

ISSUE 34, MAY 2022

APIARIST'S ADVOCATE



News, Views & Promotions - for Beekeepers - by Beekeepers

Compliance Defiance

We look at the issue of selling
non-compliant honey



The Non-Compliance Conundrum



You might have seen it, unlabelled honey at the roadside stall or on the local Facebook market place. Some might be legitimately harvested, extracted and packaged, but there are a range of food safety rules to comply with and not all sellers have. What are the actual risks of this form of production and marketing activity to the wider apiculture industry though and should it be tolerated?

A proliferation of honey in New Zealand is proving difficult to sell – and it's not just the commercial beekeepers and packers having trouble. Smaller producers must also look for a market in which to sell their honey. With hobbyist beekeeping popularity surging in recent years, the market place for the small seller is getting more competitive too.

Ashburton couple Darren and Mandi Webb are two beekeepers feeling the pinch in the market place. Their honey, labelled Mandi's New Zealand Postcode Honey, is harvested from their 50 hives and marketed locally. However, they are growing increasingly frustrated by a range of other honeys in the Canterbury area being offered for sale that appear to be non-compliant.

"I have to pay fees, other beekeepers have to pay fees, and we must recoup them somehow," explains Darren Webb.

"Then you have others who come along, unregistered, and sell it cheap as chips. It makes it hard on those who are honest."

This season the Webbs' honey was extracted and packed at a friend's registered facility and, before next season, they plan to register their own property.

While some beekeepers, such as the Webbs, may feel aggrieved at the number of unlawful sellers, others around the industry say it's a difficult situation to police, with no logical solution and that the industry should be careful about inviting greater than necessary scrutiny.

WHAT ARE THE RULES ANYWAY?

Rules around food safety are set in place by the Food Act 2014 and apply to anyone trading food in New Zealand. Administration of food safety issues is undertaken and thus "policed" by government body New Zealand Food Safety, a business unit of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

Any person trading honey, irrespective of the amount, should lawfully obey the Food Act. Trading covers a wide range of activities, including selling food for cash, bartering food, and giving food away to promote a business.

Most food businesses need to register with their council, however those selling direct to consumer can skip this process. Regardless of if a seller has this registration though, all honey to be traded must be extracted and packed in a premises registered through either MPI or as a National Programme Level 1 (NP1) under the Food Act. NP1 registrations go through local councils.

Following legal extraction and packing, honey intended for trading must also meet the labelling requirements of the Food Standards Code.

All in all, it can not only be an expensive process, but impractical for many beekeepers.

DOING IT FROM HOME

Of course, not all beekeepers want the outlay of NP1 registration, which can be more than \$500 for even the most basic home-based facility.

Many beekeeping clubs around New Zealand have small, portable honey spinners for hire so members can extract honey at home, while countless other beekeepers will have their own equipment for the same purpose.

The Wellington Beekeepers Association is one such club and president James Withington says he "strongly suspects" beekeepers in the area are trading in honey spun out in unapproved locations. He says it comes down to practicalities and it is too difficult for hobbyist beekeepers to access registered facilities in their area.



 **BOOTLEG HONEY 1KG** 
\$15

"Bootleg" honey – something the apiculture industry need worry about?

"It's problematic in Wellington, due to the lack of available honey extraction locations, with the nearest honey house being either in the Wairarapa or Manawatu. Furthering the problem is often their requirement for a minimum number of honey boxes to be processed, often beyond that of the hobbyist beekeeper," Withington says.

"I think most hobbyists in the Wellington region extract at home, whether they barter, gift or potentially sell."

That is inevitably the case all over New Zealand and so some groups of beekeepers are banding together to help provide registered facilities to smaller honey producers.

Beekeepers Hawke's Bay are one club that has taken the bull by the horns when it comes to providing a honey processing facility, with their extraction plant capable of putting through 60 boxes of honey a day and available for use by members.

Even with access to a facility such as their club's, there is temptation for users to take honey off site to package it, which then sees it fall outside the Food Act, says club president Graham Heaven.

"We have talked about how to get around it, but we are not too sure. It is a bit of a tender spot for beekeepers. If anyone is doing that it's practical, but not by the letter of the law. Sooner or later, it is going to be picked up on."

Auckland Beekeepers Club members fall on both sides of the issue, club president Steve Leslie says. There is a group who have banded together to register a facility and sell their honey completely by the book, whereas he suspects others are happy to sell non-compliant honey.

Both comb and liquid honey regularly appear for sale on online trading sites.

"It's essentially a risk-based calculation," Leslie says of the industry's attitude to non-compliant honey.

"How much control do we want to put in, based on the amount of risk? The nominal controls are there, food control plans and the like. The actual risk of problems arising from private sales of honey that have not been extracted or packaged according to the rules is extremely low. We are lucky that honey is a safe product by its nature."

WANT YOUR EXISTING PRICKER TO BE BETTER?

Save time and money and get more honey.

WE CAN HELP!

CONVERT TO OUR PROVEN STAINLESS STEEL NEEDLES

Every cell 100% pricked
No more costly needle replacing
Sterilization with heat now possible
Time and yield losses eliminated
Every cell now releasing honey



ORDER NOW

MANUKA ENGINEERING
Innovation is everything

Call Logan Bowyer **027 667 7588**
Mark Fransen **027 838 9792** or Email Logan
logan@manukaengineering.com www.manukaengineering.com

NO EASY SOLUTION?

The issue of unlawfully traded honey is not a new one for the industry says Paul Martin, the sitting non-commercial beekeeping representative of the Apiculture New Zealand board, who says it has been discussed around the board table.

"With any food there is always risk and that needs to be managed, however, the flip side is you have to watch what you wish for in terms of bureaucracy," Martin cautions.

"If we say 'no we want to be controlled more', well you just know the rules that will come out of Wellington or the local council may have a whole heap of unintended consequences."

Regardless of compliance or not with other areas of honey safety, it is absolutely important that all beekeepers are complying with rules around the management of potential tutin contamination of honey, Martin says.

While a proliferation of unlawful honey sales is an issue the industry is seemingly acutely aware of, there is no obvious alternative to the status quo being offered up to more effectively police non-compliance, or make compliance more practical.

As it stands, compliant beekeepers, such as Darren and Mandi Webb, might be feeling some hurt as they compete in the market place against non-compliant traders though. Another problem caused by the issue of a large supply of honey competing for buyers. An issue, it seems, not limited to the big producers.

Do you have thoughts or opinions on this issue?

Email editor@apiadvocate.co.nz 🐝



Food Safety Info

- New Zealand Food Safety is contactable via email foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz or ph 0800 00 83 33.
- NP1 info: www.mpi.govt.nz/national-programmes
- Managing tutin: www.mpi.govt.nz/managing-tutin-contamination-in-honey/
- A "Guide to New Zealand Honey Labelling": www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety-toolkit
- Exporting honey: www.mpi.govt.nz/exporting-food
- Donating honey: www.mpi.govt.nz/fundraising-and-community-events

got bees?

we supply honey drums

the only supplier of BPA free drums in New Zealand

order early for 2022/23
season due to ongoing
supply chain issues

**taking
orders
now!**



we want your honey!

we are always buying honey

bush, rewa, pasture, clover,
non-manuka, multi-floral manuka,
mono-floral manuka and
organic honey

we also buy beeswax

conventional and organic

to sell, go to our online form
bees.globalhoneycorp.com

0800 NZ GLOBAL (0800 694 562) · sales@globalhoneycorp.com

Buyers of honey, organic honey and beeswax · Suppliers of honey drums · globalhoneycorp.com



GlobalHoney

Research Project to Shine a Light on Industry Struggles



For around four years the price of non-manuka honeys has been below cost of production for most beekeepers and in the past year even manuka honey prices to the beekeeper have suffered. For those reasons, the recent announcement of a funding boost from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) towards a two-year project into understanding how the apiculture sector can chart a sustainable course forward has been happily received by Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ) who will soon get the work underway.

The project, which ApiNZ has been planning and seeking to fund over the past year, is akin to turning a light on in a dark room, says the industry body's chief executive, Karin Kos.

Gaining a better understanding of the honey supply chain, existing and potential honey markets and the opinions of the country's beekeepers as to the direction of the apiculture industry, will all form part of the project, which has a budgeted cost of \$383,500. MPI will provide \$225,000 of that, through the Sustainable Food

and Fibre Futures fund, while cash contributions will also come from the Honey Industry Trust, plus honey companies Comvita and Manuka Health.

"It's a big project for us. A long time coming, but we are really thrilled," Kos says.

New Zealand's beekeepers, along with other sectors of apiculture, will be sought for their opinions at an early stage in the project. That work will be conducted by two external consultancy providers.

FOLLOW MY STORY.

KIWISECURE FARM TO FORK

Our KiwiSecure Farm to Fork Seal and 'Follow my Story' feature adds a layer of security and authenticity to your brand and product by inviting consumers to interact with your label.

To find out more, scan the QR code and enter the FTF Seal #: 8241Ks



KIWI SECURE
POWERED BY KIWI LABELS

KIWI CYCLE



Contact us for more information.

