

AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 5 Number 6

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2012



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COVER: Vice-President Harold Saxvik & President Craig Klingner a

Photo: Dr Doug Somerville

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NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



Rob Michie, Harold Saxvik, Kate McGilvray, Craig Klingner, Neil Bingley, Casey Cooper

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 Ray Hull 02 6760 3634
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FEDERAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN APIARISTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FCAA)

Federal President: Robert McDonald
 19 Eleanor Drive Campbells Creek VIC 3451
 Ph: 03 5472 4973 Email: mcdonald.robert@y7mail.com

Interim Secretary/Treasurer: Trevor Weatherhead
 1416 Middle Road, Peak Crossing QLD 4306
 Ph: 07 5467 2135 Email: queenbee50@bigpond.com

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 Ph: 03 6331 0888 Email: lb@ozhoney.com.au

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 Email: helen.moffett@rirdc.gov.au Website: www.rirdc.gov.au

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Secretary: Kevin Webb, 184 Cavan Rd Dry Creek SA 5094 Ph: 08 8262 7555 Email: kevin.webb@springgullyfoods.com.au



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The State Executive has been very busy over the last two months. Honey production in the north has been only average if that and everyone is looking to the short budders to make this a reasonable season.

Amongst the day-to-day issues we are dealing with, on Wednesday 21 November an incursion of Asian Bees with *varroa jacobsoni* and not *destructor* detected, was discovered in Sydney. The swarm was located on the mast of a crane on a ship which had arrived from Singapore. Approximately 130 *varroa jacobsoni* were found in the swarm and last information I received no tracheal mites were present. The hive was destroyed successfully and its believed there were no escapees.

Surveillance has been upgraded in the immediate area with nothing found to date. It appears that the situation was dealt with well by our biosecurity people and hopefully that is the end! This incursion proves that Varroa could only be the next boat away from our shores and reinforces the need for all forms of border protection, surveillance and vigilance on our part.

The proposed constitutional changes are printed again in this edition; if anyone has any specific questions please don't hesitate to ask us.

Planning for the 2013 Sydney Show is well underway. It runs from 21 March to 3 April and we are urgently seeking both donations of honey and volunteers to help at the show stand. If you can help out at the show please contact Bruce White and let him know the days you can help. Entry to the show is provided to all volunteers as well as accommodation to volunteers traveling from country NSW. If you have some quality honey you wish to donate to NSWAA to be sold at the show, please contact either Neil Bingley or Casey Cooper.

The Annual Conference to be held in Merimbula on the 22-24 May 2013, is shaping up as one not to be missed. Already we have secured 2 key note speakers. Dr Mike Allsopp from South Africa will be speaking on beekeeping in South Africa and pests and diseases they have to deal with. Dr Jeff Pettis from the USDA will be giving talks on CCD in the United States and their Varroa experiences.

Other topics that will be covered are marketing the uniqueness of honey by Peter Bray from New Zealand and turning active honey into money for Australian beekeepers from Dr Shona Blair. On Wednesday night we will be holding a BBQ, Thursday night will be the wine and cheese night and the dinner on the Friday night. Please book your accommodation early to avoid disappointment.

The national approach to AFB management is slowly but surely gaining momentum. A workshop is going to be held in Canberra on 14/15 March 2013. Invites are going to all the heads of biosecurity sections in all the States, DPIs stakeholders of AHBIC and related federal bodies. The aim of the workshop is to act on a resolution from the last AGM which was unanimously supported by all stakeholders "That AHBIC consider a national approach to the control and management of AFB". A discussion paper is currently being prepared to stimulate thought and discussion and to suggest some possible ways forward.

The NSW Government is currently reviewing the Biosecurity Act and the Apiaries Act.

The biosecurity strategy appears to have been very rushed, we will be putting in a submission however as this is a very important issue. The Apiaries Act will be undergoing mostly minor changes. The biggest change will be the scrapping of the compensation levy. The proposed changes will be available for public comment early next year.

On the 19/20 November the State Executive met in Sydney. Along with the usual discussions, talks were held with Daniel Tuan from Forestry NSW and Justin Crosby and Peter Darley from NSW Farmers. The State-based Forestry Beekeeping Policy is taking shape and it is hoped a draft will be presented at the AGM in Merimbula. Transfer and application fees are set to be introduced; we are endeavouring to keep these to a minimum. There may also be changes to the way dropped sites are reallocated. Discussion with NSW Farmers is continuing on ways we can work together. It is hoped a deal can be struck so NSWAA can access some form of policy and lobby assistance.

On the 21 November Harold Saxvik and myself attended a meeting with Tim Scott, Chief of Staff and David Dawson Policy Advisor to the Minister for Agriculture, Katrina Hodgkinson.

Issues raised were:

- **Forestry**
The questionable audit process carried out on a beekeeper in the south of the State, forestry corporatisation, State based beekeeping policy and possible website for the booking of vacant bee sites.
- **AFB**
The continuing issues around the massive AFB problem and the inability for small but important industries like ours to raise funds to assist industry in any way.
- **LLS**
A new super department, Local Land Services (LLS), was announced two weeks ago and we sought some clarification about it. The big issue for our Industry is the future of TSRs. We will now be having input into the future of TSRs, a big resource for our Industry.
- **National Parks**
Access to resources in National Parks was raised, also with the Shooters and Fishers Party in the brief meeting with their staff. This is an issue we are currently pursuing.

On behalf of the Executive and Members I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to Terry Wilson on the recent death of his wife Lee. Terry was a former President of the NSWAA and we are thinking of him at this difficult time.

Once again we have a number of members on the sick list. Best wishes to all those who are not feeling well at the moment, our thoughts are with you.

On behalf of the Executive I would like to wish all our Members and their families Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Craig Klingner
State President



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NSWAA PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

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



NEW CONTACT DETAILS

Members are advised that the NSWAA has a new website address:
www.nswaa.com.au

AND a new email address:
info@nswaa.com.au

YOUR EXECUTIVE WORKING FOR YOU

The NSW Apiarists' Association Executive is working hard for you and the NSW apiary industry. This month they are addressing the following motions put forward and endorsed by industry at the 2012 Annual Conference.

Motion 2012/3

That the incoming Executive establish meaningful dialogue with relevant agencies with the aim of securing uniform regulations across forest NSW districts.

Motion 2012/5

That the Executive investigate the cost and value of employing a lobbyist.

FORESTS NSW

The Executive has been in discussions with Forest NSW and are conjointly developing a policy for the administration of Beekeeping Occupation Permits issued by Forests NSW. It is anticipated that a final draft will be presented at the Merimbula Conference in May 2013 for final endorsement by the NSW Apiary Industry.

In addition, the Executive together with Forests NSW has been addressing the specific conditions surrounding occupancy permit audits and the development of a consistent statewide policy.

LOBBYING SUPPORT

On the 20 November 2012 the Executive met again with NSW Farmers' Association Vice President Peter Darley and Policy Director Justin Crosby. This meeting further progressed the concept of utilising NSW Farmers' Association expertise and political networks to lobby on behalf of the NSW Apiary Industry. A proposal is now being refined and comment sought from the NSW Farmers' Association Board on the cost and value to both organisations.

Want any further information?

Please have a chat with any of your Executive Council members.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Andreas De Bruin
Dale Willemsen

Dapto
Corrimal

MERRY CHRISTMAS
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2013 SHOW

21 MARCH - 3 APRIL

PLEASE NOTE THESE DATES

Included in this edition is a form for volunteers for the Honeyland Stand at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

The Show is very early next year and will run from Thursday 21 March to Wednesday 3 April so be sure to mark it in your diary and let me know as soon as possible if you can help out and if you will require accommodation.

Accommodation will once again be at Ashfield Manor, Liverpool Road Ashfield. Accommodation is offered if required to volunteers if they live beyond the Wollongong, Mittagong, Katoomba and Newcastle areas. Inside these areas are serviced by good public transport.

Flexible working times will be allowed so those who volunteer can also see some of the show.

**The cut off date for accommodation is:
10 February 2013
but earlier notification would be appreciated**

We look forward to seeing you at the Show.

Bruce White
Show Coordinator
02 9634 6792
blwhite11@hotmail.com

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

Entries for the 2013 honey competition close on Wednesday 9 January 2013. Online entries close on Wednesday 16 January 2013

For a schedule or more information contact:

Elaine Rogers – Coordinator
Honey Competitions & Events
Phone: 02 9704 1449
Email: honey@rasnsw.com.au
Website: www.rasnsw.com.au

2013 CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

The Executive has invited several overseas speakers to the 2013 Conference. They will include the following: Dr Jeff Pettis from the US and Dr Mike Allsop from South Africa.

Dr Jeff S Pettis

USDA Agricultural Research Service, Beltsville, MD.



As research leader of the USDA-ARS Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, Jeff Pettis leads a team effort to improve colony health by limiting the impact of pests and diseases on honey bee colonies. His research areas include; IPM techniques to reduce the impacts of parasitic mites and disease, effects of pesticides and pathogens on queen health and longevity, host-parasite relationships and bee behavior. Dr. Pettis serves on several international committees concerning bee health and is frequently interviewed by the media for his opinions on worldwide pollinator declines. Dr. Pettis received an undergraduate and MS degree from the University of Georgia and his doctoral degree in Entomology from Texas A&M University in 1992.

Dr Mike Allsopp

Senior Researcher at the Agricultural Research Institute in Stellenbosch, South Africa and head of their honeybee programme since 1997.

Experiences with the Cape honeybee, African honeybee, commercial crop pollination and the varroa mite in Africa, and a longstanding collaborator with Dr Ben Oldroyd of the University of Sydney.

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Doug Somerville

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

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Bee Biosecurity

Wikipedia meaning: *Biosecurity is a set of preventative measures designed to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases, quarantined pests, invasive alien species, living modified organisms.*

Nick Annand and myself have conducted close to 20 courses on pest and diseases of honey bees over recent years. These courses were aimed at commercial beekeepers with about 80% of the participants in that category.

At the beginning and end of these courses we ask all participants to write down all the pests and diseases that they can think of and rate each in severity to their beekeeping operation. This can also include exotics and their potential impact on their beekeeping operation.

