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HONEYBEE NEWS

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Volume 11 Number 3
May - June 2018



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COVER: A few of the Honeyland Crew! Photograph: Margaret Blunden



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Email: wally.56@hotmail.com

Casey Cooper Darby's Road Tingha 2369 Mob: 0428 233 551 Email: cooperbees@bigpond.com.au
Mark Page 424 Minimbah Road Minimbah NSW 2312 Mob: 0448 444 606 Email: mpage6541@gmail.com

SECRETARY/TREASURER: Roslynn (Ros) Riggs PO Box 5022 South Tamworth 2340
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Executive Director: Trevor Weatherhead Ph: 07 5467 2265
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Ms Margie Heath, Project Manager, RIRDC PO Box 4776, Kingston ACT 2604 Ph: 02 6271 4145
Email: Margaret.Heath@rirdc.gov.au Website: www.rirdc.gov.au

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Season

The last few months have been extremely dry over most of NSW. Some regions have severe rainfall deficiencies leading to delayed plantings of Canola. If significant rain does not arrive soon then outlooks for early spring prospects will be dismal. Those intending on providing Almond pollination have probably made the correct decision this time around, although fees paid are still low. Prospects for later spring are minimal although there is reasonable budding on Yellow Box and Grey Ironbark but due to the continuing warm dry weather these are or will probably flower early.

Resource

The resource issue continues to be at the fore. The Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval-Consultation Draft was released for public comment on May 15. Submissions close June 29. On reading the documents it is clear NO consideration has been given to the use of our forests by the apicultural industry. If these draft approvals are implemented as is, the future of beekeeping in State Forests will be seriously limited which will have dire consequences for many beekeepers by restricting the ability to supply hives of adequate strength to service their pollination obligations. NSWAA will be submitting our comments and concerns.

Another issue raising its head is the land being set aside for Bio Banks. These are areas of Private and Public land being set aside in perpetuity for biodiversity and carbon credits. On information I have received, commercial beekeeping is excluded. I have spoken with one of our members in the Hunter region who has informed me that sites on Public land that he has utilised for the past 25 years will soon be no longer available.

DPI (Department of Primary Industries)

I recently received a report from a member relating to inaction by DPI regulatory personnel. The incident involved a large number of hives in several locations severely infected with AFB. The beekeeper reported the incident via the DPI Hot Line. A DPI inspector travelled to the location and inspected hives, took photos, samples and slides but did not make any attempt to make obviously diseased and dead colonies bee proof thus eliminating any further spread of AFB. Several commercial apiaries were located nearby thus presenting an immediate risk. Many industry members have spent numerous hours on development of our Biosecurity Code

and for this lack of concern by DPI Compliance in not acting immediately is unacceptable. I will be contacting Minister Blair on this and other matters as soon as possible.

On a brighter note Nick Geoghegan continues developing the Apiary Support Desk and associated projects. Refer to Nick's article in this issue. DPI and PHA (Plant Health Aust.) conducted a Varroa incursion exercise in Orange on May 24 which was attended by Vice President Steve Targett and other industry representatives. A report on this will be included in the next Honeybee News.

DPI Publications

In mid April a new Ag Guide was released "Pollination using honey bees". I highly recommend this comprehensive publication to anyone involved with apiculture, especially those that specialise in pollination. The hard copy is exceptionally well presented and thanks must go to the authors and DPI for making this available to industry. Phone 1800 025 520 to order your copy.

NSWAA AGM

Preparations for our June 26 meeting are nearing completion and I hope as many members as possible can attend. Please register on our website under Events. I have been pleading for nominations for Executive council and I am pleased to say that we have received six nominations thus far, which requires a ballot to be held (first time for a few years) as only four vacancies exist. Anyone else contemplating nominating, please do so as soon as possible as nominations close June 5 (3 weeks prior to AGM). Now that nominations exceed vacancies NO nominations will be taken from the floor at our AGM. Profiles of candidates so far are included in this issue.

Membership

Thank you to all members that have renewed or joined online and manually. For those members that have not renewed yet please do as soon as possible as unless renewals are forthcoming the next Aust Honeybee News will be your last. Some members paying online have experienced minor problems but we are addressing these and thank you for your patience.

Stolen Hives

Incidences of stolen hives seem to be on the increase. When we place hives on Public land sites some

individuals think they can help themselves to our livelihoods. Although many beekeepers get frustrated by perceived inaction by authorities these incidences need to be reported. If not reported it cannot be included as happening. The following is an incident that occurred early April:

I'm writing to you to tell you about some hives I've had stolen. They were taken sometime in the first few days of this month from a site 15km north of Armidale towards Guyra. There were 96 hives painted silver 10 frame full depth all branded with my brand M2487. If you see or hear anything about them could you let me know by phone 0427010287. I have reported it to the Armidale police.

Honeyland

Thank you to all who volunteered at this year's Honeyland. Without this support Honeyland would not be the success that it is.

Meetings

There will be a short Executive meeting the morning of June 26 prior to the AGM. For the incoming Executive there will be a short meeting at the conclusion of our AGM.

Neil Bingley
President

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BLUEBERRIES

Blueberries are a relatively new crop starting to take prominence on the beekeeping calendar. The growth of the almond industry and the dependence of that industry on bees, to some extent, has overshadowed the growth of the blueberry industry and the role of honey bees in it.

Blueberries are a native of North America. They are part of the *vaccinium* genus which includes approximately 450 shrubs and bushes. Blueberries are either classified as 'Highbush', 'Lowbush' or 'Rabbiteye'.

Lowbush blueberries are not generally grown in Australia, but of the remaining two groups there are any numbers of cultivars. Each cultivar has a different set of characteristics which include growing conditions, seasonal preferences etc.

Thus, flowering times and need for bees vary considerably. As a rough guide flowering times are as follows:

Southern Highbush (early)	April–June
Northern Highbush (late)	September–October

Growing regions extend from the Atherton Tablelands in northern Queensland to Tasmania, including NSW and Victoria. The Northern Rivers districts in NSW are the biggest areas for blueberry production, with a particular focus on Coffs Harbour. NSW accounted for 86% of the blueberry production in Australia in 2015/16.

Overall production is said to be exploding, with many new orchards being planted each year. The Australian blueberry crop has quadrupled from 2007 to 2016. Production in 2015/16 was 7,660 tonnes.



The future prediction is to see a harvest of 16,000 tonnes by 2021 – not that far away!

Blueberries were first introduced into Australia in the early 1950s, in Victoria. They were slow to take off as a crop until further work was conducted in the early 1970s. Even then, the rapid growth in the blueberry industry is only a recent phenomenon.

In 2004, the Northern Rivers region of NSW from Coffs Harbour to the Queensland border produced over 75% of the Australian blueberry crop.

Blueberries are now the most important agricultural activity around Coffs Harbour. One estimate suggests that the industry accounts for 80% of the value of agriculture within this region.

The success and continued growth of the blueberry industry is equally dependent on the availability, health and professionalism of the Australian beekeeping industry. Blueberries need insects to pollinate the flowers and produce fruit. Little or no insect activity equates to little (size) or no fruit.

A study in North America provides clear evidence of the relationship of the average number of seeds per berry and the average weight of the berry. For instance, 10 seeds equates to a berry weight not much better than half a gram; 20 seeds relates to a fruit weighing around one gram and 30–40 seeds relates to a fruit approaching one and a half grams.

The seed set is directly related to the insect activity in the flowers and the resultant cross-pollination activity. The larger the fruit, the more profitable the crop becomes.

In the North American setting, blueberries are pollinated naturally by endemic bumble bees and native solitary bees. Even in this environment, the introduced honey bee is utilised to maximise the commercial fruit crop. Managed honey bees in this environment account for more than 50% of the insect visits to blueberry blossom.

A study in Victoria demonstrated that honey bees in that environment accounted for 95% of all insect visits. In the northern NSW zones and into Queensland, native social bees and other native solitary bees have been observed visiting blueberries and probably provide some of the pollination services in these environments.

The problem with natives is the unknown populations that are likely to exist from year to year and location to location. Chemical use on farm will reduce the fitness of this group of insects, alongside the removal of suitable habitat. The stingless bee can now be transported, but their availability is extremely limited. They are expensive and the little fellows have the habit of fighting each other when newly placed in an orchard. It is also extremely invasive to crack open a stingless bee nest to estimate its population.

Whilst small blueberry orchards close to natural bushland may be adequately serviced by wild honey bees and various native bees, this is still a hit and miss scenario. The provision of managed honey bees is the only current and most reliable means, of pollinating blueberries within Australia.

But what's in it for the bees? Not much as it would seem!



The primary attractant for honey bees is the nectar produced by the blueberry flowers. There are a few reports from North America that, at times, with some species and in some locations, a small surplus honey crop can be obtained. This appears to be the exception, not the rule. In the Australian context, no reports have been received of any surplus in the form of a blueberry honey crop having been harvested.

Blueberries are shy yielders of pollen, as far as honey bees are concerned. It is unusual to observe honey bees collecting pollen from blueberries. One sample of pollen originating from southern NSW tested 13.9% crude protein. This is an extremely low protein pollen and not able to sustain honey bee nutritional requirements.

