



MonthlyNEWS

To: The Australian Honey Industry

From: Stephen Ware – Executive Director

January/February 2012

AHBIC acknowledges the **beekeeper suppliers** who contribute via their packer/queen bee supplier to AHBIC. We urge beekeepers to support those Packers/Queen bee breeders who contribute to AHBIC.

DOES YOUR HONEY BUYER(S) OR QUEENBEE SUPPLIER'S NAME APPEAR ON THIS LIST? IF NOT, THEN ASK 'WHY NOT?' AHBIC WORKS FOR YOU!

AB's Honey	Cugley, Kirsten	L'Estrange, Tony	Saxonbee Enterprises
Argus, Andrew	Damokas, B	Lever, Robert	Slattery, Anna
Australian Queen Bee	Daybreak Apiary	Locker, Judy	Smith, C & B
Exporters	Davey, Helen	MacFarlane, R H	Spring Gully Foods P/L
Australian Queen Bee	Davis, E	Marchant, R & S	Squire, Gary
Breeders	Deane, A J & C M	Marti, Rod T/A Gagarra	Stanley, J & L
Australian Honey	Den Hollander, Jeroen	Honey	Stephens, R
Products	Dewar Corporation	McGurk M L &	Stevens, Graeme
Barnes Apiaries P/L	Dunlop, P G & R D	Lockley, B A	Stevens, Howard
Bates, Tiffane	Ewington, P & M	McLaren, Jane	Stirling, Graeme
Beacham, V G	Faithfull, Mark	McInerney, Neville	Stokes, Peter
Bee My Honey Apiaries	Federal Council of	Meimetis, Steve	Strout, Graham
Beechworth Honey P/L	Australian Apiarists	Milne, Howard	Tasmanian Beekeepers -
Bees Neez Apiaries	Fruet, F P	Morgan, Trevor	NW Branch
Bell, Graham	Gell's Honey	Morris, Wendy	Tasmanian Crop
Billington, Steven	Georgiou, Athena	Mullen, Peter & Sylvia	Pollination Association
Black, R G & M J	Giles, G R & P M	Myers, Terry	Tasmanian Honey
Bowman Family	Glenister, Susan	Naisbitt, A L	Company
Bredenkamp, Don	Goode, T W & M A	Nevin, Denis	Thompson, N
Bresland, Ian	Griffiths, Milton	Nitschke, C J	Weatherhead, T & M
Brock, Margaret	Griffin, Brian	Norcic, John	True Blue Honey
Brooks, Graham	Hadfield, Simon	Papworth, F & E	Valkenburg, Simeon
Bucktin, Brian	Honey Packers &	Park, William F	Upton, Ralph
Bush Honey - Rosalie	Marketers Association	Paull, D M & G A	Van Dongen, A J
Waters	Hooper, B A	Phillips, Rupert	Vermeer, Peter
Buzz Honey	Hooper, R F & A J	Pluschke, D & MS	Wallace, P
Capilano Honey Ltd	Hooten, Keith	Pobke, Barry	Warral Apiaries P/L
Ciphery, C & R	Hoskinson, H L & H M	Pollard, Nigel	Watson, James
Clifford, D A & J J	Howard, O D	Pollination Association	Weerona Apiaries
Codde, T J	Howell, T & S	of WA	Wescobee Limited
Cole, O F	Howie, GD	Rasmussen, Ivan	Wilson, Col
Coleman, R J	Hughston & Sons P/L	Ravi, David	Wishart, Ron
Cotton, A J &	Ipswich/West Moreton	Roberts, I J & J H	Zadow Apiaries
McDonald, M A	Beekeepers Association	Roberts, Glenn	
Craig, Athol	Jones, C H	Robinson, Barry	
Crop Pollination	Kap J & E A	Roden, Helen	
Association	Langan, Margaret	Ruiter, J H	

Thank you to all our beekeeper contributors some of whom have asked to remain anonymous.
AHBIC appreciates your ongoing support.

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The following provides an update of recent activities of AHBIC naturally if you should seek any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact the AHBIC office.

