claimed it was not possible to test for all new micro-organisms on imported goods – over 100,000 mail items and 1,500 shipping containers arrive at the border daily – and unnecessary testing could leave New Zealand open to complaints of using a non-tariff trade barrier.

Law changes were made to require "passenger organisms" to be assessed under the Biosecurity Act, rather than the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, even when they were new to New Zealand.

Re-Activating imports under the re-instated health standard has been suspended until MAF considered an independent panel's views on whether any amendment to the rules was required.

Sherwin said the report pointed to some areas in which the scientific evidence had evolved since the original risk analysis for the standard was undertaken.

"It also raises some trade policy matters which are not strictly related to the underlying questions of the science behind the proposed standard," he said. "These issues require careful consideration."

Sherwin will take advice on international trade obligations before deciding in about a month's time whether changes to the standard are required.

# DOUG'S COLUMN

Doug Somerville

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



## ASIAN HONEY BEES – THE REAL BADDIES!

References to Asian honey bees usually refer to *Apis cerana*. Asian bees in the genus *Apis* actually include quite a few identifiable species.

Giant honey bees include a number of species although the principle one is *Apis dorsata*. This bee is 'big', I mean big. It is approximately 25mm long (an inch in the old language). Besides its size the other dominant characteristic is the large single comb it builds which can measure a metre and half long, and a metre deep. The bees cluster over this comb which is often quite visible under a cave overhang, under the branch of a very large tree or even under the eave of a multi-story building.

Another bee is often referred to as the 'dwarf' honey bee of which *Apis florea* is the principle species. The bee, as its name suggests, is small and forms fist sized colonies in amongst bushes and shrubs.

The Asian bee, namely *Apis cerana*, has a number of subspecies much the same as the European honey bee, *Apis mellifera*. This bee is about two-thirds the size of European honey bees.

So why is this information of interest, or of what use is it to Australian beekeepers?

Two factors are important, one includes the 'known' mites that some of these bees carry and the other is the direct competition and threat these bees pose on our managed bees.

Varroa mites need no introduction, they have evolved with *Apis cerana* for many hundreds of years. They usually reproduce on the Asian honey bee drones and don't bother the worker brood. Generally speaking, varroa and Asian bees have found a balance. Denis Anderson's work in CSIRO discovered that not all varroa are the same. In fact some strains of varroa are lethal to our honey bees, *Apis mellifera* where as other strains don't seem to be able to reproduce on *Apis mellifera*.

Denis named the most destructive of these mites *Varroa destructor*. Not all of the different types of these mites are that harmful to our honey bee, it's the 'Korean' haplo type which is the big, big baddie.

This mite is now responsible for millions and millions of dollars worth of damage to the world honey bee industry. Up until recently it was believed that the varroa mites on the Asian bees in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea were not a problem to our honey bees as they were the harmless *Varroa jacobsoni* mite.

Very recently, last year in fact, Denis Anderson found varroa reproducing on European honey bees in the PNG highlands. His initial reaction was that these must be *Varroa destructor*. Further investigation actually demonstrated that the mites were in fact *Varroa jacobsoni*, which would appear to have now adapted to live on our honey bees. We now have two mites that pose a major threat to Australian honey bees.

Back to the other bees, the giant honey bee is the natural host of *Tropilaelaps clareae*. This mite is four times more lethal than varroa mites on our bees. The other problem with this mite is that there is very little published on the management of honey bees hosting this mite.

So what's the probability of any of these mites arriving in Australia?

Well, the good news first, tropilaelaps mites are specific to giant honey bees, when they transfer onto honey bees they die out when no brood is present. There is also a low likelihood of giant honey bees entering Australia (not impossible), thus this pest mite presents a reduced risk when compared to varroa mites.

Now for the bad news. For years Australian bee scientists and those who are responsible for monitoring biosecurity risks have expected an incursion of varroa mites. Up until 2000 NZ did not have mites. They spread to the South Island in 2006. The varroa species in PNG is now reproducing on *Apis mellifera*. Thus wherever you look we are now literally surrounded by 'bad' mites.

In the past an Asian bee incursion of which we have had two, one in Darwin successfully eliminated and the other current incursion in Cairns, was not considered a problem in relation to carrying nasty mites as the bees were hosts of *Varroa jacobsoni*. Now the game is different any bee incursion from just about any *Apis* species into Australia now poses a massive risk of also bringing into Australia a mite that will have a massive impact on our beekeeping industry and also on our plant industries due to the major disruption to pollination services.

Back to the title of this article Asian honey bees, which most often refers to *Apis cerana*. Yes, they are currently in Cairns and the Queensland Government is in the process of attempting to eradicate them. This current lot of bees have been tested for mites and they have been found to be free of any mites.

The question has been asked, so why worry about this new introduced bee? The short answer is this bee could be just as bad for the Australian beekeeping industry as any of the mites, or even worse.

Asian honey bees are very stripy and are about two-thirds the size of our honey bees. Many of their behaviours are very similar to our honey bees. They sting, they swarm etc.