Call 03 384 2903 or email info@kiwilabels.co.nz

BUY LOCAL, BUY KIWI ► www.kiwilabels.co.nz

Kiwi Labels

After a "haphazard" few years, largely due to Covid disruptions, the time is right to get a project of this nature underway Kos believes.

"We are trying to take stock of where we are at and look for opportunities, but it is not about us saying 'this is what we want'. It will involve a big exercise of going to the industry to get feedback. It is about surveys, focus groups and discussions at the national conference. We don't want to predetermine any of the outcomes," Kos says.

ApiNZ is unaware of any similar work which has been conducted in the past, and can confirm such a project has not been conducted since their formation in 2016.

Findings from early stages of the project, such as industry consultation, will determine some of the later work. However, one initial implementation project is an independently produced supply chain analysis.

"That will help determine where the value of exported honey is captured along the supply chain. It isn't beekeeper focused, but very much across the whole supply chain to understand where value sits, from hive to consumer," Kos says.

There will likely be a literature-search style element too.

"When it comes to market access, understanding consumers and consumer demand, we know there is already a lot of reports and info out there. Part of this project will be to bring all of that info

together and distil it, to understand the picture better. We don't think we need to spend a whole lot of time and money on new research, but we need to try to pull together what is already out there," the ApiNZ chief executive says.

While the industry body has few staff, one is policy analyst Phil Edmonds. He is encouraged by the potential of the project to help fully identify the industry's problems and chart potential solutions.

"There is definitely a market insight piece to be completed on non-manuka honeys," Edmonds says.

"There are a number of areas the industry is calling for more knowledge and that is one of them. MPI are quite comfortable that we haven't been able to identify exactly what they are. Part of that is due to the fact we want to hear what people have to say and determine where the road blocks are."

MPI director of investment programmes Steve Penno believes the project will be the first step towards reinvigorating the apiculture sector by "strengthening collaboration". That is something Kos has witnessed elsewhere.

"Other successful primary industries, such as the wine industry and the seed industry, have come together after strong setbacks to realise the value of collaboration," Kos says.

"What that looks like, I don't know and we don't want to predetermine outcomes. Looking at other successful primary sectors, that is definitely a factor though." 🐝

The world's most versatile loaders for beekeepers



AVANT®

0800 453 627
www.glenbrook.co.nz

GLENBROOK
 MACHINERY – HIRE AND SALES

Inside Ashburton Apiaries



BY MAGGIE JAMES

Last month Maggie James visited Geoff Bongard at Ashburton Apiaries in Mid Canterbury to learn the company history. This edition we take a look around the commercial beekeeper's shed, plus hear about queen rearing issues, varroa counting, sugar feeds, some bee pest concerns, neighbour complaints and solar powered warmed water for bees!

Honey dew plays an important role in Ashburton Apiaries' 1800-hive beekeeping operation and, while this isn't the worst dew season in their 40 years of operation, it's bordering on it, says owner Geoff Bongard.

When I visited in February, 2.5 tonne of beech dew had just been extracted and was being held in their towering 15.8 tonne holding tank. More recently, late April dew has been extracted. Quantities are down though, due to the amount of rain this season, with rain every four days on average.

The value of beech dew to the business is not just in honey sales. Hives that are required for pollination contracts are overwintered in dew areas, double-queened in spring, then shifted onto carrot pollination at 8hives/ha for six weeks early summer. Following the pollination, these hives shift to clover sites for the main flow on the Canterbury Plains. Immediately prior to the clover flow hives are super strong and reunited. Clover honey is extracted (although the flow was largely non-existent this season), then hives are sent back to honey dew to complete the yearly process. High productivity of every hive is paramount, Bongard says.

INSIDE THE HONEY HOUSE

Designed by Ron Newton in the 1950s, Ashburton Apiaries honey house was doubled in size in 2000 and in 2017 another 28m² was added to the building length.

During extracting – which is conducted solely for their own honey – the plant runs 8am-4.30 pm, by which time the hot room has also been cleaned out. A good operator can extract 32 eight-frame boxes hourly. On the west side of the extraction room is a large clear glass window letting in natural light. At appropriate times windows can also be opened for air flow.

The first year Geoff Bongard, and wife Angela, were in business they were strapped for cash and couldn't afford an uncapper. Uncapping by hand took forever and a day, Bongard recalls.

"Fortunately, in 1990 we heard on the grapevine that Steve Bozzi (as in Bozzi cell cups design), Rangiora, retired and was selling his rather old Penrose Engineering uncapper," Bongard says.

"Ten years ago this uncapper had a major overhaul. Due to constraint of operating space, we moved the motor to the opposite side. The turnout table at the end only held three boxes, so a larger table was built, big enough that we could fill in one turnout the 96 frame Syme's extractor, which was bought from Les Spriggs in 1990."

Cappings are transferred to a large white tank, stirred to get homogenised, then pumped by motor into a hummer.

Honey is piped through an interior wall during the day of extraction to either a small tank, which holds the equivalent of four 300kg drums, or to the much larger 15.8 tonne capacity ex-dairy silo, now with reinforced steel base capable of honey weight bearing. The drumming off facility is on a large Avery scale platform.



Wax cappings are stirred to homogenise any honey, before going through the Ashburton Apiaries hummer, pictured here.



Taking pride of place in the honey house is this ex-dairy silo, with an impressive 15.8 tonne holding capacity.

NUC YARD AND RE-QUEENING

Ashburton Apiaries prefer requeening with laying mated queens in spring, as opposed to queen cells. Many years ago MAF and Apiary Instructors undertook study on protected queen cells for requeening. Their work indicated a 70-80% acceptance and so Bongard says he trialled this method as a labour-saving device. He has avowed never to again though as it was a disaster for their outfit. Some of the virgin queens were killed upon hatching by the old queens, while other virgins had killed the old queen and not returned from their mating flights. Consequently, there was the problem of numerous queenless hives. Therefore, their practise is to produce their own mated queens in separate mating yards of five or six frame nucs.

Varroa treatment in these yards is usually in the form of oxalic acid cardboard strips, one per unit.

"To ensure high quality queen production, the aim is no harsh proprietary manufactured miticide treatments in the nuc yards. Only, if necessary, in autumn once queen rearing is finished will this type of treatment be used."

Pre-varroa it was possible for their own well-bred Italian queens to last three years. These days a one-year-old queen is favoured. This means breeder queens are also young and therefore there is a lack of history of performance. Thus, as an assessment tool, every time honey is removed from hives it is weighed and recorded per hive.

SOLAR POWER AND A WATERING HOLE FOR THE BEES!

Ashburton Apiaries grafting shed takes the form of an easily

relocatable (by Hiab) steel garden shed with removable floor. The grafting yard is surrounded by macrocarpa hedges, and, nowadays, houses. When urban sprawl neighbours complained to the Ashburton District Council about bees visiting their garden taps and pools, the Council settled the issue by stating that if the Bongards provided drinking water for bees the problem would resolve. Ensuring bees specifically visit this drinking area, warm water is required.

Geoff's son Greg – a trained electrician now managing Ashburton Apiaries – helped solve the drinking water issue by installing a large solar panel, creating 230volt power to warm the water. To help prevent bees from drowning, large concrete tiles are placed in the water. The solar power is also harnessed inside the shed, with LED lighting over the grafting table.



Laila Bongard, age 5, a fourth-generation beekeeper, with father Greg's unique solar powered warm water bee trough.

HD Process NZ

Specialists in sanitary process equipment

Honey processing equipment

Pumps

- ▶ Flexible impeller
- ▶ Progressive cavity
- ▶ Lobe



10 Maurice Road, Penrose, Auckland
Ph: +64 9 580 2520 Fax: +64 9 580 2525

Filters

- ▶ Rotary self cleaning
- ▶ Bag filters



NEW

Filter with heating and agitation helping wax removal

Heat exchangers

- ▶ Shell and tube
- ▶ Plate and frame



Extraction and processing

- ▶ Honey looseners
- ▶ Extractors
- ▶ Drum filling



Please enquire to: james@hdprocess.co.nz
or visit: hdprocess.co.nz

PUMPS | FILTERS | HEAT EXCHANGERS | EXTRACTION | PROCESSING

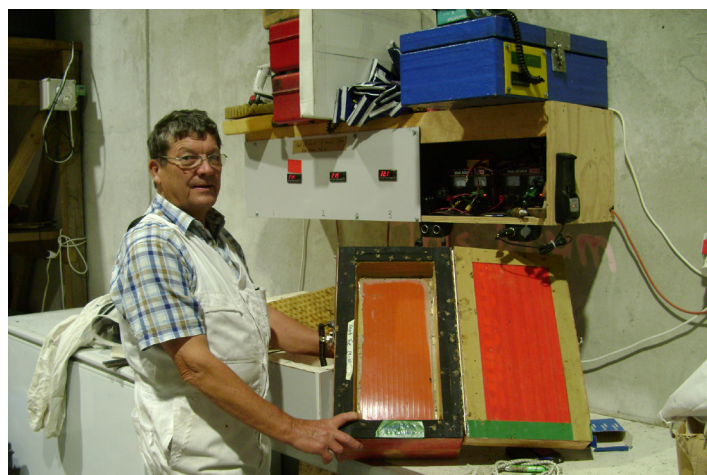
QUEEN CELL INCUBATOR – SPARKY SKILLS TO THE FORE AGAIN!

