

ISSUE 27, OCTOBER 2021

APIARIST'S ADVOCATE



News, Views & Promotions - for Beekeepers - by Beekeepers

Significant Natural Area of Concern for Beekeeping?

We talk SNAs with beekeepers.



Significant Natural Area of Concern?



BY PATRICK DAWKINS

The issue of Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) and their pending increased implementation made headlines earlier this year and generated protest from private landowners, farmers and iwi alike. Beekeepers, however, have been largely quiet on an issue that could, on one hand, work in their favour by helping generate more native bee forage and, on the other, has the potential to dramatically impact businesses by limiting the right to place and access their hives.

Gary Glasson's family has been beekeeping in Blackball on the West Coast for 97 years (as detailed in *Innovative Blackball Beekeepers Thrive Despite Isolation* last month), but like many beekeepers his operation has been put under pressure by newcomers to the industry through increased competition for apiary sites. To overcome the burden on bee forage, or his right to place hives on other's land, Glasson purchased a block of rural land for his own beekeeping use several years ago.



West Coast beekeeper Gary Glasson is unsure of how beekeeping on his property might be impacted if it is declared a SNA.

Now, in the light of the Government's draft National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB), which outlines a desire to implement mapping of SNAs and thus limit land use, Glasson has concerns over how his business – and many like it around New Zealand – might be impacted.

"We don't know what is going to be permitted activities in these areas," Glasson says.

"If you want to use the land for anything, put a building up, make a track, anything like that, you will need resource consent to determine whether it will be allowable or not."

It is up to Councils to classify SNAs, but a halt to the process was put in place following widespread displeasure and protest against the moves in June and July, most notably from various Northland iwi plus rural advocacy group Groundswell NZ. The Government is currently working on an "exposure draft" for a new NPSIB, due for release before the end of the year, which will readdress the issue of SNAs and their implementation.

"I went to one of the community SNA meetings in Greymouth and it won't affect me, as a beekeeper, as much as it will other people, farmers and the like," Glasson says.

"But I went to raise the issue, in terms of permitted activities, to put forward the beekeepers' perspective. I went there to make sure we don't get overlooked."

A WARNING FROM NORTHLAND

Beekeepers themselves could be at risk of overlooking the implications of SNAs though, with most beekeepers *Apiarist's Advocate* canvassed recently saying SNAs are not something that has been front of mind.

However, for iwi groups, particularly in Northland, there is no hiding from the concerns of SNAs. Large portions of their land could have use limited.

Northland iwi Te Roroa, which has various land and business holdings across the region, including beekeeping, has concerns about what it could mean for their range of enterprises.

"We are in an area where one council jumped the gun and it was all over the news, which led to a whole lot of upheaval in the Maori and non-Maori communities," says Snow Tane, general manager Te Roroa Development Group.

"It was the first time in a long time that you saw both communities coming together on an issue."

While SNAs are more likely to impact their seven farms, Tane is concerned that beekeeping could be limited. Already, in recent years, they have had the Department of Conservation (DoC) try to limit the number of hives they could place in the extensive Waipoua Forest which falls within the iwi's rohe (territory).

"They told me we were overstocking, while standing in the middle of the Waipoua forest, which is the biggest native forest in Northland. We were looking at putting 100 hives into a 4000-hectare area. I'm not a beekeeper, but our beekeeping partners know how to place the right amount of hives to reduce the impact," Tane says.

Te Roroa own 300 hives, while Manuka Health also place and manage a further 300 hives on their land.

Tane says DoC was concerned that by overstocking an area with bees it was going to harm native biodiversity.

"They will say there is issues with exotic bees in ecologically significant areas and provide anecdotal evidence. If you don't know how to handle DoC they will stick their scientist on you and come up with reasons why you shouldn't place exotic bees in certain areas," Tane explains.

To counter DoC's desire to limit Te Roroa's ability to keep bees within their rohe, Tane and others from the iwi travelled

to Wellington to meet with then Minister of Conservation Eugenie Sage.

"I came at them with the angle of, so you are telling me bees are harmful to the environment?"

That tactic worked, with the Department not willing to make that claim, and the iwi dodged the bullet and avoided having restrictions placed on their beekeeping, Tane says.

Like many other landholders with manuka honey blocks, Te Roroa have much of the infrastructure to place hives on their land in place, but those who wish to push new tracks, build structures, or do remedial work should be concerned about the restrictions which SNAs could bring, and it doesn't stop there, Tane warns.

"The bigger question is around the scientific aspect. That is what we have found very grey. The SNAs legislation could give more weight to that science. An SNA is not always about something physical, but could be about endangered plant species, or animals that live in these areas.

"It is challenging and it is something that is very real. For beekeepers SNAs could have a huge impact, not just in the physical realm but the science space too," Tane further warns.

CARROT APPROACH BETTER THAN STICK

Of course, some beekeepers could be among the big winners if tracts of land are protected from development and native sources of bee forage are encouraged to regenerate.

Minister for Primary Industries Damien O'Connor, while not wishing to dive deep into the issue of SNAs and apiculture, says there is misinformation and hype around SNAs and their implementation.

"Bees will be the greatest beneficiaries of protected areas and we encourage beekeeping as long as people don't overstock and starve the bees," O'Connor says.

"For a beekeeper to object to the protection of flora across farmland is like a trucking company objecting to roads."

Snow Tane, general manager of Te Roroa Development Group. The Northland iwi fear SNAs could restrict their ability to operate on many of their properties and businesses, including their beekeeping.



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While beekeepers will surely welcome extra flora, as O'Connor suggests, it is the restrictions around how that bee forage is gained that the chief executive of the country's largest industry body, Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ), has concern over.

Karin Kos says SNAs are well and truly on her radar, even if they are not currently a pressing issue for many of ApiNZ's members.

"Where I live, in Eastbourne (Wellington), the community has seen SNAs introduced and so, personally, I am aware of the impact they can have for private landowners," Kos says.

"All of a sudden people are told, land has been identified as a SNA and you can't develop it. It has a bigger implication for farmers, but it will have a downstream impact on beekeepers."

ApiNZ has not given the government any direct feedback on the issue of SNAs, but they are taking a "watching brief" approach to developments, so they are ready to act as required.

The biggest concern is around future use of land, Kos believes, while those with existing hive sites and honey production are less likely to be affected by the introduction of SNAs. However, there are plenty of questions yet to be answered.

"We would all agree, we need biodiversity, but how do you apply that? How do you apply it so that it does not hamper future investment?" Kos asks.

At this stage ApiNZ's view falls in line with that of Federated Farmers, the chief executive says.

