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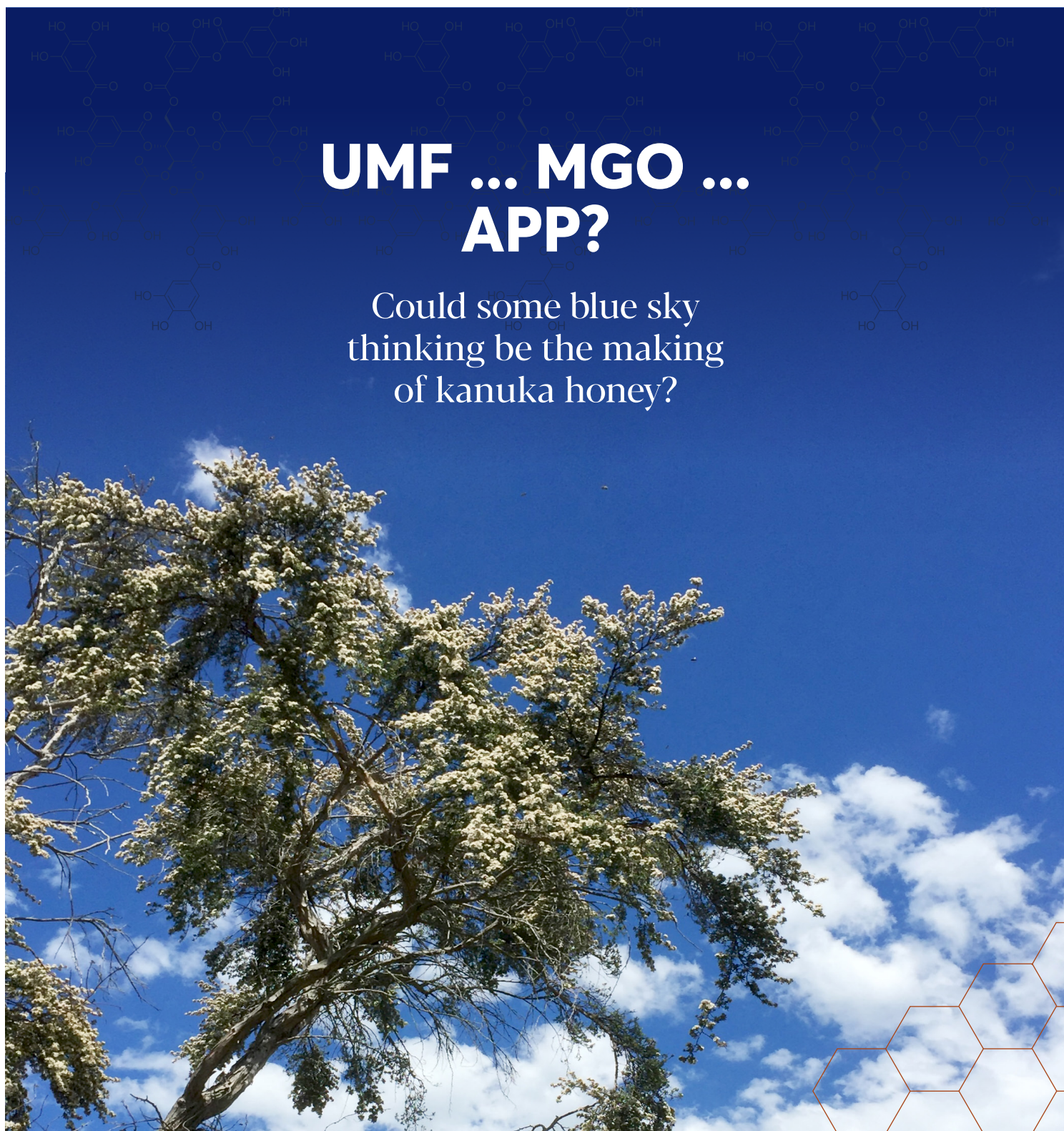
APIARIST'S ADVOCATE



News, Views & Promotions - for Beekeepers - by Beekeepers

**UMF ... MGO ...
APP?**

Could some blue sky
thinking be the making
of kanuka honey?



UMF...MGO...APP?



In recent years, New Zealand beekeepers and honey packers alike have asked, how can we replicate the success of manuka honey? Now, a start-up company based in Auckland believes they may have the answer with a new rating system which would sit alongside UMF and MGO, but measure the bioactivity of all New Zealand honeys, not just manuka. The Experiment Company's work doesn't stop there though, as they also seek to prove the power of kanuka and dispel diastase concerns, all with the aim of highlighting the true value of New Zealand honey and increasing returns to the industry.

"People are not connected with kanuka honey like they should be," The Experiment Company founder Sunil Pinnamaneni believes.

"Most consumers literally know zero, and they only know that New Zealand produces manuka honey. There are a lot of other types of honey that have the opportunity to make it big, but they are just not taking off.

"We decided that we need to do something unique, something big."

That something "big" involves ongoing research through three projects which aim to better identify and understand the bioactive components of a range of New Zealand honeys. That research in turn will support a recently-registered rating system named APP® which can be applied to all honeys, as well as a commercial lab test for two bioactive components found at high levels in kanuka honey which identify it as an ideal wound dressing. The third project seeks to gain Kiwi honey greater access into European markets by better understanding diastase levels.

All that research is being carried out by a team spread between Auckland, Hamilton, the United Arab Emirates and in conjunction with a Swedish lab, giving the chief researchers of The Experiment Company access to a wide range of resources.