Consistently we have had American foulbrood (AFB) and varroa as the top two issues of concern. One is an endemic disease (AFB) and the other an exotic parasite (varroa mites). Both are lethal to a bee colony. Fortunately, with treatments and management, varroa can be effectively managed. On the other hand, antibiotic use to suppress AFB has not been practised in much of Australia. This decision has primarily been made to avoid residues in honey and a dependence on antibiotics that would evolve if the industry chose this course of action.

One of the responses from a participant at our pest and disease course sits in my memory when asked this question about which disease/pest is the most significant. The answer was "the pest/disease that is a problem now." The meaning of this response is

quite logical in as much as the disease or pest that threatens your bees today is the most significant.

Thus AFB and varroa become second place to small hive beetle or European foulbrood if either of these are causing colony losses now. What this suggests to me is that there is a range of pests and/or diseases that have the potential to seriously impact on your beekeeping enterprise.

Question:

Do you know what they are?

Do you know how to identify them?

Do you know how to manage each one of these threats?

If yes, then congratulations. If not, why not? They are your bees.

It's a point of frustration at times for me that with all the courses on offer, video clips and information sheets on the web, presentations at past meetings and field days on the specific subject of pests and diseases of honey bees, that I receive phone calls from beekeepers asking what is wrong with their bees. The person on the end of the phone was too busy to attend the recent event, sometimes only held a week before and now requires my one-on-one attention.

It is becoming more important every day for beekeepers to become familiar with all aspects of pest and disease management. There is no lack of material to assist in this area. Unlike cattle or sheep, beekeepers are not able to ring their local vet hoping for a farm visit. They are largely on their own.



The beekeeping industry has historically left the role of providing education to beekeepers up to the government DPI beekeeping staff. Recently bees were transferred from the Animal Health Australia organisation in Canberra to Plant Health Australia (PHA). This group (PHA) have taken a more active role and are endeavouring to produce extension material, particularly in the area of biosecurity for beekeepers.

Recently all NSW registered beekeepers were sent a parcel of publications containing the following:

- Covering letter from NSW DPI Apiary Staff
- Biosecurity Manual
- Managing AFB field guide
- Poster on varroa mites
- NSW Apiarists' Association brochure
- Amateur Beekeepers' Association brochure
- Bees in the Australian environment
- Letter from Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

The 60 page biosecurity manual was produced by Sam Malfroy from PHA. This publication covers information on keeping honey bees healthy, surveillance and management practices, with fact sheets on 13 of the more significant pests and diseases that affect honey bees.

This publication was sponsored by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC); Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL); Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC); Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Association (FCAAA) and The When Bee Foundation.

The field guide "Managing AFB" was produced by NSW DPI. This publication provides guidelines for the identification and management of American foulbrood, a fatal disease of honey bee colonies. The guide is A5 size with a glossy finish and designed to put in your car glove box if needed.

This publication brings together much of what we know about AFB, including many pictures featuring the signs and symptoms of AFB infection. The procedures for taking samples and managing a case of AFB are clearly discussed.

Make no mistake; AFB is a beekeeper's responsibility and not a government one.

You are legally required to report cases of AFB within 24 hours of becoming aware of your hives becoming infected.

The publication of this guide was made possible by sponsorship from the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, The When Bee Foundation, Capilano Honey, Saxvik Pollination Services, Monsons Honey and Pollination Services, and the Amateur Beekeepers' Association of NSW.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of myths around regarding managing the various diseases and pests of honey bees. Fortunately there is a lot of useful, well researched and balanced information on how to identify and manage these issues. These two publications have been made available free to all NSW registered beekeepers due to the generous support of the sponsors listed.

The use of sponsors is an interesting trend in itself. In the past there would have been government money available to produce such documents. Times are changing and without the generous support of individuals, organisations and companies, these publications would struggle to see the light of day.

In summary, **bee biosecurity is your responsibility**. Take the time to read and digest the publications produced by PHA and NSW DPI; it's in your best interest.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR UNUSUAL BEES

The identification of Asian honey bees at a port in Kurnell is a timely reminder to the community to be on the lookout for this potentially devastating pest.

Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Technical Specialist Bees, Dr Doug Somerville, said the bees were found on a bulk carrier and have now been destroyed by Commonwealth biosecurity officials.

"The Asian honey bee poses a significant risk to the State's apiarists and bee industry," Dr Somerville said.

"Asian bees are also potential hosts of parasites and disease, including varroa mites which are considered the most damaging parasite of honey bees in the world today.

"NSW has so far kept this pest at bay and it's critical people remain vigilant and on the lookout for unusual looking bees or swarms of bees.

"Asian honey bees are easily identified by a distinct stripy abdomen and are much smaller than the commonly-found honey bee."



Dr Somerville said the invasive pest impacts populations of European honey bees by competing for floral resources, robbing managed bee hives and transmitting disease.

"The bee can also be a major pest in urban areas by establishing nests and by its aggressive stinging behaviour," he said.

Dr Somerville said the bees were found on a bulk carrier, which sailed from Singapore and was ported at Kurnell.

"The varroa mites attached to the bees are believed to be the Varroa jacobsoni species, not the Varroa destructor," he said. "The bees were destroyed by a professional pest controller with beekeeping experience and samples have been sent for further diagnostic work.

"Authorities are confident that all bees have been destroyed and no swarms have escaped."

About the Asian honey bee

- Asian bees are considered as the most significant pest and competitor for resources of managed honey bees.
- There have been two incursions of Asian bees into northern Australia where they have established colonies.
- Asian bees have a very distinct stripy abdomen. The overall size of Asian bees is approximately two-thirds the size of honey bees.

People should report any unusual sightings of bees, along with any photos to: DPI Technical Specialist Bees, Doug Somerville (doug.somerville@dpi.nsw.gov.au or 02 4828 6619)

Media contact: Steve Green 6391 3686 or 0427 192 658

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When travelling in the National Parks, correct tyre pressure management can reduce the ground pressure of tyres from 95psi to 30psi, reducing track and environmental damage, resulting in less funds needed to maintain dirt road tracks. This can help beekeepers negotiate a greater area for hive sites. Logging Trucks already have an AS standard (AS4708) supporting the use of Central Tyre Inflation or Tyre Pressure Management to reduce track and environmental damage in the parks.



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CAPILANO HONEY MAKING BEELINE FOR GROWTH

thebull.com.au - 29/11/2012

Honey seller Capilano says it is actively buzzing for acquisition opportunities a day after announcing its offer to merge with West Australian honey distributor Wescobee.

Chairman Trevor Morgan told shareholders on Friday the board was exploring growth strategies and was hopeful of a more "realistic" share price since its listing on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) at the start of this financial year.

"The board and management are actively investigating opportunities to expand the company, be it by merger or acquisition with other businesses or the development of markets in other areas," he said in Brisbane.

Capilano Honey's annual general meeting comes a day after announcing an offer to merge with Wescobee, which sells and distributes honey primarily in the West Australian market.

Chief executive Ben McKee said in a statement on Thursday that Capilano did not have any operational presence in Western Australia, and argued a merger with Wescobee would help increase revenue and earnings before interest and taxes by combining honey packing and distribution operations.

Capilano's net profits fell by 43 per cent to \$2.55 million in the 2011/12 financial year, down from \$4.47 million in the corresponding period.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) at \$6.46 million were a slight improvement on the previous financial year's \$6.43 million result.

This was achieved as Capilano paid an average of \$3.30 a kilogram to suppliers in the year to June, up slightly on \$3.25 a kilogram during the previous financial year.

The meeting was also told that insurance covered for fire damage at Capilano's Richlands factory in southwest Brisbane during September, which destroyed more than 320 tonnes of honey.

Since July, Capilano has been listed on the ASX, after the Bendigo Stock Exchange advised it would become an exclusive trading house for clean technology companies.

"Hopefully, combined with continued good results, the increased level of exposure accorded by listing on the ASX and the ease of electronic trading, we should see the share price reflect a more realistic valuation for Capilano shares," Mr Morgan said.

Capilano avoided a first strike on the remuneration report with 12 per cent of proxies voting against \$706,765 being spent on salaries for the company's four key directors.

The level of opposition was well below the 25 per cent level that triggers a board spill if the same result is replicated the following year.

INTERNATIONAL HONEY UPDATE

November 2012 - www.skamberg.com

In The 2011 US honey crop was down 16% from the 2010 crop, and overall US honey crop prices rose 7% in 2011. During the first few months of 2012, the remnants of the 2011 honey crop were selling at extremely high prices.

The early 2012 US honey crop entered the market at price levels about 7% higher than the same period for the 2011 crop. The 2012 US honey crop is still coming in, and projections for this honey crop are at approximately 156 million pounds. While this is much better than last year's dismal 148 million pound crop, it is well below early spring crop projections of about 170 million pounds. Demand for this honey has been high and we have seen prices for this honey continue to escalate with offerings as high as 15 % higher than the 2011 crop.

A worldwide shortage of bees, increased consumer demand, and diminishing forage area for bees to gather nectar have all contributed to a worldwide honey shortage. Price offerings in the world market range from 4% to 12% higher than last year at this time. With the US Customs and the Justice Dept. cracking down on "honey laundering", shipments of fraudulent honey entering the US has slowed. This stopped a lot of the very low priced honey that was entering the US market and has narrowed the gap on the two tiered honey pricing that we have seen for several years. Much depends on each subsequent countries honey crop as it enters the world market, with good crops helping to stabilize prices and poor crops driving prices higher.

Vietnam - The use of carbendazim to fumigate rubber tree plants and cashews has changed honey production in Vietnam. Vietnam beekeepers have moved their bees to other floral sources. The result is darker, stronger flavoured honey that will be shorter in supply.

Canada - The demand for Canadian honey is at an all time high and their prices reflect US raw honey prices.

Argentina - With the GMO pollen issue in Europe, more Argentina honey entered the US market this year. Much of this honey was light amber and helped to alleviate some of the short US light amber honey supply. While some of the GMO pollen issues are resolved, much of the 2013 Argentina honey crop should find its way into the US market.

Brazil - Always a good source for high quality honey, Brazil continues to produce a steady volume of honey. Brazilian honey prices continue to rise as the demand for their honey continues to grow.

Mexico - Mexican honey is still in high demand by Europe, but their volume seems to be growing, and more of this honey is entering the US market.

