



Monthly NEWS

To: The Australian Honey Industry

From: Stephen Ware – Executive Director

April 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
Cole, OF
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
Weerona Apiaries
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.

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

1. *Apis cerana*

At the time of writing although Governments had come to the conclusion by majority vote that they could not support *Apis cerana* being eradicated the door has been left open for supporting an ongoing surveillance and eradication program based on containing the Asian Bee. Further meetings between Industry and Government have been foreshadowed and Industry is hopeful that this will lead to a positive outcome.

2. APVMA Labelling

The adequacy of the current labelling laws and whether they are sufficient to ensure that the user of chemicals takes adequate steps not to spray hives and foraging bees was recently workshopped in Canberra. Industry is hopeful that the outcome of this meeting will result in better labelling and protection of beekeepers from indiscriminate spraying of bees.

3. APVMA Registration

Also on the subject of the APVMA, AHBIC continues to seek the registration of Apistan, Bayvarol and Apivar. These are only to be used in the case of *Varroa* and Industry is attempting to ensure that we are prepared should the *Varroa* mite find its way into Australia. We are also re-registering our permit for Aluminium Phosphide to control small hive beetle.

4. Surveillance Systems for Bee Pests/Diseases

During the month a teleconference was held on Surveillance Systems for Bee Pests/Diseases. Following this teleconference it has been agreed that a two day workshop will be held in May. Prior to the meeting, Industry and jurisdictions have been encouraged to research all available papers and data on this subject.

These include:

- RIRDC 'Future Surveillance Needs for Honeybee Biosecurity' by Barry et al
- A report by Pat Bolan of DAFF on the Sentinel Hive Program that included data on the work that has been done; bee free zones; the capability of resources; ability of jurisdictions for diagnosis.
- Queensland report about surveillance data.
- Information from Animal Division, DAFF and AHA.

5. AHBIC Annual General Meeting

The AHBIC AGM is to be held on 8 July 2011 in Adelaide. Guest speakers include:

Mr Gerald Martin, Chairman of the Pollination R&D Advisory Committee
Dr Denis Anderson - CSIRO
Dr Mike McDonald -DAFF
Dr Robyn Martin - DAFF
Dr Dave Alden – RIRDC
Mr Terry Ryan

As per the Constitution the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are elected for a term of two (2) years running alternatively. This year, Mr Ed Planken, Deputy Chairperson is up for re-election. The next two Executive Members up for re-election this year (being for a bi-annual term) are: Mr Ian Stephens and Mr Trevor Morgan.

Members are invited to use their member organisations to submit resolutions on areas of concern.

HPMAA REPORT – APRIL 2011

Trading news

Generally sales are being reported as tough for those of us dealing with the supermarkets. There is a huge pressure on retail prices as the major chains slug it out in the consumer war. Ultimately all this goes back to the manufacturers and primary producers with less margins or lower farm gate results.

Slower sales to date are a result of consumers who hold back as a consequence of higher interest rates and the economic situation both here in Australia and overseas. Wars, tsunamis, earthquakes, wild weather conditions all have a flow on effect. Pressure therefore from supermarket groups for promotions, discounts or product deletions continues to give great concern to all. Most house brand honey tenders have recently been put to the market and some ridiculous pressure has been placed on suppliers to lower costs to the supermarkets. Fortunately I can report that HPMAA honey packer members did not bow to the pressure demands and held their offered values leaving the status quo in the market place. Time will tell what will happen as we hear new rumours of another assault.

For the packer exporters there is a great knock on effect from the Australian dollar which is crippling export sales. In the last 12 months alone we have seen a further 17% currency loss effect occur with the dollar now at record highs. Industry will need to be aware that export markets made unprofitable due to the movement in exchange rates will mean a lot of honey here at home that simply will not get soaked up at the prices they are today. Today, unlike in the past, we see beekeepers also fighting it out for every last honey sale and typically price chopping is all they know resulting in its predictable outcome.

Honey news

There is a mixed situation of supply of honey on hand with packers currently but it seems most have adequate stocks for now or can still get stored beekeeper stock. From a production perspective on forward crops - overall things seem optimistic for the new spring season onwards due to the rain on the east coast. States like WA need a LOT more rain as it has had the longest dry on record.

World market

World bulk honey prices remain reasonably stable but most countries comment on shorter crops and the need for higher prices (the same as we do in Australia).

