



# AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

*"The voice of the Beekeeper"*

Volume 1 Number 5

September -October 2008



**Does the Bumble bee pose a threat to the Australian honey industry? ..... Page 20**

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

**Published Bi-Monthly      ISSN 1835 6621**

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**COVER:** The Bumble Bee (*Bombus terrestris*) in Tasmania

**PHOTO:** Robert Luttrell

## Copy Deadline for Next Issue of *Australia's Honeybee News* - 1 December 2008

Pre-Paid Advertising Rates (GST Inclusive)

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6 Issues	\$990.00	\$572.00	\$374.00	\$209.00
3 Issues	\$594.00	\$352.00	\$220.00	\$132.00
1 Issue	\$231.00	\$132.00	\$99.00	\$66.00

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*Australia's Honeybee News* goes free of charge to members of NSWAA. Non-member subscriptions are welcomed. Within Australia \$33, Overseas (airmail) AUS\$50. Forward payment to Editor, PO Box 352 Leichhardt NSW 2040 (Cheques payable to NSW Apiarists' Association).

The opinions expressed in articles published in *Australia's Honeybee News* are those of the authors and do not imply the endorsement of the NSWAA for the promotion of any product, goods or services mentioned unless specifically stated.

<b>Editor &amp; Production:</b>	Margaret Blunden PO Box 352 Leichhardt NSW 2040 Phone: 02 9798 6240 Fax: 02 9797 8061 Email: honeybee@accsoft.com.au
<b>Consultant Editor:</b>	Greg Roberts PO Box 6137 Goulburn North NSW 2580 Phone: 02 4821 9022 Fax: 02 4821 0462 Email: gregory.roberts@bigpond.com
<b>Printer:</b>	Farrell Printers PO Box 253 Croydon NSW 2132 Phone: (02) 9550 4055 Fax: 02 9550 3403 Email: rob@farrellprinters.com.au

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Bill Weiss  
206 Lambeth Street  
Glen Innes NSW 2370  
Ph/Fax 02 6732 1263  
Email: beeweiss@yahoo.com.au

**Vice-President**

Craig Klingner  
PO Box 564  
Glen Innes NSW 2370  
Ph/Fax 02 6734 4125  
Email: klingnershoneyco@bigpond.com

**Secretary/Treasurer**

Julie Lockhart  
PO Box 3018  
Toongabbie East NSW 2146  
Ph: 02 9631 3934 Fax: 02 9631 0585  
Email: nswaa@bigpond.net.au

**Councillor**

Neil Bingley  
101 Woodfield Road  
Sutton NSW 2620  
Ph: 02 6230 3578  
Email: beez101@bigpond.net.au

**Councillor**

John Benfield  
PO Box 714  
Inverell NSW 2360  
Ph/Fax 02 6722 4788  
Email: nbenfield@bigpond.com

**Councillor**

Robert Seagrave  
PO Box 41  
Emmaville NSW 2371  
Ph: 02 6734 7174  
Email: robert.seagrave@bigpond.com.au

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



## Season

Rain over many areas of the State has allowed hives to breed out well in the north. Southern areas are suffering from dry, however hives have made good bees. Honey flows are fairly scarce, with Canola almost finished, Winter Iron bark is almost over, some good honey was extracted in the north. Bees in coastal areas have bred up well, however Iron bark budding is very patchy so Summer honey flows will have to come out of other species.

## Honey Prices

Due to very low stock levels and no major supply improvements, prices have remained firm in the \$3kg range. It is disappointing to see the major packer dropping their prices again. Given the US exchange rate at present is around 70c and world honey stocks at relatively low levels Australian prices should firm up in the next few weeks.

## Illegal Spraying

Sprays have caused some concern in the central west where some farmers were using "Rogor" which is a very deadly spray on honeybees. I understand that one agronomist has refused to use this spray and is advising farmers not to. There is recourse available to beekeepers if they are aware that chemicals are being used illegally. The Department of Environment and Climate Change Hotline Phone number is 131555. If the name of the spray operator and the farmer or property name is relayed to the DECC, they can ensure that this spray operation, if illegal, will not continue.

## Plague Locusts

As you are aware there are currently locusts hatching in many areas. Insecticides are likely to be used where locusts are known or suspected to have laid eggs, some of which will continue to kill locust hoppers (young adults) for 8-10 days after application and therefore offer advantages where hatchings are staggered.

Bees foraging in these areas will be at risk if there are locust outbreaks. Farmers are being issued with a chemical called Fenitrothion 1000 which may have significant effects on your bees.

## New Transport Legislation

Authorities of NSW Transport have given twelve months grace to primary industry over the need to fill out a work diary for trips shorter than 100kms. Industry intends to support this policy.

## NPWS Sites

We have been advised that the National Parks & Wildlife Service has concerns with beekeepers using sites before a consent form has been issued. Please ensure that you have GPS coordinates for all your sites and a consent form is issued. We have also heard from quite a few beekeepers that the time taken to issue consent forms is excessive (sometimes months). We hope to address this with NPWS.

## Vale

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Ted Porter on 8 October. Ted was a foundation member of the Central Tablelands Branch and an active member of the NSWAA for many years. Our sincere sympathies are extended to Val and the family.

## Bill Weiss

### State President

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# 2008 TASMANIAN EXPORT AWARDS

## *TasPorts Agribusiness Award*

This award is presented to the business which demonstrated outstanding export achievement in the field of agricultural products, services or technology, including processed foods and beverages and the forestry, fisheries and fibres industries.

The winner of the 2008 *TasPorts Agribusiness Award* is: **Australian Quality Honey Pty Ltd (Blue Hills Honey)**

Mawbanna's Charles family has been producing honey in Tasmania's far north-west since 1955. It is a tradition that has passed through two generations and the final product is as pure today as it was 50 years ago - the premium honey is sourced from the family's 1600-hive apiary nestled in the pristine Tarkine wilderness.

Australian Quality Honey only started exploring its export potential in 2004, seeking advice from its local Business Enterprise Centre, Austrade and the Department of Economic Development.

After considerable research Australian Quality Honey developed a marketing strategy, started to build up an awareness of its Blue Hills brand, made overseas market contacts and made a major investment in new production facilities.

Today the company's honey, including its flagship Leatherwood variety, is packaged and promoted as a gourmet product, aimed at the middle to high end of the market. Australian Quality Honey's targeted approach to exporting has resulted in export markets being established in a diverse range of countries including Germany, the United States, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Japan and Hong Kong.



*Mr Robert Barns (Tasports) with Nicola and Robbie Charles of Australian Quality Honey Pty Ltd*

# NEW ZEALAND TO REVOKE VARROA MOVEMENT CONTROLS

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ) will revoke all movement controls associated with Varroa bee mite, effective from 25 September 2008.

"Seventeen beekeeping operations in Waimakariri and Selwyn Districts have been confirmed positive for Varroa. High levels of mites detected in some operations suggest Varroa may have been present for six months which suggests Varroa is established and widespread," said MAFBNZ Incursion Manager Richard Norman.

"Tracing has identified more than 150 beekeeping operations with hives within 5 kilometre radiuses of apiary sites belonging to infested operations. These operations are at risk from local spread of Varroa. The infestation in North Canterbury is now beyond the point where it can be eradicated or contained in a localised programme.

"In addition, the high densities of hives in the Canterbury region and the lack of geographical barriers means there is little scope for an effective movement control line to progressively withdraw down the South Island.

"It has been inevitable that Varroa would spread from the Nelson region. Movement controls can only attempt to reduce the risk of human-assisted spread – they do not address local spread by bees drifting between hives, robbing, and swarming," said Richard Norman.