India - With due diligence in testing for residues, adulteration, lead, and country of origin, India is a good source of honey. India produces a good volume of white, extra light amber, and light amber honey. While the European ban on this honey was lifted over a year ago, a large volume of this honey still enters the US market.

China - While some Chinese honey still enters the US market, both legally and illegally, most of this honey now goes to Europe.

NICK'S NEWS

from DPI NSW

Nick Annand

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



Incursion at Kurnell

Three days prior to writing this article, the need for an effective port surveillance program for honey bees was highlighted with the discovery of a swarm of Asian bees (*Apis cerana*) on a bulk carrier (oil tanker) that had docked at Kurnell in Sydney. The ship had come directly from Singapore. Ten live and dead bees had been found on the deck when an inspection of the ship was carried out by DAFF Biosecurity officers. On one of these bees a varroa mite, later identified as *Varroa jacobsoni*, was found. A further inspection was performed and a swarm of around 2,000 bees was located on an overhead crane. These bees were exterminated by a pest controller/beekeeper and collected for further examination. Well done by DAFF Biosecurity and the officers who detected the Asian bee incursion.

This does highlight the need for vigilance for our border protection and the need for a backup of this system through surveillance programs based around the ports across Australia. These bees had come a large distance on a ship that would generally be considered lower risk compared to container ships. It shows just how easily a swarm could come over from New Zealand on any type of vessel and arrive in Australia bringing with it *Varroa destructor*.

We have mites in our hives

For the sentinel hive program around the country two types of samples are collected.

One is a sample of 30-50 bees that are collected in methylated spirits (the metho is drained before posting) in a sample jar and submitted for examination. These bees are dissected and examined for the exotic internal mite, *Acarapis woodi* or commonly known as tracheal mite. These are small mites that reside in the breathing tubes (trachea) of the bee located at the front of the thorax.

The other sample technique is a sticky mat which is placed on the bottom board of the hive, with a wire mesh covering it to prevent bees getting stuck to it. This is used in combination with miticide strips which are placed in the brood box for between 24-48 hours (as per APVMA permit for surveillance use). The idea being, any external bee mites present on the bees will fall off as a result of coming in contact with the miticide and get stuck on the mat on the bottom board. The sticky mats are removed and submitted for inspection for any exotic bee mites such as varroa or tropilaelaps.

This process of examining the samples from the sentinel hives used to be done by Denis Anderson of CSIRO free of charge for many of the states (thanks Denis). The retirement of Denis from CSIRO mid way through this year (2012) required alternative arrangements and so I have taken on this job for samples collected in NSW.

Denis provided basic training to a range of government staff from across Australia on the identification of bee parasites at a workshop conducted at the When Bee Foundation in May 2012.

Recent inspection of sticky mats revealed something I had not seen previously. This mat had a lot of plant debris which I assume the bees had unintentionally carried in. On closer inspection of this trash a small amount of movement was noticed, and on closer examination of the

sticky mat under a microscope a very large population of mites could be seen. Knowing they were not mites of significance to the beekeeping industry such as varroa or tropilaelaps, but interested in what they were, I sent some away for identification.

The finding came back as *Tyrophagus* species or more commonly known as mould mites. These types of mites are considered cosmopolitan being found throughout the world. A number of different species of this mite have been identified within bee hives. These mites are often in the trash in the bottom of hives as I found. They are considered house guests of the hive causing no known problems to the bees. Who knows, they may even be beneficial to the hive environment. Many of the different species are quite generalist in their feeding habits. They get their common name from eating moulds but the diet is mixed. These mites can be found in a large variety of stored foods. The lifecycle is very temperature dependant but egg to adult usually takes one to three weeks and they can live for numerous months. They like warm humid conditions to live and breed. The females can lay between 100-700 eggs in her lifetime.



This picture taken from the internet. It was suspected of being a *Tyrophagus* sp. of mite similar to what was seen under the microscope.

The mites were so small I was unable to see any detail of the mite with the naked eye. They were clear to white in colour. So next time you examine your hives think of the range of life that hive supports and think how fortunate we currently are in Australia that we only have the harmless mould mites in our hives and not those other nasty mites.

NSW DPI Update

There have been a lot of major changes to the structure of NSW DPI during November, as no doubt many of you have heard and seen in the media, with many jobs being either moved or lost in the creation of the new structure. Many of the extension positions from NSW DPI are going to the newly evolving Local Land Services (LLS) that is combining services from Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's), NSW DPI and the LHPA's. In relation to Doug Somerville and myself we have retained our position within NSW DPI. Currently we will both remain where we are but there is talk of the closure of the Bathurst Research Station where I am based but how long this will take is unknown.



Left: True Blue. 60ft catamaran. New 2011 Furuno Electronics allowing us to pinpoint fish from the flybridge! Comfortable indoor lounge area. Separate Ladies and Gents onboard toilets.



Right: Sea Eagle. 43ft Pro Fisher Stebercraft. Sea Eagle is a 43ft Pro Fisher Stebercraft. Powered by a 550hp Iveco engine she comfortably cruises at 15 knots. 2010 Furuno electronics allow us to put you onto the fish then the rest is up to you. Onboard toilet.

Pre and Post Conference Fishing Trips

Does 8 hours fishing on one of the pictured boats appeal to you?
The Southern Tablelands Branch is organizing pre and post Conference fishing trips.
True Blue can accommodate 15 people and Sea Eagle 14 people.

Monday 20th May and Saturday 25th May 2012.

Departure time: 7am from the Merimbula Marina

Cost \$120 per person

\$60 deposit will secure your spot with the balance to be paid before 01/05/2013

Contact Neil Bingley for more information.

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NSWAA STATE CONFERENCE MERIMBULA 2013

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In conjunction with the NSWAA/AGM the Southern Tablelands Branch is organising entertainment for non participants / partners

Thursday 23rd May

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The changing face of Varroa

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*included with all full registrations
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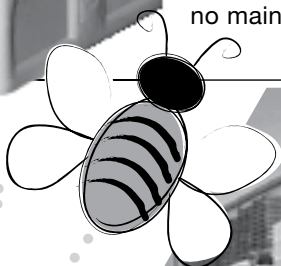
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Honeybee R&D News



Chairman's Foreword

Michael Hornitzky, Chairman, RIRDC Honeybee Advisory Committee

American foulbrood (AFB) is the major endemic honeybee disease in Australia. More money has been spent on the control of this disease by State Departments of Primary Industries (SDPIs) than on any other honeybee disease. However, with budget cuts to State Governments and a change of policy which is aimed at reducing government involvement in endemic animal disease control, the onus is now on industry to take the lead in determining the path to be taken for AFB control. To facilitate this transition an AFB workshop is being organized by AHBIC, Plant Health Australia (PHA) and the RIRDC, Honeybee Advisory Committee (HAC) in February/March 2013 at which representatives from industry, SDPIs and scientists will aim to formulate a national AFB control strategy.

An obstacle preventing industry from being more actively involved in biosecurity issues is a lack of funds. AHBIC recently requested that the feasibility of a "Bee pest biosecurity and management levy" be considered. The HAC recently approved funding for a project to address this issue. The three objectives of the project are:

1. Test the case for a 'Bee pest biosecurity and management levy' on all beekeepers, plus the cost of levy collection/compliance.
2. An assessment of which organisation/s would be most appropriate to collect the levy, taking into account the appetite of the organisations to collect the levy and the likely cost of levy collection and compliance.
3. Obtain an indication of the level of in-principle support by States and Territories for a 'Bee pest biosecurity and management levy' on beekeepers to be collected by the most appropriate organisation/s identified.

The project, being conducted by Terry Ryan, is expected to be completed in early 2013.

Nine preliminary research proposals (PRPs) have been submitted to the HAC for funding. The majority of the projects relate to pest and disease protection including subjects such as improving knowledge on pathogens of Australian honeybees, varroa, remote bee poisoning and small hive beetle. One project relating to productivity and profitability enhancement, and one project dealing with extension, communication and capacity building were also received. These proposals will be considered at the next HAC meeting which is to be held in early November in Melbourne. This year we received only about half the number of PRPs that were received last year.

The New Zealand Institute for Plant & Food Research Limited has recently announced that the Ruakura bee team has successfully produced colonies of bees carrying a trait (Varroa Sensitive Hygiene – VSH) that gives the bees an ability to clean their hives of varroa naturally, offering the potential to reduce chemical use in the colonies and to slow the build-up of chemical resistance.

The eight-year breeding project, led by Michelle Taylor, is now complete and the VSH bee colonies have been transferred to industry although there are still a few years of work to be done for this trait to become a successful varroa control tool.

The Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry has recently given approval for queen bees to be imported from New Zealand into Australia. This change of policy may facilitate the importation of queens carrying the VSH trait when they become available.

Other items included in this newsletter are:

1. Research in Progress 2011 – 2012 Honeybee and Pollination Programs,
2. Pollination of Crops in Australia & New Zealand Manual, a project funded by the Pollination Program,
3. Finding and Reporting Varroa poster. This poster is currently being distributed to every registered beekeeper in Australia, inside the front cover of PHA's 'Biosecurity Manual for the Honey Bee Industry' (funded by the Pollination Program); and
4. Another one of RIRDC's program's (Pasture Seeds) report on Native Australian Bees as Potential Pollinators of Lucerne.

Current R&D Committee

Dr Michael Hornitzky (Chair)	(02) 4651 2729
Prof. Ben Oldroyd	(02) 9351 7501
Prof. Boris Baer	(08) 6488 4495
Ben Hooper	0407 820 474
<i>Senior Research Manager</i>	
Dr Dave Alden	(02) 6271 4128
<i>Program Coordinator</i>	
Helen Moffett	(02) 6271 4145

New RIRDC Honeybee-related Publications



Honeybee and Pollination Completed Projects in 2011-12 and Research in Progress at June 2012

Publication No: 12-067

Authors: RIRDC Honeybee and Pollination Programs

Published: 26 Sep 2012

Free download

Honeybee and Pollination RIRDC Completed Projects in 2011-12 and Research in Progress at June 2012 contains short summaries of projects funded by the Honeybee and Pollination Programs.

