

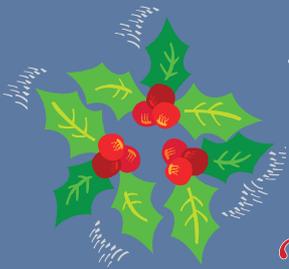


AUSTRALIA'S
HONEYBEE NEWS

"The voice of the Beekeeper"

Volume 1 Number 6

November-December 2008



*Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*

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AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

The Journal of the NSW Apiarists' Association Inc. (NSWAA)

Published Bi-Monthly ISSN 1835 6621

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COVER: The beautiful rainbow bee-eater lunches on a bee! **PHOTO:** Scott Templeton

Copy Deadline for Next Issue of *Australia's Honeybee News* - 1 February 2009

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6 Issues	\$990.00	\$572.00	\$374.00	\$209.00
3 Issues	\$594.00	\$352.00	\$220.00	\$132.00
1 Issue	\$231.00	\$132.00	\$99.00	\$66.00

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Australia's Honeybee News goes free of charge to members of NSWAA. Non-member subscriptions are welcomed. Within Australia \$33, Overseas (airmail) AUS\$50. Forward payment to Editor, PO Box 352 Leichhardt NSW 2040 (Cheques payable to NSW Apiarists' Association).

The opinions expressed in articles published in *Australia's Honeybee News* are those of the authors and do not imply the endorsement of the NSWAA for the promotion of any product, goods or services mentioned unless specifically stated.

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Phone: (02) 9550 4055 Fax: 02 9550 3403 Email: rob@farrellprinters.com.au

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Season

The season has progressed slowly with most producers collecting some honey. The South and South-West of the State are still doing it tough with very little rain. The North has experienced good rains over the past 6-8 weeks with the possibility of some short budders flowering over December/January (Silverleaf Ironbark, Coolibah, Brush Box and Appletree).

With such a small window for production as we have experienced in NSW it would be hard to imagine very much carryover stock of honey to be held over autumn/winter.

AFB

The NSW Executive have been looking at ways that Industry may address AFB in the future. Most beekeepers we have spoken to agree that AFB is an increasing problem, affecting more beekeepers every year. We believe that if you keep doing what you are doing – then you keep getting what you got! If we agree that a new approach is necessary, which is what the State Executive believe, then we need to explore other ways to reduce AFB.

One approach being looked at is a price differential for honey which has the risk of antibiotic residues and/or AFB spores as against honey which does not pose this risk. Clearly, honey which is from hives having no disease and not been fed antibiotics does not pose the same cost or difficulty for marketing.

If price incentive cannot be achieved then another option being considered is an Industry Managed AFB Reduction Scheme. New Zealand has had such a scheme operating over the past few years and is claiming good results.

One of the drivers for your Executive to investigate different options for AFB control/reduction is dissatisfaction by many producer who do not wish to use antibiotics so they may produce a residue free product but are not getting any financial incentive despite taking a production cut most years. I must emphasise this is not a proposal to ban antibiotics, rather to allow beekeepers who wish to produce a residue free product, not be penalised in the market place.

The other alternative is that we all use antibiotics and do not worry about disease, and in time have similar problems to other countries (such as resistance in North and South America and China). Having the risk of residues in all honey sent to packers will surely add costs and difficulty to marketing Australia's crop.

DPI have conducted another Task Force inspection, this time in the Lismore area. In the absence of an official report, I have heard this was successful and diseased hives were found.

Sydney Show

Most members are aware of the Association's honey stand at the Royal Sydney Show. Over 1 million people attend this venue and it provides us with a wonderful opportunity to showcase our Industry and promote honey.

The labour to run this promotional stand is voluntary and much of the product sold is donated. This allows us to make a profit which assists in running your Association and keeping membership fees down to a very reasonable level. If you cannot assist with time at the show, then you may be able to assist by donating some honey to be packed and sold at the show. Please contact Secretary (Julie) or one of the Executive.

I must thank, on behalf of all members, the people and organisations who have donated honey and product in the past to make the show promotion a success.

State Executive

The Executive held their November meeting at Kempsey. This was done to give local beekeepers the opportunity to meet with the Executive and to indicate any concerns they may want addressed. Thank you to members at Kempsey.

A further, similar meeting is being planned for Orange in February to give Western Plains and Central Tablelands Branches the opportunity to meet with the Executive.