An Australian funded project in the Solomon Islands has tracked the devastation of the Asian bee on honey bees. It is not native to these islands and neither is the honey bee. Honey bees are an established industry in the Solomons. Since the invasion of Asian bees, many hundreds of honey bee colonies have been wiped out. The authorities put this not down to mites, but to competition for nectar and pollen plus the Asian bee robbing stores from honey bee colonies.

Honey bee colonies may swarm once a year whereas Asian bees may swarm 5 or 6 times through the year. Thus they have the capacity to build into large numbers of colonies. The sheer number of Asian bee competitors are out competing the honey bee. The Asian bee numbers have got to a point where they can be readily observed entering honey bee colonies and stealing the food stores in managed hives. Honey bees have just not been able to cope and have been disappearing in large numbers.

So why not keep Asian bees instead? The productivity from honey bees (European) is ten times greater than Asian bees. A yield of 100kg/hive is a reasonable annual yield from commercial honey bees in Australia, whereas a yield of 5 to 10kg/hive from Asian bees is considered an average. Their prolific tendency to swarm makes them very difficult to manage. Asian bees are not an economic proposition.

Apparently Asian bees can be found throughout the PNG highlands. The temperatures in some areas drop to as low as 4°C. Thus, given the PNG experience, we could expect Asian bees to inhabit most areas of Australia.

If mites enter Australia, they will become a pest of our managed honey bees and a major competitor with native animals for nectar and pollen. Fortunately there is a volume of information available on how to kill the mites and manage a sustainable commercial beekeeping operation. The scary thing is if Asian bees establish in Australia and spread across the country. I think given the Solomon Island experience they could be a major nightmare for the Australian beekeeping industry, possibly more so than the mites they carry and also become a major environmental pest.

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# WORLD HONEY MARKET REPORT

*Ron Phipps, CPNA International Ltd- New York - 27 July 2009*

## **Overall Comments**

As this report is being written, the North American honey market awaits clarification of production of the: 1) important white clover and sunflower crops in South and North Dakota and 2) Canada's honey crop.

Given the sparsity of white honey from the traditional major honey exporting countries, with China excluded due to prohibitive antidumping duties imposed by the US Department of Commerce on Chinese honey, the success or failure of the honey crops in the northern honey producing areas of North America will have a major impact upon the price tendencies and availability of honey, especially white honey.

The American honey market is witnessing the converging influence of two major concerns: 1) growing long-term concerns regarding the viability of the global honey bee population, and 2) the emergence of a two-tiered honey market in America. Both of these concerns have generated an unusual degree of interest among beekeepers and packers, the media, scientists, the US Congress and the governmental agencies responsible to enforce the rule of law in America's international trade relations.

## **Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)**

In recent months, there has been excellent media coverage of the continuing problems with the health of the world's pollinators. One of the best descriptions of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) was broadcast on National Public Television on July 26, 2009 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episo...l-episode/251/> - this program described the nature of the problems, current research regarding causes and cures and the potential impact upon agriculture. There are approximately 100 crops that require pollination through insects. These crops include the major fruits, nuts and vegetables required for a healthy, anti-oxidant rich and balanced human diet. As both the scale of agriculture and the suburbanization of society have increased, natural pollination has declined greatly. Now approximately 1/3 of American agricultural production depends upon the honey bee to pollinate crops.

There appears to be a confluence of variables which are exacerbating the bees' vulnerability to disease, including stress from the highly migratory practices of modern beekeeping, the mono-diet of bees under large scale agriculture, pesticides and climatic stresses. Most research scientists are coming to view the phenomena of bees disappearing from their hives to be a cumulative consequence of this confluence of factors. Concern for the world's honey bees has deepened as increased awareness of the vital importance of bees, not just to the honey industry, but to agriculture more generally, has grown.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a multi-disciplinary team to investigate the cause and cures of colony collapse disorder. This illustrates the importance of the issue beyond the beekeeping community, since 3/4 of the plants on the earth require pollination.

## **The Two-Tiered Market**

Concurrent with stresses on bee colonies, we witness the emergence and entrenchment in the USA. of a two-tiered honey market. This two-tiered price structure has sprung up in inverse relationship to growing quality and duty restrictions upon imports of Chinese honey. The price gaps inherent in the two-tiered market have become untenable for many honey packers.

There has rarely, if ever, been such growing unity among all levels of the American honey industry and from all regions of the country in favour of ending the circumvention of Chinese honey through various forms of non-dutiable "blends" and through illegal transshipments of Chinese honey through third countries. American beekeepers, packers, some importers, various exporters and governments are coalescing in unprecedented unity to stop the circumvention of anti-dumping duties and the illicit trade in honey that have created the two-tiered market that threatens the American honey industry. The US Federal Government agencies responsible to enacting and enforcing US antidumping law have been increasingly active and arrests for criminal trade in illicit honey imports have occurred.

