



Monthly NEWS

To: The Australian Honey Industry

From: Stephen Ware – Executive Director

December 2010 – January 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!**

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Brooks, Graham
Capilano Honey Limited
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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
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
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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.

1. On behalf of all of us at AHBIC I take this opportunity to wish all a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.
2. AHBIC has been working to re-open trading relations with the United States following the US Dept of Agriculture's, Animal and Plant Health Service (APHIS) decision to temporarily suspend imports of honeybee queens and package bees from Australia.

The US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Service (APHIS) informed the Australian Government on 28 October 2010 of the suspension of the importation of honeybees from Australia. After representations from the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), APHIS indicated that the suspension was due to concerns about specific bee viruses that were claimed to be present in Australia and may not be in the US and to concerns regarding the Asian honey bee incursion around Cairns. At present the temporary suspension remains in place and the DAFF continues to work to have the suspension removed.

3. The Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry had previously advised it would be undertaking a risk assessment to enable the re-opening of the imported bees to the Quarantine Station at Eastern Creek. The closure of the Quarantine Station is doing immense harm to Australian Industry. Following discussions with AHBIC the Department has advised:

As has been previously advised by Conall O'Connell and Ms Rona Mellor, Deputy Secretary Biosecurity Services Group, the Department has commenced a review of the policy for the importation of queen honeybees. The review will cover all disease agents, pests and species of quarantine concern, including those that have emerged since the original policy was developed in the 1990s.

The review remains a high priority for the department. Two consultants with scientific knowledge and experience of honeybees have been contracted to provide technical input on agents of particular complexity and concern. As previously stated it is expected that a draft import policy will be available for comment in the first half of 2011. As a registered stakeholder you will receive notification when this is released. The timing of the release of a final policy will depend on a number of factors including the nature of stakeholder responses and the measures that are required to address biosecurity concerns.

The Eastern Creek facility has the capability to accept imports should this be required at the completion of the policy review and the capacity to import live honeybees is being included in planning for future post-entry quarantine arrangements.

4. AHBIC raised with the Government that New Zealand apples will be shortly entering Australia. Industry also raised with Government if it had any success in allowing Australian honey into the New Zealand market. The Government responded thus:

In May 2010, DAFF was advised that the review of an Import Health Standard related to Australian honey and bee products was still under consideration by the Ministry of

Agriculture and Forestry-Biosecurity, New Zealand (MAFBNZ). A project officer has been employed by MAFBNZ to oversee further consideration of issues raised by its review panel on honey. This process is expected to be finalised by early 2011. When the outcome of the review is known DAFF will recommence negotiations with MAFBNZ for access of Australian honey and bee products.

5. The Prime Minister recently announced that the Australian/Korean Free Trade Agreement was a matter of priority for Australia. In response the Government responded to AHBIC:

In regard to the inclusion of honey in Australia's proposed free trade agreement with Korea, the Australian Government is seeking a comprehensive outcome that includes improved market access for Australian honey into Korea. Korea has advised that its honey industry is sensitive. From consultations by the department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with the Australian honey industry, including with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, the Government also knows the importance the Australian honey industry attaches to improved market access for honey into the Korean market. The Government will continue to push for a high-quality outcome that includes improved market access for Australian honey.

6. *Apis cerana* Queensland

This issue continues to be important to Industry and we are seeking clarification as to the next meeting of CCEPP. The following is a brief summary and progress report of the incursion response to date:

Program status

Casual surveillance staff numbers in the Asian honeybee (AHB) program were significantly increased earlier this year on a short term basis to gather data about the extent of the AHB infestation in the Cairns region. This information has been gathered and is currently being considered by national funding partners.

In September, casual staff were made aware by Biosecurity Queensland that the program may need to reduce its operations. Recently, 40 casual surveillance and administrative staff who were employed by Biosecurity Queensland on short term contracts were notified they were no longer required for the Asian honeybee program. The affected staff were offered the opportunity to seek casual employment on another Biosecurity Queensland eradication program and that twenty staff have expressed interest.

As Asian honey bees are not as active or visible during the north Queensland wet season, the national program does not require the same number of staff it requires through the dry season. Biosecurity Queensland has advised that there will still be sufficient staff throughout the wet season to respond to any public reports and remove any confirmed swarms or nests.