Imports and Exports

Retail packed product leaving Australia is at its lowest level since 2004 mainly due to our high currency and from Capilano withdrawing out of some large volume, unprofitable business. Imports have been affected on the back of better local crop and lessened need for imports of honey for export blended product which is now uncompetitive in price.

Eduard Planken - President HPMAA

APIS CERANA UPDATE

Advice 92 - 4 April 2011

Detections since Advice 91 are:

IP360 was a nest at Innisfail
IP361 was a nest at Cairns
IP362 was a swarm at Cairns airport
IP363 was a nest at Portsmith
IP364 was a nest at Mt. Sheridan
IP365 was a nest at Gordonvale
IP366 was a swarm at White Rock
IP367 was a nest at Cairns
IP368 was a nest at Cairns

A little bit about IP362. It was a swarm that turned up on an air bridge at the Cairns airport. Maurie Damon got the call as the staff out there know him. When he arrived he saw straight away it was Asian bee and called the Department. In the meantime, the air bridge was closed for several hours and caused some inconvenience at the airport.

The dog has now been validated and you may have seen it on the 7.30 report last Wednesday night. It has found two (2) nests so far and will be valuable in industrial areas and where containers are stored. Here it can move around the areas and find any nests.

Hopes lies with the reconvened Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) which is to meet this coming week. They have to power to reconsider the recommendation that the Asian bee was not feasible to eradicate. It has now been over four (4) months since the full eradication program has not been in place. When the full program is re-instated, there will need to be some catch up time to get back to where we were last November.

Advice 93– 18 April 2011

Detections since Advice 92 are:

IP369 was a swarm at Cairns
IP370 was a nest at Gordonvale
IP371 was as warm at Edmonton
IP372 was a swarm at Mareeba
IP373 was a nest at Cairns

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests met last Friday, 15 April with no change in the decision on the eradicability of the Asian bee. Industry had put up a proposal for more surveillance, which included volunteer beekeepers. This received some support and is to be referred to the National Management Group Asian Bee Co-ordination Group, which meets on Tuesday 19 April, for consideration.

The interim report for the Senate Committee can be found at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/rat_ctte/bees_2011/interim_report/index.htm

I note the final report will not be submitted until 30 June, 2011.

Trevor Weatherhead

RIRDC'S KEY HONEYBEE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES SINCE NOVEMBER 2010

Recently published reports can be found on the 'honeybee' page of RIRDC's website http://www.rirdc.gov.au/programs/established-rural-industries/honey-bee/honey-bee_home.cfm and include the following two reports.

Rapid Method for Measuring the Antimicrobial Activity of Honey

Honey has been used as a therapeutic agent since ancient times. It is particularly useful for treating open infections with relatively poor blood supply, including skin wounds on the extremities of the body and stomach ulcers caused by the helicobacter organism. Honey is known to have antimicrobial activity against bacteria and fungi resistant to many antibiotics and can control bacteria living in biofilms, which have proven difficult to control by conventional means. But honey samples vary widely in their antimicrobial activity.

This RIRDC report summarises the possibility of using near infrared spectroscopy (NIR) for rapidly measuring the antimicrobial activity of honey. The report is targeted at the marketers of honey and potentially to laboratories that could provide an analytical service for measuring the antimicrobial activity of honey.

Hygienic Behaviour of Stocks of the Western Australian Honeybee Breeding Program

A study of the hygienic behaviour of bees from the Western Australian Queen Bee Breeding Program (Better Bees group) showed that some breeding lines exhibited higher levels of hygienic behaviour in the removal of dead brood than other lines. Hygienic behaviour is a mechanism of disease resistance where bees are able to remove brood from the nest before the pathogen becomes infectious.

Honeybees having the hygienic trait show resistance to diseases such as American foulbrood, Chalkbrood and to some limited extent the parasite Varroa. Further knowledge of hygienic behaviour should assist queen bee breeders to exploit those identified lines to produce by instrumental insemination a "hygienic" line for beekeepers Australia-wide so apiaries of bees will be more resistant to bee diseases.

The *Honeybee R&D News* – the official newsletter of the RIRDC Honeybee Program available is also available on the RIRDC website.

RIRDC's Honeybee Advisory Committee

Denis Anderson resigned from the Committee late last year as he prepares for retirement from CSIRO and Dr Boris Baer of the University of Western Australia has been appointed as a new Committee Member. Des Cannon will retire as the Committee Chair at the end of June and Dr Michael Hornitzky from the NSW Department of Industry and Investment will take up the position. RIRDC greatly appreciates the commitment Denis and Des have given to the Committee over many years and valued their considered advice.

