



AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 3 Number 3

May - June 2010



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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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COVER: A Beekeeping demonstration in progress at the 2010 Sydney Show - *Photo courtesy RAS*

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



SEASON

Conditions have pretty well stopped at time of writing as June is normally a dormant month for bees. Good rain over much of the State has ensured large plantings of Canola. Curse would have germinated in many areas and the far West has had some follow up rain, all of which should give good Spring conditions.

Honey flow prospects for New South Wales vary from Yapunya and Coastal Ironbark in the North and Canola and Curse with limited Tableland species in the South and the North.

Hive strength is varied from poor to good due to Autumn being very dry.

Honey stocks seem reasonable at present with most packers having sufficient for 1-2 months. Beekeeper stocks vary from nil to a few carrying their normal carry over.

Prices are slipping by 10-30cents/kilo however late Winter-Spring may see these prices firm up again as stocks diminish.

CONFERENCE

The 2010 State Conference had a good lineup of speakers and some valuable information was presented. Our guest speaker from the US, Dr Jerry Bromenshenk, was presented with the Clemson Award for his contribution.

I would like to thank the following Conference Sponsors for their generous support of the Association: Beechworth Honey, Bindaree Bee Supplies, Capilano Honey Limited, Ecroyd Beekeeping Supplies, Saxee's Sap, Trevor Monson - Pollination and Wesfarmers.

The Trade Show was also very successful and attracted a large number of visitors during the two days of Conference.

AFB

Conference gave the Executive a strong indication that Industry needs to address AFB.

The Executive will pursue this with Dept Agriculture (I & I) and will endeavor to put in place some measures which will reduce AFB by having Industry more involved and committed to reduce the incidence.

There is a scheduled Executive meeting to be held in Orange on the 29 July and the Executive will put forward its proposal to I & I and work out what is possible to be done within the present policies and what might require changing.

EXECUTIVE

On behalf of the Executive I wish to welcome our new Executive member Malcolm Porter from the Central Tablelands Branch.

I would also like to thank the retiring member Neil Bingley. Neil has been a stalwart of the New South Wales State Executive committee, contributing tirelessly to the *Honeyland* Stand at the Sydney Show and Conference arrangements.

VALE

We are saddened to report that Life Member, Mr Bob Weir passed away on 7 May aged 95. I would like to extend our sincere sympathies to his family and friends. He will be sadly missed by the Australian Beekeeping Industry.

A tribute to Bob will be published in the next edition.

Bill Weiss
State President



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NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Terry Brown	Mendooran
Steve Cunial	Griffith
Kevin Forde	Young
Kevin Heslop	Woodbine
Ken Jackson	Roselands
Therese Kershaw	Bungendore
Jim & Beverly Small	Condobolin

THANK YOU

Thank you to the Hunter Valley Branch once again for their generous donation of \$300 to the Clemson Fund.

SYMPATHY

We would like to extend our sincere sympathy to Doug Somerville on the recent death of his mother.

We were saddened to hear of the death of John Guilfoyle on 9 June and extend our sincere sympathy to his family.

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BARBARA BINGLEY

LIFE MEMBERSHIP



Barbara Bingley was awarded Life Membership of the New South Wales Apiarists' Association because of her long and tireless support of the Association.

Barbara has prepared the gift baskets presented to speakers at Conference for many many years. These baskets, filled with honey products, are truly a credit to her in the way they are prepared. These high quality gifts reflect on the Association as well as herself. Barbara is also usually one of the first faces seen at Conference helping out on the registration desk.

Until recently Barbara has been responsible for packing much of the Sydney Royal Show honey which is sold to assist the Association. Her creamed honey has repeatedly won accolades both in the competition section and also on the shelves of Honeyland.

This recognition is overdue for a person who has done so much for the Association and on behalf of the members we thank you and we wish you all the very best for the years ahead.



Bill Weiss presenting Barbara Bingley with her well deserved award at the 2010 Conference



Bill Weiss presenting Dr Jerry Bromenshenk from USA with the Clemson Award at the 2010 Conference

2010 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2010/10 *Moved: Bert Seagrave, Seconded: Craig Klingner* - That the State Executive pursue a replacement for John Rhodes.

Resolution 2010/11 *Moved: Laurie Kershaw, Seconded: Rob Michie* - That NSWAA request AHBIC look into preventing the importation of honey that is produced under systems which are not equivalent to our current domestic production requirements.

Resolution 2010/12 *Moved: Laurie Kershaw, Seconded: Craig Klingner* - That FCAAA investigate the benefits to some form of association with the National Farmers Federation.

Resolution 2010/13 *Moved: Frank Papworth, Seconded: Bryn Jones* - That NSWAA develop a beekeeper run AFB scheme for control of AFB.

Resolution 2010/14 *Moved: Geoff Manning, Seconded: Craig Klingner* - That the Executive make urgent representation to the appropriate Minister to have the Queen Bee Quarantine facility reopened.

Resolution 2010/15 *Moved: Neil Bingley, Seconded: Craig Klingner* - That NSWAA request FCAAA to pursue the development of a potential external hive beetle trap.

Resolution 2010/16 *Moved: Craig Klingner, Seconded: David Mumford* - That NSWAA and Industry and Investment form a management committee to implement an AFB reduction strategy.

Resolution 2010/17 *Moved: Craig Klingner, Seconded: Bert Seagrave* - That the Conference agrees to an increase in the "compensation fund" (in the future to be The Disease Management Fund) from \$3 per 10 hives bi-annually to \$3 per 10 hives annually.

Resolution 2010/18 *Moved: Bryn Jones, Seconded: Troy McWhirter* - That NSWAA ask APVMA whether they can have an extra condition provided to Dymythawait permits that they have to comply and notify that the crop is not flowering in the location.

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NOSEMA (No-See-Um) DISEASE

For a disease that probably causes more lost production than any other disease in Australia, this problem receives very little attention in discussions between beekeepers, articles in bee magazines and coverage at conferences. One possible reason is the fact that more often than not the symptoms of the disease are very non specific and frequently there are no obvious symptoms. A colony is simply not as productive as it should or could be. Thus the heading “No-see-um” disease.

The symptoms may include:

- a reduction in the colony population – this may be rapid or subtle, and is often termed ‘spring dwindle’, occurring in August and September
- a serious reduction in honey production in heavily infected colonies, compared with lightly infected colonies
- an accumulation of dead bees at the hive entrance. This is not common, as most field bees die some distance from the hive
- flightlessness in adult bees. They crawl along the ground, and their hind wings may be unhooked from the front wings and held at unusual angles. This is also a symptom of pesticide poisoning or viral infestation
- a sickly look and greasy-looking abdomen in adult bees
- greyish-white, dull intestines
- dysentery, with hives covered in spots of faecal matter. This symptom is often associated with serious cases of the disease
- death of the colony (occasionally).

Unless you missed it, there are now two types of nosema infecting honey bees in Australia. *Nosema apis* (traditional disease organism) and now its cousin *Nosema ceranae*. Initially *N.ceranae* was thought to be far more lethal than *N.apis*, but as further evidence and research unfolds both seem to be on par as far as just being plain nasty.

If anything, *N.apis* would appear to cause more problems during cooler weather and *N.ceranae* would appear to be more prevalent during armer conditions.

The symptoms of *N.ceranae* are said to be even more subtle than *N.apis*, although some international publications have suggested that *N.ceranae* may be more lethal. The fact is that both organisms are extremely hard to diagnose, simply based on field symptoms. And thus the problem!

Given the hassle of having to collect samples and submit them to a lab for diagnosis it all becomes too much for the majority of beekeepers to worry about. Therefore, unless the wheels come off i.e. major losses are experienced or the whole apiary does not perform, rarely are samples collected and submitted. As the symptoms described are only present in a small percentage of cases, the disease largely goes undiagnosed.