Federated Farmers provided the Government with a 200-page submission on the NPSIB in March 2020. In it they stated support for the intent of the Statement, while stressing the importance of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity, but claimed the Statement was unworkable. Instead, they have advocated for a more supportive approach to be taken with farmers who have areas of significant natural value on their property.

Their Policy and Advisory Report of August 2021 states, "Federated Farmers firm position is that real gains come through 'hearts and minds' and that while rules are necessary, it will be through non-regulatory approaches (such as incentives, advice, education, support, co-ordination and effort etc) that the biggest gains for biodiversity will come".

"Fed Farmers position lines up pretty well on how we see it and how most beekeepers would see it," Kos believes.

"We are not saying, biodiversity is not important, but are there better ways to get people interested and engaged in biodiversity?"

"Biodiversity is important and has always been important through the Resource Management Act, and it helps the bees. Absolutely. It is the balance which is important though, between the need for that biodiversity and if rules and legislation put a halt to investment in honey production."

The work of the Trees for Bees Research Trust to educate and support, along with beekeepers and landowners desire to work with the Trust, is an example of how, with the right approach, increased biodiversity on private land can be achieved, Kos says.

KEEPING SNAS ON THE RADAR

While the latest draft of the NPSIB is being worked on in Wellington, the issue of SNAs is lingering in the background and is sure to vault into the national discussion again when the next draft is released.

In the meantime, ApiNZ will be keeping in contact with fellow primary industry groups as they all monitor the progress. Some of those groups, such as Federated Farmers, may have much more to lose should restrictive land use rules be put in place, but

Karin Kos, chief executive of ApiNZ, says the industry body is taking a "watching brief" on SNAs.



beekeepers shouldn't take their eye off the ball either Kos believes.

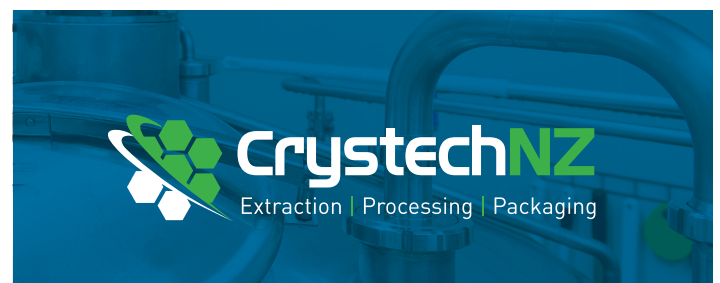
"Until it (SNAs) affects you, you may not be aware of the implications. Once you see it in the light of day you realise it might have an impact on our industry and we need to know about it," Kos warns.

There are some beekeepers already of that opinion though.

"You might be able to put bees on the land, but if you can't build a track, how are you going to get your bees in there?" Glasson says of his West Coast property.

"I bought the block of land for somewhere to put bees where I won't get turfed off, because we have all these big corporate beekeeping businesses running around with their cheque books trying to get sites.

"Now, we don't know what is going to be permitted activities in these areas." 🐝



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Commitment to Supply



BY PATRICK DAWKINS

Establishing the willingness of beekeepers to commit a regular supply of honey for bulk export to an offshore joint venture partner is the crucial first step in any honey collective, John Hartnell believes.

The long-time honey exporter and managing director of Hartnell & Associates floated the concept of a collective supply arrangement between New Zealand producers and an offshore packer in the **August issue of *Apiarist's Advocate***. In the **September issue, industry stakeholders weighed in on the concept.**

Hartnell has considered the feedback and had further discussions on the idea with potential suppliers, but says he is hesitant to initiate discussions with the second half of any arrangement: the offshore packer and distributor.

"I nearly had the conversation with one of the key offshore buyers the other day, but then I held back because I thought, no its too soon. I will just disappoint and frustrate them if I can't put in place a reliable supply network," Hartnell says.

Some in the honey industry have warned of the risk and difficulty **associated with getting a joint venture honey cooperative off the ground**, but Hartnell says the model he is proposing would be light on capital outlay, other than the honey itself, and rather take advantage of existing distribution and marketing channels.

"These people are the same people I have been trading with for over 35 years. I already know them. They are performers. They pay on time and never miss a beat. So, I have complete confidence in their ability to deliver a viable solution should this pathway be seriously considered.

"My concern is in gaining confidence that suppliers won't just dive off for another dollar somewhere else. They have to be prepared to make an investment. That investment would not be

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in money so much as it would be in moving their honey stock, so that we could get things off the ground.

"We have to be able to go to the international packer and say, 'we have 30 producers who are prepared to commit 50% of their crop to this particular marketing approach for the next five years'. I don't see beekeepers rushing up to do that though. It is not about raising money, it is about getting commitment, understanding the challenges, being patient and letting the end product do the talking.

"If there is support for this concept and the commitment that this would require from the industry, then discussions can be taken to the next level, if not it will simply remain another option on the table for future consideration."

The most scope to generate supply is in lower grades of manuka honey, likely monofloral, and in the range MG100+ to MG300+, Hartnell believes.

There is trepidation from some honey sellers about what **impact a large supply arrangement of honey could have for the manuka honey industry**. However, Hartnell says it would simply be entering an existing market and be neither solving nor worsening any current brand confusion among customers.

While he understands that honey suppliers are going to want a price estimation before they commit to any arrangement, Hartnell says at this stage that is impossible, it is early days and unrealistic at this point.

John Hartnell

"We understand the bulk market price for Manuka, and this will be the starting benchmark return for the beekeeper collective. We will need to have many discussions with an offshore partner to set guidelines covering marketing, packaging, distribution and Brand New Zealand. We also will need to understand that the joint venture packer on the other side of the arrangement is going to want a margin, just like the beekeepers are going to want one.

"So, if beekeepers have interest in the concept, then they should talk with their fellow honey producers to determine the collective interest and potentially reach out to me. I am certainly interested in hearing beekeeper's response," Hartnell says.

"Ultimately, any progress is totally reliant on beekeeper commitment, it is a serious option but only if the industry wants to progress such an arrangement. The idea sits on the table."

Hartnell & Associates contact details are available via www.hartnellnz.com 🐝

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Give to Take

– Southern Beekeepers Discussion Group



BY PATRICK DAWKINS

Kiwi farmers have a reputation for being too insular with problems faced either personally or in their business and when it comes to beekeepers that stereotype is strong. This month's *Club Catch-Up* takes us to the south of the country where a group of beekeepers has bucked the norm through their Southern Beekeepers Discussion Group which has been stimulating discussion amongst those in the business of beekeeping from Ashburton to Te Anau since 2002.