UPDATE AHBIC ACTIVITIES

On behalf of AHBIC I would like to wish all a Happy New Year.

Already it has been a busy year, developments include:

1. A further incursion of *Apis cerana* has occurred in Queensland and in this edition of the newsletter we include details. One important issue that came out of the incursion was the ability or non-ability of the *Varroa jacobsoni* mite to be harmful to the European honeybee. Until 2008 the Java type of *Varroa jacobsoni* was regarded as harmless to *Apis mellifera* (the European honeybee) as it lacked the ability to reproduce on the brood of that bee (Anderson, 1994). In 2008 mites belonging to the Java type of *Varroa jacobsoni* were found to be producing offspring on *Apis mellifera* brood in Papua New Guinea, even though mites of this type still did not show this ability in Java, Irian Jaya or the Solomon Islands (Anderson, 2008). To clarify this situation we invited Dr Denis Anderson to write in respect of the biosecurity risks to industry.
2. In respect of *Apis cerana*, Industry has also been involved in further discussion in respect of the containment strategy for the current operation in Cairns Queensland. A Scientific Advisory Panel including Industry representatives: Trevor Weatherhead and Max Whitton have forwarded a report recommending certain projects be undertaken. These are currently being evaluated by RIRDC to cost their implementation but have, in principle, been supported by the Committee overseeing the containment strategy.
3. It is with deepest sympathy we acknowledge the death of two of Industry's well known and respected figures, namely Gretchen When and Monte Klingner. We extend our condolences to their family and friends. They were an inspiration the Industry and all who knew them.
4. The AHBIC Executive is meeting on Monday 27 February in Melbourne. Importantly they will consider an updated Five Year Business Plan which will be circularised to member bodies and delegates prior to the Annual General Meeting. On behalf of AHBIC thank you to those who have already contributed to this process.
5. Training.gov.au has now been launched, replacing the National Training Information Service (ntis.gov.au) as the official National Register of information on Training Packages, Qualifications, Courses, Units of Competency and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). The new-look website has been developed to improve navigation for users and all of AgriFood's Training Packages are now available to download from the website.

Please note that some data is yet to be uploaded to the website, including superseded Training Packages. It is anticipated that this information will be loaded progressively. For more information, please visit www.training.gov.au

DETECTION OF ASIAN HONEY BEES AT TOWNSVILLE PORT

Monday 9 January 2012

Biosecurity officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) have taken immediate action to contain and exterminate Asian honey bees detected on a cargo vessel that arrived at Townsville from Port Moresby on Friday.

Dead and alive bees were detected as the vessel was being unloaded.

Shipping containers and the vessel were carefully inspected by DAFF Biosecurity officers. A pest controller was engaged to exterminate the bees.

Nearly 300 dead bees were collected and these have been examined by DAFF Biosecurity entomologists. To date, no queen bee or hive has been identified.

DAFF Biosecurity is working closely with the Queensland Government's Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation in an ongoing response to the detection. Biosecurity officers are continuing surveillance of the area, but so far no additional bees have been found.

The vessel has since left Townsville.

The initial detection and notification by the stevedores, the swift response by DAFF officials, and the ongoing surveillance and analysis being undertaken by DAFF and Queensland officials is an example of Australia's biosecurity system at work — where the Australian and state governments, and the community, each play a role.

Statement by First Assistant Secretary

Tim Chapman, Biosecurity Quarantine Operations, DAFF

INFORMATION ON THE “JAVA TYPE OF *VARROA JACOBSONI*”

Dr Denis Anderson

CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences

24 January 2012

Identification

- Its native host bee is the ‘Java type of *Apis cerana*’ from Java Indonesia (Anderson & Trueman 2000).
- It is distinguishable from *Varroa destructor* by its smaller body size. It is also morphologically distinct from *Varroa rindereri* and *Varroa underwoodi* (Anderson & Trueman 2000)
- It is distinguishable from all other varroa mite types using molecular markers (Anderson & Fuchs, 1998; Anderson 2000; Anderson & Trueman 2000; Navajas et al 2010).