Program status – funding

Funding for the Asian honeybee program was adjusted in September when AHBIC advised it could not commit to a previously agreed funding figure resulting in a shortfall of \$500,000.

At the recent Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) meeting in Sydney, Ministers agreed to continue the program until the end of March 2011. Negotiations on funding the program are continuing with the national cost sharing partners. The Consultative Committee will need to review the costing extension. NMG consideration and endorsement will need to

be obtained. This is being progressed and I will come back to you when dates have been confirmed for the Consultative Committee and the National Management Group.

AHBIC is in principle and has advised Government its willingness to contribute to the three month extension of the program. This should enable time for the CCEPP meeting to make appropriate recommendations to the NMG in respect of a final decision on whether eradication is succeeding.

HONEYBEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE VACANCIES: CHAIR AND MEMBER

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) is calling for applications from interested people to apply for two positions (including Chair) on the Honeybee Advisory Committee.

The position of Chair will become available at the end of June 2011. The position of member of the Committee became available when Dr Denis Anderson resigned the position in preparation for his retirement.

The Committee consists of persons with a range of skills and experience in the research, production and processing sectors of industry together with a representative of the Corporation. The Committee provides recommendations on the allocation of research and development contributions (comprising industry levies and Commonwealth matching funds) to the RIRDC Board.

The Committee consults with industry bodies and participants to evaluate the requirements for research and development and to prepare a research, development and extension strategic plan. The plan is reviewed annually to monitor and evaluate the impact of projects.

Applicants should note that RIRDC program Committee guidelines generally preclude members of the executive of a national industry association from being a member of a RIRDC advisory committee. A joint industry/RIRDC selection process has been established to choose Committee members.

Written applications outlining your skills and relevant experience should be forwarded by 31 January 2011 to:

Honeybee Program
Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation
PO Box 4776
KINGSTON ACT 2604

If you require further information about the Honeybee Program, please visit the Program's page on the RIRDC website (www.rirdc.gov.au), or contact the Honeybee Program Senior Research Manager, Dr Dave Alden, on 02 6271 4128 or dave.alden@rirdc.gov.au.

APIS CERANA UPDATE

Advice 84– 28 November 2010

Finds for the past weeks up to Friday 26 November are:

IP289 was a swarm at Aeroglen

IP290 was a swarm at Alooomba

IP291 was a nest at Gordonvale

IP292 was a nest at Edmonton

IP293 was a nest at Deeral

IP294 was a nest at Deeral

IP295 was a nest at Edmonton

IP296 was a swarm at White Rock

IP297 was a nest at Earlville

IP298 was a nest at Yungaburra

IP299 was a swarm at Alooomba

IP300 was a swarm at Meringa

IP301 was a swarm at Cairns Port

IP302 was a nest at Edmonton

IP303 was a nest at Bayview Heights

There are several sites where beelining is continuing.

The most significant event of the past weeks has been the letting go of the casual staff. This has coincided with the spending of the allocated money and the coming of the wet season. There is 11 staff still in place to handle public notifications and attend to beelining. The detector dog and its handler are still in place.

Officially the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) has extended the program to 31 March 2011. A telephone hook-up for the National Management Group (NMG) scheduled for Monday 29 November will not proceed due to departments seeking further technical information.

One thing that has been drawn to my attention in the past weeks is that there is still a misunderstanding of how the Asian bees work. The strain that is in Cairns is the Java strain. This exhibits different behaviour to the strains in south-east Asia. The strain that is in Thailand is amenable to being kept in boxes and will yield a surplus of honey, be that it is small. The Java strain is not amenable to being kept in boxes. It absconds at the slightest disturbance and does not yield a surplus of honey.

So the view that has been expressed by some beekeepers that, if the Java strain is declared endemic, beekeepers will still be able to carry out beekeeping in the manner they are used to is totally erroneous. Maybe with this story being circulated we can understand why some in the horticulture industry are thinking that it will still be business as usual. This is far from the case and I would urge beekeepers when they have the opportunity to let those in the horticulture industry know this and maybe correct a misconception they have through incorrect information being given out by some beekeepers.

