



Monthly NEWS

To: The Australian Honey Industry

From: Stephen Ware – Executive Director

March 2011 Update

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!**

SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT YOUR INDUSTRY!

AB's Honey
Australian Queen Bee
Exporters
Australian Queen Bee
Breeders Association
Australian Honey Products
Barnes Apiaries Pty Ltd
Beechworth Honey Pty Ltd
Bees Neez Apiaries
Black, R G & MJ
Bowman Family
Brooks, Graham
Capilano Honey Limited
Ciphery, C & R
Clifford, DA & JJ
Codde, T J
Cotton, AJ & McDonald, MA
Craig, Athol
Dewar Corporation
Dunlop, PG & RD
FCAAA
Gell's Honey
Goode, TW & MA

Ipswich & West Moreton
Beekeepers Association
Honey Packers & Marketers
Association
Hooper, RF & AJ
Hoskinson, H L & H M
Howard, OD
L'Estrange, Tony
MacFarlane, R H
Marchant, R & S
Marti, Rod T/A Gagarra
Honey
McLaren, Jane
Midgley, John
Morgan, Trevor
Mullen, Peter & Sylvia
Nitschke, CJ
Papworth, F & E
Park, William F
Pollination Association of WA
Pobke, Barry
Rasmussen, Ivan
Roberts, IJ & JH

Saxonbee Enterprises
Smith, C & B
Spring Gully Foods Pty Ltd
Stephens, R
Stevens, Graeme
Stevens, Howard
Tasmanian Beekeepers
Association - NW Branch
Tasmanian Crop Pollination
Association
Tasmanian Honey Company
Thompson, N
Weatherhead, T & M
True Blue Honey
Valkenburg, Simeon
Warral Apiaries Pty Ltd
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Wescobee Limited
Wilson, Col
Zadow Apiaries

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

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UPDATE - AHBIC ACTIVITIES

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.

March has been a very busy month for Industry. AHBIC continues and is involved in the following matters:

1. *Canberra Rally* - Along with other representatives of Industry meetings were held with parliamentarians from all sides of the political spectrum. Honey was provided to all members of parliament along with the 4 key messages on the label:

1. Eradicate *Apis cerana*
2. Increase Honeybee research
3. Implement 'More than Honey' Report
4. Resource access for Honeybee pollination

AHBIC would like to thank all those who participated in the Canberra Rally we also acknowledge and thank Jodie Goldsworthy and Dr Max Whitten for their efforts for what was clearly a strong display of unity within the Beekeeping Industry.



Dr Ben McKee, Trevor Weatherhead, Jodie Goldsworthy, Senator Christine Milne, AHBIC Chairman Lindsay Bourke & Dr Max Whitten

Further details may be obtained on the AHBIC website along with more photos of the event.
www.honeybee@org.au



A Beekeeping Family at the Rally

2. *Bee Surveillance* - Industry is currently consulting with the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) to revamp the surveillance system for Emergency Bee, Pests & Diseases. Surveillance is a fundamental component of any biosecurity system as knowledge of pest status is the basis for managing risks. At the time of writing Industry is currently involved in looking at our present surveillance activities and ways of making these more effective.
3. *Organic Honey Products* - The Federal Government has announced an inquiry into the labelling of organic materials and has invited input from Industry and others. In this edition a detailed explanation and survey is provided. Members interested in this area are encouraged to respond.
4. *B-QUAL* - On 15 March a meeting of B-QUAL Australia was held in Adelaide and it was pleasing to note the B-QUAL has been invited by the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) to trial B-QUAL's existing Environmental Management Plan (EMP) that was developed in draft form in 2007.
5. *Registration Apistan, Bayvarol and Apivar* - These chemicals fall under the definition of veterinary products. AHBIC has therefore submitted applications for minor use permits to enable these products to be used in the event that Varroa mites are found in Australia.
6. *Biosecurity Update* - Industry continues to follow up with DAFF regarding live bee exports to the US and also the re-opening of Eastern Creek Quarantine Station for Queen Bee imports. Biosecurity Services Group continues to press that the United States to re-consider its decision to prohibit the import of bees from Australia.

With regard to the importation of queen bees and use of Eastern Creek Quarantine Station - the review of the policy for the importation of queen honey bees remains a high priority for the department and work on it is progressing. It is expected that a draft report will be available for comment in the first half of this year.