Some governments have recently taken action. The State of Florida has accepted, as of July, 2009, a Standard of Identity for honey which may contribute to preventing adulteration of honey and the creation "blends" designed to circumvent antidumping duties. The Vietnamese Government instituted a Monitoring Program in May, 2009, one of whose aims is to preserve the integrity and reputation of Vietnam by prohibiting transshipment of Chinese honey. Even elements of the Chinese honey industry and government realize that this illicit circumvention is harmful to China's reputation.

The American Honey Producers Association, The National Honey Packers and Dealers Association, The Committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health and many major packers have taken strong measures. Honey companies throughout the USA are contacting Congress and the media to urge more comprehensive and decisive action to prevent circumvention. Some lawyers have suggested Congressional Hearings to be held on these blatant and repeated acts to violate international trade law and circumvent the force of US antidumping rulings. Also, some have suggested that the mass media and the appropriate trade journals need to be informed so that the collusion and criminality that underlie the gross price disparities that render fair competition impossible and threaten the survival of honest companies can be understood.

The aberrational patterns of honey imports, which appear month by month, are relatively transparent. Countries that produce minimal amounts of honey, according to official communications from their government and other sources, are exporting 10 times their production. Countries that shipped virtually no honey to the world a decade ago are currently shipping to the US at a rate equivalent to 125

million pounds per year. Countries with tropical climates that produce 80%-90% dark honey are shipping huge quantities of white honey. There are reports that Chinese honey has been illegally blended in third countries prior to export to the USA.

The American honey industry is not the only industry threatened by Chinese honey. The Indian press reported in 2003 that Chinese honey was being smuggled through Nepal, that Nepal was a net importer of honey, not an exporter, and that no sanitary checks were being conducted on the honey imported into India. In 2005, Indian farmers feared "that cheaper Chinese honey imports have captured the wholesale market, leading to a glut" (Nov. 13, 2005, Thiruvananthapuram). Indeed, India, despite a rather intense trade relationship with China, has more antidumping suits against Chinese products than does the USA.

## **CROPS**

### **United States**

The size and quality of North American crops remains hard to assess, as this report is being written in late July. Weather problems and volatility nationally have been inconsistent and pronounced. California and Texas have suffered extreme and persistent drought, reducing normally substantial crops of sage, orange and buckwheat honey in California and tallow honey in Texas. Florida and the southwest, like the northeast, have suffered excessive rain, which harms the orange, tupelo and gallberry honey crops.

The Dakotas had ample moisture and healthy bees going into the early summer. But cool weather that saw temperatures fall to 49°F in June delayed extraction and diminished prospects for a bumper clover crop. Beekeepers report many problems with bees as colonies are in some cases failing to build and in other cases collapsing. Everything is late and extraction in the Midwest, that would have normally begun in the first half of July, has not begun as August approaches. It will take ideal weather, an accelerated production period and re-invigorated bees to produce the bumper white clover crop that was anticipated when the Dakotas entered the honey production season with ample moisture.

### **Canada**

Canada reports the same delay in the crop and that temperatures are very cold all across Canada as July ends. The prime honey production period in Canadian Prairie Provinces has been hurt by a late spring and very cold mid-summer. Some agricultural experts predict a crop of only 30-40 million pounds unless weather improves. Ontario has been too wet and cold. The Jet Stream has played havoc producing autumn weather in summer.

### **Argentina**

Argentina is between crops and, contrary to some rumours, the earlier assessment that Argentina's honey crop was small and dark is correct. If there is some honey in beekeepers hands, that honey is not being released since Argentine beekeepers anticipate a firming market as consumption in the Northern Hemisphere increases in September through December. Argentine exporters, like Brazilian exporters, are concerned that the huge bailout of the American financial system and the gigantic

cumulative national debt burdening the US economy will weaken the US Dollar and cause commodity prices in general, and honey prices in particular, to rise.

### **Brazil**

The severe floods of northeast Brazil have subsided and rainfall is normal. Honey is flowing again, and production presently is of dark and aromatic honey. Prices have shifted modestly as production has shifted from white grades to light amber and amber grades.

### **Vietnam**

The total Vietnamese honey crop was about 20,000MT about 65% of which has been exported. Some higher quality and higher priced mono-flora honey may still come into the market in September if rains subside.

Vietnam has worked hard to improve quality and increase the level of beekeepers' professional expertise. In May, several Vietnamese scientists from agricultural universities visited the bee lab at the University of California at Davis. The Vietnamese Government issued a formal circular to institute a Monitoring Program whose aims are to: 1) improve and standardize quality and 2) prevent circumvention of Chinese honey through Vietnam. Barbara Sheehan and James Phipps participated in meetings with the Vietnamese Beekeeping Association, the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and the US Embassy in Hanoi to encourage the establishment of this Monitoring Program. Officials of both governments and the honey industries of both countries welcome this important step to ensure fair and legal trade.

