

AUSTRALIA'S

HONEYBEE NEWS

"The Voice of the Beekeeper"
www.nswaa.com.au

Volume 12 Number 5
September - October 2019



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*COVER: Almond Pollination from the Air
Photograph: Jaye Hughes*



AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Report October 19

Congratulations to Casey Cooper and Suellen Weis who tied the knot on a balmy Northern Tablelands winters day.

Almond pollination is over for another year. This seasons flowering was a little different with some farms in the Riverina having good flower at the same time as farms in the Robinvale area. Also unusual was that the almonds yielded nectar this year. Some independent almond farms are releasing bees well after the pollination has finished.

The president of our Riverina branch David Mumford organised with Narrandera Shire Council an Emergency Services bee information day. David identified this was needed as a lot of trucks loaded with bees travel through the Riverina to/from the almonds. It was a very informative session and the emergency services personnel including one truck tow truck driver were grateful for the information provided. Well done David and Wendy. NSWAA is hoping to take this package to other bee concentration spots in the state.

The Long Term Vacant Sites Pilot has been running since late July. While there have been some glitches the mapping has shown the state wide Forests NSW vacant sites. Over 320 of these sites have been taken up. This can only help our industry especially with the drought continuing.

Sites taken up were paid for and the permit issued to 30 Sep 2019, then another site fee was to be paid through to 2020. NSWAA approached Forests NSW to get this changed so that only one site fee was paid and permits issued through to 30 Sep 2020. Very few beekeepers would use the sites before 01 Oct 2019 as most would be at almonds and then canola. The executive are still battling to get a positive outcome. To be fair Forestry Corporation have been kept busy with fires in the north of the state.

The dry continues. Riverina canola yielded before and after the almonds. However a lot of canola is getting cut for either silage or hay. Maybe I was imagining it but the canola seems to be flowering earlier every year. Across the state prospects look grim. The only potentials I am aware of is Yellow Stringybark and Blackbutt on the coast and some river gum budded inland. Good rain is probably required before flowering for these to yield. Water will have to be provided for bees at sites where this has not been needed before this.

Steve Cunial our vice president had an accident and hurt his hand which required an operation. This severely limited Steve in his moving and working of bees. Thanks to the many people who put their hands up to help Steve.

Privatisation of Forestry Corporation. The Association wrote to many ministers including the premier with the impact this could have on our industry. A copy of the letter is in this edition. The opposition Forestry Minister did ask questions re this matter during question time. At this time the government is NOT ruling out privatising Forestry Corporation. We have a request in for a meeting with the Forestry minister.

Bush Fires - a lot of resource has already been lost. The season ahead looks like a lot more timber will be burnt without good rain across the state. Beekeepers should be extra careful this season. Please carry some firefighting equipment with you when in the bush at all times. A knapsack full of water and a fire rake will help if a fire is attacked early. Currently beekeepers have some exemptions on Total Fire Ban days - let us not destroy this faith in our industry. Be aware that Forestry Corporation can shut a Forest down with no public access on bad fire days (this has happened before). Beekeepers need to abide by this rule and stay out of the forest while there is no public access.

Honey will be scarce this year. At the AGM members agreed a honey competition at the conference would be a good idea. Sullen has put her hand up to run the competition and planning is well under way. Please start preparing honey entries for the 2020 Conference.

NSWAA is in the process of changing our secretarial services. The changeover will be seamless to members as our recent 2 Rivers secretary Robyn Lewis is our new secretary under her own company. Contact details are as advertised in this HBN. NSWAA is in the process of changing our website manager/designer. Keo have not been able to provide the services that we require. Members should see little difference in our website other than ease of registering for conference. However branch secretaries and the executive will see much more meaningful reports and membership lists.

The next executive meeting is in Sydney in November. Details will be out to branches in October.

Stephen Targett
President

BIBCC Meeting Update

Held in Newington 31st July 2019

DPI NSW now have the diagnostic tools to detect OTC powder in hives. If OTC is found along with AFB scale, then DPI will be aiming for maximum penalties. If on is going to blanket feed OTC then a disease check must be done prior to applying OTC.

The two year time frame for the BIBCC is nearly up. DPI are going to recommend the BIBCC continue for the time being. The report on registration fees that is due at the end of two years from DPI will be that registration fees stay as they are. The amateur beekeepers were wanting free registrations for on-line registrations for 1 - 5 hives.

The industry Code of Practice is being updated and most will become mandatory. Adherence to the Code of Practice will become prerequisite for hive registration renewal. Mandatory honey sampling for those with more than 50 hives. Honey sampling should occur for each load of bees.

October is AFB Month and DPI will be issuing media releases ref this. Commercial beekeepers should have already completed their first disease check for the season by October. At least one more disease check should be done prior to the end of the bee season - preferably March or April

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Welcome New Members

Anthony Pullen - Weethalle NSW
Dean Maloney - Broadwater NSW
Tony Tenney - Wirraba SA
Zac Alcock - Koorawatha NSW
Hsing Sung - Warral NSW
Jeffrey Smith - St Leonards NSW
Ian Can - Bruthen VIC

The next Executive
meeting of NSWAA
will be held on
Monday 18th November
2019
in Sydney



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- 9.10 40 Years of Beekeeping
- Bill Winner
- 9.40 2019 Apimondia Review
- Bruce White
- 10.00 Honey and Pollen Flora of
South-Eastern Australia
- Dr Doug Somerville
- 10.30 Morning Tea - Demonstrations for Beginners, bee smokers and
tools, PPE, Hive parts and opening of a beehive
- 11.30 NSW DPI Queen Bee Breeding Program Update - Elizabeth Frost
- 11.45 Beekeeper Training Update - Dani Lloyd-Prichard and Kevin Tracy
- 12.00 Bee Biosecurity Update - Mark Page and Rod Bourke
- 12.30 The History of AFB and Analysis Techniques - Dr Michael Hornitzky
- 1.00 AFB Sniffer Dogs - Sam Giggins
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- Nick Geoghegan
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NSWAA Executive Responsibilities

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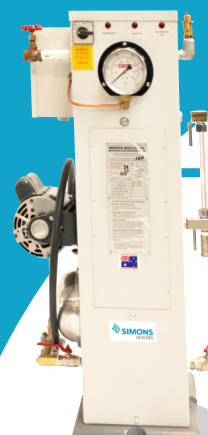
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NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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22nd August 2019

Dear Minister/Shadow Minister,

It has been reported that Forests NSW may be privatised. This is of great concern to NSWAA and the beekeepers that we represent. Beekeepers are a passive user of state forests and are the second largest commercial user of NSW state hardwood forests.

Most NSW beekeepers will not have viable businesses without continued affordable access to NSW hardwood forests. Beekeepers rely on access to state hardwood forests to:

- Collect honey (which is income);
- Maintain bees with breeding conditions;
- Provide a pesticide free area after working farmland honey flows or pollination;
- Build bees prior to pollination; and
- Build bees up again at the completion of pollination events.

It is highly likely that privatised hardwood forests would be logged more frequently leaving very few nectar producing trees for bees or native fauna. Young trees produce very little nectar and pollen compared to mature trees. This loss of resource would negatively impact on the viability of bee businesses.

Beekeepers are losing resource continuously through land clearing which recent legislation has made easier, increased National Parks and loss of flowering plants such as Patterson's Curse.