State Forests

State Forests have indicated they are revisiting their pricing of bee site permits and that they will increase in future. On looking at the price structure they discovered that the fee has remained the same since 1997. It was indicated that a CPI type increase was being looked at.

Nosema ceranae

Michael Hornitzky is undertaking a survey of hives to ascertain the level of *Nosema ceranae* within hives in Australia. This will be done periodically (every 1-2 months) to determine whether *Nosema ceranae* is increasing, decreasing or superseding *Nosema apis*.

This could become a very important survey, as *Nosema ceranae* is believed to be a major contributor to the large losses of hives in North America and some European countries in recent years.

Varroa

Dr Denis Anderson (CSIRO) has recently been working in New Guinea, investigating a report of *Varroa* impacting hives of *mellifera*.

A small apiary in the South West of New Guinea (Tinika) has *Varroa* present and is breeding on *mellifera*. It appears that this may constitute a similar mutation as happened long ago in Korea and Japan. More research

is being conducted to fully understand where this mite may have jumped species and how closely it is to Varroa Destructor in genetic make up.

AHBIC

At the recent AHBIC meeting, a Dulux paint representative gave a presentation, explaining a potential partnership discount deal on Dulux paint for beekeepers plus a rebate back to AHBIC.

The AHBIC Review Committee has extended the time for submissions to be returned until the end of December. If you have a view on AHBIC and how it is, or is not serving the Honeybee Industry, then write in, and have your opinion taken into account by the Review Committee.

AHBIC has been advised that the Honeybee Industry has been granted \$300,000 over the next 2 years for Industry Biosecurity (port surveillance) and other security measures. This is a direct result of the outcomes and recommendations from the inquiry into the Honeybee Industry.

Bee Site Database

A meeting was held in November with David Larson and James Houlahan, DPI cotton at Narrabri. David has updated the bee site database, making it easier to access information. This database is for beekeepers to note the position of their loads of honeybees so spray operators (either farmers or contractors) are quickly aware where bees are, prior to spraying and can notify beekeepers quickly. This is intended to make it safer for beekeepers to work their Coolibah country. If you intend to work Coolibah this year or are in any of the cotton valleys with bees during December-February, then you should register your sites on this database, so your bee's safety will be considered when spray operations are being planned. The contact to register your occupied sites is:

www.cotton.crc.org.au/content/Industry/Tool/Bee_Alert.aspx

Merry Christmas

I would like to take this opportunity, and on behalf of the Executive to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Safe, Happy and Prosperous 2009.

Bill Weiss
State President

2009 SYDNEY SHOW

Thursday 9 April – Wednesday 22 April, 2009

The Sydney Royal Easter Show will run next year from Thursday 9 April to Wednesday 22 April, 2009.

Apiculture entries

Competition entries for the 2009 Sydney Show close on Monday 16 February, 2009. For a copy of the Apiculture schedule contact:

RAS Apiculture Co-ordinator on 02 9704 1288

www.sydneyroyalshows.com.au/comp/apiculture/schedule

SEASONS GREETINGS

The team at Australia's Honeybee News wish all readers and contributors a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

During these difficult times, we appreciate our advertisers' support and thank them sincerely.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Bevan Badcott	Bungonia
Peter Blake	Maryville
Nicholas Carlile	North Nowra
Ray Jones	Narrabri
Corinne Jordan	Queensland
Patrick Moloney	Potts Point
Geoff Porter,	Kelso

2009 STATE CONFERENCE

Just a reminder that the 2009 NSWAA State Conference will be held in Sydney in July.

The venue will be the Penrith Panthers Leagues Club. Accommodation details and further information will be published in the next edition.

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THAT'S MY OPINION

By Greg Roberts



National Peak Body Review

At the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) Annual General Meeting (AGM) in July it was resolved that a review should take place of our National Peak Body's (AHBIC) structure and to investigate the future funding of this organisation which was traditionally funded by voluntary levies. This review has been triggered by a major contributor withdrawing their voluntary funding. The problem was also escalated by the majority of honey producers who have been suffering high production costs and low commodity prices refusing to pay the levy suggesting that there is a huge lack of confidence by producers in the AHBIC structure.

There seems to be some confusion within industry in the belief that we have two national peak bodies. Maybe it is me that is confused but I believe that we have one National Peak Body, AHBIC, and under its umbrella honey packers are represented by the Honey Packers and Marketers Association of Australia. Some have suggested that this organisation has had too much power in the background. The queen bee breeders are represented by the Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association. I know I'm being sarcastic but with the amount of representation they have compared to their membership any person on the outside looking in could be forgiven for thinking they all should be driving Rolls Royces. Then we have the crop pollinators being represented by the National Crop Pollinators Association. When I was National Chairman this association never wrote one report at national executive level and, with tongue in cheek, I think they may have had a secret and weren't going to tell anyone.

The Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Association (FCAAA) is the body that represents the honey producers nationally and the NSW Apiarists' Association, being a member body of FCAAA, is the NSW state body representing producers.

Some years ago, whilst State President, I argued against the present structure of AHBIC and described it as an ivory tower without foundation – a pollinator is a beekeeper and so is a queen bee breeder. Let's face it we need a united industry not a divided industry creating unnecessary internal industry politics.

I personally don't believe we need honey packers involved with our National Peak Body. Some of our packers know too well how to obey the law of self concern – without any help from the rest of the industry they have proven that they are well able to look after themselves. I believe that it is the honey producer who has been lost in this system and at the last NSWAA AGM I made a statement that AHBIC was doing nothing for beekeepers but before I could explain I

was rudely interrupted by a person who I believe to be the National Crop Pollinators' representative at that time. Even though I regard the NSWAA as my Association my point is that this Association is the state producer representative body – could anybody please explain to me what programs, if any, within the last few years have been put together to assist honey producers during this time of low commodity prices?

For almost three years now I have been warning of a potential world shortage of uncontaminated honey. In one report from overseas it describes some world honey markets as a 'a Bull market in this liquid asset', however here in Australia the only 'Bull' is in our promotional and marketing programs. There are very few promotional programs put together and as for our marketing it consists of some marketers going in on contracts with minimum prices and at the end of the day they take their cut, the retailer takes their cut and whatever is left over is for the producer. While imports pour in, Australia today seems to be one of the hardest countries to export honey out of yet the easiest country to import honey.

We do need a National Peak Body run by a professional person with some lobbying skills and adequately funded. Some have suggested that we need to hire lobbyists – lobbying is a precise art. I learnt this when I was dealing with the Regional Forest Agreements and with all the problems that the beekeeping industry has, I don't believe that we can afford to hire a professional lobbyist when needed.

National Residue Committee

Some years ago when I was National Chairman with the consent of the National Executive it was my unpleasant duty to dismiss a major committee under AHBIC, this decision was severely criticised by some people my greatest defence was there should be more of it, by the way I was never thanked for the success of this decision. It is unsatisfactory for our National Residue Committee to contain people who may have been involved in importing contaminated honey, if this is correct then I think our National Chairman should show some leadership, and dismiss and restructure this committee. The National President of FCAAA should be very aggressive and unforgiving on this issue and demand an industry-experienced producer representative on this committee.

Merry Christmas to All

This year has been my first attempt to write an industry column – you may agree or disagree with me – but that's just my opinion – Merry Christmas to all.

Greg Roberts is a third generation beekeeper, former NSW and National President and former National Chairman



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WHAT A BUZZ - CHINESE HAVE A TASTE FOR LUCKNOW FAMILY'S HONEY

It may seem like selling ice to Eskimos, but yesterday a Lucknow honey producer shipped off a container load of his product to the biggest honey producing nation in the world - China.

Goldfields Honey is on the cusp of opening up an export opportunity in China, bucking the trend of business caution during the global financial crisis.

Three trips to Beijing to showcase their locally-produced honey have paid off for the Lockwood family, who started the business in a small shed at the back of their home on Phoenix Mine Road.

It seems the Chinese love the taste of the Lucknow yellow box honey and plans are underway for the Lockwoods to open a shop in Beijing, stocking their honey supplemented by other Australian produce.

"There is so much doom and gloom out there and I don't know whether it's all justified but this is a wonderful opportunity for us," said Vicki Lockwood.

Mrs Lockwood said the flavours in the Lucknow honey, produced through the variety of flora used by bees, particularly eucalyptus, appealed to the Chinese palate.

The doors were opened to the potentially huge marketplace of China when a consultant approached Goldfields Honey, offering the opportunity to produce for the Chinese.

"It may be seen as a niche market but it is huge for us," said Mrs Lockwood.

The Lockwoods started their business 20 years ago and now have almost 6000 hives on farms in the area.

Bee producers have their good times and bad like any other business, according to Mrs Lockwood.

"We've just come out of a drought, honey has been scarce and then of course when you have a glut it is difficult to market," she said.



Vicki Lockwood at the family's Goldfields packing shed at Lucknow with the products for sale in China.