### **Conclusion**

Circumvention in the American honey market has become the most decisive factor in determining prices of honey, who dominates and who survives or fails among producers, packers, importers and exporters. Correspondingly and consequently, the opposition to the collusion underlying circumvention has become unprecedentedly broad and deep. This problem has to be solved if the positive potentials for the honey industry are to be realized.

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# RECIPES & HONEY HINTS

## Asian-Style Noodles with Spicy Honey Grilled Chicken

2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves  
2 cups broccoli florets  
1 small red bell pepper, cut into thin slices  
1 medium carrot, thinly sliced  
1 package Asian style noodles  
2 green onions  
1/4 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder  
2 Tablespoons sesame seeds  
1/3 cup rice vinegar  
**1/4 cup honey**  
2 Tablespoons peanut butter  
2 Tablespoons soy sauce  
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 Tablespoon sesame oil  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1/2 Tablespoon crushed red pepper flakes  
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

In a large bowl, combine rice vinegar, honey, peanut butter, soy sauce, vegetable oil, sesame oil, garlic, red pepper flakes and ground ginger. Remove 3 Tablespoons sauce to plastic bag, reserve remaining sauce in bowl. Add chicken to marinade in plastic bag, turning to coat. Close bag securely and refrigerate for 30 minutes, turning once.

Meanwhile, cook broccoli, peppers and carrots in boiling water, 2 to 3 minutes, or until crisp tender, drain and set aside. Cook noodles as package directs, drain. Add noodles, cooked vegetables and green onion to sauce in bowl, toss to coat. Set aside.

Remove chicken from marinade, discard marinade. Sprinkle chicken evenly with Chinese five-spice powder. Grill for 6 to 10 minutes or until done, turning once. Slice chicken across grain. Arrange chicken on top of noodle mixture. Sprinkle evenly with seeds. *Serves 6*

## Honey Banana Cake

1 cup walnuts, chopped  
2 teaspoons mixed spice  
3 ripe bananas, mashed  
1/2 cup cold-pressed nut or seed oil  
**3/4 cup honey**  
1 cup water  
1 & 1/2 cups sultanas  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda  
2 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
2 & 1/2 cups self-raising wholemeal flour

Boil together water, oil, sultanas and bicarbonate of soda. Let cool, then add all other ingredients.

Pour into a large greased pan (eg lamington tray) and bake in a preheated 190°C oven for 30 minutes or until done.

## Sesame Snaps

1 & 1/2 cups medium oatmeal  
1/4 cup sesame seeds, roasted  
**6 tablespoons honey**  
6 tablespoons oil  
2 tablespoons raw sugar

Place all ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Press into a grease 20 x 30cm Swiss roll tin and smooth the top with a palette knife.

Bake in a preheated moderate oven 180°C for 20 to 25 minutes.

Cool in the tin for 2 minutes, then cut into 24 squares. Cool completely before removing from the tin. *Makes 24*

## Almond Honey Crunch

1 cup slivered almonds  
**1/4 cup honey**  
1 Tablespoon butter  
1 Tablespoon grated orange peel  
salt  
2 & 1/2 cups corn flakes

Combine almonds, honey, butter, orange peel and salt in heavy frying pan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until almonds are golden. Remove from heat. Add corn flakes and mix carefully. Spread on buttered baking sheet. When cool, break into small pieces.

## Honey Cleansing Scrub

**1 tablespoon honey**  
2 tablespoons finely ground almonds  
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

Mix all ingredients. Rub gently onto face. Rinse off with warm water

## Moisture Mask

**2 tablespoons honey**  
2 teaspoons milk

Mix honey with milk. Smooth over face and throat. Leave on for 10 minutes. Rinse off with water.

## Smoothing Skin Lotion

**1 teaspoon honey**  
1 teaspoon vegetable oil  
1/4 teaspoon lemon juice

Mix together honey, vegetable oil and lemon juice. Rub into hands, elbows, heels and anywhere that feels dry. Leave on 10 minutes. Rinse off with water.



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# “BEELINER”

## BEEKEEPING UTILISING A FULLY INSULATED AIR CONDITIONED CURTAIN SIDE TRUCK BODY

By Lindsay Callaway



### Introduction

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to transport bees utilizing a fully insulated air conditioned curtain side truck body? Since the winter of 2004 we have been doing just that. With this article I'd like to share with you the many benefits (including; shifting hives securely during both night and day, transporting honey supers in a bee tight and climate controlled environment). I'd also like to highlight the system's weakness (including the initial expense, problems with crawling bees and reduced payload).

### The truck body

Underneath the “BEELINER’S” floor is urethane foam, sprayed up to 100mm thick. The front wall is reinforced to carry the air-conditioner unit; this is insulated to 100mm thick. The rear doors are 100mm insulated panels and the roof is also fully insulated with urethane. The curtains have an “inner” and “outer” layer. In between these two layers is what is best described as a “bubble wrap” product designed to give extra insulation. The Loading or Clearance height is made to order @ 2100mm and the body's internal length is 7700mm.

