



AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

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AUSTRALIAN HONEY INDUSTRY MONTHLY REVIEW

To: The Australian Honey Industry
From Stephen Ware – Executive Director
Re: January 2010 Update

AB's Honey
Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association
Australian Honey Products
Beechworth Honey
Bees Neez Apiaries
Capilano Honey Limited
Dewar Apiaries
Gell's Honey
Honey DownUnder
Honey Packers & Marketers Association
H L & H M Hoskinson
I N & J E Mills

Pollination Association of WA
Saxonbee Enterprises
Spring Gully Foods Pty Ltd
Stephens, R
Tasmanian Crop Pollination Association
Tasmanian Honey Company
Walkabout Apiaries
T & M Weatherhead
Weerona Apiaries
Wescobee Limited
Col Wilson

AHBIC acknowledges the **beekeeper suppliers** who contribute via their packer and queen bee supplier to AHBIC. We also urge beekeepers to support those packers/queen bee breeders who contribute to AHBIC.

Does your honey buyer's or queen bee supplier's name appear on this list?
If not, then ask 'why not?'

SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT YOUR INDUSTRY!

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INDUSTRY UPDATE ON BEALE REPORT

Following the release of the Beale Report Industry has been involved in a series of meetings with Government in respect of the report's implementation. The following provides a brief outline of the Government's commitment and outcomes to date:

1. In response to a review of the AusVet Plan Disease Strategy Manual for bee pests and diseases by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, DAFF has made applications for Emergency Use Permits for the chemicals required to conduct an emergency response to an incursion of Varroa or other parasitic mites. The APVMA advises that the permits are likely to be issued before the end of January 2010. At a meeting of the RIRDC Pollination Research and Development Advisory Committee held on 2 September 2009, it was agreed that industry would take responsibility for applications for Minor Use Permits to manage Varroa should the mite be declared endemic. The meeting agreed that Kevin Bodnaruk, advisor to Horticulture Australia Limited would be able to assist industry with their applications.
2. The Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) Parties' meeting of 27 October 2009 agreed in principle to the inclusion of honeybee pests and diseases in the EPPRD. Plant Health Australia has, over the past 6 months, consulted with EPPRD Parties to allow for the pests and diseases of honeybees to be included in the EPPRD. This would allow the pollination-reliant industries to participate in and contribute to the decision making and funding of a response to a pest of bees that would impact on the productivity and viability of their industries.
3. A working group of primary industries officials from the Commonwealth, states and territories is drafting the National Agreement on Biosecurity (the Agreement) and provided a draft to the Primary Industries Ministerial Council and Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council in November. The draft Agreement aims to strengthen the working partnership between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and identifies the roles and responsibilities of governments. The draft Agreement is supported by a number of schedules that outline the priority areas for collaborative effort between governments to improve the national biosecurity system. It is anticipated that monitoring, surveillance and diagnostics, information sharing and research and development will be included in the supporting schedules. Recommendation 53(f) of the Beale review focuses on post border monitoring and surveillance, the National Sentinel Hive Program and its eventual replacement with a more comprehensive approach based on an assessment of risks. The Australian Government is examining its options for post border monitoring and surveillance activities more broadly and, through the National Agreement on Biosecurity, it will see how these activities could best fit into the national biosecurity system. Future liaison with industry will occur to further develop policy directions established under the Agreement.
4. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke MP, has approved the expenditure of \$14.7 million from within the Department's budget to address priority issues identified by the Beale Report. One of these priorities will be to examine the current network of quarantine facilities for plants and animals entering Australia, to better plan for future needs. The work will include examining alternatives for the current five sites that have leases expiring in 2015. This includes the Eastern Creek facility that contains the bee quarantine facility in New South Wales.
5. Experts with DAFF have continued to assist Biosecurity Queensland with the response to the Asian honey bee incursion in Cairns. In particular, DAFF officers have assisted Queensland in preparing their case to the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) and have completely redrafted the Surveillance

Plan to meet international standards and the requirements of the SAP. DAFF contributed two senior technical specialists and the secretariat for the SAP. Industry is also making representations to Government and Plant Industries re obtaining funding.