APIS CERANA UPDATE

Advice 90 - 4 March 2011

Detections since Advice 89 are:

IP353 was a swarm at Brimsmead

IP354 was a nest at north Cairns

IP355 was a nest at Edmonton

IP356 was a swarm at Cairns port

IP357 was a nest at Earlville

There has been a lot of rain in the north and more is expected.

The trip to Canberra during the week did a lot to raise the profile of the industry with members of Parliament. Many expressed delight at receiving the honey. Hopefully we will achieve the main aim of having the eradication program re-instated. There were around 200 beekeepers who made the trip to Canberra. Thanks to those beekeepers who came.

A lot of time was spent inside the building talking with politicians. We receive a lot of support from all sides of Parliament. Some have now written to the Minister, Senator Joe Ludwig, to keep the program in place. The meeting with the Minister did not gain any new promises but it is hoped that the extra pressure put on by the members will finally persuade the Minister that the eradication should be kept going, at least for a year.

We had media interviews arranged by John Cobb and Senator Christine Milne. Several members put our press releases. A question was asked in the House, on Wednesday, by Tony Windsor and the answer by Tony Burke, who represents the Minister in the House of Representatives, left a lot to be desired. As an example, Tony Burke said in part of the answer “no other country has ever managed to eradicate Asian bees once they have arrived”. Not incorrect but then no country has ever attempted eradication. Australia is the first.

You can find further information on the campaign at www.securefoodssavebees.com and www.honeybee.org.au

Advice 91 - 18 March 2011

Detections since Advice 90 are:

IP358 was a nest in a power pole in Cairns

IP359 was a nest in a mango tree at Gordonvale

Both these nests were filmed by the 7.30 crew from ABC TV. The nests were destroyed and this was also filmed. This took place on Friday 11 March. The 7.30 crew had been out to my place on the Monday before and did some filming. It will be interesting to see what they come up with. I have been told that the program, in an extended version, will also appear on Landline.

The contracts of the temporary staff in Cairns have been extended by the Queensland Department till the end of June. Trials in remote poisoning are still being carried out. Rain has been fairly persistent in the north.

This was not the subject of the phone hook-up but the Q & A program on ABC TV on Monday night is to feature Senator Christine Milne as one of the panelists. This gives an excellent opportunity for beekeepers to put questions to her. Go to <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/> from there you can send a question by email or by video. It has been suggested to me that if someone is

doing a video question, they may care to be in their bee suit for more effect. It would be good to have a lot of questions on the Asian bee to put to Senator Milne who has been very supportive of our campaign to have the full eradication program re-instated. It is best to have the question in a civil way and not be too aggressive.

See <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201103/s3166484.htm>

Trevor Weatherhead

2011 CONFERENCE DATES

FCAAA	New South Wales Apiarists' Association	19 & 20 May 2011
	Tasmanian Beekeepers' Association	3 & 4 June 2011
	Victorian Apiarists' Association	8 & 9 June 2011
	WA Farmers Federation - Beekeeping Section	17 June 2011
	Queensland Beekeepers' Association	30 June & 1 July 2011
	South Australian Apiarists' Association	7 July 2011

Honey Packers and Marketers Association	TBA
National Council of Crop Pollination Associations	6 Jul 2011
Australian Queen Bee Breeders' Association	End of May
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council	8 July 2011
Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Associations	6 July 2011

AHBIC 2011 AGM

The 2011 Annual General Meeting of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council will be held in South Australia in conjunction with the South Australian Apiarists' Association Conference on Friday, 8 July 2011 at Rydges South Park, 1 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

The South Australian Apiarists' Association (SAAA) has negotiated an accommodation package deal with Rydges South Park. The Secretary of SAAA, Mrs Wendy Thiele is responsible for all accommodation bookings – please contact Wendy on Phone: 08 8635 2257, Mobile: 0400 264 031 or Email: secretary@saaa.org.au

AUSTRALIAN QUARANTINE AND INSPECTION SERVICE (AQIS)

Australian Organic / Bio-Dynamic Certified Operator

AQIS is conducting a review of the current Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders (the Orders) to provide a more efficient system for the whole of the organic industry.

The Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders together with the current National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce and the AQIS Administrative Arrangements for Approved Certifying Organisations Operating Inspection and Certification Activities for Australian Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce (Administrative Arrangements) outline the requirements for the certification, production and export of certified organic and bio-dynamic products from Australia.

In order to make the most informed decision possible, AQIS is seeking your input through a consultation process on matters which may affect the whole organic industry.