To keep pace with the expansion of their business due to export opportunities Goldfields Honey is planning to build a new factory.

Their product is already on sale at local outlets and the Lockwoods used to be a regular stallholder at the farmers' market in Orange.

"But with all the workload we've had getting ready for the China export, I just haven't had time to go," Mr Lockwood said.

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AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL REVIEW

SUBMISSION DATE EXTENDED - 31 DECEMBER 2008

The July 2008 AHBIC Annual General Meeting resolved that a review be undertaken of the peak body's organizational structures. The review will also investigate and make recommendations about future funding of the organization which has historically relied substantially on the subscription of voluntary levies by industry participants.

A discussion paper tabled at the AHBIC AGM by the Victorian Apiarists' Association, dealing with the funding crisis and proposing a way forward through structural reform of the peak body has been provided to all editors of the Australian beekeeping media for the information of beekeeping industry stakeholders.

The Review Committee comprises: Mr Bill Weiss (Chairman), Mr Linton Briggs, Mr Stephen Fewster, Mr Ken Gell.

The review committee needs to know what you, as members, expect of AHBIC and FCAAA. If you consider we need both bodies. If you consider we need packers, pollinators and queen breeders as separate member bodies. What form the peak body should be that you would consider making contribution to for funding of that body.

Inquiry Terms of Reference

1. What structural changes are necessary, if any, to help improve the function of the peak body?
2. What structural changes are necessary, if any, to help improve peak body voluntary levy collection?
3. What other options for peak body funding need to be investigated?
4. What administrative changes are necessary, if any, to improve communication and feed back from AHBIC sector member bodies – (honey production (FCAAA), crop pollination (NCPA), queen/package bee production (AQBBA), honey packers and marketers (HP&MAA))?
5. The role of FCAAA (principal state beekeeping associations) in the structure and function of the peak body.

Submissions from Australian honey bee industry stakeholders are invited to be lodged by the 31 December 2008. The review committee will publish its findings and recommendations by the end of January, 2009. All replies to remain confidential. Submissions may be mailed or posted online to the following addresses:

Mr B Weiss
Chairman, AHBIC Review Committee
206 Lambeth Street, Glen Innes NSW 2370
Phone/Fax: 02 6732 1263 Email: beeweiss@yahoo.com.au

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Backyard blitz on Asian honey bees

Bird watchers in Cairns assist in the search for *Apis cerana*

The heat is on for Biosecurity Queensland to find and destroy as many Asian honey bee nests and swarms before the wet season sets in.

Primary Industries and Fisheries Minister Tim Mulherin said rain would make surveillance for the Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) more difficult. "They will take this opportunity to breed up over the summer and create an even bigger headache than they have this year," he said.

"We have detected Asian honey bee nests in Parramatta Park and Bungalow and have destroyed 17 nests and swarms since the incursion was initially detected in May last year."

"We need to stop the Asian honey bee in its tracks."

Mr Mulherin said the public can help find swarms and nests of the Asian honey bee. "A swarm at a property on Spence Street was destroyed on Saturday, November 1, thanks to public reporting and a further nest in Joan Street was found and destroyed on Wednesday, November 5."

"If everybody took some time each day to check their trees, shrubs, outbuildings and under roofs for any suspicious bee activity, then we may be able to find established nests more quickly and prevent them from swarming."

"A joint backyard blitz involving our surveillance teams and all Cairns householders will be an effective way to track down nests and swarms."

"While the *Apis cerana* we are dealing with at the moment are free of the destructive pest varroa mite, it only takes a new incursion of a mite-carrying species to quickly spread it through our bee colonies. New incursions would be hard to detect if there are *Apis cerana* living in the area already."

"Mites are destroying commercial and hobbyist hives in America and New Zealand and we dread their appearance in Australia."

The Minister said bird enthusiasts and residents are also joining Biosecurity Queensland's hunt for Asian honey bee nests in the suburbs of Cairns. "Biosecurity Queensland welcomes the extra eyes to help locate roosts of the rainbow bee-eater bird which will in turn help track down Asian honey bee nests and swarms in the city area."

"We are able to collect the pellets of indigestible bee remains that they cough up overnight. The remains include bee wings and our entomologists will be able to determine if Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) are present."

"These remains are sent away for further testing."

DPI&F senior operations manager Scott Templeton, a keen birdwatcher, is asking his birdwatcher contacts to help in the Asian honey bee response.

