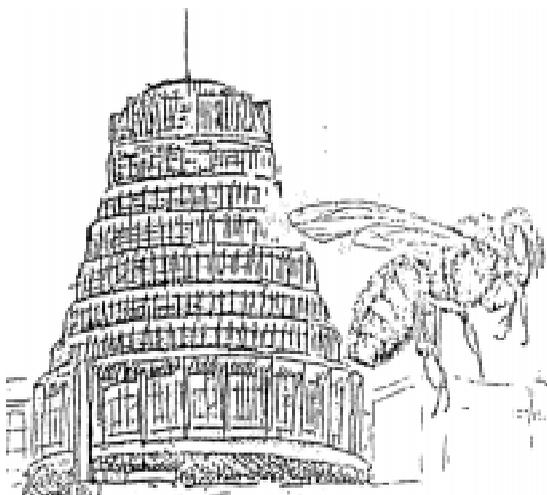


Wellington Beekeepers Association Inc.



Our Next Meeting:

When:

**Monday 10th July 2000 at
7:30 p.m.**

Where:

**Terrace Centre,
Union Church,
Dr Taylor Terrace.
Johnsonville**

Theme:

**AGM and Mead
Competition**

Note start time!

Meetings are held on second Monday each month (except January), at above venue

**Wellington Beekeepers Association Inc.
Monthly Newsletter – July 2000**



This newsletter is available to members via e-mail using Adobe Acrobat v3 format.

The reader software is available from Adobe free of charge. Contact editor@beehive.org.nz for additional details.

Return Address: PO Box 11-089, Manners St., Wellington (Ph 565 0164)

Minutes of June Meeting

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSOC. INC. HELD IN THE JOHNSONVILLE UNION CHURCH HALL, JOHNSONVILLE ON MONDAY 12 JUNE 2000 AT 7.30 PM.

PRESENT : Richard Hatfield (Pres.), Mary Ann Lindsay (Treas.), John Burnet (Sec.) and 26 members and visitors as listed in the attendance book.

APOLOGIES : Cliff Hulston, Ray Baker, Marie & Chris Christoffel, Wrae Duncan, Jeff Pollard, Bob McGahan, Peter Ratcliffe.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING : Minutes of meeting held 8 May as detailed in June newsletter were confirmed.

MATTERS ARISING : Upper Hutt Science Festival : While Bill Allan & Les Solomon had volunteered to staff the Club stand on Thurs & Fri., volunteers were still required for Sat 22 July.

Varroa Bee Mite : Update from Frank Lindsay - the mite had been discovered as far south as Raurimu near National Park (a low infestation sourced from the main South Auckland apiary infestation). Estimate of eradication costs was now \$50 - \$60 million with \$4 going to beekeepers as compensation for destroyed colonies. Beekeeper co-operation and control over hive movement would be essential. Cost estimate allowed for 7 outbreaks within one year. Bait stations would be set up every kilometre and all hives monitored within 5 km radius of each infestation. Possibility of introducing mite resistant bees from Asia. Mite has been identified as *Varroa Destructor* not *V. Jacobsonii* as first thought as *V. Jacobsonii* can only reproduce on *Apis Serana* not *Apis Mellifera*.

CORRESPONDENCE : Secretary read Minister for Biosecurity's letter of acknowledgment received in response to Club's letter demanding eradication of the Varroa bee mite from NZ.

TREASURER'S REPORT : Working account balance \$2,115.70. Other account balances were \$3,119.81 (Goal Saver) and \$429.33 (BL account).

GENERAL BUSINESS :

- Members were reminded of the necessity to submit written claims under the Club's AFB compensation scheme before AGM next month.
- Ivan Pederson outlined contents of his letter to Russell Berry (Arataki Apiaries) expressing concern over delays in destroying mite infested hives.

PRESENTATION : Mary Bryne and her partner Andrew outlined the basis of the Anti-fluoride campaign and details of their research and correspondence with various Health authorities and the Regional Council. Their research indicated there were a number of likely health threats and no proven benefits justifying introduction of fluoride to town and city water supplies.

Meeting closed at 9.15 p.m. with usual supper.

John Burnet

Draft Control Plan for Varroa

16 June 2000 - Draft operational plan for varroa control released

The draft operational plan for the control of varroa was released today by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

This document is the second options paper released by MAF. The draft operational plan for eradication of varroa was released last week. Both papers were drafted by a team led by AgriQuality New Zealand Ltd, in accordance with specifications developed by the technical advisory group convened by MAF. Both papers will be used to advise Cabinet in its decision with respect to the government response to varroa.

