



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL
ABN 63 939 614 424



Monthly NEWS

To: The Australian Honey Industry

From: Stephen Ware – Executive Director

November/December 2011

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

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

AB's Honey
Australian Queen Bee Exporters
Australian Queen Bee Breeders
Australian Honey Products
Barnes Apiaries Pty Ltd
Beacham, VG
Beechworth Honey Pty Ltd
Bees Neez Apiaries
Bell, Graham
Billington, Steven
Black, R G & M J
Bowman Family
Bredenkamp, Don
Bresland, Ian
Brock, Margaret
Brooks, Graham
Bucktin, Brian
Bush Honey - Rosalie Waters
Buzz Honey
Capilano Honey Limited
Ciphery, C & R
Clifford, D A & J J
Codde, T J
Cole, O F
Cotton, A J & McDonald, M A
Craig, Athol
Crop Pollination Association
Cugley, Kirsten
Damokas, B
Daybreak Apiary
Davis, E
Deane, A J & C M
Den Hollander, Jeroen
Dewar Corporation
Dunlop, P G & R D
Ewington, P & M
Faithfull, Mark
FCAAA
Fruet, F P

Gell's Honey
Georgiou, Athena
Giles, G R & P M
Glenister, Susan
Goode, T W & M A
Griffiths, Milton
Griffin, Brian
Hadfield, Simon
Honey Packers & Marketers Assoc
Hooper, B A
Hooper, R F & A J
Hoskinson, H L & H M
Howard, O D
Hughston & Sons Pty Ltd
Ipswich/West Moreton Beekeepers
Jones, C H
Kap J & E A
Langan, Margaret
L'Estrange, Tony
Lever, Robert
MacFarlane, R H
Marchant, R & S
Marti, Rod T/A Gagarra Honey
McLaren, Jane
McInerney, Neville
Meimetis, Steve
Milne, Howard
Morgan, Trevor
Morris, Wendy
Mullen, Peter & Sylvia
Myers, Terry
Naisbitt, A L
Nevin, Denis
Nitschke, C J
Norcic, John
Papworth, F & E
Park, William F
Paull, D M & G A
Phillips, Rupert

Pluschke, D & MS
Pobke, Barry
Pollard, Nigel
Pollination Association of WA
Rasmussen, Ivan
Ravi, David
Roberts, I J & J H
Roberts, Glenn
Robinson, Barry
Roden, Helen
Ruiter, J H
Saxonbee Enterprises
Slattery, Anna
Smith, C & B
Spring Gully Foods Pty Ltd
Stanley, J & L
Stephens, R
Stevens, Graeme
Stevens, Howard
Stirling, Graeme
Stokes, Peter
Strout, Graham
Tasmanian Beekeepers -NW Branch
Tasmanian Crop Pollination Assoc
Tasmanian Honey Company
Thompson, N
Weatherhead, T & M
True Blue Honey
Valkenburg, Simeon
Upton, Ralph
Van Dongen, A J
Vermeer, Peter
Wallace, P
Warral Apiaries Pty Ltd
Warral, James
Weerona Apiaries
Wescobee Limited
Wilson, Col
Zadow Apiaries

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

All rights reserved. This publication is copyright and may not be resold or reproduced in any manner (except excerpts for bona fide study purposes in accordance with the Copyright Act) without the prior consent of the Publisher. Every effort has been made to ensure that this newsletter is free from error or omissions. However, the Publisher, or its respective employees or agents, shall not accept responsibility for injuries, loss or damage occasioned to any person acting or referring from action as a result of the material in this newsletter whether or not such injury, loss or damage is in any way due to any negligent act or omission, breach of duty or default on the part of the Publisher, or its respective employees or agents.