Please find attached the following two documents:

- Summary paper – a summary of why AQIS is reviewing the Orders and seeking your input through a consultation process
- Questionnaire – a request for your view on a range of important issues surrounding matters that may impact the organic industry as a whole.

Additional information is available on the AQIS website www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/organic-biodynamic/organic-orders-review to provide a more detailed explanation regarding the consultation process and how it impacts the organic and bio-dynamic industry with respect to export trade. If you do not have access to the internet, contact AQIS on the number below to arrange a copy to be sent by mail.

If you have any questions relating to this consultation process, please call AQIS – Julie Crockett on 02 6272 3928 or Ian Lyall on 02 6272 3630.

Please send your completed questionnaire to AQIS by no later than 30 May 2011.

Please note any responses received after this date may not be considered in the decision process. Responses can be made by the following methods:

By Mail addressed to:

Julie Crockett (L.1.234), AQIS Organic Program, GPO Box 858, Canberra City, ACT, 2601

By Email to: NPG.Exports@daff.gov.au

Please address the SUBJECT line of the email as **ORG: LEG Review**

By Fax to: 02 6272 3626 Attention: Julie Crockett (L.1.234) AQIS Organic Program

Thank you in advance for providing valuable information to assist AQIS in establishing a more effective system for the organic industry as a whole.

Mark Schipp

General Manager, Food Exports Branch

SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND PAPER

Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders Review

Scope

This summary paper seeks feedback from the Australian organic and biodynamic industry and related stakeholders on matters relating to export.

The intent of the paper is to provide a brief outline on the Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders, and the Regulatory Mark with respect to the current legislative review. These matters are reported as Item 1 and Item 2 respectively.

It is advised that this paper is read in conjunction with the Background Paper which provides detailed information on the Export Control (Organic Certification) Orders review. The Background Paper can be found at:

www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/organic-bio-dynamic/Ordersreview/backgroundpaper

1. Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders

A review of the Orders commenced in late 2008 in consultation with all seven AQIS approved certifying organisations. This review identified several areas of the Orders where legislative amendments are required. In summary these included:

- Organic Produce Certificates (e.g. issuing, electronic certification, sanctions)
- Certification of organic operators
- Approval of certifying organisations
- Other legislation
- Use of an official Government mark for export
- Consistent terminology throughout legislative documents

Considerations

- The Commonwealth Government *Legislative Instruments Act 2003* stipulates that a review of legislation must be completed under a sun-setting period of every 10 years from the date of Commencement.
- There is no clear linkage between the Orders, the National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce and the AQIS Administrative Arrangements. At times, the lack of linkage between these documents has been questioned by overseas authorities when conducting an equivalence determination for market access for Australian organic exports.
- The Australian Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Products (AS6000) was published in October 2009. This review of export legislation provides an opportunity to review the most appropriate standard for export.

2. Regulatory Mark

Since 2004 there has been a mark called the “Regulatory Mark” that can be applied to Australian certified organic and biodynamic products for export. This mark is an unapproved mark under current legislation and operators have been instructed to cease using the mark as of 30 June 2011.

Consideration

- Due to AQIS repealing the use of the mark industry representatives have asked AQIS to replace this mark with a new official mark. One reason supporting this request related to the integrity of certified organic export produce by the growing number of private certification schemes; therefore as part of the legislation review process, AQIS has agreed to consider the implementation of an official mark.

Action Request

Could stakeholders please complete the attached Questionnaire and return it to AQIS no later than 30 May 2011 via:

Online at: www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/organic-bio-dynamic/Ordersreview/questionnaire

Mail to: Julie Crockett (L.1.234), AQIS Organic Program,
GPO Box 858, Canberra City ACT 2601

E-mail to: NPG.Exports@daff.gov.au Please address the SUBJECT line as - ORG: LEG review

Fax to: (02) 6272 3626, Attention: Julie Crockett, AQIS Organic Program (L.1.234)

Attachment 1

ORGANIC INDUSTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

As a member of the organic industry in Australia your opinion is very important to AQIS. By completing this questionnaire, you are helping AQIS make an informed decision about what amendments should occur to the export system for organic produce.

Please indicate your preferred options in each question including a reason for your choice.

Note: A response without justification for your choice may not be considered by AQIS.