MAFBNZ intends to use some of the remaining funds from the response to help beekeepers in the South Island adapt to the newly detected spread of Varroa through advice, hive testing and education workshops.

"We will also discuss with industry and research providers whether there are immediate, high value research needs that remaining funds could assist.

"MAFBNZ appreciates the assistance of beekeeping industry leaders and individual beekeepers throughout the Varroa response," said Richard Norman.

Varroa remains a notifiable organism and beekeepers in un-infested areas should report suspect finds of Varroa to MAFBNZ on 0800 80 99 66.

More information is also available on the MAFBNZ website [www.biosecurity.govt.nz](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz)

# THAT'S MY OPINION

By Greg Roberts



## Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue Reform

The new National Road Transport *Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue* laws for vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) of more than 12 tonnes were to commence on 29 September 2008. However the new Minister for Roads, Michael Daley MP, announced that he is to introduce some exemptions for the next 12 months, this would give him time to consult with transport industries and primary industries. These changes exempt primary producers from filling out the new work diary if they travel less than 160km from their home, also exempt are truck drivers who don't travel more than 100km from their base. For the short term these exemptions will bring NSW in line with the other eastern States.

It is reported that over 80% of the national transport system is in NSW or passes through this State. So often when Governments bring down new legislation the devil may be within the detail. Some years ago, when I was State president, I was contacted by the NSW Government advising that there were to be changes to the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) laws and that these laws would be married into other legislation, for example the OH&S Act has been amalgamated into the Forestry Act. The new Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue laws will require transport parties to meet their responsibilities under OH&S legislation.

Standard Hours options would suit most beekeeping businesses; it sets out minimum rest and maximum work hours. For example for your record keeping requirements:

- Every 5 ½ hours you will be allowed 5 ¼ work hours with 15 minutes of continuous rest
- Every 8 hours you can have 7 ½ hours of work time with 30 minutes of rest time in lots of 15 continuous minutes of rest
- Every 11 hours will allow you 10 hours of work with 60 minutes of rest again in lots of 15 minutes.
- Every 24 hours there is allowed 12 hours of work time with 7 continuous hours of stationary rest,
- Every 7 days there is allowed 72 hours of work with 24 continuous hours of stationary rest,
- Every 14 days there is to be no more than 144 hours of work time with 2 nights of rest and 2 nights rest brake taken on consecutive days.

If your business requires more flexible hours then you may have to consider Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) which under accreditation will allow 14 hour work shifts or Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM) which will allow

you to create your own safety management system again linked to accreditation.

I attended the Goulburn RTA Seminar and it was explained to me that beekeepers working time within their apiaries would not be counted as work diary time, however loading and unloading of bee hives and honey supers will need to be recorded as work diary time.

I have always believed that when it comes to changes to legislation industry should always work with Government to set standards that suit our industry rather than take the risk of bureaucracy setting the bar to high. These new exemptions are only for 12 months. I believe our industry has a lot of consultancy work to do with Government.

## World Report

I mentioned in my last report the high percentage of bee hive colony losses throughout the world and the possible effect on world honey production and pollination. In the UK the colony losses have been very high and it has been reported that they may be out of locally produced honey by Christmas. Canada's losses were 35% which equates to about 200,000 hives. The Canadian Honey Council has approached their Government for \$50million for disaster relief for their beekeepers. The Working Group of the Bee Research Institutions believe around 30% of colonies have died in Germany and have advised their beekeepers to treat for Varroa mite on time because of an abnormal warm winter. Italy, Switzerland and many European countries have suffered similar losses.

As I have stated before the changes to land management on the Argentine prairies have resulted in losses of beekeeping natural resources. In some provinces of Argentina they have established deadlines for migratory beekeepers to enter and exit each federal territory. Migratory beekeepers will be allowed to enter some provinces to pollinate crops but in some cases they will be forced to return to their own provinces before any honey production takes place. This I think is to protect local beekeepers and their bee sites. All of this is contributing to a decline in Argentine honey production and I believe the days of this country producing 100,000MT plus of honey per year, on a regular basis, are over.

India is a country that has been increasing its production for a number of years now, however over 90% of their export honey samples have been found to be contaminated with residues of antibiotics and lead. It is likely that Europe, UK and Canada may ban Indian honey imports. With this high percentage of contamination Australia should also ban Indian honey as there is always some irresponsible person willing to import such honey and mix it with our clean product to bring down contamination levels.

# HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVER FATIGUE REFORM

## *New National Road Transport Laws*

### How to Use Your New Work Diary

It's time to manage heavy vehicle driver fatigue. New national road transport Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue laws to commence on 29 September 2008, set revised work and rest limits for heavy vehicle drivers and require better management of driver fatigue. The reform makes all parties in the supply chain legally responsible for preventing driver fatigue.

#### A new work diary

The new laws include the introduction of a driver work diary to replace the existing driver log books. A work diary can be either written or electronic, but, whatever form it take, it must contain a record of the driver's work/rest history as required under legislation.

The written work diary contains similar information to the existing logbook and is issued by a road authority. Drivers must complete daily sheets to record their work/rest history.

An electronic work diary is an electronic device or system fitted to the heavy vehicle to monitor and record the work and rest times of a driver. It must be approved as an electronic work diary by a road authority.

#### Who must use a work diary?

You only have to use a work diary if you are driving:

- a heavy vehicle; - with a GVM over 12 tonnes (except a bus or tram); - that is part of a combination, if the total of the GVMs of the vehicles in the combination is over 12 tonnes; or
- a bus with more than 12 seats.

Work time is the time spent driving heavy vehicles or buses on or off the road, or doing tasks related to their operation (eg: pre-trip inspection).

#### When should you use a work diary?

You must use the work diary if you are working:

- in NSW or Tas (regardless of the distance travelled); or
- more than 100km from your base (200km in Qld); or
- under Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) or Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM) (you must carry a copy of the operator's BFM or AFM accreditation certificate at all times); or
- under a work/rest hours exemption (you must carry a copy of the work/rest hours exemption at all times).

Drivers required to use a work diary must keep a work diary in the vehicle which contains records of your work and rest time within the last 28 day period. If you travel in WA or the ACT for less than 7 days you must continue to use the work diary.

You must only ever record information at any one time in a single work diary. This includes electronic work diaries. However, if you used a paper work diary for part of the previous 28 days you need to keep that paper work diary in the vehicle for compliance purposes.

If you have changed from using an electronic work diary to a paper work diary, you must carry printouts of your daily records for the previous 28 days with you.

#### Who keeps the copies of your work diary pages?

Each daily sheet (marked ORIGINAL) must remain in the work diary. Each daily sheet has two copies. You must give the first copy (marked DUPLICATE) to the person you are currently working for as soon as possible or within 21 days of the date recorded on the daily sheet.

You should keep the second copy (also marked DUPLICATE) in the work diary unless you have worked for two separate employers within the same 24 hour period. In this case give a copy to each employer. Otherwise retain the second copy in the work diary unless it is requested by an authorised enforcement officer who may remove it.

If you are self-employed you must keep copies of your work diaries and daily sheets for 3 years for audit purposes. If you are an employed driver, your employer must keep these copies for 3 years.

#### What should you do with your work diary if you are stopped at the roadside?

If you are stopped by an authorised officer or a police officer for a roadside inspection, you must produce your work diary for inspection. The officer may ground you for 24 hours if you do not. The officer may remove a duplicate of each work diary daily sheet from your work diary if required. You can ask the officer to make a note in your work diary if you have been stopped for more than 5 minutes.

#### How do you get a new work diary?

If you have nearly filled up your work diary, you can get a new one by applying in person to a road agency. The road agency will cancel the unused pages in your work diary.