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

It has been a busy two months for AHBIC and we are happy to report to Industry members the following update:

1. At long last the Scientific Committee for the Asian Honey Bee Containment Program has met and an update from Plant Health Australia is included in this addition.
2. It is pleasing also to report that some progress has been made in relation to Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids (PAs). An update of recent development is provided by Dr Ben McKee.
3. Last week AHBIC attended the Annual General Meeting of Animal Health Australia and Dr Roly Niepier has retired as Chairman and has been replaced by Mr Peter Milne.
4. As a result of the season the office has been receiving a high level of calls and emails in relation to swarms. To deal with this situation more efficiently we have updated the website to enable the Industry to more effectively respond to request for assistance from the public. Should you wish to add any further information from your State please contact the AHBIC office.
5. The AHBIC Executive met in Melbourne on 31 October and as per the 2011 AGM resolution the Minutes have been sent to AHBIC delegates and State & Sector Secretaries.
6. One issue of interest and importance to the entire Industry will be the ongoing work by AHBIC and Government to prepare for the possible introduction of Varroa. Mr Peter McDonald attended the AHBIC meeting as Chair of the Varroa Preparedness Committee and also took part in an Industry/Government committee organised by Plant Health Australia.
7. Industry again would put on record its thanks to the more than 70 volunteers who have assisted in Asian Honey Bee suppression work in Cairns. In this issue of the newsletter we have also received an article from Minister Ludwig outlining the Government's position in this matter.
8. AHBIC continues to receive voluntary contributions from members and new names are added to our newsletter (unless otherwise requested). In respect of contributors if you wish to receive a receipt please contact the AHBIC office. Could members receiving this update please advise other members that if they wish to receive a copy they need to supply their email address.
9. The AHBIC Executive also agreed to provide Industry with a new five year Business Plan to be approved at the 2012 Annual General Meeting. A summary of key headings has also been sent to all State and Sector bodies asking for further input.
10. The AHBIC office will be closed for the Christmas holidays from 22 December 2011 till 16 January 2012.
11. Finally on behalf of the AHBIC Executive and office may I take this opportunity to wish all a **Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year** and may there be many honey flows for you and your family.

NEXT STEPS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ASIAN HONEY BEES

The following article was submitted to the AHBIC Newsletter by Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Following my announcement in May this year that the Australian Government would be investing \$2 million over two years to help manage the Asian honey bee, I am pleased to announce the release of a strategic action plan which sets out how that funding will be allocated.

The *Plan for the Transition to Management of the Asian Honey Bee* gives greater certainty to efforts to confront this pest which was first identified in Australia in 2007. Fortunately there is no evidence that these bees are carrying the Varroa mite.

This investment is being made in partnership with Biosecurity Queensland, the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and the Federal Council of Australian Apiarists Association, which will also contribute funding and undertake activities in complementary programs.

The plan will be overseen by a management group which includes senior representatives of each of the funding parties and the program is being administered by Plant Health Australia. A Scientific Advisory Group of scientists, industry and government experts and Plant Health Australia, will provide technical support. Both of these groups have already met and further meetings are planned.

I am confident that this plan will support efforts to reduce the impacts of these bees on our agricultural industries, apiarists, the natural environment and local communities.



The transition plan is a test of a new policy between the Gillard Government, states and territories, to tackle the challenges of exotic pests and diseases that cannot be eradicated.

Under the current national emergency response agreements the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and industry members provide financial contributions to undertake incursion management activities. Traditionally, if after attempts to manage the incursion, it is no longer considered eradicable, the host state or territory and affected industries have been left to manage the incursion with little or no support.

The new transition program aims to develop a longer term management solution that can be applied in situations where serious pests cannot be eradicated. A similar program is being trialled for the plant disease, Myrtle rust.

The Asian honey bee plan includes a range of community engagement activities to ensure the public and industries are well informed about the bees and how best to deal with them. It also includes a number of scientific studies aimed at developing mechanisms to help in the battle against₃

the bees. Experience gained during the program, particularly in relation to the behaviour of the Asian honey bee and its management, will be applied to refine emergency response plans for the Varroa mite and other exotic pests and diseases of bees.

The plan identifies ways to suppress the bee to minimise its impact on honey production. The plan will develop environmentally friendly invasive bee control methods to be used in areas of threat and that are of ecological significance.