In its nearly 20 years of existence the Southern Beekeepers Discussion Group has been the founding place for major industry good, from improved management of individual businesses to the likes of the Betta Bees breeding programme, several honey marketing groups, two Sustainable Farming Fund research projects and most recently Project Clean Hive (as detailed on pg 10-11).

The group brings together between a dozen and 20 beekeepers or industry stakeholders, such as scientist and suppliers, on a bi-monthly basis to discuss topics of mutual interest from within the industry or just what is happening in the hives. Independent facilitator John Scandrett, of Southland based consultancy business Scandrett Rural, has been there from the beginning.

"Local beekeeper Murray Ballantyne approached me as a farm advisor and said he would like me to run a discussion group for beekeepers, like they used to have events coordinated by MAF (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) in the '80s as they were good value," Scandrett says looking back.

"I invited him to one of my sheep and beef groups to see how they are run. He was impressed by how positive the group was, how constructive and how they helped each other and how progressive they were."

So, while they were far from stateside, the discussion group found its beginnings on their own Independence Day, July 4 2002 with a meeting of about a dozen beekeepers at the Woodlands Tavern east of Invercargill.

Among the beekeepers present on that day was Otago apiarist Allen McCaw who still attends the discussions despite being "retired" with 70 hives. He has kept the list of issues that beekeepers outlined they were facing at that inaugural meeting.

McCaw chuckles as he reads out a range of issues that still reside today, things like managing cash flow, risk of not being paid, climatic impact on production, work isolation and staff shortages.

"That last one sounds familiar," McCaw quips.

While the group has not been able to outright solve any of those major issues, they have helped each other navigate them through their regular discussions.

Both Scandrett and McCaw repeat the mantra "a problem shared is a problem halved" and that has certainly been the case, and maybe more than halved in some instances, with the likes of Betta Bees and other research projects making great inroads for the apiculture industry.

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That industry good was a while coming though, the facilitator says.

"After the inaugural meeting it took about a year for everyone to get totally comfortable with sharing information with everyone else. There was a certain hesitancy because, prior to that, one beekeeper was the next one's enemy. A 'his bees are taking my bees' nectar' attitude and 'his honey is competing locally with my honey'. But they soon realised there was strength in numbers. Now anybody in the group can ring up anyone else and talk through any beekeeping matter," Scandrett says.

Beekeepers from Central Otago have even contacted those from further south to gain temporary hive sites during Otago droughts. Additionally, a major AFB outbreak in one beekeeper's business has been effectively managed thanks, in part, to group discussions and member input.

"You can't take until you give. It's a two-way street. The model relies on everyone giving something so that you can take. Once that realisation came through, there was a sharing of information and learning," Scandrett says.

From the start the group set some strict ground rules, such as the need for punctuality and an apology if a member could not attend, respect for other's information and anything of a personal nature has to be kept confidential, that all members have to contribute and respect other's views, and membership is by invitation only.

McCaw says Scandrett's ability as a facilitator has been instrumental to the group's success and that he knows of similar commercial beekeeping groups around the country that have sought to establish without having the longevity of the Southern Beekeepers Group. He puts this down to the lack of an effective, independent facilitator in the start-ups.

"The key to it all along has been John's skills as a facilitator. He is the first to say 'it is not up to me, it is up to the group to make it work', but in actual fact, he has experience working other farm groups and, by his own admission, doesn't know anything about beekeeping, which is probably an advantage," McCaw says.

The long-time Otago apiarist encourages other commercial beekeepers around New Zealand to give the concept of a discussion group a go if they think it could be of benefit, but says there are a few key things to consider.

"It takes a while to break the ice, particularly if there is history there, but you have to be prepared to give it time. Don't worry about involving everybody. Start off with the keen people and others will see the value and join in," McCaw says.

One thing is more important than the rest though and their group has struck it lucky in that respect, he believes.

"Getting that right facilitator, that's the key. Getting the person with the right skills to bring the group together and it needn't be a beekeeper." 🐝

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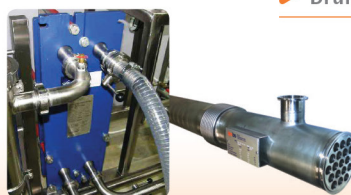


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Project Clean Hive



BY SHAWN MCAVINUE

A group of southern apiarists is using a similar scientific method to fight American Foulbrood (AFB) as to that which is being used to detect Covid-19. *Allied Press'* Shawn McAvinue learns about the “breakthrough” technology and its potential to eradicate the highly infectious disease.

A group of Southern apiarists (detailed in *Give to Take* on pg 7) has a new tool to fight a disease killing their bees, by using the same technology used to detect Covid-19.

Project Clean Hive assistant project manager John Scandrett, of Invercargill, said a group of Southern beekeepers launched a project about three years ago to find a better way to detect AFB in their apiaries. As the project nears an end, he believes the group has a new tool, which has the potential to eradicate the disease in the south.

“We are the first at the coalface,” Scandrett says.

The notifiable bacterial brood disease weakens and kills honeybee colonies.

Early detection of the disease was important because routine apiary management and interchange of hive components could easily spread the disease to healthy bee colonies.

As part of the project, a new technology - quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) - was introduced to detect the DNA of the disease. The technology was first discussed on a group conference call including scientist Mark Goodwin at the Crown research institute Plant & Food Research.

“We didn’t know what we were letting ourselves in for,” Scandrett laughs. “We have learnt a lot.”

For the project, the Southern beekeepers collected nurse bees and swabs from the entrances of hives from apiaries where the disease had been detected, which were then sent to a laboratory, dnature, in Gisborne, for testing.

Molecular biologist John Mackay, the technical director at dnature, floated the idea to the group of swabbing the entrances of the hives.

The swabs used the same science methodology as when taking a sample of DNA from a person to detect Covid-19, Mr Scandrett said.



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"The concept is exactly the same."

Swabs from about 850 hives were taken from about 50 apiaries south of Oamaru in the past three years.

Spores of the disease were invisible to the naked eye and could only be seen after it became a full-blown infection.

The "new tool" allows beekeepers to detect spores of the disease early so the hive could be managed, rather than letting the infection reach a stage where the hive must be destroyed.

Now beekeepers were getting data back from the laboratory, the next stage was learning how to interpret it.

The technology was in the "proving" stage and beekeepers were learning how to determine from the data if a hive was safe, required more management or needed to be destroyed.

A beekeeper needed to know the history of a hive to interpret a result. For example, a new hive might not contain spores but the bees inside it might. Conversely, an old hive might have spores of the disease but any bees newly introduced to it might not.