1. To ensure the integrity of this questionnaire could you please indicate where you are from?

AQIS Approved Certifying Organisation or accredited third party certification body (*only one response from each organisation will be accepted*)

Certified Organic / Bio-Dynamic Operator (*only one response from each operation will be accepted*)

Producer

Processor

Wholesaler

Business name _____ certified
with _____

Certification number _____

Consumer

Retailer

Exporter

- Wholesaler
- Processor
- Producer
- Government agency – please specify _____
- Other – please specify _____

2. Do your certified products enter the export market?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

3. Should the Australian organic sector require legislation to export certified products? Why?

- Yes – please provide details
- No - please provide details

4. Should one Standard be used for export? Why?

- Yes - please provide details
- No- please provide details

5. If Yes to question 3, which Standard would best serve the organic export sector and why?

- National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce
- Australian Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Products

6. Would you like a mandatory official Mark to be used on Australian product labels for export? Why?

- Yes - please provide details
- No - please provide details

7. Are there any changes you would like made to export legislation, which are not already addressed in the outcomes of the 2008 review (refer to Background point 1).

- Yes (please specify section of the Orders and suggested change)
- No

UNITED NATIONS - BEE DEATHS MAY SIGNAL WIDER POLLINATION THREAT

Some Indicators Point to a Global Issue – March 2011

Full report can be found at:

http://www.unep.org/dewa/Portals/67/pdf/Global_Bee_Colony_Disorder_and_Threats_insect_pollinators.pdf

Declines in flowering plants, a spread of parasites, use of pesticides or air pollution were among more than a dozen factors behind recent collapses of bee colonies mainly in North America and Europe, the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP) said.

That cocktail of problems -- rather than a single cause killing bees in hives that might be easier to fix -- may also threaten wild bees and other insects vital to pollinate crops such as soybeans, potatoes or apple trees.

"It's the tip of the iceberg we're seeing with the honey bees," Peter Neumann, a lead author of the study of "global honey bee colony disorders and other threats to insect pollinators," told Reuters.

"There is not an immediate pollination disaster but the writing is on the wall," said Neumann, of the Swiss Bee Research Centre. "We have to do something to ensure pollination for future generations."

The study said there were also reports of bee colony collapses in China, Egypt and Latin America.

"There are some indicators that it is becoming a global issue," he said in a telephone interview.

BIRDS AND THE BEES

Bees and other pollinators such as butterflies, beetles or birds are estimated to do work worth 153 billion Euros (\$212.3 billion) a year to the human economy - about 9.5 percent of the total value of human food production, it said.

Recent estimates of the contribution by managed species, mainly honey bees, range up to 57 billion Euros. In the United States, over two million bee colonies are trucked around the nation to help pollination every year.

"Of the 100 crop species that provide 90 per cent of the world's food, over 70 are pollinated by bees," Achim Steiner, head of UNEP, said in a statement.

"Human beings have fabricated the illusion that in the 21st century they have the technological prowess to be independent of nature. Bees underline the reality that we are more, not less, dependent on nature's services in a world of close to seven billion people," he said.

The report urged a shift toward ecological farming, less dependent on insecticides and more resilient to threats such as climate change. Food prices have hit record levels and are one factor behind uprisings in Egypt or Tunisia.

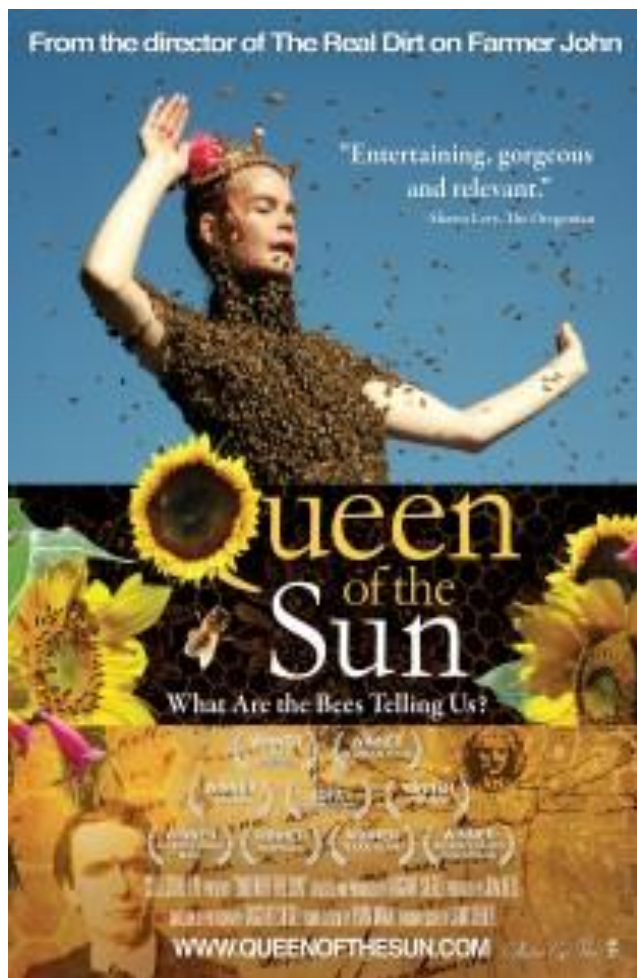
UNEP said farmers could be given incentives to set aside land to "restore pollinator-friendly habitats, including key flowering plants" as part of a shift to a "Green Economy." Neumann also urged more research into insects, noting that charismatic animals such as polar bears won most attention as victims of global warming. "Insects are usually not cute but they are the backbone of ecosystems," he said.