### “Beeliner” - the strengths

- **Ability to shift open entrance hives securely and safely** - The beeliner eliminates bees flying or falling off the truck once the hived pallets are loaded. This greatly assists with public safety.
- **Shift day or night** – The BEELINER turns day into night ( it is virtually pitch black in the truck body and a hot day into a cooler day. Therefore, we have increased our options, providing greater flexibility when shifting our beehives.
- **Transporting honey combs full** - Robber bees are no longer a problem as the curtain or rear doors can be opened and closed quickly. Combs can be heated prior to extraction (max 27dec C) by simply dialing up the required temp with the in cab microprocessor. The BEELINER also includes an installed three phase electric heating element inside the air conditioner.

However, until now there has only been one trial of the three phase system to warm combs (which worked well), due to the need to use the truck for other purposes.

- **Transporting honey combs empty** - The beeliner's facilities will cool combs to help control wax moth or small hive beetle.

### Weaknesses of “Beeliner”

- **Upfront capital expense** - adds thousands onto your normal truck body cost, with no immediate return on your investment.
- **Crawling bees** - are a problem when shifting open entrance. Bees naturally crawl in the darkness of the body and can get squashed if the load is shifting. However, this problem can be minimized if extra care is taken when loading to ensure that hives and gates are secured firmly.
- **Reduces payload** - can conservatively reduce payload by one tonne most of which is at the front of the body.
- **Restricts off road access?** - Beeliner has been able to get into most sites without any hassles. The width is more restricting than the height. However, the curtains can be removed or “tied back” to protect them from excessive branches brushing against them (we have never removed the curtains but we have “tied” them back and tucked them behind the back gates to help with extra ventilation during very hot weather).
- **Struggles during hot summer months** because the hives are at their peak and hence producing maximum heat, coupled with the high ambient temperature, the air conditioner struggles with the heat/humidity generated by the beehives. The air conditioner separates the hot and cold air, expelling the hotter air and humidity. The hives use up the cool air as they generate heat, the new vents (front and back) help with this (see “after market” modifications). In addition, because the bees fly very late during hot weather loading is difficult as the roof confuses the bees as they try to fly to the hives on the truck.

### Examples of shifting bees

1. **Shifting bees from Bendigo to the Almonds** - 300km during late winter is a complete joy! We normally load the hives during the afternoon and then retire home for sleep. We then drive up in the cool of the morning, arriving at Boundary Bend around 11.00am.
2. **Shifting bees from Paterson's Curse to Mallee** - 440km one way during hot weather in late spring; I'd load the hives just on dark 8.30pm and drive until about 10.30pm. Every 30 minutes I'd give them a mist spray of water. When I stop I open up the curtains to let the cooler night air pass through the bees while I slept until about 6.00am. I would then drive the rest of the way, arriving at around 9.30am, still giving them the “mist spray”. The hives with ventilated lids didn't “hang out” as much during transit and they settled better after unloading. This means less stress for the bees in transit!

3. **Shifting bees from Bendigo to Batemans Bay -** 870km one way has been its best test yet. Without the Beeliner I wouldn't have considered moving my bees this far. It certainly makes long distance shifting a more realistic option for the beekeeper.

#### **After market modifications**

- We Installed an electric water pump onto the water tank to "introduce" moisture directly back into the atmosphere within the truck body during hot weather. There is a toggle switch in the cab and a series of mist sprays down the centre of the roof. This moisture acts as an evaporative cooler, in conjunction with.
- Introducing fresh air into and stale air out of the body while in transit. This was achieved by installing two 6" vents front and rear of the body. This assists the evaporative cooling process as the air flow passes over the wet hives. We have been told that 1 day old chicks are transported using refrigeration and it is crucial to have a constant flow of fresh air going over the chicks, otherwise they would smother and potentially die from the high humidity. For one day old chicks the ambient temperature is kept at 28°C. Thus for our beehives the constant flow of "fresh" air coming in, helps reduce the "build up" of hot stale air. I also believe that the "fresh" air assists the air conditioner by giving it "new" air to cool with. As a rule the air conditioner pulls the temperature 5°C less than ambient when transporting hives (eg when shifting in hot weather at dusk it normally is between 15 and 22°C in the beeliner)



*Curtain open ready to unload*

#### **Future "to do list"**

- Look at increasing the ventilation in our beehives.
- Re-design our hive pallets, so that they don't shift during transit.

#### **Conclusion**

Overall I am very happy with how our first five years have gone with the new "Beeliner". The option to shift during night or day time and not worry about bees "flying" of the truck is a huge relief. Often I load up a load of bees and sleep at home on the way to the next location (**Note:** I always open up the curtains when I stop). I would say that the system has been worth it alone when I just consider the benefits of carting combs (full or empty) in a dust and robber free environment!

I believe other Beekeepers will look at this concept closely in the future both though choice and necessity. Some beekeepers will look at using semis to shift long distance to almonds, the good thing about the larger cooling units on semis is that they are able to introduce "fresh" air though the unit. This "beeliner" concept could be adapted from a 1 ton Ute right up to a B-double.