The flow on effect from the privatization of state hardwood forests could be catastrophic for beekeepers and the 30+ crops that rely on pollination. Without pollination some of these industries would not be viable such as almonds and cherries. Other industries would see their profits decline and their product quality suffer. These 30+ industries are all rural based and added together are a many \$ billion group. Less bees to provide pollination is a threat to NSW food security.

If the privatisation reports of Forests NSW are correct NSWAA has some serious concerns:

Will our current bee site management and cost structure remain as is?

Will our bee site permit system remain?

Page 1 of 2

President

Stephen Targett
PO Box 325, Narrandera NSW 2700
P: 0428 649 321 E: wally.56@hotmail.com

State Secretary/Treasurer

2Rivers Pty Ltd
Robyn Lewis
P: 0466 269 811

Contact Us

NSW Apiarists' Association Inc
PO Box 264, Manilla, NSW 2346
E: info@nswaa.com.au

Who will maintain state forest roads enabling beekeepers to access their bee sites?

Who will be responsible for hazard reduction burns in state forests?

Who will be responsible for controlling fires in state forests?

Will current hardwood forest management plans remain?

Will there be a powerful state forest management monitoring body?

If the decision is to privatise state hardwood forests, then NSWAA request to be involved with the meetings for the pathway to privatisation. If there is to be NO privatisation of state hardwood forests, please advise.

Kind regards



Stephen Targett
President
2019/2020

Distribution List:

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, Premier of NSW

The Hon. Adam Marshall, Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales

The Hon. Matthew Kean, Minister for Energy and Environment

The Hon. Jodi McKay, MP - NSW Leader of the Opposition

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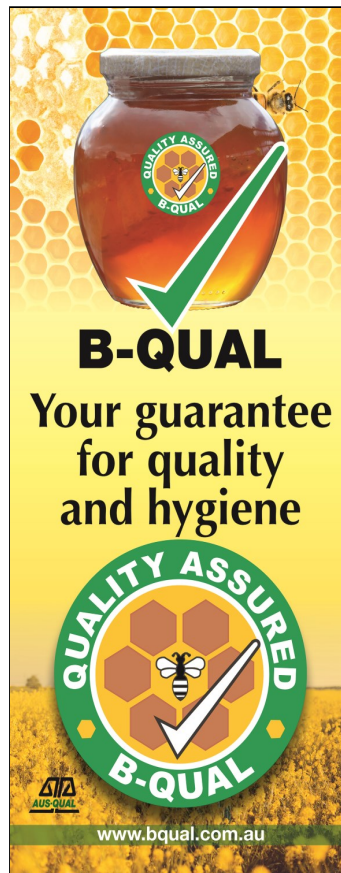
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Research, Development and Extension

This heading is essentially the field of endeavour that currently encompasses the activities of the AgriFutures Honey Bee and Pollination program. I want to go back in time to discover the roots of the current structure governing research, development and extension (RD&E) in the Australian context.

Possibly not an exciting subject for many, but investments over many decades have, in my opinion, had a major impact for the better on the Australian beekeeping industry. The future of your beekeeping business may depend on what investments are made in the RD&E space. A bold statement maybe, but frequently investment in one area leads to projects funded by others, with the ultimate outcome being positive for beekeepers.

The Australian beekeeping industry currently has a statutory or compulsory levy imposed on it of 4.6 cents/kg of honey sold. This money is, in most cases, deducted from the payments honey packers make to beekeepers and forwarded onto the Commonwealth Government department responsible for the collection of such levies across a range of industries.

The levy is paid by 'all' beekeepers who sell more than 1500 kg in a year. If you sell directly to retail outlets, through markets or online, then you are required by law to pay this levy.

This levy is an industry 'agreed to' levy. In other words, if the industry so wishes, (through their peak industry body Australian Honey Bee Industry Council - AHBIC) the levy could be set at any figure, including zero. A zero levy means that there would be no money available from the beekeeping industry to invest in RD&E via the current AgriFutures structure.

The current Research & Development levy is set at 1.5 cents/kg of honey. This is matched by government, so 1.5 cents effectively becomes 3 cents. This is crudely what happens, but some administrative fees and other operational costs are deducted from the effective amount of dollars available for RD&E.

The Commonwealth Government has said that they will match industry collected funds (levies) at up to 0.5% of the industry gross value of production. Currently the 1.5 cents/kg only takes advantage of the matching dollar for dollar contribution at about half its potential. In other words, we could double the RD&E levy to 3 cents/kg and have this matched by Canberra. If we increased the levy to 10 cents, then the matching dollar for dollar will not

apply for moneys collected over approximately 3 cents/kg.

These are rough figures, but in the ballpark. The 1.5 cents/kg is a component of the 4.6 cents/kg that is compulsorily collected. The bulk of the money goes to biosecurity, including 0.1 cent directly to Plant Health Australia and 2.7 cents to the Emergency Plant Pest Response. The remaining 0.3 cents goes to the National Residue Testing.

All these figures are able to be adjusted up or down at the request of the peak industry body, AHBIC, after extensive consultative process with members of the beekeeping industry.

A recent review of the levies paid by beekeepers recommends that some of these levies are increased to maximise the benefit to the beekeeping industry. The R&D levy for instance, is not set at a level that would maximise the dollar for dollar contribution on offer from the Commonwealth Government. This levy is also set as a cents/kg figure historically and as the honey price increases, the levy is not automatically adjusted. The last review of the R&D levy undertaken when wholesale honey prices were around \$3.50 per kg, whereas currently they sit around \$5 per kg.

I swing back to discussing the current mechanism for allocating beekeeping industry collected funds to RD&E projects. AgriFutures was previously named Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC). Under its overriding organisation sit a range of industry committees that oversee the investment of their individual industry funds. These committees are made up of a range of persons with a combination of skills and experiences.

The current Honey Bee & Pollination program is chaired by myself (Dr. Doug) with the Vice-Chairs Danny LeFeuvre (commercial beekeeper, SA), Tiffane Bates (Beekeeper Technician CRC, WA), Prof. Saul Cunningham (Researcher, ANU, ACT), James Kershaw (commercial beekeeper, NSW), Dr Diana Leemon (Researcher, QLD), Sam Malfroy (Wheen Bee Foundation, NSW) and Ashley Zamek (Hort Innovation). The program is currently managed by Annelies McGaw, a staff member of AgriFutures, who is also responsible for a number of other industry programs.

The typical term for members of the panel is three years, although historically members have often served more than one term. The current advisory panel largely started its term in 2017, due to the amalgamation of the

Pollination Committee and the Honey Bee Committee, which had separate budgets, objectives etc. As of 2017 these two committees were rolled into one, with Saul and James thankfully staying on in the new panel. Both these gentlemen have served since 2014.

From 2014 to 2019 the AgriFutures Honey Bee and Pollination Program has invested \$3.4 million in RD&E across 35 projects. In the 2019 report to the beekeeping industry, the key objectives were listed as such:

1. Reduce the incidence and impact of pests and disease on the beekeeping and pollination services industries.
2. Increase the productivity and profitability of beekeepers.
3. Increase understanding of the role of flora in honey bee management.
4. Understand the role of pollination in delivering more productive systems.
5. Promote extension, communication and capacity building.