That was why swabs as well as bees were sent for testing.

Traditionally, the scientific method beekeepers used to detect the disease was by germinating spores of it on an agar plate. The new qPCR technology was quicker, easier, more sensitive and cheaper than the plate test.

More hives could be checked in less time. One person in the group swabbed more than 260 hives in a day using the new technology, he said.

"It's fast and efficient and potentially more effective."



John Scandrett

He reminded beekeepers it remained a statutory requirement for hives to be inspected.

"This technology doesn't replace that — it's in addition."

The new technology had the potential to be used in many ways.

He knew of someone who bought hives containing disease spores. After an infection became obvious, he had to burn more than 100 hives.

The qPCR technology would allow a potential buyer to swab hives for spores as part of a due diligence process, he said. It could also help protect international markets, such as China, which refuses to import any honey containing spores of the disease.

Beekeepers could swab hives to check whether spores were in the hives before honey was harvested.

He believed the "valuable tool" had the potential to be a "game-changer" for the sector.

This story appeared first in Allied Press' Rural Life. 🐝

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Ilona Hart, Kaitiaki Kai, Food Guardian



BY NIGEL COSTLEY

From English language teacher, to beekeeper and now senior auditor at AsureQuality, Ilona Hart's career has had some pivots. Nigel Costley caught up with the nomadic Risk Management Programme (RMP) auditor to learn what life on the road, meeting New Zealand's beekeepers and assessing their operations, is really like.

Being a honey house auditor, Hart often has to deal with the sharp end of the business. As the face of her company, AsureQuality, she can sometimes cop the flak from stressed-out beekeepers.

"It's not all like *Country Calendar*. Some people are really struggling," she says.

Not many people embrace an audit willingly, but she finds the tensions dissipate after their initial chat, when the beekeeper realises they're dealing with someone who is genuinely empathetic and, herself, an avid beekeeper.

She came to the job by an unlikely route. A linguist by profession, Hart has spent most of the first 15 years of her working life travelling the globe teaching English. After a stint teaching in Japan, she worked her way to a high-powered job running an English teaching agency in London, responsible for the hiring and training of 60 teachers. It wasn't to last though.

"I found it was endless problem solving, not a lot of joy. I lost the love for it," she says.



Ilona Hart. The AsureQuality RMP honey house auditor is comfortable in the hives, having worked as a commercial beekeeper prior to her current role.

HOME AGAIN

Coming back to New Zealand with little more than a backpack, she ended up staying with her aunty near Tapawera, a village just south of Nelson. While pondering her next career move, she ended up pruning roses in Sherry Valley Apiaries owner Jeff Lukey's garden. During smoko something marvellous happened. Strangely-clad workers appeared, excitedly babbling a mysterious and exotic language about queens, landing boards and robbing.

"I was immediately fascinated and begged them to take me along," Hart says.

There was initial reluctance from the beekeepers. By her own admission, wasn't she a high-heel and designer-clothes wearing big city slicker?

Eventually she wrangled a beekeeping job. Although it was largely donkey work at first, lifting boxes and such, she loved it. She learnt quickly that once you're in the field the theory counts for little and she had her share of mishaps.

"I got stuck in a river once and the boys had to rescue me. But I had the grit – I wasn't going to let it beat me."

Given her academic background, helping out with Lukey's paperwork, such as his RMP, was an obvious job during her downtime. Hart was introduced to AsureQuality when Marco Gonzalez came to audit their operation. After three years working for Lukey, much as she enjoyed it, Hart realised she needed to do something for herself.

So, when an auditor position came up at AsureQuality four years ago, with her self-reliance, academic credentials, and beekeeping experience, she was an ideal fit. After a great start with Lukey and Sherry Valley Apiaries, she fell on her feet regarding mentors, auditing in the first instance with Byron Taylor and Murray Reid.

Hart's progress in the business has been spectacular and her full title now is senior auditor/trainer bee products RMP and herself now mentors new auditors. As she spends most of her time living out of suitcases touring the country, it helps that she has no family commitments.

"I'm a bit of a nomad anyway," Hart admits.

HOW TO AUDIT

Covering the whole gamut of bee products, including pollen, royal jelly and propolis, Hart's job is not lacking in intellectual stimulus. Working under the Animal Products Act of 1999, AsureQuality monitors the contractual obligations between the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the beekeeper. Everyone understands that these protocols and requirements are necessary to protect our high-value export markets.

The tricky part comes in the 'how' part of the question. That is why all the specific details – guide to building design, cleaning, pest control and much more – are all spelt out in the RMP. Usually the questions likely to be asked are sent out before the audit. But the beekeeper must be prepared for random sampling and probing of the tracing system too. Finding a mutually agreeable time (usually between two and four hours) can be a challenge. As it is an 'all year around' business, it is not always possible to avoid the busy times.

All hive products must be correctly labelled and Hart says she sees "some crazy things" on labels. Claims on retail labels are checked against laboratory reports where applicable, as are advisory statements on potentially hazardous substances, such as bee venom.

"We check all additional requirements through the e-cert system when product is transferred between premises, such as glyphosate levels for Japan, to ensure there are no problems further down the track."

Getting a non-compliance result can sometimes be a shock for the beekeeper. Usually this can be quickly rectified by emailing evidence of the correction through to the auditor.

Currently MPI is working with the industry to move to more annual, rather than six-monthly, audits.

"Beekeepers will welcome this development, since they pay for the audits, but will have to demonstrate that they take full responsibility for their own procedures," Hart says.

KEEPING ON BEEKEEPING

Despite her demanding work and travel schedule, Hart is determined to keep her hand in with the bees, keeping no more than five hives, they're for pets rather than production. Some very tight time-management saw her successfully complete her level 4 Queen Raising Course last season.

As her work encompasses the whole country, the north/south divide as to hive concentration is striking, both in the economics and biology of beekeeping. North has congestion issues chasing the high UMF manuka, while in the south farmers can be crying out for hives on their land.

She's noticed a dramatic change in the last four years, with market access issues, low prices for non-manuka honey, and difficulty in finding staff combining to create a really demoralising scenario for many beekeepers.

Whatever the pressures though, Hart is keeping up her dander and happily carrying out her essential role in the industry.

"There was one customer who named his bait station after his previous auditors," Hart recalls, "so I'll know I've really made it when I get a bait station named after me".