I hope that my "beeliner" story has been of interest and serves to assist other beekeepers.

For further information contact:  
**[lindsay@warralhoney.com.au](mailto:lindsay@warralhoney.com.au)**



*Shows vents & air conditioner at front also rear vents*



*Unloading bees, shows water pipe in roof for mist spray*



*My 5 year old son Teague ready for work*



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# Bruce White Receives the Goodacre Award

The Goodacre Award is the Australian beekeeping industry's peak recognition for excellence and dedication. To receive this award you must be nominated by six persons associated with the beekeeping industry. The nomination is then assessed by the Goodacre Award Committee, who makes a decision on whether the nomination is worthy. In Bruce White's case the decision was not in question.

Bruce has spent his life providing services to the beekeeping industry as an employee of the NSW Department of Agriculture, a total of 43 years. In his retirement Bruce continues to be very generous with his time and knowledge, continuing with his dedication to passing on his extensive experience and enthusiasm for honey bees. In his retirement he is a committee member of the Honey Bee Research Council, he has taken up a very active role in the Australian Queen Bee Breeding program and continues to attend various conferences, meetings and field days as an active participant.

This all started at primary school when Bruce acquired two bee hives. Bruce received a Junior Farmer's award for best project which was about keeping bees. The judge was Alan Clemson! From here Bruce obtained a Junior Farmer's scholarship to attend Hawkesbury Agricultural College. Under the guidance of Neville Cutts ("Cuttsie"), Bruce's enthusiasm for honey bees grew. As a foot note, Cuttsie inspired many people who are now major players in the beekeeping industry. During the three years Bruce attended Hawkesbury he assisted with three beekeeping summer schools.

In 1962 Bruce received the Commonwealth Parliament Prize for the best thesis on agriculture. The title of this thesis was "Honey and Pollen Flora".



*Lynn looks on proudly as Bruce accepts the Goodacre Award presented at the NSWAA Conference*

Twelve months after Bruce graduated from Hawkesbury Ag College, a job was advertised for an apiary officer with the Department of Agriculture. Given Bruce's achievements and obvious enthusiasm the job was made for him. Thus he started his long career as an apiary extension officer in February 1964. This would span 40 years serving the NSW and Australian beekeeping industry. After a period of training Bruce was stationed at the Orange district office. In 1975 Bruce applied and gained the position of

assistant principal to Alan Clemson ("Clemo") in Head Office near Central Station. In 1983 "Clemo" retired and Bruce became the head of the bee section in the NSW Department of Agriculture.

Bruce served in this position at the Parramatta office, then the Seven Hills poultry research station. After this was closed Bruce moved to the Windsor office then to the Richmond office back on the old Hawkesbury Ag College Campus, which is now the University of Western Sydney.

In the late 1970s the quarantine facility was built at Eastern Creek. This facility, and the cessation of the direct importation of stock to beekeepers, has no doubt assisted the Australian beekeeping industry maintain its freedom from mites including Varroa and Tracheal mites for this many years. During his time as the principal apiary officer, Bruce managed this facility, overseeing the successful maintenance of the imported queen stock and providing advice to both AQIS and the importers.

Bruce has been involved in a number of notable projects that have benefited the beekeeping. These include the production of the endemic bee disease video, the exotic bee disease video; it's a buzz video and the package bee video. He has travelled as an official ambassador for the Department and the beekeeping industry to New Zealand, Russia, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, United Arab Emirates, Germany, England, Korea, Thailand and Norfolk Island.

While the principal apiary officer within the Department, Bruce was required to attend and assist at all NSW Apirists' Association executive meetings, he was the executive officer for Beekeeping Industry Consultative Committee, secretary/treasurer of the Goodacre Award, and judge at the RAS show. He continues in this role till this day. He has been a strong supporter of all beekeeping associations in NSW and interstate, regularly attending meetings on request from those organisations.

Bruce has been asked to talk at interstate conferences, and is one of the main presenters at nearly all beekeeping field days held in NSW, which again he continues to do into his retirement. His role in major international conferences started at Apimondia in Adelaide in 1977 when he was the secretary of the beekeeping economy segment. He was the chairman of a session at Apimondia in Slovenia. Bruce also played a very big part in the successful Australian Apimondia in 2007.

Bruce is the beekeeping teacher for the Open Training and Education Network of TAFF and also co-wrote educational packages for the Australian beekeeping industry.

Bruce regularly entertains international beekeeping visitors to our country and has proven on a regular basis to be a great ambassador for the Australian beekeeping industry.

It is a privilege and honour to present this award to Bruce tonight – Congratulations.

*Doug Somerville*  
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
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# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am writing this letter to express my opinion about, I believe, one of the largest issues facing our industry today - the issue of AFB control and the very clouded issue of OTC use.