Compounding the poor nutrition is the reports of increased European foulbrood disease in bees in the North American context. This disease is frequently associated with suspect nutritional conditions.

Thus, there is not much in it for bees.

Added to this is the risk of pesticides. The following are listed as causing grief to blueberries:

Anthrax, aphids, blueberry rot, botrytis flower blight, grey mould, budworms, downy mildew, elephant weevil borer, light brown apple moth, monolepta beetle, painted apple moth, phytophthora root rot, plague thrips, Queensland fruit fly, scarab beetles, slugs and snails, western flower thrips and white wax scale.

All of these ailments or threats presumably may, or may not, need to be controlled at some stage. If the bees (local resident bee population) in the area of the orchard

or orchards (if there are several blueberry growers in the same proximity) are regularly exposed to pesticides, this is highly likely to impact on their health and fitness.

Fungicides would appear to be a chemical group regularly applied during the flowering period of blueberries. While the toxicity of this group of pesticides is a mixed bag, there is increasing evidence of the sub-lethal impacts of these chemicals to honey bees.

Added issues for bees and beekeepers include:

- orchard design – often not compatible with access for a bee truck and adequate set-down sites that suit the bees.
- lack of water within the orchard – OK if sufficient nectar is being gathered.
- need to spread hives about – placed in groups of 2 to 20. Orchardists often want hives placed in small lots. Best to remind them that bees have wings and are able to fly some kilometres.
- the netting may restrict entry and exit of bees – if bees cannot get out, the hive population will decline.
- UV light-restricting material over some crops will impede the bee's vision. UV light is within the honey bee visual spectrum.



If you are contemplating supplying bee hives for the pollination of blueberries, then don't go in with your eyes closed. There are risks and lost opportunities with alternative honey crops potentially available within your operational range.

Stocking rates are said to be 2–5 hives per hectare, in most cases around 2–3 hives per hectare. When bees are in the orchard, observe foraging behaviour in the morning and look for two foraging bees per metre of crop row. This is an acceptable level of insect activity.

Another way to determine how many hives are necessary in a crop is to estimate the possible yield from the orchard and use the formula of one hive per two tonnes of fruit.

An accepted hive standard in North America is a single hive with a minimum of four frames of brood with $\frac{3}{4}$ bee coverage for eight frames.

Future research areas:

1. Suitable supplementary feeding regimes of bees within orchards to sustain healthy bee populations.
2. Investigate the triggers for nectar secretion within and between cultivars of blueberries, both sugar content and volume of nectar.

I have been asked a few times how to 'get my bees' to pollinate in tunnels or certain crops. The answer is easy, make the plant attractive and you won't be able to keep the bees away.

I purposely have not mentioned pollination service fees. I hear of some beekeepers charging one price for a three month period, others charge on a weekly basis. Some growers are providing excellent set-down sites for apiaries in groups of 20, whereas in other orchards the set-down access is far from ideal.

We are also likely to see some growers obtain their own bees and, unfortunately, this scenario has a bad history for the beekeeping industry. Many of these hives become neglected and pose a very high biosecurity risk. Historically the incidence of AFB around orchard areas is much higher than the rest of the state.

Something to think about!

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Brown J, Berry very good. The Land 7 Dec. 2016

Ellicott J, Blueberries blue hits north coast. The Land 3 April 2017

Australian Blueberry Growers' Association.
www.australianblueberries.com.au

Somerville D, Frost E (2018) Pollination Using Honey Bees. AgGuide. NSW Department of Primary Industries

(Thanks to Vicki Saville for typing my notes and Annette Somerville for proof reading the final article)

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2018 Annual General Meeting Tuesday 26 June, 1.00 pm – 4.30 pm
Convention Lobby at RACV Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland

As voted by the membership at the 2017 Conference this year's AGM is being held as above.
Registration is required but will be free of charge.

To assist with arrangements and catering could all Branches please remind their members of this meeting and ask them register their intention to attend, either by email to info@nswaa.com.au or via the website www.nswaa.com.au.

The Executive Council continues to work towards the Objectives of the Association for the benefit of its members and the industry as a whole.

We encourage all members to attend and show their support.

Regards
Ros Riggs
Secretary.



RL Dewar T/A

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RACV Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland

TUESDAY 26 JUNE 2018

10.30 am – 12.30 pm	Member Check-In
1.00pm	Welcome & Opening - Neil Bingley , <i>President</i> NSW Apiarists' Association
	Apologies
	Minutes Silence For Past Members
	Minutes 2017 AGM – as read
	Business Arising from 2017 AGM
	Financial Report – to be ratified – as read
	Presidents Report – Mr Neil Bingley – as read
	Nominations for Executive Council
	Election of Executive Council
	Notice of Motions
	General Business
2.30	AHBIC – Trevor Weatherhead , Executive Director
2.45	Agrifutures – Doug Somerville , Chair, Honey Bee and Pollination
3.00	B-QUAL – Wayne Fuller , Director
3.15	Bee Biosecurity – Rod Bourke , Bee Biosecurity Officer
3.30	Proposed Genetic Improvement Program Honey Bees - Elizabeth Frost , Honey Bee Industry Development Officer, NSW Department of Primary Industries
3.45	Single Desk & Public Lands Policy – Alex Russell , Manager, Intensive Livestock Industries, NSW Department of Primary Industries & Nick Geoghegan , Program Coordinator, Apiculture Resource Access, NSW Department of Primary Industry - overview & update
4.15	Education & Training – Danni Lloyd-Pritchard , Education Officer Professional Development, NSW Department of Primary Industries
4.30	Close

Conference program subject to change without notice - see www.nswaa.com.au for the most up to date program & for more information on speakers.



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Members are reminded to notify the Secretary of their intention to attend the AGM via the website: www.nswaa.com.au or email: info@nswaa.com.au

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC

ABRIC 63 939 614 424



Address: P.O. Box 4253, Raceview Q 4305
Email Address: ahbic@honeybee.org.au

Phone: 07 5467 2265
Web Site: www.honeybee.org.au

INDUSTRY NOTICE NO. 1

AHBIC has been advised by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources that a swarm of Asian bees (*Apis cerana*) has been found in Darwin in the suburb of Karama. A local beekeeper was called, on 13 May 2018, to collect a swarm of bees and noticed that they were most likely Asian bees and reported this to the local Apiary Officer. All bees have been destroyed including the queen.

Examination has shown no presence of external mites i.e. Varroa or Tropilaelaps. Examination for internal mites is also being conducted. DNA identification will also be carried out.

Northern Territory Departmental Officers are starting a surveillance program initially concentrating on a one (1) kilometre radius for the presence of other Asian bees.

The AHBIC Executive is considering a response to this incursion.

Further information will be sent out as it is received.

Trevor Weatherhead AM
Executive Director
16 May, 2018

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THE FROST REPORT

Elizabeth Frost
Education Officer, Honey Bees
Tocal Agricultural College, NSW Dept. of Primary Industries
T: 02 4939 8821 M: 0437 731 273 E: elizabeth.frost@dpi.nsw.gov.au



2017/18 Development Officer Employment Review

As of the 2018 NSWAA AGM, I have worked for NSW DPI as a Honey Bee Industry Development Officer for nine months, based at Tocal College in the Hunter Valley. A substantial amount of this time has been spent working with NSW DPI, NSWAA members, USyd, and UNE collaborators on the development of plans (field/research work, honey shed designs, stakeholder engagement, etc.) for the future DPI Queen Breeding Program and application to Horticulture Innovation to access additional funds to support this program. An internal NSW DPI investment of \$1.6 million has taken this program from the idea stage into the realm of planning and execution to establish a population of hives (200 production, 50 breeders, 250 nucs) for bee breeding research and development.

Additional work tasks during this time include collecting hygienic behaviour data with the Horners of Flora Glen Apiaries for an AgriFutures-funded (UNE-led) project, processing data and writing a report from my project “Optimising timing of hive removal from almond pollination,” progressing a NSW DPI Beekeeping Industry Strategic Plan which my predecessor Nick Annand started, co-authoring *AgGuide: Pollination using bees* with Doug Somerville, attending DPI training (Basic Statistics, Program Management), engaging with beekeeper stakeholders (face to face, phone, email) and delivering the following accredited courses among other tasks:

- Artificial Insemination of Queen Bees (2)
- Queen Bee Breeding (3)
- Using Bees for Pollination (2)
- Pests & Diseases of Honey Bees (3)

DPI Queen Breeding Project update

The following is quoted from the collaborative proposal (NSW DPI, USYD, UNE) to Horticulture Innovation for additional project funding.

“The overall objective is to establish a genetic improvement program for the beekeeping industry that will ensure long-term viability of the industry and a stable supply of quality honey bee colonies for

pollination-dependent crops. The project will reach this outcome through:

- annual evaluation of production traits e.g. pollination efficiency, honey production, disease resistance;
- production of a standardised system for evaluating the genetic merit of honey bee stock;
- comparison and evaluation of genetic material from overseas breeding programs (in accordance with relevant importation and state quarantine legislation);
- establishment of pedigrees and performance records for specific populations;
- significant engagement with pollinators and beekeepers to increase skills and capability across the network of interested stakeholders.