Ilona's tips on the audit process:

- An incorrect Harvest Declaration Form is far and away the most common fault. Many beekeepers don't realise its importance – it ties the whole system of traceability together. So don't be slap-dash in filling it out.
- Get someone who is not as familiar with the honey house to do a dummy-run inspection, armed with the internal audit checklist. They will see things easily missed by the over-familiarity of daily usage.
- Don't take non-compliance personally. It's only a requirement you've yet to meet and often it can be easily rectified with additional staff training.
- Sometimes non-compliance comes from adding on a new process to an existing one without fully thinking through the additional hazards.
- Foreign contaminants are the most common cause of a re-call. Therefore, a useful exercise would be to ask: "what steps would I take if paint flakes were found in the honey?" This is a good test of traceability and record keeping.
- Take time to upskill - consider attending the one-day audit training sessions. See the [assure quality course finder](#).
- MPI has several websites with helpful information, such as the [RMP Operator Resource Toolkit](#). 🐝

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Blackball Beekeeping Innovations



Last month a trip to visit Glasson Apiaries in Blackball on the West Coast proved popular with readers. So, this month, Maggie James takes a closer look around the 97-year-old beekeeping business's sheds to find some clever innovations and labour-saving devices, many of which are custom made.

HONEY HOUSE TROLLIES AND PALLET SYSTEM

Getting full honey supers from the back of a truck and into the honey house is made easy through the use of small steel trollies, well suited to the confined space. These are similar to other trollies available, but modified by owner Gary Glasson's father John and uncle Ralph Glasson. The wheels underneath are a lower and smaller profile, designed to fit under pellets.

Honey supers arrive on the truck stacked in single columns, six high on nests of pallets grouped in fours and these pallets are designed to neatly accommodate approximately 200 full-depth supers.

The truck deck, equipped with a 300 Ezyloader, is the same height as the concrete loading bay. A large round saw blade bridges the gap between the deck and the bay. One stack of six full supers at a time can be easily wheeled, using the trollies, off the truck to the hot room, then into the extraction room.

EZYLOADER FLOOR MOUNTED DRUM LIFTER

When ordering the honey truck 300 Ezyloader from Australia, it wasn't much more in freight costs for a custom-made drum lifter to be sent. It is potentially the only example in New Zealand and made to Glasson's dimensions. Capable of 400kg lifts with an electric winch, it is bolted onto the concrete floor next to the settling tanks. On extraction, honey is transferred via outside overhead pipes to the settling tank and drum shed. Drumming is undertaken with scales recording the weight. The Ezyloader makes it easier to get drums off scales onto pallets and is safer to use than a manual barrow. It makes for decreased forklift use, resulting in less labour and fuel consumption.

FRAME WASHING

Constantly rising and seemingly out of control freight expense, along with worsening delays, were the catalyst for Glasson developing an on-site frame washing process, expressly just for their outfit. It created another task for staff in down time, with cleaned frames guaranteed available to suit their schedules.

There are still many wooden frames in use, but the business goal is one piece recyclable plastic frames. Currently two to three frames per hive are taken from brood nests each season, with wooden thrown out and plastic washed and reused.

A 3000 PSI 20L per minute, Honda powered water blaster is connected to a hot box to provide pressurised hot water to two nozzles with rotating heads mounted on a swivel, so they spin in a circular motion. The nozzles are in a cabinet to help keep the operator dry and the frames are passed through one at a time. Glasson wanted the nozzles, heads, and hot box in one unit, and contacted Waterblaster Solutions, Nelson, who had previously had a similar request from another beekeeper.

The slumgum to be sent to the compost heap, drops onto an angled sieve eventually ending up in a wheelbarrow while the hot water drops into a tank below which is full of frames getting preheated prior to washing.

The hot box and water blaster are separate units making them more versatile in terms of uses. The whole setup including nozzles cost approximately \$9000.

The washed frames are re waxed manually using half sized paint rollers with beeswax melted in a stainless steel bucket mounted in a repurposed commercial classic stainless steel 1950s hot water tea urn.

THE SPRING & AUTUMN LIGHTWEIGHT BEEKEEPING TRUCK

Like all beekeeping operations the truck plays a central role. Glasson Apiaries 2018 VW Crafter is no different. Diesel powered and on a WOF it is a very practical and valued part of the business. It is not a heavy vehicle, thus less likely to get bogged and so is used in spring and late autumn for lighter work – spring checks, making up nucs, carrying empty honey supers, wintering down – and is not used to cart honey.

The cab comfortably seats three staff members and the low deck is often used as a work area. The deck holds a plastic insulated trunk for miticide strips, a few bags of raw sugar, and a couple of 300L honey drums containing 1:1 syrup from which 20L buckets of syrup are siphoned via gravity. It makes for a much more pleasant user experience than a noisy pump working, and syrup is not spilled while driving. A larger tank is carried in periods when greater amounts of syrup are required. 🐝



The Glasson Apiaries frame washer. A simple looking device, but highly effective at making plastic frames reusable.



Oxalic Acid's Impact on Bee Health



BY JOHN MACKAY

The perfect storm of increasing varroa pressures, concerns of resistance and falling or no returns to beekeepers, has many beekeepers seeking lower cost or self-made varroa treatment. Proving popular is the use of materials soaked in oxalic acid and glycerine. Yet, little is known about the action of oxalic acid in killing varroa and while many have claimed success in treating varroa, others have reported substantial losses. Now there's a new report suggesting we should look closer at the effects of oxalic acid.

'Healthy stomach, healthy body' has come to the realisation of 'healthy stomach bacteria, healthy body' i.e the stomach microbiome (bacterial community) and the relative levels of community members present relate not only to human health but our bees as well.

The major group of bacteria in healthy bees are the lactic acid bacteria, a large order of bacteria that ferment carbohydrates. Indeed, the discovery of this in bees led to the suggestion that honey was a fermented product! Way ahead of you kombucha, kefir and sourdough! Other recent work has looked at whether any benefits could be had in combatting AFB by feeding these bee-specific lactic acid bacteria (spoiler: nope!).

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A new report just out last month looked at the effects of two neonicotinoids and oxalic acid on the bacterial makeup in a selection of bees (Resistance and Vulnerability of Honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) Gut Bacteria to Commonly Used Pesticides open access). Initially the authors looked at the effects of these pesticides on lactic acid bacteria when cultured on plates, using several example species. After firstly using the highest concentrations (where only oxalic acid showed any inhibitory effects), the researchers then used lower concentrations that might be more commonly encountered. However, a number of major lactic acid bacteria species were still inhibited by these lower concentrations.