The good news is that “good beekeeping practices” would appear to reduce the incidence of the disease. Define “good beekeeping practice” you ask. Well, a survey of apiaries introduced in almonds at Robinvale in August 2004, 2005 and 2006 provided some useful guidelines.

A total of 15 apiaries belonging to 15 beekeepers originating from Victoria and New South Wales were sampled. All apiaries were found to have nosema, but the range varied between 12,236,000 to 10,000 spores. There was also considerable variation in the numbers of hives infected in each apiary. Not all hives in each apiary were found to have nosema infections. Along with the adult bee samples collected and subsequent lab diagnosis each beekeeper was asked to provide the history of the apiaries sampled.

A strong trend occurred correlated to the spore counts with various apiary management practices.

1. Hive manipulation in the three months prior to placing bees in almonds: this included taking honey off, checking brood and shifting bees. In 2004 the 4 beekeepers who stated they did not manipulate their colonies had the lowest nosema counts. The 5 beekeepers with the highest counts did manipulate their hives prior to almonds.
2. Supplementary feeding in the five months prior to sampling: in 2004 the 11 apiaries with the highest nosema counts supplementarily fed hives, whereas 3 of the 4 beekeepers with the lowest counts did not.
3. Flora utilised during the 5 months prior to almond pollination: although there were no clear consistent correlation between nosema counts and specific floral sources, bees working winter flowering events are more likely to be susceptible to an increased incidence of nosema infections. Likewise a poor pollen supply will also reduce the fitness of the colonies, making them more prone to disease infections. Poor quality pollen has clearly been demonstrated to equal shorter lived worker bees.
4. Honey content of hives going onto the almonds: hives which were full or nearly full of honey generally had the lowest nosema counts.

5. Bee strength: bee strength was estimated at the beginning of almonds (beginning August), then at the end of almonds. One beekeeper suffered a serious depletion of bees from 12 frames of bees to 8 frames with an average nosema spore count of 12 million. Less dramatic losses were reported with other beekeepers dropping 11 to 10 frames of bees with an average of 6 million spores, 7 to 6½ frames of bees with 1 million spores. Most colonies expanded their population on the almonds.

No one trigger can be associated with nosema infections. Also the field symptoms of the disease are very vague. Good beekeeping practice as defined by various studies suggests that beekeepers should take note of the following:

- Climatic conditions play a major role. Protect colonies from cold, wet winds and locate apiaries on the northern side of a hill. Ensure hives have maximum exposure to sunlight during autumn, winter and early spring.
- Keep the hive dry – elevate it if possible. In northern New South Wales and Queensland, cane toad stands have been found to reduce nosema levels.
- In autumn, compact the colony in preparation for winter. Do not leave excess boxes on each hive; reduce the colony to one or two boxes for the winter period.
- Placing bee hives on the cooler tablelands will cause the colony to become broodless. This reduces the stress and demands on the colony, and will assist in keeping nosema levels low.
- Ensure the hive is headed by a young queen with a strong population – this will greatly reduce any adverse effects from nosema.
- From early autumn, avoid moving brood combs around a hive or between hives.
- Multiple shifting of hives and opening of colonies during the winter months have been associated with increased nosema levels.
- At the end of autumn, leave more than half a box of honey on each hive for winter.
- Old brood combs are a constant source of disease pathogens. Replace old brood combs with new in late spring and summer, so that old combs do not remain for years in the brood nest.
- Protein deficiency is probably a major cause of increased nosema levels. Many autumn and early winter flows have protein-deficient pollens, causing low breeding levels and resulting in shorter lived bees prone to nosema infections. Putting bees on flora that provide high-protein pollens, before and directly after working a honey flow with low-protein pollens, will help overcome protein deficiencies.

- High-protein pollens, available at the end of autumn and over winter, can ensure that bees breed and replace population lost to nosema.

Summary

- Nosema disease is the most widespread adult bee disease in the world.
- Although there are a number of symptoms, these often go unnoticed, and the poor performance of a colony is blamed on other factors.
- There are no classic signs of the disease, and hence it frequently goes undetected.
- Heavily infected bees live only half as long as non-infected bees.
- Nosema disease is most likely present in all colonies all the time, and only likely to cause bee losses when conditions favour the micro-organism.

Further reading:

Hornitzky M. (2008), Nosema Disease – Literature review and three year survey of beekeeper. Part 2. RIRDC publication No. 08/006. www.rirdc.gov.au

Hornitzky M. (2009), Nosema diagnosis. Primefact 901 www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Somerville D, Hornitzky M. (2007), Nosema Disease. Primefact 699. www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

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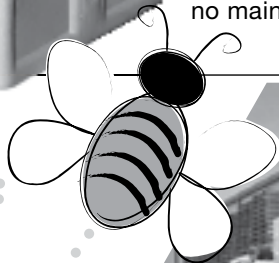








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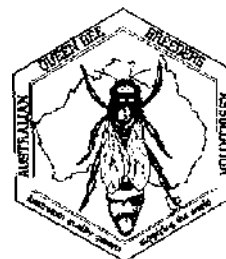
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NICK'S NEWS

from I&I NSW

Nick Annand

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



SHB and AFB

At the NSW Apiarists' Association State Conference held in May at Port Macquarie, the issue was raised that small hive beetle (SHB) is a factor in the increasing levels of AFB amongst beekeepers. Michael Hornitzky spoke on the matter during the discussion on AFB. He pointed out that the beetles are capable of carrying AFB spores however the likelihood of the AFB disease being expressed (showing signs of infection) in a hive after SHB's had moved from an AFB infected hive to a "clean" hive were extremely low because of inadequate number of spores transferred between colonies. Michael referred to a scientific paper written by M O Schafer et al. and published in *Apidologie* 41 (2010) pg 14-20. Due to copywrite and size of the paper, anybody wanting to read it, please contact me and I will provide you with a copy.

Anti-biotics? Useful tools or problematic to the industry

There are two anti-biotics that can legally be used in hives in NSW. They are Oxytetracycline (OTC), it is used to manage European foulbrood (EFB), and Fumagillin, used to manage nosema in queen rearing colonies.

Fumagillin

Fumagillin has been periodically registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) under a minor use permit over the past 10 years. The last time it was registered, it was done by a hand full of queen breeders. The permit only allowed those whose names were listed on the permit application to use the product. The permit has since expired on 5/12/09 and as far as I am aware nobody has renewed it. This anti-biotic can only be used in queen raising hives because of the risk it poses regards leaving high levels of residues. Any honey produced from treated hives can not be used for human consumption. With very limited use in Australia there should not be any threat of residue issues or problems arising from fumagillin use.

Oxytetracycline

Oxytetracycline hydrochloride (OTC) is an antibiotic used to manage European foulbrood. It is registered and available for use in beehives in four commercially available premixed products in Australia. OTC is a veterinary medicine that either requires a vet or a livestock officer - bees (Doug Somerville or myself), who has confirmation of the EFB through either a hive inspection or lab diagnosis, to prescribe OTC for the legitimate treatment of EFB.

OTC and EFB

OTC is a very useful and easy way to manage EFB in your hives. EFB is a disease where the causal bacteria is present in most hives but the disease only expresses itself (visible symptoms) when the hive is stressed. This is often, but not always, around spring when the hive is trying to expand coming out of winter. So the value of managing EFB with OTC at this point allows for more rapid hive expansion leading into the major honey flow period. Other ways to minimise EFB are generally a lot

more time consuming, costly and less effective resulting in lost production.

Conditions that suite disease expression may only occur every few years and therefore only need be treated at those times, however I suspect some beekeepers may use OTC in a cautionary manner no matter if the disease is present or not. Also the use of OTC does not promote improvement of the bees genetic resistance to EFB if susceptible hives can be maintained and are bred from. Particularly a problem if queen breeders use OTC.