6. Horticulture Policy Branch within DAFF is funding of a study to: (i) determine the capacity of the honey bee industry to provide pollination services to the horticulture industries and, (ii) develop a contingency plan for the honey bee and pollination dependent industries in the event of a *Varroa* incursion. A steering committee has been established and a consultant has been retained. It is expected that the consultant's report will be submitted in July 2010.
7. DAFF has funded and conducted a training program for state/territory officers in the laboratory testing and detection of bee pests and diseases. This course was held in the laboratory of Dr Denis Anderson in November 2009. Each participant is now responsible for training three other staff members in the recognition of bee pests and diseases to increase Australia's laboratory capacity in this area.
8. DAFF is funding and conducting a training program for state/territory entomologists in the recognition and phylogenetic keying of bee species including pest bee species of concern to Australia including the Asian honey bee, the dwarf honey bee and the giant honey bee.
9. A DAFF scientist has participated in the project team lead by CSIRO conducting a review of bee surveillance in Australia. The draft report of this review has been submitted to RIRDC and a final report is expected in the next few weeks.
10. The first round of testing for the National Sentinel Hive Program under its new management structure has now been completed successfully. The transition to management by Animal Health Australia has proceeded smoothly.

CATEGORISATION OF EXOTIC INCURSIONS OF HONEYBEES

Trevor Weatherhead

There has been much discussion of late re the categorization of the current incursion/eradication of *Apis cerana* in Cairns. CCAHB has circulated the CIE/CSIRO 2000 document. These comments are based on that document and current knowledge.

In the document both *Varroa destructor* and *Apis cerana* (strains from Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, China, Taiwan Korea and Japan) are 20 percent industry, 80 percent Government. *V. jacobsoni* and *A. cerana* (strains from India, Malaysian Peninsular, Philippines, New Guinea, several Indonesian Islands plus the Torres Strait Protected Zone) are 50 percent industry, 50 percent Government.

The reason for the 50/50 for *V. jacobsoni* is "The mite completely lacks the ability to reproduce on *Apis mellifera*" and for *A. cerana* it was "All these strains, except for those from the Philippines, could introduce strains of *Varroa jacobsoni* which are harmless to *Apis mellifera*."

In light of the recent New Guinea experience, it is now known that *V. jacobsoni* can reproduce on *A. mellifera*. So it is now in the same category as *V. destructor* which is 20 percent industry, 80 percent Government.

The document also says in relation to *A. cerana* that "They could increase incidental pollination or could be hived and used for commercial pollination of some tropical crops". The experience with the

current strain in Cairns, *A. cerana javana*, is that it is not conducive to hiving and swarms too prolifically to be of much use for pollination.

The document also says “Establishment of these strains of *Apis cerana* would also have some effect on the community and environment. They could become a public nuisance around cities and towns due to their high swarming propensity. They would also compete for nesting sites, nectar and pollen.” Since 2000, there has been an application import bumble bees (*Bombus sp.*) to mainland Australia which has been rejected. There is a strong parallel between the reasons why bumble bees were not allowed to be imported and the risk of Asian bees becoming established on mainland Australia. These environmental grounds are the provenance of Government.

With the advent of this incursion in Cairns, there has been an opportunity to observe what the potential problems are if Asian bees did become established in Australia. The public nuisance is higher than has been stated in the CIE/CSIRO document. There have been nests found in letterboxes, roofs of houses and walls of houses. This problem has been only with 55 nest and swarms being found. Imagine the public nuisance if it was declared endemic and allowed to multiply at will. There is a greater public nuisance problem in light of what has happened in Cairns than the original 2000 document identified.

The problems can also be seen when the situation in the Solomon Islands is looked at.