The attention then turned to the bacterial levels in the bees themselves when they could feed on sugar water with the chemicals added, at what were considered lower concentrations. For the bees feeding on the chemicals, two of the three (including oxalic) showed increased bee deaths compared to the control (no chemical). Using the now-familiar genome sequencing methods to sequence all the bacteria present in the bee gut, bees feeding on oxalic acid-laced syrup showed the most marked differences in the relative levels of lactic acid bacteria species.

...As an aside, you might be thinking that feeding on oxalic acid might seem more akin to the dribble method of administering, rather than the presumed physical contact against the impregnated oxalic/glycerine materials in hives. However, many people report that the materials are chewed and removed by bees, presumably meaning that oxalic acid is ingested by bees as well. Back to the research though...

As a laboratory experiment, it has a number of differences and unknowns to normal beekeeper field settings – namely in ingestion vs physical contact of oxalic, as well as the potential differences in oxalic acid levels. However, it provides more information and understanding on the tolerance of bee health to oxalic acid. Similar work on bee gut composition has been performed in New Zealand, using the same sequencing methods. Check out apicultural conference talks from Dr Michelle Taylor at Plant & Food Research.

John Mackay is a molecular biologist and technical director of Gisborne-based lab dnature diagnostics and logistics, as well as a hobby beekeeper. 🐝

Oxalic acid varroa treatments have become popular with Kiwi beekeepers in recent years (often administered through “staples” such as this), but what is the long term impact on bee gut health?



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Harnessing Savings from the Sun



BY PATRICK DAWKINS

The decision to install a solar hot water system on his honey house was made long before going eco-friendly was in vogue, but it has well and truly paid off, Heaphy Honey owner Keith Tomlinson says. After 15 years of using the installation, the Tasman beekeeper believes more honey houses could cut costs and be more eco-friendly by harnessing the water heating powers of the sun.

For many beekeeping businesses the drop in honey prices in recent years are taking a toll and so apiarists should be looking at a range of ways to cut costs, Tomlinson says. At Heaphy Honey, which he has grown from 200 hives when he bought the business in 1985 to about 800 now, reducing waste and unnecessary costs has always been a core philosophy though.

"We have been eco or conversation minded since I started the business. At that stage it was motivated by economics. I simply had to save every dollar I could," Tomlinson says.

Heaphy Honey was also registered as an organic honey producer until 2010, when varroa reared its head. Re-registering will be considered if an organic varroa treatment plan, currently in the works, proves successful.

The business is owned in partnership between Tomlinson, his wife Nancy-Jean Bell and Lars Moeltgen who carries out the day-to-day beekeeping along with one other part-time staff member. It is located on the outskirts of the Kahurangi National Park, with Takaka the nearest township, 30 kilometres away.

Due to the location of the business base and their beehives, getting honey boxes to a contract extraction facility was becoming increasingly uneconomic and so Tomlinson decided to install his own extraction facility, complete with solar water heating system, in 2006.

"We built our own honey house with underfloor heating and got some pretty good high quality European solar hot water panels and plumbed them into our hot water supply. I built my own house and did the same sort of thing and we pay hardly anything for power. The biggest use of power is for heating water and this system will boil the water unless we use it. It is incredibly efficient. I also use hot water to heat the hot room, for anywhere in the extracting room where we might need it, and it doesn't cost me a cent. It is absolutely brilliant."

The water is heated in copper pipes coiled inside two solar panels located at ground level alongside the building, with it then pumped into the shed and distributed to each of three circuits –



Heaphy Honey's solar water heating system, an "incredibly efficient" way for beekeepers to heat water for extraction facilities says owner Keith Tomlinson.

underfloor, hot room or extraction room – via a pipe and valve system with no computer needed. A 350-litre hot water cylinder with coils acts as a heat exchanger.

The simplicity of the system appeals to Tomlinson as it makes diagnosing and fixing any problems easy. All up it cost him less than \$2000 to install, not including his labour, with the solar panels picked up for \$700 each when a North Island business sold up. For an easy cost saving comparison, the similar setup on their house results in an average power bill of \$30 a month.

"It's cheap, affordable and it pays dividends straight away. If you have another use for the hot water you could just disconnect the hot water panels and put them on your house for winter if you want."

The business also makes use of the hot water for melting out wax frames in a large water bath at 60 to 80 degrees.

For beekeepers who extract their own honey, solar water heating makes sense because the systems provide the most hot water when it is needed most, in summer, Tomlinson adds.

The Heaphy Honey owner says he is "gobsmacked" by the waste and inefficiencies he sees in beekeeping businesses and in general. However, for Heaphy Honey to persevere through five different decades and associated fluctuating honey prices, plus their geographic isolation, means they have had to adapt a mantra of waste-minimisation and efficiencies to make the business a viable concern.

"This was all done before the manuka boom when I was struggling to make ends meet. With kids and a family to support you have to get maximum use of your resources to make a dollar. Now of course it is very fashionable to be eco-friendly, but I have been there a long time. I did it for different reasons, but I am really glad I did it," Tomlinson says, adding "I would like to take a lot of credit for what I've done, but really it just made sense at the time and also turned a dollar." 🐝



Heaphy Honey owners Keith Tomlinson, left, and Lars Moeltgen, have always taken an eco-friendly approach to business and in the current economic climate it is paying off, Tomlinson says.



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4	18-04-0104	18-04-0104	18-04-2019 10:00:00	18-04-2019 12:00:00
5	18-04-0105	18-04-0105	18-04-2019 10:00:00	18-04-2019 12:00:00
6	18-04-0106	18-04-0106	18-04-2019 10:00:00	18-04-2019 12:00:00
7	18-04-0107	18-04-0107	18-04-2019 10:00:00	18-04-2019 12:00:00
8	18-04-0108	18-04-0108	18-04-2019 10:00:00	18-04-2019 12:00:00
9	18-04-0109	18-04-0109	18-04-2019 10:00:00	18-04-2019 12:00:00
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Working with Willows – Part III – Giant Willow Aphid



By Stephanie Sopow (Scion), Dr Trevor Jones (NZ Poplar and Willow Trust), Drs Linda Newstrom-Lloyd and Angus McPherson (Trees for Bees NZ) and Scion.



The giant willow aphid (GWA) is a serious pest of willows, which has had a noticeable impact since its arrival in 2013, with blackened willow trees in the landscape, stem dieback, tree deaths and a surge in vespid wasp populations. The aphids form large clusters on tree stems (Fig. 1) and produce copious amounts of honeydew during summer and autumn that attracts wasps and bees and leaves sticky deposits on roads and farm gates under willow trees.