#### What if your work diary is lost, stolen or destroyed?

If your work diary is lost, stolen, destroyed or filled up before you can get a new work diary you must report this in writing to a road agency within 2 business days. You have a maximum of 7 business days to get a new work diary. Until you are issued with a new work diary, you must continue to record all work and rest time in a supplementary record. This must contain the same information as you would record in your work diary.

Any supplementary record must be treated the same way as your work diary. You must keep a copy of each daily supplementary record in the vehicle for 28 days after it is made and give a copy to your employer within 21 days, who must store it for 3 years.

If your lost work diary is returned to you after you have been issued with a new one you must immediately cancel any unused daily sheets in the old work diary by writing CANCELLED across each unused page and notify the road agency as soon as possible.

#### How to fill in your work diary

It is important to always use a blue or black ballpoint pen and record all entries legibly. Make sure you apply enough pressure so your entries are transferred and clearly recorded on the duplicate sheets. You must complete a daily sheet for the full 24 hours of each day during which you are the driver of a heavy vehicle or bus.





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# OBITUARY

## Edward George (Ted) Porter

20/7/1927 - 8/10/2008

It is with much regret that we have to announce the passing of Ted Porter, on Wednesday after a lengthy battle with prostate cancer. Ted has left behind his wife Val, six sons and daughters-in-law, sixteen grand children and four great grand children.

Ted was born in Portland NSW and grew up at Yetholme. He went to school at Kirkconnell and then started an apprenticeship as a baker in Bathurst. His mode of transport in those early days was a push bike. Unfortunately he was hit by a car, breaking his leg. During his recuperation at Yetholme he befriended a local farmer who gave him work. Ted enjoyed this vegetable and orchard farming life style and never went back to the bakery. Ted had also by this stage collected bee hives from hollow trees and was fascinated by the way they worked and collected honey.

By the early 40's Ted had acquired a local run down farm, requiring hard work erecting new rabbit proof fences, and clearing blackberry bushes soon becoming a full time vegetable grower of sprouts, cabbages, potatoes and peas. All the produce was sent to the Sydney markets. During this time Ted was also putting his collection of bees into proper bee boxes and increasing the number of hives whilst keeping them in the local area. He was assisted with information from Dick Bland who was also living at Yetholme in those days.

As the 50's rolled around Ted found a local young lass, Val Bromfield, who used to work on her father's vegetable farm, and by 1951 they were married. They both worked on their farm which Ted called "Warrawee" and continued increasing the number of hives, requiring the purchase of a new Bedford truck and with the influence of Dick Bland and Murray Charlton, whom Dad met when Murray was broken down on the road, Ted decided to start travelling further afield. By this time Ted's brother Eric, who had been working with central west beekeepers, decided to branch out in his own business. Ted and Eric had separate businesses but both worked together, helping one another. This arrangement is how three of Ted's sons work together today in their beekeeping business. During the mid to late 50's, Val and their three eldest sons joined Ted, living in tents, empty houses on the properties they used or in caravans. Areas that they worked in were Tullamore, Tomerong, Tamworth and Nundle, with strong friendships being formed with the farmers.

Even today Ted's sons still use those properties and the friendships are still there but now with the original farmers' sons. This friendship is certainly testament to a bonding

and use of another's resource, while helping them on their farm without being expected to pay for the privilege.

This life style continued until their eldest son was of school age, requiring Val and boys to stay at home looking after the farm while Ted was away at the bees.

Ted was a foundation member of the Central West Apiary Branch in the early 60's and during this time continued to enlarge his vegetable farming enterprise by purchasing an extra property, planting an apple orchard and also increasing his hive numbers. While Ted worked his bees, Val and their sons, as they became old enough, helped to run the farm.

As his sons started to leave school two of them worked along side Ted with the bees. Ted's stable, hard working influence and ethics put all his sons in good stead to go their own way in life, doing what they wanted be it beekeeping, transport business, building or mechanical game and he was always there to help which he enjoyed immensely, having great satisfaction in watching their young families and business grow.

By this time the vegetable and orchard farming had disappeared and as all their children had left school Ted and Val again started going away together, working their bees or holidaying. During these years they regularly attended the NSW state conferences and helped on the honey stand at the Royal Show, as well as helping in their sons business.

Ted's astute and hard working ethics continued for some time after being diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2000. He sold his bees to Robert and Malcolm, leaving more time to travel around with Val and help their sons as required.

During his last few months Ted was still able to be at home on weekends, enjoying his family and seeing everything on the farm working as usual. The bees in the front paddock, the cows around the gate, and the many chooks in the pen, that Ted had collected and bred.

Ted passed away very quickly and peacefully at St Catherine's Nursing home two days after his last weekend at "Warrawee". His funeral was held in Yetholme on 13 October and was attended by a large number of family members and many friends.

Ted's beekeeper friends along with two bee hives formed a guard of honour as a final farewell to Ted.

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I have taken on the responsibility for staff supervision, management of the honey hives (both organic and non-organic) and maintenance of the queen rearing colonies. This will free up Dad to concentrate on queen cell production for organic royal jelly and commercial queen production. He will continue to be the master queen bee breeder and will continue his key role in the national queen breeding improvement program. Mum, Paula will still perform the insemination of breeder queens for us as well as the national program.

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# US HONEY UPDATE

*S Kamberg & Company  
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With the demand increasing for light amber honey, mostly as a lower cost replacement for white honey, light amber honey prices continue to escalate as this demand rises. At the same time, with what appears to be the best US white clover honey crop in several years, there was a very brief period where it looked like white honey prices may dip. Prices firmed up very quickly though as packers started to buy, and those white honey prices are now again rising. With some US beekeepers holding honey off the market for higher prices, white honey prices will probably continue to rise, which in turn will also raise light amber honey prices.

Argentina raw honey prices are at historically high levels. Europe continues to buy most of that honey with their much stronger Euro compared to the US dollar. Inflation has also driven Argentina honey prices higher. With most of the 2008 Argentina honey crop sold and several months before their new crop comes in, those prices should remain strong. Brazil has been a strong honey supplier into the US market the last few years, but now with the European ban on Brazilian honey lifted, more of that honey will end up in Europe and this will raise prices on that honey coming into the US. Likewise, honey from Chile and Uruguay, which once found its way to the US, is now ending up in Europe. Brazil has good potential to increase their honey production, and incentive should be high with current raw honey prices. This could help to ease worldwide honey supply shortages in the future.

The Canada honey crop will be below average due to poor weather conditions and heavy bee losses last winter. Canada honey prices could be higher than US honey prices.

New crop India honey should enter the market in January helping to supplement the extra light amber and white honey supply. Prices for this honey could enter the market at prices lower than US honey prices, but could escalate quickly if demand is heavy.

Vietnam has become a good supplier of light amber honey into the world market producing about 40 million lbs. Last years' honey crop has been sold, and their new crop won't enter the market until about February. Vietnam honey prices will probably be even higher than last year's historically high levels because of inflation and heavy demand for their honey.

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# DOUG'S COLUMN

*Doug Somerville*

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



## CANOLA – AFTER THE EVENT

Every year I receive enquiries from Canola growers and beekeepers about the risk to honey bees of using one or other chemicals on flowering canola crops. Personally, I do not like canola as a floral resource due to the down sides and yes, I have had experience of bees on Canola crops.

Even though there is a small body of evidence to indicate that honey bees benefit canola crops by increasing yields and evening up the crops maturity, growers of Canola by and large would appear indifferent to spraying canola crops in flower. This quite often comes down to a perception of risk.

As a grower I am not paying for the bees (in most cases) but I am paying for the advice from the local private agronomist. He/she tells me that aphids are now causing significant damage to my crop and I should apply a chemical to control the aphids before significant damage is done to the crop.