So it can be seen that there are a lot more benefits that can be subscribed to the public and environment than was originally identified in the original document plus an update of the knowledge on *V. jacobsoni* and *A. cerana* now clearly justifies a 20 per cent industry, 80 per cent Government split.

APIS CERANA UPDATES

Advice 60 – 19 December 2009

The normal phone hook-up was not held on Friday 11 December as this clashed with a CCAHB meeting. It was held yesterday, 18 December 2009, with both Rodney Ruge and I on line.

There have been no new cerana detections by the surveillance teams since Advice 59.

The cerana bees at Gordonvale that have been being beelined in recent weeks are now foraging on the lillipilli (*Syzygium sp.*) and have not been on the feeding stations. As this lillipilli is just about finished flowering, it is expected that the cerana will again return to the feeding station and beelining can commence again.

Surveillance is being carried out at Gordonvale, Mareeba and Yarrabah with no cerana being found. There have been no finds of cerana in Mareeba since IP43 and IP52 at Yarrabah.

Sticky mats and acaricide strips have been put into managed honey bee hives in Cairns and Mareeba with no mites being found.

On Friday 18 December, a swarm was found at the Cairns port by AQIS officers. It is thought to be cerana but needs confirmation identification by an Entomologist. At this stage it has not been determined if it was a swarm that came in with a ship or is a local swarm. Micro satellite DNA will be done to determine this. This incident is being handled by AQIS with co-operation from Queensland PI&F.

Laboratory examination of all cerana up to IP53 has proved negative for varroa, tropilaelaps and tracheal mites.

There had been a positive find of cerana wings from bee eater pellets at Yarrabah on 26.11.09 but three sample since have been negative. It is probable that the positive was a left over from IP52.

With the CCAHB telephone hook-up on 11 December, I was only able to be present for about 45 minutes as I was on my way to the Sydney for the queen bee seminar. At this stage, AHBIC have issued memo 09.06 dated 15 December 2009 which gives a very good account of what is happening without breaching confidentiality agreements. This has been circulated to industry.

Advice 61 - 8 January 2010

The normal phone hook-up was held today, Friday 8 January, with both Rodney Ruge and I on line. The swarm at the port of Cairns, reported in Advice 60, has been now called IP 56. AQIS examined the bees and they were negative for all mites. At this stage it has not been determined if this was an incursion from a ship or a swarm from within the port area. DNA micro satellite work will hopefully show which happened.

As a result of this find, the Community Engagement Officer has been doing some public engagement work on the Tablelands. It is very important to have the public fully aware of what to look for.

On 24 December, a swarm of bees were reported from the Lake Eacham area on the Atherton Tablelands. It was destroyed and later identified as cerana. This is IP57. It is about 18 kilometres from the nests that were discovered and destroyed in the Goldsborough area. Surveillance is now being carried out in the area to ascertain if there are more cerana in the area. It is hoped to carry out some DNA micro satellite work on this one to determine its origin.

Those foraging cerana at Gordonvale have stopped coming to the feeding station. Efforts are being made to have them come back onto the feeding stations.

Advice 62 – 22 January 2010

The normal phone hook-up was held today, Friday 22 January, with both Rodney Ruge and I on line. It has been a busy fortnight. On Saturday 16 January a swarm was reported by the public in the Greenhill area. It turned out to be cerana and is IP58.

On Monday 18 January, the bees that had been found foraging in Gordonvale back in November and had been off and on at the feeding station since then were successfully beelined and the nest destroyed. This is IP59.

There is a rainforest dome on top of the Cairns Casino and a call from the public, on Tuesday 19 January, lead to the discovery of the remnants of a nest. Green ants had been attacking the bees. A worker and drone were found at the site and were identified as cerana. This is IP 60. The nest is in a crack in a wall and it is hoped to be able to have some gauze covering removed so an endoscope can be used to examine what remains of the nest.

There are more foraging bees in the Goldsborough Valley area and these have been converted to a feeding station and will be beelined when the weather permits. Currently Cairns is under the influence of a low that is expected to become a cyclone over the weekend and there is rain a plenty.