A new 5-year R&D plan has been formulated earlier this year and should be available on the AgriFutures website.

A quick review of the projects summarised in the 2019 published report to the beekeeping industry:

Active Lepto honey (PRJ-009186) – looking at other Lepto honeys other than manuka and determining their activity levels. A total of 1,199 honey samples collected and tested for DHA & MGO, the principal measurements of activity. Final report due later in 2019.

Propolis production (PRJ-010777) – under-produced product of Australian beehives. Market potential significant. Definite prospects to add to the profitability of beekeeping enterprises. Project completed 2019.

Honey as a health food (PRJ-010879) – preliminary findings show that some Australian eucalypt honeys have a positive impact on human gut health. This project has major potential to add to the value of many Australian honeys. Final report due late 2021.

Trapping queen bees (PRJ-007765) – the active compounds that attract queen bees have been identified. The production of a pheromone trap is still to eventuate. Initial project completed in March 2018.

Queen bee mating (PRJ-009757) – Assessment of mated queens in spring and autumn were compared. Project completed April 2018.

Hygienic bee selection (PRJ-009904) – hygienic bees were not found to be particularly resistant to chalkbrood. Several strains of chalkbrood identified. Project completed February 2019.

Royal jelly production (PRJ-010167) – traditionally high labour input. Labour saving technology tested, but proved underwhelming. Markets for Australia-produced

royal jelly investigated. Project completed May 2018.

Breeding values (PRJ-010257) – progressing the implementation of genetic selection in Australian honey bees. Ongoing, report due December 2021.

Review of chemistry associated with honey (PRJ-011685) – international testing regimes revised with limitations of these techniques discussed. Project completed June 2019.

Review of industry levies (PRJ-011643) – all levies reviewed with an analysis of what levies may be considered going forward, including the introduction of a pollination levy and marketing levy. Project completed December 2018.

Investigation of WA honeys (PRJ-010313) – particular attention to the Hydrogen Peroxide levels of honey from different sources. Project to be completed September 2019.

Review of past projects (PRJ-011631) – from 2014 to 2019, review of the net benefits derived from various projects. Completed April 2019.

External small hive beetle trap (PRJ-09334) – trap designed and trialled. Youtube extension production on 'how to' produced. Completed January 2018.

Large African hive beetle (PRJ-009748) – large African hive beetle is exotic to Australia. Life cycle and risk to Australia beekeeping industry evaluated. Completed December 2016.

Nutrition on nosema and virus levels (PRJ-009987) – feeding bees to reduce impacts of nosema and viruses. Findings not conclusive. Project completed December 2017.

Biosecurity resources (PRJ-010226) – driven by Plant Health Australia to assist in the implementation of the National Code of Practice. Due by July 2019.

Triggers for chalkbrood outbreaks (PRJ-01085) – gain a better understanding of the issues that impact on chalkbrood outbreaks. To be completed by November 2020.

Fungicide impact on bees (PRJ-010818) – look into the extent of exposure and impact of fungicides on honey bees within a range of crop situations. To be completed July 2020.

Probiotics and honeybees (PRJ-010825) – identifying healthy bee gut flora versus diseased bee gut flora, with consideration of seasonal and locational trends. Ultimately identify a probiotic treatment for bees to assist in the management of chalkbrood. First stage to be completed by February 2020.

Shortage of pollinators on crops (PRJ-010219) – a model to determine the broader economic and social costs of pollinator deficits. Completed April 2017.

For more information on each or any of these projects refer to the 2014-2019 Research, Development &

Extension Snapshot - AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Program report (www.agrifutures.com.au).

I hadn't intended to review or list the current projects, but once I got started it illustrates the number and area of research projects in play at present. What most don't do, and in fact most research projects don't do, full stop, is individually change your attitude or decision making processes within your own beekeeping business. This more often than not a long drawn out process.

When small hive beetle (SHB) arrived in Australia in 2002, there was a proliferation of projects and studies into this insect pest. One researcher, Dr Garry Levot, an entomologist with no bee background, was approached to conduct research into the problem. One project led to another and another and yet then another, until after 10 years Australia had a 'registered' pesticide that could be used within a hive to control SHB. Part of Garry's work was to screen and review the various insecticides available that might be applicable for use in a bee hive. After much trial and tribulation 'the chemical' of most use, i.e. least risk and most effective, was identified. The chemical is now the basis of a legally registered product plus counterfeit products and homemade devices. I'm betting that most of those using this chemical have no knowledge or memory of how the journey to identify suitable chemicals started; the field trials that were carried out with a range of comprehensive reports and the ultimate widespread adoption of the outcomes of that research.

It is hard to identify the impact of a single research project, but when you analyse a series of projects over time, there is often a very positive outcome for the beekeeping industry. This can be said for many of the projects being conducted currently.

So how did the RD&E journey start in Australia? In 1962 the Government created the Honey Industry Act. This saw the birth of the Australian Honey Board. This was created, I am told, to assist in the stabilisation of the export price for honey. Australia generally produced a surplus of honey, in some years this would be quite a substantial volume. Most of our exports were to the United Kingdom and Germany.

Quite a few people and companies were involved in this export trade. Various buyers were controlling the market, particularly playing off honey sources from Western Australia and the Eastern States.


The creation of the Australian Honey Board saw the issuing of export honey licences and the creation of better communications within Australia with the publishing of regular newsletters. This helped stabilise the market to some degree.

The Australian Honey Board also produced a range of promotional materials and made these available to beekeepers and the public.



A subsidiary of the Australian Honey Board, the Honey Research Advisory Committee was formed in 1963/64.







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The first committee comprised of the Chairman, Chair of the Australian Honey Board, producer representative, a CSIRO representative and a representative from the Australian Agricultural Council.

This Advisory Committee was funded by the board, with an allocation of £2,500 per year for three years. The Commonwealth Government had already matched a £5,000 contribution with the resultant £10,000 being spent on three projects.

1. £7,000 to the Waite Agricultural Research Institute for construction of a permanent building for honey bee research.
2. £1,550 to Professor Haydak for bee nutrition research in Australia (who was stationed at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute in South Australia).
3. £1,450 to the NSW Department of Agriculture for the purchase of a motor truck for use in the bee breeding projects at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College.

It was agreed at the inaugural meeting of the Honey Research Advisory Committee to give the problem of honey bee nutrition first priority.

Up to and including 1980-81, grants for honey research were funded by contributions from the Australian Honey Board and the Commonwealth Special Research Grants. The Honey Research Act 1980 came into being and the Honey Research Committee was formed. The Honey Research Trust Account was created and financed by honey levies, much as we have today, with matching

contributions from the Commonwealth Government. The 1981-82 Research Program listed the priorities for research as:

1. Bee breeding
2. Bee diseases
3. Pollination
 - i. as a service to horticulture and agriculture
 - ii. pesticide hazards
4. Bee nutrition
5. Production of honey and hive products
6. Honey quality

The Honey Research Act 1980 was replaced in April 1986 by the Rural Industries Research Act 1985. The committees that were formed under these arrangements were subsequently selected against objective criteria and appointed for three year terms, rather than being representatives of specific agencies.

The Honey Bee Research and Development Council, or the HBRDC as it became known, operated until the formation of the Honey Bee Research and Development Committee within the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC).