The plan will provide tools for the community, land owners, honey bee industry, and commercial and hobby apiarists to identify the Asian honey bee and apply measures to limit its impact.

It is not known how the Asian honey bee entered Australia in 2007, but the Queensland Government immediately started a state-based eradication program.

The eradication program was subsequently funded nationally until 31 March 2011. The National Management Group met in January 2011 and determined that eradication was not technically feasible and a transition to management program needed to be developed.

This decision was revisited after the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Reference Committee inquiry into the Asian Honey Bee. Although consensus was not reached, in May the National Management Group confirmed it was not technically feasible to eradicate the bees.

However, in reviewing this case I recognised the need for a new policy area to assist in the transition from eradication to management of pests and diseases. This is an important opportunity for our biosecurity system and I welcome the involvement of apiarists and the bee industry in its development.



The eventual impact that Asian Honey Bees will have on communities, farmers and the natural environment is not known, and it will take time to assess how the bee will operate under Australian conditions.

As we learn to adapt to life with the Asian honey bee, the experience gained by beekeepers who have volunteered their services to work with the Queensland Government, to find and destroy nests and swarms, will greatly benefit the transition program.

I appreciate the efforts of all people in the transition to management in policy development and on the ground work, including the apiarists, DAFF, Biosecurity Queensland and the wider industry.

The Asian honey bee plan can be found at: Plant Health Australia www.planthealthaustralia.com.au

NATIONAL ASIAN HONEY BEE TRANSITION TO MANAGEMENT (AHB T2M)

The Australian government is investing \$2 million from July 2011 to June 2013 to progress a transition from eradication of Asian Honey Bee (AHB) into management of the pest as it becomes more widely established in Australia. It will do this in partnership with Biosecurity Queensland and the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), who will also contribute significant funding and undertake activities in complementary programs to adapt to life with AHB.

The program will be delivered by Biosecurity Queensland under the oversight of a management group consisting of senior representatives of each of the funding bodies – DAFF, Biosecurity Queensland and AHBIC. The management group will oversee program establishment, monitor its delivery and consider any triggers arising that necessitate a review of the program. The management group will be chaired by DAFF.

Plant Health Australia is an observer on the management group in recognition of its role as contract manager; however, PHA will not participate in the decision-making process.

A Scientific Advisory Group has also been established to provide technical advice, feedback and consideration of specific projects and activities within the AHB T2M program. This advice and feedback will be provided to the National Management Group who will consider these suggestions.

The Scientific Advisory Group recently held their first meeting on the 9 November in Brisbane. The SAG is chaired and coordinated by PHA, and includes industry experts and bee scientists who provide a wide range of experience to assist with the AHB T2M program.

To download the AHB T2M document and to keep up to date with this process, go to the PHA website and click on the link to the National Asian Honey Bee Transition to Management Program website.

If you have any questions or queries regarding the program, contact PHA on Phone: 02 6215 7700
Email: info@asianhoneybee.net.au Or visit <http://www.phau.com.au>

WHO IS PLANT HEALTH AUSTRALIA?

Plant Health Australia (PHA) is the national coordinator of the government-industry partnership for plant biosecurity in Australia. As a not-for-profit company, PHA services the needs of Members and independently advocates on behalf of the national plant biosecurity system. PHA supports its industry and government Members by contributing to decision making and management groups directing responses to incursions, as well as assisting with some operational response roles.

The EPPRD

PHA is the national custodian of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) and PLANTPLAN on behalf of the Australian honeybee industry, as well as the other 35 industry and government signatories. The EPPRD is a legally binding agreement between PHA, the Australian Government, all state and territory governments and national peak industry body signatories. It covers the management and funding of responses to Emergency Plant Pest incidents, including the potential for Owner Reimbursement Costs for producers. It also formalises the role of plant industries' participation in decision making. Underpinning the EPPRD is PLANTPLAN, the agreed

operational plan that guides responses to eradication of plant pests. Honeybee pests and diseases became covered by the EPPRD in 2009.