Birds Australia North Queensland members have been taking to the streets with binoculars looking for bee-eater roosts. "Now that we have detected Asian honey bee nests in Parramatta Park and Bungalow, I would like to find bee-eater roosts in the city area to help us get a line on other nests nearby," Mr Templeton said.

"This means looking for roosts in parks and backyards, so we have asked residents to see if the bee-eaters are roosting in trees in their yards. The birds flock to their roosts at dusk, usually 5.30pm or 6pm."

"Locating rainbow bee-eater roosts is important because it helps us to track their flight direction which is usually to their food source, which may have included a diet of Asian honey bees."

DPI&F local controller Pat Kalinowski said recent publicity about the bees in the city had created huge interest in the community. "We received a jump in public reporting," he said.

"Many people have either come in with specimens or have sent us some excellent photographs of what is in their backyards. "None of the specimens we have seen so far have been *A. cerana*, but it is important for us to see what is out there."

"We will be pleased to supply residents with a photograph comparing the Asian honey bee to the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*)."

Operations manager for the response Ian Rodger said two infestations in Bungalow in the past week indicated it was likely more nests were in the city area. "Our teams are scouring as many backyards as possible with the assistance of property owners," Mr Rodger said.

"But we can't be in everybody's backyard every day. Residents are at home seven days a week and we are asking them to 'bee alert' and keep a close eye on what's happening in their yards."

DPI&F surveillance manager Wim de Jong said Biosecurity Queensland teams have found more foraging Asian honey bees in the Alooomba area and are hunting for nests. "As a commercial beekeeper myself, I am determined to destroy any Asian honey bee in Queensland."

"If you see any bee activity, please contact Biosecurity Queensland as soon as possible on 132523," Mr de Jong said. We will follow up every phone call," he said.



DPI&F senior operations officer Scott Templeton (right) joined John Seale of Birding Cairns and birdwatcher Fred Rieben in tracking down rainbow bee-eaters in suburban Cairns

Government to buy back water

The Federal Government will increase spending on buying back Murray-Darling water - Commercial irrigation properties will be part of the buyback

The buyback of water from the Murray-Darling River system will be massively boosted by an injection of federal funds – which will also buy major commercial irrigation properties such as Queensland’s Cubbie Station, if the states contribute.

Speaking in Adelaide recently not far from the devastated river communities at the mouth of the Murray and the Coorong, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said an independent auditor would also be brought in to check the accuracy of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission’s assessment of how much stored water the system held.

But the future of South Australia’s wetlands at the Coorong and Murray mouth remain in doubt with no new allocation of water for downstream communities and the Federal Government admitting it could not provide a magic solution.

Mr Rudd said the river system overall was in deficit, with a capacity of 24,000 gegalitres but only 4800 currently stored.

He said the audit would settle debate about the accuracy of figures on which federal Water Minister Penny Wong based her controversial assessment that there was not enough water in the system to save the Murray mouth, the Coorong and the lower lakes.

The Australian Conservation Foundation said the new money demonstrated the Government was listening but did not guarantee the future of the lakes.

The National Party’s water spokesman, John Cobb, said the measures announced would not alleviate the crisis because the buybacks in Queensland and NSW would take at least three months to finalise.

Mr Rudd would not nominate large irrigation properties that could be targeted for purchase and declined to say if they were the six properties identified by the Australian Conservation Foundation as major commercial users of water.

But he said the Government would look at buying not just the entitlements but the properties themselves.

But with no immediate prospect of fresh water inflows to flush the lower Murray system and keep it from acidifying next summer, the future of the lakes looks bleak. Goolwa Mayor Kym McHugh, who met Mr Rudd and Senator Wong, said the Government was in a difficult position but its response would not help the environment in the short term.

“If it is a voluntary buyback on the open market, all this could take a while.”

Cr McHugh said the potential purchase of strategic irrigation properties could be the biggest boost but even that could take more time than the area had.

“The Darling used to flow into the Murray and put substantial amounts of water into it but it can’t flow now because they siphon it all off before it gets there.”

The First Mildura Irrigation Trust was abolished in August just five weeks after Premier John Brumby gave assurances that no such plan existed.

The 113-year-old trust has been investigated by the Victorian Government over claims it lost millions through financial mismanagement during the American subprime crisis. Lower Murray Water will take over its powers.

OFFICE OF GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATOR

Limited and Controlled Release of Genetically Modified (GM) White Clover

Australia’s gene technology regulatory system is designed to protect the health and safety of people and the environment by identifying risks posed by, or as a result of, gene technology and managing those risks.