Hereafter, “collaborative program” refers to the portfolio of projects that we propose to build on the foundation of an investment by NSW DPI to establish a research apiary at Tocal Agricultural College.

An important distinction must be made clear at this point: the funding we are seeking from Horticulture Innovation is not to operate a breeding program. NSW DPI will establish a research apiary at Tocal, but the investment made through the collaborative program will enable new research and development well above that possible with the NSW DPI investment in partnership with University of Sydney and University of New England, including:

- data collection on novel traits, especially those associated or potentially genetically associated with pollination efficiency
- research to investigate the genetic basis of such traits, resulting in information that can be used in ongoing breeding programs
- research into breeding program design to maximise effectiveness of breeding programs that have pollination efficiency in the goals in addition to honey production and disease resistance
- national extension and communication to encourage wider adoption of improved methods of breeding honey bees, with strong recognition of the importance of pollination efficiency

- investigation of genotype-by-environment interactions
- importation and testing of Varroa-resistant stock for their performance in Australian conditions (in accordance with relevant importation and state quarantine legislation)
- a national genetic survey to determine the relatedness of available stock
- upskilling of queen producers outside of NSW to initiate genetic selection in their programs
- a national assessment of the needs of beekeepers and pollination-dependent industries

The NSW DPI investment will establish and operate a research apiary, based at Tocal Agricultural College. Should the proposed collaborative program not proceed with Horticulture Innovation funding, the focus of this research apiary will be on improving the genetic merit of honey bees and undertaking industry outreach in NSW. It is proposed that the collaborative program be run in two phases. Phase 1, intended to be completed in 12 months, will establish the research apiary and achieve the following:

1. A review of the literature relevant to the eight services identified in the RFP
2. Detailed planning completed:
 - a. program governance and management structure
 - b. work plan
 - c. stakeholder engagement plan
 - d. evaluation plan
3. Establish program structure
4. Industry buy-in, through engagement activities including presentations/workshops
5. Determination of preferred traits
6. Determination of data protocols
7. Stop/go evaluation

Outcomes

A sustainable queen breeding industry that substantially contributes to the economic viability of the Australian beekeeping industry, thereby underpinning the supply of colonies for pollination services.

This program will contribute to two investment themes from Horticulture Innovations' "pollination co-investment strategic intent": "manage European honey bee health" and "optimise crop pollination efficiency." The outcomes of this collaborative program will be that honey bee management and pollination performance is improved by:

- Better understanding of heritable traits contributing to pollination effectiveness of Australian honey

bees while continuing selection for industry-valued production traits (i.e.-honey production, fast spring build-up, disease resistance, etc.);

- Conducting the research to underpin the development of a national genetic improvement program focussed on productivity, health and pollination effectiveness;
- Enhancing crop pollination and honey production through improved honey bee genetics;
- Developing a consortium for research and development and implementation through partnerships with the key national and international research and development programs, queen bee breeders, and industry users of pollination services;
- Educating the beekeeping Industry of breeding and research outcomes and how to implement genetic selection in their honey bee stock through multiple mediums (i.e. - Tocal College accredited training course Using bees for pollination, *AgGuide: Pollination using bees* publication, industry news articles, presentations, videos, workshops and online through blogs, social media and industry-based websites)."

For more information, please don't hesitate to contact me. Safe travels to anyone attending the Bee Congress and/or AGMs and conferences nationwide.

The Southern Tablelands Branch NSWAA

The Inaugural Apiary Car Boot Sale/Meeting



On: Saturday 14th July 2018

10.30am – 3pm

At: Laurie & Therese Kershaw

"Wattle Valley"

151 Shingle Hill Way

Gundaroo, NSW

Guest Speaker: David Mendes from Florida USA 11am

Gold Coin Donation at the gate. Morning Tea 10.30, Gold Coin Donation

Sausage Sizzle \$3 & Drinks \$2 from 12-2.30pm

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Contact: Branch Secretary—Judy Saxvik at jaxvik@gmail.com

Make a quid or Snag yourself a bargain.



Executive Council Nominee Profiles 2018

AGM (in alphabetical order)

Neil Bingley

Current NSWAA president seeking your continuing support allowing me to see the culmination of previous years work on the Public lands issues to evolve.

I am a second generation beekeeper and director in our family business based at Sutton (near Canberra) which runs 1800 hives.

Our industry is one I am extremely passionate about and will do my utmost to maintain its viability and prominence before Government and their agencies that affect our longevity and prosperity.

Casey Cooper

For many of you I may not need an introduction – but anyone who doesn't yet know of me – here's a bit about me and my passion for this fantastic industry we're all involved in.

My name is Casey Cooper, and I am a second generation commercial beekeeper from Tingha on the Northern Tablelands of NSW. Our business was started by my father Carl back in the 70's and continues to this day – we believe quite successfully both in honey production and in the superb quality of breeder queens and their progeny with which we work.

I have been a fulltime commercial beekeeper since leaving school at 15 and my passion for this industry still runs deep – which is my purpose for re-nominating for another term of your Executive Council as I feel we still have some unresolved industry issues which I'd like to see through to their successful completion for the benefit of us ALL.

Serving previously as President and Vice President and currently retiring Councillor (the role for which I seek re-election) with the NSW AA I bring with me a proven capability to push through some of the truly important issues affecting yours and my industry and collectively our future livelihoods.

Steve Cunial

My name is Steve Cunial and along with my wife Robyn run a commercial beekeeping enterprise based in Griffith NSW.

We have been in business for 9 years and run around 800 hives. I previously worked as a plumber and project manager with a few hobby hives. Three hives turned into thirty which then became 500 when we purchased an established business off a retiring beekeeper. Being a relative new comer to the industry and coming from the construction background I have come into the industry with a fresh outlook and have always been prepared to try new things, and to learn from the experiences of others.

Beekeeping is an industry that I have become very passionate about. I'm putting my hand up to stand for a position in the executive as I wish to become involved in the decision making process. Issues that I'm particularly interested in are access to public lands, promotion of Australian honey, the use of chemicals on crops which severely impact on honey bees and Bio security.

I see AFB as a major problem in our industry, and I'm keen to see what can be done in a practical way

to reduce its impact.

If elected I look forward to working with the current executive, learning the ropes and contributing to our industry.

Debbie Porter

My name is Debbie Porter and I am married to Malcolm Porter, a third generation beekeeper. I have been beekeeping for 33 years and work in the Central Tablelands and Central West area. I have served as a secretary on the Central Tablelands Branch of NSWAA and assist with our beekeeping courses. I have also volunteered at Honeyland at the Royal Easter Show. The reason I have accepted nomination is that I want to see beekeeping well into the future and the only way to do this is to become part of the Executive and help fight for our industry. I believe I will be a great attribute to the NSWAA with my extensive experience and knowledge of the beekeeping industry.

Mal Porter

I am Mal Porter, I am a third generation beekeeper and have been beekeeping since 1977 part time and full time beekeeping in 1994 running around 800 hives with my wife Debbie.

I am President of Central Tablelands Branch, a position I have held for ten years. Have also served time on the state executive for 4 years.

The reason I have again put myself up for the executive position is that I feel that the state executive needs all the help they can get and the industry is my livelihood and I'm passionate about this industry.

Brian Woolfe

Brian (Hound) grew up in Bathurst and was a third generation beekeeper on both his Mother and his Father's side. He studied Agriculture after finishing his HSC at Charles Sturt University in Wagga and met his future wife there. Hence the move to Glen Innes, her home town, in 1992.

By 1993 he was working for Monte Klingner, a legend in the beekeeping world. Then in 2000 he bought 600 hives, a truck and bobcat from the Klingners' and his eldest daughter was also born. Working in conjunction with the Klingner family until 2002 which was also the year his second daughter arrived.

He joined the Northern Tablelands Branch of the Apiarists Association during this period and attended meetings and conferences. In 2003 Bill Weiss approached Hound to take over part of his established beekeeping business. Bill was stepping up as President of the NSW Apiarists Association and needed more time to devote to this. This arrangement happened over a period of 8 years. In addition Hound inherited all the hives that his father Ian Woolfe had been managing in the Central West. Hound was Vice President of the Northern Tablelands Branch from 2010 and then President from 2013 until 2017.

The next challenge is promoting the beekeeping industry he is so passionate about by nominating to be part of the Executive Team.



Industry Advice Notice Australian honey and China

Ref: NPG 21.0318

Date of issue: 21 March 2018

Date of effect: Immediate

Attention:

- Australian Honey Bee Industry Association
- Honey producer-packers and beekeepers
- Exporters and freight agents

Overseas markets: China

Purpose

To notify of recent market access issues relating to the export of Australian honey to China.

Background

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is the central competent authority for the export of prescribed and non-prescribed goods.

For non-prescribed goods, the department issues export certificates in accordance with overseas country requirements.

The Chinese government has notified the department that consignments of Australian honey have been detected with American Foulbrood (AFB).