Background

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) is currently a Member of both PHA, and Animal Health Australia (AHA).

From 2002 – 2009 AHBIC was a signatory to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA), the equivalent agreement to the EPPRD that covers animal disease eradication response. During the Asian honeybee incursion in Queensland, it was recognised that as this pest did not fall under the category of an animal disease it could not be managed using the EADRA. Despite this outcome, the Asian honeybee response was still managed using principles of the EADRA, however, the process highlighted to the Parties involved that the EPPRD was better suited to handle honeybee pests, diseases and pest bees.

In addition, as a result of the benefits provided to plant industries by pollination due to honeybees, and the impact that a pest of honeybees would have on pollination dependent industries, it was determined that future pest emergency responses for the honeybee industry would be better covered under the EPPRD.

This also allows the various horticultural industries that benefit from pollination activities to potentially share the costs of a future emergency response to an exotic pest or disease of honeybees. Although honeybee pests and diseases were covered by the EPPRD in 2009, the Asian honeybee incursion could not be managed retrospectively under EPPRD rules. However, Parties saw the benefits in developing a management framework for the Asian honeybee response to be based on EPPRD principles. Following the change from eradication to transition to management, PHA is facilitating the coordination of the program as contract manager.

Any future incursions of honeybee pests or pest bees would be managed under the EPPRD and AHBIC and pollination dependent industries would be involved in both decision making and any cost sharing of an agreed response.

RURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D) UPDATE

The November 2011 edition of the *Rural Research and Development (R&D) Update* has been compiled for the Rural R&D Council and presents recent policy and program developments in rural R&D and innovation. It can be downloaded from the [Rural R&D Council website](#).

Rural R&D activities continue to progress, including the government consultation with stakeholders in relation to the Council's *National Strategic Rural R&D Investment Plan* and the Productivity Commission report on the rural research and development corporations. I encourage all interested stakeholders to continue to support government deliberations regarding the system's future. The Rural R&D Council Secretariat is available to assist with this if you require further information regarding current developments.

Dr Kate Grenot

Chair

Rural Research and Development Council

A BRIEF UPDATE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC OPINION OF PYRROLIZIDINE ALKALOIDS (PAs) IN THE FOOD CHAIN

Industry has been working with Food Standards Australia & New Zealand (FSANZ) and Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC) to further research into Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids (PAs), in particular those PAs present in honey and their relative toxicology.

Much of the data with relation to the presence of PAs in food is associated with honey, as it has been a common area of research by laboratories developing analytical methods for PAs. Such data is then used by regulators to review and hypothesise the toxicology of PAs and honey, even though we have not seen a public health concern with the consumption of honey like there has been with other foods (eg. herbal teas or herbal remedies etc).

Many European authorities and governments have been conducting reviews on PAs, such as Codex, European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and European Commission (EC). These reviews were sparked following some testing of salads in Germany that returned an unacceptable level of PAs.

The EFSA scientific opinion recently published is worth us summarising; in the majority it does not contain any significant new information with the exception of a greater review of individual PA toxicology. However, it does make some interesting comments about honey that are favourable.

The report considered data from 13,280 bulk honeys and 1,324 retail honeys and 600 different PA structures. This data is likely to have originated from European laboratories testing PAs commercially. A total of 17 PAs were detected in honey, with 8 PAs constituting 75-90% of total PAs measured in honey. Echimidine-N-oxide was the highest PA detected at 2,031 parts per billion (ppb).

Interestingly, the maximum levels found in retail honey were only 10% of the levels found in bulk honey, suggesting that blending, processing and filtering does reduce PA levels in honey. Industry is planning to research this finding in more detail to provide best practice advice to honey packers.

The report concluded that a specific group of PAs were more toxic than others (1,2-unsaturated PAs esters and their N-oxides) and they were demonstrated to be part of actual cases of negative human health impacts. Lasiocarpine is amongst the most toxic PAs that has been tested, and in the data reviewed it was not present in 99% of the honey samples. The results from retail honeys were considered to be a low public health concern, which is great news for our industry.