The Acting Gene Technology Regulator is currently assessing Licence Application DIR 089 from DPI Victoria for a limited and controlled release to undertake research with one white clover line genetically modified for resistance to Alfalfa mosaic virus.

The purpose of the trial is to conduct experiments to evaluate the agronomic performance, including seed yield, of the GM white clover line under field conditions. Some seed would be collected and retained for analysis and possible future trials, subject to further approval(s). The trial is proposed to take place, under limited and controlled conditions, at one site in NSW, on a maximum of 633 m² from 2009-2011. None of the GM plant materials from the trial would be used in human food or animal feed.

A consultation Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) has been prepared, which concludes that the proposed release would pose negligible risk to human health and safety or to the environment. A range of licence conditions are proposed, including measures to restrict the release to the size, location and duration requested by DPI Victoria.

The Acting Regulator welcomes written submissions in order to finalise the RARMP, which will then form the basis of her decision on whether to issue the licence. The consultation RARMP and related documents can be obtained from the website <<http://www.ogtr.gov.au>> under ‘What’s New’ or by contacting the Office. Please quote application DIR 089 in any correspondence.

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Ph: 1800 181 030 Fax: 02 6271 4202
Email: ogte@health.gov.au
Website: www.ogtr.gov.au

IN LOVING MEMORY

of

Nona Florence Horner

21/12/1925 – 31/10/2008

Mrs Nona Florence Horner passed away on Friday the 31 October after battling with renal failure. She will be sadly missed by her family and friends. Nona was born into the Tracy family of 4 brothers and 2 sisters.

Being raised at Bylong and attending school in Kandos helped develop Nona into the wonderful country lady she was. She moved with her family to Fairfield NSW where she worked as a seamstress and met her beau, Charles Horner. She married him on 19 February 1944 and became a beekeeper working alongside Charlie managing all the bee activities camping and extracting on site until the central extracting plant was built in 1971, Nona was a wonderful mother to Gwen, Joe, Don and Margaret.

Nona enjoyed supporting her children through their various school and sporting activities and also devoted herself to the local CWA where she participated within the committee. Upon the arrival of her grandchildren Nona also spent many hours of enjoyment with each and every one of them.

Nona was always there when the vehicles were going to the bees, with the tucker box full of home cooked goodies and the thermos full of tea or coffee. She would take her position in the truck and head out with the boys. At the bees, Nona would light the smoker and tend to the hives as "The Smoker Lady", making the bees very amicable and easy to manage without wearing a bee veil.

With the sad loss of Charlie in 1994, Nona kept up her beekeeping activities working alongside Joe and continued with special developments such as queen bee breeding and the like. This gave her a total of 60 years of beekeeping experience and many wonderful fulfilling trips both local and overseas all of which enhanced her wonderful knowledge of the her beloved bees.

On 31 October 2008 as Nona was undergoing another medical procedure she very quietly slipped away on her final journey along life's highway.

The life and legacy of Nona Florence Horner will remain as beautiful memories for us all to cherish and remember. Her wealth of experiences, knowledge, strengths and mannerisms have influenced the lives of all those she touched.

Nona will never be forgotten in our lifetime.
May she forever Rest in Peace.

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Technical Specialist, Honeybees - NSW Department of Primary Industries - Goulburn



BIOSECURITY

I'm sure many beekeepers will look at the heading of this article and associate the word "biosecurity" with a government department, and thus it's a "government problem".

Well, this is partly true, but it isn't a government problem – it's your role as a beekeeper, or manager of any animal for that matter, to keep an eye out for the "unusual" or unexplained symptoms that may go with a new pest or disease. It doesn't even apply to just exotics – you should have a "biosecurity system" in your own apiary, flock, herd, etc., to ensure that you don't accidentally introduce a preventable pest or disease.

This thinking should extend right through your beekeeping system, whether you have 6 or 600 hives.

WHAT IS BIOSECURITY?

Biosecurity very simply refers to all management practices that you may use to reduce the risk of introducing a pest or disease into your bee hives. This could even be broken down to the concept of management practices to reduce cross infection between apiaries, but it could also apply to infections in individual hives within the same apiary.

I have talked about implementing a "barrier system" in past issues of the honey bee news. Barrier systems are essentially a management 'best practice'. In a nutshell, you isolate materials within identifiable units, usually within individual apiaries. Thus, supers are not interchanged between apiaries primarily to reduce the spread of AFB.