Surveillance continues in all areas and interviews commence next week so as an extra eight (8) field staff can be employed.

Community engagement is continuing with a meeting of people at Lake Eacham and Mareeba. An interesting development is that a PhD student on the Tablelands, who is studying the interactions between bees and plants, has been contacted so the student is now an extra source of surveillance in the area.

There is still an excellent response from the public and all calls are followed up.

The national meeting of CEO's to consider the cost sharing is to be held next Thursday, 28 January.

I have been advised by AHBIC of a reply to a letter sent to the Federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and it is not very enlightening. At this time they claim that "there is limited evidence of environmental impact on native flora and fauna". Of course this is the case because the nests and swarms are being found and destroyed. Seems a bit short sighted that they do not see themselves as being a party to any cost sharing at this time. Makes you wonder if they really understand the ramifications to the environment if the cerana became endemic. I was once told by someone in this area that bees are not warm and cuddly like koalas so don't really get much attention.

You only have to look at something like the cane toad and the environmental ramifications of this introduction. At the time of introduction of the cane toad back in 1935, the beekeepers were objecting and pointing out the possible environmental damage as well as the damage to the bees. If only they had listened to the beekeepers in 1935. Is history repeating itself in 2010 with regard to Asian bees?

The next phone hook-up is scheduled for Friday 5 February unless something else untoward crops up.

Trevor Weatherhead

2010 STATE AND SECTOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

FCAAA	New South Wales Apiarists' Association	20 - 21 May	Port Macquarie
	Victorian Apiarists' Association	2 - 3 June	Mildura
	Tasmanian Beekeepers Association	4 - 5 June	Launceston
	South Australian Apiarists' Association	10 - 11 June	Goolwa (Adelaide)
	WA Farmers Federation- Beekeeping Section	11 June	Mahogany Creek (Perth)
	Queensland Beekeepers Association	17 - 18 June	Ipswich

Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association	19 May	Port Macquarie
Honey Packers and Marketers Association	26 May	TBA
National Council of Crop Pollination Associations	17 June (to be confirmed)	Ipswich
Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Associations	17 June (to be confirmed)	Ipswich
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council	18 - 19 June	Ipswich