THE EXPERIMENT COMPANY

Pinnamaneni is the founder and driving force behind the company, having spent more than a decade working with New Zealand honeys, most recently with honey label Zelandia Honey which he co-founded in 2019. In 2020, Pinnamaneni has been based in the UAE, having moved to Dubai to market Zelandia Honey and take up a contract researching honey for the UAE government, just before the global pandemic struck.

"I have had a lot of time to study honey," Pinnamaneni says of his 11 months on the Arabian Peninsula.

"Not just honey from the UAE, but also New Zealand. It is a big laboratory and we have a lot of good equipment. It is well set up, which is good because I haven't known what else to do, so have just worked seven days a week."

Back home in New Zealand The Experiment Company has employed the services of Dr Swapna Gannabathula who, since undertaking a doctorate degree focusing on the bioactive qualities of New Zealand honey from 2011-16, has maintained an interest in the subject.

The start-up is also teaming with the University of Waikato and Auckland University of Technology (AUT) to further their projects. In the near future the company hopes to bring on board commercial labs to allow beekeepers to test their produce for the unique qualities which they believe sets New Zealand honey apart.



The Experiment Company founder Sunil Pinnamaneni at work in Dubai as he attempts to gain increased value for New Zealand honey.

PROJECT 1: THE APP® POTENCY RATING

The new APP® rating system is set to debut on Zelandia rewarewa honey in Middle Eastern markets next year and Pinnamaneni believes it is the first time a New Zealand honey other than manuka will be marketed with a rating system.

APP® is short for Active Polyphenols, and the rating system is a measure of milligrams of polyphenol per kg of honey. Polyphenols are present in a range of foods and are known to have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory properties.

"We want to develop a secondary potency rating for manuka honey that sits alongside UMF or MGO. It will be the first potency parameter for other kinds of honey though," Pinnamaneni explains.

"People say rewarewa has antioxidant properties, it has polyphenols. So far no one has actually quantified those compounds though. So that is what we are doing, developing a test to quantify all those important polyphenols in all the native New Zealand honeys - manuka, kanuka, rewarewa, kamahi, pohutukawa and bush honey too.

"We hope to capture the data in the next four or five months and develop a classification system just like MGO."

Dr Gannabathula is tasked with testing a range of New Zealand honeys to get a better understanding of their levels of polyphenols.

"At present we know of some research which determines the presence of polyphenols and their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, most of which has been done on manuka honey, but we want to delve into other honeys," Pinnamaneni says.

Dr Swapna Gannabathula, scientist at The Experiment Company which is conducting several honey research projects.



"We want to know what other polyphenols are present, to what level and how we can rate them."

Polyphenols are not unique to honey though, and are present at high levels in a range of natural foods, especially many cherries and berries, and Pinnamaneni does not plan to limit the use of APP® to honey. However, both Pinnamaneni and Gannabathula believe New Zealand produce will come out on top against other foods in the APP® potency rating.

"Our plants are very strong, compared to other countries," says Gannabathula.

"We believe this is due to our volcanic soils and the hole in the ozone layer which means plants get a lot of sun. We haven't proved that yet, but that is what we think may be the cause and what we want to determine."

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PROJECT 2: A LIFELINE FOR KANUKA

Gannabathula explored the bioactive components of New Zealand honeys while undertaking her PHD at AUT. That work, alongside that of another student, led them to identifying the presence of Arabinogalactan proteins (AGPs) at high levels in kanuka honey which, when combined with Apisimin in the honey, aids the body's immune response.

"There has not been much further research carried out on the subject though. So, we want to look into kanuka honey from a range of regions to see what the range of AGPs is," she says.

Much of Gannabathula's work over the next year will focus on assessing a range of kanuka honey samples from around New Zealand to determine the level of AGPs. She will be assisted by two Masters students from AUT and together they aim to create a commercially-viable testing method for AGPs.

"The levels of AGPs vary a lot from honey to honey," Pinnamaneni explains.

"They are found in manuka honey, but kanuka has a greater concentration. So, we want to develop an economically and commercially-viable AGP testing facility so that we can offer the test to beekeepers. We also wish to develop our data on different types of honey to determine the levels of AGPs and build a rating system," he says.

"I think this can be an important tool for those who are developing skin care applications. There are a lot of companies creating wound gels and dressings with kanuka honey, but they are not including the fact as to why that type of honey is superior for the use. If we can find out the concentration of this component then the companies creating the end product can choose the honeys based on these components."

Pinnamaneni believes that ultimately The Experiment Company's work identifying and establishing an appropriate test for AGPs will lead to greater returns for the beekeeper if they can point to exactly what it is in their honey which provides immunostimulatory, or wound care, value.

PROJECT 3: BUSTING DOWN DIASTASE BARRIERS

The Zelandia Honey label, along with many others, have been built off the back of manuka honey sales, but there is a major impediment to getting the product into Europe. As a safeguard against overheating of honey the European Union (EU) prevents honey with diastase readings of less than eight from being imported. However, manuka and other New Zealand monofloral varieties regularly test below eight, despite the honey being fresh and free from adulteration.

"At Zelandia we have an order from Europe for manuka honey with an 850 plus MGO rating, but I don't think we are going to be able to find a honey that has that rating and can meet the diastase requirements. It is a big problem," Pinnamaneni admits.

"I believe that if we can convince the EU's regulatory body that it is because of the honey's compounds that the diastase is being affected then it is a huge win and will help the whole industry. We would be able to export a whole lot of hybrid manuka honey to Europe without any problems."