The honeydew collected by bees contains the trisaccharide sugar melezitose which crystallizes in the honeycomb, as well as salicylic acid and malic acid that contribute a sour taste to the honey. During honey extraction and processing the melezitose crystals rapidly clog filters and result in reduced yields. The sugars present in the honeydew of willows comprises 50 to 70% melezitose, so careful management of beehives is required to avoid contamination of floral honeys.

IMPACT ON WILLOW HEALTH

Willows vary widely in their susceptibility to the aphid, with the more susceptible species hosting large populations of the aphid. These build up quickly with the warmth of summer, and peak in autumn, before declining with colder weather in winter. The aphids deplete the willows of nutrients, particularly in the autumn, when the trees need to store starch reserves to survive the winter and commence growth and flowering in the spring.

Willows that have proved susceptible include *Salix candida*, *S. dasyclados*, *S. hookeriana*, *S. pentandra*, *S. viminalis* and *S. udensis*, where tree deaths, stem dieback and reductions in spring flowering have occurred. Other willows have proved more tolerant, such as *S. aegyptiaca*, *S. alba*, *S. appenina*, *S. caprea*, *S. eriocephala*, *S. lasiolepis* x *viminalis*, *S. matsudana*, *S. matsudana* x *alba*, *S. nigra*, *S. purpurea*, *S. reinii*, *S. schwerinii* and *S. x reichardtii*, but, for some of these, reductions in tree biomass growth of 20 to 50% has been observed when aphids are present.



Figure 1. Giant willow aphid colony on Tangoio willow, *Salix matsudana* x *alba*, near Whakatane. Photo: S Sopow.

BIOCONTROL OF THE APHID

As with many exotic insects that invade new areas and become serious pests, GWA arrived in New Zealand without any of the natural enemies that help to keep it in check elsewhere. It is scarce in California where it is parasitised by a tiny wasp called *Pauesia nigrovaria*, which relies on the aphid to complete its development, killing the aphid and creating an aphid mummy in the process

(Fig. 2). Aided by MPI's Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures initiative, the tiny wasp was brought into New Zealand for testing in containment in 2017 and was released in 2020 after confirming that it posed negligible risk to any other species.

Further releases of *P. nigrovaria* were conducted in summer and autumn of 2021, targeting remaining gaps and aiming to achieve good coverage of New Zealand (Fig. 3). Simultaneously, surveys were being conducted in the central North Island to determine overwintering success and the distance it had spread from 2020 release sites. Survey results were astounding, with the wasp found up to 100km from release sites one year later and in very high numbers, making them relatively easy to find.

At this early stage in the biological control programme, we are unable to predict the level of impact the wasp will have in controlling GWA populations. However, the survey results indicate that effective control is possible, and that it could happen faster than anticipated. Look for evidence in the form of aphid mummies, which remain fixed to willow stems for several months (Fig. 4), to determine whether this process is underway in your area.



Figure 2. *Pauesia nigrovaria* adult female (upper left) attacking individuals among a colony of giant willow aphids. The mummified remains of a previously attacked giant willow aphid can be seen in the lower left. Photo: S Sopow.

PLANTING ADVICE

When considering which willows to plant for your spring bee forage, there are a number of cultivars that provide significant pollen while showing a degree of resistance to GWA. These include the tree willows white willow (*S. alba*) and black willow (*S. nigra*), which grow to a considerable size, along with some shrub and basket willows such as the pussy willows *S. caprea*, *S. aegyptiaca* and *S. purpurea*.

As always, refer to the selected best male willow genotypes that produce the most pollen per plant (Apiarist's Advocate August 2021, pg 21-24) and in the online publication 'Winning with Willows' at www.treesforbeesnz.org/how-to-plant-guides. Cross reference this

with tolerance to GWA. Willows are so valuable for spring build-up of bee populations that it is most worthwhile to plant them and try to control the willow aphid if it becomes a problem.

For the full Working with Willows series: [Part one](#), [Part two](#) 🐝



Figure 3. Map of New Zealand showing *Pauesia nigrovaria* release sites. 2020 release sites are shown in blue; 2021 release sites are shown in red. Image: Scion.



Figure 4. Giant willow aphid mummies, indicating presence of *Pauesia nigrovaria*. Photo: S Sopow.



Nuclear Boats



BY IAN FLETCHER

The anxious watch over the latest Covid lockdowns in New Zealand has kept much of our national focus off the Aukus deal, announced mid-month, where the US agreed to supply technology to let Australia build eight nuclear attack submarines (attack submarines hunt other subs, and ships; they don't carry ballistic missiles). Australia dumped a commitment to buy twelve non-nuclear boats from France. The new boats will come into service (all being well) in the middle of the next decade.

HOW SIGNIFICANT IS THIS?

Militarily, it'll make quite a difference: if completed, Australia's eight boats would outnumber the UK's current six attack boats globally. The US has over 50 in service, spread over all the world's oceans. Maybe half the total will be available at any time. Technically, even the French agree the nuclear boats are better than the alternatives. If there's a war, the US and Australia would be able to largely contain China's navy to its home waters and threaten mainland targets with cruise missiles.

And it's all about China. The US/China rivalry has sharpened in recent years into a real contest for dominance, especially in our part of the world. China's military testing of Taiwan, the

rendering of Hong Kong into political submission, various rivalry-by-reclamation projects in the South China Sea have all added up. Australia has been quite a target and has clearly decided to ostentatiously defend itself. The submarine deal is the high point – so far.

In practice, all this new hardware will also defend New Zealand, just because we will be in the shadow of the Australian and US navies to our North. But there are risks: China's 'grey zone' (between peace and war) activities risk escalation, and almost all our imports and exports are shipped through potentially contested waters. China will want to act sooner rather than later before the Australians and Americans get organised. The political temperature has just gone up sharply.

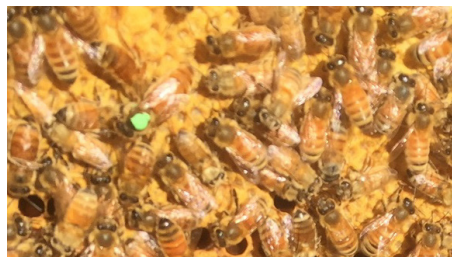
In making this announcement, the US and Australia treated France shabbily. Other allies will be reluctant to fully trust America and Australia for a long time.

Some of that reputational damage will rub off on us. New Zealand will still hope that it has an independent foreign policy. But that's not worth much if we can't either defend ourselves or have much to offer in other ways. Irrelevance looks like impotence. Time to take a long hard look at ourselves.