OTC and AFB

It is illegal to knowingly treat hives with OTC that have AFB. This is because OTC does not get rid of AFB. OTC does suppress the vegetative stage of AFB and as a result you will see no symptoms of AFB for a period however it does not have any impact on the hardy AFB spores that can outlive most beekeepers. Once the affect of the OTC has worn off, the spores still remain causing infection and symptoms of AFB to reappear. So the antibiotic only masks the disease for a period but does not get rid of the disease. The disease can be spread between hives through equipment transfer and robbing bees etc. even when no AFB symptoms are evident because its being masked by OTC. This can lead to the spread of AFB throughout apiaries. Beekeepers who start feeding OTC to manage AFB such as USA beekeepers have done, become reliant on OTC. As Jerry Bromenshenk put it at the last NSWAA conference, your business becomes addicted to using antibiotics and once hooked it is very difficult to stop using without major losses. Jerry also spoke of how in the USA, AFB has become resistant to some of the antibiotics and many of the large commercial beekeepers have returned to the AFB control methods of past days of destroying infected colonies rather than using antibiotics.

Would removing OTC from the bee industry help fight what appears to be an every increasing AFB problem around the state or is the misuse of OTC just an easy target to blame?

OTC residues

Over time the demand from consumers has driven demand for products (including honey) to minimise or remove completely man made chemicals, be it pesticides or veterinary medicines. As a result this has led to domestic and export markets testing produce to ensure quality of product.

Maximum residue limit (MRL) means "the maximum level of a residue of a chemical which is permitted to be present in a food". In Australia we have a limit set for the level of residue for OTC in honey of 0.3 mg/kg (1 mg/kg = 1 part per million). With last years results from the National Residue Survey (NRS) two honey samples were found to have traceable OTC levels in the honey however both samples were below the MRL. The test used by the NRS detects OTC levels down to 0.02 mg/kg or 20 parts per billion (ppb).

Currently this system works adequately for Australia; however this could change if domestic market pressure was such that it did not want any antibiotics in honey. The limit may well be changed so that any detection would be a contravention of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. I can not see any likelihood of the MRL being increased.

Regarding our export markets, the European Union (EU) has the toughest requirements regarding OTC residues in honey. It currently has no MRL set for OTC in honey and as such any honey containing residues at any level can legally be rejected by member states of the EU. There has been a recommendation for the EU to have a provisional MRL of 0.025 mg/kg (25 ppb) but as of March 2010 it has yet to be adopted. This level would still be 12 times lower than the Australian MRL. Samples are being tested to levels as low as 0.01mg/kg with any samples equal to or greater than this level considered non-compliant. This is very low level detection but it shows how sensitive some markets are and how easily exporters can get into difficulty with residues because of the actions of a few beekeepers. Contamination and resulting recalls or product withdrawals can be a huge cost and cause sometimes irreversible damage to the product image. That cost can come back to directly impact on the producer of the offending honey.

As time moves on and new technologies develop the sensitivity of such tests for residues will increase. This means if the market requirement is for nil residue, that will mean **nil residue**. Where as in the past you may have thought the second or third extraction post OTC treatment was clean this may not be the case in future.

OTC and marketing

Australia is currently (as of writing and hopefully for many decades to come) in the very fortunate position of being free of varroa mites. This enables us to keep European honeybees without being dependant on chemical treatments (synthetic or organic) to control the mite. The industry and consumers want honey free of residues because it is perceived as a pure, natural product. Australia is one of very the few who has the potential to provide and market our honey as such a product. With around a third of Australia's honey being exported to a range of different markets around the world, our ability to produce pure unadulterated honey should be seen as a great marketing opportunity. However the use of OTC does cloud this potential.

I will also point out the bleeding obvious, that you as producers of a product (honey) have to meet your market demands. If not you will lose market share. Honey packers when chasing markets for your honey will find out the buyers requirements and then the importing countries requirements. Those buyer requirements are often more restrictive than the countries requirements (ie. meeting consumer demands) and for the packer to get that business they have to meet those requests. As a packer selling to a range of markets around the world they would prefer honey that they can be confident has no risks such as OTC residues problems.

So if used correctly OTC can be a very useful management tool for beekeepers increasing production and reducing costs but do those advantages outweigh the disadvantages of OTC, including misuse of OTC for AFB management, residue issues and lost marketing opportunities. ????????

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FCAAA: Why is it still here?

By Peter McDonald, Victoria

I think the Federal Council of Australian Apiarists Associations (FCAAA) is a waste of both beekeeper time and money. The reason I think this is simple, I look at the organization chart for the beekeeping industry and wonder, why is it still there?

But a bit of general background before I get to my reasons in more detail.

The FCAAA was formed around 1934 as the national peak body association that has the main beekeeping groups from the Australian states as its members (Vic, NSW, Qld, Tas, WA, SA). In the mid 90's it commissioned an industry review, which recommended the Australian Honeybee Industry Council (AHBIC) became the national beekeeping peak body. It had the FCAAA as one of its members (represented by voting delegates from each of the member bodies of the FCAAA) along with the honey packers, queen breeders and pollinator groups. AHBIC took over around 1998 and has been running the show ever since.

To this day, the main beekeeping groups from the Australian states (Vic, NSW, Qld, Tas, WA, SA) have a vote at FCAAA, and then these same groups also having a vote at AHBIC. This means that there is duplicity between two of the highest levels of beekeeping representative groups.

AHBIC has now been our leadership group for a while, performing either poorly or ok, depending on who you talk to. But at this time it is also going through a period of financial crisis, and duplicity in times of financial hardship is a waste.

So, the reasons I have for the removal of the FCAAA from the scene are outlined below:

- Simplifies the industry structure.
- Removes the financial waste outlined above through having the same groups voting at 2 separate levels of industry, running 2 separate offices, 2 sets of meetings hence and accommodation, etc, etc. It could provide a financial gain to other areas of the beekeeping industry in this time of financial need.
- People on FCAAA are also on the state executives and AHBIC, so the removal of FCAAA will reduce their workload. It will remove a full set of meetings, committees and reporting requirements from volunteer beekeepers who lead our industry. In doing so it help prevent burnout of these leaders by allowing them more time for their families, their businesses, other industry roles or partying, whatever their pleasure may be.
- I have heard delegates to the FCAAA (including past presidents) say that they had no idea what it should be doing and that they thought it didn't serve any purpose any more. I agree there.

- One of the main gripes about AHBIC is its lack of communication to the wider beekeeping industry. At least it communicates more than the FCAAA does.
- I have heard beekeepers say that it doesn't matter if AHBIC fails as FCAAA did the job for a long time and will just step in and take over again. This thinking provides a reason for beekeepers not to fully commit to AHBIC and support it as our peak body and therefore I think this crutch should be removed.

Now if anyone can tell me why getting rid of the FCAAA isn't a good idea I'd be glad to listen, but I can't think of any reasons that would change my mind on the matter given my reasons already outlined.

I think that the FCAAA should vote to wind itself up and distribute its existing funds in one or more of the following ways:

1. Give it all to AHBIC to manage and so help resolve its funding crisis.
2. Give it to the member bodies of the FCAAA.
3. Give it to the grass roots beekeeping associations around the country.
4. Give it to RIRDC or the Wheen Foundation to use for beekeeping research.
5. Give it to the contingency funds to help with exotic pest incursion responses, such as the current one in Cairns.

So where to from here?

A motion from a member of the FCAAA to wind itself up that the FCAAA votes on and then carries out.

Easy really.