The Experiment Company has teamed with leading honey researcher Dr Megan Grainger of Waikato University to test a range of monofloral New Zealand honeys with the goal of understanding what causes low diastase results in manuka honey.

"Diastase is an enzyme that breaks complex carbohydrates into smaller sugars. Enzymes can be degraded by heat, hence the diastase activity is used as an indicator of heat treatment. However, diastase can be low in manuka honey, even if it hasn't been heated. We are investigating if polyphenolics unique to manuka honey may be interacting with the enzymes and preventing them from working," Grainger explains.

"We will analyse diastase and concentrations of phenolics in honey and assess them over time, under controlled conditions, to see what is going on."

Pinnamaneni will also continue assessing honey samples at his lab in Dubai, while Swedish lab Phadebas, who manufacture the diastase tablets used in the testing regimes, may also assist.

The Experiment Company's work is independent of similar diastase research being carried out through Analytica Laboratories in conjunction with Apiculture New Zealand, with both projects aiming to boost exports to Europe.

HOW DOES MANUKA STACK UP?

All up, The Experiment Company's three major projects aim to gain a better understanding of a range of New Zealand honeys. That science will back up the rating systems they plan to implement.

However, the APP® potency rating could run the risk of lumping manuka honey in with not only other New Zealand honey varieties, but also international honeys and even other foods, by placing them under the same rating system.

Pinnamaneni refutes any suggestion the new potency rating will lower manuka honey's standing, believing it will still stand alone, while other New Zealand produce will also rate highly. This belief is built after testing of "maybe 100 different types of honey" from all around the world during his time in the UAE.

"We are adding another layer of potency to manuka honey with APP®. We have identified three or four other properties of manuka honey, outside of DHA and MGO, which say it is antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and also immunomodulatory.

That will secure the position of manuka honey by incorporating more components.



Dr Megan Grainger is leading research into diastase levels in manuka honey from her Waikato University lab.

Sunil Pinnamaneni has been able to use the resources at a lab in Dubai to research honey. Work he now plans to use to help add value to New Zealand honey.



"If you compare manuka honey on all these scales, it will come out on top and APP® is a way of proving that. I think it is a good situation for manuka honey to be in and will help to give it more credibility."

Gannabathula also believes honey's unique health benefits will still be valued highly, even if the rating system was to take off across a range of foods.

"It does not have any risk, because honey is so different from other foods. We need all the foods, but want to know why certain foods are important to us and what health benefits they have. The research could be very good for New Zealand's food industry in general," she adds.

PERCEPTION ALTERATION

While The Experiment Company plans to launch the APP® potency rating with Zelandia's rewarewa honey in the UAE early next year, work will continue across the range of labs with which they are collaborating.

Putting timeframes on their projects is difficult, but Pinnamaneni hopes they can soon partner with at least one commercial laboratory to offer testing of AGPs in kanuka honey and polyphenols in all honeys.

Their work up to this point has been self-funded, but they will be applying for a Callahan Innovation Grant and are hoping other honey sellers and beekeepers will see fit to back their work, including by submitting honey samples to expand their database.

"We would be grateful if anyone can contribute any help, be it honey samples or funding. Nevertheless, we will continue and we want to finish and publish the findings," Pinnamaneni says.

The current range of research projects and registration of the APP® potency rating are early steps for Pinnamaneni on a long journey to answer the overarching question of how to replicate the success of manuka honey.

"It won't happen overnight or even within a year, because, ultimately, we need to change the perception of the end consumer. The consumer may not know all about MGO or UMF, but they have a perception that manuka honey is the best, which it is, but the other types of honey are equally important in a way.

"There should be a scale where we can compare manuka honey and kanuka honey and rewarewa honey. We cannot say kanuka or rewarewa honey is useless because it doesn't have MGO, it has unique components that will boost health," he says, adding "if one type of honey clicks the way manuka has, then imagine the honey export value". 🐝

Help The Research — Send In Your Honey Samples

The Experiment Company's work to better understand New Zealand honey and add value to the beekeeper will only be as good as the database of honey varieties its scientists can assess. With this in mind, they ask Kiwi beekeepers whose honey fits the below specifications to kindly submit new-season samples for research purposes.

Kanuka, manuka and other monoflorals for polyphenol (APP) research

Dr Swapna Gannabathula is seeking 2020-21 season kanuka honey samples (100g) from any location, as well as manuka and non-manuka monoflorals.

Samples can be sent to:

82 Barrys road,
Glendene,
Auckland-0602

Please provide:

- Floral type
- Date of harvest/collection
- Region collected from
- Land type (urban, bush, farm, orchard)
- Contact person (non-essential)

Contact Swapna for more info: swapna@experiment.nz // 021170929

Monoflorals for diastase and trace element research

Dr Megan Grainger is requesting 2020-21 season samples (approximately 50g) of any monofloral honey varieties from any region of the country.

Samples can be sent to:

University of Waikato
Science Store
Gate 8, Hillcrest Road
Hamilton
New Zealand
Attention: Megan Grainger

Please provide:

- Floral type
- Date of collection
- Location of hive (e.g. Hillcrest, Hamilton, or GPS)
- Land type (e.g. urban, bush, farm, orchard)

For more info email: megan.grainger@waikato.ac.nz

Pollination Ties Tested



With a drop in honey prices, paid pollination work has become more appealing to many beekeepers recently. In an effort to diversify their revenue streams some beekeepers are now undercutting market rates to find work for their hives. *Apiarist's Advocate* surveyed beekeepers from New Zealand's leading growing regions and found that growers are largely staying loyal to their beekeepers, as a range of factors play into decision making.