Considering the types of PAs found in honey and their reduction in retail products the EFSA concluded that honey as a dietary source will not lead to any acute toxicity in humans, which is an expected conclusion as there is no evidence anywhere of a public health problem.

The ongoing use of appropriate blending practices in Australia is essential to ensure PA levels continue to be maintained at safe levels. As we continue to receive updated scientific information industry will review and work with government to ensure an appropriate and ongoing research effort is best maintained.

Please contact AHBIC should you require any further information.

Ben McKee

APIS CERANA UPDATE

Advice 105 - 21 October 2011

Detections since Advice 104 are:

IP496 was a nest at Mooroolool

IP497 was a nest at Earlville

IP498 was a swarm at the Cairns Domestic Airport

IP499 was a swarm at Portsmith

IP500 was a swarm at Lake Placid

IP501 was a nest at Freshwater

IP502 was a swarm at Redlynch

This past week has been very wet. Babinda had 654mm and Cairns had 420mm of rain. Is it an early start to the wet season or just unseasonal rain? Opinion seems to be divided. However it did curtail operations in the area.

The bee eater roosts are being monitored and the pellets collected have been negative for *Apis cerana* for ETTY Bay, near Innisfail, Clifton Beach and Atherton. There were positives for Kewarra Beach and Kuranda. New roosts have been located in the Port Douglas area, to the north, which is well outside the RA so will provide useful data.

The containment plan is still being refined so at this stage it cannot be released. However, I think the general comment can be made that it is disappointing from an industry point of view.

A swarm was picked up at Shoalwater Bay, which is the military training ground north east of Rockhampton. It was a decent swarm containing about 12,000 bees. It was reported by the defense people to the Queensland Department. As there have been recent exercises there involving overseas troops and equipment, it was collected by a local beekeeper and samples are being sent to Brisbane for examination for internal and external mites and some viruses. The bees have been identified as *Apis mellifera* and indications are that it is a local swarm but it still will be checked.

There was more questioning of the DAFF people in the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Committee on the Asian bee incursion. The result is what would be expected. The transcript is at <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/committee/s375.pdf> just put bees in the search section and it will give you the pages.

Advice 106 - 5 November 2011

Detections since Advice 105 are:

IP503 was a nest at Myola

IP504 was a nest at Russell Heads

IP505 was a swarm at the Cairns Airport

IP506 was a nest at Edmonton

IP507 was a nest at Earlville

IP508 was a swarm at Mareeba

The VMS road sign is now at Silkwood which is south of Innisfail and out of the RA. It is expected that this will generate more public call outs and, as Silkwood is south of the RA, it will give a very good idea as to whether the Asian bee is being contained within the RA.

Advice 107 - 20 November 2011

Detections since Advice 106 are:
 IP509 was a swarm at Cairns wharf
 IP510 was a nest at Lake Barrine
 IP511 was a swarm at Earlville
 IP512 was a nest at Mt. Sheridan

Bee eater pellets from ETTY Bay near Innisfail early this month have proved negative for Asian bee wings.

So far 64 volunteers have been to Cairns. This past week there have been volunteers from South Australia and New South Wales. Thank you to those who have volunteered. 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. Contact Bill on: 02 6732 1263 or 0428 669 578 or email to beeweiss@gmail.com if you wish to volunteer.

The Scientific Advisory Group is due to meet in Brisbane on Wednesday, 23 November 2011. The role of this group is to provide technical advice, feedback and consideration of specific projects and activities within the program.