For those who have implemented this industry best practice, it has been a godsend when it comes to a case of AFB. They can immediately identify all hives that have been exposed to potentially contaminated stickies and increase the number of inspections on these hives. Thus facilitating the elimination of the AFB quicker and with less inconvenience, as distinct from having to regularly inspect all hives in all apiaries on a regular basis before one is confident that the problem has been eliminated.

This is essentially a barrier system and the reasons why this practice is useful. The same applies for other pests and diseases, including the exotic Varroa mite. Mites live on materials, including extracted combs, for over five days without contact with bees. The movement of beekeeping equipment from a contaminated site (apiary) will quickly spread Varroa. With a barrier system, this spread is potentially confined.

I didn't want to talk so much about barrier systems in this issue, but more about biosecurity within your apiary. Even though AFB and Varroa mites are

major worries for you and the Australian beekeeping industry, there are a lot of other diseases that present themselves as major pains in the behind. To name a few – nosema (both types), viruses (we don't know much about these), EFB and chalkbrood can all have a major impact on the productivity of bee hives. At times they can be responsible for completely killing a colony.

One of the key components to biosecurity is to know your enemy. Enemy in this context is, do you know the signs and symptoms of AFB, EFB, chalkbrood, viruses, nosema and varroa? Your level of expertise will vary according to each disease and your level of knowledge and experience with each pathogen.

I challenge just about anyone to provide a field diagnosis for nosema without submitting a sample to the lab. Viruses are an unknown can of worms. A lot of fuss has and continues to be made about viruses mainly from America. Australian beekeepers have, by and large ignored them as an issue. There has been some research done on viruses in Australia, but again they have not been regarded as a major issue to beekeepers.

Nosema is a very interesting disease and currently it's on the top of my radar screen as regards being a threat to beekeeping operations. I strongly believe that most of the fuss in America about Colony Collapse Disease (CCD) can be attributed to nosema. More and more scientific type minds are coming to this conclusion. Describe the symptoms of this disease? I bet most beekeepers will list dysentery, greasy looking adult bees, etc. In fact, these are symptoms of the viruses that are associated with nosema. In most cases, you will experience a poor performing colony and, in extreme cases, the population will diminish and the colony will eventually disappear. What you are seeing, in most cases, are the symptoms that are associated with a viral infection. Nosema is the primary disease pathogen weakening the colony and increasing the colonies susceptibility to viruses. It is unlikely that the viruses would cause any major problems if the nosema bugs were not present.

Back to my title, "Biosecurity". What can you do to tighten your biosecurity within your beekeeping operation?

- 1) Isolate any purchased second-hand hives for at least 12 months.
- 2) Implement a barrier system at least between apiaries.
- 3) Keep good records of the movement of hives and the general condition of the colonies.
- 4) Record all disease cases, signs and symptoms.
- 5) Know your diseases and pests – become familiar with the signs and symptoms.

- 6) Implement a regular requeening program. Replace queens in colonies that have demonstrated a tendency to show signs of one or more diseases.
- 7) Regular replacement of brood combs should be a very high priority.
- 8) Don't join weak colonies with strong ones – if you must join weak with weak or shake bees from a strong, healthy colony in front of a weak colony.
- 9) If a colony dies out, ask why? Destroy the brood combs if it clearly died as a result of any disease.

When I was engaging my thinking processes to write an article for the Honey Bee News, points 7 and 9 were in my thoughts. Many beekeepers, including myself, have broken these two rules. Why I have focussed on them now as being more important than in the past, is the growing pressure from the increasing incidence of nosema.

If a colony dies or is struggling, don't automatically dismiss it as a poor queen or whatever, particularly if other colonies in the same apiary are performing well. I encourage beekeepers to take samples of adult bees and submit them to the NSW Department of Primary Industries veterinary laboratories for nosema diagnosis. Know what's happening in your hives. As I have already stated, you may not even know you have nosema. If a colony dies either with identifiable disease signs such as EFB or you are not sure, you would be strongly encouraged to destroy the brood combs.

Some beekeepers regularly remove and destroy brood combs, usually two or three combs per year. All evidence increasingly suggests that this is a very good practice. Certainly if a colony dwindles and dies for no apparent reason, consider destroying all the brood combs.

I occasionally look over the fence at commercial chook, pig and dairy operations. Biosecurity is a huge issue for intensive livestock producers. Make no mistake – commercial beekeeping is an “intensive” livestock system with many of the same biosecurity type issues.

