

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

ABN 63 939 614 424

Monthly NEWS



To: The Australian Honey Industry From: Stephen Ware – Executive Director
June 2010 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!

Australian Queen Bee Exporters
Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association
Australian Honey Products
Bees Neez Apiaries
Capilano Honey Limited
Dewar Apiaries
FCAAA
Gell's Honey
Honey Packers & Marketers Association
Hoskinson, H L & H M
Morgan, Trevor
Papworth, F & E
Pollination Association of WA

Pobke, Barry
Saxonbee Enterprises
Spring Gully Foods Pty Ltd
Stephens, R
Stevens, Graeme
Tasmanian Crop Pollination Association
Tasmanian Honey Company
Weatherhead, T & M
True Blue Honey
Weerona Apiaries
Wescobee Limited
Wilson, Col

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NEW AHBIC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

The annual general meeting of the Council was held in Ipswich on 18 & 19 June 2010.

The Executive Committee of AHBIC for the coming year consists of:

Mr Lindsay Bourke	Chairman	0418 131 256	queenvic@cradlemountainhoney.com.au
Mr Ed Planken	Deputy Chairman	08 9271 8133	eduard.planken@wescobee.com
Mr Ian Stephens	HPMAA	03 6363 1170	busybees@leatherwoodhoney.com.au
Mr Ken Gell	FCAAA	03 5461 4326	gells_honey@hotmail.com
Mr Trevor Weatherhead	FCAAA	07 5467 2135	queenbee50@bigpond.com
Mr Trevor Morgan	Capilano Honey	08 8626 1355	tpmorg@bigpond.net.au

Also, please note the dates for the various conferences for the 2011 year for forward note in your diary:

2011 CONFERENCE DATES

FCAAA	New South Wales Apiarists' Association	26 & 27 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



2010 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Dr Doug Somerville was awarded the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council's Award of Excellence at the Annual General Meeting held in Ipswich on 18 June.

The Award of Excellence is presented annually for outstanding services to the industry.

I think all will agree that Doug is a very worthy recipient serving the industry in many ways.

We sincerely thank him for his support.

Dr Doug Somerville receiving his award from Mr Lindsay Bourke, AHBIC Chairman.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On behalf of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council it gives me great pleasure to present the 2009/10 annual report.

I would like to pass on my thanks to my fellow Executive Committee who have worked hard this year on your behalf – Paula Dewar, Ed Planken, Bill Weiss, Ian Stephens, Ian Zadow, Trevor Morgan and Warren Jones. We welcome the new Executive Committee and look forward to a busy and fruitful year ahead. A special thanks also to the efforts of HBRDC, Des Cannon, Bruce White, Dr. Ben Oldroyd and Dr. Denis Anderson for their support and dedication during the year.

I have detailed below some important issues that AHBIC has been involved with during the year:

Asian Bee Incursion in Cairns

Surveillance and eradication of the Asian Honey Bee in Cairns continues. There are fortnightly telephone hook-ups at which the latest developments are discussed and the information relayed to industry via our AHBIC newsletters. Recently the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) agreed to a cost sharing agreement where the Governments, i.e. State, Federal and Territories pay 80% and industry 20%.

AQIS Imported Food Program

AQIS continues to test imported honey on arrival for the presence of residues. AHBIC has consulted regularly over the past year with AQIS to ensure our border protection for imports remain stringent and that imported honey does not pose a quality risk.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

As you may be aware, Greenpeace brought the issue of GMOs and honey to the attention of the media last season, after they stole honey from hives in Victoria and made allegations that they had confirmed the presence of GMO DNA, likely to have been detected from concentrated pollen. AHBIC provided an immediate media response and a management strategy to ensure the public remained informed of the real issues surrounding honey and GMOs and to ensure the quality and safety of Australian honeys.

Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids (PAs) in Honey

Following the German Honey Industry concerns over the occurrence of PAs in honey worldwide, AHBIC has drawn approximately 200 samples of Australian honey from packers for PA testing. This will give us a better understanding of the occurrence of PAs in Australian honey.

Issues for the Future

R & D Funding

AHBIC is currently responding to calls for submissions on the future of Federal Government support for R&D funding and over the next few months AHBIC will work in your interests to protect our ongoing R&D arrangements.