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The five year plan of the HBRDC in 1991 stated its research priorities as:

1. To promote conservation of melliferous resources, and access to, public and freehold land, based on sound scientific findings.
2. Establish the value of the industry.
3. Increase profitability by improving hive husbandry and management.
4. Improve the genetic pool of bees within Australia.
5. Development of agricultural and horticultural crop pollination.
6. Improve methods of extraction, storage and transport of bulk honey.
7. Increase industry understanding of market processes.
8. Improve the communications between the R & D sector, the honey industry and associated industries.

And now we come to the present!

Some things have not changed much, the words used have been massaged and word-smithed, but in many cases there are re occurring themes since the early sixties in the RD&E sector.

A few key points need to be stated relating to 2019.

- a) the role of State Government departments in the function of extension has diminished and, in many cases has disappeared.
- b) the involvement of Horticulture Innovation (HI), the horticultural industry R&D organisation, has identified and made pollination a major priority.

As a result of a diminished number of qualified and informed people involved in the dissemination of

information to the beekeeping industry, the “E”, or extension of the RD&E equation has, and will continue to, take on a greater level of importance for key beekeeping industry bodies and agencies, including the AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Committee.

The involvement of HI in pollination R&D means that the honey bee industry is not on its own in this area of scientific endeavour. Even so, HI is focused on pollinators and not solely on honey bees. This will be an area of R&D to watch as far as any benefit to the honey bee industry is concerned. Honey bees remain the most readily available pollinating insect that is economically available in large numbers. This is the case in most of the world as well.

The role of the levies collected from the Australian Beekeeping Industry must be invested in areas that benefit those who are paying the levies.

It would be good to see a refocus on honey bee nutrition, as was the case many decades ago. Australia led the world in honey bee nutrition research for a while, maybe we can do so again – but that’s my personal opinion.

Even so, the deliberations around what and who money is spent on in the RD&E sector will be an ongoing process of identifying priorities, setting objectives, allocating finances and communicating the outcomes.

The never ending story continues. The future of your beekeeping business depends on it!

For further information on past and present projects, refer to: www.agrifutures.com.au

(Acknowledgements: Bob MacDonald provided extensive insights into the Australian Honey Board and the history around the creation of a specific Research & Development Committee. Bob was heavily involved for many years in the various groups that oversaw these functions.

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

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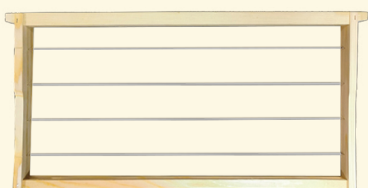
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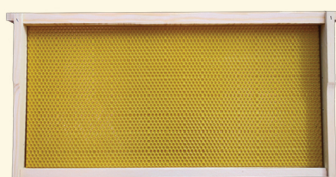
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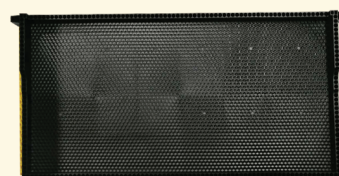
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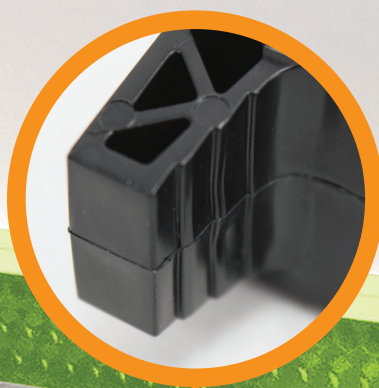


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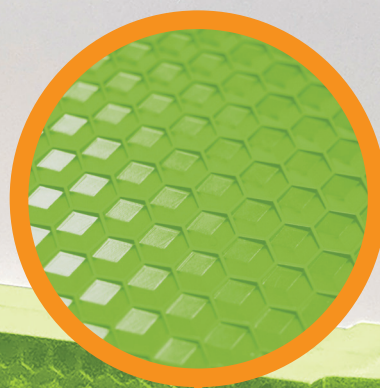
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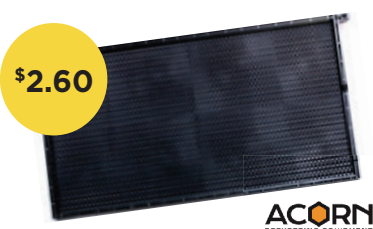
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Elizabeth Frost

Acting Technical Specialist, Honey Bees

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Honey bee water requirements

Water is essential to all living things, including honey bees. Worker bees use water to dilute stored honey in order to eat it, in royal and worker jelly brood food production and critically, to regulate hive temperature on hot days. Once temperatures reach the upper 30s and into 40° Celsius and above, forager bees switch from gathering food to collecting water. Like nectar and pollen foraging, water foraging is regulated according to the current demand for it in the colony.

Higher temperatures stimulate the colony to employ evaporative cooling inside the hive. This bee- powered form of air conditioning is required to ensure developing bees in the hive don't suffer heat stress or at worst die. In addition to water foraging, workers also fan fresh air in the hive and hot air out of the hive to maintain the internal hive temperature between 33-35° Celsius and 50 to 60 per cent relative humidity.



Figure 1: A temporary water source in an almond orchard in Robinvale, Victoria in August. It may be winter, but bees were still actively foraging for water in this polystyrene box filled with water and with a hessian-covered polystyrene float as a honey bee landing board. This is a useful temporary source of water on-farm during contract pollination to offer an alternate source of water to drip irrigation, which may contain more than just water, or farm taps which farm staff need to access bee-free.



Figure 2: A water trough on the Tocal College property during a 40° Celsius heat wave in February. Notably this aged trough has rough

sides, perfect for bees to cling to while drinking. Some newer troughs may have slick plastic or cement sides which bees may have difficulty holding on to and be at risk of drowning. A bit of algae, plant material, or other floating platform in a water trough will act as a reliable landing area for bees to forage water from safely.

On a hot day a single hive may collect half a litre of water or more to maintain its internal temperature. As beekeepers we can help our honey bees by providing a close and uncontaminated source of water and ensuring our hives are shaded from late morning, or at least noon onward in hot summer locations. This is of critical importance in times of drought when natural water sources previously relied on may have run dry.

Water collectors prefer to fly to the nearest source of water, however, if that source is over 100 metres away, the great amount of energy required for these flights back and forth in extreme temperatures will shorten the worker bees' lifespan. In the long term, this could decrease the population of the hive which could have negative effects on temperature control, overall hive health, subsequent honey production, hive strength required for contract pollination, or all of the above.



Figure 3: Water foragers in a plastic bucket in autumn. Note the polystyrene platform floating on the water. Bees which lose their grip on the smooth plastic can climb onto the polystyrene and exit safely.

It is important to maintain a water source at your apiary site, whether in a paddock or your backyard and keep this replenished in warm to hot weather. Ensure bees will not drown by providing landing sites, for example rocks, branches or sand protruding above the water, or pieces of polystyrene or aquatic plants floating in the water. Bees aren't picky about what container the water is in as you'll see from my photos. One type of container that should never be used to water bees is one that previously held chemicals or pesticides which could leach from the container and contaminate the water with potential negative effects on hive health.