Native Australian Bees as Potential Pollinators of Lucerne

Publication No: 12-048

Authors: Katja Hogendoom, Mike Keller

Published: 6 Oct 2012

\$25.00 (38 pages) or free download

The seed lucerne industry in Australia produces around \$AUD 38 million worth of seeds annually. It is generally recognised that improved pollination would increase yield. This report summarises a proof-of-concept study to investigate the efficacy of some common Australian native bee species to pollinate lucerne. Over the course of two years, the project evaluated the utility of some bees for the pollination of lucerne in captivity and in the field, and investigated methods to enhance these bees in the crop environment.

This report is relevant to the pasture seeds industry in particular and more generally to growers of crops that profit from bee pollination (e.g. lucerne, canola, cotton, and many horticultural crops).



Pollination of Crops in Australia and New Zealand

Publication No: 12-059

Author: Mark Goodwin

Published: 5 Oct 2012

\$35.00 (136 pages) or free download

Compared with the other growing practices required to produce a crop, pollination is often the most poorly managed. For many crops this places limitations on production. This Pollination Manual provides growers with a range of tools that can be used to assess the levels of pollination their crops receive. It also provides growers and beekeepers with methods that can be used to better manage, and optimise, pollination. It also discusses how to protect pollinators introduced to orchards.

Finding and Reporting Varroa Poster

Publication No: 12-058

Author: RIRDC and HAL Pollination Program

Published: 24 Jul 2012

Free download only – no hard copies available

The Varroa mite is expected to decimate bee populations when it reaches our shores – something experts say is inevitable. However, with early detection and good hive management, Australia's honey and pollination industries can continue to prosper. Regular inspections are a key part of maintaining hive health. Unless identified early Varroa could spread quickly, making it almost impossible to eradicate. It's therefore vital that all beekeepers are aware of Varroa and its symptoms and immediately report any sightings. This poster will assist beekeepers to monitor hives and identify varroa mite.



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Single stacks can be secured with tape, or double emlocks

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Please note that any deliveries not meeting the above requirements will not be irradiated until the owner has resolved the issues



We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you in the near future

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FOOD FRAUD TACKLED BY FORENSIC SCIENTISTS

By Anna-Louise Taylor BBC Food

Wine, spirits, meat and even baby food can all be faked, with fraudsters hiding their true origins. Now forensic scientists are clamping down on food fraud, which costs millions in lost revenue and can put the health and safety of the public at risk.

Imagine tucking into a fine fillet of “British” beef, only to learn it actually came from Australia. Or drinking “French” wine that actually came from California.

What if the “Italian” olive oil you pour over the accompanying salad originated in Morocco? That might not be so bad, you may think.

But what if a bottle of vodka you’d purchased in good faith is tainted with methanol, making it lethal to drink? Or the baby food you feed your youngest is not what the label on the jar said it is?

As global trade has increased, so has the potential for food fraud, where fraudsters lie or hide the true provenance of produce.

Alongside food safety and health fears, it raises concerns over quality control, reputational damage and lost revenue, and puts the spotlight on illegal activity.

Now some firms are taking to using scientists, a type of food “crime scene investigators”, to tackle the issue.

Faking it

In a world where food is exported and imported every day, how do you prove that the origin of a product is legitimate?

A company in New Zealand has developed a scientific origin system which maps and catalogues “food fingerprints”.

“What we do needs to be able to stand up in court,” says Dr Helen Darling, from Oritain.

Most food supply chains use predominantly paper-based systems to trace the origin of food, such as following barcodes.

But while these show the route a product has travelled and how, and “whatever kind of details you want to capture in that system”, says Dr Darling, Oritain’s proof of origin “cannot be faked”.

Oritain’s scientific liaison officer Rebecca McLeod says it ties food and drinks back to their geographic origin, by measuring the geochemical fingerprint of say, an apple, as well as the fingerprint of the soil it grew in, and that of the surrounding atmosphere.

“We look at the concentrations of a whole suite of different metal elements - present in the soil, and get introduced by things like fertilisers, and taken up by plants, and we can trace them to animals that eat plants as well.

“The likelihood of two regions having exactly same soil type and fertilisers is very very slim,” she says.

The firm also can analyse some manufactured products, in “batch profiling”.

“Something like infant formula or wine produced in a factory incorporates lots of different ingredients. We can characterise each batch of that product, based on the geochemical signature,” explains Ms McLeod.

Once the food or drink profile has been developed, it is recorded and safely stored.

EU food quality schemes:

- **PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)** guarantees products such as **Stilton cheese** which must be produced, processed and prepared within their original geographical area using traditional methods
- **PGI (Protected Geographical Indication)** protects products such as **Cornish Pasties** which are linked to a geographical area where at least one stage of production, processing or preparation must take place
- **TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed)** protects products with traditional names not restricted to a geographical area

Source: EU agricultural product quality policy

“Once we’ve got that in place, it’s a quick process to analyse a suspect sample that is sent to us. The idea is we do all of the groundwork before there’s a problem,” she explains.

Each product is given a unique number which can be displayed on packaging or stickers.

Dr Helen Darling says it enables quick comparisons to root out any goods that aren’t “true to label”.

“Whilst our logo itself can be counterfeited, any product with our label on it or our brand on it, we would have authentic data and an authentic archive sample of that product. If we don’t, we know immediately that it’s a counterfeit product - that in itself is a deterrent to people.”

In the Czech Republic last month, distilled alcohol was tainted with methanol, causing the deaths of 19 people.

The government imposed prohibition as authorities tried to trace the origin of the poisonous alcohol (believed to be vodka), with great difficulty.

Would an origin system have made it easier?

The EU does have an agricultural product quality policy, which allows foods and drinks to be assigned a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) or Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) category.

But this only applies to certified products and would not have helped in the case of counterfeit alcohol.

However, Rebecca McLeod says Oritain’s scientists could look at the isotopic content of the water in alcohol products, analyse it and come up with a fingerprint for spirits such as whisky and vodka.

This technique would only work pre-emptively.

She says while it hasn't analysed any top shelf spirits yet, it has catalogued wine for clients.

One of those is Antonio Pasquale, a winemaker based in north Otago, New Zealand.

He has become increasingly frustrated that wine produced in the country is allowed to be mixed with other vineyards' - laws there state if a label says the wine is from a particular grape variety, vintage or area, then at least 85% in the bottle must be from that variety, vintage or area.

Oritain scientists have been working with beekeepers to map honey origins.



"The structure of the free market pushes all food companies to standardise the product year in and year out. The lack of differences is destroying the individuality," he explains.

"I had enough of this. They (Oritain) came and sampled two blocks of 40 acres... mapped the chemical structure of my paddocks, and from then on they had freedom to come to my winery and collect samples.

"So I have solid proof that all my wine, as I say it is, comes from my paddock."

In Southeast Asia provenance is becoming more important, as "there are millions and millions of bottles of falsified wine sold in China," says Mr Pasquale.

"Wine was sold where produced in California but with French wine labels," he says.

China is no stranger to food scandals. But consumers are demanding higher standards of certification and proof of origin after infant formula was sold tainted with melamine in the country.

HONEY IS ANOTHER EASILY FAKED FOOD

"Some honeys being sold around the world have had sugars added, there have been honeys supplied with traces of antibiotics in them and some honeys have not been 'true to label' (the pollen source has been different to what has been recorded on the label)," explains Peter Cox, the general manager for New Zealand Honey Specialties.

The company is also asking scientists to profile their produce, which includes single flower honeys such as thyme honey, and honey produced in the beech forests of the south Island, or the lakes in Central Otago.

"Getting from beehive to the palette, we have a real story around authenticity. Certainly it's a rigorous scientific process," he says.

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THE RULES REDUX

by Randy Oliver - ScientificBeekeeping.com

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

My recent article, "The Rules for Successful Beekeeping," got more response (overwhelmingly favorable) than all my previous articles combined! (I've received requests to reprint it in several foreign countries, including a translation into Serbian!). What I also discovered is that there are a few beekeepers suffering from advanced cases of HDD—Humor Deficit Disorder. This is cause for concern, as a good sense of humor is critical for successful and enjoyable beekeeping!

Reason and Common Sense

Two things inspired me to write that article:

1. The dismay and confusion that I hear from newbies about making sense of rigid and conflicting rules as to how they "should" keep their bees, and
2. The pleas that I've heard from beekeeper after beekeeper about their local club being hijacked by some cadre of well-meaning, but fervent "true believers" in some particular set of rules.

I'm seeing a problem—there's currently a huge resurgence of hobby beekeeping, *yet our bee researchers and extension apiculturists are so afraid of offending someone, that they don't dare publicly speak their minds about some of the fads and cockamamie ideas being promulgated to naïve beginners.* So I took it upon myself to do the offending! (Yes, the sentence above was intentionally offensive, just to make sure that I get this article off to a good start. That's my kind of humor.)

In my articles, I'm generally not much one for judging or criticizing others, but I wanted to make the point that there is no one "right" way to keep bees. I decided to follow the style of the American revolutionary Thomas Paine, who, in his essays "The Age of Reason" and "Common Sense," humorously and irreverently pointed out the fallacies and inconsistencies of the reigning institutionalized religious dogma.

I was looking for a way to get the attention of folk who just go a little bit overboard with their zeal to impose their belief system upon other beekeepers. I had heard the term "Beekeeper Taliban" from a correspondent in the U.K., and felt that it was perfect for humorously describing some of the more fervent proselytes.

What I had hoped to accomplish with the Taliban analogy was that it would get some of the more adamant rule makers to look at themselves in the mirror, and perhaps see that there was more than one path to Beekeeper Enlightenment. I had hoped that by rationally discussing some common misconceptions, that they might rethink their dogma. And maybe I did get into their faces a bit, but that's my nature—I'm not forcing anyone to read my articles!

To my surprise, I found that certain beekeepers suffer from serious HDD, and missed the entire points of my article, which were *"lighten up, allow others to keep bees any way they wish, and that the only 'rules' that the bees follow are those set by Mother Nature."*

Unfortunately, some folk were so offended that I received a few excoriating emails and phone calls. My intent was not to incite divisiveness or defensiveness (as I feel that most all beekeepers have essentially the same end goals) but rather to provoke some of the more rigid practitioners into introspection.