Aiding quality queen production and superior cells, both supersedure and emergency responses are used in the grafting yard processes.

Believing that the hive is the best incubator, finisher hives are used until day 8 (following the graft). The Bongards' preference would be to leave cells in finisher hives until day 9, but this can be a bit risky in terms of early emergence or the team working against weather conditions. Further to that, finisher hives need pressure taken off them, in terms of space.

Therefore, on day 8 queen cells are removed into incubator portable cupboards designed by Greg. Each portable polystyrene incubator cupboard holds 144 queen cells. Power circulates around the sides, and the outside row has the same temperature as the middle of the pad, I'm told.

Unlike other portable incubators available on the market, the Bongard design holds the warmth better out in the field, Geoff says. In the past, in the Mid Canterbury climate, heat retention has been an issue, along with bumpy farm tracks which can cause damage to cells, hence their decision to make their own well-insulated incubators.



Geoff Bongard with insulated blue and red portable queen cell incubators developed by his son Greg to suit their conditions. The wall cabinet includes the electronic temperature controls for all the incubators, one battery charger controls the portable incubator, the other the day eight fixed incubators.



Ashburton Apiaries incubators made out of shower lining and polystyrene for cells at day eight. They have three and each compartment holds 144 cells.

SPEEDING UP MITE COUNTING

Capturing bees for "icing sugar shake" counting of varroa mites is made simpler with a Bosch double speed Unlimited Series 8 vacuum cleaner. Once bees are emptied from the vacuum cleaner into their jar and undergone the shake, they are tipped onto a white piece of plastic shower lining.

"The contents are then sprayed with water and the varroa start swimming!" Bongard explains.

"We don't need or have time to count every mite, you soon figure out what's good. Anything above 20 mites on the board is treated with proprietary treatments. On each hive lid the date and varroa level are written"



The adapted vacuum cleaner for sucking up bees prior to a sugar shake varroa mite count.

DRY SUGAR FEEDS – WHITE V RAW

Hives have double compartment top feeders with one side for granular sugar, the other syrup. Once the price of raw sugar exceeded white, white was trialled as dry feed and has been used since.

"White sugar doesn't colour frames, and we sell our honey on colour," Geoff Bongard says.

"There is potential to colour honey, particularly an early crop. The dry sugar is put on promptly after the flow (in late summer) and at this time of the year the old bees are able to convert it, and take it down to the brood nest. Any dry sugar in the feeder after winter is retrieved and added to the syrup tank. Raw sugar can't be fed in liquid form."

PLANNING FOR PEST ATTACKS

While small hive beetle (SHB) has not yet made it to New Zealand, Bongard has decided to have a plan in case of its establishment. That involves setting aside of space for a refrigerated room in which unextracted honey can be stored with a much lower risk of SHB chewing through it.

"We are in a good position as owner/operators extracting our own honey. Beekeepers who have honey sitting two to three weeks prior to processing will really struggle. There will be extra pressure on contract extractors," Bongard envisages, should SHB make it to New Zealand.

"If it comes, beekeepers will have to make decisions quickly. Australian beekeepers tell me, that while they don't have varroa, they would have preferred varroa to SHB. Getting honey out of frames before damage is a big issue."



Greater wax moth – showing itself in Canterbury this year.

One pest that has already arrived is the greater wax moth. While the lesser wax moth can be commonly seen, only in the last month has the larger moth reappeared in a few of their hives on the Plains, Bongard says.

"None have been seen in our sheds, but we are on alert for it this winter. The last two winters in Mid Canterbury have been very mild with only a few frosts. This season summer was late, with major rainfall at times for days. This pattern, which may be due to climate change, has probably created ideal conditions for this moth."

So, while there is always a challenge to be overcome, the Bongards and Ashburton Apiaries have proven they have not just the beekeeping knowhow, but some adaptive tools at hand to help get them through.

To discuss any aspect of this story with Geoff Bongard, email geoff@ashburtonapiaries.co.nz 🐝



Varroa treatment that goes deeper.

Formic Pro™ penetrates under the brood cap to target varroa mites where they reproduce, protecting developing honey bees for healthier, more productive colonies.

Organic • No Resistance • Residue Free

Ask for NOD Apiary Products at beekeeping supply stores across New Zealand.



Healthy Bees. Healthy Planet.

1-866-483-2929
www.nodglobal.com

Celebrating 25 Years of Honey Bee Protection!

Established in 1997, we're proud to work shoulder-to-shoulder with beekeepers to create organic and sustainable honey bee health products—delivering the No. 1 formulated product* for varroa control to beekeepers around the globe.

*Based on a survey of varroa management methods used by beekeepers, collected in the 2020 Mite-A-Thon Analysis by Pollinator Partnership.



CrystechNZ
Extraction | Processing | Packaging

FROM THE HIVE TO THE SHELF



CrystechNZ Honey Dehydrator

Make the most of your honey with our thermalising / fine filtration and moisture removing systems - avoid fermentation and ensure a high quality sell-able product.

Shown to reduce moisture levels by an average of 2.5% through a single pass at 400-500KGPH.

Remove water from honey continuously during extraction or in batch's once it has been blended – or even after it has fermented.

Phone +64 7 579 0082 Email info@crystech.co.nz www.crystech.co.nz





VITAHIVE

SCIENCE-BASED NUTRITION

BEE FIT!

THIS SPRING WITH POWER FEED

View the
science at
vitalhive.co.nz

**GOOD FOR
REPRODUCTION**

**BEE STRONGER
FLY FURTHER**

**BEE STRONGER
LIVE LONGER**

VitaHive™ Power Feed™ is a powerful pollen supplement that delivers optimal nutrition to your hive and significantly boosts your brood, bee health and longevity.

VitaHive Power Feed is the perfect feed during times of low pollen availability or high energy demand. Feeding in autumn and spring can boost hive health; reduce winter losses and prime hives for the coming season. Power Feed is available in both ready to mix powder and pre-made ready-to-go patties.

Boosts Bee Health, Longevity & Colony Strength

For improved pollination and higher honey yields

Advanced Milling Techniques

Delivers significantly smaller particle sizes than traditional bee feed products, resulting in improved bioavailability and nutrition

GMO and Animal Product Free

Power Feed is not only free from genetically modified organisms (GMO free) but also does not contain soy or egg-based proteins (which have been proven to slow insect growth)

Science Based Nutrition

Highly researched, highly beneficial and carefully blended ingredients deliver powerful nutritional benefits to your hive



POLLEN SUPPLEMENT

- Power Feed Powder 20kg
- Power Feed Patties 5kg, 15kg

HIVE NUTRITION

- Brood Booster 250ml, 1L, 20L

Exclusively sold at www.ecrotek.co.nz and participating Farmlands stores

*From local and imported ingredients



Three generations of Berry beekeepers: from left, Robert, Ian and John in recent years.

Husband, Father, Beekeeper — Ian Berry



BY JOHN BERRY

Ian Berry died recently, March 18, having played an integral role in iconic New Zealand beekeeping enterprise Arataki Honey, for which the Berry family are synonymous. He witnessed many changes in the world and in beekeeping in his 90 years. His family's beekeeping legacy is continued by son John Berry – among others – who takes time here to put some key aspects of his father's life and times into perspective.

My father was born on October 7, 1931 and was named Perceval Ian Berry, but always called Ian. Apparently, my grandmother thought that the initials I P might be taken the wrong way.

He was raised on a dairy farm at Nireaha, in the Manawatu, where they milked 32 cows by hand because they couldn't afford the electricity to run the machinery. When he was nine the family moved to Hastings and when he was 12 the whole family moved to Arataki Road, Havelock North. There he would live until ill-health a couple of years ago meant he had to move to a retirement home.

He had two great passions in his life: the family business, Arataki Honey, and his family.

He was also a keen vegetable gardener, fisherman and, in his younger days, a keen tramper and a member of Search and Rescue. He could play a mean game of table tennis, play the mouth organ and loved to sing duets with my mother (Pat) at the local country and western club.

Dad worked. He worked early and late. He worked weekends and public holidays. Even when we went on a family holiday, there was always some element of work involved. All his working life, he was very involved with the National Beekeepers Association, both at a local level and eventually as president. One of his proudest moments was being made a life member.

One of my first memories of Dad is of him, along with my uncles and grandfather, dipping heart totara floors into boiling hot tar. Times were tough for beekeeping and beekeepers and Dad had to learn to do everything from making frames and boxes to packing honey and then marketing it. If you could possibly do it yourself

then you did, because you sure as hell couldn't afford anyone else to do it for you.

He was a specialist comb honey producer, producing section honey for many years and then pioneering cut comb honey. He was also a skilled bee breeder, but he had none of the fancy gear and would just sit on a bee box with the sun over his right shoulder and graft using a piece of wire. He did eventually change to a 000 Sable paintbrush.

He read a lot of beekeeping books and magazines, both local and international, and it was from something he read of Brother Adam's that he decided to try keeping hives on pallets with four hives each facing a different direction. A lot of people think he developed this system so that the hives could be moved mechanically, but at least initially it was used only for hives in permanent apiaries. The main reason for doing this was to stop stock damage which used to be considerable.