Invasive Biology

- It is native to Java (on the Java type of *Apis cerana*) (Oudemans 1904)
- It was introduced to New Guinea during the 1970's on *Apis cerana* that were introduced by Indonesians into Irian Jaya (or Papua) from Java (Anderson, 1994).
- It first arrived in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1987 on *Apis cerana* that had spread from neighbouring Irian Jaya (Delfinado-Baker and Aggawal, 1987).

- By 1995 it had spread throughout the entire Island of New Guinea and onto offshore islands, including Biak and Yapan (Irian Jaya) and Boigu, Dauan and Sabai Islands off the southern PNG coast (which are part of Australian territory) (Anderson, 2006).
- It arrived in the Solomon Islands shortly before 2003 on the Java type of *Apis cerana* (which probably spread from New Guinea). *Apis cerana* first arrived in the far eastern parts of the Solomon Islands (San Cristobal, Guadalcanal and Savo Islands), so it did not 'island-hop' from New Guinea into the Solomon Islands. It is thought that forestry activities were responsible for introducing the bee into the Solomon Islands (Anderson 2010).
- By 2008 it had spread into New Britain, Bougainville and Manus Island on *Apis cerana* that had spread from mainland PNG.
- Since 1998 there have been two incursions of *Apis cerana* on to mainland Australia (Darwin 1998 and the current incursion at Cairns). No Varroa mites were found associated with either incursion and the Darwin incursion was successfully eradicated (Barry et al 2010).
- Since 1999 the Java type of *Varroa jacobsoni* has been found on 5 of 8 (62%) colonies of *Apis cerana* intercepted on vessels arriving at Australian seaports from the New Guinea region (Barry et al 2010; and the recent interception at Townsville).

Biosecurity Threat

- Until 2008 the Java type of *Varroa jacobsoni* was regarded as harmless to *Apis mellifera* (the European honeybee) as it lacked the ability to reproduce on the brood of that bee (Anderson, 1994).
- In 2008 mites belonging to the Java type of *Varroa jacobsoni* were found to be producing offspring on *Apis mellifera* brood in Papua New Guinea, even though mites of this type still did not show this ability in Java, Irian Jaya or the Solomon Islands (Anderson, 2008).

Current Research

- CSIRO is currently carrying out research to show:
 - (a) Whether the *Varroa jacobsoni* mites now reproducing on *Apis mellifera* in PNG originated from a single mother mite (similar to what happened for *Varroa destructor* on *Apis mellifera* – Solignac et al 2005) or from several different mother mites;
 - (b) Whether the *Varroa jacobsoni* mites now reproducing on *Apis mellifera* in PNG can also reproduce on *Apis cerana* (they may not now be able to reproduce on *Apis cerana*, as they had to change to be able to reproduce on *Apis mellifera*).
 - (c) The types of microbial pathogens associated with the *Varroa jacobsoni* on both *Apis cerana* and *Apis mellifera* in PNG.

Current Biosecurity Risk

Until more information is obtained on the reproducing *Varroa jacobsoni* mites in PNG (from current research), any *Varroa jacobsoni* mites arriving from PNG present a biosecurity risk to Australia (precautionary principal), although evidence suggests that this risk is not as great as that for *Varroa destructor*.

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APIS CERANA UPDATE

Advice 108 - 2 December 2011

IP513 was a nest at Tolga

IP514 was a swarm at Miriwinni

IP515 was a nest at the Cairns International Airport

An interesting point that came out was that the team in Cairns had been contracted by people from a joint CSIRO/University of New England project team which is going to Gordonvale, just south Cairns, to study how Asian bees affect other pollinators. This is the first I have heard of it so I have no idea who is funding this project. It makes you wonder what they will find at this early stage unless they are looking for data to be able to compare in future years. It would be my conclusion that there would not be much competition at the present time taking into account how many Asian bees are present.