Advice 85– 10 December 2010

Finds for the past two weeks up to Friday 10 December are:

IP304 was a nest at Centenary Park
IP305 was a swarm at White Rock
IP306 was a nest at Edmonton
IP307 was a swarm at White Rock
IP308 was a swarm at Manunda
IP309 was a nest at Portsmouth
IP310 was a nest at Portsmouth
IP311 was a nest at Mount Sheridan
IP312 was a nest at Woree
IP313 was a nest at Bentley Park
IP314 was a swarm at Manunda
IP315 was a swarm at Fitzroy Island
IP316 was a nest at Woree
IP317 was a nest at Woree
IP318 was a swarm at Portsmouth
IP319 was a swarm at Gordonvale
IP320 was a swarm at Parramatta Park
IP321 was a nest at Gordonvale
IP322 was a nest at Gordonvale
IP323 was a nest at Portsmouth

Re IP3232, it is the first time that a nest has been found in one of the coconut logs put out as bait hives. This one has been good for helping train the dog and is to be used for a remote poisoning trial. There have been attempts in the past to have nests used for this trial but something has come up at the last minute which made the trial not able to be carried out.

The swarm at Fitzroy Island is the first time that the Asian bee has been found there. It is just off the coast with Yarrabah being nearby. At this stage it is not known whether the swarm came from the mainland or was from a nest on the island that established during refurbishment a few months back. Sweeping on the island has not found any more cerana.

An observation that has been made is that the nests now are not very old. This is a good sign and not finding old nests, to me, means that we are gradually get on top of the nests.

Negotiations are currently being held to provide the funding till 31 March next year. There is also a meeting of the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) to be held shortly to put recommendations to the NMG. The CCEPP took over from the Consultative Committee on Asian Honey Bee (CCAHB). This occurred because the responsibility for the program has transferred from the animal side to the plant side of Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF).

Trevor Weatherhead

ODOUR DETECTION DOG

Odour detection dog (Zac) arrived in Cairns on 4 November. The process of transitioning Zac from his trainer Greg Horrocks to his handler Patricia Villegas is complete. Training of Zac by Patricia and with the support of Greg continues to progress rapidly. Currently Patricia and Zac are:

- Performing 3-5 training searches a day (most is 6)
- Searching to a height of 3m
- Longest search time is 13minutes
- Searching successfully on AHB comb and bee
- Training on live nests when possible
- Working well as a unit

Patricia is a competent and experienced dog handler and Zac is the best dog she has worked with and she is working extremely hard to get him operational as soon as possible.



Zac buzzing to get started

AHBIC'S FOOD SAFETY & PREVENTION OF RESIDUES COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Committee continues to work on a voluntary basis for the best interests of industry and we are happy to update you on a number of key recent events that may be of interest.

Exporters were faced with some rather radical changes by the Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service (AQIS) to export documentation procedures, which limited the capacity for many of us to meet our market specific requirements. Further consultation with AQIS has enabled us to reach an amicable outcome so far that has limited any interruption to exports of honey.

An unfortunate change in policy led to AQIS stopping the development of export honey orders that would have been regulated through the Export Control Act. The decision was made by AQIS that at this stage it was an unnecessary regulatory burden for industry and was thus not warranted. Industry will continue to observe our market access needs to ensure we can continue to see easy export access to key international markets.

Following some earlier advice from AQIS, the Committee awaits further advice on the expectations of the EU with regard to honey produced from hives that may have had a historical treatment of antibiotic (oxytetracycline). There are some concerns that hives treated in the past may require a longer withholding period than usual when being used to provide honey for export to the EU.

The National Residue Survey (NRS) continues to illustrate the conformance of Australian honey to international standards. A reviewed list of appropriate packers has been provided to the NRS to help them deliver a suitable survey, which will commence shortly.

In a new initiative, a review will commence on commercial honeys taken from treated hives with oxytetracycline as a means of assessing the appropriateness of the Maximum Residue Level or MRL at 300 ppb. The motivation for this work is to investigate whether the MRL can be reduced.

There is some frustration about the AQIS Imported Food Program's ability to detect honey with residues at current levels of import border control testing. The problem we face is that the system is set up purely as a mechanism to control food safety and not compliance to food standards or residue levels, and there are minimal food safety concerns with honey. The Committee has written to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to try and improve the level and degree of testing of imported honey. The aim is to ensure imports meet the high quality standards set by locally produced Australian honey.