Importantly, if your bees find your neighbour's pool before you put a watering station out, it is impossible to stop them, short of moving the hives out of the area. Finding the ideal location for your apiary will always be a compromise, however, we all have the responsibility of keeping our bee hives adequately watered, with an uncontaminated source of water ideally 100 metres or less from the hive in dry, warm and hot weather.

Additional information of water provision for bees is included below from the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council's publication *National Best Management Practice for Beekeeping in the Australian Environment*.

This information can be found at the web address: honeybee.org.au/pdf/NBPFBIAE.pdf

"(6) Ensure appropriate availability of water when required.

ELEMENT 6: Provide water for bees

Ensure appropriate availability of water when required. In some states this activity is enshrined in legislation. Where water is close by, such as a creek, dam or river, water should not have to be supplied by the beekeeper. Honey bees, like all living creatures, require water to survive. In summer this requirement can equate to substantial amounts of water being collected by colonies and in extreme hot weather a colony will devote all of the available field bees to the collection of water. The water consumption of a colony will vary according to

the strength of the colony, the colony's location, and the ambient air temperature. Beekeepers should supply sufficient water for the apiary's needs if required to ensure that the colonies do not perish during hot weather, so that bees do not cause a nuisance around stock troughs and swimming pools. An artificial water source should be placed within 200 metres of an apiary if a suitable, naturally occurring water source such as a dam, stream, or river is not [present]. An artificial water source supplied by beekeepers must be suitably covered with mesh to prevent access by wildlife and their accidental drowning."

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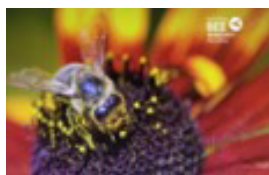
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BEE BIOSECURITY OFFICER REPORT



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Almond pollination update 2019

Near the end of August I spent some time as an observer with Darryl Cooper and 8 other DPI compliance staff who were looking at hives pollinating Almonds in the Griffith and Hillston areas. Over 4 days a large number of apiary sites at many locations were checked, with highly variable results seen between and within apiaries of various operators from NSW, VIC and QLD.

Whilst it was good to see that there were not many signs of rampant AFB this year it was also concerning as to the quality of some of the hives present on this pollination event. The most prominent concerns were the large numbers of weak hives at some locations (that were not being well managed), some dead-outs (both starved and robbed out), unbranded hives, poorly maintained boxes and weak hives actively being robbed at the time of our site visits.



Weak double that had been getting robbed and the entire colony of bees in that hive! Not worth the beekeeper putting on the truck or the almond grower paying for it! Leave it at home!

These issues are all ones that are covered under the Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice (Code) that will become a mandatory part of beekeeping in NSW from July 1st, 2020. If beekeepers do not take the requirements of the Code seriously then NSW DPI Compliance is going to issue a lot of fines on the almonds next year!

There has been a lot of talk this year that the tough seasonal conditions have made it very hard for beekeepers to produce good strength hives, but it was clear to see that some of the operators had done a very good job of either breeding up populations in all their hives or sorting out the weaker ones and not sending that junk in. A mix of both larger and smaller operators had done a very good job in this regard and should be commended for the consistent hives delivered. If every beekeeper did this then the pollination rate paid per hive would probably be a lot higher than it currently is!

The concern is that some of the other beekeepers dropping hives nearby on the same orchards appeared to have made absolutely no attempt to assess their hives before taking them to pollination, and may have simply picked up absolutely everything that they could fit on the truck regardless of their hive colony strength or ability to last the whole pollination job without starving out.

In some apiaries the condition of hives was extremely varied and one would be so honey-bound that it was hard to lift whilst the one next door could be lifted with your little finger. Some of these heavy double hives contained only a few frames of bees, were queenless/drone layers (non-viable as pollination hives) and on their way out, whilst the light ones were either exactly the same (but with far less or no honey stores) or had loads of bees and were on the verge of starvation. Either way these hives are not going to be viable hives for the entire pollination event, and will often be non-viable or dead for the rest of the season unless a lot of work is done resurrecting them (which costs money).



Not much pollination going on with this drone-layer!



United hive that when put together still didn't make the grade, ultimately failed and was then robbed out (taped up by DPI). Don't send junk to the almonds!

Being a beekeeper means that you are responsible for managing your beehives (i.e. keeping them alive and healthy), therefore you need to determine what stored resources the hives will require to withstand the conditions faced on a pollination job and prepare them accordingly. If you don't prepare your hives appropriately (often a job that starts early in the new year to set them up for almond pollination) then you will not achieve your best financial return (profit) possible and some of your hives will die.

It is counter-productive to send in strong hives that have insufficient honey stores and may simply starve out or dwindle and become stressed/diseased due to impending starvation, as is sending in weak hives full of honey where the bees cannot defend themselves from being robbed by strong colonies nearby/next door. Loss of colonies will cost you a whole lot more dollars in replacement cost and lost honey opportunity than the pollination fee that you received from sending it, so save yourself all the extra work on rebuilding hive numbers back up by thoroughly preparing all your hives before you actually go in.

Preventing the issue from happening in the first place is a lot better than trying to fix it all up later!

It is a pretty straight forward principle in preparing almond hives;

If a colony of bees is small (5 frames or less) then simply leave it at home where it belongs. For medium sized colonies (~6-9 frames of bees) then keep it in a single brood box (10 frame boxes are probably more suitable for this than a single 8 frame full depth box as you can pack in more honey and bees). If a colony is larger (or likely to become larger on the job as it is healthy and already has a lot of capped brood) then give it extra space by having a honey box on top and some frames of honey there in case it is needed. Each almond season is different and whilst some years will give nectar (or there is a nearby nectar source such as Canola etc.) there will be others that are very unforgiving on the bees, so always prepare your hives for the worst possible conditions.

The second part of preparing your hives is the "lift test", where you individually lift the front or back of each hive (after unlocking em-lock, straps or clips holding it to

a pallet!) to estimate how heavy the hive may actually be. If your single is too light then it needs some extra weight, either as a feeding of heavy sugar syrup or adding a frame or two of honey. If a double is too light then it is probably safer to add frames of honey or fill a frame feeder with dry granular sugar than feed liquid sugar syrup, as the latter may be stored in honey frames and therefore adulterate honey if it's not all used up.

It was obvious that some beekeepers had not undertaken either of these two basic jobs and had just sent the lot in.

If some of the beekeepers whose hives I saw at the almonds had done better preparations then they would have fared much better and lost less hives (and \$) whilst there, plus had less non-performing hives when they came off. A good healthy hive does extremely well on the almonds and comes off ready to do a good job collecting honey, so in a tough year like this one they are good for your business.

By beekeepers not adequately undertaking these preparation measures they are effectively not adequately managing weak hives within their operation and enabling the potential robbing of these hives and associated spread of any AFB spores contained within them. Not managing weak hives increases the risk of AFB transmission on the almonds, which is one of the biggest biosecurity threats that all beekeepers face there. Part 4 in the Code clearly outlines this, so please review this section thoroughly if you do not understand the reasoning why weak hives must be managed to prevent robbing.