Thus I would suggest that the 'stronger' message is likely to be, go ahead and spray my crop as I do not have a cost associated with the bees. The role of honey bees in canola crops and flowering crops in general has been and continues to be severely undervalued. With the threat of Varroa mites and the media attention on this subject over the last 12 months this perception has changed in some quarters, but only slightly.

This year I received a disturbing number of calls mainly from beekeepers who expressed concern about the threat of bees being sprayed while they were foraging on Canola.

Canola blossom is extremely attractive to bees. Foraging bees have been recorded to fly several kilometres to access Canola nectar and pollen. Thus it could potentially be very difficult for beekeepers with bees in areas where Canola is being grown to place their hives out of harms way.

What was particularly worrying was the chemicals being reported. While there are chemicals with low impact on honey bees for use on flowering canola crops, these were either ignored, in short supply or deemed too expensive. A number of reports received indicated that dimethoate was being suggested as a chemical to control aphids. This chemical is extremely

toxic to honey bees with a toxicity to honey bees in excess of three days. Besides the fact this chemical is not registered for use on flowering Canola crops.

Now we know that the incidence of major pests will vary from year to year and location to location, so the aphid problem experienced on such a wide scale this year may not be repeated for several years. Even so where do you stand as a beekeeper?

The *Pesticides Act 1999* is the primary legislative instrument controlling the use of pesticides in NSW and is administered by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). The underlying principle of the Pesticides Act is that pesticides must only be used for the purpose described on the product label and all the instructions on the label must be followed. Consequently, all label directions must be read by or explained to the user prior to each use of the pesticide.

A regulation was gazetted on 14 December 2001 requiring all commercial pesticide users, i.e. all farmers and spray contractors, to keep records of their pesticide application (Records Regulation).

While no set form has to be used, records must include the following:

- full product name
- description of the crop or situation
- rate of application and quantity applied
- description of the equipment used
- address of the property, identification of the area treated and order of paddocks treated
- date and time of the application (including start and finish)
- name, address, and contact details of the applicator and of the employer or owner if an employee or contractor is the applicator
- estimated wind speed and direction (including any significant changes during application)
- other weather conditions specified on label as being relevant (e.g. temperature, rainfall, relative humidity)

Records must be made within 24 hours of application, be made in legible English, and kept for 3 years.

A second regulation (User Training Regulation) commenced on September 1 2003. This regulation requires all commercial pesticide users to be trained in pesticide application.

In the event that you suspect that your bees have been sprayed by a chemical not registered for the intended purpose you should contact the Department of Environment and Climate Change on **131 555** (local call cost throughout NSW, except on mobile phones). Any delay will reduce the chances of the DECC officers being able to collect sufficient evidence of the impact on your bees.

For further information on the role of DECC refer to their web site: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

From information obtained from the NSW DPI Insect and Mite Control in Field Crops Management Guide (2007) there is only one chemical formulation recommended for use on aphids. This is pirimicarb with three registered trade names; Aphidex, Pirimicarb and Pirimon. This chemical is said to have a very short persistence with a very low toxicity to honey bees. Where as dimethoate which is not registered for use for aphid control on flowering canola is extremely toxic to honey bees with a persistence (active residue) for 3 days.

Clearly if growers and spray applicators do the right thing and use pirimicarb, this will seriously reduce the risk to honey bees foraging on flowering crops. On the other hand if growers or spray applicators use dimethoate on flowering canola then the risk to honey bees is extreme and bee deaths are a certainty.

If you experience bee deaths and you have cause to suspect the illegal use of a pesticide then ring the DECC hotline on 131 555 otherwise my advice would be to avoid canola if possible.

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# AUSTRALIAN PLAGUE LOCUSTS

Spring hatching began during the last week of September in the eastern Riverina and southern Central West of New South Wales. Over forty reports of nymphs emerging at high densities in **Narrandera, Forbes, Wagga, Condobolin, Gundagai, Young** and **Murray** Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB) areas were confirmed by RLPB staff by the end of the month. Hatchings were at band density in numerous locations, but at this stage only small bands of first instar nymphs have formed, mostly less than 200 m long. Further hatchings are expected in Hume, Riverina and southern Murray RLPB areas, and across northern Victoria during the first week of October. Warm weather during September caused eggs to complete development rapidly and peak hatching has occurred up to a week earlier than expected.

**A widespread nymphal infestation with many small bands will develop in the Riverina and Central West of New South Wales, and in North Central Victoria during October and November. The overall scale of likely control operations is difficult to predict, but experience from recent spring outbreaks in these regions indicates a potential for more than 25,000 ha of control.**

**Landholder identification and control of small bands on farmland will be critical to minimising the impact of locust nymphs on crops and pastures during October. Control of extensive areas of high density bands will be coordinated if required by RLPBs, NSW and Victorian Departments of Primary Industries and the APLC, with cooperation across jurisdictions.**

High density hatchings are occurring in Murray, Wagga, Narrandera, Condobolin and Forbes RLPB districts, extending into the western edge of Gundagai and Young RLPB districts. Egg laying also occurred in southern areas of Dubbo and Molong, and in Riverina and Hume RLPB areas, where hatchings will begin in early October. RLPB staff plan to begin control in early October and have commenced distribution of pesticide to landholders. **Nymphs in the Riverina and Central West will reach mid-instar stage from 10 October and fledging will begin in early November.** Adult population density will increase to high densities and there is the potential for swarms to form during November.

In Victoria spring hatchings will begin from early October in the area bounded by Wodonga, Wangaratta,

Rushworth and Echuca. High density nymphs are likely to develop in some locations during October and November and control is anticipated by DPI Victoria and landholders.

Population density is low in the NSW Northwest Plains, Far West and Far South West regions. Surveys in Queensland also indicated a very low population density in most regions during September.

September surveys in northern South Australia identified a very low density adult population in the Far North and around the southern Flinders Ranges.

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

A toll-free call to the Australian Plague Locust Commission can be made on 1800 635 962. An answering machine is attached for after-hours calls. Reports can be sent through the APLC web page at [www.daff.gov.au/aplc](http://www.daff.gov.au/aplc)

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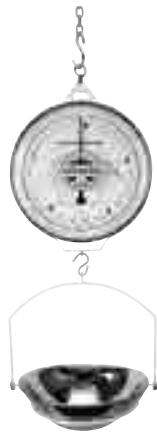
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# SEASONAL OUTLOOK

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Southern NSW

Rain is key to most prospects for spring, Canola flowering has been cut short in western areas, due to hot dry winds & lack of moisture. Canola in more eastern areas has responded well to some useful rain, but more is needed. Some honey is being produced and colonies are breeding well.

Late Mugga Ironbark is yielding well on the slopes but may be cut short if hot conditions prevail. Yellow Box is yielding in some locations. Paterson's Curse needs a lot more rain to have any chance of producing a reasonable crop. River Red Gum still looks promising for summer and Spotted Gum on the South Coast is still carrying good bud for winter '09.

### Northern NSW

Yellow Box should be okay [if some rain and warm nights eventuate] some honey could be produced. Mugga, Caleys, Narrowleaf and Broadleaf Ironbarks have yielded reasonably well but are almost finished. Prospects after Christmas are non-existent. Some gums are budded, rain pending!

*Neil Bingley*

### North Coast

Many beekeepers have split hives to make up for winter losses. There is some interest in patches of Grey Ironbark many beekeepers are hoping for good rain on the clover county on the tablelands.

### Central Coast

On the sandstone country Yellow Blood wood is flowering at present providing pollen - generally bees in the area had a poor spring with very little swarming.