The draft operational plans for eradication and control of varroa (respectively) are available on the MAF website at www.maf.govt.nz (Click on to the Bee Varroa icon at the bottom left of the front page and then click on the plan you want or see the individual download addresses below - FL.)

MAF is accepting comments on both papers, and the National Beekeepers Association is co-ordinating responses from the beekeeping industry through its network of regional branches. NBA representatives have participated in the technical advisory group, and in the team led by AgriQuality.

The operational plan for control of varroa considers the potential ways to achieve the specified objectives of mitigating the effects of varroa on North Island beekeeping, and ensuring that the South Island remains free of varroa for as long as possible. The plan presents the options in a modular fashion, with each component costed separately.

The plan proposes two alternative programmes of surveillance to confirm the South Island's freedom from varroa, and a series of measures to protect this status. Movement control of bees, hives and equipment from North to South Islands could be maintained, with continuing publicity to alert transport operators, beekeepers and members of the public to these restrictions.

Options are also included for an eradication programme in the event that mites are found in the South Island. The extent and cost of an eradication programme for a South Island incursion would depend upon how early the find was made, and where and when it was located.

The plan discusses various options for immediate control of varroa in the North Island, including two versions of a co-ordinated treatment strategy in those areas known to be currently infected. Co-ordinating treatments through a management agency is considered as a first year option to achieve maximum impact on current varroa populations. The pros and cons of co-ordinated treatment are considered, and balanced against allowing beekeepers to make their own decisions with regard to managing treatments.

A pest management strategy is discussed as a possible vehicle for administering a control programme over the longer term.

The plan includes a proposal for New Zealand-based research activities because overseas control methods may not be directly applicable here. This is due to differences in New

Zealand beekeeping practices, climatic and floral conditions, honey bee strains, and the interaction of bee viruses present in New Zealand with varroa.

The goal of the research programme would be to produce a sustainable control strategy that minimises cost, chemical use, and the development of resistance in mites and residues in the products that are being produced.

The plan discusses an extension programme to help lessen the impact of the mite on New Zealand beekeeping, and on the horticultural and agricultural industries that rely on honey bees for pollination. Proposed activities within this extension programme include:

- an initial training seminar for professional apiculturalists (using an overseas expert);
- production and distribution of a varroa control booklet to all registered beekeepers;
- queen breeding courses for South Island beekeepers to help them produce their own queens now that North Island queens are not available;
- a variety of short courses presented over a 7 year period that are tailored to the various circumstances facing beekeepers in relation to varroa;
- an on-going group extension programme for sharing of experiences and information on varroa control;

production and distribution of a New Zealand varroa control manual once New Zealand-based research is completed; and encouragement of the use of pollination hive quality assurance services to ensure mite impacts do not result in reduced production of horticultural crops.

For a download of the eradication operational plan.

<http://www.maf.govt.nz/Standards/anbio/OperationalPlanvarroa.pdf>,

For a download of the Control plan

<http://www.maf.govt.nz/Standards/anbio/controlvarroa.pdf>

or for a hard copy contact:

Lucy Martinez

MAF Biosecurity Authority

PO Box 2526

Wellington

email: Martinezl@maf.govt.nz

This is also the address for submissions to either or both papers. For further information contact: Gita Parsot, MAF Communications, telephone: 04 498 9806 or Lin McKenzie, National Beekeepers Association Executive Member. 025-357-970

Note: The above has been slightly amended. You have this week to put in submissions. Please copy the plans and distribute to those who have not seen them. (Ie contact larger beekeepers and hobby clubs in your area and ask if they have seen / want a copy. (Its quicker and cheaper than us copying them and posting them off to everyone).

Frank Lindsay

VARROA MITE : ERADICATION VS CONTROL

The following submission on this issue was made by the Auckland Branch of the NBA.

I/We _____, _____
(Name[s]) (Occupation)

of _____
(Town/city)

SUPPORT in principle MAF's plan to eradicate the varroa mite from New Zealand.

I/We DO NOT SUPPORT any of the options included in MAF's plan to control the varroa mite in New Zealand.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

1) Firstly, beekeepers are not stupid! They are practical people who make a living from a healthy, vibrant beekeeping business. That is why they support MAF's Eradication Plan, because it is a practical, cost effective solution which best ensures the long term well being of New Zealand's beekeeping industry.