Meeting with AQIS

AHBIC has scheduled a Canberra meeting with AQIS and FSANZ in July to discuss a number of issues through AHBIC's Food Safety & Prevention of Residues Committee (FSPRC) (Ben McKee, Ed Planken and Dawn Smith). They will also be pushing for a provisional ban on imported honey and bee products from New Zealand; all shipments of Chinese imported honey to be subject to antibiotic, pesticide and adulteration testing and that imported honey be prevented from entering Australia if it is not produced under the same systems that Australian beekeepers must adhere to.

I would like to thank all sectors of our industry for their support in what has been an extremely difficult year. AHBIC has had a hectic year with the AHBIC restructuring and the review of our Constitution and hopefully the changes that have been implemented will allow AHBIC to operate more effectively for the benefit of all industry members. Despite the challenges we look forward with optimism to the future.

Lindsay Bourke
Chairman

B-QUAL REPORT

The past year for B-Qual has been one of consolidation and forward planning. The B-Qual program currently has 114 fully accredited producers/packers and 232 non accredited members. However, the good news is that we have 48 new applicants who are progressing their risk management plan forward so they can be audited. Many beekeepers now realise that B-Qual accreditation is affordable and not as time consuming as first thought.

Many beekeepers are already operating in extraction sheds and using food grade equipment that would be passed at a B-Qual audit. Often it is only minor upgrades to plant, a few alterations to existing documentation and a streamlining of existing practices that are needed to reach the accreditation stage.

B-Qual recently offered a subsidized work shop training day for beekeepers prior to each State Conference. The aim of the training day was to get beekeepers through the first stage of the program so that they could progress to the implementation of their risk management plan within their business to achieve full certification. Twelve enrolled for the training in Queensland and 44 in South Australia with a further 70 SA beekeepers indicating their interest for another workshop!

Why is there so much urgency for B-Qual Accreditation in South Australia? Currently, in South Australia, quality assurance guidelines are being added to the Code of Practice which is being carried into regulations for the apiary industry. Subsequently, all beekeepers with 50 hives or more are to have a Food Safety Plan in place. However, there are major advantages for all beekeepers in Australia to join B-Qual:

- the additional 5c/kg paid by most major packers for honey supplied by B-Qual accredited producers
- beekeepers fine tune their business into a more professional operation with excellent trace back procedures/paper work and a more efficiently run plant
- if you sell directly to the public through markets, local fruit shops, at the farm gate etc, then you will satisfy food regulations in most States

- satisfies the legal obligation of producers to sell safe food
- meets the requirements of States who put regulations in place as is currently happening in South Australia

If you are interested in finding out more about the B-Qual program, give me a call – Barry Pobke (08) 85723813 or 0428 950296, or phone Robyn at Aus-Qual in Brisbane 1800 630890 who administers the B-Qual program.

Currently, there are 10 B-Qual auditors in Australia, many of whom you would already know: Bill Winner (Capilano), Dawn Smith (Honey DownUnder), Donald Hay (Tasmania), Trevor Weatherhead (Brisbane), Andrew Brown (Brisbane), Duane Leadbetter (Sydney), Gerry McLoughlin (Western Australia), Rob Kelly (NSW), Bill Marquis (Victoria) and Gary Altmann (South Aust).

They are always available to discuss B-Qual and the program with you. Give them a call.

Barry Pobke
Chairman

REPORT OF THE AUSTRALIAN QUEEN BEE BREEDING GROUP

The Australian Queen Bee Breeding Program, run by the Australian Queen Bee Breeding Group, has progressed slowly but surely this past year. The AQBBG was successful in selling some AI breeder queens in spring and have several orders for next spring. It is hoped that as this stock becomes distributed amongst the beekeeping industry in Australia we will be able to gain more sales to keep the program viable.

Unfortunately the AQBBG was not able to pay the University of Sydney the third payment of \$11,000 for their project. The AQBBG wrote a letter asking for dispensation from payment due to the financial position of the AQBBG and the University of Sydney granted the dispensation.

The AQBBG was happy that it was able to attract some more members to the group and there are currently 14 financial members.

The evaluations for the 2009/10 season have been completed and it is planned to make these available on the AHBIC website under the “queen breeding program”. Thank you to Neil and David Bingley, Lindsay Bourke and Elwyne and Frank Papworth for carrying out the work. The best of each line has now been returned to the Dewar’s for incorporation into next seasons reproductions.