Another important issue is that of enabling hives to adequately defend themselves against robber bees by preventing the use of old defective boxes that provide additional openings into hives other than the main hive entrance. If a colony is weak or weakens due to nosema etc. then the bees cannot defend all the entrances and eventually they will be robbed. As stated in the Code under Part 6 hives should be maintained in good condition and Part 7 a beekeeper must not allow a hive to be exposed in a manner or under conditions likely to attract robber bees. Basically this means don't use old junk or defective bee boxes. There were a number of operators using substandard boxes that should have been retired (burned) and replaced (with new boxes) many years ago, so best to invest part of your pollination payment in rectifying that before next year -or you may get fined.



Junk boxes of one beekeeper degrade the reputation of all beekeepers-

burn these industry devaluing boxes well before they end up like this.



Burn it! Put another junk box on the fire and burn it!



When you can also see sunlight shining through from gaps on the other side it's obviously highly susceptible to robbing....Burn it!



If it's warped, full of gaps and was last painted in 1989....Burn it!

Unbranded hives. There were many hives observed which were either completely unidentified (unbranded) or only had the previous owners brand (some of whom finished up beekeeping and sold out last century!) and had not been updated with the new owners brand. It has always been a legal requirement under both the Apiaries Act 1985 and Biosecurity Act 2015 that all hives be branded with the current owner's hive brand, and it is also a requirement under the Code too. There is no excuse for having unidentified bee hives, so unless you want to cop a fine from DPI compliance you should ensure that everything is marked properly. If the biggest beekeepers in NSW can brand every hive then there is no excuse for anybody else not to, and if you don't want to burn brand them then use a spray pack and stencil or a good quality permanent marker, paint pen or cattle tag pen to do it.

I have left cards in the some poorer quality hives that I saw, so I urge you to take note of any comments I wrote in order to better prepare your hives for next time. In the three weeks since then only 2 of those beekeepers had called me, so how many others have not even bothered lifting lids and checking their hives yet?

There were some very good operators on the almonds this year and also some beekeepers that have a large number of improvements to make, or they probably should get out of bees. Those poorer beekeepers are one of the biggest biosecurity threats that the rest of the beekeeping community face, so requiring every beekeeper to operate by the Code will help to reduce their danger to everyone else.

Bee ready for registration changes. <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/events>

Type in this link to see where DPI is holding public meetings to discuss the NSW Bee Registration changes that begin on July 1st, 2020. It is updated regularly and all NSWAA branches are asked if they can host a meeting.

Contributions

Do you have something you would like published in Australia's Honeybee News?

Perhaps a favourite recipe or an update from your Branch, then email it to the editor

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Media Release

29 August 2019 | Media contact: Annette Cannon 0466 621 378

For industry journals and articles

Operation almond pollination

Agriculture Victoria – Joe Riordan, Ally Driessen, Nikki Jones, Paige McDonald, Ben Walker, Cynthia Kefaloukos, Kate Miller

Agriculture Victoria has completed a targeted almond pollination operation across the Piangil, Tooleybuc, Mildura, Robinvale and Euston areas.

The operation focused on undertaking inspections of apiaries that were brought into the region to pollinate almond orchards to determine the presence or absence of disease, with effort concentrated on American foulbrood disease (AFB).

An estimated 110,000 hives arrived in North-West Victoria for the annual almond pollination season. This large movement of bee hives increases the biosecurity risks that are associated with hive-to-hive transmission of bee pests and diseases, most notably American Foulbrood disease.

Foulbrood can spread from an infected hive whether it be weakened or already dead, known as 'dead outs', by robber bees who take the infected honey back to their healthy hive.

Prior to conducting field operations, apiary staff undertook a risk assessment on each beekeeper known to be bringing hives to almond pollination. The risk assessment using the Honeybee Biosecurity Code of Practice as a foundation was based on whether each beekeeper;

- had completed honey culture tests (HCT) and how recently and what the results indicated;
- had completed the Biosecurity On-Line Training (BOLT);
- was a B Qual Member;
- and whether they have any known history of AFB.

Apiary staff completed an extensive engagement campaign to contact all beekeepers flagged as high or medium risk or their brokers, who were known to be attending pollination prior to their arrival. The purpose of the contact was to remind them of their obligations under the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994 (LDCA) and let them know that apiary inspectors would be onsite conducting audits and inspections.

Beekeepers flagged as a 'high risk' were the highest priority for field inspection, followed by those flagged as 'medium risk'. In addition, sugar shakes were conducted on hives from all Queensland beekeepers and random New South Wales beekeepers to ensure no exotic bee pests were present.

With Victoria's almond industry worth an estimated \$380 million annually, and currently 68 per cent of Australia's almond production coming from Victoria, ensuring compliance with the LDCA is a priority for Agriculture Victoria.

www.agriculture.victoria.vic.gov.au

Agriculture Victoria's targeted operation aimed to;

1. minimise the risk of spread of endemic diseases between hives and protect healthy hives from becoming diseased.
2. protect the almond pollination and brokerage industry by minimising the biosecurity risk associated with bringing large quantities of livestock into the one geographic area.
3. undertake exotic pest surveillance by carrying out sugar shake testing.
4. deliver a compliance operation that upholds the principles of being: helpful, respectful, impartial, proportionate, predictable and transparent.

During the two-week operation Agriculture Victoria inspected hives at 65 sites 107 Sugar shakes were conducted, with a range of different pests detected, including AFB, Nosema, Chalk Brood, small hive beetle and cockroaches.

Inspectors conducted an inspection of each hive and, where any clinical signs of AFB were present, carried out field testing and sampling as per the *Ag Note AG1426: 'Diagnosis of American foulbrood disease of honey bee brood'*. Our inspectors then assessed each hive infected with AFB and determined a risk rating of low, medium or high per the symptoms described below:

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hive is in early stages of infection• Only one or two sunken cells per brood frame, discoloured to dull white yellowish or light brown• Adult population NOT declined• No glue pot odour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hive is in early stages of infection• Only one or two sunken cells per brood frame, discoloured to dull white yellowish or light brown• Adult population is declined• No glue pot odour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hive is in advanced stages of infection• Multiple sunken perforated cells with larvae coffee brown to dark brown almost black mass or hard dry black brittle scale across multiple brood frames• Bees that die in the pupal stage their mouth parts (tongue) are turned up towards and almost touching the top side of the cell• Presence of gluepot odour• Declined population of adult and developing bees rendering hive to be robbed by other hives

Where AFB was detected, action was taken to mitigate the risk posed by the diseased hive/s. AFB is not highly contagious, however bacterial spores can easily be spread between hives and apiaries through sharing of beekeeping equipment and via bee robbing and drifting.

Inspectors are now following up with beekeepers offering suggestions to improve compliance with the Act, raising awareness for the Honeybee Biosecurity Code of Practice which is legislated in Victoria and South Australia with NSW aiming to legislate the code in 2020 and providing feedback on how to improve the quality of hives in the field.

Working together with the industry, Agriculture Victoria aims to secure almonds as Victoria's second largest horticultural export after grapes. Almonds make up about 27 per cent of the state's total horticulture exports.

As we know the size of the crop harvested in 2020 greatly depends on the success of the pollination process in August.

For more information on honey bees visit the Agriculture Victoria website, agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/honey-bees

There's a New Group of Workers Spreading Organic Pesticide on Crops: Bees

By Ben Paynter

As they leave their hives, the bees get coated with a beneficial fungus that they spread to plants, which protects things like strawberries from disease.