Firstly, I was very disappointed to read some of the opinions of our former President Greg Roberts in his "THAT'S MY OPINION" article (March-April 2009 Honeybee News). Greg Roberts is someone I have a lot of respect for however being a current executive member of the NSWAA I find it discouraging that the former president is trying to hose down the AFB issue at the same time the executive is trying to work on a way forward with AFB. For Greg to suggest AFB is not out of control I believe he is out of touch on this issue. I agree with Greg regarding the claim that OTC should not be banned (re Keith Gibbs letter) however the abuse of OTC I believe is breeding complacency and a careless attitude towards the AFB issue.

I believe that there is nothing wrong with legitimate feeding of OTC for EFB as long as it is just that, legitimate.

Are people who feed OTC 2-3-4 times a year, or perhaps more, legitimately using OTC? In most cases I would suggest not! When they are feeding do they complete a brood inspection on every hive to ensure EFB is actually present in the hives they are feeding? If they are not then this is when they are letting themselves and the entire industry down. If AFB is present and they are unknowingly feeding OTC to AFB then that AFB infestation will be masked and continue to spread to other hives and loads in that operation. These beekeepers are potentially sitting on a time bomb!! Then there are unfortunately those beekeepers who choose to feed OTC knowingly to AFB infected loads, these people are foolish and are doing so illegally.

Greg Roberts says he has spoken with beekeepers that have built into their AFB management programs irradiation of all dead out hives and they say AFB is no longer a problem. I agree it is a huge help in stopping the spread of AFB in any operation. However, it does not stop bees from contracting AFB again from neglected infected hives.

South Australia has recently implemented a program in which industry funds a dedicated inspector for AFB via a hive levy at the same time having increased involvement.

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At the last AHBIC AGM it was reported that 4000 hives had been inspected and 1500 of those were destroyed with AFB. SA is to be congratulated on their efforts. With NSW being the largest state by far, in terms of beekeeping numbers, it really makes us look backward on this issue. To suggest AFB is able to be eradicated is foolish however, it is controllable given hard work, responsible thinking and can certainly be reduced!

NSW desperately needs to get a hold of all the issues surrounding AFB and implement a control program similar to the VIC, SA or NZ (as spoken about at the last NSW Conference by Paul Bolger)

Sadly the vast majority of packers don't seem interested in the AFB issue, yet they are constantly telling us we need to maintain our so called "clean and green" image. Surely abuse of OTC is putting this at risk? As Greg Roberts suggests if packers were to show some backbone and set their own MRLs and therefore pricing structure regarding OTC it would go a long way in helping us on this issue.

I realize everyone is sick of discussing this issue and that previous attempts have failed but does that mean we should all give up on this important issue!!

I hope more people can write in and express their opinion so we can work together in solving this massive problem.

**Craig Klingner**

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Seamus couldn't resist taking up the challenge rather than accepting the way Dad did it.

A feasibility study confirmed that there was enormous potential and a need for a better beehive for beekeepers and pollination contractors. Seamus went to work in his shed at home in South Gippsland, combining his knowledge of beekeeping and his engineering skills.

The industry uses predominantly wooden boxes which need assembly and regular painting to prevent weathering and rotting; this can cause paint contamination. They're also heavy without providing good insulation and the bees can chill in winter and suffer heat stress in summer. High humidity causes rotting and pests chewing the wood are also a problem.

As people are becoming more conscious about food standards, Seamus knew there had to be a better way.

He tried a number of materials. One option was polystyrene, which is already used overseas, but the hives had to be painted, lined or wrapped to stop the bees from chewing the material—not the environmentally sound and low-maintenance product he wanted.

A composite box that performed well was labour-intensive and slow to produce, which would have priced it out of the market. Its flat-pack concept and variable depth size may still be of great benefit.

### **Toughing it out**

He was determined to give the industry a hive that was lightweight yet tough and hard with good thermal properties that would limit extremes of temperature for the bees and brood inside. After six years of research and development he designed a polypropylene box with a tough plastic skin and with a foam core for effective insulation.

Because of the high cost of producing the injection mould die (it weighs around 4.5 tonnes), this limited him to one initially. He had to choose between manufacturing an 8-frame or 10-frame hive.

He says: 'We opted for the standard 10-frame because most people in the industry prefer them, and so do the bees because of the bigger brood area. It's also easier to find the queen in a 10-frame hive.'

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The hives are low-maintenance without paints or chemicals; they are moulded in one piece from 100 per cent food-grade and UV-rated material with no joins or corners to harbour bacteria. They are designed with moulded handles, or the commercial customer can choose to screw on their own handles.



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Aussie Hives™ by Hasson's Hives Australia P/L have a patent pending and are in production with ongoing developments and improvements. As yet there is no food-grade standard for beehives in the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*, and the Hassons believe they have a quality product that will set that standard. They plan to submit Aussie Hives™ to Food Standards Australia New Zealand for food-grade certification.

Already the accolades for Aussie Hives™ are coming in. Among them, beekeepers say '...they meet all my requirements...'; 'with good thermal properties, robust design...and low maintenance...[they] will be very well positioned in the market nationally'; 'We welcome this and see the potential to improve our quality, occupational health and safety, risk management and applied systems'.