He trialled quite a few hives over several years and found that he not only got a lot less stock damage, but also a significant increase in honey production, so much so that, even before we changed all the hives over to pallets, the singles we had left were also set up in the same configuration. He found that it made no difference at all to which way a hive faced and that the pallets not only reduced stock damage to almost zero, but also almost eliminated drifting.

Dad was quiet, honest, teetotal all his life and could never relax until the last truck had safely returned for the night. He was obsessed by weather and all of his six children learned to shut up during weather forecasts at a very early age!

He wanted to work until he was 90, but only managed till he was 87. Other than that, I think he achieved most of what he set out to do.

It's impossible to put 90 years into just a few sentences, but anyone who knew him well will remember how kind he was and how far he would go out of his own way to help others, with never a thought of what was in it for him. 🐝



A teenage Ian Berry, left, with his father and Arataki Honey founder Percy Berry in the early days of the now iconic North Island beekeeping business, around 1948.



Bayvarol®



South Island

44 Gladstone St South, RD 22, Geraldine 7992
P: 03 693 9189 E: info@beeswax.co.nz

North Island

153 Maui St, Pukete, Hamilton 3200
P: 07 849 6853 E: info@beeswax.co.nz

www.beeswax.co.nz

MyApiary: Beekeeping Managed Well

There is considerable scope for most beekeeping businesses to not only reduce costs through more effective management, but increase revenue and profit by better targeting of resources, say the team behind MyApiary. The hive management service providers have been in business since 2017 and in that time have developed a suite of software tools to streamline commercial beekeeping management, from hive to drum.

There are so many more businesses they could be helping though, so MyApiary are striving to reach those beekeepers, grow their businesses and build a stronger apiculture industry, they explain.

"We're not telling beekeepers how to beekeep," Henry Taylor makes clear. He, as MyApiary's customer success representative, makes up one half of the company's full-time staff, along with founder and general manager Darren Bainbridge.

Understanding the concept of "core competencies" is at the heart of MyApiary's role and tending client's hives is not one. However, they have found a well-established role within the industry in advancing beekeeping operations through much improved record keeping and data analysis.

"We are not telling them how to tend to their hives. All we're doing is laying out a platform that they can use to record what they're doing. Or we are adapting the platform tool in a way where they can record what they want to record. They can record just the basics, or they can

actually customise it to record a lot more, and get a whole bunch more value out of the platform," Taylor explains.

Every beekeeping business is different and so – while MyApiary have well-refined software packages covering everything from "hive to honey drum", such as apiary status, site mapping, task and job assignment to staff, plus an extensive extraction shed system – determining the right package and even creating bespoke tools for each client is an essential part of their service.

"When we launched in 2017 our service offerings were a lot more basic," Bainbridge says.

"Over those five years, we have continuously developed and improved though. The more customers we have on board, the more we can put into the platform. Now we are at the point where we are focusing on how we can intelligently interpret data."

CUTTING COSTS

The interpretation of that data is a key area in which a streamlined management programme can reduce costs. Where a manager or business owner might previously spend hours assessing information before turning it into a meaningful report or series of actions, MyApiary's various programmes can do it immediately and accurately.

"That then means being able to be more proactive, getting things done on time and knowing where they are at in real time," Bainbridge says.

While the savings at a management level are prominent among MyApiary clients, it's the same at an individual beekeeper level, aided by the likes of their site mapping, plus apiary or hive management dashboards.

"When you look at putting three people in the vehicle and sending them off, that's a big expense," Bainbridge explains.

"So, we are helping make sure those guys are getting the right tasks done and going to the right place. If they go to the wrong place, then you have basically wasted \$1,000 and that's what MyApiary costs for the year."

MyApiary also gives beekeepers, especially team leaders, a greater ability to manage their hives and key tasks. This reduces the need for regular and potentially lengthy team meetings.

"They have their own plan and the way they go do it, because the management programme helps provide ownership over their jobs. We see productivity increase from there."



INCREASING REVENUE

The complexity of New Zealand's honey industry, with its different grades of manuka honey, means many businesses can benefit from better understanding where the best returns can come from. Often, this is not simple to see though. So, for many clients the most value in MyApiary comes from identifying the right opportunities to pursue, or the sites that should be left behind.

"It is about really evaluating where you're making money in the business," Bainbridge says.

"What regions are performing and what's not? Or perhaps down to what apiaries. It's not just looking at yield, but quality of honey. What value are you getting, versus the costs of having sites in those areas? We have seen one of our clients pull their hives completely out of a region because their analysis from our data was able to help them see it was not worthwhile for them."

It's not just honey performance either, MyApiary is tracking hive health and queen performance for clients too, by creating key performance indicators

and then helping clients collect data and interpret it.

"Creating value by focusing on the areas that may make you money is where MyApiary can pay for itself 100-fold," the GM says.

"A lot of people are trying to be a better beekeeper and have better queen genetics or the likes, which might yield you 1 - 3 percent improvement, but you could go get a 20% improvement in your bottom line by focusing on a different honey crop or not, or doing certain pollination. It has a far bigger impact than the incremental improvement of being a better beekeeper."

WHO'S IT FOR

While MyApiary's services are undoubtedly for commercial beekeepers (with pricing plans based on how many tablets are registered) it is not just the big guys who can benefit. An increasing number of smaller operators are signing up. Moving these small operators to a point where the boss can step away from the day-to-day, knowing effective management plans are in place, is a goal MyApiary can help achieve.

"If you're having to transcribe everything from a whiteboard onto an Excel sheet, or gather information for people constantly, you can't just step away," Taylor says,


"If information is recorded on their tablets and MyApiary is used correctly, then the staff can carry on and the owner or boss could check in on the business from anywhere."

Because of that improved management, MyApiary is undoubtedly giving business owners more time and more resources to help achieve their goals.

"We want to see people have strong, sustainable family businesses that are making them a lot of money," Bainbridge says of the service he founded.

"It's about giving beekeepers a secure future. We want to see these multi-generation businesses survive and we will continue to help with that, through management systems and appropriate consultancy.

"The more beekeepers who support MyApiary, the more we can do to provide a greater level of services to benefit the industry." ■


MyApiary Manager™

Quickly see what needs doing

An app
your staff
will actually
use

Number of hives

Calendar

Site status


Reports

Create new sites


Hive status

Jobs





Learn more



MyApiary™
SMARTER BEEKEEPING

Visit us at: **MyApiary.com**

Call us at: **07 3910039**

The National Honey Competition and Honey Profiling



BY MAGGIE JAMES

The Apiculture New Zealand National Honey Competition has become a staple part of the national conference, which this year will be held in Christchurch June 30 - July 1. We take a look at what goes into the search for New Zealand's top honeys.

The Competition, established in 2010, evolves every year and 2022 is no different, with conference attendees to have greater opportunity to sample the honey entries. Further to that, a new "People's Choice" award will be doled out to the honey attendees are most impressed with.

Exhibits to the competition are judged to international standards, with entry open to all registered New Zealand beekeepers, packers, and exporters. Each entry is subject to sensory analysis or profiling of the honey – a research activity in the study of characterisation and promotion of honey. It is a discipline similar to that applied to wine, culinary oils, cheese, and malt barley (used in beer making).

Chief Judge Maureen Conquer, with vast international honey and mead judging experience, is assisted by South Island-based scientist in botany and honey analyst Claudine McCormick, plus North Island-based Alessandro Tarentini, a food scientist and previously Hawke's Bay commercial beekeeper.

So how do the judges make their decisions?

"The first thing we do with each section is assess colour for each category with entries lined up in a straight continuous line, light through to darkest," Conquer explains.

"The baseline for that category becomes the middle colour. If we are of the opinion it's too dark in that category, we downgrade it. Sometimes we might up the entry to get it in the right category."

Pfund colour international guidelines are used.

"Then each judge lifts the lid, smells, then closes, then re-smells. With this process a judge will often pick up on faults immediately. Then we roll over on our tongue, checking for viscosity, textures and aftertaste. We are particularly interested in aftertaste and its longevity," the judge explains.

Next up, it's presentation and cleanliness.

"There are no pollen counts in the competition, but we do sometimes check moisture content with a refractometer. It must come in below 18.5%."

Because lighter coloured honeys are generally milder on the palate, these are usually judged first.

If anyone does have a honey sample they deem unique, the judges welcome them bringing it forward, as they are always on the lookout for additions to the New Zealand honey library.

"Judges often detect how some varietals can taste differently from various parts of New Zealand. It is thoroughly satisfying to be able, without reference but just through experience, to make the call as to the location of production," Conquer says.




The National Honey Competition will bring together honey of all range of varieties in Christchurch.
Photo Dinsdale Honey, Hamilton

"This Competition, from the top of the north to the bottom of the south and outlying islands, attracts New Zealand's best honey. The judging team are delighted to give positive feedback to the industry, confirming to beekeepers, whether they work in isolation or as part of a team, that their product is high quality, and with due accolades enabling promotion of their products domestically and internationally."