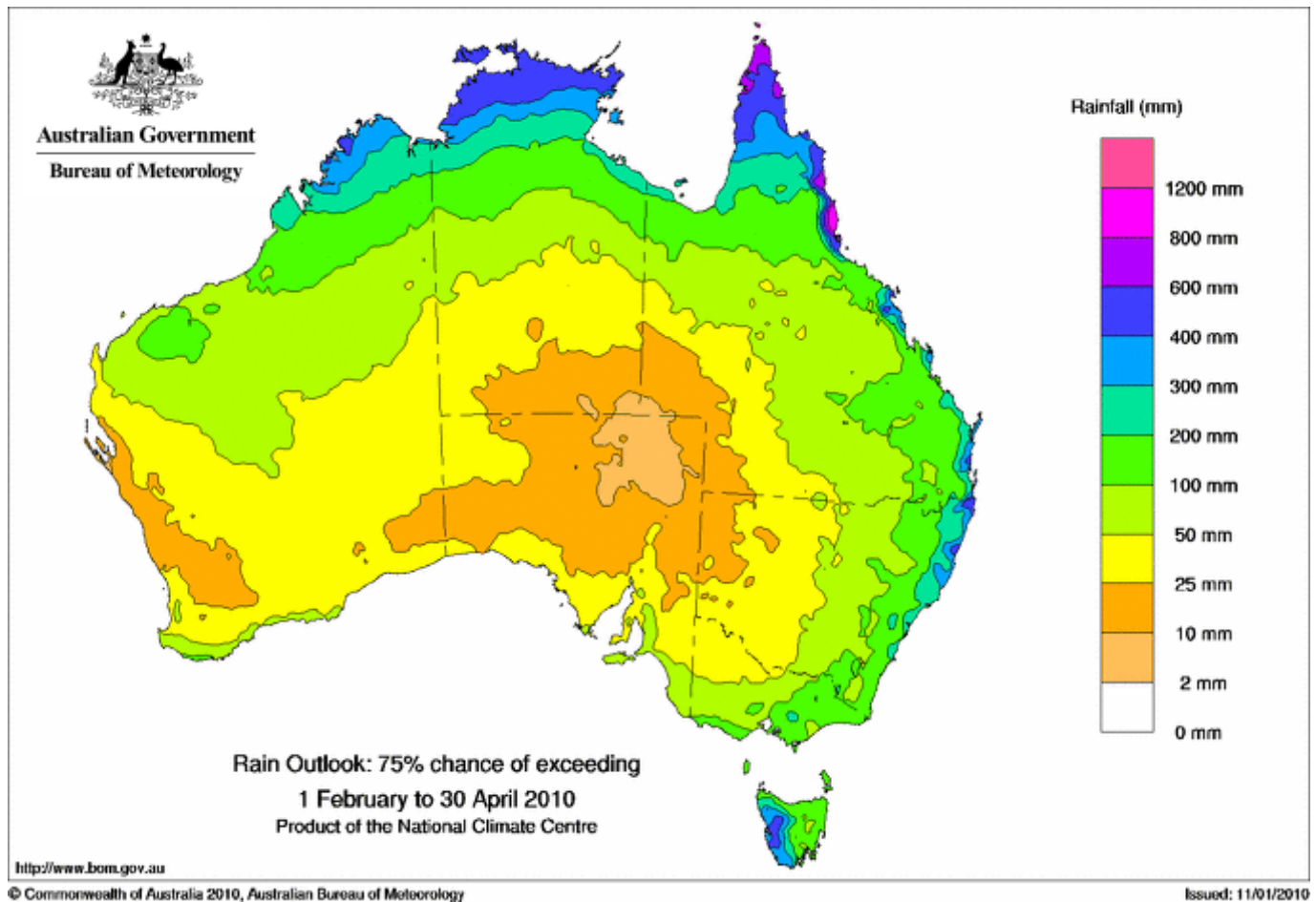
NATIONAL SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK - Probabilities for February to April 2010

Australian Bureau of Meteorology

Contrasting seasonal rainfall odds for late summer to mid-autumn

The national outlook for total rainfall over late summer to mid-autumn (February to April) shows contrasting odds across the country: below average falls are more likely in northern parts of both Queensland and the NT, whereas a wetter than normal three months is indicated for northwest and central WA.

The pattern of seasonal rainfall odds across Australia has been produced using recent Pacific and Indian Ocean temperature patterns, with the warm Pacific (El Niño) having the greater influence.



The chances of exceeding the median rainfall for February to April are between 30 and 40% over a broad region covering north Queensland and much of the northern NT (see map). In one part of north Queensland the chances drop below 30%. This means that for every ten years with ocean patterns like the current, about six or seven February to April periods are expected to be drier than average across this broad area of northern Australia, while about three or four periods are wetter. In addition, there is a moderate tendency in the odds favouring a drier season in a small section of southwest WA, although totals are normally rather low for this period in that part of the country.

Contrasting this, the chances are between 60 and 70% for above average February to April falls in a band stretching from the northwest to the interior of WA.

Across the rest of the country, the chances of exceeding the median February to April rainfall are between 40 and 60%, meaning that above average falls are about as equally likely as below average falls.

Outlook confidence is related to how consistently the Pacific and Indian Oceans affect Australian rainfall. During the February to April period, history shows the effect to be moderately consistent through the northern parts of both Queensland and the NT, most of WA, the far west of SA and southeast NSW. Elsewhere the effect is only weakly or very weakly consistent.