Trevor Weatherhead

2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SECTOR CONFERENCES

FCAAA	New South Wales Apiarists' Association	24/25 May 2012
	Tasmanian Beekeepers' Association	5/6 July 2012
	Victorian Apiarists' Association	20/21 June 2012
	WA Farmers Federation - Beekeeping Section	15 June 2012
	Queensland Beekeepers' Association	14/15 June 2012
	South Australian Apiarists' Association	28/29 June 2012
	Honey Packers' and Marketers' Association	June 2012
	National Council of Crop Pollination Associations	4/5 July 2012
	Australian Queen Bee Breeders' Association	TBA
	Australian Honey Bee Industry Council	6 July 2012
	Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Associations	TBA

2012 AHBIC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The venue for the 2012 AGM will be the Colonial Inn, Cnr George & Elizabeth Streets, Launceston Tasmania in conjunction with the Tasmanian Beekeepers' Association (TBA) Conference.

People attending the AGM/Conference need to make their own bookings – Phone: 03 6331 6588. The cost is \$120.00 per room per night for two persons – extra person \$35.00 pp. Business Class room is \$150.00 per night.

The location is in central Launceston so alternative accommodation to suit all is available. If you require any more information contact Mrs Maxine Ewington, Secretary, TBA Phone: 03 6442 3916 or Email: secretary@tasmanianbeekeepers.org.au

SYDNEY ROYAL NATIONAL HONEY SHOW – 5 - 18 APRIL 2012



2010 saw the introduction of the National Honey Competition with 3 commercial classes being included and competing for Gold, Silver & Bronze medals.

This is the only National Honey Show awarding Gold, Silver & Bronze medals in the Southern Hemisphere.

Entries for the 2012 Sydney Royal National Honey Show will be open in mid December and there are a variety of non-commercial and also commercial classes that are available to enter.

Please ensure that you read the Sydney Royal National Honey Show Schedule. Exhibitors are bound by the terms and conditions set out in the RAS General Regulations, the Special Apiculture Regulations, the Sydney Royal National Honey Show Schedule and the conditions detailed in each Application for Entry.

Please ensure that you have read these documents. For more information or to be added to the 2012 Show Exhibitor mailing list contact:

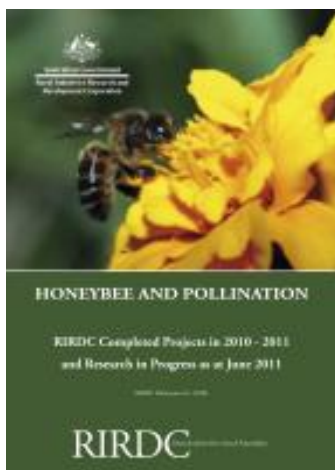
Elaine Rogers - Coordinator

Honey Competitions & Events

Phone: 02 9704 1449 or Email: honey@rasnsw.com.au Website: www.rasnsw.com.au

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS - HONEYBEE AND POLLINATION 2010-2011

The Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC) Honeybee and Pollination Completed Projects in 2010–2011 and Research in Progress at June 2011 contain short summaries of continuing projects as well as those that were completed during 2010–2011. The Honeybee Program aims to improve the productivity and profitability of the Australian beekeeping industry through the organisation, funding and management of a research, development and extension program that is both stakeholder and market focused.



The objectives of the Honeybee Program are:

- Pest and disease protection
- Productivity and profitability enhancement to lift beekeeper income
- Resource access security and knowledge
- Pollination research
- Income diversification including new product development
- Extension, communication and capacity building.

The Honeybee and Pollination Programs' completed projects and research in progress report for 2010-11 is now available for free downloading from the RIRDC website: www.rirdc.gov.au

PATERSON'S CURSE/SALVATION JANE

FSANZ has recently updated its factsheet on Paterson's Curse/Salvation Jane honey.

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/factsheets/factsheets2011/patersonscursesalvat5335.cfm>

This update was undertaken as part of a FSANZ-wide exercise to modernise all our factsheets and was not in response to any food safety matter or our combined research efforts in this area. The original Paterson's Curse factsheet was prepared in 2004. The new factsheet has been simplified. No changes have been made to the recommendations regarding the consumption of pure Paterson's Curse/Salvation Jane honey.