COMPETITION DETAILS AND CHANGES

Due to the large number of entries received last year, and popularity of many attendees wishing to inspect and taste honey exhibits, things will be run a bit differently this year:

- Judging takes place two days prior to Conference. Therefore, all goods must be delivered prior. Full details are outlined in the **National Honey Competition rules**
- Winners announced: Midday Thursday 30 June (Day 1 of conference).
- Afterwards, the judging room will open to attendees for the opportunity to sample winning entries. Judges will be present to meet conference attendees and answer questions, except at 3pm.
- 3pm the same day, judges' discussion panel on tips and insights on what makes a winning honey.

- Running through the entire conference, attendees will be able to help select the People's Choice Award. For this category honey will be submitted in amber jars and this award is purely on taste. People don't get the ability to see or smell the honey, and it is sampled through a small hole in the jar. This winner to be announced at the conference dinner.
- Full competition details can be found **here**. 



Chartered Accountant

**An accountant who understands
your business!**

I'm a Blenheim-based chartered accountant, hobbyist beekeeper, and business partner with all of my clients. What's important to me is understanding my clients' business and bringing that personal touch. Please contact me confidentially and without obligation if you'd like to discuss how I can assist you and your business this year.



www.marrnz.com
Office: 03 929 3100
Mobile: 027 276 7682
Email: office@marrnz.com

NEED MORE FROM YOUR **HONEY?** *Battling high moisture or fermented drums?*

WE CAN HELP!

TALK TO US ABOUT BULK HONEY STORAGE & SERVICES:

- Growth storage
- Chilled storage
- Ambient storage
- Chilled super storage
- Honey sampling
- Honey moisture reduction
- Fermented pressure release
- Two-point HMF filtering



Call Logan or Tania Bowyer

Phone: 027 6677 588

Or email: thehive@manukaorchard.com

www.manukaorchard.com

Profiling the Honey Profiler – Alessandro Tarentini



BY MAGGIE JAMES

Previously *Apiarist's Advocate* has published articles on two of Apiculture New Zealand's national honey competition's three judges – Maureen Conquer and Claudine McCormick. Now we get an interesting insight to fellow judge, Alessandro Tarentini, who has gone from academia in Italy, to a Dutch research farm, then beekeeping in North America, before arriving in New Zealand and again picking up the hive tool.



Alessandro Tarentini will be one of three judges sampling honey at this year's Apiculture New Zealand Honey Awards.

It was back in about 2004 that Tarentini, between his Bachelor and Master degree in Food Science, developed an interest in honey. It being the topic of his dissertation thesis, he wanted to deepen his knowledge on honey.

"It was the best choice ever, because it allowed me to participate in several honey competitions," the Italian-born honey judge says.

"I was also lucky enough to get into the beekeeping world in my early twenties, enabling me to travel around the world. Being paid for a job that I love, is the most prestigious award that a person can gain in his lifetime."

Tarentini says he was attracted to sensory analysis in honey.

"This analysis, it helps me to understand and appreciate the final product of months of dealing with swarming prevention, varroa treatments and the other thousands of challenges a beekeeper must face during a season of hard work. It's also a way to learn more about our territory because each honey can tell a different story."

After university studies, for one year, Tarentini lived on the educational farm "Hamster Mieden" in the Friesland region in the Netherlands. The farm had all sorts of livestock, from the well renowned Friesian dairy breed to the most common chicken. Until his arrival there were no bees, therefore he set up a two-hive apiary with hives typical of the Friesland area – boxes in a cubic shape made of polystyrene. This material is more suitable to the harsh winters of northern Europe.

"I then went to San Francisco to work with Marshall's Honey Farm. Marshall's were focused on harvesting honey from around the Bay Area – blends of acacia, eucalyptus, star thistle, blueberry. These boutique honeys were sold through the network of farmers markets in the Bay Area. People in the Bay were really demanding when it came to local honey," Tarentini says.

A beekeeping season followed in Camrose, Alberta, Canada with a 4000-hive operation, Severson Honey. Severson imported a lot of package bees from New Zealand and Australia because of high

losses over winter. The company was focused on canola (rapeseed) honey and pollination services.

Following the American beekeeping experiences, Tarentini moved to New Zealand and has been here for almost 10 years. He says he was "honoured" to work for Hawke's Bay queen breeder John Dobson for three interesting years of upskilling. Following John's retirement, Tarentini went to work for Arataki Hawke's Bay.

Nowadays, his involvement in the industry is quite different.


"I'm a full-time support worker in a therapeutic community based on Steiner's philosophy. Basically I work with children with intellectual disabilities, and at this stage I'm working through to get my Level 3 Certificate in Health and Wellbeing completed."

On the honey side, Tarentini helps to organise the regional honey competition with Beekeepers Hawke's Bay Inc. He still keeps his hand in with the hives too, as an AP2 inspector for the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan.

"Being a beekeeper helps my honey judging," Tarentini explains.

"I think it helps me with some scents that are related to certain beekeeping practises. Having experience in the field helps me to build a distinct 'library' of different aromas and flavours."

The honey judge admits he still has plenty to learn when it comes to New Zealand honey, but says he is in good hands to broaden his knowledge.

"I'm very well aware that I have so much to learn when it comes to New Zealand honeys. I'm honoured to work with two other judges that are more experienced than me." 

Want to tell beekeeping stories and earn some extra income?

Apiarist's Advocate is
searching for freelance
writers to contribute to
our monthly eMagazine.

If you have skill with
the written word and an
understanding of beekeeping
and the apiculture industry,
then we want to hear from you.

**Ph. Patrick 027 383 7278 or email
editor@apiadvocate.co.nz**



Minimalist design, maximum function.

Introducing our new Squeeze Flasks.

Their clever compact designs not only look good but have been designed with ergonomic key features in mind giving total user comfort when squeezing. Unlike other flasks these can be used both ways allowing product to easily be dispensed.

These stylish new products are bound to turn heads...Available in the following sizes:

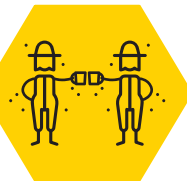
- Oval 375g (267ml) and 500g (357ml)
- Round 340g (249ml)

FDA & EU 10/2011 approved recycled PET (rPET) also available.



For more information about our new Oval Squeeze Flask,
call on +64 9 444 9631 or visit the website pharmapac.co.nz

pharmapac™



Bees, Business, Family and now ... the Club



Maintaining the correct balance between raising a family, running his own beekeeping business and involving himself in the local beekeeping club has been the challenge for Northland apiarist Nick Watkins over the past season. We check in with one of the Whangarei Bee Club's newer members, who is already playing a pivotal role, and find out how a desire to improve the community is motivating him to become a leader at the club.

"Being involved in the club is giving me a sense of community, and makes me feel like I'm contributing. I've been beekeeping a while and I want to be able to share that knowledge," Watkins says.

After only signing up for his membership in late winter last year, he soon found his place at the Northland club and has literally and figuratively been handed the keys, having been invited to join the committee and taken charge of the club hives and equipment.

The fast ascension comes after long-time president and Apiculture New Zealand board member Paul Martin stepped down from the club presidency last year. For Watkins, the Bee Club has to be managed alongside family and business.

Two stepdaughters and a baby daughter welcomed by wife Ceilia last year, make for a busy household at their home base in Tangiteroria, halfway between Dargaville and Whangarei. Then there is their beekeeping business, Mattersville Ltd. The couple manage 300 full size hives for pollination and honey production and 600 nucs for queen rearing.

The business was launched in 2020, a couple of years into a major downturn in non-manuka honey prices. Following 10 years working for other commercial beekeepers, Watkins is glad they decided to take the plunge with Mattersville Ltd though.

"I thought, why am I doing this for other people? I could be doing this myself. We also have a young family and my wife was pregnant. So, we wanted more flexibility around our time and to be able to spend more time with the family where we can," Watkins says.

"It hasn't been easy, but I guess we got into it, more than anything, because of my passion for beekeeping. I keep questioning myself, is there anything else that I want to do? And I just want to stay in the industry really."

Mattersville has a focus on queen breeding and supply, with their strain of bees a hybrid Italian-Carniolan.




"We select queens based on performance, more so than looks. Which I think a lot of commercial guys like. They want something that's going to perform rather than just look nice and golden, so they get the best of both worlds."

Pollination services are provided to both kiwifruit and avocado orchards, which Watkins calls the "bread and butter" of a business launched at a tough time for the honey industry.



**Sourcing and
Manufacturing
Creative Solutions**

Mineral Bee

-  Essential for bee health
-  Contains the same key minerals and trace elements as pollen and honey
-  Add to sugar syrup or patties.



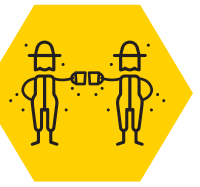
**100%
Natural**



Freephone 0800 000770 | sales@hiveworld.co.nz
www.hiveworld.co.nz

*Nick and Ceilia Watkins,
embracing a young
beekeeping business
and family, along with
involvement in the
Whangarei Bee Club.*





Nick Watkins has always had a fascination with bugs, so a career in beekeeping and now his own business, Mattersville Ltd, as well as a leading role at the Whangarei Bee Club is rewarding.

CLUB CONNECTION

After only one full season in business, Watkins decided to venture along to the local bee club and they have eagerly called on his knowledge and expertise over the past 10 months.