[Photo: courtesy BVT]

Bees are great at retrieving tiny cargo: their main job is to visit flowering plants in order to gather pollen and nectar for their hive. Now one pesticide company has gained federal permission to ensure they're bringing something special along on each trip. The Canadian-based company [Bee Vectoring Technologies](#) just received EPA approval for an organic fungicide that bees can carry directly from hive to crop. The breakthrough could help farmers eliminate the need for chemical spraying.

It's called Vectorite, a white powder that farmers place in special trays for honeybees or bumblebees to pass through as they exit their hive. Vectorite carries a refined form of *Clonostachys rosea*, a fungus that feeds on other types of fungi that damage crops.



[Photo: courtesy BVT]

"This is the first bee-vectored product that the EPA has approved, so what we have really done is created a new category," says BVT CEO Ashish Malik. In Florida, the company has used this system in commercial-size test fields to reduce gray mold on strawberries while increasing yields by at least 10%. In Georgia, it's done the same thing with blueberries to eliminate gray mold and the more nefarious monilinia blight that causes

"mummy berry" shriveling. (BVT has already proven its product doesn't harm the insects that carry it.)

The exact impact of these applications vary by region because there may be different strains of pathogens, but Malik is hopeful that he can promise an increase of between 15% and 20% for those southern blueberry growers (although the exact net gain is still being calculated). In addition to those berries, the company sees its biotech as a great solution for sunflower and almond growers.



[Photo: courtesy BVT]

Part of the allure for farmers is that bees are more effective than spraying synthetic pesticides because they tend to visit flowering crops at exactly the right time to deliver their payloads. With conventional sprays, it can take several applications and still not soak everything, so the bee-based system ensures a wider and more consistent delivery service.

The other part is that many farmers are already in the business of contracting for visits from large scale swarms through commercial beekeepers or buy their own from companies that rear and ship whole hives. Fruit, nut, and seed farmers rely on bee pollination to ensure their crops get fertilized at the right time to produce the best yields. BVT's tray systems are engineered to be specifically be adapted to these style hives.



[Photo: courtesy BVT]

Vectorite may be organic, but BVT is targeting both conventional and organic farms. The company projects that it can reduce pesticide use by 50% to 75% at conventional farms that are willing to widely adopt the new practice. And as it develops and offers more types of pesticide protection, it could reduce pesticide use even

more. “The beautiful part about our system is that you can deliver multiple microbes through that one flight the bees make, provided the microbes are safe to the bee,” says Malik.



[Photo: courtesy BVT]

The company raised \$3.1 million in funding in 2015 and has other operations pending their own country-specific approvals in Mexico and Southern Europe, along with interest in other places. “We can close the research phase. We can now talk about generating commercial revenue and building the business back up, not only in the U.S. but ultimately globally,” he says.

Doing so in a way that eliminates reliance on synthetic pesticides is both cost-effective and good for the environment. BVT has previously projected that services will be extremely competitive against traditional methods. And controlling diseases like botrytis more uniformly ensures that as more fruit hits stores, some of it will have a longer shelf life. The company’s early estimate was 10 to 12 more days of ripeness in some cases. Now you have two reasons to thank bees for your fresh fruits.

2020 Conference Dates

Bee Industry Council of WA
15 May, venue TBC

NSW Apiarists' Association
21-22 May, Tamworth NSW

Tasmanian Beekeepers Association
29-30 May, venue TBC

SA Apiarists' Association
11-12 June, venue TBC

QLD Beekeepers Association
18-20 June, Warwick QLD

Victorian Apiarists' Association
TBC

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National Council of Crop Pollination Association
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Australian Honey Bee Industry Council
Victoria

Catch the Buzz A Gene Fix for Nosema?

Maybe.....

By Kim Kaplan

BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND—Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists have taken the first step towards a weapon against the major honey bee parasite *Nosema ceranae*.

Currently, there is no antibiotic treatment for this parasite, however, that will change this fall when fumagillin will once again be available in the US. This genetic approach, however, is a much better approach.

The scientists found that feeding honey bees a small amount of an interfering RNA compound (RNAi) could disrupt the reproduction of *N. ceranae* by as much as 90 percent in the laboratory study, according to a study recently published in *Insect Molecular Biology*.

This RNAi compound targets a single *N. ceranae* gene called Dicer, explained Jay Evans, research leader of the ARS Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland, who headed the study.

“Dicer is a critical part of *Nosema ceranae*’s machinery for defeating honey bees’ immune responses to infestation by these parasites. It also encodes an essential protein in *N. ceranae*’s reproduction. So, it could be a double-barreled, practical route for attacking *N. ceranae*. Even better, RNAi against Dicer is specific to the parasite and will not interfere with the health of the honey bees,” Evans said.

In earlier studies, the lab had looked at attacking *N. ceranae* genes that encode for proteins that make *N. ceranae* a better parasite such as a polar tube protein that is important in the invasion of bee cells by the parasite.

“But by striking at a single gene that affects *N. ceranae* reproduction and the ability of this parasite to counter honey bee immunity, I think we may have found an even better—an excellent avenue of attack,” Evans added.

But this is just the first step toward a possible treatment. The researchers need to prove the concept in the field and beekeepers’ apiaries.

Nosema ceranae is a widespread problem of honey bees, although the impacts on colony health remain unclear.

The best measure of the damage of *Nosema* comes from Europe where this parasite has been linked to long-term colony declines in Spain.

Pests and diseases of honey bees

Course details

Name: Pests and diseases of honey bees

Description: The two day course provides beekeepers with the skills to recognise, monitor and manage the impact of pests and disease on honey bee colonies. It is also designed to promote awareness and surveillance for exotic pests and diseases threatening the Australian beekeeping industry.

Cost: \$590 GST free

Course aims: This course aims for each participant to be able to identify and manage the major domestic pests and disease of honey bees to minimise their impact, whilst promoting awareness and surveillance for the exotic pests and disease threatening the Australian apiary industry.

Learning outcomes:

- » Identify the suitable PPE required and WHS risks.
- » Assess the health and condition of brood.
- » Assess the health and condition of adult bees.
- » Identify the climatic factors that predispose honey bees to the various pests and diseases.
- » Identify the appropriate samples to assist in the identification of the pest or disease.
- » Identify the necessary actions to reduce the impact of pests and disease of honey bees.

Length: 2 days

Course program/structure:

- » Seasonal cycle of honey bee colonies.
- » Why pest and diseases are important.
- » What is disease, what causes disease.
- » Different pathogens and transmission methods.
- » Four main brood disease.
- » Practical - opening a hive and inspecting for brood disease.
- » Practical - collecting samples for diagnosis
- » Adult bee diseases.
- » Hive pests.
- » Non infectious disorders.
- » Exotic pests and disease.
- » Surveillance programs for exotics.
- » Exotic incursion responses.
- » Management strategies for disease prevention.

Resources and method of delivery: Participants receive course notes and a copy of the AgGuide Healthy Bees.
This course is delivered using indoor and outdoor instruction.
This course is also delivered [online](#).

Accreditation: This course has been mapped to the following national units of competency:

- » AHCBEK306 - Manage pests and disease within a honey bee colony
- » FDFOP2013A - Apply sampling procedures.



Register

[Contact us](#) to register your interest in this course.


Other dates and locations are available on demand.