### Sydney

Forest Red Gum is just starting to flower and general nectar has been in very short supply. Small hive beetle numbers seem to be low.

### Central West and Slopes

Showers on the slopes and tablelands should help the later flowering crops of Canola and Paterson's Curse and Blue Weed on the tablelands. Some beekeepers are moving onto patches of Mallee.

Canola plantings have not been as extensive as in other years, but more genetically modified crop has been planted.

Under current labeling laws the honey from the GM Canola crops don't have to be labeled as GM because of the very small amount of detectable GM material in the resulting honey.

*Bruce White*

## QUEENSLAND

Continued light falls of rain across Queensland have given an air of optimism for a reasonable crop. Bees are breeding well everywhere and swarming is becoming a problem.

### The Downs

Now the warmer weather is here Narrowleaf and Broadleaf Ironbark are starting to produce, with good prospects of Hill Gum and Yellow Box to follow.

### South East Cost and Wide Bay, Burnett

Most hives are on Macadamia and Avocado Pollination. Grey Ironbark has patchy bud and will be a hit or miss affair.

Brush Box is a good prospect for December/January, but we will have to wait and see how well it buds. River mangrove is well budded and is a good prospect for October, for those fortunate enough to have sites on a very limited resource.

### Channel Country

Very few hives have been taken to the far west this year, but the few that were, had mixed results, with very little honey produced.

### Central Queensland

Prospects look fairly poor at this stage. Overall, I predict an average crop between now and Christmas.

*Roy Barnes*

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# Does the introduction of bumble bees pose a threat to the Australian honey industry?

Dr Andrew B. Hingston

School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania

hingston@utas.edu.au

The bumble bee *Bombus terrestris* is native to Europe, as well as the near east, Mediterranean islands, part of the north coast of Africa, the Canary Islands and Madeira (Hingston 2007). Feral populations occur throughout Tasmania, with the exception of some offshore islands (Hingston 2006), and also in New Zealand, Japan, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay (Hingston 2007). However, it is not established on the Australian mainland.

Two applications have been made to import *B. terrestris* to the Australian mainland for pollination of crops inside greenhouses. The first of these (Goodwin & Steiner 1997) was rejected. However, a second application (Australian Hydroponic & Greenhouse Association 2005) is currently being assessed by the Australian Department of Environment and Heritage.

Because *B. terrestris* feeds on nectar and pollen, it is a potential competitor for food with commercial honey bees, and Tasmanian apiarists expressed their concern about this to me at the Tasmanian Beekeepers' Association AGM in 2005 (Hingston 2007). Research in Tasmania validates their concerns. I consider the introduction of *B. terrestris* to the Australian mainland to be a threat to the honey industry because of the high probability that *B. terrestris* will escape from greenhouses and form feral populations at high density across a vast area, forage on a wide variety of plants that are important to the honey industry, and reduce nectar and pollen availability to honey bees in these plants by being able to forage at lower temperatures than can honey bees.

*Bombus terrestris* is a hairy bee with broad black and yellow bands, whose stocky body ranges in length from 8 mm to 35 mm. It has annual colonies in pre-existing cavities in or near the ground. Queens establish the colonies on their own after having mated with a drone.

The use of colonies of *B. terrestris* in greenhouses on the Australian mainland is likely to lead to the

establishment of feral populations. A representative of the bumblebee-production industry has stated "Over 50% of hives within the greenhouse can expect to produce these queens. The diameter of the flight hole is such that it should prevent the egress of the larger-sized queens, but in practice, some queens and males escape into the glasshouse environment. Thus, whilst not all commercial hives will produce queens and the number per hive will be small, some can be expected to escape into the natural environment, where they will be fertilised by escaping males" and "there is a risk that a limited number of fertilised queens will escape from commercial glasshouses into the environment. Whilst the overall numbers will be few, some feral colonies will establish" (Griffiths 2004). Similarly, the first application to import *B. terrestris* to the Australian mainland stated "While it is not the intention to establish feral populations, it is anticipated that improper use or accident could result in bumblebees establishing in the wild" (Goodwin & Steiner 1997).

Two climatic models of the potential geographic range of *B. terrestris* on the Australian mainland were produced as part of the current application to import *B. terrestris* to the Australian mainland (McClay 2005). Model 1, based on the climates within the entire natural distribution of *B. terrestris*, predicted that it could spread across most of Victoria, the eastern half of NSW, almost all the way up the Queensland coast, south-eastern SA, and a large area in south-western WA. Model 2, based on the climates in the United Kingdom where subspecies *B. terrestris audax* occurs, predicted that this subspecies would be restricted to coastal and high elevation areas in Victoria and NSW and a small area in south-eastern SA. However, in the absence of evidence that the natural range of *B. terrestris audax* is limited by climate rather than the North Sea and English Channel, McClay (2005) concluded that *B. terrestris audax* "could establish in broader areas of Australia, possibly approaching the limits of the potential distribution of *B. terrestris*" as determined from Model 1.



Studies of *B. terrestris* in Tasmania indicate that feral populations could spread quickly and reach high densities on the Australian mainland. It spread rapidly through native vegetation in Tasmania (Hingston & McQuillan 1998; Hingston *et al.* 2002; Hingston 2006), and a colony in a national park produced at least 304 new queens and 939 workers/drones (Hingston *et al.* 2006). It comprised 43% of visits to flowers of *Gompholobium huegelii* (Hingston & McQuillan 1999), up to 92% of flower visitors to *Eucalyptus ovata* (Hingston 2007), and up to 100% of flower visitors to *Lupinus arboreus* (Stout *et al.* 2002).

*Bombus terrestris* is a potential competitor with commercial honey bees because of its broad diet (Hingston & McQuillan 1998; Hingston *et al.* 2002) and capacity to forage at lower temperatures than honey bees (Corbet *et al.* 1993). It forages on a very wide variety of plants in Tasmania, including many species that are important to the honey industry such as eucalypts, banksias, clovers, thistles and blackberries (Hingston & McQuillan 1998; Hingston *et al.* 2002, 2006; Hingston 2007). *Bombus terrestris* often starts foraging on eucalypts earlier in the day than do honey bees, and also forages at other times when it is too cool for honey bees, thereby reducing the amount of nectar available to honey bees (Hingston 2007). On a warm day (max. temp. 28.2°C), *B. terrestris* started foraging at 7 a.m. By 8 a.m. flowers exposed to *B. terrestris* contained less than half as much nectar as those from which it was excluded. Hence, less nectar was available when honey bees started foraging at 9 a.m. (Hingston 2007). On a day that was too cold for honey bees to forage (max. temp. 12.8°C), *B. terrestris* foraged continuously from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m., comprised 92% of all flower visitors, and prevented nectar accumulating for honey bees to collect on subsequent warmer days (Hingston 2007). The potential for *B. terrestris* to harm the honey industry is highlighted by observations on several species of plants in Tasmania where large numbers of honey bees were only seen in areas that *B. terrestris* had not yet invaded, suggesting that competitive exclusion may be occurring (Stout *et al.* 2002).

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# A very closely watched sentinel hive

Nicholas Annand, NSW DPI - Bathurst

There is a colony of bees being used as a sentinel hive at Darling Harbour, Sydney. This may sound like nothing unusual as many of the international ports around Australia have sentinel hives in close proximity to monitor for incursions of pests and diseases such as varroa, tropilaelaps and tracheal mites. However this hive, I would like to bet, would be the most scrutinized sentinel hive in the country by a long way. It is a display colony that is set up down on the Darling Harbour foreshore located within Sydney Wildlife World. The bees are in a glass display hive that is presented within another large glass display cabinet which is full of large web spinning spiders from far North Queensland who enjoy the occasional supplementary feed of any escapee bees.