SYDNEY METROPOLITAN BRANCH - NSWAA

Annual General Meeting

The Sydney Metropolitan Branch invites all members to attend the AGM to be held at 7.30pm, Tuesday, 3 August 2010, at the Anglican Church Hall, Church Lane, Top Ryde.

It is imperative that you attend as the future direction of your branch will be decided through your input with selecting your committee for the ensuing term of office.

As your current President, with much regret, I will be standing aside for personal reasons and I trust that I have served the branch to the best of my ability and take this opportunity to thank all members and non-members for their most able assistance in achieving the best results for your branch.

Eric J Whitby, Your retiring President

WHY FCAAA SHOULD REMAIN

I wish to point out a few facts to the author of the article "FCAAA: why is it still here?"

Within the organisational chart the FCAAA was the voice and vote of the beekeepers at AHBIC, having 2 votes. We have the Packers now with 4 votes, along with Queen Breeders 1 vote and pollinators with 1 vote.

The "Review" hoped to remedy this inequity by having the beekeepers (who are the foundation of the whole Industry) as the core body of a new "AHBIC" with the other sectors having an advisory role. If this had been the outcome, then you would be correct in stating "why is FCAAA here?"

The other sector bodies ie Packers, Queen Breeders and NCPA are all, almost dysfunctional groups with very few members and even divided within their ranks. Yet they are still strongly represented at AHBIC Council level.

Resolutions passed at FCAAA meetings are often overturned when put to AHBIC Council meetings.

The "cost of holding FCAAA meetings" quoted by the author are almost non-existent as the one meeting held each year is in conjunction with AHBIC AGM and the same delegates are required to be present for AHBIC Council meetings. If business arises at other times during the year, a phone hook up or email contact is made.

The money that FCAAA is trustee for is a contingency fund collected when times were much tougher than they are now and the beekeepers who contributed to this fund have been adamant that this not be "given to AHBIC to waste".

The funding crisis that AHBIC is experiencing is largely due to the perception by the Industry at large that AHBIC is not functioning as they believe it should.

Following last years' AHBIC AGM an impromptu meeting of FCAAA was called to discuss financial assistance to AHBIC. During this meeting an indication was sought from States, whether they desired FCAAA to continue and the result was unanimous that it should continue.

If AHBIC can reinvent itself and demonstrate to Industry that it is worthy of support then I have no doubt it will get Industry support, but until this can be demonstrated then there is a dire need to retain FCAAA.

It is for these reasons that if Industry wants to control its own destiny then the new AHBIC Board (executive) must have people of vision for the Industry and be the best people from the Industry. The elections to be held in Ipswich on 19 June will be paramount to the success or failure of AHBIC and hence the need or otherwise of FCAAA.

Bill Weiss
President - FCAAA

EXPORT MATTERS NEW AQIS CONTACTS

Honey exporters have new contacts in the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). They are:

- Ian Lyall (Ph 02 6272 3630) – For all market access enquires and assistance in negotiating new market access. Help with detained consignments.
- Christine Coulson (Ph 02 6272 4167) – General enquires about certification for established markets.

I am sorry that I will no longer be the industry's contact for all things involving AQIS honey certification and market access. I have sincerely enjoyed working with the bee product industry, which I believe to be a responsible and mature industry with a strong commitment to self-regulation and a willingness to work with government.

This was demonstrated recently when the European Union Food and Veterinary Office (EU FVO) visited Australia to review residue controls including honey. Participation in a residue-monitoring program is one of the requirements for access to the EU market. The EU FVO appreciated the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council's use of the National Residue Survey to monitor honey for residues and contaminants.

This regular monitoring underpins Australian honey's good residue credentials. The EU FVO also accepted the Australian honey industry HACCP based programs, such as B-QUAL as meeting their requirements.

The EU FVO review found the Australian honey system equivalent to the European system and therefore Australia can continue to export bee products to EU under our current regulations. This means that there is no need for a separate set of Honey Orders. However, AQIS will still be working with the industry to streamline the export process and to assist the industry, through the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council to develop new markets for Australian honey.

To minimise the number of Australian honey consignments detained due to certification errors and to provide options for exporters, AQIS will be introducing new electronic certificates, using the AQIS EXDOC system. AQIS will also be officially listing honey exporters to the EU on the Establishment Register (ER). Both these measures should increase certificate control and minimise the time taken to produce a certificate.

AQIS will retain the manual certificate system for those exporters that want to use a manual certificate.

Speaking of certificates, AQIS has developed a honey certificate for French Polynesia (Tahiti) which has quite specific export requirements. Please contact Ian Lyall, if you are interested in exporting to French Polynesia.

Farewell and good luck with your exports.

Fay Stenhouse
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The process of irradiation kills bacteria by breaking down DNA strands which means that AFB and EFB spores, and any other organism will be eliminated.

Irradiation is done at room temperature meaning that heat is not applied to your product making sterilisation and decontamination of delicate products such as wax sheets, block wax, pollen, feed cake, and brood honey efficient and effective without causing heat damage.

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Steritech is always looking to improve the service it provides to the apiarist industry. Over the last couple of years feedback from many members of the NSWAA has been received and the changes are a result of that, in order to make it easier and more cost effective for anyone requiring irradiation for their equipment.

From 1 June, Steritech NSW implemented the following changes to its irradiation service:

- The cost of treatment has been reduced to \$8.00 per box plus GST
- Only single boxes will be accepted
- All boxes must be clean and free of honey and insects
- Each single box needs to be wrapped with plastic bags, stretch wrap or cling wrap
- Tape will be sufficient to secure the wrapping. Emlocks and straps are no longer required
- Tightly wrap and tape each box to ensure the contents do not fall out
- All boxes must be less than 25kg, no exceptions

Steritech NSW will be issuing new forms to all NSWAA branches for use when delivering equipment for irradiation treatment.

Up until the 1 August 2010, stretch wrapping and tape will be provided by Steritech NSW for any beekeepers delivering equipment that does not meet the new requirements.

For a copy of the new form or for any further information, please contact Jamie Crighton on 02 8785 4403 or email at jcrighton@steritech.com.au.



The poster features the Steritech logo at the top, followed by the heading 'Important Announcement'. Below this, it states: 'Please note that from 1st June 2010 we have made some important changes to our NSW service.' The changes are listed in a series of rounded rectangular boxes: 'The cost of treatment has been reduced to \$8.00 per box plus GST', 'Only single boxes will be accepted (no double or triple stacks)', 'Each single box needs to be wrapped with plastic bags or stretch/cling wrap', 'Tape will be sufficient to secure the wrapping. Emlocks and straps are no longer required.', 'Tightly wrap and tape each box to ensure the contents do not fall out', 'All boxes must be clean and free of honey and insects', and 'All boxes must be less than 25kg'. At the bottom, it says: 'These changes are a result of your feedback regarding our service. We thank you for your continued support and hope the improvements we have made makes your experience with our service even better.' and 'For more information please contact Jamie Crighton on 02 8785 4403 or at jcrighton@steritech.com.au'.

SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW

National Honey Show & Bee-Zeebo

The Sydney Royal Easter Show was buzzing this year with a National Honey Competition held for the very first time. Ran by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS), the Show was held from 1-14 April, elevating honey, bees and all that comes with it in the minds of the 900,000 visitors to the Easter Show.

The inaugural National Honey Competition was an overwhelming success for exhibitors, with six prestigious Sydney Royal medals awarded.

Bartholomews Meadery was awarded a Gold medal for their Wandoo medium colour liquid honey, whilst Malfroy's Gold Pure Soft Set Honey won Gold in the creamed honey class. Lindsay Bourke also tasted success with two Silver medals for Clover honey and Manuka honey.

Malfroy's Gold went on to take out the highest honour of the competition, winning The Philip Carter Annual Trophy for Champion Commercial Exhibit. The Trophy commemorates the ongoing service given to the Honey Competition by Mr Carter, an honorary Member of Council at the RAS.