The AQBBG would like to acknowledge a generous donation from Ian & Shirley Stephens. Many thanks to Ian and Shirley.

Professor Ben Oldroyd from the University of Sydney has put forward a proposal to have some of the Australian stock tested overseas in the USA. This is looking at the resistance/susceptibility of Australian stock to Varroa. Ben has approached the AQBBG to arrange for some of the program stock to be included in that testing. The AQBBG has agreed to make stock available for this testing.

Finally a big thank you to Laurie and Paula Dewar for the amount of work they put into keeping the program going. If it was not for their work, the program would have fallen over a long time ago.

Trevor Weatherhead
Secretary

HPMAA REPORT

The Honey Packers and Marketers have pursued the best intentions of both the packers and the Australian apicultural industry during the last 12 months in the representative roles on AHBIC, other bodies and with governments. The packers note there are many challenges ahead in this continually changing world we operate in.

Looking at the year past I can comment:

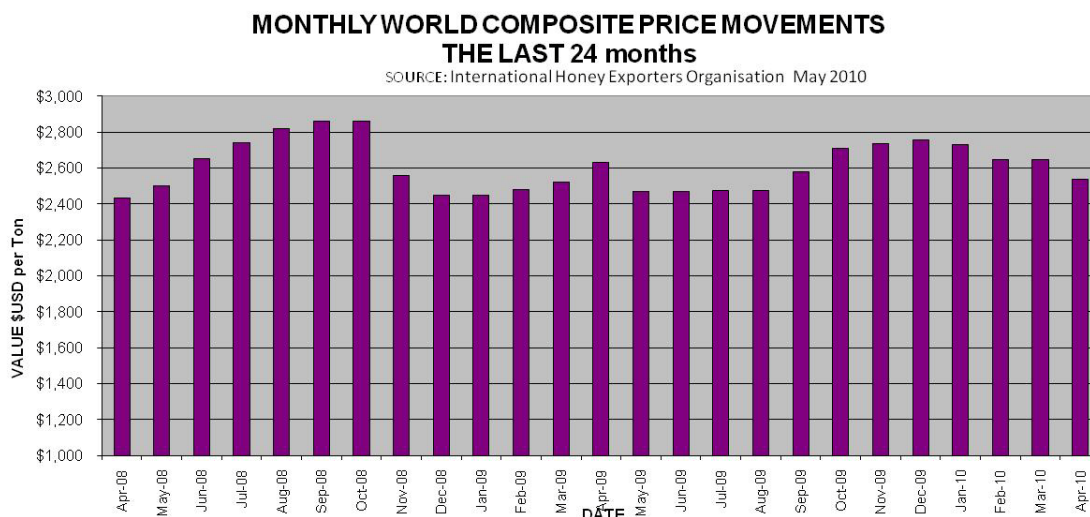
- All honey packers found it difficult in honey supply for the first half of the financial year due to poor honey production conditions in Australia. The period from January to June 2010 has seen much improved stock levels being available.
- In Australia the volume of honey sold via the three mainstream supermarkets of Coles, Woolworths and Metcash (IGA) increased 3.6% during 2009 (*Source: Retail World January 2010*). The likes of Aldi, Costco and others do not report into this system so volume variations are unknown although it may be fair to assume a similar trend in their stores.
- Increased demands have been imposed on all packers and some have seen losses of ranged products. Pressure continues on margins achievable for packers with the unabated push on private labels by the big three retail groups.
- Major packers are incurring increased testing, QA and auditing costs which are being imposed on their businesses. While all this is happening there seems to be no abatement in the number of beekeepers selling direct (often at low values).
- From an import and export perspective the following can be seen as occurring over the last three years;

AUSTRALIAN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS ANALYSIS						
Period	Combined Imports Tonnes	Combined Exports Tonnes	Packed Exports Tonnes	Bulk Exports Tonnes	Packed Exports %	Bulk Exports %
Mar-10	692	1,589	460	1,129		
Dec-09	1,294	2,354	1,086	1,268		
Sep-09	1,636	3,556	751	2,805		
Jun-09	1,292	2,086	710	1,376		
Total	4,914	9,585			3,007	31%
Mar-09	522	2,143	1,055	1,000		
Dec-08	661	2,103	1,088	1,015		
Sep-08	1,480	1,755	1,066	689		
Jun-08	1,748	1,799	1,020	779	4,229	54%
Total	4,411	7,800				3,483 45%
Mar-08	1,355	1,362	602	759		
Dec-07	332	1,391	676	714		
Sep-07	790	1,208	558	632		
Jun-07	151	1,320	672	648	2,508	47%
Total	2,628	5,281				2,753 53%

The numbers will change in imports and exports in the next 12 months as supply increases and as we see the effect of the major packer exiting unprofitable markets. The AUD currency exchange value will also impact how the import verse's export numbers will evolve over time.