"I kept my head down a little bit initially, just went along to the meetings and had chats. I think it didn't take people very long to realise I had a little bit of knowledge or expertise on beekeeping from a commercial point of view," Watkins says.

There is a changing of the guard at the top of the club and Watkins looks set to take a prominent role. He hopes others will help him bring some new energy to the club.

With around 240 members on the books there is plenty of local beekeepers to benefit from a strong club and prior to Covid they were drawing about 80 people to some of their monthly gatherings, which continue to be held on the first Saturday of the month at Whareora Hall.

"Those gatherings are especially important for those new members. For them to buy a beehive in spring and invest their time and money into it, they don't want to be left in the dark. There's a lot of resources out there, but you can't beat one-on-one talking about beekeeping issues, or the things that they've seen and analysed, that the club offers. They just need that little bit of help to see them through."

It's not just helping people that is driving Watkins to find time in a busy schedule to help the club. He has been interested in bugs and insects from a young age. That interest has motivated his career choice and so too his recent investment in the Whangarei Bee Club.

"For me, it's not only for the welfare of the club members, but it's the welfare of the bees," he says, adding, "I'm passionate about the bees and every life matters".

Whangarei Bee Club, www.whangareibeeclub.co.nz meets on the first Saturday of the month, 10am, Whareora Hall, Whangarei. 🐝

HONEY TESTING

Results you can trust.

Be confident with your honey, by testing with New Zealand's leading analytical test provider. We offer an extensive range of honey tests with fast turnaround times, using the latest technology and methods, providing IANZ accredited results you can trust.

Test your honey with the laboratory that's 100% New Zealand owned and operated.



Hill Laboratories



Three Waters



BY IAN FLETCHER

The Government's 'Three Waters' reform of water, sewerage and stormwater arrangements is ambitious, complicated and controversial. The National Party has already said that, if it leads the next Government, it will repeal at least parts of the reform. So, which side has the strongest argument?

The proposal is ambitious: local-authority owned water and waste water assets would be transferred to four new entities. They are said to be big enough and would be sufficiently well-managed to be able to manage the \$120-\$180 billion of investment the sector is said to need over the next 30 years. I think that number is probably an underestimate, if population growth continues and if our tendency towards chronic optimism in costing big projects also continues.

It's complicated. I've previously described the governance structure as 'baroque'. I stand by that: to provide for professional management, a local voice, and Māori co-governance, the result is baffling and opaque.

The local government NZ website explains:

"Independent, competency-based boards would govern each entity. This is how these boards would be chosen. Councils and mana whenua would appoint a Regional Representative Group. This group would appoint an Independent Selection Panel, which would appoint the Entity Board. But each entity would also have to engage with its communities on key documents that set its

direction. The entity would actively report on how consumer and community feedback was incorporated into decision-making."

Got that? A new composite local body would appoint a selection panel, that would appoint the board, that would, in some rather loose way, be accountable to communities. This something-for-everyone approach is a weakness. It may just not work.

And controversial: this is the one national issue I get local people here in the Wairarapa wanting to talk about. Rightly or wrongly, they see it as a loss to the local community, and they certainly don't identify with either the problem or the solution. National has seized on that, and I'm sure they will make political hay come election time.

SO, HOW TO JUDGE?

First, the government is right that a lot of investment is needed. Existing water services are old, need replacing, and a growing population just needs more. The cost estimates are probably light. Professional management of big projects is a good idea too. But we mustn't get spooked by the big numbers – over time, it's maybe \$5-7 billion a year, in an economy currently running at around

\$250 billion per year. A sizable cost, but by no means unmanageable. And if 30 years becomes 35, it'll get easier. There's a lot of looseness in the numbers.

HOW TO PAY FOR IT?

It'll always be a mix of debt, taxes and user charges. The mixture is a political choice. Taxes are efficient, but unpopular. Debt helps spread lumpy costs. Charges are politically sensitive – the sensitivity is around big increases, of course. The Crown has the best credit, so the optimum for new or replacement assets is borrowing on the Crown's ticket, and slightly higher taxes. If the Government tries to paint these new entities as somehow off-balance-sheet to flatter its accounts, we will pay more. In fact, New Zealand's public debt is commendably low, and Crown



Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Local Government Minister Nanaia Mahuta think the Three Waters reform is the way ahead for New Zealand. Ian Fletcher calls it "ambitious, complicated and controversial".



borrowing for this sort of investment should be uncontroversial. And we need higher taxes anyway, as I've *previously argued*!

LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Which brings us to the question of local accountability, and the separate question of whether these assets should be in local authority control, or in specialised water entities. This is where National is pointing to the claimed loss of local assets, and control. Of course, the assets (pipes, pumps, sewers) aren't going anywhere, they would just move from local authority control to another public entity. The government argues that local authorities are too fragmented and lack the expertise bigger specialised organisations would have, and also that local government has a narrow, inefficient tax base through rates, and so arguably worse credit.

The Government has a point, but in fact water operations may be different to water investment and construction. The French model (local authorities build and own the assets, but franchise operations to specialised operators) shows an alternative. Will it matter? History suggests that these apparently big shifts in public arrangements settle down quickly – "The dogs bark; the caravan moves on...". This must be the Government's hope.

ENDURING CONTROVERSY

But the complex co-governance arrangements might lead to enduring controversy. Much will depend on the skill (political and social as well as managerial) of the new entity Boards. If National wins the election, reversing all this might be difficult – some local authorities might be glad to have got rid of lots of leaky pipes onto the Crown's balance sheet, however indirectly.

This argument only makes sense because New Zealand has a strong central government and weak local/regional governments. The proposed new water entities would be expressions of the centre's power. Strong regional or provincial government with a decent tax base would provide a real alternative for this, and many other service delivery challenges. That option seemed to have ended in 1875 (when the provinces as political entities were abolished). It's a debate an imaginative opposition leader might want to revisit. Wellington can't do everything; getting others to shoulder some of the burden might be a smart move.

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. 🐝



AFB Pest Management Plan

Review Time

NZ Beekeeping Inc is an Industry organisation supporting Beekeepers and their Businesses.

The Pest Management Plan was developed in 1998 to eradicate AFB from New Zealand.

We are preparing an Independent Review Proposal to the Minister.

Could we get a better return on our investment?

NZ Beekeeping would really appreciate your feedback and the ideas you personally have, by email or phone, so we can collectively create a better system to eliminate AFB.





An Elixir for Bee Life?



BY JOHN MACKAY

Cannabis products have been investigated for their ability to treat human conditions, but could they also improve bee longevity? Some recently published research suggests so...

Cannabis-related products are in the headlines now – not those ones, but the products low in THC (the chemical that gives the psychoactive 'high') and high in cannabidiol or CBD. CBD also binds to natural cannabinoid receptors in the human body and is being investigated for treating a number of human conditions such as nausea, depression, pain and other ailments.

CBD is also present in hemp, a cannabis cultivar low in THC and a product used for its antioxidant activities for human conditions, as well as a food source of anti-oxidants. Other work in New Zealand (conducted by myself and Barry Foster) has looked at the effect of

supplementing honey bee feeding with oils and fatty acids, with the result reduced nosema levels and stronger colonies. Other antioxidants have been investigated for bee health as well, but this research investigated the levels of anti-oxidant enzymes when administering hemp extracts in different ways – via syrup and also via glycerine strips (not dissimilar to those using oxalic acid strips for varroa treatment).

The antioxidant enzyme activity increased in the bees, but as far as beekeeper benefits, the lifespan of the bees also increased: from the 35 days (control group without hemp) to 42 days (hemp strips) and a 60% increase in lifespan to 56 days with the hemp in syrup. This was suggested as being due to the faster uptake of the hemp from the syrup than the glycerine strips.

However, before you rush out and start dosing the bees – please note that the paper refers to 'hemp paste' and a commercial product. Therefore, no standard amount is described in the paper. Interesting results, some longer lifespans but ... further work required!

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

References

1. Impressive Impact of Hemp Extract on Antioxidant System in Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) Organism
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-3921/11/4/707> (Open Access)

Look after your bees with DNA testing from **dnature**.

DNA testing is fast, sensitive and detects harmful bacteria, viruses and noseamas in your bees before symptoms show.



AMERICAN FOULBROOD (AFB)

Test your bees to see if AFB spores are present in bees, honey or hive-ware.



NOSEMA DUO (*N.ceranae* and *N.apis*)

Associated with recent hive collapse outbreaks.



APIVIRUS PANEL

This suite includes:

- Deformed Wing Virus • Acute Paralysis Virus • Kashmir Bee Virus
- These viruses are associated with over-wintering losses and are often present without visual symptoms.



Contact **dnature** today for more info...
0800 362 887
info@dnature.co.nz
www.dnature.co.nz/testing/bees
www.dnature.co.nz



Sugar Supplies

In three parts; The nature and supply of sugar, for bees and beekeepers.

BY DAVE BLACK



For good reason, beekeepers may need to intervene to ensure honey bees have an adequate supply of carbohydrates. Therefore, understanding what bees want, why we use sugar in our hives and where it comes from is important. Resident science writer Dave Black brings you up to speed in this, part two of his series on sugar.