As well as the National Competition, the popular *Honeyland* stand returned to the Easter Show. Honey tastings were as popular as ever with over 61,000 spoons slurped down by the crowds, up from 50,000 in 2009. Showgoers sampled over 166kg of honey during the 14 days, and bought an incredible 8,000 kg.

Live bee demonstrations at the Bee-Zeebo, making its Easter Show debut, proved very popular with showgoers getting up close and personal to working hives, and learning about the intriguing world of beekeeping.

The 2010 Easter Show saw the inaugural Excellence in Agriculture Day take place. Excellence in Agriculture Day sought to underline the special role that agriculture plays in the health, wealth and happiness of the nation – and the Honey Show was a key feature of the day, with a somewhat reluctant Easter Show General Manager, Michael Collins, getting suited up and entering the Bee-Zeebo to lend a hand.

“It was fantastic to get up close to the working hive, I learned so much about these interesting creatures - and didn't get stung once.”

“I'm sure all apiarists know this, but for me it was so interesting to learn not to wear aftershave around bees, and to make sure I had my socks tucked in so the bees couldn't go up my pants - I was very careful with that!” Mr Collins said.

The National Honey Show will return to the Easter Show in 2011. Exhibitors can contact Elaine Rogers on (02) 9704 1449 or email erogers@rasnsw.com.au to ask about taking part. The Show takes place from 14 - 27 April 2011 at Sydney Showground.



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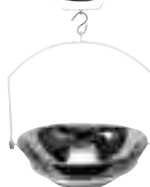
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Capilano has asked that this letter be published in response to an article previously published in the Australasian Beekeeper. We have now received a copy of the article which is published for your information (see page 26).

Re: Article “Our Future”

The question Jodie Goldsworthy attempted to answer in her article “Our Future” (*The Australasian Beekeeper*, Vol.111, May 2010) was “is our action today leading to best outcomes for future generations?”

What developed was an argument why Beechworth should not make any contribution to funding AHBIC. This relies upon her belief “beekeepers believe that the way AHBIC functioned and their results were not worth supporting”.

1. Should we fund AHBIC?

AHBIC recently circulated a list of over 30 major achievements including:

- Continuation of the Sentinel Hire Program, including provision of \$300,000 over 3 years to fund it, our first line of defence against Varroa;
- Lobbying of Federal Government to achieve opening of live bee exports to US worth \$7.5 million to industry;
- Establishment of Pollination Australia and an additional \$500,000 in R&D research into pollination issues.

Are these results not worth supporting?

When we consider the benefits/achievements of AHBIC perhaps we should also consider the potential impacts that flow from adverse publicity in relation to issues like PA's in honey and honey from GM crops and the role a fully representative Peak Body plays and has played in the past in addressing these threats. These issues could have a serious impact on all sectors of the industry, producer and packer.

Beechworth, together with all others in this industry, has been a beneficiary to what AHBIC has achieved.

2. Beechworth's reason for not funding AHBIC

Goldsworthy states “In considering the request for funding we consider the return on our investment and whether our dollars could provide better return elsewhere.” Are these achievements considered such a bad return on investment for industry that funding is withheld? Instead, examples are given of Beechworth's alternative use of funds for AHBIC, for example, funds paid to agricultural shows or the ‘Beechworth Experience’. These are similar to the corporate or marketing costs incurred by Capilano, in addition to Peak Body funding. Costs used in promotion of your company name and brand are hardly Peak Body funding. The edges get blurred by Beechworth when a donation or contribution contributed in brand marketing is considered industry funding.

Some people may have interpreted Capilano's recent decisions regarding funding of AHBIC to mean there was some disappointment in the performance of AHBIC. This

could not be further from the truth; the only disappointment was that a situation had developed where Capilano was providing almost all of the money to run the organisation.

Since Capilano made its decision to stop funding to the level that had developed previously, AHBIC has made an enormous effort to reduce its budget and has put forward a proposal for funding that consists of voluntary funding both from Producers and as a fixed amount from the major Packers. While in an ideal world it would be possible to have every member of the industry contributing to the cost of maintaining an effective Peak Body, in reality this is almost impossible to achieve.

Capilano has committed to pay the \$50,000 pa that has been suggested and feels it is a good investment in our future given the threats we all face as an industry. Goldsworthy says “Beechworth would be prepared to fund something that functioned in accordance with good corporate practice”, which suggests AHBIC does not. I will leave it to the Beekeeper Associations that run AHBIC to deal with that suggestion.

3. Criticism of AHBIC communication

Goldsworthy refers to the old criticism about lack of communication from AHBIC back to the membership. I do not think that is a fair criticism of the operation of AHBIC or the Executive Director but a reflection on sector body representatives who sit on the Executive whose job it is to report back to their respective organisations. It is interesting to me that this is the same criticism that was directed at the FCAAA for many years while it was the Peak Industry Body, despite almost every industry journal containing reports and updates on the activities of the FCAAA then, and now on AHBIC.

4. The NFF or FCAAA alternative

Goldsworthy also talks about going back to just the FCAAA or joining the National Farmers Federation.

The FCAAA is only a producer organisation and has no representation from any other sector of the industry, so I cannot see how that would be of any use to her or us. Goldsworthy cited a ‘lack of rigorous work on determining our industry policies’ as the evidence of malfunction in AHBIC. But isn't AHBIC directed by the appointees of industry (State Associations) voted into office? Are the FCAAA officers, made up of appointees of industry (State Associations) going to be any different?

AHBIC has already investigated possible links with the National Farmers Federation and it is not just a new idea that Goldsworthy has thought of. It is not all that expensive to join them but to have any work done to directly involve your industry sector within that organisation would see the additional costs all charged back to that industry. This is in addition to the membership fee and would result in a far more expensive Peak Body.

Goldsworthy suggests “a workshop needs to be organised” and “let’s start by trying to generate funds for this”. To have more workshops as suggested by Goldsworthy is rubbish. The industry went through that process endlessly when AHBIC was established. AHBIC has worked pretty well to represent a small industry since that time, particularly while Capilano paid all the bills. It just needs others to be prepared to put some money in for the benefits they are getting.

5. The future

Capilano has never had a vote on AHBIC’s Executive Council and has taken an apolitical stance – the beekeepers should decide and run their industry. The Peak Body is run by the industry and its associations.

It might be more pragmatic to have beekeepers support their Association that makes up the AHBIC Executive, and if they have questions about good corporate governance practice, they query their Executives who sit on AHBIC.

The results listed as achievements by AHBIC are entirely in the interests of the production sector and very much in the interest of the marketing sector – including Beechworth.

Yours faithfully

CAPILANO HONEY LIMITED

Trevor Morgan
Chairman
3 June 2010

RECIPES



HONEY CHICKEN

The honey makes the skin crispy and the chicken stays moist in the cooking juices.

1 chicken size 12-14 jointed into 4-6 pieces
Juice of 1 lemon
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons honey
1/2 cup white wine
2 cloves garlic, peeled & chopped
A few sprigs of fresh thyme
Salt and pepper

Put the chicken in a large roasting pan with the lemon, oil, honey, wine, garlic and thyme. Toss well to coat all the pieces. Marinate for 30 minutes, skin-side down (if you have time, marinate for a few hours or overnight for maximum flavour.

Preheat oven to 200°C. Turn chicken skin-side up in the roasting pan and cook for about 50 minutes, or until skin is well browned and chicken is cooked through at its thickest point. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Serves 4

TRADITIONAL MUESLI

Makes about 18 half cup serves.