Aussie Hives™ will be ready for delivery within Australia in time for spring 2009. One customer has already taken delivery of 700 new Aussie Hives™ with another order for 1000 for next season, and Seamus Hasson is confident that it's 'next stop the rest of the world'.

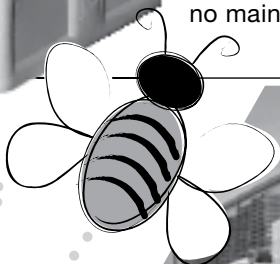


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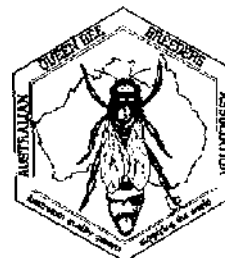
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## AHBIC NEWS - June/July Excerpts

### RECONVENED 2009 AGM

The reconvened 2009 AHBIC Annual General Meeting will be held at the Quality Hotel Melbourne Airport, 265 Mickleham Road, Tullamarine Victoria on Monday 12 October 2009 commencing at 11.00am.

*(Proposed changes to the Constitution have been sent to all Delegates as well as State & Sector Secretaries)*

If you seek any further information please contact me.

**Stephen Ware**  
Executive Director

### 2010 INDUSTRY DATES

Proposed dates for Conferences next year have been set and are included in this edition. It is proposed that AHBIC's Annual General Meeting will follow the Queensland Conference in June 2010.

NSW Apiarists' Association	20-21 May
Victorian Apiarists' Association	2-3 June
Tasmanian Beekeepers Association	4-5 June
South Australian Apiarists' Association	10-11 June
WA Farmers Federation -Beekeeping	11-12 June
Queensland Beekeepers Association	17-18 June
Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association	19 May
Honey Packers & Marketers	26 May
National Council of Crop Pollination Associations	19 June
Federal Council of Australian Apiarists'	20 June
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council	20-21 June

### RIRDC BEE SURVEILLANCE WORKSHOP

16 June 2009

The Workshop was attended by sixteen and chaired by Simon Barry from CSIRO Mathematical and Information Science Section.

The following State Government apiary staff attended:

Doug Somerville and Nicholas Annand, NSW Hamish Lamb QLD, Joe Riordan Victoria, Michael Stedman South Australia, Chairman of AHBIC Lindsay Bourke, Dr Denis Anderson CSIRO, other CSIRO scientists, Iain East from DAFF, Dr David Dall from RIRDC and consultants involved in this RIRDC funded project.

The workshop was held to consider future and current surveillance needs for Honey Bee Biosecurity, every participant contributed to the discussions.

The annual benefit of mite exclusion to Australia's plant industries is between 43.5 million and 102.2 million dollar.

#### The workshop discussed existing programs as follows:

As part of AQIS International vessel clearance, masters en route to Australia are required to report any detection of bees to AQIS who respond to any report and instruct that bees are to be destroyed before arriving at an Australian port.

Border inspections by AQIS also include cargo inspections and wharf surveillance working closely with port workers to ensure bee sightings are reported.

Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy focuses on pests and diseases with potential to enter Australia including Apis species and the mites they may carry that are a threat to Australian beekeeping.

The National Sentinel Hive Program was established in 2000 and currently sites monitor 26 ports in Australia.

Bait hives have been established round high risk ports in Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

The program also monitors pheromone baited log traps for Asian honeybees in Darwin, Gove, Cairns and Brisbane and there are plans to install them in some Tasmanian ports.

In 2007 Queensland surveyed 43 apiaries for external parasites using miticides strips and sticky paper, none were found.

Victoria and NSW have several beekeepers undertaking sugar shaking.

Interstate movement also require health certificate.

Detector Dogs that can detect honeybees are used at airports and the mail exchange. The research staff involved in this project will be addressing all the concerns and options to determine future bee Biosecurity arrangements.

The workshop looked at a pathway analysis for the introduction of exotic bees and associated parasite they carry, only one component of this large project to help government and industry make decisions about present and future protection arrangements such as industry wide monitoring, remote detection, bee free zones and the role of the Honeybee Quarantine Station.

From July, Animal Health Australia will take over the management of the National Sentinel Hive program from DAFF.

**Bruce White**

## AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Mr Keith McIlvride was this year's recipient of the AHBIC Award of Excellence. This award is presented for services to the industry.

Keith has served the industry in many ways: HBRDC Chair, the Organising Committee for Apimondia 2007, the Queen Bee Breeders' Group as well as a long time member of the NSW Apiarists' Association. He was also instrumental in setting up the AHBIC website.

Keith has always been passionate about the industry and there can be no debate that industry is better off for Keith's efforts. We sincerely thank him for his support.



*Chairman Lindsay Bourke presenting Keith with his award at the AHBIC Dinner*

## EDUCATION DOCUMENTS ONLINE

AHBIC has produced training material to assist recognised training organisations to provide assistance in apiary training.

**This material is now available on the AHBIC website:**  
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