An El Niño event persists across the Pacific Basin, with most leading climate models suggesting the tropical Pacific will gradually cool during the next three to six months. The influence of El Niño on Australia's rainfall patterns often weakens in the second half of summer - we've already seen heavy rain across parts of inland eastern Australia during December.

OVERSEAS RESEARCH

Hivelihoods November 2009

Research on insect pollinators is receiving a major boost in support in Canada. The Canadian Honey Council and the Canadian Association of Professional Apiarists have been heavily involved in planning a five year, \$5million research network that is already investigating the issue of pollinator decline.

The project involves over 45 researchers at universities and government agencies, and looks at Pollinators, Plants, Ecosystems, and Economics. The health and efficiency of managed bees (including honeybees, bumble bees and leaf cutter bees) will include a survey of honeybee pathogens and parasites in Canada, breeding AFB-resistant bees, increasing resistance to Nosema, biocontrol of pests, reducing the impact of pesticides, and use of pollen substitutes in disease control.

Alternative species for commercial pollination will also be looked at as will wild pollinators.

In plants, the mechanism of pollination will be examined, and plants most at risk from declining pollinator populations will be identified. In the ecosystem area, such things as habitat loss, agricultural and forestry practices (and their effect on pollinators), and climate change will all be evaluated. In the economics area, predictions of future pollination needs will be made, particularly in relation climate change and changes in land use.

The major approach of the scheme is that it will look at all aspects of pollination to address the full scope of pollination problems in Canada.

WORK WANTED

I will be coming to Australia in July 2010. In Germany I work for a beekeeper supplier. I search a job at a big beekeeper in NSW or Queensland with 1000 or more bee hives. I travel as backpacker. I have two training as a beekeeper and as an industrial mechanic in Germany.

Best regards

Daniel Ruck

daniel_ruck@web.de



BEE-BREEDING EXPERT VISITS AUSTRALIA

Internationally renowned Bee Breeding expert, Dr Sue Cobey (on the right) with Jacky & Rod Bourke from Tasmania at the AI course at held at Richmond in December.

Dr Cobey is from the University of California and travelled to Australia at the invitation of NSW Apiarists, Association to conduct two courses in artificial insemination a the Richmond property of Gretchen When.

The courses attracted participants from all over Australia.

Dr Cobey said that Australia could learn from the mistake made in the US and Europe with regard to Varroa.

One solution to combating the mite if it arrives in Australia would be to breed Varroa-resistant bees. This could take up to five years.

WHEN FOUNDATION

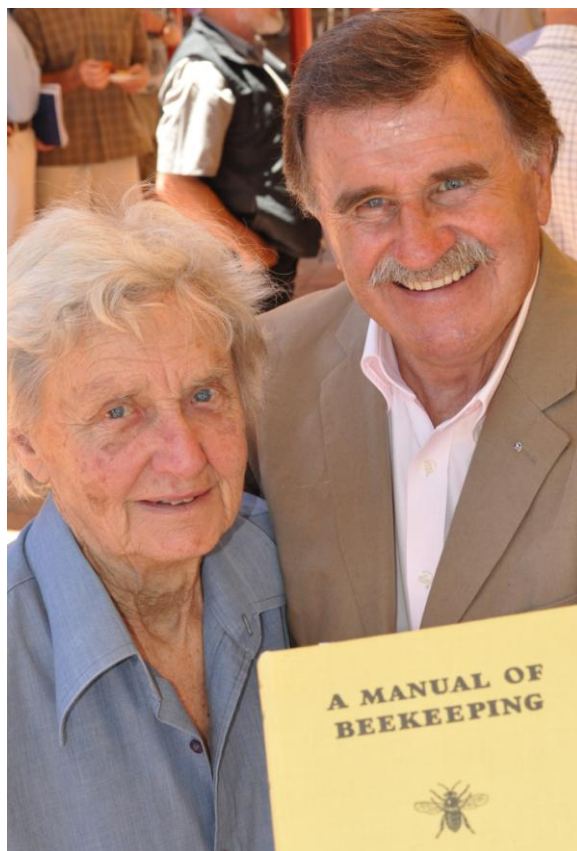
Over 100 people attended the launch of the When Foundation on Saturday 12 December 2009.