360g oats
100g wheatgerm
40g hazelnuts, chopped
55g almonds, chopped
40g pecans, chopped
40g sunflower seeds
35g shredded coconut
90g butter
80ml honey
80g sultanas
100g soft prunes, pitted and chopped
75g dried apricots, chopped
35g dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Combine oats, wheatgerm, nuts, sunflower seeds and coconut in a large bowl. Melt butter in a bowl, add honey and stir to combine. Pour butter mixture over oat mixture and combine thoroughly with a spoon or hands.

Pour mixture into two large baking trays and spread evenly. Bake for about 15 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. Swap trays between shelves after 10 minutes.

Combine with dried fruit and store in a sealed container.

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OUR FUTURE – is our action today leading to the best outcomes for our future generations? What should we be doing?

Jodie Goldsworthy, Beechworth Honey Email: jodie@beechworthhoney.com.au Phone 02 6033 2322

Take a deep breath and just write – even if it means outstretching your neck across the chopping block! That's what I must do! The results of thoughts, research, reading, discussions and internal information processing and analysis cannot any longer remain internalised. They must be documented with the intent of stimulating debate and achieving better outcomes. Debate, discussion and opening one's mind to diverse thinking when practiced across communities or industries emerges collectively as fresh directions and new resolve to try again to improve on past performances. The emotional responsibility that comes with living, breathing, eating and sleeping Australian honey and our unique industry can be overwhelming at times.

As I interpret it, in 2010 the Australian Honey Industry is sitting on the steepest point of a knife edge. For some years we've been somewhere on the knife but the edge is now ever so sharp. Over one edge is a world of opportunity, a fantastic product that fits all the fundamentals of natural, healthy food surrounded by a community that is interested in where their food comes from and wants a healthier environment. Over the other edge festers a myriad of ugly challenges each on their own almost beyond comprehension in thinking about; complex disease and health issues, a myriad of scientific challenges, increasing difficulty and complexity in producing products and keeping bees healthy, faltering and weary leaders unsure of what to do next and largely unsupported by the wider industry, lack of shared, agreed or well communicated strategic industry direction or actions, pathetic support for the problems from policy makers and governments, fierce competition from imported and even potentially "fake" product, and the list could go on.

Living the "knife edge" is overwhelming because many of the issues on the darkest side of the knife edge have an ever closing window of opportunity in order to be adequately addressed.

Can things get any worse in terms of our inability to know what to do next? Or do they actually have to get worse in order for us to again, with even more resolve, work our way forward in making progress on key issues? I am motivated to act – and act I do where I know that our efforts and resources will make a difference – because I am a fundamental believer, as most in our industry are, that without bees humanity does not face a very nice future. Of course deriving our families livelihoods (and now carrying a large responsibility for many other beekeeping families livelihoods also) from this industry I am obviously also motivated to act in order to protect my immediate future and livelihood. The extra effort and financial investment that we make to promoting Australian honey and the issues we face is actually about trying to position our industry better for the future in order to retain and sustain Australian bees and Australian beekeepers. Why? Because viable Australian bees and Australian bees are the future pollinators of the range of foods that I enjoy eating and that sustain my health and the health of future generations for life.

Interestingly and thankfully I am not alone in understanding the importance of the role that we play. The International Risk Governance Council (IRGC) – an independent organisation whose purpose it is to help the understanding and management of emerging global risks that have impacts on human health and safety, the environment, the economy and society at large – recently identified pollination services as a project area. The council is made up some of the world's most significant thinkers and senior leaders (www.irgc.org). According to the paper titled "Risk Governance of Pollination Services" (2009) *"IRGC is concerned that, in comparison with other ecosystem services such as fresh water supplies, fishery provisioning services, and climate regulation services, insufficient attention is being given to the risks associated with the loss of pollination."*

IRGC considers that, although pollination is a critical issue that is well acknowledged within the scientific community, it appears to be neglected and insufficiently appreciated by policy makers, industry (particularly the agricultural sector) and the general public. As a result, IRGC believes that the threats to pollination services and related risks are not adequately taken into account, directly or indirectly, in policies and regulations that may affect pollinators and their habitats."

Taking time out to attend Apimondia in Montpellier, France in 2009 also provided a global perspective on the urgent need for Australia to work harder to address the issues we face. The overwhelming envy of the international beekeeping community of being an Australian beekeeper who does not yet have to deal with varroa was absolutely amazing.

Every international delegate we spoke to on learning we were from Australia proceeded to give us one "critical" piece of advice – "whatever you do, make sure you don't let it get there". Taking in the latest apiculture science, learning that "fake" honey was being manufactured and was very difficult to detect, and thinking about the future of our kids and the industry they might be inheriting gave us fresh motivation to try harder to do more.

The invitation of the Australian Prime Minister to attend a 2010 Australia Day Celebration with him in Sydney was my first opportunity to discuss directly my concerns that the Australian Government's response and actions on issues relating to our industry and the need for future pollinators has been pathetic. I used the opportunity to remind Prime Minister Rudd of my message during the 2020 Summit and to advise him of the identification of the "pollination risk" by the IRGC, an opportunity I am grateful to have had.

Needing to work at all levels, and with the belief that it will be interest from the general public that will eventually apply enough pressure on Governments to pull their weight, we then set about "refreshing" our Beechworth Honey Experience Tour to take in the topic of pollination, the need for bees and the problems they face. Since the launch of "Honeybee Blues" last year in Kyneton we have

which we believed would make a bigger difference. We have supported state beekeeping associations to promote honey at the Melbourne and Sydney shows for a number of years and invested our efforts into promoting Australian honey and our key messages through every opportunity possible and through the development of the Beechworth Honey Experience. We have also invested heavily in the viability of our industry through paying generous honey prices at every opportunity, even at times when we could have been paying far less. I can easily justify and would be largely supported by beekeepers that these measures have provided far greater results than if we had have diverted these funds and resources into AHBIC.

Unfortunately though even doing these things does not negate the need for a well functioning peak body. It is my perhaps idealistic belief that if people believe in the results of something then they will support it financially, not everyone of course but I believe enough people will. It's a difficult chicken and egg paradox without funding AHBIC cannot exist but people will not fund it if they don't believe it is worthwhile.

Sadly reviews, new leadership and the AHBIC executive have largely missed the opportunity to gain beekeeper support at a time where Capilano (rightly in my opinion) withdrew a large portion of its funding. If we want AHBIC we must collectively make it work and make it worth funding. Our position on funding has been to match the funding committed by our beekeepers and this has been dwindling. I have communicated my thoughts on numerous occasions at the AHBIC table. Largely there are many there who probably hate my presence because my messages are so simple and boring. At the time of the reduced funding I agreed to assist if I could and offered to assist the executive in working through and determining industry policies on key issues and documenting a work plan for the coming 12 months. I was told that the executive would handle these things and that I would be called on if required. My warning was that unless beekeepers were given reasons to support AHBIC the window of remaining funds would be exhausted without any change. Largely this is where we now are.

During January and February Beechworth Honey was approached by AHBIC with a plan to fund AHBIC entirely via contributions from honey packers, seeking an amount of \$24,000 and resulting in a total budget of \$120,000 from which AHBIC was to function. It was explained to us that other honey packers had agreed to the funding model and that AHBIC had secured \$50,000 from Capilano but the model was all dependent on Beechworth Honey's commitment. In considering the request or any request for funding from any organisation we consider the return on our investment and whether our dollars could provide better returns from elsewhere. At the time I also explained my belief and investigations at that point in considering whether as an industry by linking with other like minded organisations we could be getting more cost effective results to assist with the tasks that should have been occurring through AHBIC. I openly explained that I was investigating the role that the National Farmers Federation (NFF) might have been able to play and was awaiting a copy of their strategic plan and membership proposal. I also expressed my concern in a funding model for AHBIC that relied on honey packers entirely where conflicts of interests were very real along with my concerns that the promised action plan and meaningful communications had not been forthcoming.