Industry has been testing alkaloids (PAs) in honey to better understand their occurrence and at what levels they appear. To really understand this issue we do need to improve our knowledge of the human health implications or toxicology of different PAs and the role in which honey may play in human's dietary exposure to PAs.

Simply, there is not enough data or good science surrounding PAs. Packers need to continue their blending codes of practice which is a responsible response. FSANZ is preparing a research proposal for industry to consider, which if we fund and progress will help us all better understand the issue and what our response should be.

Ben McKee

RIRDC'S KEY HONEYBEE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IN 2010

The '*Research in Progress*' report <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/items/10-090> provides an excellent summary of projects that were completed and published or were continuing in 2009-10.

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.

This and 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:

'Non-chemical and minimal chemical use options for managing Varroa' – a summary (including presentations) of two industry and researcher workshops held in August.

This report summarises outcomes from two related workshops convened by RIRDC and its pollination research partner Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). The purpose of the workshops was to review control options, identify research projects and to raise Varroa management awareness. While chemical use may be a necessary short term response to Varroa infestation, viable longer term non-chemical R&D requirements are scoped in this report. Non-Chemical R&D needs include measures to address industry profitability, prevention strategies and pre-incursion option evaluation. Communication messages developed during the workshops focus on the need to educate both beekeepers and pollination dependent plant industries.

'A study of existing and prospective markets and marketing activities for Australian honey'

This RIRDC study aims to find ways to improve producer returns by assessing the effectiveness of the current supply chain arrangements and exploring the scope for the distribution of new and enhanced honey products. In particular, the study assessed the potential to deliver products specific attributes such as low Glycaemic Index (GI) and benefits derived from products that can enable antimicrobial and prebiotic activities.

'Pollination aware – the real value of pollination in Australia'.

This report consolidates the available information on pollination in Australia at a number of different levels: commodity/industry; regional/state; and national. The report, including 35 case studies describing individual crops and commodities, provides a base for more detailed decision making on the management of pollination across a broad range of commodities. This project is part of the Pollination Program – a jointly funded partnership with the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

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

Dave Alden

MAKING THE MOST OF POLLINATION TO BOOST AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION



Help is on its way for Australian agriculture, which is threatened by a blood-sucking mite likely to devastate wild populations of escaped European honeybees and attack commercial hives if it arrives on our shores. An estimated 65 per cent of agricultural production in Australia relies on honeybees for pollination, yet there is little awareness of its importance because of the incredible job done by wild honeybees.

A pollination manual is being written to provide practical advice for Australian and New Zealand beekeepers and the many growers reliant on them for crop production.

The manual is being prepared under the Pollination Program, a research and development strategy jointly funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and the Australian Government.

The manual is being written by the NZ Institute for Plant and Food Research Ltd. Lead author and pollination researcher Dr Mark Godwin says it will provide background information on the importance of pollination and the basics of plant flowering for specific crops and the pollination process.

The manual will then outline how best to manage both bees and these crops for pollination to get the best outcomes in terms of fruit production. There will be separate sections on each of the main crops reliant on pollination providing more specific information.

“The idea of the manual is to give straightforward information that readers can readily apply. It is being written in plain language that will clearly lay out the relationship between bees and their crops and how growers can best manage that relationship to ensure good crop outcomes and maintain healthy bee populations,” Dr Goodwin said.

Gerald Martin, Chairman of the Pollination R&D Advisory Committee, says it’s essential to optimise pollination and promote good pollination practices.

“A recent Pollination Program report, *Pollination Aware*, points out that a heavy reliance on incidental pollination means the yield and quality of produce is often not reaching its potential. However, growers will only pay for services if they are cost-effective,” Mr Martin said.

“The best outcomes will be achieved through proper preparation of both the bees and the crops, and that is where the manual will be invaluable.

“The more demand there is for paid pollination and the greater the returns for beekeepers, the more the industry will expand. This in turn will protect agricultural and horticultural industries against the impact on wild bees of an incursion of *Varroa* mite.

“This parasitic pest has already devastated honeybee populations around the world and scientists say it’s only a matter of time before it reaches Australian shores. It has already reached New Zealand,” Mr Martin said. The manual is expected to be available in 2011.

AUSTRALIAN BEES BANNED

Courtesy: Catch the Buzz

By: Alan Harman

Maybe A Virus, Maybe Not

With little public fanfare, the United States has banned the importation of honey bee queens and package bees from Australia.