- World bulk export prices have held reasonably steady over the last two years however the last three months we have seen a weakness downward occurring. Based on current values being payed to Australia beekeepers we cannot be commercially competitive to move any volume. While a few sales are being made overall nothing occurs unless it is a speciality product like Jarrah or the exchange rate drops substantially. Industry should not be surprised if prices fall based on supply reports to hand. International buyers need cheap product as they in turn are being squeezed by their

customers to supply the very best quality at budget values. This situation does the industry no good worldwide as it is not sustainable for all.



- Unintentional residues in honey and beeswax remain a major concern to all.
- Packers should be aware of the national implementation by the Commonwealth to take full responsibility, including funding, for the national trade measurement system, from 1 July 2010. This will bring in the introduction of the Average Quantity System (AQS) for packers as an additional method of calculating target weights.
- Changes to the food act and labelling are also in process. Greater chances for prosecution will follow.

On an AHBIC level over the last year, packer delegates have contributed on industry's behalf in the following areas:

- International market access issues (duties, barriers, demands etc);
- Residue contamination issues (potential PA's, pesticides, antibiotics etc);
- Labelling standards;
- Honey import standards;
- Exporter Honey contamination issue;
- Supported a per hive statutory levy to replace all existing statutory honeybee industry levies;
- AHBIC readiness plan;
- AHBIC constitutional changes;
- AHBIC funding;
- AQIS - what to do in respect of prescribed and non-prescribed goods, what the current market issues were, what was to happen in relation to EXDOC and ER, trade access etc.;
- Support for the amalgamation of Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia;

The above is just a snapshot of some issues our association has been proactive in over the last 12 months.

Honey Packers believe in having a peak industry body the nature of the current AHBIC that represents ALL sectors of industry. Up to this date it has been the packers that have funded AHBIC and unless some sort of mandatory hive levy comes into play I am sure that we - The HONEY PACKERS – will be the ones asked to support it.

Eduard Planken
President HPMAA

VALE – JOHN GUILFOYLE

We were saddened to hear of the passing of John Guilfoyle on the 9 June 2010. AHBIC would like to offer its sincere condolences to John's children Jan, Ross and Kym; son-in-law Mal and grandchildren Tracy, Kylie, Ian, Amy, John, Peter and Jennifer.

John will be sadly missed by the Australian beekeeping industry.

A tribute to John is currently being completed by industry members and will be published in next month's AHBIC newsletter.

APIS CERANA UPDATE

In the past month, there have been 15 Asian Bee swarms and nests found in the Cairns/Gordonvale areas.

Beelining is currently underway at Behana Gorge, Goldsborough, Cairns, Yarrabah, Gordonvale, Lake Eacham, Redlynch (Cairns suburb) and Aeroglen (Cairns suburb). This may seem a lot but when you consider the number of staff now employed it is what would be expected.

A single bee was found in a house at Atherton which is still within the RA. There has been surveillance carried out around the area and no other cerana have been found.

Precautionary work has been undertaken with Queensland Rail (QR) to look at the line from Cairns to Townsville for cerana.

A new Community Engagement Officer has been employed in Cairns and is spending half her time on Asian bee work.

There has been an extra 6 staff employed making 34 in total in the field plus 2 more to be employed.

The Asian bee is now a declared pest under the Queensland Exotic Diseases in Animals Act. This now allows for quarantines to be put in place under this Act.

Recording equipment that has been made available to the team will be used to record cerana. This would hopefully help in the detection of cerana on foraging plants e.g. tall palms.

It also has the possibility of using the recordings to prove that there are no cerana in packages shipped to the USA or other countries. Not that this is likely but we have those in the USA who have been trying to whip up concern that cerana could come with the packages. This would put that fear campaign to rest.