Dave Alden

PLANT HEALTH AUSTRALIA

Copies of presentations from the Member engagement meetings will be available to view or download from the PHA website (www.phau.com.au) from 11 April.

Copies of the *Draft 2010/2011AOP* and the *2010/2011 Mid-Year Performance Report* can also be found on our website.

If you require additional hard copies please contact PHA's Administrative Coordinator, Angela Ditton aditton@phau.com.au or 02 6215 7700.

ANIMAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA - RALPH HOOD AWARD

Animal Health Australia has launched the Animal Health Australia Ralph Hood Award at the Members' Forum. Nominations opened 18 March 2011

The Award honours the memory of Ralph, who passed away in February 2010. In recognition of Ralph's contribution, the award is designed to encourage and support a commitment to Australia's national animal health system.

We invite you to nominate one person per member organisation.

- Nominations close 30 June 2011
- Award announced 19 August 2011

For more information visit the AHA website: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au - there is a link on the home page.

AUSTRALIA POST - NEW STAMP ISSUE 'FARMING AUSTRALIA - NATIVE PLANTS'

Australia Post has advised that the forthcoming stamp issue entitled 'Farming Australia - Native Plants' which includes the Australian Honey stamp will be available shortly and they are keen to promote this stamp issue and would be very grateful for our assistance.

The media release is scheduled to be distributed on 13 May ahead of the stamps being issued on 17 May.

SYDNEY WILDLIFE WORLD – BEE EXHIBIT

Sydney Wildlife World are currently running a bee exhibit over the Easter holidays, called 'Bees Needs'. It features European Honeybees and Aussie native bees, along with lots of information about the current plight of the bee globally.

It is part of wider 'Conservation Champion' activities running at Sydney Wildlife World and Sydney Aquarium on Darling Harbour over Easter.

More info here: <http://sydneywildlifeworld.myfun.com.au/Exhibits-and-Animals/Conservation-Champion/Bees-Needs.htm>

HOBBY BEEKEEPERS PROTECTING AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE

In a project launched on 11 April in Melbourne by the Victorian Minister for Agriculture and Food Security Peter Walsh MP, urban beekeepers are being given a role in protecting Australia from exotic pests that could devastate our honey industry and the agricultural production that relies on pollination by honeybees.



Ten enthusiastic hobby beekeepers have been given extra hives, bees and training in monitoring methods as part of the Bee Force pilot project, being conducted around the Port of Melbourne because cargoes and shipping ports have been identified as a key risk for the entry of bee pests.

If Varroa mites or similar bee pests reach Australian shores and become entrenched it's expected to cost between \$21 million and \$50 million per year over 30 years. This is not just from lower honey production but the impact of the loss of pollination by both managed and wild European honeybees on a range of fruits, vegetables and pastures.

Beekeepers inspecting hives

Bee Force is being run by the Pollination Program, a research and development strategy jointly funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), and managed on the ground by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI). Sabine Perrone, an expert in biosecurity, will assess how Bee Force could be designed to be rolled-out nationally.

Mr Gerald Martin, Chairman of the Pollination R&D Advisory Committee, says it's vital that if Varroa mites do get into the country, they are found quickly.

"These parasitic pests have caused enormous damage as they've spread across the world and Australia is one of the few places still free of them," Mr Martin said.

"When you consider that a staggering 65 per cent of agricultural production in Australia relies on the pollination efforts of wild bees and managed hives, everyone has an interest in protecting the industry.

"We're hoping this pilot program will prove to be an efficient and cost-effective early detection system, catching any Varroa mites or other pests before they can spread too far and become established.

"The aims of the trial include collecting hard data on the costs and benefits of using volunteers and developing a best practice model for the system to be used more widely than it already is," Mr Martin said.



Gerald Martin

The beekeepers are being trained in the use of sticky mats which are placed on the floor of the participating hives, separated from the bees by mesh, and sending them to DPI entomologists every six weeks for examination. The aim is to eventually use miticide strips which will cause any mites to fall on and stick to the mats.

Bee Force is being run in conjunction with existing state and national surveillance programs and will be expanded to Geelong in the second year if successful.