So after much consideration, thought and debate between myself and Steven Goldsworthy, the owners of the two pockets that the \$24,000 was to come out of and the consideration of a counter offer of a lower amount we concluded and communicated verbally that we would not be funding AHBIC. Understandably there was much disappointment from Lindsay Bourke and Eduard Planken, two people whose dedication I admire. Deciding not to fund AHBIC forces a number of issues that would not be forced if reduced funds continued to flow and AHBIC continued to limp on without confronting the real issues.

1. Beekeepers must decide if they want a peak body
2. Beekeepers must decide if they do what they want it to do, what 5 key things they want it to achieve over the next 12 months and into the then future
3. The issue of the continued employment of a suitably committed, skilled and relevant paid employee. Industry has previously moved a vote of no confidence in AHBIC's current paid employee which was overturned by the executive but this remains a major issue for the future support of beekeepers. Perception is reality despite what protection and justification individuals within AHBIC try to portray. I personally feel very sorry for Stephen Ware – our failings to plan have set him, or anyone else who may have filled this role in past years, to fail.
4. Other cost effective options must be looked at to achieve the progress the key issues of our industry whilst this process is occurring.

It was most disappointing to note after the circulation of the AHBIC Memorandum Number 10.01 on the 16 March some AHBIC untruths were uncovered. The memo reported that *"Despite our best efforts we still do not have agreement on long term funding of AHBIC. Following consultation with the Honey Packers, all have agreed to fund AHBIC except Beechworth Honey. Capilano's contribution was and is on the basis that all other Packers contribute"*. Dawn Smith from Honey Down Under immediately responded to AHBIC to say that they had not been approached and had not seen the plan and that Beechworth Honey had been wrongly singled out. One other honey packer has also confirmed that they had not been approached and were not in support of the funding model. I am also very doubtful of the truth of the statement that *"all have agreed to fund"*. Quite frankly I am not sure that AHBIC even has an accurate list of "all" packers of honey in this country. Despite the error AHBIC has to date not seen fit to make a correction despite issuing new updates and having the opportunity to do so. Bit silly really, just lucky we don't hold grudges – can't afford to – the fact is grudges or misinformation will not lead our industry to where it needs to go! I believe that when the current funding dries up, and it will either sooner or later, when we reach rock bottom and enough people want to do something about it – an independently facilitated workshop needs to be organised and opened up to anyone with an interest in our industry. Let's start by trying to generate the funds for this – I have had numerous beekeepers offer to donate a drum of honey saying "if only I thought it would lead to something I'd be happy to give it". If there were 500 beekeepers who thought like this we would not have a funding crisis, we would have over \$500,000. Beechworth Honey would be prepared to fund part of something that functioned in accordance with good corporate practices if this is what beekeepers believe is a good starting point. It is not our intention to abandon our

been filming segments to update our tour. The final editing is now complete and Easter 2010 sees the release of our new tour where the “future generation” from Beechworth Honey reports on the story. Waiting at the end of the tour to listen to the first lot of unsuspecting visitors come through I was absolutely overwhelmed to be identified from the tour by a visitor and to be told that he would be doing a number of the things that we suggested doing and that he never usually writes letters to his local MP but would be doing so on this issue. Let’s now hope that more people have the same reaction and that the job of educating the public continues at every available opportunity. This is an investment that we are committed to.

At an industry level I am extremely concerned that we do not seem to be able to “help ourselves” at a time when we really need to be functioning well. Our problems of the past have culminated today in a funding crisis of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council which to me and many others is not surprising. A poorly functioning peak body is one of the things that concerns me most because I believe that we cannot expect others to help if we can’t help ourselves.

My position on the reasons why our peak body is in the state it is in has not changed for some time and has before been on the public record. In my submission to the Australian Government Parliamentary Inquiry in June 2007 I wrote under the section **EXISTING INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT WORK THAT HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN FOR THE HONEY INDUSTRY**

- *To date the Australian honey bee industry has managed itself to the best of its ability, utilising a structure based on an historic state and national farm / agripolitical type model. As part of this model historically the marketers of Australian honey have played a significant leadership role in providing direction for the industry.*
- *This structure only remains fundamentally sound in looking after the interests of the Australian honey bee industry production sector whilst the interests of the marketing sector are aligned with the production sector. This time has long past and the Australian Honey Bee industry structure finds itself in difficulty in managing a number of complex issues that it faces. This is because for some stakeholders a good result is exactly opposite for another stakeholder.*
- *Further complicating the new confusion due to complexity of market and production issues is the fact that the major funding source of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, the resulting peak body, comes from one major company, Capilano.*
- *Difficult situations have arisen in the past and will continue into the future where there is a risk of the AHBIC being at odds with the interests of the major companies funding the AHBIC. The structure itself is robust however the funding arrangements at times have the ability to influence decisions made that impact on the future viability of the Australian honey industry. To date there have been no alternatives to the funding dilemma’s of the peak body, however the broader industry perception of the impacts of this issue and therefore the ability of AHBIC to be truly representative of the broader industry can perhaps be best measured in the involuntary scale of the “voluntary” funding arrangement.*

- *Additionally in relation to the issues above the author believes the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and state based recruitment, corporate governance and decision making practices should be rigorously analysed by government with the view to improving the effectiveness of these organizations.*
- *It should be noted that all industry positions, except the Executive Officer of AHBIC, are voluntary and current selection processes and skill sets may not be resulting in organizations and committees possessing the diversity required to achieve the best results possible.*
- *Many individuals have had negative leadership experiences as a result of lack of clearly recorded guidelines, terms of reference, reporting requirements and expectations that were not clearly communicated.*
- *This industry will argue strongly that its structure is appropriate and the author supports that. In addition many industry leaders will not support these comments however past results and the current state of the industry clearly support the looking into possible improvements in regard to promoting diversity and practices that improve results for the industry. The ability of the Australian honey bee industry to tackle these hard issues and grow and support an additional group of leaders to supplement the current and tiring industry faces will be the difference between a positive future and a future of more of the same.*
- *Without the government’s investigation into the shortcomings of the existing industry decision making practices and lack of diversity all current and future funding is at risk of failing to deliver on the full potential or required outcomes. Supplementing this investigation a mechanism needs to be developed to assist the Australian honey bee industry to address these current shortcomings through the outside assistance and facilitation by appropriately skilled persons experienced in such tasks.*
- *It is the authors belief that once this task is accomplished, the industry will be better equipped to help itself and existing industry and Government work will deliver better results.*
- *The submission contained within this section are in no way meant to be a criticism of any individual as the work of the many individuals is both acknowledged and appreciated. Unfortunately it is our practices, our old habits and our lack of being able to see how simply we could help ourselves that are our real problems rather than any perceived differences we have. We must strive for a more open and rigorous decision making process that is more inclusive of our entire industry.*

To summarise my thoughts today, it is our lack of inclusive and rigorous work on determining our industry policies on key issues and formulating these into key agreed actions, combined with AHBIC’s lack of MEANINGFUL communication that sees it face the very real lack of funding that it faces. Beekeepers have believed this for some time, (but nothing needed to be done about this problem because of the generous support of Capilano in the past), that the way AHBIC functioned and their results were not worth supporting. Our company has largely shared this view and alternatively directed our funding into areas

industry it is our intention to ensure that the dollars we spend lead to the best possible outcomes. If you have any thoughts on this please email or phone me.

In addition to this offer to industry via this open article after my investigations, meeting in Canberra and discussions with the National Farmers Federation Beechworth Honey is prepared to pay the National Farmers Federation membership fees for AHBIC, or if they choose not to then FCAAA to become an associate member of the National Farmers Federation. As an industry we can join as associate members, or for that matter as private businesses (who can join also) if our industry body does not wish to, for between \$1750 and \$5000. The final figure is to be negotiated. I make the following case for industry consideration in offering to fund this fee.