The bee eater pellets have revealed cerana wings in Cairns, Smithfield and Machans Beach. These can be accounted for in the nests and swarms destroyed plus area where foragers are being beelined. It is encouraging that cerana wings are being found as it shows that the examination of these pellets is a positive way of finding area to look at. The only minus is if the bee eaters are starting to migrate north and pellets were found further north which would be a false positive.

The detector dog was recently in Cairns. Both dog and handler were stung by bees without problems. They will be back in early July.

Community engagement will be carried out over the coming week with a festival at Yorkeys Knob, a northern beach suburb. The cane harvesting season is about to start. Contact will be made with mill staff, cane growers and harvesters via their newsletters plus the Community Engagement Officer will be attending the induction of the loco drivers.

There are some Conservation volunteers who will receive training in surveillance and will be used in the northern beach suburbs of Cairns.

Trevor Weatherhead

AHBIC PROFILE – LINDSAY BOURKE

Over the next few months we will take a more personal look at what our AHBIC Board get up to besides their roles of hard working lobbyists for our industry.

Many of you are familiar with Lindsay in his role of AHBIC Chair but behind the scenes he is kept busier than ever following the honey flows of the Tasmanian countryside.

By the time Tasmanian lad, Lindsay Bourke was 23 years old he was running 200 hives and 20 nucs part time while working as a wool classer. However, beekeeping took a back seat when he became a fire fighter working for the fire dept for 15 years and later on as a property developer.

At the age of 60 years, when most people are considering retirement, Lindsay decided to take a serious look at beekeeping again starting off with 92 hives and steadily building up to 3000 hives seven years later.

These days, Lindsay is based in Launceston and travels no more than 4½ hours with his bees to pollinate crops or follow the Leatherwood honey flows concentrated in the rainforests of the West Coast of Tasmania.

Diversifying into the brewing of honey ales, nectar and mead and producing quality creamed honey made from Christmas Bush have become challenging sidelines for Lindsay who has numerous awards for his ales and meads. Last year alone he produced over 20,000 litres of his famous brews.

While Tasmania is renowned for its unique Leatherwood honey, Lindsay is well known for his unique extraction facilities. He extracts his honey in a hospital!

Once a maternity hospital, Lindsay has set up a quality accredited extraction plant on the ground floor of the seven-storey hospital in High Street Launceston. An elevator takes him to the third floor where Lindsay stores his supers. At one time he had more than 100 tonnes of honey stored in one of the hospital wards!

Lindsay and his wife Yeonsoon extend a warm invitation to any industry members who may be visiting Tasmania in the future to come and have a look at their unique extraction facilities. They can be contacted on: 03 6331 0888 or 0419 557431.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

NEW COUNCIL FOR BIOSECURITY - QLD

Queensland's new advisory group on biosecurity issues affecting Queensland has been announced with representatives from industry, resource management, local government and animal welfare bodies.

The Ministerial Advisory Council members are:

* Peter Kenny- Chairperson

Representative Members:

- * Councillor Brendan McNamara (Local Government Association Queensland)
- * John Bishop (Growcom)
- * Andrew Drysdale (Regional Natural Resource Management Groups Collective)
- * Stephen Murphy (Queensland Seafood Industry Association)
- * John Cotter (AgForce)
- * Al Mucci (Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria - Queensland)
- * Tim Low (Queensland Conservation Council)
- * Trevor Robinson (Queensland Indigenous Working Group)
- * Gary Sansom (Queensland Farmers' Federation)
- * Mandy Symons (RSPCA)

Expertise-based members:

- * Diane Sheehan
- * Peter Milne
- * Margaret Britz
- * Peter Allsopp
- * Kareena Arthy (ex-officio member, Biosecurity Queensland)

NEW RIRDC MANAGING DIRECTOR

Mr Craig Burns has been appointed the Managing Director of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). He will commence on 12 July 2010.

WORK WANTED – DO YOU NEED A HAND?

27-year-old Italian Valerio Ganda is looking for a beekeeping position for next season. Valerio has a Masters degree in Agriculture and is currently undertaking a PHD focussing on AFB. He already has some experience in managing bees.

If you need an extra hand next season you can contact Valerio on his email address: valerio.ganda@unimi.it