The Scientific Advisory Group met in Brisbane on Wednesday, 23 November. The next meeting is a telephone hook-up for mid December where a lot of the projects will be reviewed. As some had not had the paperwork for much time prior to the 23 November meeting, it was felt that more time was needed for these people to review the paperwork. A meeting is planned for Cairns in early January. All participants are paying for their own travel expenses to attend meetings.

The Transition to Management Plan is finalised and is available at:

http://asianhoneybee.net.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/AHB-transition-plan_V1-Nov-2011.pdf There is a dedicated website <http://asianhoneybee.net.au/>

The final Senate Committee report has been tabled.

See <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/dailys/ds211111.pdf> for debate when tabled.

Trevor Weatherhead
2 December, 2011

Advice 109 - 16 December 2011

IP516 was a swarm at Manoora
IP517 was a nest at Bentley Park
IP518 was a swarm at the Cairns Reef Fleet terminal
IP519 was a nest at Machans Beach
IP520 was a nest in Cairns City
IP521 was a nest in Cairns City
IP522 was a swarm in Cairns City
IP523 was a swarm at Bentley Park
IP524 was a swarm at the Pier, Cairns
IP525 was a swarm at Portsmouth
IP526 was a swarm at White Rock

The Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) had its telephone hook-up on 14 December. The Transition to Management Plan is being finalised with the SAG meeting in Cairns on 18 & 19 January to finalise their advice to the Management Committee on the proposals within the plan.

Advice 110 - 10 January 2012

The Queensland Department has advised that as they are now moving into the Transition to Management (T2M) phase, our fortnightly phone hook-ups will no longer be held. The Sitreps that were sent out will also no longer be supplied. There will be less frequent reporting that will report the achievements and progress of the T2M. I will endeavour to report on these when they are received. There will be regularly updated information on the Plant Health Australia web portal and DEEDI website. If you are into facebook it will also be used.

Details from the final Sitrep were:-

IP527 was a swarm in the Cairns CBD
IP528 was a swarm at Portsmouth
IP529 was a swarm at Kuranda
IP530 was a nest at Earlville
IP531 was a nest at Gordonvale

Wim de Jong, who has been with the eradication program from way back, did not re-apply of the position of Technical Specialist that he held. So Wim finished up at the end of December. I would like to thank Wim for the work he put in, often under difficult circumstances, during his time in the program. So at this stage the Department has advertised the position but have said that they are not sure if they will fill the position seeing as how they are moving into the T2M phase and have to reassess if a Technical Specialist is needed.

The Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) meets in Cairns on 18 and 19 January. So at this stage I would anticipate that these Advices will now become less frequent and will only be issued when some relevant information comes to hand.

Some Asian bees were found on a container in Townsville, on Friday 6 January that had come from Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. See a DAFF press release at:

http://www.daff.gov.au/about/media-centre/dept-releases/2012/swift_response_to_detection_of_asian_honey_bees_at_townsville_port The Country Hour approached me for an interview in response to this, plus comments by First Assistant Secretary Tim Chapman.

Since giving the interview I have been thinking more about this interception. Had it not been intercepted and this swarm became established in Townsville, when it was found the response would have been that it came from the Cairns incursion. This would have been totally incorrect. So we can be thankful that this one was found and we didn't end up with another Cairns type incursion.

Advice 111 - 25 January 2012

I thought people may wish to have an update on what has happened in Townsville.

Since Advice 110, the mite found has been identified as *Varroa jacobsoni*. There were reports out that it was a juvenile mite but these were incorrect. It was a "normal" female mite.

As a result of the interception and some thinking that some of the cerana may have gone off the ship, the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), which is the old DPI, mounted a surveillance response with negative results. There are traps in place and the local beekeepers have been circularised to let them know what has happened and asking them to be on the lookout for unusual bees.

It is a relief to know that it is most likely that no cerana made it off the ship. The fact that a mite was found on the bees is a concern. It shows how easily Varroa could be introduced into northern Australia and with the ready pool of cerana in the Cairns area, it would have a lot of bees to reproduce on.

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

We still need volunteers and a weekly roster is now in place but if you want to stay longer than the week that will be no problems. Bill Weiss is organising rosters and will book accommodation if required. Please contact Bill on: 02 6732 1263 or 0428 669 578 or email to beeweiss@gmail.com if you wish to volunteer.