The hive is owned by Eric Whitby and Eric kindly provides the voluntary services involved in monitoring this particular sentinel hive. Boris Lomov the Invertebrate Section Supervisor for Sydney Wildlife World was keen for the inclusion of the honey bee colony which has been on display since October 2007. Boris provides the day to day care for the colony with guidance from Eric who visits every 3 months to do the monitoring for the sentinel hive program. The bees are free to come and go from the display cabinet via some PVC plumbing pipes connecting them to the outside world but additional food is required to maintain the colony.

Each day hundreds, if not thousands of people move through the building. The active nature of the bee colony draws great interest from those passing by, curious to see the inner working of a European honey bee colony. So thousands of sets of eyes are examining the bees each week. The hive has been used as a sentinel hive since the beginning of the year. However because of the design of the display hive only adults bees could be collected for examination from the colony initially. However the colony died during the winter which then provided the opportunity for Eric Whitby (the hive owner) to make some adjustments to the display hive cabinet. One of the changes Eric added was a sliding draw that allows the placement of a sticky mat covered by mesh (stop bees getting stuck on it) in the bottom of the hive which is used in combination with miticide strips to test for external mites on the bees. This allows the hive to be used as a fully functioning sentinel hive in the same way that is done for other sentinel hives around Australia.

Eric in collaboration with Sydney Wildlife World, are also planning on adding display signage to explain the hives use and importance as a sentinel hive and the significance of preventing incursions of exotic honey bee pests for the well being of the honey bee and agricultural industries in Australia. This will provide a great opportunity to teach the general public about the importance of honey bees to Australian agriculture and to emphasize the benefit of preventing an incursion of varroa, trophilaelaps or tracheal mite and the role the sentinel hive program plays in this. The public having a better understanding of the apiary industry and the role pollination services play in the economy will only help strengthen support for the industries survival. Perhaps all those peering sets of eyes may even spot an unwanted intruder on the bees, but let's hope there are no intruders to see. So if you get the opportunity to visit the Sydney Wildlife World, take a look. It has a huge range of Australian wildlife on display in the heart of the city, made even better with the inclusion of a honey bee hive that is also used in the National Sentinel Hive Program.



*Eric Whitby beside his display colony prior to installation at Sydney Wildlife World*

# RECIPES

## LAMB WITH HONEY MUSTARD SAUCE

450g lamb back straps  
1 green onion, chopped  
375ml beef stock  
**2 tablespoons honey**  
1 ½ tablespoons mustard  
2 teaspoons cornflour  
Olive oil  
Salt & pepper  
Water

Brush the lamb with a little olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the lamb and cook (in batches if necessary) for 4 minutes each side or until cooked to your liking. Remove, cover with foil and keep warm, allowing the meat to rest.

Combine the cornflour and 1 tablespoon water in a small bowl and whisk until a smooth paste forms. Place the stock, honey and mustard in a small saucepan over medium heat and cook, stirring, until sauce comes to a simmer. Add the cornflour mixture and green onion, stirring constantly to avoid lumps forming in the sauce. Cook for another minute then set aside. To serve, thickly slice the lamb. Serve with honey mustard sauce and a selection of vegetables or rice.

## HONEY CUPCAKES

125g butter, softened  
¼ cup caster sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
½ cup honey  
2 eggs  
1 ¼ cups plain flour, sifted  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
½ cup milk  
*Lemon Icing*  
½ cups icing sugar, sifted  
2 ½ tablespoons lemon juice

Preheat oven to 160°C. Place the butter, sugar and vanilla in an electric mixer and beat for 10-12 minutes or until pale and creamy. Add the honey and continue to beat until well combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Fold through the flour, baking powder and milk, spoon into four 12-hole x 1 ½ tablespoon capacity mini muffin tins lined with patty cases. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until cooked when tested with a skewer.

*To make the lemon icing, place the icing sugar and lemon juice in a bowl and stir to combine.*

Spoon icing over cakes. Makes 48

## HONEY GINGER CAKE

1 cup self raising flour  
1 cup plain flour  
½ teaspoon carb soda  
2 teaspoons ground ginger  
½ teaspoon mixed spice  
½ cup caster sugar  
90g butter  
¾ cup dark honey  
¾ cup milk  
2 large eggs

Sift the flours, soda and spices into a mixing bowl. Add sugar and make a well. Melt butter with honey in a saucepan then pour into the well. Add milk and eggs and beat thoroughly. Line a 20cm square (5cm deep) cake tin with Gladbake. Pour mixture into lined tin.

Bake in a moderate oven for 45 to 50 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool in the tin. Turn out, cut into squares. Serve plain or with a little softly whipped cream.

## STOP PRESS

### Australian Queen Bee Breeders Program

The Australian Queen Bee Breeders Program run by the Australian Queen Bee Breeders Group (AQBBG) will shortly have a small number of queen bees available for sale. These are Instrumentally Inseminated queens that have been run in eight (8) frame hives during the winter.

They are partially evaluated by Laurie Dewar. Laurie can be contacted on 07 5463 5633 if you wish to discuss the performance of these queens. These queens are suitable for using to rear queens for your own operation or for sale to other beekeepers.

These queen bees are available for \$500 each (no GST) and will be provided on a first come first pick basis.

Please contact Laurie Dewar to place your order. Either phone or email at [lpdewar@bigpond.com](mailto:lpdewar@bigpond.com)

**Trevor Weatherhead**  
**Secretary, AQBBG**  
**14 October 2008**



# PESTICIDES CAUSE MASS DEATH OF BEES

*Charge against Bayer's Board of Management - Germany, 25 August 2008*

The German *Coalition against Bayer Dangers* today brought a charge against Werner Wenning, chairman of the Bayer Board of Management, with the Public Prosecutor in Freiburg (south-western Germany). The group accuses Bayer of marketing dangerous pesticides and thereby accepting the mass death of bees all over the world. The *Coalition* introduced the charge in cooperation with German beekeepers who lost thousands of hives after poisoning by the pesticide clothianidin in May this year.

Since 1991 Bayer has been producing the insecticide Imidacloprid, which is one of the best selling insecticides in the world, often used as seed-dressing for maize, sunflower, and rape. Bayer exports Imidacloprid to more than 120 countries and the substance is Bayer's best-selling pesticide. Since patent protection for Imidacloprid expired in most countries, Bayer in 2003 brought a similarly functioning successor product, Clothianidin, onto the market. Both substances are systemic chemicals that work their way from the seed through the plant. The substances also get into the pollen and the nectar and can damage beneficial insects such as bees.

The beginning of the marketing of Imidacloprid and Clothianidin coincided with the occurrence of large scale bee deaths in many European and American countries. Up to 70 per cent of all hives have been affected. In France alone approximately 90 billion bees died within ten years, reducing honey production by up to 60%.

Harro Schultze, attorney of the *Coalition against Bayer Dangers* said: "The Public Prosecutor needs to clarify which efforts BAYER undertook to prevent a ban of Imidacloprid and Clothianidin after sales of both substances were stopped in France. We're suspecting that Bayer submitted flawed studies to play down the risks of pesticide residues in treated plants". In France Imidacloprid has been banned as a seed dressing for sunflowers since 1999 and in 2003 was also banned as a sweet corn treatment. The *Comité Scientifique et Technique*, convened by the French government, declared that the treatment of seeds with Imidacloprid leads to significant risks for bees. Bayer's application for Clothianidin was also rejected by French authorities.