“QUEEN OF THE SUN” - The movie

<http://www.queenofthesun.com/>

ABOUT THE FILM

In 1923, Rudolf Steiner, a scientist, philosopher & social innovator, predicted that in 80 to 100 years honeybees would collapse. His prediction has come true with Colony Collapse Disorder, where bees are disappearing in mass numbers from their hives with no clear single explanation. In an alarming inquiry into the insights behind Steiner’s prediction *QUEEN OF THE SUN: What Are the Bees Telling Us?* examines the dire global bee crisis through the eyes of biodynamic beekeepers, scientists, farmers, and philosophers. On a pilgrimage around the world, the film unveils 10,000 years of beekeeping, highlighting how our historic and sacred relationship with bees has been lost due to highly mechanized industrial practices. Featuring Michael Pollan, Vandana Shiva, Gunther Hauk and beekeepers from around the world, this engaging, alarming and ultimately uplifting film weaves together a dramatic story that uncovers the problems and solutions in renewing a culture in balance with nature.



THE STORY

The Queen of The Sun: What Are the Bees Telling Us? is an in-depth investigation to discover the causes and solutions behind Colony Collapse Disorder; a phenomenon where honeybees vanish from their hives, never to return. Queen of The Sun follows the voices and visions of underrepresented beekeepers, philosophers, and scientists around the world, all struggling for the survival of the bees. While other bee films focus exclusively on commercial beekeepers, this film emphasizes the biodynamic and organic communities who have differing opinions from many commercial beekeepers and are overlooked in other films.

THE CHARACTERS

Queen of the Sun follows colorful, alternative and inspiring beekeepers from all around the globe as they keep bees in natural and holistic ways. From Gunther Hauk in the United States to Massimo Carpinteri in Italy, each has unique philosophical and spiritual insights into their bees and is striving to keep their bees safe from pesticides, and the other causes behind Colony Collapse Disorder. Click here to meet the beekeepers filmed in Queen of the Sun.

THE BEE CRISIS

In the fall of 2006, newspapers around the United States began to publicize an unnerving phenomenon. Honeybees were mysteriously disappearing from beehives all around the nation. Dave Hackenburg, an outspoken beekeeper, and the first to raise a stir about the crisis, reported that bees were simply vanishing from his hives. That fall, beekeepers and commercial beekeeping enterprises around the country reported losses of 30% with some beekeepers reporting losses up to 90% of all of their colonies.

AUTUMN CROP & STOCK REPORT



NEW SOUTH WALES

Most New South Wales beekeepers would have taken a reasonable crop (2/3rds normal crop). The season has been a difficult one with cool wet conditions hindering honey production up till the end of January.

The North has had a reasonable production since Christmas. Ironbark, ground flora and inland Bloodwood flowering at present. Prospects from now till spring are limited to Napunyah in the Channel country of Queensland and some patches of Ironbark in Northern NSW and Southern Queensland.

Late spring/summer prospects are looking better than previous years with bud on some later Ironbarks and Yellow Box in the North. Most autumn species in the South have run to ground and spoilt this year's flowering. Some patches of Ironbark are reported to be carrying bud in the Central West and South West of the State.

Beekeepers are down on hive numbers due to floods, disease, hive beetles and queenless hives. This will have an effect on next season's production.

Packers' stocks appear to be adequate at present, no doubt due in some instances due to imported honey. Stocks on hands appear to vary from some beekeepers carrying some honey to others having to sell all they produce to carry on their businesses.

Bill Weiss

QUEENSLAND

Queensland honey producers have been scouting large tracts of country over the past few weeks, trying to work out what the next season will bring.