A Wilmar International sugar depot. The agribusiness conglomerate headquartered in Singapore owns 75% of New Zealand Sugar, the largest sugar importer in the country.

THE FEED-HONEY RISK

Honey is not always the perfect answer to ensuring adequate carbohydrate supply to managed honey bee colonies, especially when bees are confined for a long winter.

Honeys rich in protein (such as heather or manuka) or minerals can be problematic. Indigestible substances in feed intended for wintering have to be kept low (<0.1%) to prevent filling the rectum during the winter period¹. Honey like avocado, with a high mineral content (for instance, sodium, potassium or phosphorus), has been blamed for paralysis of bees in the past².

Inadequately ripened honey and crystallised honey can both ferment and result in dysentery. Honeydew contains, depending on the insect that produced it, melezitose, raffinose, or erlose among

TOUGH TESTED
AerofastTM
TIEDOWNS

Hive Straps

Replace harsh to handle steel strapping and emlocks with Aerofast's New Zealand made Hive Straps. More environmentally friendly, cost effective, easier to apply and remove than traditional single-use steel strapping. Get in touch today by emailing us at tiedowns@aerofast.co.nz or phoning us on +64 3 376 4028



GET YOUR BRAND & COLOURS



UV TREATED WEBBING



TRUSTED BY NZ'S LEADING KEEPERS



PROUDLY NZ MADE FOR OVER 40 YEARS

Sugar cane harvest in Australia. Our western neighbour supplies much of New Zealand's sugar, grown in vast cane plantations.

the sugars collected. There can be enough melezitose to crystallise in the honeycomb (think willow dew³), while raffinose is another considered toxic in the right amounts. In other honey a range of sugar types can be harmful, unless diluted and present in small amounts.

In addition, most beekeepers are counselled against feeding honey back to bees to avoid introducing or spreading the spores of the pathogen American foulbrood⁴. There is also the problem of storing enough of it while preventing crystallisation, fermentation, or the production of toxic hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF). For these and other reasons beekeepers look to manufactured sources of sugar when they are feeding bees.

Generous stores of safe sugar dilute and ameliorate any issues with the honey the bees have collected, but it doesn't pay to be too generous. Honey that comes to market contaminated by any kind of added sugar is considered contaminated, even counterfeit. Bees are notorious for moving stores around (as added food colouring will show) so getting the timing and quantity right matters if you don't want their ration in the supers you are extracting.

THE WORLD OF SUGAR

In New Zealand the sugar now imported comes entirely from sugar cane plants, essentially because beet sugar sources are too far away. Around the globe 80% of the world's sugar is made from sugar cane (the balance from beet). India and Brazil vie for the top spots producing sugar, but India is a major consumer too. Annually, in terms of net export contribution, Brazil, with more than 45% of the total, sits in top place. Australia lies about fourth, exporting around 60% of its total production, but just one seventh of Brazil's 30 million tonnes. Brazil's volume has a large influence on production and price, altering a balance between sugar and ethanol (biofuel is also made from sugarcane).

Many countries either have, or continue to regulate, sugar production, imports, and price with quotas. These days sugar is a commodity traded for its own sake, regardless of any culinary goal.

NEW ZEALAND SUGAR

New Zealand Sugar (Chelsea), the country's best-known and once only supplier, is majority owned (75%) by the giant agribusiness group Wilmar International, founded and headquartered in Singapore⁵. Wilmar, a company with more than US\$58 billion in assets is one of the world's largest international traders of sugar and owns eight mills in Australia and half of the country's supply, seven in India, seven in Morocco, two in China and two in Myanmar. Sugar, with palm oil, accounts for about 5% of its business⁶.


The remaining 25% of New Zealand Sugar's ownership stake is held by Mackay Sugar, a company established from the merger of Queensland cane-growing co-operatives⁷ and who also own (again with Wilmar) Sugar Australia. Mackay, in turn, is largely owned by Nordzucker, another of the world's large sugar companies with an asset base of US\$2.7billion. New Zealand Sugar trades in sugar mainly from Australia, Malaysia and Thailand, both for domestic use and for re-export around the Pacific.

So, that's why beekeepers use sugar and where it comes from. Next month I will dive deeper into this figurative mound of sugar and elaborate on the various forms used by apiarists...

*For part one of the Sugar series read: **Sugar for the Bees***

Note: New Zealand Sugar, a major supplier to apiculture, was consulted for information in this story.



Dave Black is a Bay of Plenty based hobbyist beekeeper who now works in the kiwifruit industry. He has a degree in Environmental Science and for the past 25 years he has been reading and writing about bees and beekeeping. His essays are available at www.beyondbeebooks.substack.com 

References

1. V. Ceksteryte and J. Racys, *The quality of syrups used for bee feeding before winter and their suitability for bee wintering*, (2006) *J. Apic. Sci.*, vol. 50, no. 1
2. D. C. Somerville and H. I. Nicol, *Mineral content of honeybee-collected pollen from southern New South Wales*. *Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture*, 2002, 42, 1131–1136
3. Sopow SL, Jones T, McIvor I, McLean JA, Pawson SM. 2017. Potential impacts of *Tuberolachnus salignus* (giant willow aphid) in New Zealand and options for control. *Agriculture and Forest Entomology* 19(3) DOI:10.1111/afe.12211
4. Mark Goodwin and Cliff van Eaton. Elimination of American Foul brood without the use of drugs, NBA of New Zealand, 1999.
5. *New Zealand Companies Office*, Companies Register
6. *Wilmar International Ltd*, Annual Report, 2021.
7. *Mackay Sugar*, Annual Report 2021

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

We'd love to hear it.

Email your
'letter to the editor' to
editor@apiadvocate.co.nz

“Mandatory” Training Terminology Gone, says NZBI



After a drawn-out process corresponding with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), New Zealand Beekeeping Inc (NZBI) say they have managed to get the terminology “mandatory” removed from training advice.


As detailed by *Apiarist's Advocate* in March, the industry body raised concern that all beekeepers holding a Risk Management Programme (RMP) certification for their honey extraction or processing facilities that wanted to move to a less frequent auditing programme would be required to undergo training, according to advice issued by auditing body AsureQuality.

“NZ Beekeeping wishes to advise that both MPI and AsureQuality have now withdrawn the ‘mandatory’ requirement around verification training for operators to move to one audit per year, that is moving from step 6 to step 7,” NZBI president Jane Lorimer says.

An industry group meeting to discuss assessment of competency of RMP operators and how it will be delivered, so verifiers are able to use this when determining if an operator should move to step 7, is expected to be staged. No date has been set.

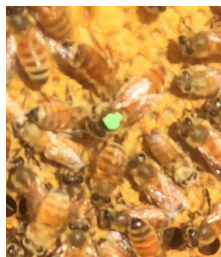
“NZ Beekeeping’s advice remains the same – do not undertake the training unless you feel it would be beneficial to you and your business,” Lorimer says.

NZBI first flagged the issue of AsureQuality’s “mandatory” wording on February 11.

While the move to less regular RMP audits has long been a desire of both Apiculture New Zealand, who worked with MPI and AsureQuality on the change, and NZBI, the later has concerns that training imposed on RMP holders to move to step 7 will be overly onerous. 

PYRAMID APIARIES

QUALITY ITALIAN QUEENS



PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR
OVER-WINTERED QUEENS
NOW TO ENSURE SUPPLY
FOR SPRING!

MATED QUEENS

VIRGIN QUEENS

CELLS & NUCS

(Marlborough pickup)

MARLBOROUGH BASED
COMMERCIAL & TERTIARY TRAINED BEEKEEPERS
NO STAFF, JUST HANDS-ON OWNERS
Nationwide overnight delivery of mated & virgin queens // Cells and nucs via pick-up only

P & L DAWKINS
pyramid.apiaries@gmail.com
027 383 7278
www.pyramidapiaries.co.nz

Advocate Offers Printed Bi-Annual — Order Now!



BY PATRICK DAWKINS – EDITOR

This publication has grown greatly since our first eMagazine release in August 2019, and now we have a new adaption to offer our readers, *Print Reads Winter '22: The best of Apiarist's Advocate January to June 2022*. The printed magazine will be the first of its kind for us, having previously released a PDF eMag for our first 34 months.

Our publication will continue in electronic form going forward, both in eMag and via our [website](https://www.apiaristsadvocate.com), so beekeepers can continue their free and easy access to our content. We want to test the waters on the interest level in a printed "highlights package" style magazine every six months though.

In our more than two and a half years publishing we have received some great feedback from readers about our content and the eMag form allows many beekeepers to access the stories. However, it would be good to give those stories greater permanence. A regular printed version of the publication should do that. I envisage it sitting in the smoko room or on the coffee table at home over the winter months when beekeepers have more time to dive further into stories, then it heading to the bookshelf or office for posterity and as a reference point and snapshot of our industry.

I am looking forward to going through our first six editions of the year to sift out what I believe will make for the most suitable stories, with still a few months to go there is already plenty to choose from. We have got some great reads about beekeepers all over the country (from Maggie James's excellent profiles, to our Club Catch-Ups), have dived into some big issues of apiculture (AFB sniffer dogs, UK trademark battles, a major recap of the honey season...), while also tapping into expert advice and insight from a wide-range of corners of our industry (Apiarist Opinions, Management Matters, Varroa Diaries...).