Trevor Weatherhead

VALE - GRETCHEN WHEEN (1929-2012)

Gretchen Wheen was one of Australia's best known beekeepers, and for good reason. She was one of the first suppliers of quality queen bees to commercial beekeepers in Australia and overseas. She also pioneered instrumental insemination of queen bees to complement her efforts in stock improvement.

Neville Cutts, then lecturer in apiculture at Hawkesbury Agricultural College, taught Gretchen the rudiments of inseminating queens. Gretchen reciprocated by teaching Neville another of her skills - how to become a potter which served him well in retirement.

Gretchen developed strong links with leading bee researchers in Europe and the USA. Recognising the need to import breeding stock from overseas, Gretchen played a key role in the establishment of the Honeybee Quarantine Facility at Eastern Creek which has served Australia well since 1980. She was bitterly disappointed that a short sighted Howard Government sold the Eastern Creek quarantine facilities for a pittance in 2001; but she was prepared to fight the battle all over again for yet another quarantine facility. This battle continues.

Gretchen earned the respect of beekeepers and researchers with her selfless contribution to the well being of this strategically important industry - for without bees to pollinate our crops, our food supplies would be greatly diminished.

Gretchen dedicated much of her estate to the establishment of the Wheen Bee Foundation for R&D to support beekeepers and food producers. The Foundation's motto is "Food Security Needs Bee Security".

In an industry that requires hard physical work lifting and manipulating hives heavy with honey, Gretchen could hold her own against her male colleagues. She did this without compromising her charm and femininity.

Gretchen was also an accomplished horticulturist, maintaining well over 300 old-fashioned roses and a pecan orchard. These were some of her achievements since 1978 when she relocated her activities from Sydney to her Richmond farm.

Gretchen was born in October 1929 in Buckinghamshire UK to Arthur Wheen and Aldwyth, daughter of potter, Gerald Lewers. To better appreciate this outstanding but fiercely independent person, and the forces that drove her to help others, some background on her formative years are needed.

Both parents were born in Australia but lived their adult lives in England. Her 18 year old father departed Australia in 1915 after his first year at University of Sydney to serve as a distinguished and highly decorated soldier in WWI. He returned to England in 1920 as a NSW Rhodes Scholar. He eventually became Keeper of the Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum. He translated from German, and made famous, Erik Remarques "All Quiet on the Western Front".

Gretchen was sent to Australia for 'safe keeping' in 1940 staying with Aldwyth's family for schooling. She rejoined her parents at Buckinghamshire in 1946 but found it easier to love her eccentric parents from a distance and so she returned to Australia in 1948, completed an Arts Degree at Sydney University and later a Diploma of Horticulture.

Gretchen brought back with her a basic understanding of beekeeping, learned from her mother who

maintained a number of hives on their small farm “Further Pegs” near Oxford. Collecting a swarm of bees, whilst a university student, set Gretchen along the path to beekeeping and horticulture.

Regular letters to Gretchen from her erudite father until his death in 1971 form a large portion of the book on the Life and Letters of Arthur Wheen, edited by Gretchen’s cousin, Tanya Crothers (nee Lewers). This book was launched by Governor Marie Bashir on 25 November 2011 at the Mitchell Library. Governor Bashir used the occasion to emphasise the importance of food security, bees and the role of the Wheen Bee Foundation. This interest delighted Gretchen.

Arthur Wheen, and his relationship with Gretchen, featured on a recent ABC 7.30 report: <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2011/s3368372.htm>

Gretchen’s only sister, Sally died in 1939. Gretchen never married but leaves many cousins, friends and admirers, especially in beekeeping, horticulture and the local community.

In recent years Gretchen’s aging body could not keep up with her alert and enquiring mind. This frustrated her enormously. She died peacefully in Hawkesbury Hospital on 6 January 2012. In her final act of generosity Gretchen donated her body to the University of New England for teaching and research purposes.