Consideration

Australian honey producer-packers should ensure honey does not contain AFB when exporting to China.

- Regular sampling and laboratory testing of Australian honey for bee disease may support customer specifications or market access objectives.
- Certification to B-Qual or other independent standard/code of practice might complement overseas market access requirements.
- Detection of AFB in honey may result in a Chinese authority suspending the Australian honey producer-packer.

Further information

Chinese import conditions for Australian honey visit: <https://link.agriculture.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

B-Qual visit: <http://bqual.com.au/>

Establishments currently suspended by China AQSIQ Food Safety Bureau visit:

<https://pub.fda.cn/approval/SitelPages/foreignplants.aspx>

Contacts

General questions about the export of non-prescribed goods email: NPGExports@agriculture.gov.au

The information provided above is current at the time of writing and is intended for use as guidance only and should not be taken as definitive or exhaustive. The Commonwealth endeavours to keep information current and accurate, however it may be subject to change without notice. Exporters are encouraged to verify these details with their freighters prior to undertaking any export activity. The Commonwealth will not accept liability for any loss resulting from reliance on information contained in this notice.

Rewards of Being on the Executive

I started beekeeping later in life in 1995. In 2015 I was nominated for the NSWAA executive. Due to a lack of nominations there were no elections and I was accepted onto the NSWAA executive. While this was not a good result for the NSWAA (elections result in a stronger Association) it proved to be great for me.

Being on the Association opened my eyes to the internal workings of the NSWAA and departmental public servants such as DPI, Local Land Services, Forestry NSW and OEHL. Of course at NSWAA meetings as well as agenda items, beekeeping was discussed and as a result my knowledge and my business improved. This has resulted in an improved bottom line for my business despite being away approx four days a year for NSWAA meetings.

Being a NSWAA executive member is not onerous. Yes there is work to be done to contribute to the team effort but in reality not that onerous. The President's job is more demanding with lots of reading and travel to meet with Government ministers. The demands on the vice president are somewhere between the demands on the president and those of the executive members.

While there have been many highlights of being on the executive there have been a few disappointments. These being the:

Slow speed of progress when dealing with government departments,

Numbers of NSW beekeepers who are not members of the Association,

Lack of attendance at the NSWAA Conference/AGM, and

Lack of nominations to be on the executive.

From my time on the executive as **part of a team** my rewards have been:

Great satisfaction when the planning and teamwork result in a well run and attended Conference/AGM,

Knowing we have helped the future of beekeeping with input to the future access to public resources,

Increasing the knowledge of government department staff of beekeeping practices, requirements and importance to agriculture,

Progressing the one desk policy for all NSW public bee sites,

Meeting more beekeepers from across the state,

An increased understanding of the NSW Apirists Association, and

Increase in knowledge of beekeeping.

In summary I have enjoyed my time on the executive and I would recommend it to everyone. I feel it is extremely important for anyone who has children or grandchildren who want to be part of the bee industry to have a go at being on the executive to get a better understanding of the industry. That way they can help ensure a positive future for the next generation of beekeepers.

Stephen Targett
Vice President

Abandoned or neglected hive material

May 2018, Primefact 94, 3rd edition

Mick Rankmore, Regulatory Specialist, Apiaries Biosecurity and Food Safety, Gunnedah

Abandoned or neglected hives of bees or hive material often become matters of concern and complaint within the beekeeping industry.

Complaints are usually made on a variety of allegations. The most common are as follows:

1. There is a positive identification of disease in the hives or hive material
2. Abandoned or neglected apiaries and exposed hive material may represent a disease risk to nearby colonies of bees.
3. Their unsightly appearance reflects badly on the standards of management of the better beekeepers and they present a poor public image of beekeeping generally.
4. Property changes ownership and the new owner can't identify the owner of the apiary.

What are abandoned hives?

Any of the following reasons may indicate abandonment:

- The owner/manager pays no attention to the identification, management or welfare of the hives
- Hives are not identified, and a Regulatory Officer (Apiary Inspector) has taken reasonable steps to locate the owner of the hives without success
- The owner of the hives fails to contact an Apiary Inspector within 20 days of a notice requesting the owner to do so.
- Hives are owned by an unregistered beekeeper and the owner is unable to be contacted.

What are neglected hives?

- Hive material is missing from the hive, such as lids, frames or bottom boards.

PERSPECTIVE



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BEE INDUSTRY BIOSECURITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Bee Industry Compliance Report

February 2018

Published by the NSW Department of Primary Industries

Bee Industry compliance report

First published: February 2018

Authorised by: Director Compliance – Biosecurity & Food Safety

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

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Executive Summary

NSW Department of Primary Industries acts in partnership with industry and other public sector organisations to foster profitable and sustainable development of primary industries in New South Wales. The Department delivers a wide range of services to primary industries and rural communities. Services to the beekeeping industry include research, development, education, training, biosecurity, compliance and diagnostic.

Biosecurity Compliance Activities

The Biosecurity Compliance Services to beekeepers are provided through the Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Branch, overseen by the Director, Biosecurity and Food safety.

Bee Industry compliance snapshot below has been developed to provide stakeholders with an overview of some of the Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Branch's broad and diverse compliance activities under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, including:

- > coordinating compliance advice, information to beekeepers
- > market access services
- > assisting in the detection, control and eradication of exotic diseases and pests
- > targeted investigations (including bee health investigations, nuisance bee investigations, export certification)
- > nuisance bee complaints
- > emergency management activities.



BEE INDUSTRY BIOSECURITY COMPLIANCE FY 2017-18



Targeted Compliance Operations Q2 2017 (Oct – Dec 2017)

Operation ‘God save the Queen’

In November 2017, NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Officers conducted an operation around the Orange district to provide education to apiarists & bee breeders to raise awareness around their responsibility to manage biosecurity risks to prevent, control and manage the negative impacts of the serious notifiable bee brood diseases namely, American Foul Brood (AFB) & address Small Hive Beetle (SHB) responsibilities.

The operations were successful by increasing awareness of the potential risks of diseased and poorly managed hives having adverse effects on other commercial & amateur apiarists.

The operation also provided an opportunity for officers to advise apiarists of their obligations, ensuring they are aware of the risks their non-compliant product poses to others in their industry, as well as what actions may be enforceable if requirements are not complied with.

In total, 4 queen bee production businesses/sites & 21 properties with apiaries were inspected over the four-day period.

Inspections

- 1404 Hives inspected
- 107 Brood inspections

Enforcement actions taken as part of the operation:

- Biosecurity Directions: 8

Operation Hercules

In October 2017, NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Officers conducted an operation around the Coffs Harbour region to provide education to apiarists & bee breeders to raise awareness around their responsibility to manage biosecurity risks to prevent, control and manage the negative impacts of the serious notifiable bee brood diseases namely, American Foul Brood (AFB).

In total, 25 apiary sites were visited during the operation of which a total of 93 hives were inspected

Enforcement actions taken as part of the operation:

- Biosecurity Directions: 9
- Warning letters: 3
- Penalty notices issued: 1

Biosecurity Compliance Operations Q1 2017-18 (Jul – Sep 2017)

Operation – Almond Pollination

In August 2017, NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Officers conducted a joint operation with Victoria DPI targeting commercial apiaries in almond orchards throughout south western NSW & the Victorian border. The identification of NSW apiaries & the orchards in which they were located was provided by intelligence from apiary pollination brokers and almond industry bodies. Due to the nature that pollination events, there is a high biosecurity risk of transferring pest and disease.

In total, 12 properties were inspected over the five-day period and included the following number of apiaries being inspected:

Enforcement action was issued in the form of biosecurity directions and penalty infringement notices. The latter were issued due to large infestations AFB identified across multiple hives from the same owners. The penalty notices were issued to the bee keeps for failing to notify the department of a notifiable disease and the increase risk they posed to healthy hives.