Bayer's Board of Management has to be called to account since the risks of neonicotinoids such as Imidacloprid and Clothianidin have now been known for more than ten years. With an annual turnover of nearly 800 million Euro neonicotinoids are among Bayer's most important products. "This is the reason why Bayer, despite serious environmental damage, is fighting against any application prohibitions", says Philipp Mimkes, speaker of the

*Coalition against Bayer-dangers*. The Coalition demands that Bayer withdraw all neonicotinoids from the market worldwide.

The accusation of flawed studies is confirmed by the Canadian *Pest Management Regulatory Agency* (PMRA) which judged on Bayer's Clothianidin application: "All of the field/semi-field studies, however, were found to be deficient in design and conduct of the studies and were, therefore, considered as supplemental information only. Clothianidin may pose a risk to honey bees and other pollinators, if exposure occurs via pollen and nectar of crop plants grown from treated seeds". PMRA adds: "It should also be noted that Clothianidin is very persistent in soil, with high carry-over of residues to the next growing season. Clothianidin is also mobile in soil."

In May 2008 German authorities blamed clothianidin for the deaths of millions of honeybees. The German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) suspended the registration for eight pesticide seed treatment products, including Clothianidin and Imidacloprid, on maize and rape.



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# THE ASIAN HONEY BEE INCURSION IN CAIRNS

## The story so far:

- Back on 4 May, 2007 a nest of Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) was found in the mast of a boat in Portsmith in Cairns.
- Subsequent checking, between 16 May and 8 November 2007, found another six (6) nests in the nearby area.
- As nothing was found in the next few months it was hoped that all nests had been found and that was it.
- However on 29 July, 2008 a nest was found in an avocado tree in Green Hill, about 10 kilometres south of where the original nests were found. The owner of the property said it had swarmed a few days previously.
- Three (3) days later a swarm was found in a tree several hundred metres from this nest. It is thought that this was the swarm from the avocado tree.
- Then on 13 September a nest was found just south of Gordonvale near Walsh's Pyramid and another one in the same area on 24 September
- From 22 September to 25 September, three (3) nests, one had already been sprayed by a pest controller, were found in the Parramatta Park/ Bungalow area of Cairns. This was within five (5) kilometres of the first find back in 2007.
- On 29 September, another nest was found in Portsmith not far from where the first find was.

All nests have been destroyed and most have been sampled. So far there have been no Varroa found in any of the nests.

Samples for DNA determination have been sent to Dr Ben Oldroyd at the University of Sydney to determine if we were looking at one swarm, which has subsequently swarmed, or if there had been more than one incursion. This was for the samples collected up to 1 September. The results came back that "The genotypes are compatible with the 4 colonies being headed sister queens mated to brother drones. You don't seem to have the mother (introduced) colony in there – no colony is more variable than the rest."

Not all colonies were able to be sampled but from the above it would seem that we had one primary swarm which was the original incursion at some time and

all swarms have come from that colony or daughter colonies. Samples from the latest finds have been sent to Dr Oldroyd for DNA determination to see if we are still dealing with the progeny from the original incursion.

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) Biosecurity Section has control of the eradication and they have good staff in Cairns. Our industry has had people go up to Cairns to help out with surveillance. I will publish a list of these volunteers in the next newsletter. QDPI&F have been footing the bill for the travel and accommodation of our industry people. The QBA must thank QDPI&F for picking up this tab.

President Rodney and I have had a meeting with the Chief Veterinary Officer for Queensland, Ron Glanville, and the General Manager for Animal Health, Allison Crook, and they have assured us that at this stage there is no thought of declaring the Asian bee as endemic and stopping the eradication program. This is reassuring for us as I am of the belief that we have every chance of eradicating the Asian bees from Cairns. It will take persistence and patience but it is achievable.

To date there have been no more nests found and surveillance is being carried out in a 10 kilometre radius from the found nests. It is hoped that there will be no more nests found. However, if there are, it will mean that it is good to be finding and destroying these nests. At this stage, I personally see no reason why the eradication will not succeed. It is just a matter of looking. The areas already surveyed will need to be checked again to show at a later date that there are no more nests in the area.

**Trevor Weatherhead**  
**12 October 2008**

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# MANUAL HANDLING

***Everyone knows what manual handling is... don't they?***

***Research by WorkCover NSW suggests that many people don't!***

*Reproduced with kind permission of WorkCover NSW.*

Many workers and employers believe manual handling relates only to lifting and hard physical labour. In fact, manual handling is any activity that involves lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, holding or restraining. It also includes sustained and awkward postures and repetitive movements.

Research also suggests that many people believe safe manual handling is commonsense. This is cause for concern, given that manual handling is the most common cause of workplace injury; in Tasmania, it accounted for around 34% of all claims in 2006.

Manual handling is part of almost everything we do, and it plays a role in everyone's job. As we move naturally when doing familiar tasks, we often become complacent and simply forget to consider our actions. Even where risks are evident, many workers and employers think it is just part of the job, but in most cases these risks can be eliminated or reduced.

Eliminating or reducing manual handling risks doesn't have to be expensive. It's about working smarter and safer. Think about your actions before you make them. In particular, think about those actions that place stress or strain on your body, such as:

- bending forward or sideways
- twisting
- jerky movements
- over-reaching
- repetitive movements

If you do these movements often, find a better way to complete the task:

- sometimes re-arranging the workspace can make a difference. Position tools, controls, equipment and furniture so work can be done in a comfortable, upright position, preferably at waist level. Arrange furniture to allow yourself as much room as possible, so you can move about freely. Place regularly-used items close by and store rarely-used items away to give yourself more workplace
- where tasks are repetitive or are performed in a sustained position for a long time or at a high speed ensure that your workers are given a variety of tasks. Encourage them to regularly change positions and postures throughout the day.

- where work pressures demand a fast work pace, ensure schedules and procedures allow for rest breaks and job rotations. Ensure there are enough staff and equipment to get the job done safely.

Safe manual handling is more about good planning and good management, rather than simply purchasing expensive equipment.

Talk with your workers. Ask for their ideas about improving safe work procedures. Emphasise your commitment to safety. If you're serious about safety, your workers are more likely to follow procedures. Never assume manual handling is "just part of the job". Solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems are uncovered all the time. Often, simple remedies are the best. Be vigilant about the risks. Do all you can to make your workplace safer.

For more practical guidance on reducing manual handling injuries, call the Workplace Standards Helpline on 1300 366 322 or go to [www.workcover.tas.gov.au](http://www.workcover.tas.gov.au) for your free copy of *Body Strain Prevention Kit* (GB114) and *Body Strain Prevention for Workers* (GB124).

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# AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL REVIEW

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

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

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

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

## Inquiry Terms of Reference

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

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

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

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# BRANCH NEWS

## NSWAA Northern Tablelands

New England Volunteer Air Transport Inc (NEVAT) provides free transport for patients to medical specialists in major centres such as Tamworth, Armidale and Toowoomba.

We are 100% volunteer and rely on the generous support of the community to keep us flying.

The NSW Apiarists' Association's Northern Tablelands Branch have assisted us to keep flying by their generous donation and we truly appreciate their support.

It is by such support that we are able to continue to operate, we keep our operating costs to a minimum and every dollar raised goes into providing the service.

No one at NEVAT gets paid and we feel this is important when appealing for funds. In a lot of organisations a large amount of donated funds gets absorbed into administration and that is not the case with us.

We are Tax Deductible and donations can be made at the New England Credit Union or by sending a donation to The Secretary, NEVAT, 35 Albury Street Ashford, NSW 2361.

Our fundraising depends on community support and organisations and service clubs assisting us is what keeps us going. We really cannot stress enough the value of community support without which we would have a difficult time.