Minister Counsellor (Agriculture) Simon Smalley at the Australian Embassy in Washington and a spokesman for the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) both confirm the move made towards the end of last month.

Both say there is a "temporary suspension" of the imports, but the APHIS website has a one sentence reference that reads:

"Importation of honey bee queens and package bees from Australia is prohibited."

But the halt is not because of the Asian bee incursion in northern Queensland as many expected but because of something called slow paralysis virus.

In a letter sent to APHIS official Wayne. F. Wehling and seen by *Bee Culture*, Australian world bee authority Dennis Anderson of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization questions the decision, saying the virus has never been found in Australia.

"I wish to inform you that Slow Paralysis Virus has not been detected in or reported from Australia," Anderson says. "This is despite a number of surveys for it."

Anderson says this is borne out by the following:

"In the latest publication on SPV by Miranda et al 2010 ... it states on page 2525 that quote 'SBPV appears to be extremely rare, having been identified positively only in Britain, Fiji and Western Samoa (Allen & Ball, 1996; Anderson, 1990; Carreck et al., 2010; Martin et al., 1998), despite being included in surveys of Australia (Hornitzky, 1987), New Zealand (Todd et al., 2007), Scandinavia (Nordstrom et al., 1999) and Poland (Topolska et al., 1995). Only in Britain has it ever been associated with colony mortality (Carreck et al., 2010)'."

Anderson, principal research scientist at the CSIRO, says he is confident Australia knows what viruses are present in its honeybees.

"This is also borne out by the fact that since imports of Australian bees into the US started in 2005 (?), no viruses have been detected in Australian bees in the US that Australia didn't already know about and publish," the letter says.

He says the only exception is Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV). However, Anderson says, prior to this virus being named IAPV by a researcher in Israel, that virus had been regarded in Australia as a strain of Kashmir Bee Virus.

"If SPV was the primary reason for APHIS suspending imports of Australian honeybees into the US (and this is the reason given in the official response), then the process that led to the decision to suspend has been a travesty and it should be reconsidered," Anderson's letter states.

In another letter, also seen by *Bee Culture*, Tim Ryan of Biosecurity Australia tells Daniel Weaver, president of the American Beekeeping Federation, his organization was in the process to writing to APHIS to start to detail the lack of evidence for SPV being in Australia.

“Your request for a copy of the letter from APHIS has come back to Biosecurity Australia, but the decision is that we cannot release government to government correspondence without the permission of the originating party,” Ryan states.

“However, I can tell you that the letter states that suspension is ‘primarily due to slow paralysis virus’ but then goes on to mention other viruses- TSBV and BVX.

“It quotes the findings of the APHIS Pest Risk Assessment from earlier in the year as support for the suspension ‘until Australia can control or eradicate the Asian honey bee and provide data about the distribution of bee viruses and pests, particularly SPV.’

“To me this leaves them a pretty wide operating scope outside SPV. In my interpretation the letter also precludes an increase in the export exclusion zone around the Asian bee area again quoting the ‘unknown’ distribution of SPV.”

Australian bee exporter Warren Taylor, one of the pioneers of the US trade through his Australian Queen Bee Exporters Pty. Ltd. company, says SRV does not exist in Australia.

“Somehow, somewhere it was reported that we had Slow Paralysis Virus which was incorrect,” he says in an email to *Bee Culture*. “I guess the ban is all political so USDA is now trying to find something else to hang their hat on.

“Our bees have been tested so frequently as they entered US I am sure that they would have found something if it actually existed.

“I guess US beekeepers will be very short of queens January to March as I visited Hawaii in June and saw problems they are having with Varroa and SHB.”

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.

DATE: Friday, 8 July 2011

VENUE: Rydges South Park
1 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
Ph: 08 8212 1277 Fax: 08 8212 3040 Web: www.rydges.com/southpark

SEASONS GREETINGS



**ON BEHALF OF THE AHBIC EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE AND OFFICE STAFF, WE WISH ALL A
HAPPY AND SAFE CHRISTMAS AND WE LOOK
FORWARD TO A PROSPEROUS 2011.**

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The AHBIC Office will be closed from 5pm Wednesday 22 December 2010 and will reopen at 9am on Monday 17 January 2011.