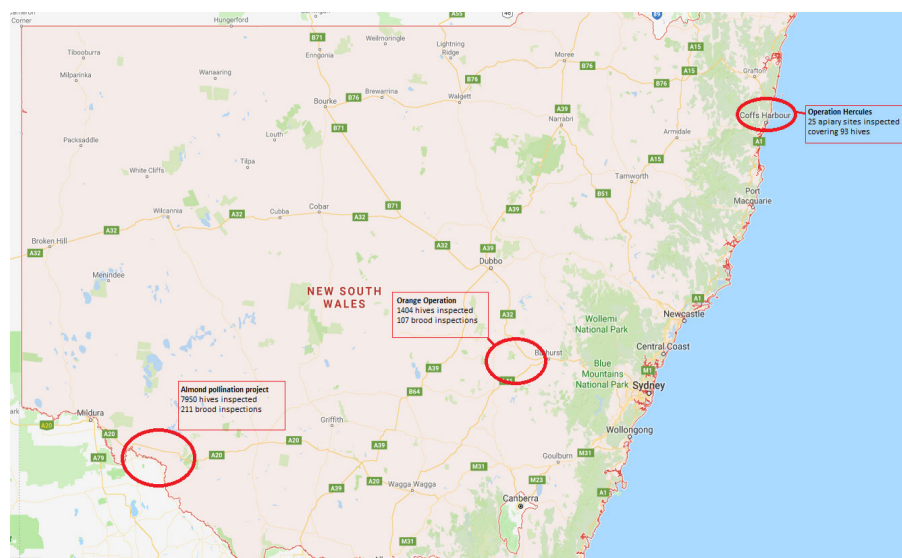
Inspections

- Total hives inspected: 7950
- Brood Inspections: 211

Enforcement actions taken as part of the operation:

- Biosecurity Directions: 3
- Penalty notice: 2
 - o 2x failure to discharge their General Biosecurity Duty

Apiary Targeted Operations Hotspots FY 2017-18



Licensing (Beekeeper Registration) as at February 2018

Class/Activity	Number of registered beekeepers
Business	816
Recreational	4,245
Recreational concession	1,667
TOTAL	6,728

Complaint investigations (Q1/Q2 FY 2017-18)

Complaint category	Number of closed complaints
Abandoned hives	5
Disease notification	10
Nuisance bees	70
General bee complaints	34
TOTAL	119

Prepared by:

Benil Mukundan

Operations Intelligence Officer

NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety

APIARY SUPPORT DESK UPDATE

Nick Geoghegan | Program Coordinator, Apiary Sites
Intensive Livestock
nick.geoghegan@dpi.nsw.gov.au



Apiary sites program is taking shape.

The DPI apiculture resource program coordinator Nick Geoghegan reveals more about the Apiary Sites Program and what's in store:

Since our last update we've been focused on setting up the four main projects that make up the program:

1. An online portal to provide a map view of existing and available apiary sites and useful information about public site permits.
2. Introduction of common policies across agencies including consistent permit terms and pricing and an Expressions of Interest process for allocation of certain sites.
3. A common permit administration platform to simplify permit management for apiarists.
4. A service desk for Apiary sites on public land: providing a single point of contact for permit enquiries.

We've been talking to the agencies and will shortly publish agency information on the DPI information to make it easier to identify the current contacts for apiarists. This will be useful in the interim period while we establish the new program. We have a funding commitment for the IT build of the portal and permit system and have started a detailed scoping process to determine the best platform options to meet requirements.

We'll be giving a further update at the NSWAA AGM and I look forward to seeing some of you there.

If you would like to get regular updates on the program please email apiary.sites@dpi.nsw.gov.au with your name and contact details so we can add you to our contact list.

Bee Killing Pesticides Banned

EU member states support near-total neonicotinoids ban

**By Matt McGrath BBC Environment
correspondent**

Member states have voted in favour of an almost complete ban on the use of neonicotinoid insecticides across the EU.

Scientific studies have long linked their use to the decline of honeybees, wild bees and other pollinators.

The move represents a major extension of existing restrictions, in place since 2013.

Manufacturers and some farming groups have opposed the move, saying the science remains uncertain.

Neonicotinoids are the most widely used class of insecticides in the world, but concerns about their impact on bees have been reinforced by multiple research efforts, including so-called "real world" trial results published last year.

Change of heart

Back in 2013 the European Union opted for a partial ban on the use of the three chemicals in this class: Imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam.

The restrictions applied to crops including maize, wheat, barley, oats and oil seed rape. The newly agreed Commission regulation goes much further, meaning that almost all outdoor uses of the chemicals would be banned.

Voting on the proposal had been postponed a number of times as countries were split on the move. However, Friday's meeting saw a qualified majority vote in favour of the ban.

The action has been driven by a recent report from the European Food Safety Authority (Efsa), which found that neonicotinoids posed a threat to many species of bees, no matter where or how they are used in the outdoor environment.

To read the full article go to: www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-4391053

Thursday 3 May 2018

New guide to boost bee pollination

Preparing and maintaining bees for the vital task of pollination is the focus of the new *AgGuide Pollination using honey bees*, recently released by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

Beekeepers and growers of horticultural crops, broadacre crops and pastures all benefit from bees visiting flowers.

Lead author and NSW DPI Honey Bees Technical Specialist, Dr Doug Somerville said the new guide provides information for beekeepers to ensure their bees are fit for pollination and informs crop growers on creating an environment that will provide the best results.

"Honey bees are the major insect pollinator of a significant number of flowering crops. Without them it is unlikely that many important crops would be economically viable," Dr Somerville said.

"Recent estimates value honey bee pollinations at \$3-4 billion dollars to the Australian economy.

"Australia has approximately 10,000 beekeepers managing over half a million honey bee hives which are potentially available for contract pollination.

"The guide was developed following the success of the course - Using Bees for Pollination - delivered at Tocal College last year."

Dr Somerville said various topics are covered in the guide including: honey bee colonies; nutrition for bees; health problems; hive strength; and size of the operation.

"Beekeepers can learn about orchard design and management, managing hives on the crop, netting and glass houses and post pollination hive management," Dr Somerville said.

"Also, the important topic on how to make a business agreement between grower and beekeeper is covered in the guide."

The *AgGuide Pollination using honey bees* is available for purchase from Tocal College in printed and eBook formats online www.tocal.nsw.edu.au or phone 1800 025 520.

To register your interest in the nationally accredited course "Using bees for pollination" delivered around NSW, please email: paterson.tocal@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Media contact: Anne Brook (02) 6763 1163 or 0477 358 305

CATCH THE BUZZ – Cold Storage for Honey Bee Colonies Breaks the Brood Cycle and Makes Varroa Treatments More Effective. How Cool!!



The black bump on this honey bee's back is a varroa mite. Mites weaken bees' immune systems, transmit viruses, and siphon off nutrients. Photo by Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service.

By: Scott Weybright – College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences

PULLMAN, Wash. – Saving honey bees is easier when varroa mite infestation is reduced. WSU researchers are hoping mid-season hibernation can help in the fight against the mighty mites. Varroa mites are pests that weaken bees' immune systems, transmit viruses and siphon off nutrients. They're a huge factor in colony collapse around the country.

"Most treatments only kill varroa on adult bees, and are generally only effective for three days," said Brandon Hopkins, assistant professor of entomology and manager of the WSU bee program. "But a lot of mites live in the brood, which are under a wax cap that treatments can't touch. Those bees hatch out and are already afflicted." Currently, treating for mites requires three treatments over a 21-day period to make sure you treat all the new bees that come out infested with mites.

These treatments are difficult and expensive because beekeepers must treat all their colonies on a specific schedule. It's very labor intensive to treat thousands of colonies by hand three times at precise timing cycles, Hopkins said.

Cold storage

Bees don't truly hibernate, but they do change their behavior in winter. Queens stop laying eggs, so no new 'brood' is created at that time.

Last August, WSU researchers put 200 honey bee colonies into refrigerated storage. This is a time when bees are still active, but have finished making honey for the season, and there are no crops that require pollination. It's also when beekeepers normally do a round of mite treatments.

By placing colonies in refrigerators, the queen stops laying new eggs, which stops the production

of brood. When the bees come out of refrigeration, there is no 'capped brood'.

At that point, Hopkins and his team apply a varroa treatment on the adult bees.

The initial results were overwhelmingly positive. Researchers found an average of five mites per 100 bees on the control colonies (not refrigerated) one month after the normal three-cycle mite treatment. The refrigerated colonies had an average of 0.2 mites per 100 bees one month after the single mite treatment.

"That's a significant decrease," Hopkins said.

"Refrigeration is expensive, so we need to do more work to prove the cost is worth it for beekeepers, but we're really excited so far."

Additionally, the infestation levels varied tremendously from colony to colony in the control samples. That's because of the difficulty in treating colonies consistently over three cycles. The colonies that had the refrigeration treatment had consistent mite numbers with little variation.

Doubling down

After hearing about this research, a few beekeepers approached the WSU scientists about doing a similar round of refrigeration in the early spring.

Most commercial beekeepers in the U.S. take their colonies to California for almond pollination in February and March. But there's a time gap between the end of the almond pollination season and the start of pollination season in the northwest. "Beekeepers generally have two periods of time for mite treatments, before the bees make honey and after," Hopkins said.

Once bees have mites, the infestation increases during the pollination and honey production months. "But if they can start with low mite numbers, the bees are healthier during the honey production period," Hopkins said. "A lot of varroa damage comes while the bees are making honey."

Calculated risk with 100 colonies

This spring, Belliston Bros., a commercial Idaho beekeeper, donated 100 honey bee colonies to do a refrigeration study just like the one done in August last year.

"It's a big risk for them," Hopkins said. "But if it works, beekeepers would have significantly better varroa control while using fewer chemicals. And they'll have better colony survival during the following pollinating season. It's a win all-around."

Nobody really knows how bees will react to being put back into their winter mode in what is normally the middle of their active season, he said. But that's what science is all about. And if this works, it could be a major and environmentally sound victory in the great varroa mite battle that beekeepers have been waging for decades.

"We're hopeful," Hopkins said. "We won't have results back for several months, but we're excited we may have a way to help beekeepers keep their colonies strong and stable."