The fertile soils and largely temperate climate of New Zealand makes for productive fruit, vegetable and seed growing regions. Many of those plants require honeybee pollination to produce and abundant crop, with produce as diverse as kiwifruit, avocado, cherries, squash and apples, as well as numerous other stone-fruit and berry crops. When combined with seed production, such as for carrot, radish and onions, insect pollination contributes at least \$2billion to the national economy according to Ministry for Primary Industries figures.

For most beekeeping operations, especially since the advent of lucrative manuka honey markets, paid pollination work is a sideline to the main revenue stream provided by their honey crop. Other beekeepers put more of a focus on pollination as staple work for their business, especially on the Canterbury plains where large seed crops are grown.

In all regions and across a range of crops, many beekeepers who have built strong relationships with growers are maintaining a large amount of their existing contracts. This despite pressure



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coming on from beekeepers looking to make their way into pollination work, they report.

Apiculture New Zealand board member and Bay of Plenty beekeeper Dennis Crowley says, while there have been beekeepers canvassing growers for work, kiwifruit and avocado producers in his region have been largely loyal to their existing providers.

"You hear stories, but to try and validate them is a bit hard. You always get the odd company or beekeeper who are struggling a bit who might try to undercut the price to get an orchard, but they generally don't get a lot," Crowley says.

With the kiwifruit industry booming, new orchards going in and avocado prices also favourable to growers, demand for quality hives is high.

"The crops up here are now worth so much, that a good orchardist is not going to risk a beekeeper that they don't know for the sake of a few thousand dollars when their crops are worth a million dollars plus, or in some cases several million dollars."

David Hayes at Buzz Apiaries Ltd, who also owns several kiwifruit orchards, understands those economics well and the value of offering quality hives. While Buzz Apiaries Ltd has retained approximately 90 percent of its pollination contracts this season, the actions of some beekeepers who seek to undercut the market is still frustrating to Hayes.

"There are some beekeepers chasing rainbows. They chose to pull their hives out of pollination and chase honey production, or alternatively not get involved in pollination at all. Now, as times have got tougher in the honey industry, they are trying to push back in to it.

"For apiarists who have been consistently supplying orchardists with hives for pollination, it does grind your gears a little bit," Hayes says.

While most kiwifruit growers who deal directly with beekeepers are maintaining contracts, some beekeepers are reporting that packhouses which act as intermediaries between grower and beekeeper are searching for lower pollination fees and some have begun taking a share of the fees charged to orchardists.

CANTERBURY

In Canterbury, carrot seed pollination, among others, provides a lot of work for beekeepers and this season the crop area is expected to be down, meaning less hives will be required.

"There are a lot of beekeepers looking to get into pollination work, but the work is not there for them to find at the moment," explains Matt McCully field operations manager at Midlands Apiaries.

Midlands Apiaries work alongside Midlands Seeds, major merchants in the Canterbury area, and so provide a lot of hives for seed pollination.

"Our pollination clients have told us they have been approached by other beekeepers offering a lower price, but we haven't lost work because of it," McCully says.

Midlands Apiaries will be launching one major change to their pricing for this coming season – charging clover seed growers for hives.

"At the moment the amount of honey you get per hive does not anywhere near cover the cost of running the hive. So, this year we



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have started charging a pollination fee for hives moved in to clover and next season we will charge a fee for any resident sites near clover crops," McCully says.

Another major provider of hives for pollination work in Canterbury, Barry Hantz of Hantz Honey in Leeston, says he has lost one small contract this season due to price, but he will not be reducing his fees.

"We deliver a good service, good bees and we believe that is what they are worth. There have been farmers in the past who

have gone the cheaper option and suffered the consequences of a reduced yield and production," Hantz says.

HAWKE'S BAY


In Hawke's Bay Brian Hills grew up on an orchard and now runs several hundred hives offering services to the wide variety of crops grown in the abundant region. The Bay has seen changing land use in recent years, with new kiwifruit, apple and berry crops being cultivated. It is an area of high hive population and Hills says that is leading to competition for pollination contracts, but he hasn't heard of price-cutting beekeepers getting much work.

"To get into the market is not easy," Hills says.

"Some beekeepers are prepared to accept a low price to push their way in and there are some orchardists who will take that, but they will want to make sure they are getting quality hives.

"Beekeepers are desperate due to the low honey prices, but to me they are hastening their own doom because, like in any business, if there is a shortage of work around then if everyone competes on price it drives it down and becomes uneconomic for everyone."

From his position on the ApiNZ Board and as an experienced beekeeper Crowley has seen many changes in the pollination market through the years and competition for contracts is not unusual.

"If the growers are dealing with someone who is delivering a good product which yields results, then they are not inclined to chop and change. The orchardists that do that, the beekeepers soon learn," Crowley says. 



Clover pollination will come at a cost for some growers in Canterbury this season.

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What's Changed? — Far North Freeze Out Thawing?



Each issue we take a look back on an *Apiarist's Advocate* story from a year ago and ask, what's changed? This month the concerns of Northland beekeepers over the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) export manuka honey standard, as detailed in *Far North Freeze Out* in our November 2019 issue, are topical following a November 11 hui with the government department that has left beekeepers more optimistic.

At times over the last year John Craig says he has felt disheartened at the plight of Tai Tokerau Miere, the collective of Northland beekeepers he represents as spokesman. In October 2019 they held a hui in Northland with representatives of MPI which they left feeling "stonewalled" over inaction to change the controversial honey standard.