Ross Conrad begins the preface to his excellent and popular book *Natural Beekeeping* with an appropriate quote from

Francis Bacon: *Read not to contradict nor to believe, but to weigh and consider.*

I am in total agreement! I'm not trying to convert anyone to anything, nor to be disrespectful to any school of thought. But it's clear that at least some readers misunderstood what I was trying to accomplish! With that in mind, I'd like to address some of the comments by my critics, as the last thing that I want to do is to polarize the beekeeping community.

Critic: *"When you call a group a Taliban it does give it a harsh feeling. I think it is wrong to compare a group of beekeepers to a group of suicide bombers. It doesn't matter if they are saying there is only one way of beekeeping."*

The Taliban analogy was simply about rigidity and righteousness, and imposing one's beliefs upon others. And I feel that it *does* matter if they don't let beginning beekeepers know that there are other viable and ecologically-sound options. (The above critic actually cancelled a speaking engagement of mine after reading the article—that is Taliban-like behavior (the decision was later rescinded)).

Critic: *"If someone doesn't agree with your rules, then you call them the Taliban!"*

As for "my" rules—that bees need good food and a warm, dry cavity, and suffer when exposed to parasites and toxins—these rules are set by Mother Nature, not by Randy Oliver! My Taliban analogy wasn't about any particular set of rules, but rather about anyone forcing their own belief system down the throats of others.

The Rules of Nature

Paul Newman, in the role of Butch Cassidy, gave a succinct and eloquent demonstration of the rules of knife fighting in a scene of that namesake movie (there ain't any rules). The same applies to Nature. As a biologist, I do not have the romantic perception of a benevolent and harmonious Nature that some embrace—Nature is an ever-evolving tooth-and-nail fight without rules, in which only the most fit survive, and in which the "normal" yearly death rate of "wild" colonies of bees exceeds a commercial beekeeper's worst nightmares!

In Nature, whatever works, wins the fight (and it is a constant fight for resources, in a contest against members of your own species, other competitors, predators and parasites). *In the case of the honey bee, the species is in serious competition with humans* for suitable forage, as we convert productive land to pavement, housing, lawns, and pesticide-laden monocultural cropland unsuitable for bee survival. In addition, we have imported a slew of new parasites that have added serious challenges to bee health overall. I myself feel that we owe it to the bee to help it deal with problems that we ourselves have created.

The better that one understands the reality of the rules of Nature, the better one can then adjust their management practices to be successful at beekeeping in their particular situation and environment. When I teach beekeeping classes,

I begin by telling my students that I am not going to give them any rules whatsoever; instead, I explain bee biology and behavior so that *they* can make appropriate management decisions of their own. If one bases their methods upon the natural rules that bees invariably follow, then even in these days, beekeeping can be successful and profitable.

The Facts

Critic: *"I just read your 'Rules for Scientific [sic] Beekeeping' piece and if you genuinely believe that pile of nonsense, then you really should drop 'scientific' from your domain."*

As always, I implore my readers to point out any factual errors in any of my articles, as I am eager to correct them! I've got no position to support, and only wish to share accurate information to all beekeepers, no matter their particular philosophy.

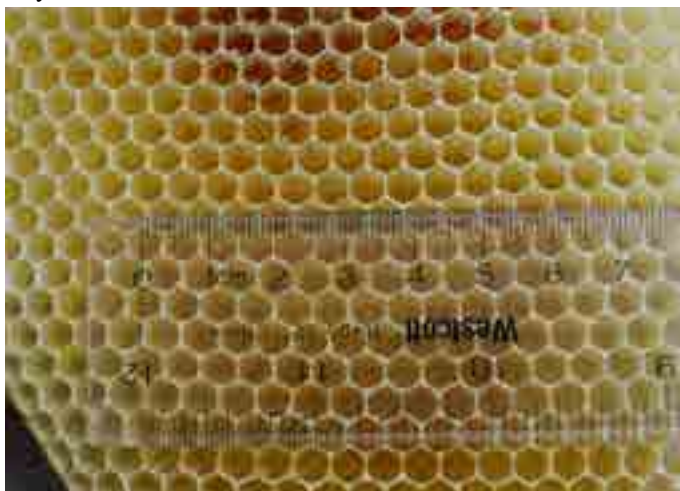
He continues: *"This sort of rhetoric not [only] undermines your entire argument, but paints you as a reactionary lashing out at what you fear."*

Actually, what I fear are people who allow their emotions to overcome their reason!

Folks, I claim the right to speak frankly and openly since I've run the gamut from being an extreme green "alternative" hobby beekeeper to a professional migratory pollinator, queen breeder, and honey producer. I pride myself upon keeping an open mind, and being able to look at things objectively. I assess these issues through the eyes of a scientist, tempered by my experience in the school of hard knocks.

Pragmatism

I write for an audience that has a specific outcome in mind—keeping healthy, productive colonies of bees in a profitable manner. Thus, all of my management suggestions are outcome based—meaning that they've been tested and demonstrated to make a measurable improvement in colony health or production. I do not write to support any particular philosophy or "faith." I don't tweak my facts to suit my opinions or prejudices; rather, I try to understand why some beekeeping practices work, and why others don't.



Small cell foundation sure sounds like an easy and natural way to control varroa mites; regrettably, several scientific studies (reviewed in Seeley 2010) found that it had no effect! Despite its apparent lack of efficacy, some still cling to it as an article of "faith" (oh, that statement's gonna tick some folk off!). Until I see a single *controlled* trial in which colony survival is better in the small cell group, I must remain skeptical. I grabbed a naturally-built comb out of one of my hives for this photo--note that the cell spacing is the same 5.4mm as in standard foundation.

I generally go out of my way in my articles to be non judgmental, and to keep my opinions to myself. The old saw goes that if you ask ten beekeepers how to do something, that you'll get at least a dozen different answers. But simply believing that something's gotta work doesn't necessarily make it true in real life—I've heard many management suggestions that make complete sense when you first hear them, but upon deeper analysis run contrary to natural bee behavior, and often work *against* the bees! To me, the bottom line is, is the advocated method consistently successful? Does it result in healthy colonies that produce a harvestable honey crop, and then survive until the next season

One thing that bothers me is the vast amount of questionable beekeeping recommendations on the Web, and the fuzzy thinking

behind some of the management advice being promoted to "save the bees." Much of this advice is based upon wonderful idealism, or a fairy-tale version of Nature, or the anthropomorphizing of bee behavior. I, on the other hand, am a hard data kind of guy.

The Soul of the Hive

Hey, I love the magic and mystery of bees and beekeeping, and never lose the thrill that I get when I open a hive and peer into the heart of the superorganism that we call the honey bee colony. I doubt that there is an experienced beekeeper alive who isn't enchanted by the vibe of an apiary working a spring flow, or who doesn't recognize the vibrant soul of a growing colony with a fresh young queen!

That's all the poetry you're going to get! I suggest that the reader question any management recommendation based upon how bees *must feel*, or *must think*. Let me tell you, it is a huge mistake to anthropomorphize bees! Bees are not humans, and live in a totally different reality. I suggest that you read my articles *The Economy of the Hive* and *The Primer Pheromones*, to better understand the actual rules that govern bee behavior.

The bee books often refer to colony "morale." This is about as close as you are going to get as far as hearing a scientist or commercial beekeeper talk about the soul of the hive, but I suggest that the two terms are synonymous—the best beekeepers are those who have that special "feel" for colony morale, and work to maintain it.

And again, most of colony morale goes back to Nature's four rules: nutrition, cavity, parasites, and toxins. And add to that the condition of the queen—communicated to the colony by her pheromone output (see James Bach's recent articles in this Journal). So I question rules that prohibit requeening, and suspect that they were written at a desk, not by someone actually immersed in an apiary.

It is a lovely romantic notion that a colony will "mourn" the loss of their dear queen mother. But the reality is that they will supersede her in a heartbeat should she begin to fail, and that introducing a vibrant young queen generally gives a colony a new lease on life. So I just can't see why some "natural" beekeeping rules prohibit beekeepers from raising daughters from their best queens, so that their offspring will be suitable for local conditions and can deal with local parasites and pests.



The “soul” of this hive is filled with love—you can see it in the way that the nurses form a tight retinue around this queen. But they don’t care whether the queen is their natural mother or not!

My point here is that arbitrary rules about how one *should* keep bees often more reflect the prejudices of the beekeeper, rather than the actual biological responses of the bees.

“Saving the Bees”

When CCD hit the press, and thus the public’s attention, folk came out of the woodwork with ideas that they were sure would “cure” CCD (I got dozens of emails and phone calls from them). Although these people are earnest and well-meaning, most of them have not made the effort to really understand just how their method applies to the reality of bee biology.

In truth, there is little evidence that the bees actually need “saving”—worldwide, the number of managed colonies is increasing, there have recently been enough live hives for almond pollination, and feral populations are rebounding in a number of areas. Many of us, even those using “standard” beekeeping practices that focus upon good animal husbandry, maintain thriving apiaries (ironically often selling replacement bees each year to those very beekeepers who are on a quest to teach us how to better keep bees!).

Critic: “*The fate of bees does not rely on man; the fate of man relies on honeybees.*”

Very poetic, but hardly true! The Native Americans had thriving agricultural societies in the absence of *Apis mellifera*—mankind could well exist without honey bees. Conversely, the fate of the honey bee in certain areas has much to do with man, as it is through our actions of habitat destruction, monocropping, environmental pollution, overstocking, and pathogen transportation that many of today’s bee problems arise.

On the other hand, I don’t understand what makes people think that proven management practices that for decades resulted in healthy, productive hives were suddenly responsible for CCD! Langstroth was a keen observer of the nature of bees, and his hive design has been so successful because it is based upon natural principles of bee behavior. Similarly, bees thrived (and still thrive) on comb foundation. I’m not saying that either couldn’t be improved, but there are tradeoffs—e.g., deeper combs result in heavier boxes, and naturally-drawn combs are not interchangeable throughout the hive, as the bees tend to build different cell sizes in different areas of the cavity and dependent upon the immediate needs of the colony.