Ian Fletcher is a former chief executive of the UK Patents Office, free trade negotiator with the European Commission, biosecurity expert for the Queensland Government and head of New Zealand's security agency. These days he is a commercial flower grower in the Wairarapa and consultant to the apiculture industry with NZ Beekeeping Inc. 🐝

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Bee Welfare Code – a Marketer's Tick-Box, or More?



BY ROGER BRAY

Following six years of Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) investigation, through Landcare Research's Colony Loss Survey which indicates around 10% of New Zealand bee colonies perish over a six month (winter) period, it is little wonder the Minister of Agriculture has indicated to industry groups that he wishes beekeepers to address what he considers are bee welfare issues.

The Minister has established bees are sentient creatures (that is, they have feelings) and thus deserve respect in their care. It appears the Minister has taken beekeeper views on overstocking causing starvation of colonies and other bee health issues seriously and asked industry groups to sort the problem.

Anyone that actually works a beehive is aware that each time a beehive lid is removed the bees become distressed. As the beekeeper breaks the beehive down to expose the brood combs some individual bees are maimed and a few may be killed. As the hive is put back together it becomes an impossible task to ensure that all the bees in the hive are out of the way of being

crushed to death. Such is beekeeping both in New Zealand and other countries.

Most beekeepers have an affinity for their bees, accept they are sentient and minimise harm as much as possible, within the constraints of using time efficiently when working in a commercial situation.

So, beekeepers have what appears to be an impossible task ahead of them if they accept there is indeed a bee welfare 'problem' that needs to be sorted.

Can any written document stop bees being distressed, maimed or squashed while beekeepers work them? Can a written document prevent starvation through overstocking? Can a written document on 'bee welfare' prevent sometimes large colony losses where the actual cause remains a mystery?

A written document may prevent bee losses from being confined as they sometimes are in netted orchards, or provide enforcement of spray regulations under animal welfare provisions. However, is it necessary to embark on writing such a document or should discussion centre on identifying if there is a problem and how practical it

A bee in your beard?

The next best thing to a bee in your bonnet may well be a beard full of bees.

Ashburton breeder of queen bees, Mr Roger Bray suffered no ill effects from these thousands of bees which settled on his face after he shook them from their hive.

The bees were due to swarm and because of good weather conditions were in an amenable frame of mind and did not object too strongly at being disturbed.



1978 and young apiarist Roger Bray poses for a photo in the Ashburton Guardian with a "bee beard" to prove how tame bees can be. Most beekeepers treat their bees with care and respect – such as is needed to comfortably wear a bee beard – but is Bee Care Code required?



would be to address? Are there any other insects that are sentient – flies, varroa, bumble bees, wasps?

At the same time, it appears some honey marketers have been taking notice of a NZ Trade & Enterprise survey of consumer buying preferences when it comes to making their purchases. It shows, some of the important influences in consumers decisions relate to the sustainability of the product and that the product is ethically produced and sourced.

Have the marketers of honey simply seen a marketing advantage to push animal welfare when they may not be aware of how beekeeping actually works, or the insurmountable issues beekeepers have with manipulating beehives without causing distress or suffering to (a few) bees?

It has been promoted that a quality mark should be developed that acknowledges the production of honey is sustainable taking into account bee welfare, but would beekeepers be happy to sign a declaration that "No bees were harmed in the making of my honey"? That's where modern beekeeper 'ethics' comes in.

Perhaps there would be a few beekeepers, and even some of our larger companies prepared to make such a claim. Therefore, any documented bee welfare code needs to have some monitoring and enforcement capability. How would monitoring take place? What would enforcement look like?

If a bee welfare code was developed would MPI see a reduction in the number of colonies lost as depicted in the Colony Loss

Survey? Should losses through beehive management become zero, except for natural disasters that nobody can predict or plan for?

Finally, with respect to the ethics referred in the NZ Trade & Enterprise survey, some companies promote their product as being 'ethically sourced'. One such company is the Bell Tea Company, who are part of an organisation called the Ethical Tea Partnership. That organisation promotes "creating a fairer, better, more sustainable tea industry for workers, farmers and the environment".

It seems to me the NZ honey industry is a long way from being able to claim their products are ethically sourced while the situation remains that honey traders appear to have little regard for production costs, or the welfare and sustainability of bees or the beekeeper, when sourcing honey. They simply offer a take or leave (low) price knowing that the beekeeper either caves in and accepts or the next producer in the line will face the same dilemma.

Such are the ethics within this industry at present. Should we simply term this as "market forces", create a tick box with "bee care code" and allow the marketers to portray another illusion to consumers though?

Roger Bray is a Mid Canterbury beekeeper of more than 50 years' experience who has previously served on the executive of the National Beekeeping Association and is a current member of New Zealand Beekeeping Incorporated's executive council. 🐝

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Beekeeping Scholarship Opens to Applicants



Beekeepers, or want-to-be-beekeepers, aged between 17 and 22 years-of-age are being encouraged to put their name forward for the annual Ron Mossop Youth Scholarship this month.

Applications for the scholarship, set up three years ago by Mossop's Honey and industry body Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ), opened in September. Those interested have until October 29 to submit their application.

The scholarship aims to give young people the best possible start in the apiculture industry. It includes \$2000 to be put towards best

practice training and/or set up costs, membership to ApiNZ for a year and attendance at their national conference in the year of the award.

Last year Bay of Plenty 18-year-old Angus Brenton-Rule benefitted from the scholarship while spending his first year in the industry working for Whakatane-based Golden Grove Apiaries. Scholarship funds allowed him to purchase resources to kick start his career and attend the national conference.

"Conference was a really great opportunity to meet other beekeepers and hear about what's happening in other parts of the country. I learnt lots," Brenton-Rule said.

The scholarship is named after industry pioneer, Ron Mossop, who started his family beekeeping businesses in the 1940s. His business was built on values of quality and integrity, which remain at the heart of Mossop's Honey today.

Neil Mossop said his family were thrilled to continue to support the next generation of beekeepers through the scholarship.

"Mossop's Honey is committed to best practice beekeeping and the highest levels of integrity throughout our business. It is a privilege to be able to pass on those values to young beekeepers. We see the scholarship as a wonderful tribute to my father, who instilled those values in his family and business."

Brenton-Rule has experienced the benefits of the scholarship first hand and thus encourages others to put their application in.

"It's so worth it and you'll never know unless you try," the Bay of Plenty teenager says.

"If you win, you'll be glad you applied,"

For more information and how to apply, go to www.apinz.org.nz/scholarship-in-beekeeping 🐝

Thoughts, feelings or other input you'd like to share?

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