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BEE BIOSECURITY OFFICER REPORT

Rod Bourke - NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer
NSW Department of Primary Industries - Biosecurity NSW
Tocal Ag College, Tocal Rd Paterson NSW 2320
Ph: 02 4939 8946 Mob: 0438 677 195 Email: rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au



The use of oxytetracycline for the treatment of American foulbrood (AFB). Part 1 (of 2 parts)

In NSW a beekeeper can legally obtain the antibiotic, oxytetracycline (OTC; Terramycin) and use it to treat hives that have European foulbrood (EFB), provided that they already have a positive identification from a smear slide submitted to the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute at Menangle, NSW. OTC is extremely useful and necessary from time to time to economically manage and control the impact of EFB on hive productivity, but its use varies significantly from year to year and between geographic regions depending on the seasonal conditions that the bees experience. In some years it is not even required.

The use of OTC to treat American foulbrood (AFB) infected hives is not permitted under NSW law (and that of all other mainland states and territories) – meaning that its use for treating AFB is illegal. However, there is anecdotal evidence that some beekeepers have used OTC as a blanket feed of all hives in the apiary (often on a routine seasonal basis in spring and autumn) or applied more specifically to individual hives that show definitive signs of an AFB outbreak. Such use contributes to the spread of AFB by masking the symptoms of disease, without killing all bacterial spores in the hive. Whilst there is very little evidence to suggest that this practice is common, there have been some instances where beekeepers were found to be using it, and some of these had a very heavy and mismanaged AFB problem that was only made worse by using OTC.

OTC is classed as a S4 Poison, so like all chemicals it should only be used according to the label and by following the correct directions for use.

What really is AFB?

For many beekeepers, the biology of AFB is not well understood –if you feel that you are in that category please type in the following links and read both articles thoroughly, and then continue reading my article after that. If you think you already know all there is about AFB then please read them anyway.

<http://www.wheeneefoundation.org.au/assets/Uploads/Managing-AFB.pdf>

<http://beeaware.org.au/archive-pest/american-foulbrood>

AFB is caused by the bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae* which can exist in two forms: 1) spores, which can survive for many decades in bee products and in hive equipment and when ingested by larvae

germinate into 2) vegetative cells, which colonize and kill brood. The first thing to realise is that whilst OTC can kill live AFB bacteria and cause short term improvements (“masking” AFB’s affects) it is not a “cure for AFB” as it does not eliminate AFB spores. AFB infected hives treated with OTC will generally break down again with AFB within 2-14 months, and that has been scientifically proven.

There are a number of ways in which AFB can be transmitted between hives, with the following being the most “effective” ways of doing so.

1. Moving frames of brood, honey and bees from one hive to another. AFB spores can be present in this material even if no current AFB infection is noticed, especially if OTC has previously been used.
2. Enabling the opportunity for bees to rob out weak hives that are infected with AFB or have AFB spores in their honey -through poor apiary management of weak/diseased hives.
3. Exposing other bee equipment -therefore allowing bees to feed on honey which may contain AFB spores. Drifting honey boxes and/or exposing “stickies” during robbing conditions is a prime example of this.



Robbed out hive...try to prevent this at all costs.

NSW AA 2018

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 26 June

1.00pm -4.30pm

RACV Royal Pines Resort

Gold Coast QLD



Multiple frames of AFB, weak colony and an old queen cage...poor beekeeping and a highly preventable rob out waiting to happen.



Exposed dead-out hive as found by DPI. It tested positive for AFB and how many other hives did this affect?



Nothing less than ridiculous! You need to bee-proof AFB infected gear immediately to prevent exposing it to.



Bee proof your honey or stickies to reduce access to AFB spores...this beekeeper already has a long term AFB problem and this robbing only enables it to continue unabated! At a minimum tidy up the covers and put a net or tarp over it.



Custom built burr comb and cappings feeder for their bees...please do not do this at home (or anywhere else)!

AFB disease occurs when a newly hatched larvae (around day 4 after the queen lays the egg) consumes AFB spores. The larva is literally swimming in food and nurse bees regularly top it up to enable the larva to eat as much as it needs to reach its full growth potential.

In a healthy hive previously unaffected by AFB, the nurse bees generally source the very first AFB spores from their own stored honey or from robbed honey that has been fed (regurgitated) to them by other bees. They may consume this contaminated honey, fresh nectar and pollen in the process of making bee food and Royal Jelly. When that product is fed to larval bees it will contain AFB spores. The AFB spores are activated by enzymes in the bee larva's gut which enables the outer protective spore shell to be cast off and the bacterium to "come back to life" and begin multiplying.

A newly hatched larva only needs to eat 6-10 AFB spores to become infected (1). Some research suggests that sometimes as little as one spore may be all that is needed (2). As larvae get older, the number of spores required to become infected rises to well over 500-1000 at 24-36 hours old. By 48 hours, millions of spores are required to cause an infection. Realistically the window of opportunity for a larva to pick up an AFB infection can be quite

small and measured in hours, but at the right stage it can also occur with only a small number of spores.

The bee larvae will finally succumb to the internal AFB infection soon after the brood cap is sealed, and the now dead bee will eventually produce up to 2.6 BILLION AFB spores. Spores can survive for many decades and still be viable when fed to larvae, so a single cell of AFB could potentially infect (or re-infect) countless bee colonies over future years depending on where that equipment ends up.

Randomly spreading boxes and frames throughout your apiaries is one of the best things to do if you want to spread AFB! Did anyone just realise how risky it is to **NOT** use a barrier system?

But, AFB is also categorized as not being very contagious, as all ducks need to line up to enable infection. For example, if a young larva only eats 1-4 AFB spores then it may not necessarily become infected, or if the larva does not consume spores until it is another 12-24 hours older then it may also avoid infection. If the field bees rob a source with a low concentration of AFB bacterial spores then it is entirely possible that the hive will escape infection altogether, whereas if a source that is highly contaminated is robbed (e.g. an AFB infected dead-out) causing bees to collectively bring back many thousands of AFB spores then it is far more likely that one or more bee larvae in the hive will become infected and disease will appear.

Beginning in bees -an AFB story on how it can wipe out an apiary.

A new beekeeper has just purchased 6 hives from a local beekeeper. Within six weeks one of the hives collapses with AFB and gets robbed by the other 5. The beekeeper is super keen, notices lots of bee activity and thinks everything is fine and dandy until he opens the dead out hive and finds a stinking mess.



This frame contains many billions of AFB spores.

A sample of the remaining honey from this dead-out is tested and returns a rating of 3+ (50 spores) which equates to ~450 AFB spores per kg of honey. If the other hives in the yard each robbed out 3-5kg of this honey then on average they may have each brought in between 1300-2200 AFB spores into their colonies. This contaminated honey will be

distributed to many thousands of bees within the colony and some of it may end up stored as surplus honey, but most is likely to be fed to nurse bees for bee food production. Early in the season the nurse bees may place the contaminated honey around the brood and use it to feed larvae. Going into winter the contaminated honey will mostly get packed away and capped off - potentially to be fed to larva next season or safely used for warmth by broodless bees over winter (where any AFB spores would pass through the gut and hopefully be deposited outside the hive!).

It is likely the 5 hives are each feeding somewhere between 2000-12 000 uncapped larval bees (~day 4-9 after egg is laid) each day, which means that from that 3-5kg of robbed honey there is probably less than 1 AFB spore to spread between each uncapped larva on that day. The ones getting fed the lowest daily percentage of this food supply are the young larva that have only just hatched, so they would still likely need to consume a number of AFB spores for any AFB infection to definitely occur.

Perhaps a few younger larvae may consume enough spores to get AFB, but statistically speaking it is unlikely to happen unless there is (or has been) a lot of robbing of multiple heavily infected hives over a number of days and there are lots of spores spreading around the hive.

There will definitely be AFB spores residing within these beehives (often in honey) but quite likely no AFB infection actively occurring until at some point conditions line up and AFB appears. This is one reason why hives may come down with AFB many months or even years after exposure to a contaminated source. Regularly replacing brood combs can help reduce this occurrence by moving away that old stored honey around the brood.

If the new beekeepers hives are mostly putting their contaminated robbed honey around their brood nest, are only feeding a small number of larvae and the robbed out hive had countless uncapped AFB cells (meaning lots of AFB spores spread throughout the hive) then very quickly the numbers change and it becomes mathematically possible that AFB may result from their rob-fest reasonably quickly. The more infected the source and the higher the density of AFB spores the more likely that AFB will start...it is all a numbers game.

Will this new beekeeper be lucky enough to miss this "jackpot" and save his other hives?

How did the hives go?

Due to the initial slow rate of infection after the robbing occurred it took quite some time from a first infected larva developing into a sunken capping before the infection went any further. The beekeeper should be doing regular brood inspections to identify a hive as soon as it breaks down with the first cell of AFB, as the earlier he catches it the better. By removing that hive whilst the infection is not well established he may still be able to save the rest.

If that first AFB cell is uncapped by the bees (which it may not be for some time after it was capped-

months) and those 2 billion plus AFB spores are exposed by the activities of bees cleaning up the infected brood, the disease jumps to the next level. The rate of infection increases dramatically as the infection window becomes longer (from 6-12 hours up to 24 hours of the first feeding/larval development stage), because older larva can now also be infected due to the presence of far higher numbers of spores.