Twelve months on, the mood coming out of the recent hui at the Ngati Hine Forestry Trust building in Moerewa was more hopeful though.

"I'm optimistic, because I had been almost resigned to the fact there was no way forward. Now, it appears there is a way forward," Craig says.

Since MPI implemented a new regulatory definition for what can be exported as manuka honey in February 2018 much of the honey coming out of Northland has failed to meet the standard, despite beekeepers being confident that bees have been foraging in areas of manuka. This is due to 2-methoxyacetophenone (2-

MAP) levels which test below the required 5mg/kg standard, as defined by MPI.

Craig, who is also honey manager for Northland iwi Ngati Hine and a retired Professor of Environmental Management at The University of Auckland, says the standard does not account for regional variations such as the low 2-MAP in Northland — but it should.

The recent hui was attended by approximately 20 Northland beekeepers "who explained they didn't like the manuka honey standard and that it was ruining their business," Craig says.

MPI was represented by manager for operational research Dr Claire McDonald and principal advisor for food regulation Tara Ross-Watt, as well as Waata Papalli-Smith.

"We put it to them that if we came back with some good reasoning, would they modify the definition? The answer, from MPI, was that if we have a good case and it is science-based then they will look at it.

"Nothing has really changed for beekeepers in the north. We still have a problem, but MPI is working more collaboratively," Craig says.

The Tai Tokerau Miere collective of beekeepers is hopeful that work being carried out by the Manuka Charitable Trust, who are assessing a wide range of honey samples from around New Zealand, will result in a more regionally inclusive standard. However, that work is expected to take a number of years.


"That will be better than what we have got, but the hui made it very clear that they couldn't wait three years, there would need to be an interim change, if nothing else, to make it fairer," Craig says.

"I have faith that [following the Trust's work] we will end up with a definition that is a lot better than what we have got, but in the meantime MPI is considering listening to us and making a minor modification to make the current definition fairer."

The retired professor will now consult with colleagues from the scientific community who have an interest in manuka honey to come up with potential modifications to take to MPI. They will keep the Manuka Charitable Trust's team informed of their progress, but work separately.

"There is an independent group of scientists who have been working with us on this and we talk with stakeholders within the industry and laboratories. It needs to have wide consultation or it will never get anywhere."

With new season honey coming in from the far north the beekeepers will want swift action. Craig, who has kept bees for 47 years, is motivated to help play Tai Tokerau Miere's part and put the ball firmly back in MPI's court.

"We will do the work, but it is MPI that is the slow bit. They can't just make a snap decision. They have to work through their processes." 



Dr Claire McDonald, representing MPI, and Jim Ngawiti of Nga Bush Honey were among those who attended a recent hui in Moerewa arranged by Tai Tokerau Miere to tackle "inadequacies" in the manuka honey standard.

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RMP Audit Changes Signalled



Following years of lobbying from industry bodies the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) appears on the verge of loosening rules around Risk Management Programme (RMP) audits, to allow for less frequent and online assessments. Both Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ) and New Zealand Beekeeping Inc (NZBI) have found favour in the proposed changes, but they say there is more work to be done.



MPI is proposing changes that would allow some beekeepers to move to less frequent RMP audits of their facilities.

Both industry bodies made submissions largely in favour of MPI's proposed changes to auditing prior to the November 27 deadline.

Most notable of the changes proposed to the Animal Products Notice are the potential for a move from six-monthly RMP audits to annual for regularly compliant beekeepers operating a seasonal facility, and the allowance for auditors to carry out "off-site verification" during an off-season audit.

"The big thing is reducing the two audits a year," ApiNZ chief executive Karin Kos says.

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"A lot of beekeepers find that onerous and expensive so we asked for a review and MPI did come to the table eventually. We have had a couple of good focus groups between MPI, us, AssureQuality and other industry groups to look at all the options."

NZBI executive board member Ian Fletcher says they too have been pressing MPI to reduce audits for beekeepers who only extract honey for part of the year.

"This proposal goes a good way towards that. We think it could go further, but it is a step in the right direction," Fletcher says.

The proposed changes signal that thinking from MPI is heading down the right line for two main reasons, as NZBI see it.

"Firstly, it implies that compliance costs are a relevant factor when it comes to designing the regulatory arrangement. They are saying that there can be a lower cost regime where you have a good compliance record and are a seasonal producer.

"They are also recognising that beekeepers with a satisfactory compliance record can be promoted up the system. There is every reason to think that is a good idea," Fletcher says.

NZBI's submission on the changes did flag concerns about the clauses regarding moves from six-monthly to annual audits though. The proposed new Notice states that in the case of ongoing compliance the verifier "must" move the "animal product processor" to less frequent audits, but in the following clause singles out "bee product processors" and says the verifiers "may" change audit frequencies.

"We want to know why they are doing that. We are asking why they appear to be giving us something then taking it away? Why not make it 'must'?" Fletcher says.

During lockdown periods this year, some audits were carried out remotely. Now there are provisions for some audits to be carried out in this manner in the future in the new proposal. However, off-site audits did not result in reduced fees and so ApiNZ pushed for this in their submission.

"It is not going to suit everyone and I know some beekeepers noted there was no shift in costs to moving online. This is all about reducing compliance cost for beekeepers though. So, these changes need to be working towards that," Kos says.