While the eMagazine and website are free to subscribers – thanks to the support of advertisers – Print Reads comes at a cost of \$29, which includes GST and delivery to your mailbox. We expect it to contain 50-60 pages of quality reads and thus be great bang for the buck. We will compile it immediately after the release of our June issue and plan to have it into mailboxes by mid-June. I invite you to order now:

Print Reads can be ordered online via:

www.apiaristsadvocate.com/printreads.

We always welcome feedback from our readers too, email editor@apiadvocate.co.nz on this topic or any other. 🐝

Coming soon

Get the best of *Apiarist's Advocate* in print for your winter reading and posterity...

Order now, *Print Reads Winter '22: The best of Apiarist's Advocate January to June 2022*.

Apiarist's Advocate brings New Zealand beekeepers news, views and promotions to your email inbox each month for free and now you can get a selection of the top stories from the first half of 2022 in print magazine form. Have it in the smoko room, coffee table, office and then on the bookshelf for safe keeping and reference.

Support independent reporting in your industry.

**ORDER
NOW**

\$29* (includes gst)
[apiaristsadvocate.com/printreads](https://www.apiaristsadvocate.com/printreads)



Classified Listings



List in the *Advocate* classifieds for free. Simply email your 40 words or less listing to: advertising@apiadvocate.co.nz

QUEENS & CELLS

ApiLife Limited: Quality Queens: Mated, virgins or cells. Limited quantity available for December and January. Free courier delivery nationwide.

Email: info@apilife.co.nz

Phone: 027 355 9790

Kiwi Queens: Mated Italian Queens, Virgins Queens and NUCs. Available throughout NZ. Nelson/Tasman - cells available for collection. Pre-order over wintered queens now for next season. Contact - Matt Goldsworthy 027 727 3392 or kiwiQueens@hotmail.com

Lion Apiaries: King of Queens. An industry leader producing quality queen bees and queen cells for beekeepers throughout New Zealand. Check us out at www.lionqueens.nz all enquires to info@lionqueens.nz

Pyramid Apiaries: Quality Italian queens, Marlborough. Mated and virgin queens – available via courier delivery throughout New Zealand. Cells – pickup only. Order your over-wintered queens now for spring delivery, before they are all gone! www.pyramidapiaries.co.nz, pyramid.apiaries@gmail.com, 027 383 7278 (Patrick).

HONEY EXTRACTION, PACKING & STORAGE

CrystechNZ: Specialist honey solutions in extraction/processing/packaging. Supplying a wide range of equipment for the honey house, plus ongoing maintenance and servicing. Visit www.crystech.co.nz or ph 07 579 0082 to discuss your solution.

HD Process NZ: Specialists in sanitary processing equipment for the honey industry. Pump, filters, heat exchangers, extraction, processing. www.hdprocess.co.nz, james@hdprocess.co.nz, ph 09 580 2520.

Lion Apiaries: Otahuhu, Auckland. Our extraction plant can produce up to two tonnes of raw, unfiltered honey a day. RMP certified for export. Highly competitive pricing. www.lionqueens.nz/extraction or email info@lionqueens.nz

Manuka Engineering. We design, install and manage high tech machinery to help improve your honey extraction, packing or processing business. www.manukaengineering.com, 027 6677 588

Manuka Orchard. Need more from your honey? We offer a range of services from, extraction, storage (all temps.), moisture reduction, chilled super storage. Paengaroa, BOP. www.manukaorchard.com, 027 6677 588

BUSINESSES FOR SALE

Waikato-based: Award winning boutique honey business for sale. Includes a strong local brand with established website & 40 stockists. At least 150 beehives and additional gear, honey, etc. Happy to discuss options and pricing. Please phone 021 623 515.

BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT FOR SALE/WANTED

Avant Loaders: Glenbrook Machinery. Suppliers of Avant, the world's most versatile loaders for beekeepers. www.glenbrook.co.nz, ph 0800 453 627

Honey Dryer: For sale, includes NZ made custom industrial dehumidifier. Also, early model vertical Beetech hummer spinfloat. Ph 027 362 8084

HIVE SALES

Pyramid Apiaries: Nuc hives, Marlborough. Five frame cor-flute boxes with quality Italian mated queen. Pickup only. www.pyramidapiaries.co.nz, pyramid.apiaries@gmail.com, 027 383 7278 (Patrick).

HONEY FOR SALE/WANTED

ApiLife Limited: Bulk honey available at competitive prices. Email info@apilife.co.nz for all inquiries.

3000 kg of Monofloral Manuka Honey: season 2020/21 ready for packing and exporting. Extra Drums of high UMF Non-Manuka for sale. Stored under RMP in Kaiwaka, Northland. Phone 021 289 9060 or email honeybytheseanz@gmail.com

Marlborough: 7.5 tonne honey for sale, 4 batches – mono & multi manuka, kanuka. For more details and full test results email honeysale22@gmail.com

HIVE INSPECTION/ MENTORING SERVICE

ApiLife Limited: AFB/ COI Inspections available, North Island only. Email: info@apilife.co.nz Phone: 027 355 9790.

MyApiary: Job management and productivity software for commercial beekeepers. Also, our advisory service helps beekeepers run productive businesses, not just keep bees. www.myapiary.com, ph (07) 391 0039

II TRAINING: Courses offering training in instrumental insemination of queen bees starting January 2023. The courses are two days long and offer one-on-one practical training. Everything supplied. Contact penny@southernsun.co.nz or visit our website southernsun.co.nz

Blenheim, Queen Cell Production

Powerpoint Tutorial: For producing large numbers of quality queen cells. **Blenheim,** Monday 16 May, 9.30 a.m.-2.30 p.m., \$210 pp (incl GST). Board Room, Taylor Pass Honey Co. Online bookings: mjqueenb.co.nz/queen-cell-production-tutorials/. Maggie James 027 629 9388

Leeston, Queen Cell Production

Powerpoint Tutorial: Producing large numbers of quality queen cells. Wednesday 29 June (day before conference). 9.30 a.m.-2.30 p.m., Leeston \$210 pp (incl GST). Would consider other venues.
Online bookings: mjqueenb.co.nz/queen-cell-production-tutorials/. Queries welcome Maggie James 027 629 9388.

Neville Marr Chartered Accountant:

I'm a Blenheim-based chartered accountant, hobbyist beekeeper, and business partner with all of my clients. What's important to me is understanding my clients' business and bringing that personal touch.
Ph 027 276 7682, **e:** office@marrnz.com, www.marrnz.com.

BEEKEEPING CLUBS & GROUPS

Whangarei Bee Club: meets on the first Saturday of the month, 10am at Whareora Hall (820 Whareora Road, Whangarei).

For details go to www.whangareibeeclub.co.nz/, select 'About Us' and then 'Club Day Invitation'. See you there.

Rodney Beekeepers Club: meet second Wednesday of each month (except January), 7.30pm, at Kaipara Cruising Club in Helensville. Learning about bees together: advice, field days, club shop.
See website for details
rodneybeekeepersclub.co.nz

Franklin Beekeepers Club: 137 Sim Road, Paerata, Auckland 2580. Meetings on second Sunday of the month, 9.45am start. www.franklinbees.co.nz.

Hawkes Bay Bee Club: Pakowhai Hall, Pakowhai Road, Pakowhai (opposite the shop) from 7pm on the first Thursday each month (except January). **Email:** beekeepershbinc@gmail.com
The Buzz Club Otaki: Waitohu School Hall, Te Manuao Rd., Otaki. Meetings every 3. Wednesday of the month, 7-9pm.
Contact: thebuzzclubotaki@gmail.com.

Wellington Beekeepers Assoc.: Meets on the first Wed of each month (except Jan) at 7:30 pm at Johnsonville Community Centre Main Hall. Beginners class at 6:45 pm.
www.beehive.org.nz **Email:** secretary@beehive.org.nz

Nelson Beekeepers Club: Waimea Lounge, A&P Showgrounds, Richmond. Meets first Tuesday of the month (except Jan) 7-9pm.
www.nelsonbeekeepers.org.nz, email tasmanbees@gmail.com, Ph 03 548 6220.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apiculture New Zealand Conference and Trade Exhibition: "Sharing Knowledge, Sharing the Load for a Better Future". June 30-July 1, Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre. **Registrations open now:** www.apinz.org.nz/apinz-conference/

Apiarist's Advocate is brought to you by Patrick & Laura Dawkins, Marlborough beekeepers.

www.apiaristsadvocate.com
www.facebook.com/apiadvocate

Editorial

Editor: Patrick

To make comment or send press releases please email editor@apiadvocate.co.nz or phone **Patrick, 027 383 7278**.

Creative

Design: Ashleigh Ryan

Advertising

For more information or to make a booking, email advertising@apiadvocate.co.nz or phone **Patrick 027 383 7278** or **Laura 021 130 7446**.

Booking deadline is the second to last Friday of the month prior to publication and artwork must be supplied by the final Friday of the month.

Take your place in these pages

advertising@apiadvocate.co.nz
Patrick 027 383 7278
Laura 021 130 7446



Never miss an issue!

Subscribe at
www.apiaristsadvocate.com