APITHOR™ SMALL HIVE BEETLE HARBOURAGE

After six months in the market, with sales permitted under a special emergency use permit from the APVMA, the APITHOR Hive Beetle Harbourage has proven itself a great success. More than thirty thousand hives have already been successfully protected with the Harbourage, confirming the recent research by the NSW Department of Agriculture showing 100% effectiveness in commercial hive trials. APITHOR was a joint development of the NSW Department of Agriculture and the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and is marketed under licence by Ensystex Australasia Pty Ltd. Royalties from the sales of the Harbourage are returned to the Beekeeping Industry by both organisations.

The small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) is an introduced pest, first discovered in Richmond, North West of Sydney, in 2002. Normally a scavenger of bee hives in its native Africa, it has caused enormous losses to the Australian bee industry through hive collapse or bees absconding.

APITHOR takes advantages of the beetle's behavioural vulnerabilities, while remaining totally safe in use to bees and bee products. The small hive beetle is a shy insect that harbours in cracks and crevices in preference to remaining in the open. In the hive it is subject to harassment by bees so this habit is exploited by providing a 'safe haven' in a lethal harbourage. A two-piece rigid plastic protective housing prevents operator or bee contact with the insecticidal component inside the Harbourage. The size differential prevents bees from entering whereas beetles enter easily.

Two honey residue trials have demonstrated that use of APITHOR results no residues in honey; whilst the most recent, independent efficacy trials have shown that a single Harbourage on the bottom board of an infested hive consistently achieves a 100% reduction in the number of live adult beetles within six weeks.

The APITHOR Hive Beetle Harbourage is designed as a single use, disposable device that can be

easily inserted and removed from standard hives without the need to open or dismantle them. Some of the key attributes of the Harbourage are:

- Two-piece rigid plastic design
- Tamperproof
- Precise size openings that allow beetles in but exclude bees
- Insecticidal insert set back from openings to prevent contact by bees' mouthparts
- Compatible with silicone adhesives
- Disposable in household garbage
- No user access to the insecticide treated insert
- Long shelf-life and time in-service.



Figure 1. The assembled plastic Small Hive Beetle Harbourage

Beekeepers simply place the APITHOR Harbourage onto the hive bottom board so that it sits flat. A thin wire (supplied) can be attached to the Harbourage to enable removal from the hive without opening the hive or removing frames.

The APITHOR Small Hive Beetle Harbourage is available in a pack of 20 Harbourages with each Harbourage costing just \$4⁹⁵. Prices are exclusive of GST and freight. For more details call ENSYSTEX on 13 35 36, or visit www.apithor.com.au.

A HISTORY OF SCIENTIFIC ALARMS

AHBIC receives a number of emails from many sources – this one is re-printed courtesy of Bob Lawrence.....

1 Population growth and famine, 1798- Based on Benjamin Franklin's observation that animals and plants reproduce until they exhaust resources then starve and die, Malthus extrapolated that humans would share this fate as a result of geometric population growth and linear resources growth. He later realised that foresight and innovation prevent this fate in humans.

2 Timber famine economic threat, 1865 – Forecasts that we will run out of wood for construction and paper occur from time to time around the world. Despite the alarms, the world's forested area has increased since WWII, as has wood production. Planting and efficiency have increased in response to demand and competition.

3 Soil erosion agricultural production threat, 1934 - Despite periodic alarms from lobbyists and politicians over soil being washed and blown away, there has been a net gain in soil on most US cropland, and erosion rates have been slowing. In Australia, too, soils have improved with fertilization and new plant species, and erosion has declined as land management practices have improved.

4 Fluoride in drinking water health effects, 1945 - Fluoride is poisonous in quantity, but occurs naturally in drinking water in low concentrations. One part-per-million reduces dental decay. Some scientists have warned of potential ill effects and some communities reject fluoridation of water supplies. Claims of ill effects at 1ppm are not supported.

5 DDT and cancer, 1962 - In Silent Spring, Rachel Carson forecast that birds would die out and people would be afflicted by cancer due to increasing exposure to the insecticide DDT. There was no plausible biological mechanism identified and research failed to support the claims. DDT was nevertheless banned. Millions have died unnecessarily from malaria.