Similarly, there are races of bees that naturally migrate to better pasture, so blaming CCD on migratory practices per se is plain silly. Same with the feeding of sugar syrup—bees thrive on sugar syrup, since their main source of nutrition is pollen (I’m not so sure about various high fructose corn syrups). I avoided feeding bees sugar syrup or pollen sub for twenty years, instead moving them seasonally to better pasture. That worked great! But then I got tired of the trucking, and found that sugar syrup is like a magic wand in beekeeping, and can be used judiciously with incredible results. Ditto with pollen substitute, especially in our dry California summers. Reality trumped philosophy!

Natural Beekeeping

Critic: “*It sounds like you’re down on natural beekeepers.*”

Nothing could be further from the truth! **Please allow me to emphatically state that I support “natural beekeeping.”**

What I have a problem with is when it becomes a religion. I’ve got the same problem with organic gardeners—despite the fact that I’m an organic gardener myself, and that I keep apiaries on organic farms, I’d like to suggest that perhaps some proponents could serve it up with a little less self righteousness. As a good example, I think that Ross Conrad did a nice job of presenting natural beekeeping without being too heavy handed. I also peruse other natural beekeeping websites for ideas, although all suffer from a lack of hard data to support their conclusions.

This is the main problem with making sense of “natural” beekeeping methods—it’s hard to tell which are snake oil and which are truly effective, unless someone has actually compared a dozen test hives against a dozen controls in the same yard, holding all other variables the same. Without such simple trials, proponents of any particular method are just talking out of their hats.

However, my feeling is that “natural” & “organic” beekeepers are on the forefront of developing apiary management techniques that are sustainable and ecologically friendly. In that, I fully support their efforts, because should they come up with economically successful best management practices, I predict that they will continue to be adopted by the bee industry as a whole.

The method that takes the prize for being “most natural” is probably the Warre hive, although I doubt that many will want to deal with the lifting and hassle involved in extracting honey. However, I’ve yet to see any sort of demonstration that bees are any healthier or productive under such management.

Critic: “*The reality of the situation is that if your “rules” are truly the only way to do things, then Kirk Webster wouldn’t be doing what he’s doing in Vermont. Sam Comfort would be out of business and our hives wouldn’t have such a low mite throughout the year that we have a hard time finding the little beasts.*”

I have to question whether the critic actually read my article, as the only “rules” that I offered were those given by Nature. I didn’t give any rules whatsoever as being the “only way to do things”! Even odder is the writer’s reference to Kirk and Sam, each of whom I consider as friends and exemplary beekeepers. Indeed, Sam makes the point that he himself doesn’t make any rules for other beekeepers (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOuPA-BUmCE&feature=related>).

Speaking of Kirk and Sam, to their credit they not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk (in different ways). They each have experience with various sorts of equipment and management, and successfully (meaning that they consistently have surplus bees to sell—not sure about their honey production) run their operations without benefit of mite treatments. I applaud their success at being “natural” beekeepers.

“Alternative” Doesn’t Necessarily Mean “Better”

Especially if one simply switches from one rigid orthodoxy to an equally dogmatic alternative! The reality is that virtually every serious beekeeper experiments with “alternative” methods. One would actually be hard pressed to come up with any truly new “alternative” idea in beekeeping!

I suggest that the curious beekeeper read the old masters from the mid 1800’s on. These guys really knew their bees, and were hard-core innovators! I highly recommend the book *The Hive and the Honey Bee Revisited*, in which Dr. Roger Hoopingarner annotates Langstroth’s original 1853 publication with up-to-date footnotes of current apicultural science. As Dr. Roger Morse was fond of saying, “there is nothing new under the sun in beekeeping.” It’s funny how beekeepers continually think that they are inventing something new, whereas in reality the old boys have often already been there, and done that!

Varroa management, of course, is the exception. Beekeepers have been forced to learn new practices for keeping their colonies alive and healthy. Necessity being the mother of invention, a plethora of new methods were spawned, most of which, no matter how much sense they seemed to make at the time, or how good they made the beekeeper feel, unfortunately proved to be ineffective.

A number of the management techniques that I’ve written about over the past few years were at the time considered to be quite “alternative.” Some I’ve incorporated into my own operation, and several I’ve abandoned for various reasons. At this point in time, progressive beekeepers (meaning those that are willing to learn and change) are staying on top of most problems, and doing quite well at beekeeping. So they are understandably of the mindset that, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!”

I'm all for trying new ideas, but then test them in a controlled trial to see if they really work! What bothers me is the promotion of "alternative" methods long after they've been discredited. I heard of lot of this during my recent visit to New Zealand, where beekeepers eager to control varroa by alternative methods were trying stuff that they got off the internet, not realizing that the methods had already been tested over here and found to be ineffective!

Arbitrary Rules

The problem that I have with some "natural" beekeeping advocates is that they have created new rigidities and "rules," such as which sizes or shapes of boxes or frames are "allowable," forbidding the use of queen excluders, specifying exactly how far apart or inches above the ground that hives must be kept, that the only acceptable means of propagation is through natural swarming, etc., etc.

For example, one set of standards specifies that: "supplementary winter feed must contain at least 10% honey by weight. This must come from a ... certified source. Camomile [sic] tea and salt should also be added to the feed." Oh my God, teatime with salt for the bees?

To me, those are completely arbitrary "rules." And oddly, various "natural" beekeepers completely disagree upon those rules. Some "natural" beekeeping gurus feed sugar syrup, many raise queens and split hives, some move their hives to better forage, and many control parasites with "natural" chemicals. I don't see any problem with any of the above details. To me, if your bees thrive and are productive year after year, then you are obviously doing things right and in a sustainable manner.



As far as niggling rules about details, note that some of the largest honey crops in the world are produced through queen excluders, so it's hard to explain how excluders are harmful to the bees. To me, an excluder is no more "unnatural" than using a fence to keep the cow out of the garden.

Treatments

Critic: *"Randy chooses to embrace chemical treatments of his bees. That's his prerogative. He very fervently justifies this to himself and to others through his talks and writings. If you don't agree he brands you a Taliban. I'm suspicious of this zeal to righteousness."*

This one came out of left field! Especially since I don't give a squat whether anyone agrees with me or not! Oddly, in the referred talk, I had clearly stated that selective breeding was the solution to parasite problems, I detailed biotechnical methods of mite management, I showed tables of the comb contamination due to miticides, and I suggested using "natural" treatments only if mite levels got too high! I guess that one is only going to hear what one wants to hear!

I've been a major proponent of selective breeding for treatment-free bees ever since varroa arrived (I had previously had great success at breeding bees for resistance to AFB and tracheal

mite). My goal has always been to keep bees without the use of any treatments. In that pursuit, I've allowed more colonies to die than the above writer will likely ever see. But what I found is that if I wanted to make a living as a beekeeper, then I needed to use some treatments to keep my hives alive!

I personally haven't used synthetic miticides since the turn of the millennium—for practical reasons. The synthetics offered to date are not sustainable (as the mites eventually develop resistance), residues of some build up in the combs and negatively affect bee health, and I'm concerned about the public perception of the purity of honey being tainted by such chemicals.

Luckily for beekeepers today, there are four effective, totally "natural" and noncontaminating mite treatments available in this country—thymol, formic acid, hops beta acids, and oxalic acid (technically not yet registered). The use of these botanical or organic acid treatments is, in my opinion, little different than using herbal extracts or apple cider vinegar to treat yourself for parasites. I honestly don't see how evaluating their efficacy means that I'm "embracing chemical treatments"!

Some Rules are Not Arbitrary!

When it comes to treatments, including those derived from natural sources, you must use common sense! Thymol, hops acids, and oxalic acid could all be considered to be "botanicals" which are normal parts of our diets (hops if you drink beer). However, in the concentrated form, they must be handled with caution, just as you would afford to habanero peppers. Especially keep them out of your eyes! **Follow the label rules!**

I've had extensive experience with Apiguard thymol gel and oxalic acid dribble, and can attest that they are not only reliably effective miticides, but also extremely safe to handle, and no big deal if you get some on your skin (other than your face) and simply wash it off. I have less experience with Hopguard, but can tell you that it doesn't cause me any skin irritation. However, it is prudent, even with these natural miticides, to always wear mechanic's nitrile gloves, and to keep wash water at hand.

Formic acid is another matter—it's the burning component of stinging nettles and ant defense. You need to wear protective gloves! However, my common sense finds that the respirator rule is ridiculous. Amazingly, bees, perhaps due to their long association with ants, appear to tolerate formic fumes easily.

To put things into perspective, yesterday I safely applied 48 formic strips, then damn near asphyxiated myself when I stopped for a snack and accidentally squirted a little malt vinegar down my windpipe—in case you're curious, THAT will clamp your trachea shut in a heartbeat and prevent you from breathing! (Don't ask). My point--vinegar is an organic acid that is considered to be so safe that it comes without any safety warnings, yet it nearly killed me! You must use common sense when handling any strong organics.



I tested MAQS formic gel strips in fall and spring, and they were very easy to handle. However, those that I've tried since the weather turned hot are gooey, sticky, and harder to unwrap and

handle. **WARNING:** the sticky gel causes only a slight tingling on exposed finger skin—but will later cause blistering! (Don't ask).

Treatment-Free

Critic: "What have you got against treatment-free beekeeping?"

My guess is that the majority of nucs that I sell each year (several hundred) never see a treatment. The feedback that I receive is that they survive just fine, and produce honey year after year. I'm all for keeping bees without treatments so long as they stay healthy.

The problem that I have with those who go treatment free is that if they allow colonies to die and get robbed out, they spread a load of mites and viruses to their innocent neighbors. To me this is irresponsible beekeeping, and a waste of valuable colonies. I don't see any reason to subject a strong colony of bees to an awful death due to the defective genetics of their mother. Just treat 'em and queen 'em!

Critic: "What evidence do you have that allowing colonies to die from mites causes mite drift to your neighbors' hives."

Plenty of beekeepers (including myself) have learned this the hard way. Smart commercial beekeepers keep a close eye on their neighbor's mite loads, and will actually move away from apiaries with problems. If you want numbers, a recent study from Germany (Frey 2011) **documented the immigration of mites from collapsing hives into other hives a mile away.**

Some folk make the mistake of thinking that the only way to breed mite-resistant bees is by setting up a "Bond Yard" (live and let die). Doing so will definitely weed out all susceptible stocks, but the end result (if any survive) is generally a feisty, swarmy bee that maintains a small colony, restricts drone production, and doesn't produce much honey (Locke 2011). However, once you've locked in resistance, you can then start breeding for more manageable bees. This approach has been followed independently with excellent results by John Kefuss, the Baton Rouge Bee Lab, and numerous independent breeders.