Short term the potential honey flows are, Blue Topped Ironbark, Red Ash, Yapunyah, Mallee Box, Mountain Coolibah and some Narrow Leaved Ironbark.

The spring and summer are not looking as good as honey producers would have expected, given the good soil moisture levels that exist in Queensland. Grey Ironbark has yet to reveal a decent budding and Yellow Box is not creating a lot of hope. The Darling Downs may hold the key to Queensland coming seasons success or failure.

Migratory beekeepers who do not mind travel and have the country will likely look at moving to NSW for potential spring and summer crops.

The 2010/2011 season has not been anywhere near as good as forecast, due mainly to the heavy rainfall and flooding. Small Hive Beetles are rampant and continue to place pressure on hive numbers. Running nucs has almost ceased for many, removing one of the most valuable tools a

beekeeper can have in keeping colonies strong and having a ready stock of young queens. Those that do have nucs are finding 5 & 6 frame nucs have the best chance of survival.

Honey stocks in producer's hands are low for this time of the year. Honey flows that have produced have kept most packers well stocked.

Bill Winner

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Rain, rain, rain

Lucerne yielded well and good rains have given plenty of ground flora and bees are in excellent condition.

There is some patchy tea-tree and stringy bark flowering which may yield a little bit. *Banksia ornata* is looking promising for this winter (the best in many, many years).

Considering the amount of rain we've had across most of the State, it is slightly disappointing to see that only some species of eucalypts have budded, but they all look to be in magnificent health.

It's now a waiting game to see how much agricultural cropping, good for bees, will be planted this winter.

Wendy Thiele

TASMANIA

Cold and windy weather stopped any production for Tasmanian honey both Clover & Leatherwood.

One of the worst crops on record!

Southern Beekeepers a complete wipe out (80%) – Northern Beekeepers 60% below average.

Ian Stephens

VICTORIA

February rain severely damaged the Narrow Leaf Peppermint (*Euc. radiata*) honey flow in the north east, and the early flowering Messmate (*Euc. obliqua*) in the lower foothills of the Dividing Range.

Gippsland – Despite the fact that Saw Banksia (*B. serrata*) had only a patchy cobbing, it yielded honey fairly heavily. Gippsland is the only area missing out on the heavy rains and floods.

South West – In the places where Red Gum (*Euc. camaldulensis*) was not badly affected by the January rains, some beekeepers produced good crops of honey.

Lucerne finished up yielding some surplus honey as well during February. Messmate is the major prospect for honey production at this time. It is yielding quite well along the Great Dividing Range, but seems to be variable elsewhere, from a light flow to no more than breeding conditions.

Many of the roads in the Mount Cole State Forest are washed out and many bee sites are inaccessible.

Messmate blossom is very delicate and will not stand rain. It is still flowering and yielding, but will finish with the present rains.

Future

Sugar Gum (*Euc. cladocalyx*) is starting to flower in the Volcanic Plains, south west of Ballarat. It could yield some surplus honey during March/into April with favourable weather, but it should be noted that wind across these plains can have an effect on the bees' ability to produce surplus honey during Sugar Gum flowering.

Long Leaf Box (*Euc. goniocalyx*) is carrying a reasonable crop of buds and has started flowering from mid-March onwards. Although unreliable as a yielder of nectar, the wet conditions of the last few months could help in this regard, and Long Leaf Box pollen is highly nutritious.

Desert Banksia (*B. ornata*) is setting cobs in both the Big and Little Deserts and with the breaking of the drought there could be a return to the good wintering conditions in the Desert that we have not seen for several years.

This season is rapidly drawing to a close with total overall production of honey for the season being substantially lower than forward prospects indicated earlier last spring.

Honey production in Victoria has been severely reduced with the continued heavy rains every month since October.

The January rains created floods over a large area of northern Victoria and many beekeepers were working the River Red Gum, which meant that in some cases, bee hives were located in low-lying areas. Although reliable figures are not yet available it is thought that around 1,000 bee hives have been affected by floods, mostly through bees being smothered.

Two beekeepers in the Mildura area had their factory premises flooded with damage to electrical motors, supers of combs being inundated, and trucks with water into differentials and wheel bearings etc.

At the time of writing this (21 March) storms/rain is building up across the State with very heavy rain falling again in the north-west Mallee (Mildura & surrounds) at the moment.

Bob McDonald

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Very little honey produced from Red Gum. Beekeepers have started shifting to White Gum.

Very few future prospects due to extremely dry weather.

Packers are holding reasonable stock.

Stephen Fewster