6 Population growth and famine (Ehrlich), 1968 - Early Malthus reheated by butterfly biologist Paul Ehrlich, who also forecast global cooling and, later, global warming disasters. In The Population Bomb, Ehrlich wrote, 'The battle to feed humanity is over. In the 1970s, the world will undergo famines. Hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death'.

7 Global cooling, 1970 - Temperatures had been declining since the end of WWII, and some scientists forecast an imminent ice age. Alarming forecasts have alternated between ice ages and the opposite several times since at least the Nineteenth Century. Media coverage of this most recent cooling alarm stopped after temperatures warmed again.

8 Population growth and famine (Meadows), 1972 –p Computer modelling sponsored by the Club of Rome predicted burgeoning population, exhausted resources, and famine. With minor and realistic changes in assumptions, however, the model would produce sanguine forecasts. The Club recanted the original forecasts in 1976.

9 Industrial production, acid rain and forests, 1974 - Sulphur dioxide from burning coal can increase the acidity of rain. Scientists ascribed fish deaths and predicted harm to forests and people. The US National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program found little environmental damage and no harm to people. Acidity of rain varies naturally. The costly Clean Air Act is still in effect.

10 Electrical wiring and cancer, etc, 1979 - A small epidemiological study reported an association between hypothesised exposure to electromagnetic fields and childhood leukaemia. In the US, regulations intended to reduce exposure cost \$1 billion annually. Thousands of studies have failed to establish a link between actual exposure and any health effect.

11 CFCs, the ozone hole, and skin cancer etc, 1985 - Speculation that the Earth's ozone layer was being depleted by chlorine from chlorofluorocarbons and forecasts that skin cancer rates would increase led to an international ban. Knowledge about the relationships was and is poor. Chlorine from the sea is 400 times CFC peak production. Replacement refrigerants are dangerous.

12 Listeria in cheese, 1985 - *Listeria monocytogenes* occurs in soft cheeses, but most strains do not cause listeriosis. Listeriosis can be fatal for high-risk people such as young children. Detection is now easy resulting in listeria being more often identified in food and therefore more deaths being attributed to it than in the past, thus precipitating alarms.

13 Radon in homes and lung cancer, 1985 - The gas historically caused lung cancer in miners working in dusty uranium-rich mines. A small survey found elevated levels in some houses, and the US EPA estimated 8 million homes were affected and forecast up to 30,000 lung cancer deaths per annum. Proper studies have shown any effect is small, or nonexistent.

14 Salmonella in eggs, 1988 - Careless investigations of food poisoning in Britain attributed some to eggs. A government minister asserted that 'most' egg production was infected with salmonella. Demand plummeted. Costly flock testing was imposed. There were calls to kill the entire laying flock-and one million birds were. Salmonella has likely never been present inside eggs.

15 Environmental toxins and breast cancer, 1990 - Long Island breast cancer survivor and lobbyist Barbara Balaban and some scientists speculated, against our understanding of biological mechanisms, that toxins in the environment, such as DDE and PCBs, were causing breast cancer. Congress ordered studies that cost \$30 million. They found no link.

16 Mad cow disease (BSE), 1996 - Speculation that a variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease might be contracted from eating beef from cattle with BSE, and forecasts that the disease would kill 10 million people by 2010, led to the slaughter of 8 million cattle in Britain at a cost to the taxpayer of £3.5 billion. Suspected vCJD deaths never exceeded 28 per year and any link to BSE remains unconfirmed.

17 Dioxin in Belgian poultry, 1999 - Dioxins occur naturally, as well as incidentally and deliberately from industry. Some are toxic. When breeder chickens became ill, the cause was traced to dioxin contaminated feed. Seven million chickens and 60,000 pigs were destroyed. But people were exposed to more dioxin by substituting fish for chicken in their diets.