2) I/We am/are under NO illusion that someone can wave a magic wand and make varroa mites decamp beehives, en masse, overnight. It will require a concentrated effort in the Infested Zone for the first year to eradicate all bees from registered/managed hives, and to carry out a poison baiting programme for unregistered/feral hives. It will require an extensive, on-going surveillance programme to detect recurrences inside the Infested Zone and "blips" outside. It will require on-going, but diminishing eradication of "blips" as/when they occur. MAF's Eradication Plan calculates for at least a four year duration to total annihilation of varroa inside and around the Infested Zone.

Varroa is like cancer, we wouldn't wish it on our worst enemy. Some suggest chemical treatments (eg. Apistan); but like chemotherapy to a cancer patient, it reduces the symptom but inflicts pain over a longer period. And besides, the end result is still the same. Overseas beekeepers tell horrifying stories of living with varroa in "do nothing" and controlled environments. They encourage New Zealand beekeepers to break the cycle of despair and do everything to reinstate our varroa-free status.

3) The cost of an ongoing Eradication Plan is \$56 million over a FOUR year period. That is to say: Year 1 = \$31 million, Year 2 = \$13 million, Year 3 = \$6 million, Year 4 = \$6 million. I/We believe it is money well spent. It is substantially less than the \$87 million allocated to the Arts in the recent Budget, and should be seen as an insurance policy to maintain the good health and well being of industries which underpin the viability of the New Zealand economy; namely, beekeeping, kiwifruit, apples, pears & other pipfruit, stonefruit, foodstuffs such as honey & jams, clover & other pasture grasses for dairying, meat & wool, seed cropping and a host of other ancillary industries. One third of the horticulture industry's \$2.2 billion annual contribution will be placed directly at risk if we have to live with varroa. Over the life of the Eradication Plan, horticulture alone will be spared that risk (from pollination) and can continue to generate safely \$3,000 million for our economy (\$750 million x 4 years). In addition, the

wellbeing of New Zealand's primary industries is pivotal to regional development, and creates substantial downstream employment through a financial sector rule of thumb: " ONE primary sector job creates FOUR industrial, commercial & service sector jobs." Living with varroa, for the sake of a meagre \$56 million, will put all this at risk.

4) It should not be forgotten that 75% of New Zealand's beekeeping industry will continue to function in its traditional, efficient manner under an Eradication Plan. In fact it will prosper by supplying replacement bees to the Infestation Zone and making up any minor shortfalls in honey, bee pollen, propolis & royal jelly. 75% of our industry equates to total domestic demand for honey, and packers report adequate stores created by several years of overproduction to meet ongoing retail pack exports (approx. 650 tonnes/annum). The only area of shortfall will be in bulk exports (300kg drums) which is generally the low returning, commodity priced end of the product spectrum anyway.

5) We will only get ONE chance to eradicate varroa, and the longer we leave it the more it will cost. New Zealand's unique geography as a relatively remote island nation lends itself to eradication. Czechoslovakia tried an eradication programme but its continental location facilitated waves of mites crossing the border continuously from its not-so-vigilant neighbours. The topography of our Infestation Zone is mainly flat to rolling and readily accessible, which makes any eradication work easier.

6) Globalisation had increased imports to New Zealand exponentially over the last 20 years. On the other hand border control effectiveness to ward off exotic pests had declined significantly. This has been highlighted in recent months/years by such cases as: varroa, snakes, tussock moth, calisi virus, paper wasps, Australian mosquitos, and a host of others. Any attempt to prevent and/or eradicate exotic pests must also be met by government supplying adequate resources to our border control services. It is in the overall, long term national interest to see their effectiveness outpace any increase in imports, NOT vice versa.

If we do not implement an Eradication Plan for varroa the prospects are frightening. Some obvious concerns are:

7) Many countries afflicted with varroa have economies with a large industrial base. New Zealand is almost entirely agriculturally based and does not have an industrial "safety net" to rely on when things go wrong. If we opt to live with varroa there is NO turning back. Disease control experts say we have an 80-90% chance of success with an Eradication Plan, so it is surely worthwhile trying. At best we have achieved a milestone in history, at worst we have still left our options open.

8) With no eradication programme organic honey will be lost forever, there will be serious chemical residue concerns from honey, bee pollen, propolis & royal jelly customers, and New Zealand's "clean, green" image will receive a serious setback which may have flow on effects to other primary industries.