Let's look at the numbers again...If the 3+ spore count honey had ~450 AFB spores per kilogram (=~450, 000 spores per ton of honey) then one AFB cell containing 2.6 billion AFB spores equates to 5,777 tonnes of that honey (4000 pelicans)!

Once multiple cells become infected by a resident AFB spore source within the hive the end of that colony has begun.



This infection will be fatal.

With spores now being exposed more and more frequently by the activities of bees cleaning up infected brood cells the communal bee interactions will also be efficiently spreading those spores right around the hive. Everything will become covered in spores, including every bee (externally and internally) and open cells in combs! AFB spores will be mixed in with nectar and honey that the bees are putting in frames, so the makings of another catastrophic rob-out event is steadily being orchestrated by the AFB KGB. By picking up AFB early the beekeeper can reduce the likelihood of this infection getting worse than it already is.

The beekeeper should assume that the hive now has AFB spores spread all through it, so reusing or transferring any of this equipment without prior irradiation will be suicidal behavior that can pass on AFB infections to other hives very quickly. Do not reuse any equipment from an AFB hive unless irradiated first (and assume all second hand equipment has ADFB spores, so irradiate before using). If multiple hives within that apiary show signs of AFB then he should assume all are suspect and not remove any splits or nucs out of those hives too. He is probably best to restart an apiary at a different location with clean bee colonies and accept that his first 6 hives are likely to all be lost due to the robbing they did shortly after he bought them.

OTC as a treatment option.

When OTC is fed to a hive that has an active AFB infection it is able to kill live AFB bacteria that are not in a spore form (unless that strain of AFB has already become OTC resistant due to ongoing and improper use of the antibiotic in the past) and initially things will look good, but it will NOT KILL ANY AFB spores. Therefore if there is even just one mature infected cell of AFB sitting within the brood (or has already been ruptured) then you will still have at least 2 BILLION+ AFB spores safely residing in that brood comb.

If you pull out the infected combs (but leave the rest of the frames and honey) then you will probably still have billions of AFB spores spread throughout the rest of that hive and within the bee's gut's, so all you have done is delay the AFB coming back as an active brood disease in that hive. Simply removing infected brood combs and treating the hive with OTC will not cure AFB.

Use of OTC and/or removal of symptomatic frames simply enables the AFB spores to remain safely within a bee hive with ample opportunity to re-infect that same hive and potentially others at a later date, or be transferred into another hive if frames/boxes get swapped around. The background spore count within the hive is not reduced by using OTC, so that beehive will again contract AFB and the spore count within that hive will again increase further. More concerning is that the feeding of OTC increases the biosecurity risk of that hive spreading AFB to other hives through the making of splits or nucs, as they don't always show signs of AFB but the high numbers of spores are there to restart it.

Question; How do you make 2 AFB hives?

Answer; Real easy...split one in half and add a new queen!

When this new hive eventually becomes weak and is robbed out it will then spread AFB spores both within your own apiary and also further afield to other hives within flight range (2-3Km+). Just enabling AFB to be present is unfortunate, but allowing the affected hives to be multiplied, die out and be robbed by other colonies is both negligent and disastrous for your own operation and grossly unfair to surrounding beekeepers. It indicates that you urgently need to reassess your operational capacity - do you have too many beehives to adequately manage, or do you require pest and disease training of assistance?



Don't let your hives end up like this!

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Whilst OTC does kill live AFB bacteria and give short term relief to those visible AFB symptoms, it simply will not cure AFB, so the AFB problem has not actually gone away and thus starts a cycle of ongoing reliance upon using OTC (drug addiction) to re-treat the infection. The rate of infection will also increase in frequency and intensity.

Come spring these treated hives would then need another dose of OTC to clear up the new round of AFB that was started when they began rearing brood again. Unfortunately reliance on the use of OTC causes more serious ongoing management issues within hives than solving the problem it was initially used for. Your honey will contain traces of OTC (which increase significantly as you then use OTC more frequently) and higher on average AFB spore counts, because AFB spores are spread all through your gear and regularly stored in honey in the brood and honey box.

AFB spore counts are currently impacting honey exports to China, so beekeepers should be routinely testing their honey for AFB spores and be working really hard on cleaning up loads of bees that have 1+, 2+ and 3+ scores.

The USA and some other countries have used OTC heavily for decades to assist with AFB, and what their largescale use has proven is that AFB only gets worse when regularly using OTC and that your honey is full of OTC and AFB spores...not the pure honey that we push in our efforts to be paid well for it! Our aim in Australia should be to never go the same way that they have.

Also there is now widespread resistance of AFB bacteria to OTC around the world.

If you would like to go cold turkey on using OTC in your apiary and need assistance with implementing a barrier system then please contact me at rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au or 0438 677 195. Don't be shy, you are not the only one in that boat and my job (which is industry funded from the Honey Levy) is to help you, so get in touch now so that we can get things organised over winter and make an impact in spring

I would like to thank Dr. Michael Hornitzky, Dr. Doug Somerville and Dr. Christopher Anderson for their assistance with this article.

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Tuesday 15 May 2018

Award winning researcher a step closer to breeding Varroa-resistant bees

Injecting a natural type of bacteria called *Wolbachia* into the abdomen of honey bees could help to solve a leading cause of honey bee deaths worldwide.



Dr Emily Remnant from the University of Sydney has spent the past 12 months investigating immunisation of honey bees against virulent viruses spread by the Varroa mite.

Varroa is recognised as the world's most damaging honey bee pest. While currently not established in Australia, it poses a huge threat to the international bee keeping industry and the global food supply chain, with the commercial value of honey bee pollination valued between \$200 – \$500 billion per annum.

Dr Remnant received the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Award in addition to the AgriFutures Australia sponsored 2017 Science and Innovation Award for Young People in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, for her research in this area.

Currently there are no formal strategies in place to protect bees against viruses, but a recent series of trials undertaken by Dr Remnant and her Sydney based research team has shown promising results.

"The aim of my research was to improve honey bee health by developing and enabling a novel method to increase honey bee resistance to viruses using a natural bacterial symbiont, *Wolbachia*," said Dr Remnant.

"The *Wolbachia* method has been shown to reduce virus levels in other insects and is currently used to reduce transmission of the dengue fever virus in mosquitoes, which requires the development of *Wolbachia* positive embryos.

"After multiple unsuccessful attempts to inject *Wolbachia* directly into embryos, a complex technique trialled during my fellowship in New Zealand, I developed and implemented an alternative method of injecting *Wolbachia* into honey bee queen abdomens.

"The two Awards allowed me to establish a microinjection setup in my own lab, with specific equipment and honey bee laying cages from the US and NZ, to begin lab trials.

"The initial queen injection protocols showed good results and with continued testing to generate sufficient samples for sequencing and virus testing. I am hopeful that more good things will come."

Generating *Wolbachia*-positive honey bees is critical to the next stage of Dr Remnant's research, as this will determine whether this process can reduce virus levels in honey bees, and contribute to a new way of enabling virus protection in honey bees.

In addition to this, Dr Remnant explains that there is significant potential for the Australian bee keeping industry to play a key role in breeding and exporting virus resistant bees overseas.

"If *Wolbachia* provides honey bees with virus resistance, this knowledge may lead to the breeding of virus resistant honey bees in Australia, before Varroa potentially becomes established.

"Our existing practices in the queen breeding industry are perfectly compatible with enabling the *Wolbachia* technology to be rolled out, including the opportunity to export virus resistant queens to countries already affected by Varroa and associated viruses."

Dr Remnant will be sharing her insights at the 3rd Australian Bee Congress at the Gold Coast, 27-30 June 2018.

Dr Emily Remnant was selected as the AgriFutures Australia recipient of the 2017 Science and Innovation Awards for her honey bee research which aligns with AgriFutures Australia's vision to grow the long-term prosperity of Australian rural industries.

ENDS.

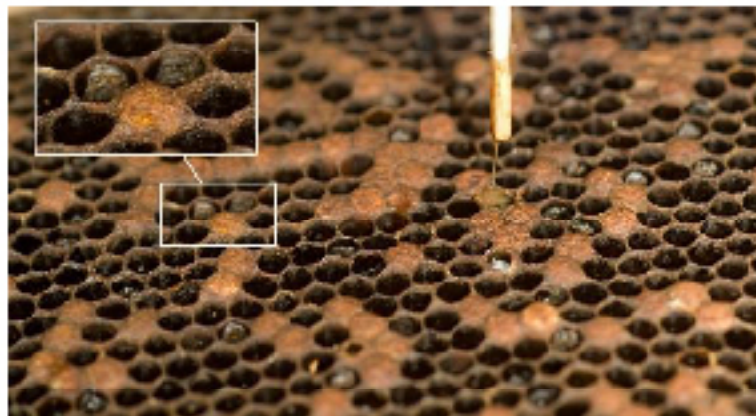
Photo Caption

Dr Emily Remnant, recipient of the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Award and AgriFutures Australia sponsored 2017 Science and Innovation Award for Young People in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, with Dr Dave Alden, former AgriFutures Australia General Manager, Research and Innovation.