1. NFF is not a replacement for AHBIC but would be a very cost effective means to progressing many of the critical issues that we face in a more professional manner to Government.
2. NFF has worked with numerous other agri political organisations and whilst we may think we are special – the problems we face in terms of functioning well are not unique to our industry or AHBIC. NFF has the ability to support us and assist us to facilitate our way through this difficult period we face.
3. Of the NFF's 25 objectives within its 4 key goals I can see common ground on at least 16 objectives. That means when NFF is lobbying governments on those 16 areas they add the issues of the Australian honey industry as an additional argument for the government to act in these areas. The biggest area here is in biosecurity.
4. NFF is a formidable lobbying body and has membership on a number of key government advisory groups and are widely consulted by a range of organisations. They have the ability to open doors for our issues, attend meetings with our industry representatives and suggest advise to us on how best to approach certain issues.
5. NFF have an effective record on handling a number of crises with the media. They have trained media advisors and could assist our industry in the event of unwanted media attention by making news killing holding statements.
6. Communication with other NFF member bodies could also aid our industry in working to achieve progress on issues which affect our industry, eg. Pesticide use and policy.
7. Given the possible value for cost to me this seems like a no brainer for industry.

Should industry decide collectively not to take up this opportunity Beechworth Honey will certainly be joining as a member individually anyway so hopefully some of these opportunities can be progressed but obviously the impact to Government will not be as strong as if our entire industry were behind the membership.

As an aside to this investigation I was advised a couple of days after my communication to a member of the AHBIC executive about the investigation of NFF that "NFF would not be an option". Surprisingly it seems that in 2 days, whilst

I was still waiting for the detailed information to come through from NFF prior to me setting up a meeting with them that AHBIC had been able to analyse the opportunity and determine that it would not add any value. During my meeting with NFF in Canberra I was advised a phone call had been received from AHBIC and the membership costs and benefits had been outlined. Given this I am therefore expecting considerable opposition to this idea from some quarters but hopefully beekeepers will consider moving motions at their state conferences if they believe that this is something that should be progressed. Should anybody be interested in educating themselves further on this matter I would be happy to photocopy and pass on the information pack provided to me by NFF, please email me or phone to request a copy. NFF have also expressed a willingness to conduct an information meeting for our industry to assist us in analysing the benefits of membership.

It would be possible for this to be arranged at the time of the AHBIC meeting sometime before or after the Queensland conference if there is will to do so.

Thankfully, even if AHBIC were not to exist we still have FCAAA and very passionate state associations behind it. I am optimistic that there are enough people out there who will move to fill the void that will be left as AHBIC reaches rock bottom. I am confident that enough people will want better than we have at the present time and will move to act.

Collectively I look forward to working to be part of this with anybody who chooses to be open minded enough to recognise that fundamentally nothing is wrong with the structure of AHBIC but rather the function and be happy to be part of changing this. Hopefully the realisation that there is not the will within Government at this time to save us, that we must save ourselves will bolster the support of more individuals to try again with new resolve as I said in my introduction.

In the meantime Steven and I will continue to do what we can by making the decisions to best utilize the means we have. With this task of writing these thoughts completed I can now go and spend Easter promoting Australian honey – no public holidays for us - this is our busiest time of the year with visitors coming from everywhere to our beautiful region. Long live Australian honey and Australian beekeepers! And I look forward to having my head chopped off and to talking to many of you about what we should all be doing!

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MYRTLE RUST INFORMATION

Industry & Investment NSW

Industry & Investment NSW has established a web portal for communication of Myrtle Rust information. Please see <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust>

The website will provide an additional means for communication of up to date information with the public and external stakeholders.

PEST ALERT - Have you seen Myrtle Rust?

If you see Myrtle Rust on any of these plants, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881.

Early detection is key to controlling this disease.

DO NOT move infested material as this can spread the disease.

DO call 1800 084 881 to report an outbreak.



Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangelii*) on *Agonis flexuosa*, cv. Afterdark (willow myrtle) Photo: Dr Angus Carnegie

A SERIOUS PATHOGEN

Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangelii*) is a newly described pathogen that is closely related to the Eucalyptus/Guava rusts. These rusts are serious pathogens of plants belonging to the family Myrtaceae including many iconic Australian natives like willow myrtle (*Agonis* sp.) and bottle brush (*Callistemon* sp.).

Myrtle Rust was recently detected on the NSW Central Coast on three species of native plants: *A. flexuosa* (willow myrtle) cv. 'Afterdark' and cv. 'Burgundy', *Syncarpia glomulifera* (turpentine) and *Callistemon viminalis* (bottle brush).

To date Myrtle Rust has not been found on Australian eucalypts

Overseas, it is also known to occur on *Syzygium jambos* (rose apple) and *Myrtus communis* (common myrtle).

The full host range of Myrtle Rust has not yet been determined and research efforts into the taxonomy and ecology of the pathogen are ongoing. At present, severe infestation has only been observed on Agonis Afterdark.

Myrtle Rust has been found on the NSW Central Coast and eradication and control measures have been implemented.

Surveillance efforts are also ongoing in the surrounding areas including nurseries and bushland.

How does Myrtle Rust infect plants?

Myrtle Rust infects leaves of susceptible plants producing spore-filled lesions on young actively growing leaves and shoots, as well as fruits and sepals. Leaves may become buckled or twisted as a result of infection. On turpentine and callistemon rust lesions are purple in colour, with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow spores. Older lesions may contain dark brown spores. Severe rust disease in young trees may kill shoot tips, causing loss of leaders and a bushy habit.

How does Myrtle Rust spread?

Rust spores travel very long distances on the wind and may infect stands of susceptible plants many kilometres from the original infestation. Rust spores are also gathered and spread by bees. These are natural means of spread that are difficult to control. Humans can also easily spread Myrtle Rust in infested plant material including cut flowers and nursery stock, on clothing and dirty equipment including containers and pruning shears, and on contaminated timber products. Always practise good hygiene when working with native plants and general nursery stock.

What can I do?

You can help stop the spread of Myrtle Rust:

- 1. Report any suspected detection to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881.**
- 2. Never move suspected contaminated or infested material unless directed by an officer of the NSW Government.**
- 3. Always practise good hygiene when working with native plants and general nursery stock. Clean equipment like containers and secateurs after use.**

APIMONDIA SUPPORTS HAITI BEEKEEPERS

Riccardo Jannoni-Sebastianini

Apimondia Secretary-General - Rome, 11 June 2010

Haiti is a Caribbean nation of 9 million people, sharing the island of Hispaniola with neighbouring Dominican Republic. According to United Nations data, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

On 12 January this year, Haiti suffered a catastrophic earthquake of magnitude 7.0, with the epicentre in the most populated part of the country, 25 km (16 miles) west of the capital city Port-au-Prince. Around 100,000 people lost their lives, while countless more lost their homes and possessions.



Bee hives in Haiti are made from the hollow trunks of palm trees.

Beekeepers in Haiti have been successfully keeping bees this way for a long time, perhaps since Spanish or French explorers first introduced bees 500 years ago. Today,

Haiti's bee populations are apparently healthy, with empty hives readily occupied by bees from the wild honey bee population.

Varroa is present.

Apimondia is raising funds to support beekeepers in Haiti to rebuild their lives after the devastating earthquake. Any funds that you can give will be sent direct to beekeepers in Haiti, to support them as they rebuild their lives.

Apimondia is working with Bees for Development Trust to raise funds for this appeal.

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The pictures shown here are kindly provided by Bo Sterk of Florida, who is assisting us with this appeal. All pictures © Bo Sterk

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