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12th Nov 2019

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(AHBIC)
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Phone: 0402 467 780
Email: ahbic@honeybee.org.au

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GOLD PLUS	\$ 5,000 & above	COPPER	\$ 100 & above
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Please return this form to AHBIC by post or email
to ensure your contribution is recorded correctly

POST: AHBIC, PO Box 42, Macquarie, ACT 2614
EMAIL: ahbic@honeybee.org.au

Account Name: Australian Honey Bee Industry Council Inc

Banking **Bank:** Bendigo Bank

BSB: 633 000

Account No: 150 976 405

Reference: Please include your NAME as the Direct Deposit Reference



Contribution by credit card is now available through the AHBIC website at
<https://honeybee.org.au/friends-of-ahbic-voluntary-contribution/>

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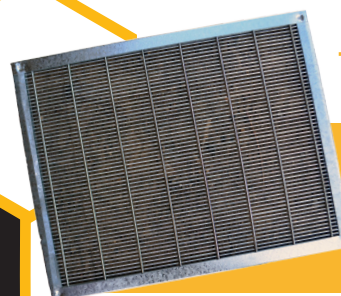


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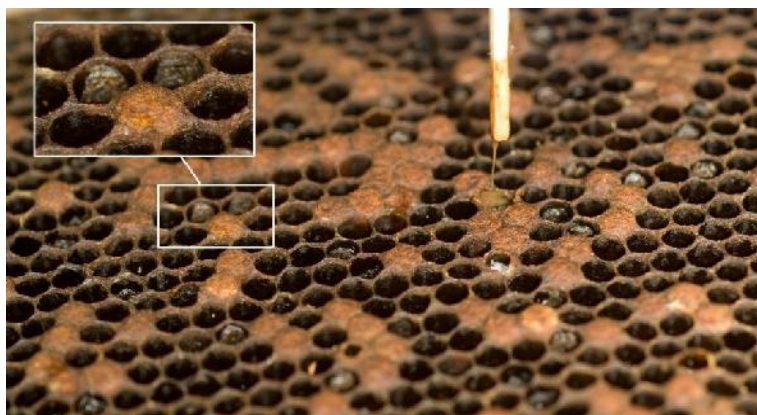
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Steritech is a proud member of the NSWAA

Innovation is driven from ideas

The concept of using irradiation in the beekeeping industry all started with an idea on how to do things a bit differently.

We are constantly trying to develop ways to utilise our processes to help your industry in lots of new ways.

But without your ideas and input, gamma irradiation would not be where it is today.

Come and share your thoughts and ideas with us. You could hold the key to developing a new application that could alter the beekeeping industry forever.



Please contact us about any inspirational ideas you have



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NSWAA - Southern Tablelands Branch welcomes you to attend their meeting.

Saturday 30th November, 2019

153 Shingle Way Gundaroo NSW 2620
12 noon - Christmas BBQ Lunch- kindly
sponsored by Ecrotek Beekeeping Supplies
(RSVP by 21st November if planning to arrive for
lunch - Email - Branch Secretary Judith Saxvik -
southerntablelands@gmail.com)

or

Arrival at 1.45pm for 2pm meeting for the
NSWAA Southern Tablelands Branch.

Guest Speakers

Will Armstrong- (Ecrotek Beekeeping Supplies) -
Discussing hive monitoring, feeding, Elders and
online.

Rod Bourke (NSW DPI) - Discussing registration
changes that come into effect 1st July, 2020.

Laurie Kershaw

President

Southern Tablelands Branch

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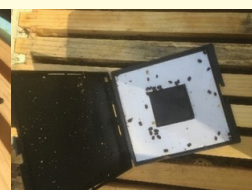
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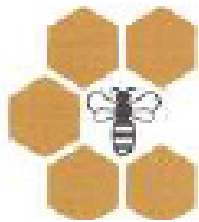


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AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC (AHBIC) UPDATE

Full newsletter available from <http://honeybee.org.au>

NOTE FROM CHAIR, PETER McDONALD

Biosecurity and Pollination go hand-in-hand. Pollination provides \$\$\$ to help our Honey Bee industry to be profitable but also pulls a lot of beehives together in close proximity, increasing the biosecurity risk.

Good biosecurity keeps our bees healthy and able to provide the pollination service as well as keeping our beekeepers aware and vigilant. It also provides beekeepers confidence in each other that all are doing their bit and encourages more beekeepers to make pollinating part of their business.

We have both of these as hot topics right now throughout Australia; (1) the main pollination period has commenced, and beehives are starting to move out of the almond orchards and (2) the intense biosecurity work going on in Townsville right now to ensure Australia remains free of *Varroa*. More on Townsville later in the newsletter.

AHBIC has been and will continue to constantly communicate with all the sectors concerned with pollination, being:

- Our Honey Bee industry through our members and friends to communicate the requirement for professional pollination services and best practices and the important role we can play in food security and the economic benefits that can flow from this. Pollination is important for our industry and has become a major reason for the growth our industry is currently experiencing.

- To government agencies at both state and federal level. This communication has been on-going throughout AHBIC's existence (and its predecessors) by successive representatives through our continuous advocacy and lobbying work.

- To the Pollination Dependant Industries(PDI) to raise awareness of the importance of the honey bee to their industry. We do this through a number of ways, joint membership of Plant Health Australia, through direct interactions and communications, through connections in research organisations such as AgriFutures and Hort Innovation.

These communications have been going on for years and they have worked exceedingly well. The PDI's are VERY aware of the importance of the

honey bee to them. They are so aware that we now have 14 plant industries contributing their own money into helping our honey bee industry and governments protect Australia from exotic pests of Honey Bees. They are directly contributing some very serious money to the responses that have been occurring in Townsville, the 2016 response to *Varroa Jacobsoni*, which is just about to finish; and the 2019 *Varroa Jacobsoni*, that has not long started. We welcome and applaud these industries for their commitment to their own future through supporting the honey bee industry. As new industries become aware of their reliance on honey bees they also come on board and contribute. An example of which is the lychee industry, who is now also contributing to the 2019 response and we welcome their assistance.

If any beekeeper needs further information/direction regarding pollination then AHBIC strongly encourages them to go to one of the member bodies of AHBIC. Join the organisation and learn from experienced pollinators through the network of beekeeping groups. There are specialist pollination groups such as the Crop Pollination Association and the Tasmanian Crop Pollination Association and there are also the general beekeeping groups represented at state level by the VAA, NSWAA, QBA, TBA, SAAA & WAFF.

Lastly for this month, AHBIC would like to congratulate the Agriculture Victoria Apiary staff on a very well-run operation for pest and disease checking through the Victorian areas of the Almond pollination season. Further details about the operation are in their media release later in this newsletter. The team conducted a well planned and executed operation with a major focus on communication with beekeepers and using the requirements of our National Biosecurity Code of Practice as a tool to identify the higher risk checks required. This definitely fits in with what our whole Honey Bee industry wanted when we all voted to implement the code. When this is also coupled with good co-operation with interstate departmental apiary staff as well, we are on the way to really start realising the benefits of the code in lifting the standard of biosecurity for all beekeepers. It was reported that there was a marked increase in the quality of beehives checked this year compared to previous ones. Well done to the beekeepers involved and thank you for representing our industry so well.

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Editor: Sue Carney
Email: susancarney@me.com

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