The suburban beekeepers are not only protecting Australia's commercial agricultural production, but their neighbours as well - a significant proportion of backyard fruit and vegetable plants are dependent on bees for pollination.

ON THE FRONT LINE OF PROTECTING OUR BEES

Seven days a week, bee keeper Lyndon Fenlon can be seen travelling the streets of Melbourne's Footscray on his specially modified cargo bicycle, moving and tending almost 30 hives spread around the backyards of his friends and neighbours.

Along with his bees producing honey and pollinating urban backyard gardens, Lyndon has taken on a crucial role in front line biosecurity for his industry, participating in a new program called Bee Force.



An initiative of the Pollination Program managed by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) and Horticulture Australia (HAL), Bee Force is designed to monitor urban hives around port areas for the likely arrival of the devastating foreign bee pest *Varroa* mite, already endemic in our nearest neighbours.

Lyndon's day starts at 5.30am to get to an office job in Melbourne, but his spare time is consumed tending hives, collecting honey to sell under his label Urban Honey Co, rescuing wayward swarms from urban roofs and gardens and educating fellow bee enthusiasts in his hobby.

"My neighbours love that I keep bees and now I have my hives spread across about 15 different backyards in the local area. It used to be all about the honey, but people are becoming much more switched on to the importance of bees for pollination. I get comments on how vegetable gardens are producing more, or flowers are blooming earlier.

Lyndon Fenlon during the rounds in Melbourne delivering honey and checking hives

"I started my own bee keepers group about three years ago - many urban people don't have the space to keep their own bees so we work on mine, but it just shows the levels of interest in the

community. There are now about 20 members from all levels of skill and experience, from beginners through to entomologists.

“I heard about the Bee Force Project through one of the bee keepers associations, and put my name down straight away because I know our bees are at risk. The most likely way that a foreign bee pest such as Varroa mite will arrive in this country is hitching a ride on a ship, so a network of bee keepers who live close to a port have been recruited by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to participate.

“Our role is to find pests before they get a chance to get established and spread inland, by monitoring our hives with the assistance of DPI entomologists,” he said.

If Varroa mite or similar bee pests reach Australian shores and become entrenched it’s expected to cost between \$21 million and \$50 million per year over 30 years. This is not just from lower honey production but the impact of the loss of pollination by both managed and wild European honeybees on a range of fruits, vegetables and pastures.

“Urban bee keepers play a crucial role in biosecurity for the pollination industry – we have the time to carefully observe and check our hives and can pick up straight away if something is wrong.

I knew a lot about Varroa mite before I joined the project, but have learned a lot more now,” said Lyndon.

“I think it’s essential that everyone who keeps bees should know what to look for – how to observe their bees for problems, how to identify different pests and diseases and how to report them to the authorities. A big part of this is being a member of a bee keepers’ group or association and learning as much as you can.

“I have been interested in bee keeping since I was young, and started out with a beekeeping course at Collingwood Children’s Farm seven years ago.



Lyndon Fenlon with his hives at the CERES bee group

“Three years ago I started a micro business called Urban Honey Co which produces organic, unpasteurised honey from the rooftops and gardens of Melbourne CBD and surrounds. It’s all sold within the bee’s flying range, taking food miles to a whole new level!

“I keep hives at the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES) community gardens in Brunswick and the Iramoo Protected Grasslands, which is a part of the Victoria University.

Hives at the Quang Minh Temple produce honey for the monks and visitors and I’m also starting another beekeepers group there.

“We all need to work together to protect our bees from foreign invaders, so I’ll definitely be sharing the knowledge I’ve gained through participating in Bee Force,” said Lyndon.

For more information about the Pollination Program, visit www.rirdc.gov.au/pollination

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

Email: secretary@saaa.org.au

WORK WANTED

My name is Adrian Osorio Chilean beekeeper, 33 years old. I have studied and worked in beekeeping since 19 years ago, within my abilities I have many years experience in breeding queens (cell production, fertilization, marked and caged queen) production of honey and pollen, pollination, beekeeping development and health.

I hold a licence to drive a truck and trailer, bobcat, forklift and small vehicles. Also I have experience in extraction, processing and storage of honey and everything relating to warehouse work. My English is intermediate (because this is my second season working in Australia) so that enhanced my skills. At the moment I am in Chile began a new season with the bees, my interest is and I am available for any job offer. If you are interested in my services would be very grateful your reply my mail.

Adrian Osorio Peñaloza <adrianov-77@hotmail.com>