NEW DIRECTORS FOR PLANT HEALTH AUSTRALIA

Plant Health Australia (PHA) is pleased to welcome two new directors to the Board following Member endorsement at the 11th PHA Annual General Meeting in Canberra on Wednesday 16 November. PHA Members voted unanimously to accept the recommendations of the PHA Board Selection Committee to appoint the Directors.

The two new Directors are Mr Eoin Wallis and Mr Malcolm Finlayson.

Eoin Wallis has an extensive background in agricultural management including work at the University of Queensland where he was involved in crop agronomy and management of the Food Legume and Oilseeds Research Program for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. He is currently Chief Executive Officer of BSES Limited, the principal provider of research, development and extension to the Australian sugarcane industry.

Mr Wallis previously led the Sugar Research and Development Corporation as its Executive Director and held positions as a non-executive director with the CRC for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology and the CRC for Sustainable Sugar Production.

Malcolm Finlayson is an accountant with extensive experience as a Chief Financial Officer for a range of large agricultural companies. He currently runs his own consultancy firm, Finesse Solutions Pty Ltd, and was the Chief Operating Officer – Trading for ABB Grain Ltd. He is a Director of PentAG Commodities Pty Ltd and Grain Trade Australia Ltd. He has a Bachelor's degree in Business (Accounting) and an MBA. Malcolm is a CPA and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Mr Wallis and Mr Finlayson replace outgoing directors Mr Xavier Martin who has been a Director of PHA since April 2000 and Dr Glen Kyle who has been a Director since October 2007.

PHA Chairman, Dr Tony Gregson, thanked both outgoing directors, acknowledging the valuable contribution that Xavier and Glen have made to the protection of Australia's plant industries during their tenure on the PHA Board. Dr Gregson wished them both all the best in their future endeavours.

Current PHA directors Dr Tony Gregson and Mr Selwyn Snell were reappointed at the meeting for another four-year term. For further information: www.phau.com.au

AUSTRALIAN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS ANALYSIS

Period	Combined		Packed		Bulk	
	Imports Tonnes	Exports Tonnes	Exports Tonnes	Exports Tonnes	Exports %	Exports Tonnes
Mar-12	0	-				
Dec-11	0	-				
Sep-11	831	961	422	539		
Jun-11	658	1,104	529	575		
Total	1,489	2,065			951	46%
					1,114	54%
Mar-11	797	1,174	495	679		
Dec-10	653	1,200	374	827		
Sep-10	997	1,270	407	862		
Jun-10	983	1,308	427	881		
Total	3,430	4,952			1,703	34%
					3,249	66%

The continued drop in exports is due to the exchange rate affecting our competitiveness and on imports the rise is due to local season shortages.

Ed Planken

DAFF RURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to prompt discussion with stakeholders on selected issues raised in the Productivity Commission's report on the rural research and development corporations and the Rural Research and Development Council's National Strategic Rural Research and Development Investment Plan.

The Australian Government acknowledges the significant public consultation that has already occurred during the Productivity Commission's inquiry and the development of the council's investment plan. Therefore, the issues on which the government is seeking further stakeholder input are those with a higher level of complexity or where additional input is required regarding how to address the recommendation. Inclusion or non-inclusion in the consultation paper is not an indication of the government's inclination to accept or reject a recommendation.

PC RDC recommendations	Key issues for consultations	RANK
1. Balance of investment for the rural R&D system.	Stakeholders' views are sought on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the appropriateness and practicality of the Rural Research & development Council's proposed investment themes and investment balance; and if the proposed investment balance was adopted, how a focus on transformation research might be implemented 	
2. Increased focus on	Stakeholders' views are sought on:	