The proposed new Notice has some specific clauses relating to if the country moves to Level 3 lockdown or higher, including removing the need for audits at that time if a seasonal facility is not in use. However, it then states that the operator of a seasonal business that was closed due to a lockdown must undergo a successful audit prior to opening.

Both ApiNZ and NZBI's submissions flagged that change as likely to create a huge backlog of facilities wanting to be audited and waiting to resume operation.

While both industry groups are still looking for further improvements in the area of RMP audits, ApiNZ and NZBI are happy to see the potential for progress with the changes signalled by MPI and neither industry group was aware of anyone who outright opposed the changes.

MPI will review all submissions in December and plans to issue any notice of change by December 18. 🐝

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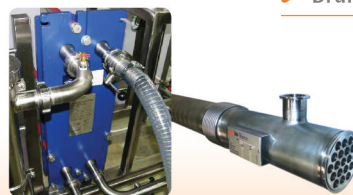


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Trust Building



With The Manuka Charitable Trust working towards some key hearings with the UK and New Zealand Intellectual Property Offices, as well as a series of consultations with Maori groups from around the country, Trust spokesman **VICTOR GOLDSMITH** answers some key questions around their mission and the challenges ahead.

What is the role of the Manuka Charitable Trust?

The role of the Manuka Charitable Trust is to protect the term 'manuka honey', the key word being 'manuka', which from our perspective is a taonga, a treasure.

If you understand our creation story then manuka derives from mother earth and we need to protect any taonga that is produced from her. That is why the Manuka Charitable Trust was established as a representative of Maori from across New Zealand, while we have a subsidiary commercial arm called Te Pitau Ltd, which we have received government funding for and which will oversee research to back our claims.

We need to have good science behind us, and also provide information and education to the consumer to explain that not only is manuka honey unique in terms of its chemical composition, but it also has a story that connects it back to the indigenous people of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Cultural appropriation matters to us and we don't believe Australians should be able to use the term and interchange it just because they have a similar tea-tree to us.

It is an important task because we have to ask the question, what is the next taonga which Maori are guardians for that will go global? We need to set the platform for that. It may be hoki, perhaps tawari honey or rewarewa. Whatever it is, if we don't set up the foundations to protect the intellectual properties then, as New Zealanders, we risk losing the right to benefit from the commercialisation.

You have a hearing to try and establish a certification trademark in the UK in March, what will that achieve and are you confident in success?

We are seeking a certification trademark, not a trademark. A trademark gives the right to use to an individual, whereas a certification trademark gives that right to a group. So, if you are a New Zealand honey producer then you can use it, but no other exporter outside of New Zealand will be able to. We have to obtain exclusive market access and be able to penalise anyone who tries to breach that.

The UK will be a test for if we can defend ourselves against Australia's challenge. The Aussies will have their argument and we are confident we can repel it, but we just don't know.

If we are not successful in the UK, all the work done in China, European Union and USA will likely fall over.

So, at this stage, we are focusing our funding on the UK application.

If we are not united, the Australians will use that against us. So we need to go out with clear messaging and say 'this is our taonga, it has been handed down to us, and we have responsibility as guardians to look after it'. It is the mechanics of how we do that which will be the issue though.

You are planning to consult with iwi groups in the first quarter of next year, how do you see those discussions playing out?

No one else has done this. No other indigenous people have gone to this extent to protect their property, their taonga species, like we are trying to. So, we have no template and this is world leading. That is the exciting part, but hey, it's also risky.



Victor Goldsmith

The whole industry and Maoridom are coming together which is kind of unheard of in any industry, but this is a global play and so we need to understand and be clear about where we are coming from and where we are going. We will come up with a robust strategy and identify our key messages so that we are consistent with that message.

We are going to go out there and consult and say 'this is the reason why we have done this, this is the group that needed to be established because we couldn't receive the funding without it, but we will come back out to you because there are international agreements that need to be worked through'.

Things like free trade agreements, geographical indicators, certification trademarks, are all stuff that is largely foreign to our people. However, it is also intellectual property and how we might commercialise that for the benefit of all of us are quite big conversations.

We have got to come up with a representation model that all Maori can see themselves in, but you don't want a board of 100.

You whakapapa back to Ngati Porou and the honey industry has been a hugely beneficial industry for your people, do you enjoy the challenge of your role with the Trust?

I have been doing this for six years and started out as a bit of a lone voice, but now it is nice to have a bit more support from around the country behind us. It can be tiring, but I do it all for love and it is a legacy thing for me. I hope, 20 years down the track, to be able to say 'we did that, we protected manuka honey'. 🐝

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Those who fail to study history...

Views From Outside the Apiary



IAN FLETCHER

One of the things the New Zealand government is doing is stepping up the teaching of New Zealand history in schools. This is a good idea. Well taught, history can be inspiring, as well as informative. Understanding where we come from is an important part of who we are. But we need to get it right: bad history, badly taught is just as destructive and demotivating as any kind of bad teaching or poor content.

Explaining New Zealand's past to people in New Zealand is surprisingly tough – it feels like everyone has an opinion, and a point (usually related to a modern issue) they want to use 'history' to support. This is common – history is always a story about the present as well the past.


One of the best ways to get a grip on history and its lessons for the present is through comparisons – looking at the New Zealand experience in comparison to other countries' development. It avoids tunnel vision – and teaches young people to look critically at context and narratives.

There is good material available too. For example, the American historian David Fischer wrote in "Fairness and Freedom" (2012

OUP) about the way New Zealand and US societies had developed from European contact, with a value of fairness embedded in the emergent New Zealand world, and freedom in the US. Looking at the way the two countries have responded to Covid-19, it's still relevant (even if you don't agree, the ideas and analysis are worth considering).