Media enquiries

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National Business Development Manager

Tel: 02 8785 4400

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Glenn Robertson

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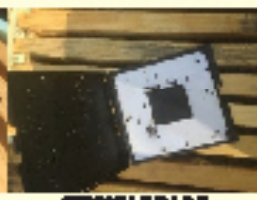
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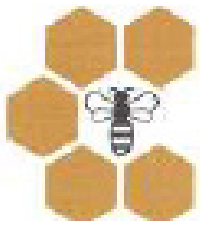
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AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC (AHBIC) UPDATE

AHBIC AGM

The AHBIC AGM will be held on Sunday 1 July, 2018 at Royal Pines on the Gold Coast. This will follow the Third Australian Bee Congress which will be held on the previous three (3) days.

This year there are three (3) positions which will become vacant. The Chairperson and two (2) Executive positions.

For the Chairperson the nomination needs to be received 28 days prior to the AGM i.e. 3 June 2018. The nomination must be signed by one voting delegate and accompanied by the consent of the nominee. If no nomination is received then nominations will be received from the floor at the AGM. For full details see Section 5 of the AHBIC constitution which is on the AHBIC website.

The two (2) Executive members stepping down are Ian Zadow and Phillip McHugh. Ian is not eligible to stand again as he has completed six (6) continuous years on the Executive. Phillip McHugh is eligible to stand again.

At the AGM observers will be able to attend but there will be a fee to cover catering costs. A Registration Form for an observer to fill out will be in the next newsletter.

1 DOWN, 2 TO GO

In the last newsletter I said that we needed three (3) years for proof of freedom for the Varroa jacobsoni eradication program. Actually it is 30 months so it will come around 6 months earlier than I said, if all goes well.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING

The time for the two year transition period for the Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) ends on 30 June 2018. So as from 1 July 2018 the new labelling requirements re CoOL will be law.

Some have suggested that the transition periods should be extended but the Government has said that this will not be the case.

So make sure all your labels are ready and compliant for the new CoOL when it becomes law on 1 July, 2018.

VEGAN HONEY

AHBIC's attention has been drawn to a product available in Australia labelled as vegan honey. As honey is a prescribed name under the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand standards, this product does not comply with the definition of honey. AHBIC has lodged a complaint re this product.

Vegans do not eat honey as they say it comes from or is produced by animals. I wonder how they get on

with food such as pumpkins, watermelons, apples and all those other foods out there that our honey bees pollinate directly or provide pollination for the seed production such as carrots and onions. Do they not eat these because bees have played a part in their production?

I note from a tweet on the ABC Rural website that France has outlawed the use of dairy and meat related words when describing products which are neither - phrases such as vegan sausages, tofu steaks, vegan cheese, meatless bacon - even soy milk and all those flavoured waters pretending to be milk – BANNED.

CHINESE FOUNDATION

I have been advised by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries that another sample of Chinese foundation sent away for analysis has shown it to be 85% paraffin plus containing residues of chemicals which were most probably used for varroa treatment.

AHBIC representatives will be in Canberra this month (May) so we will arrange a visit with the Department to push our case to have all imported beeswax tested.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF HONEY BEE POLLINATION IN AUSTRALIA

A recent paper published in January 2018, "The Economic Valuation of Australian Managed and Wild Honey Bee Pollinators by John M Karasiński" has put the value at between \$8.35 billion and \$19.97 billion. This is a big increase on the figures that we have previously quoted being \$4-6 billion. John is from the Curtin University in Western Australia. To quote from the paper "It is hoped the results of this study will be used by industry stakeholders and government's alike to frame agriculture policy reflecting the overall economic importance of this industry."

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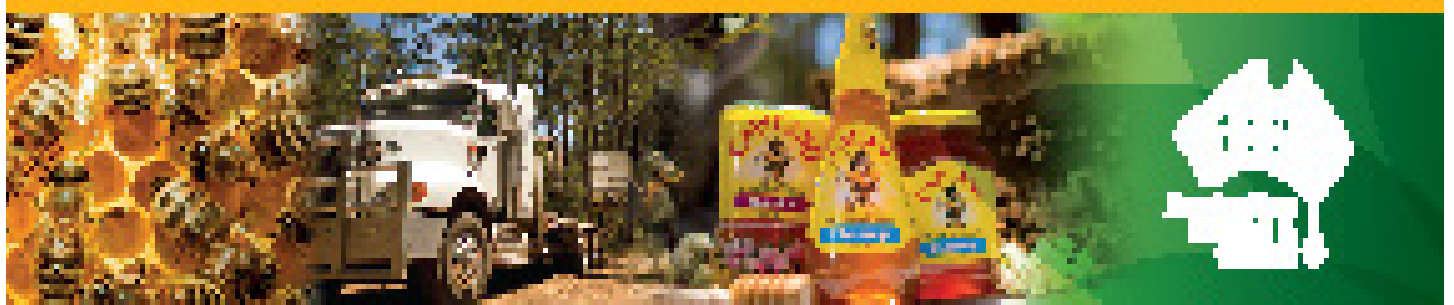
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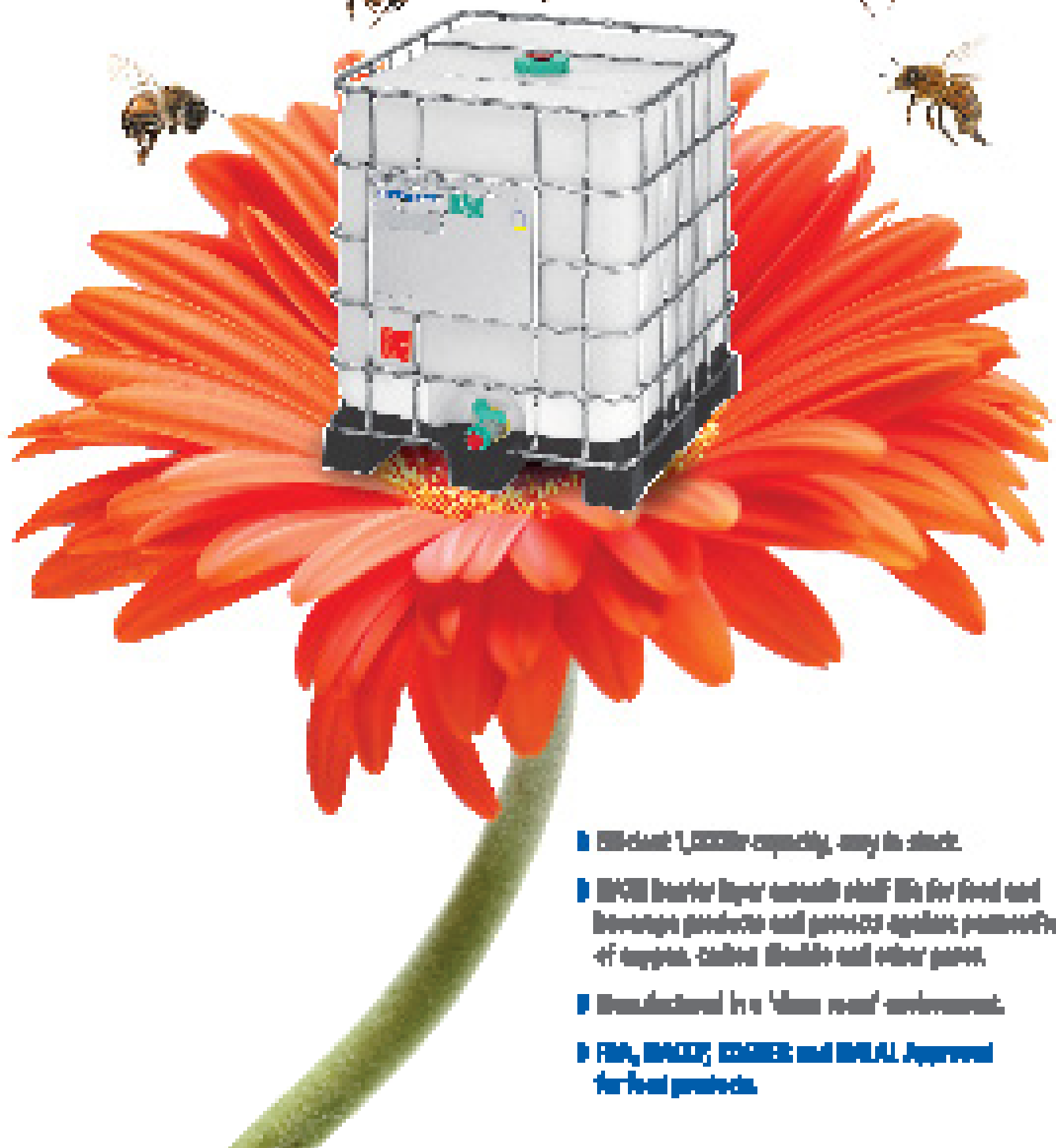
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