The When Foundation has been created as a result of a generous bequest from Gretchen and her cousin the late Frank When.

The foundation will support research and training which will benefit the beekeeping industry and pollination dependent industries. Gretchen hopes the Australian beekeeping industry will develop as a result of this foundation.

It will be located at the Gretchen's Richmond property which is an 18 acre farm on the Nepean River.

Mr Alby Schultz MP, shown here with Gretchen officially launched the Foundation.





GOODACRE AWARD

Dr Max Whitten was presented with the Goodacre Award at the Honeybee Genetics and Breeding Seminar held at Richmond in conjunction with the launch of the Wheen Foundation. Max seen here with Mr Alby Schultz MP and Dr Doug Somerville, was recognised for his contribution to the beekeeping industry. Max was the inaugural chairman of the Honey Bee Research and Development Council (HBRDC) serving from 1985-1992. Congratulations Max

AUSTRALIAN HONEY EXPORT AWARD

Australia annually exports approximately 50% of our total honey production. Last year Australian exports were approximately 8,500 metric tons.

The Australian Honey Industry is always trying to develop new markets and it is pleasing to see Capilano Honey Limited win the Agribusiness Award at the 2009 Australian Export Awards in Canberra, which followed on from their win at the Agribusiness Category of the 2009 Premier of Queensland's Export Awards.

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REVIEW OF RURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

RIRDC 14 Jan 2010

On Tuesday 2 December 2009, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Tony Burke MP, announced during a speech to the National Press Club in Canberra a Productivity Commission Review of Australia's Rural Research and Development Corporations. A copy of the Minister's speech is available from his website.

The formal terms of reference have been determined by the Government, I expect the Productivity Commission to produce an Issues Paper on the issues it considers relevant to the review. At this point, it will also invite written submissions from interested parties and members of the public.

Following the consultation phase, it is normal practice for the Commission to produce a draft report which it will invite comment on. It will then produce a final report for the Government's consideration. Further information about the Productivity Commission's inquiry process is available from its website: www.pc.gov.au.

I encourage you to play an active role in the Productivity Commission's review of RDCs. Your participation in the review is critical to ensuring industry's views are taken into account when the Productivity Commission produces its final report.

I will keep you informed of further developments throughout the course of the year as the review progresses.

OUTLOOK 2010

Outlook 2010 – marking 40 years of economic debate and discussion

With the recent economic challenges faced by Australia and the world, what is the outlook for Australian primary industries?

Understand this new economic landscape and join more than 600 delegates to explore Australia's agriculture, fisheries, forestry and natural resource sectors at ABARE's Outlook 2010 conference on 2-3 March in Canberra.

I invite you to Outlook 2010 to discuss issues important to the future of Australian primary industry and access the latest industry information and economic analysis. Attending Outlook 2010 is vital for decision-makers and businesses to plan ahead in this new economic environment.

In proudly marking the 40th anniversary of the Outlook conference series, we have invited some world renowned economic experts to lead the discussion on the issues for Australia's agriculture, fisheries, forestry and natural; resource sectors. This line-up is complemented by leading domestic speakers plus ABARE's researchers and analysts.

We set the agenda at the economic overview session, featuring speakers from the International Monetary Fund and Westpac. In addition, ABARE will release its projections to 2014-15 for Australia's agricultural and resource commodities.

Sessions on farm performance, productivity, future directions in trade policy, climate change and forestry, agriculture and greenhouse gas emission, the outlook for key commodities, water policy, irrigation farm performance, food security and biosecurity will complete the conference agenda.

I encourage you to visit the website www.abare.gov.au/outlook to register online and view conference information and updates.

I look forward to welcoming you to Outlook 2010.

Phillip Glyde
Executive Director, ABARE