New Zealand's own story is fascinating too. There will be a lot of attention given – rightly – to developing a balanced view of the impact of European contact and settlement on Maori. We need to get that right. But we might also want to think about some of the features of the European, Chinese and trans-Tasman worlds that grew up here – examples include the different (and hugely creative) provincial political systems, the link between the temperance movement and the suffrage movement, the literally racist treatment of many Chinese people who came to the goldfields.

Today, New Zealand has one of the most diverse social and cultural mixes of anywhere. We all need to make that work. Having a grip on how we got here, the ideas, people, the diseases (yes), and the events can be a liberation and a foundation. We all need to get involved in history.

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 through both the Manuka Charitable Trust and NZ Beekeeping Inc. 

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The Perfect Swarm



ANTHONY “THE IRISH DRONE” MORGAN

In the continued chronicles of a first-season beekeeping in Ireland, Anthony “The Irish Drone” Morgan details how while minding his own beeswax over breakfast one morning in County Wexford he stumbled across The Perfect Swarm.

In early August, just as I thought swarming season well and truly over, to my astonishment while making coffee in the kitchen, a frenzy of bees caught my eye.

I had placed a swarm trap in a tree opposite the kitchen window. For some days there were bees around it, maybe for a week. I had decided that after my coffee, I would go outside and open the box,


to see if there were any permanent residents, but this day there was no doubt.

Forgetting about coffee, I rushed across the garden to see my swarm trap so covered in bees, that none of the white painted surface on the front of the box was visible. They even covered the roof and a brick on top.

A swarm of this magnitude, and so late in the season, really hammered home what I already knew - I know nothing about bees! But I thanked my God in Heaven for sending me... The Perfect Swarm.

Within a week, that swarm drew out 10 frames of foundation. We use 11 frame boxes in Ireland. 10 out of 11 is not bad by any standard. Sure, I fed them the whole time, it was a matter of having to, with the lousy weather. But it showed me what such a sheer number of bees can achieve together and the importance of developing and maintaining strong colonies.

The Perfect Swarm took my total of hives to 11, having begun the season with just one (*Editor's note: The Irish Drone's colourful portrayal of purchasing his first hive was published in our October issue*). Next season I may look to grow hive numbers, but I think 20 hives as a backyard beekeeper might be close to the limit for my time constraints. Hopefully it takes less time when you start to get a handle on what you are doing...

No doubt I'll try to strike a balance between having the right number of hives to get at least a reasonable crop of honey, but not so many that they eat into all of my spare time. A balance hobbyist beekeepers the world over are no-doubt trying to strike. 

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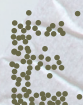


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It's one year since Covid-19 first appeared in Wuhan and it doesn't look like it's going to go away any time soon.

There have been effects on the Apiculture industry in many ways, including both the challenges of supply when importing beekeeping supplies as well as the exporting of honey and other hive products.

The government has provided beekeeping courses up to Level 3 among their offerings to help those made redundant as a result of the pandemic. Many technical institutes throughout the country are now offering these courses free of charge. If the students pass the course, they get to take home a complete hive they have made. As I talk to these technical institutes regarding their requirements, I find that although the government means well, this initiative may not be working as planned.

One should ask: will this help our industry by making up for the lack of migrant beekeepers who normally come here over the summer?

A good percentage of those doing these courses are hobby beekeepers taking advantage of free instruction. In fact, one bee club meeting was promoting this. This is not necessarily a bad thing as our keen new beekeepers will be better informed than they would have been in the past. However, they are not necessarily looking for employment in the industry.

On the other hand, long-term unemployed are being pushed to take these courses and one tutor passed the comment that it was more like running a daycare center than an apiculture course.

Would the money be better spent on promoting our unique New Zealand honeys in overseas markets?

Rod Williams is the owner-director of national beekeeping supply company Hive World NZ, email: sales@hiveworld.co.nz 🐝



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CLUB CATCH-UP



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Seeing new members get comfortable not only in the hives, but with each other is what it is all about for recently appointed Manawatu Beekeepers Club president Sarah Wilkin.

On November 26 the club hosted an end of year gathering featuring a pot luck dinner and honey competition at their regular monthly meeting place of Newbury School hall, outside of Palmerston North. It was attended by about 30 club members with "a wonderful time" had according to Wilkin.

"If you are going to join a club, join a provincial club. Don't go to one of the city clubs where people don't know how to do a pot luck dinner properly," the club president jokes.

Seeing the club embrace all their members and offer a comfortable social environment is important to Wilkin, herself an owner of just one hive. She had only been a member of the Manawatu club for about a year and attended a handful of meetings before national lockdowns prevented gatherings. Their first meeting back was the AGM in July and Wilkin was "pushed to the front" to become president, despite her junior status.

"It is going really well," she says six months in.

"We have new people joining the club, newbees getting hives and people know each other well enough to have fun at a party."

The end of year gathering featured a range of awards for various honey types, beeswax, mead and photography, with prizes sponsored by Waireka Honey.

As a hobbyist and recently new beekeeper herself, Wilkin has made sure that the club has provided opportunities for those without hives to get involved and work the club hives.

"They were longing to touch a hive, pull frames out, put on the gear and light their smokers. It has been really fun and really encouraging because all the people who have come along as beginners this year now have their own hives. A couple of them have populated their hives with swarms that they were able to get because of their connection to the bee club."