**David Roach, President, NEVAT**  
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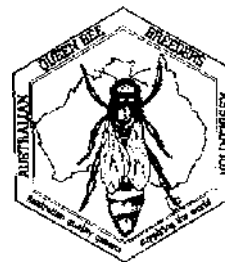
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# AHBIC NEWS

August/September 2008

## CHANGES TO HONEY LEVY ARRANGEMENTS

During 2007 there was extensive discussion within the honey bee industry to change the industry's current honey levy arrangements. At the various industry annual general meetings held in each state, the following resolution was put forward and passed unanimously:

That the honey bee industry support changes to the existing levy arrangements to reduce the existing National Residue Survey (NRS) levy from 0.3 cents to 0.1 cents and to increase the Animal Health Australia (AHA) levy from 0.5 cents to 0.7 cents.

The purpose of the proposed change to the distribution of the levy monies is to enable the honey bee industry to build up reserves in case of an emergency disease/pest outbreak such as the Varroa mite. The levy change will also enable the industry to invest more funds in the short term to improve our preparedness and prevention measures aimed at increasing the honey bee industry's biosecurity.

The reduced NRS levy rate will still enable NRS tests for residues in honey of agricultural and veterinary chemicals and environmental contaminants to be maintained for a number of years given the level of industry reserves in the NRS. The NRS reserves will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that there are adequate funds for the testing that needs to be done.

The proposed changes will not alter the total aggregate honey levy rate for these two levies or increase producer costs, but will help the industry become better prepared to respond to any emergency disease or pest outbreak. It is a positive measure that the industry can take to protect its interests.

Your industry bodies strongly support these changes and believe they are prudent and non-controversial. However, before proceeding with changes, if you have any comments or concerns please contact your (industry body/state representative/organisation) or give me a call on 02 9221 0911.

## RURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Please be advised that the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) are now calling for applications for preliminary research proposals to meet our program objectives.

RIRDC invests in the knowledge needs of our three portfolio areas:

- New rural industries;
- Specific established industries; and
- Cross-sectoral national rural issues

Our investments are driven by Five-Year R&D plans which address the needs of each industry and ensure our priorities are industry and government-driven. Overall, our aim is for a more profitable, dynamic and sustainable rural sector.

If you think you or your organisation can help address the needs of our programs as outlined in the current research priorities (listed on our website below), we would welcome your application for funding.

RIRDC welcomes proposals that will meet the specific objectives or a number of objectives, as outlined on our website and in more detail in program Five-Year Plans. We also welcome and encourage your collaboration with other research providers to build the critical research mass necessary to meet our objectives.

Please go to <http://www.rirdc.gov.au/business> for more information.

If you have further questions or need further information, please contact:

Ms Margie Thomson  
General Manager, RIRDC

Ph:02 6271 4130 Email: [margie.thomson@rirdc.gov.au](mailto:margie.thomson@rirdc.gov.au)

## POLLINATION R&D PROGRAM UPDATE

The Interim Advisory Committee for the Pollination R&D Program was brought together for the first time in Canberra, on 28 August to review a series of Pollination R&D project applications for contracting in the 2008/09 financial year.

Committee members present at this meeting comprised:

- AHBIC - Lindsay Bourke
- HAL - Kim James
- Honeybee R&D Chairman - Des Cannon
- Pollination Australia - Julie Haslett (Almond Board of Australia)
- Pollination Australia - Jeff McSpedden (AUSVEG)
- RIRDC - Margie Thomson

Pollination R&D funding committed for the 2008/09 financial year is as follows:

▪ Honeybee R&D	\$100,000
▪ RIRDC	\$50,000
▪ HAL	\$264,800
▪ TOTAL	\$414,800



A series of Pollination R&D project applications were reviewed at the meeting. A brief outline of these projects is included below. However, prior to finalising contractual arrangements with any of these projects, it was agreed to review DAFF's current and future plans to avoid duplication of activities, and to potentially collaborate on initiatives (where possible and appropriate).

Five project applications are currently under consideration, as summarised below:

1. Five Year Pollination R&D Strategic Plan & Related Communication Plan

- This project is to be funded directly by RIRDC's \$50,000 contribution.
- It is aimed to build a business case for investment in the program over the next five years.
- Future industry investment in this program is required for continuity. In order to facilitate this, a summary document will be circulated to all relevant Industry Advisory Committees (IAC's), in addition to a DVD of the recent 60 minutes story on Varroa mite, featuring Dennis Anderson.
- Further to this, funding has been allocated by RIRDC for direct communication at the IAC meetings prior to April 2009, enabling presentation of the 5 year Pollination R&D strategic plan, underpinning a request for continued funding commitment.

2. Simulation Exercise

- This project aims to undertake an emergency response exercise, simulating a Varroa mite incursion, with a view to testing preparedness and existing decision making processes.
- The project will be broken into a two-step approach, with an initial workshop focussing on eradication and containment strategies, followed by a second exercise with a focus on both short and long-term management, with a view to developing a National Management Plan.
- Importantly, this review requires input from the broadest range of people. A key objective of this project will be co-ordinating and consolidating feedback and input from the many stakeholder groups associated with this surveillance program.

3. Bioeconomic Model

- This project aims to develop a modelling tool and input relevant data, in order to model the spread of Varroa mite incursion and consequent impact on Australia's horticultural production. This model could then be used to assess economic impact of various quarantine decisions in the event of a Varroa mite incursion.

4. Economic Impact Assessment

- This project aims to utilise data generated in the bioeconomic modelling project and input it into ABARE's "Ausregion" tool, in order to quantify the total economic impact of this reduction in horticultural output.

5. Surveillance Review

- This project aims to undertake a comprehensive assessment of potential surveillance measures, outlining the related costs, benefits and risks associated

various strategies by exploring the strengths and weaknesses the range of surveillance strategy options. Ultimately the project will result in the development of a business case for investment in a recommended Australian surveillance program.

## **DAFF / INDUSTRY HONEYBEE MEETING**

A joint DAFF / Industry meeting was convened by DAFF on 29 August in Canberra. The meeting was chaired by Tom Aldred - Executive Manager, Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health, DAFF. Attendance at this meeting included representation from:

- DAFF / AQIS / Biosecurity Australia / State and Territory Agencies / CSIRO
- Honeybee Industry / Pollination Australia
- Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC)
- Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL)
- Animal Health Australia (AHA) / Plant Health Australia (PHA)

The meeting was initially convened in response to Pollination Australia's letter regarding continuation of the National Sentinel Hive Program, however the scope of discussion was broader than this.

During the meeting, a suite of more than 12 projects were scoped for collective input, including those projects currently being reviewed for Pollination R&D funding. An update was presented by those present on any specific activity that has already been undertaken with respect to each project and any future plans in order to capture current initiatives and avoid duplication. Suitable timeframes were agreed and responsibilities allocated for each project.

A majority of projects specifically focussed on a potential Varroa mite incursion, spanning the biosecurity continuum: pre border, border and post border, addressing aspects of risk assessment, preparedness, response and communication. It was noted that there was a need to broaden the scope of projects to encompass other threats, both exotic and endemic.

It was agreed that the full suite of projects should be scoped in a consistent format and developed into an integrated "Honeybee and Pollination Program" (potentially to be coordinated into the existing Pollination R&D framework). DAFF have agreed to explore this concept with RIRDC. Funding arrangements for the DAFF R&D projects are still to be determined.

I am pleased to provide the above report, which I believe represents positive progress, both in terms of progressing urgently required project outcomes, but equally importantly with respect to strengthened collaboration, communication and awareness raising of the importance of the current issues facing Australian pollination.

I look forward to providing a further update when available. Please do not hesitate to contact me should require further information with respect to any of the above.

**Stephen Ware**  
**Executive Director**

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