However, there is an alternative approach that works from the opposite direction—start with gentle, productive colonies, bring in some resistant stock as drone mothers, and then **propagate each year only from those productive colonies with the lowest mite levels.** No colonies need to die, since you simply treat and queen any that start to get overwhelmed by mites. This approach may take a bit longer to reach full resistance, but the upside is that you stay in business during the interim. I've had considerable success with this method!

Commercial Beekeeping

I don't see any reason to demonize commercial beekeepers—they have enough troubles of their own. Yet I'm constantly seeing them being painted as bad guys (just listen to the soundtrack of the popular movie "Queen of the Sun"—the music shifts to ominous each time that a commercial bee operation comes on screen).



Most commercial beekeepers dream of going back to managing only a few hives in the backyard—but are forced to adopt an agribusiness model in order to supply the demand for bees by American farms and orchards. These hives belong to one of the best and most conscientious beekeepers I've met.

It's clear that some of the industry's problems are self-inflicted—e.g., too much reliance on antibiotics, inadvertent miticide contamination of comb, and the overstocking of yards. But these sorts of problems are associated with all industrial-scale animal husbandry. Not to mention that for a time, there were no safe and effective legally-registered miticides, forcing them to...let's not go there! I'm not defending all commercial practices, but can say that the big boys are by and large very smart guys, and are adopting more sustainable varroa management practices.

What bothers me is the current schism between recreational and commercial beekeepers. The smug attitude by some hobbyists that they know so much more than professional beekeepers (who spend their every waking hour immersed in caring for their bees) is counterproductive. The collective knowledge of large-scale beekeepers is a vast resource that the recreational beekeepers can benefit from, and should pay attention to! Might I suggest that one not judge another until you've walked in their shoes—you don't need to criticize others in order to become a good beekeeper yourself!

Bee Husbandry

The only beekeeping rules that I promote are those of common animal husbandry—give your bees a clean, warm nest, nutritious food, suppress parasites if necessary, and avoid toxins. As a beekeeper, I enter into a contract with "my" bees—I provide good husbandry, and they repay me in kind with honey, pollination income, and offspring for sale. It's as simple as that folks—don't let anyone tell you that there are any other "rules" that you need to follow. Oh, and keep a sense of humor!

Allow me to end this discussion with a quote from Ticknor Edwards (1920):

"The bees have their definite plan for life, perfected through countless ages, and nothing you can do will ever turn them from it. You can delay their work, or you can even thwart it altogether, but no one has ever succeeded in changing a single principle in bee-life. And so the best bee-master is always the one who most exactly obeys the orders from the hive."

A Request from the Author

For those of you now all fired up to send me an incendiary reaming, please put "Hate Mail" on the subject line in order to save me time. I'm not criticizing anyone personally, and know that you all have the best interests of bees and the Earth in mind. On the other hand, I welcome rational discourse about any factual errors in my articles, and solicit reports of any testing of alternative methods that you've done, so long as you ran a control group for comparison.

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**RANDY'S ARTICLES ON 'SICK BEES'
WILL RESUME IN THE NEXT EDITON**

CROP POLLINATION REPORT

December 2012

First of all

Well done to those fellow pollinators who again succeeded in getting productive hives in and out of their pollination jobs as well as all the preparation and sacrificing of honey that goes with it.

For those interested in being members of the Crop Pollination Association, check out the website: www.aussiepollination.com.au. This website is updated regularly and is a tool for beekeepers, farmers, orchardists and seed companies. Beekeepers can use it to direct farmers if they can't supply the bees themselves, or if they require more bees, as the paddock sizes of annual crops can vary, as do the suitability of bees. Farmers can use it and have been. Seed companies that have changing staff don't always have beekeeper's contacts to do pollination, so check out the website, and give us some feedback and ideas.

Not all members have their details on the website list, it's your option to be on the list or not, and how far you are willing to travel with bees.

The last couple of days I have been preparing bees for work on seedless watermelons. The hives must be able to work in 40 plus temperatures with no shade and little conditions, I have also spent time with my mum Jasmin who has not been well.

One of the things that concern me is the non-existence of the BICC meetings, these were meetings held by NSWAA and DPI NSW primarily, and included all the major land managers, i.e. National Parks, LHPA, CMA and State Forests, where we could be kept up to date and raise concerns or help – these meetings are essential.

Also we have a large area of NSW resource on what were previously State Forests, Community Conservation Areas (CCA), originally designed to have community input into their management for tourism, industries, environment and people, not just locked up. In previous years I have represented apiarists for areas such as Scone or Dubbo.

Environmentalists, Field Naturalists, Hunters, Timber Industry, Aboriginals, NSW Government, Mining and Minerals, Apiarists, National Parks, State Forests, CMA, LHPA, local councils and more were represented at these meetings and all contributed.

After 3 years, the meetings have stopped no explanation why, and I believe some people who travelled still haven't been paid. The importance of our roads being maintained so that we have access to our existing sites was being discussed. Our Industry is being asked to produce more food for the world through pollination, with less access to our natural resources.

So between no BICC or CCA meetings, I don't think we are represented at all. We are having food security inquiries etc when the one industry that can help Australia's fresh food aspirations, is shoved in the corner.

Recently the NSW Executive has been on a tour with SANTOS of a working gas well, and given assurances that if all goes well the following will happen: trucking all the dangerous saline water to a desalination plant, and horizontal drilling to reduce impact on the surface. However no answers were given as to what happens if all does not go well? i.e. Economics, do they go back to water ponding. There are more risks associated

with horizontal drilling over vertical, can you imagine drilling horizontally 2km and concreting it?

Other things on the go

I also believe there is a chance for new enthusiasm for AHBIC, maybe a discussion on a new CEO, conditions of employment on our terms, what industry is prepared to pay, i.e. \$80-90,000 for a full time professional lobbyist. Also whether the office should be in Canberra, where they can walk in and see sitting members of parliament and be part of the goings on! Is it about saving money or doing a job well (promoting our importance and public benefits)?

Pesticide wise, there are still plenty of issues

One possibly being that some fungicides could be sterilizing some pollen and other effects not known.

The Murray Darling Basin plan is limping ahead, concerns of how environmental flows will affect Red Gum regeneration, and its good that more money is being spent on efficient technologies. However one farmer I know put in a state of the art underground dripper system to save water, however, now the cost of the water is down, its four times cheaper to flood irrigate the same paddock, no diesel costs.

Almonds

Still a lot of pollinators are supporting our major brokers, however there has been more and more discussion on the costs of supplying bees, difference in economics for our smaller beekeepers wanting to help, and how the coastal bees overwintered better than Mallee bees. Not everyone has access to sites on the coast.

The Crop Pollination Association throws their support behind the Australian Bee industry discussion on AFB policy and believes it is the correct decision to continue with reduction of AFB as it is the right thing for our Industry's clean green image for product and pollination services. Also the right example to give the next generation of beekeepers - 'How we came together to keep our competitive edge in the world'.

There has been an outstanding effort put into the Biosecurity Booklet. I was amazed when I saw the package, especially the good quality AFB identification book, one of the best things this year. Awareness and education, in conjunction with pest and diseases courses, I think there on a winner. Congratulations to all involved in its production and distribution, well done!

The CPA Executive think we've made a good decision to hold the 2013 Crop Pollination Conference on Tuesday 21 May in conjunction with the NSW State Conference which is on the 22/23/24 May, the venue for both being: CLUB SAPPHIRE, MERIMBULA.

Many people I know are planning for a week combining networking, information gathering, rest and relaxation, fishing, drinking catch up with mates, and having serious contribution into issues AFFECTING BEEKEEPERS being voted on at both Conferences. But Dave Mumford is just hoping to catch a bigger fish than Doug Somerville and Neil Bingley!

Bryn Jones
President



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AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

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Phone: 03 6331 0888 Fax: 03 6331 3224 Mobile: 0418 131 256
Mailing Address: PO Box R838, Royal Exchange NSW 1225
Website: www.honeybee.org.au

AHBIC NEWS

"The Chairman and vice Chairman met with Mr Stephen Ware, AHBIC Executive Director at the AHBIC office on Monday 3 December 2012 to work through several issues on notice.

The result of the meeting was that it was in Industry's best interest that the relationship with Mr Ware be terminated.

Whilst the termination places the peak industry body in a difficult position in the short term, it is considered to be an opportunity for AHBIC to move forward."

Any correspondence relating to AHBIC should be directed to:

Mr Lindsay Bourke, Chairman
Email: lb@ozhoney.com.au Mobile: 0418 131 256
Phone: 03 6331 0888 Fax: 03 6331 3224
The mailing address remains the same:
PO Box R838, Royal Exchange NSW 1225

ASIAN HONEYBEE INCURSION

National Advice 1 - 22 November 2012

AHBIC received the following information today.

- "DAFF Biosecurity officers located 10 live and dead *Apis cerana* (Asian honey bee) on the decks of a bulk fuel carrier first ported at Kurnell (Sydney) on Wednesday 21 November 2012. The vessel had sailed from Singapore. A single *Varroa* mite was found on one of these bees, with subsequent identification confirming the mite to be *Varroa jacobsoni* and **NOT** *Varroa destructor*.
- Further inspection of the vessel identified a swarm of some 2000 bees located on one of the ship's cranes. A professional pest controller was able to destroy all bees without the swarm absconding. Dead bees from this swarm have been sent for further diagnostic work.
- Dissection of the first 10 bees collected has revealed no tracheal mites present."

I have asked if the bees will be checked to make sure they are the Java genotype. Also I have raised the issue of having actions put in place at the port of embarkation to try to stop this kind of problem.

I will issue another Advice if significant new information comes to hand. At this time we can be grateful that the swarm was intercepted.

National Advice 2 - 27 November 2012

A press release came out last week from DAFF. I had the Sydney ABC ring me early on Friday morning and I did an interview. It made it to the AM program and apparently several other ABC shows around Australia. I did an extra interview with ABC Rural in Queensland which made it to the National Country Hour.