Encouraging "newbees" into the hives was made easier for Wilkin when she inherited the role of club apiary manager this spring, something the more experienced beekeepers of the club have offered guidance with.

"The old hands helped me. In fact, they were inclined to grab the hive tool and do it for me," she jokes.

While she is not overly familiar with the club's history, the new president is keen to build up their future by providing a welcoming environment and continued opportunities to all that are keen to keep bees. With annual club membership only \$25 and meetings open to non-members, there are few barriers to prevent local beekeepers getting involved.

"The point in being in a club is to meet people who want to talk about bees and make friends," Wilkin says, adding, "so, if people are not friendly it's not worthwhile."

The Manawatu Beekeepers Club meet monthly on the fourth Thursday of each month, January – November, 7.30pm at the Newbury School Hall.

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Proposal to Restrict Beekeepers



A proposed new bylaw in the Selwyn district of Canterbury could see beekeepers limited to the number of hives kept at any one property and also required to provide a water source for their apiaries.

The Selwyn District Council, which covers 642,000 hectares between the Waimakariri river in the north to the Rakai river in the south and from east coast to the main-divide, is considering submissions made on the Draft Bylaw for Keeping Animals, Poultry and Bees, which closed in November.

There are six new laws relating to the keeping of bees. They include a limit of two hives per urban property, that beekeepers must ensure bees do not cause nuisance, an ability for the council to order removal of "dangerous" hives, the Council being able to



Beekeepers could be required to provide a water source for bees should proposed new bylaws in Canterbury come in to place.

prescribe the location of hives in consultation with Apiculture New Zealand, and that a water source must be provided for hives.

While the limit of two hives per site applies only to urban settings, other laws either explicitly state, or it is implied, that they relate to "all areas within the District".

New Zealand Beekeeping Inc (NZBI) made a submission to the Council establishing that there are "considerable differences in the needs of people associated with the keeping of bees in both [rural and urban] environments".

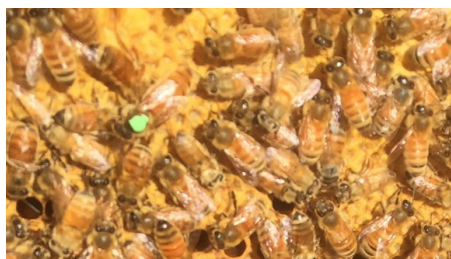
The industry body took particular exception to the potential for the Council to order the removal of hives in a rural setting, especially if they were carrying out pollination work. Giving the Council the ability to order where on a property hives were placed was also questioned, with it noted the rule appeared "unnecessary and unworkable especially in orchard or crop situations where specialised pollination requirements are being considered".

NZBI also opposed the requirement to provide water for bees, noting that due to their large foraging area and ability to source their own water a "bowl of water next to the hive" is unrequired.

The Council is considering submissions and has not released a timeline for a decision concerning the proposed changes. 🐝

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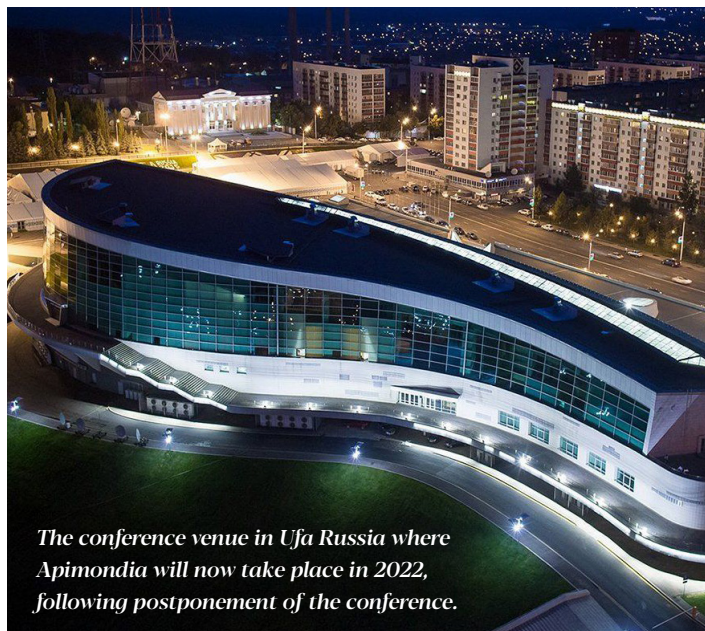


The world's biggest gathering of beekeepers has been delayed a year, with the Apimondia Federation announcing on November 13 that its 2021 conference will be pushed back to 2022.

The Russian city of Ufa was set to hold the event in September 2021, but that will be replaced with a scaled down virtual event. It is hoped Ufa will be able to host the 47th Apimondia Congress in person in August and September of 2022, while also offering virtual attendance via live streaming.

A press release by the Apimondia Executive Council stated that postponement of the in-person event was "the most sensible course of action given the realities of Covid-19 and the uncertainty that this pandemic is causing for travel", but that they remain committed to Ufa 2022.

Last month in *Apiarist's Advocate*, Jody Mitchell of Kaimai Range Honey detailed her desire to travel to Russia for the World Honey Awards held at the Apimondia Conference, following controversy around their honey being denied entry at the most recent awards last year. The Bay of Plenty beekeeper was confident in a good flowering and potentially award-winning crop coming from the current season, but plans to show their honey globally will now be delayed with the Federation's postponement announcement. 🐝



The conference venue in Ufa Russia where Apimondia will now take place in 2022, following postponement of the conference.

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