18 Mercury in fish's effect on nervous system development, 2004 - Extrapolating from insupportably low 'safe' levels, a US EPA employee predicted 630,000 babies born with potential brain damage each year. Women were warned to avoid fish. Mercury occurs naturally in the environment and most Japanese have higher than EPA 'safe' levels from eating a health-promoting high-fish diet.

19 Mercury in childhood inoculations and autism, 2005 - Robert F Kennedy, Jr claimed on CBS News that 'The science connecting brain damage with thimerosal is absolutely overwhelming'. Thimerosal is a vaccine preservative that contains mercury that the industry claims is safe. When it was eliminated, autism cases continued to climb. Researchers found no link.

20 Mobile phone towers and cancer, 2008 - Periodically, community activists raise alarms that the towers will cause cancer and miscellaneous other health problems. The towers transmit and receive weak radiofrequency signals. The signals are centimetres-long wavelength non-ionizing radiation that, like heat and visible light, cannot damage DNA. Scientific studies have found no health effects.

SUMMER CROP & STOCK REPORT



New South Wales

NSW has seen a varied production. The Northern Inland beekeepers have had reasonable production with most beekeepers getting close to average production. Coastal regions have battled limited budding and wet weather to be mostly below average production, unless they worked inland areas. Central and Southern production has been a little ad hoc with normal flows (Canola – Curse) not producing their normal volumes, however many beekeepers found hives doing well regardless and will go close to average production.

Future prospects do not look very productive however and the period from now to next spring does not have many prospects.

Most beekeepers would not have large stocks on hand and packers are actively seeking honey. It would be expected that as the exchange rate of the dollar dips in future months and the winter dearth of honey comes into play, prices should firm.

Bill Weiss

Queensland

Queensland beekeepers have had a mixed honey producing season. Dry cool weather has caused some problems with honey production for some and for others the weather has suited honey production.

Brush Box yielded well on the low country and for those who gambled on being able to get out of the high country Brush Box also yielded well for them. The forecast for 300mm of rain in the last week of January has beekeepers scrambling to get out of the high country. Getting caught with boggy conditions would see colonies going backwards until they can be moved to breeding conditions. Rain will improve autumn prospects such as Gum Topped Box. GTB is still to bud up.

Soapy Leaf or Red Ash is a real prospect given rain. This honey is slightly off flavour but is an excellent build flow.

Spotted Gum is poorly budded and is not expected to produce a crop this season. Rains may help Narrow Leaved Ironbark.

The Channel Country will feature in Queensland plans for autumn and winter months. Rain is needed and this is the time of year for that to occur.

Tea Tree is being watched on the coast but as always the threat of rain will keep many away from this source.

Many honey producers have met their goals for the season but others are not carrying any reserve stock. There is currently an emphasis on re-queening and getting colonies in order for next season. Packers are reported to be carrying high stock levels.

Bill Winner

South Australia

Euc. leucoxylon (Blue gum) has yielded well in the north of the State.

Euc. socialis (Christmas mallee) has yielded well and is almost finished.

Most bees are now on irrigated Lucerne which is yielding well. The weather has settled down and is now warmer; hopefully the cold nights are finished for a month or more.

It's been a very good year, in patches and at times, over the whole State. Bees that stayed in the South East of the State have been very short of honey until now. Those lucky (or clever) enough to have shifted appropriately, have done very, very well – eg: those that moved from almonds to *Euc. gracilis* (white mallee) and then to *Euc. incrassate* (Big cup) or *leucoxylon* in the Clare Valley and North and then back to *socialis* and now to Lucerne have had a much better than average year. There is still potential for a very good Banksia season – a little more rain in the South would be helpful, but hopefully enough fell in December to cob.

Again, there is very little honey held as a matter of course in this State as most honey goes straight to packers.

Wendy Thiele

Western Australia

Spring in WA has been very difficult for most beekeepers as many crops did not flower or produce as expected. Some beekeepers on the South coast have produced average amounts and some production has come from the Goldfields. Paper bark has helped a few but generally bees are quite poor and the budding of the Marri (WA Redgum) is varied.

Most would like to forget this season but are hoping that there may be a better finish .

Rod Pavy