<i>broader rural research – covering cross-sectoral issues or issues with a higher proportion of public benefits.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there is a need for an increased focus on broader rural research, and • if there is an need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what is the preferred delivery model? - how should the increased focus on broader rural research be funded? - what are the major issues to be addressed? 	
3. Build and strengthen strategic international links to contribute to addressing Climate change and sustain ably producing food, fibre and renewable energy, and to increase international capital flows into Australian rural R&D.	Stakeholders' views are sought on how to build and strengthen strategic international R&D links, and to increase international flows into Australian rural R&D.	
4. Change to the arrangements for voluntary contributions.	Stakeholders' views are sought on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implications of voluntary contributions only being eligible for matching if they are from two non-associated entities and commercial-in-confidence provisions do not restrict disclosure of research outcomes • future matching contribution arrangements for very small industries 	
5. Statutory RDCs to be allowed to undertake marketing.	Stakeholders' views are sought on the advantages and disadvantages of allowing statutory RDCs to undertake marketing.	
6. Number and size of RDCs	Stakeholders' views are sought on the advantages and disadvantages of the current number and size of RDCs, and options for increasing efficiency.	
7. Introduction of an escalating series of mechanisms to deal with underperforming RDCs	Stakeholders' views are sought on potential sanctions to address underperformance by RDCs.	
8. Allowing government to appoint a government director RDC boards.	Stakeholders' vies are sought on the advantages and disadvantages of allowing government to appoint a government director to RDC boards, and other ways to improve communication between government and the RDCs.	
9. Private investment in rural R&D.	Stakeholders' views are sought on barriers to, and incentives for, increasing private investment in rural R&D.	
10. Extension and adoption.	Stakeholders' views are sought on whether current arrangements for disseminations and adoption of rural R&D results are adequate, and if not, what alternative mechanisms might be considered.	
11. RDC transparency and accountability to stakeholders.	Stakeholders' views are sought on whether RDC operations are sufficiently transparent and the options for and implications which may flow from increasing RDC transparency and accountability.	

STUDY CONFIRMS SAFETY OF AUSTRALIA'S FOOD SUPPLY

The Hon Catherine King MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing

The latest Australia-wide study of our food has confirmed the overall safety of Australia's food supply, Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, Catherine King said today.

“The [23rd Australian Total Diet Study](#) released today by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), has reaffirmed the Australian food supply is safe for consumers,” Ms King said.

“The ATDS investigated agricultural and veterinary chemicals, contaminants and nutrients in 92 foods commonly consumed in the Australian diet. In total more than 1500 samples of food were taken as part of the study. The foods were tested as they would be eaten, for example apples were tested without cores and chicken was cooked.

“Estimated dietary exposures to all 214 agricultural and veterinary chemical residues tested, were well below the relevant reference health standards, which is consistent with previous studies.”

The study also detected no Mycotoxins (toxins produced by fungi) in any of the foods analysed. For all contaminants, estimated dietary exposures were also below the relevant reference health standards for all population groups, including people who eat a lot of specific foods,” Ms King said. “The ATDS also provided a general indication of nutrient intake amongst Australians which will inform further studies, such as national nutrition surveys, that will investigate and further define nutrient adequacy.”

Ms King said the study gave FSANZ important information that helps to guide the next ATDS, which is already underway. For example, the 24th ATDS will look at acrylamide in food and issues like chemical migration from food packaging, building on work FSANZ has already done in this area. The ATDS is a very important tool for keeping an eye on our food and ensuring its safety for all Australians.”

The report was made public yesterday (28 Nov 2011). A link to the media release is given here:
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/mediacentre/mediareleases/mediareleases2011/studyconfirmsafetyo5371.cfm>

HONEY RESULTS

Three honey samples (jars/containers) were obtained from four states, giving a total of 12 different honey samples (jars/containers) from around Australia. Samples included both brand name and generic name honey. To aid analysis, the samples from each state were combined together to give a total of four composite samples for analysis.

Appendix 7 includes a list of all the agricultural & veterinary residues (n = 214), contaminants (n = 9) and selected mycotoxins (n = 12) and nutrients (n = 11) that were tested in each composite sample.

Honey was the food with the highest median concentration of lead at 0.04 mg/kg, but to put this in perspective see the discussion in the report (pages 47-50) about the contribution of all dietary sources of lead.

There were no detections of agricultural & veterinary residues in the honeys.