9) With no eradication programme there will not be enough hives for pollination long term. Overseas experience shows that (post-varroa) the honey bee can only survive in hives managed by humans (albeit with difficulty). Feral hives become a thing of the past, and large tracts of the New Zealand countryside will be without bees.

If there are no feral colonies and fewer managed hives, costs will rise to a level which makes New Zealand's vibrant seed crop industry (among others) uncompetitive with Australia. The industry will then be transposed to Australia where bees are plentiful. This will result in lost New Zealand jobs in the agricultural sector, with flow on job losses (4X) in the manufacturing, commercial & service sectors.

10) With no eradication programme varroa will become immune to the miticides commonly used and recommended under MAF's Control Plan. This phenomenon is already causing major headaches for overseas beekeeping industries; and in New Zealand we only have to look at parallel problems surrounding the calisi virus and the onion beetle.

11) Questions have been raised about beekeeper compliance to an eradication programme, and yet the overwhelming support shown by beekeepers to MAF's Eradication Plan counters such logic. As long as beekeepers in the Infestation Zone perceive they are being treated in the spirit of the Biosecurity Act and are left "in no better or worse position than any person who is not directly affected" by varroa, the eradication programme should progress smoothly. It should also be said that a fair and adequate level of compensation will go a long way to cementing in such compliance.

Conversely, it could be argued lack of compliance would create more serious setbacks for any of the Control options, which the majority of beekeepers oppose. In a worst case scenario, some of the more errant beekeepers may exhibit behaviour akin to someone knowing they are HIV+ but having unprotected sex anyway. They could become despondent/desperate from weakening hives and may feel little responsibility of passing their varroa problem onto a neighbouring beekeeper.

SIGNED:

DATE:

???

Useful Maxims for Beekeepers.

- A swarm of bees in May, bee-man much astray.
- Destroy not the circle.
- When the swarming instinct has been aroused, satisfy it.
- Do your spring feeding, and your spring cleaning, in the autumn.
- Give room, comb room, in advance of the needs of the bees.
- The best packing for bees is bees.
- Never destroy a good queen till you are sure you have a better.
- The greatest danger to bees is the beekeeper
- A super in time may save nine - swarms.
- Surplus bees bring surplus honey.
- Don't buy a swarm - it contains an old queen.
- Don't sell a swarm - it contains your honey harvesters.
- The entrance of the hive is the mirror of the stock.
- Bees regard a sealing as a ceiling.
- Busy bee bring bending branches

AFB Fund Claims

Members are reminded that any claims for compensation for hives destroyed as a result of an AFB infection during the period July 1999 to June 2000 will need to be lodged with the Secretary or Treasurer prior to the AGM on the 10th July. The amount of compensation paid is determined by resolution at the AGM, but has in the past been set at a level of 50% of the cost of a standard "A4" hive (ie \$60). There are limits on the number of hives that can be claimed by any individual member in any year.

Annual Subscription

A proposal has been made that members who elect to receive newsletters by e-mail rather than standard post, will be offered a \$5 rebate on their \$20 annual membership fee. If you would like to receive your news-letter by e-mail, then please indicate when you renew your membership shortly, and supply your e-mail address to editor@beehive.org.nz

Annual General Meeting

Nominations are being sought for all positions on the executive committee. Give some thought to who you would like to see involved in running the Association. If you cannot attend the meeting, provide a nomination to the Secretary or the President prior to the 10th. Don't forget that the Annual General Meeting on the 10th July will also include the mead competition. Members wishing to enter should be preparing their mead now. Entries will need to be submitted in clear round bottles of either 375 ml or standard 750 ml size. There are three classes: dry, sweet, and sparkling.

Future Meetings

The committee is looking for interesting and/or relevant speakers for meetings this year. If you have any suggestions please contact our secretary, John Burnet on 232 7863 (or secretary@beehive.org.nz).

August (14th): Kate Lynskey from Workfit Physiotherapy Rehab Centre,
Occupational Injuries (specifically Beekeeping)

September (11th): (to be advised)

October (9th): (to be advised)

For Sale & Wanted to Buy

- Wanted: clean beeswax - \$5.00 per Kg; bulk honey - 20 litre pails (supplied) - price after examination. Phone Ivan 526 9180
- Contact Frank Lindsay for some of the items from Doug Purdie that were not sold at last month's meeting.

Don't forget when selling any used hive gear, the seller must inform AgriQuality in Palmerston North, so it can be tracked in the case of an exotic disease outbreak. Purchasers should sign the form supplied by AgriQuality.