At this stage there has been no determination to see if the Asian bee is the Java genotype but I expect it will be. I will advise when that information comes through. I have been told of several stories doing the rounds saying that varroa is rife in New South Wales. This is not correct to my knowledge.

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

Trevor Weatherhead



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RECIPES



HONEY & SESAME GLAZED CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS

8 chicken drumsticks
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup soy sauce
1 tablespoon finely grated ginger
2 teaspoons sesame seeds
Stir-fried vegetables to serve
Steamed jasmine rice, to serve

Use a small sharp knife to cut 2 slashes, about 3cm long and 1cm deep, in the thickest part of each chicken drumstick.

Combine the honey, soy sauce, ginger and sesame seeds in a large glass or ceramic bowl. Add the chicken and toss to coat in sauce. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for 1 hour to marinate.

Preheat your oven to 200°C. Line an oven tray with baking paper. Drain the drumsticks from marinade and arrange the chicken over the lined tray.

Bake drumsticks in the preheated oven, turning occasionally, for about 30 minutes or until the drumsticks are golden brown and cooked through.

Serve with vegetables and rice. *Serves 4*

PRAWN SALAD WITH GRAPEFRUIT, HONEY & CHILLI SAUCE

16 large prawns
2 zucchini, cut into julienne strips
2 carrots, peeled and cut into julienne strips
1/3 cup honey
2 teaspoons sweet chilli sauce
1/2 cup white wine
1 cup grapefruit juice
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
2 teaspoons cornflour
2 teaspoons water

Shell and de-vein prawns leaving the head and tail intact.

Boil, steam or microwave carrot strips until tender, rinse under cold water and drain. Combine carrot and zucchini in a bowl, cover, chill until ready to serve.

Combine honey, chilli sauce, white wine, grapefruit juice and ginger in a small saucepan. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for 2 minutes. Blend cornflour with water, add to sauce mixture and stir constantly until sauce thickens.

Divide carrot and zucchini onto 4 plates, top each with 4 prawns and sauce, serve immediately. *Serves 4*

HONEY, ORANGE & SOY MARINADE

Combine 1/3 cup soy sauce, **1/3 cup honey**, 1/4 cup orange juice, 1 clove garlic (crushed) and 2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger in a medium bowl.

Marinate: seafood no longer than 15 minutes, pork or chicken for 30 minutes or longer.

ORANGE & HONEY FRIANDS

1 cup of almond meal
1 1/3 cups icing sugar, sifted
3/4 cup plain flour, sifted
1/2 teaspoon baking powder, sifted
5 egg whites
125g butter, melted
1/4 cup honey
1 1/2 tablespoons finely ground orange rind
Icing sugar, for dusting

Preheat oven to 180°C. Place the almond meal, icing sugar, flour, baking powder, egg whites, butter, honey and orange rind in a bowl and whisk until combined.

Spoon the mixture into 12 x 1/3 cup capacity lightly greased round tins and bake for 20-25 minutes or until the friands are golden and cooked through.

Using a palette knife, loosen the edges and remove the friands from the tins immediately. Allow to cool on a wire rack.

Dust with icing sugar to serve. Makes 12.

HONEY CAKE

A rich moist honey cake perfect with a cuppa for those extra visitors during the holidays.

Ingredients:

170g honey
140g butter
85g light muscovado sugar
2 eggs, beaten
20g self raising flour, sifted
Water

For the icing:

55g icing sugar
1 tablespoon honey
Hot water

Preheat oven to 180°C. Butter and line the bottom of a 18cm cake tin.

Measure the honey, butter and sugar into a large pan. Add a tablespoon of water and heat gently until melted. Remove from the heat and mix in the eggs and flour.

Spoon into the cake tin and bake for 40-45 minutes until the cake is springy to the touch and shrinking slightly from the sides of the tin.

Cool slightly in the tin before turning out onto a wire rack.

While the cake is still warm, make the icing by mixing the sugar and honey together with 2-3 teaspoons of hot water. Trickle over the cake in whatever design takes your fancy. Serves 8.

Note: Muscovado is a type of unrefined brown sugar with a strong molasses flavour.

FAMILY ENERGY REBATE

The NSW Government's Family Energy Rebate is one of a number of measures designed to assist families manage their energy costs. To be eligible for the Family Energy Rebate, you must have been eligible for and received the Commonwealth Government's Family Tax Benefit A or B. For questions about Family Tax Benefit A or B contact the Department of Human Services (formerly known as 'Centrelink' and referred to on this page and related pages as 'Human Services') on 13 61 50.

The application process for the Family Energy Rebate is different to the process for other NSW energy rebates. Application forms should be sent to NSW Trade & Investment (the department) or as the department directs, not your electricity retailer. Applicants need to re-apply for the Family Energy Rebate each year.

Assessment of applications is based on Human Services verification of your receipt and eligibility for the Family Tax Benefit A or B after income tax assessment processes. Family Energy Rebate application forms should not be sent to the department unless you have lodged your tax return for the 2011-12 financial year (1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012) with the Australian Tax Office OR notified Human Services that you are not required to lodge a tax return.

The **deadline** for applying to the department for the Family Energy Rebate in the 2012-13 financial year (1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013) is **31 March 2013**.

If your application is approved, the timing of the payment will vary according to your electricity retailer's billing cycle. In most cases, it will not be processed and appear as a credit on your electricity bill until late 2012 or early 2013. You can, however, check on the progress of your application by contacting the department.

To be eligible for the Family Energy Rebate in the 2012-13 financial year (1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013) you must:

- have been assessed as eligible, by Human Services, for the Family Tax Benefit A or B at any time during the 2011-12 financial year (1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012) and received the relevant payment; and
- be a NSW resident; and
- be a direct electricity account holder (this means your name appears on your electricity bill, solely or jointly).

Please note: Assessment of applications is based on Human Services verification of your receipt and eligibility for the Family Tax Benefit A or B after income tax assessment processes.

Family Energy Rebate application forms should not be sent to the department unless you have lodged your tax return for the 2011-12 financial year (1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012) with the Australian Tax Office or notified Human Services that you are not required to lodge a tax return.

You may also be able to apply to your electricity retailer for another NSW energy rebate, called the Low Income Household Rebate.

However, the combined payment a household can receive is capped at \$250 per annum. This means that the Family Energy Rebate annual payments will be either \$75 or \$35 in 2012-13.

One Family Energy Rebate is payable per eligible household.

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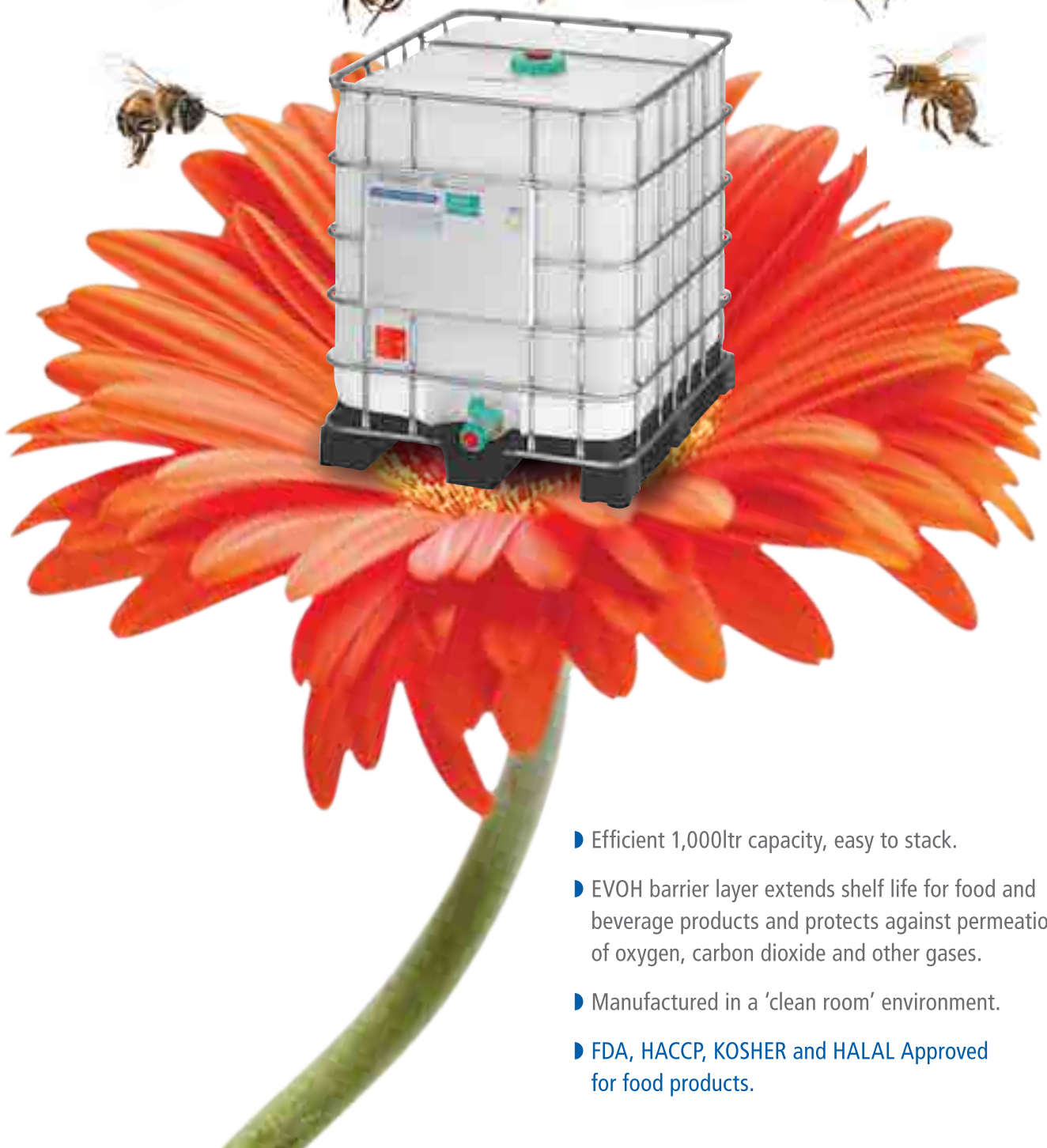
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