It really is time for beekeepers to step up and take more responsibility for their own biosecurity within their own beekeeping operation.

- a) Learn to identify endemic diseases.
- b) Not sure? – send in a sample.
- c) If you spot anything unusual in your bee hives that you can't explain, call the Emergency Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

By the way – “Biosecurity Australia” is the Australian Government agency that undertakes science-based risk assessments and provides quarantine policy advice to protect Australia's animal and plant health status and nature environment. They also provide technical advice to the federal government to enhance Australia's access to international markets and participate in international organisations that set biosecurity standards.

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ACCC REPORT ON HORTICULTURE CODE OF CONDUCT

Price win for growers

Supermarkets, exporters and processors will have to comply with horticulture's code of conduct if the recommendations of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) become law. It would require them to sign contracts agreeing on price before delivery.

The ACCC, in its report, said the code should apply to supermarkets and exporters dealing with growers. All have been exempt. And, in another big win for growers, the ACCC said the code should apply to agreements made before the code's introduction.

Many merchants and retailers claim they are exempt because their contracts were signed before the code was introduced.

AusVeg chairman, David Anderson, said the recommendation was ambiguous. He also questioned a recommendation that produce was considered accepted by a merchant 24 hours after delivery.

"To prescribe 24 hours means that if an agent calls 23 hours and 58 minutes after delivery, he's within the code, but the product might still be spoilt," Mr Anderson said.

But Victorian Farmers Federation horticulture group president, Peter Cochrane, is worried about

a recommendation that would allow merchants to deduct dollars to growers to "prepare product for resale".

"It's open-ended – it would be moving produce from one pallet to another," he said. "That's ringing major alarm bells for us."

The VFF will also seek clarification on an ACCC recommendation that a merchant could provide a price calculation formula rather than an upfront price.

The request for clarification comes from concern that the merchants' formula could be a percentage of the price they receive for produce.

"A merchant has to give a price upfront – they should take the risk for the product, not the grower," Mr Cochrane said. He also said he was pretty happy overall with the recommendations.

Horticulture Australia Council chairman, Stuart Swaddling, said the spot audits recommended by the ACCC would be a huge step forward.

Coles has said it was happy to comply with either the Produce and Grocery Institute Code of Conduct or the Horticulture Code of Conduct, but hoped to avoid being involved with two separate codes.



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SEASONAL OUTLOOK

NEW SOUTH WALES

Northern NSW

Clover is yielding in some localities and moisture permitting should continue to end of the year. Brush box has potential as do Coolibah and River Gum. Autumn prospects at this stage look dismal.

Southern NSW

River gum has started flowering early and is yielding some honey, flowering may be short and sweet. Black box has potential in some areas as does Yellow box on the tablelands, as long as the brown beetles don't arrive. Autumn prospects are non-existent at this stage, but Spotted gum still has big potential for winter 2009.

Neil Bingley

North Coast

Very little has changed, in general the season has been disappointing with some beekeepers moving to the tablelands. Small hive beetle has been causing problems for many beekeepers with all sorts of control measures being used. The most effective non-chemical method is oil based beetle traps on the bottom board. The short budding Brush Box *Lophostemon confertus* may bud and yield for January.

Sydney Basin

Bees round Sydney have been doing very well on a variety of trees and plants with very good supplies of pollen for breeding. Forest Red Gum *Eucalyptus tereticornis* yield very well. Angophora are budding with some flowers mainly *Angophora costata*, Smooth barked Apple *bakeri*, Narrow leafed Apple and *hispidula* Dwarf Apple, beekeepers will be hoping for Red Blood *Corymbia gummifera* and Grey Box *Eucalyptus moluccana* budding for late summer early autumn.

Central Tablelands

The tablelands have enjoyed a very worthwhile nectar flow from Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora*. In the same paddock some trees have finished flowering while others are still to start flowering so it will be a long flow. Paterson Curse *Echium plantagineum* and Blue weed *Echium valgare* have had a very poor flowering mainly due to grass competition. Red Gum *Eucalyptus blakelyi* is heavily budded and is flowering with the Yellow Box.

Bruce White

QUEENSLAND

The Downs

Very dry weather during October and November has spoiled what was promising to be a very good crop of Hill Gum, Yellow Box and Narrow Leafed Ironbark, with the result of small crops of honey being produced. Recent storm rain has been patchy with some areas receiving over 300mm during November. However, there are large areas that have missed out. The rain has probably come too late for Silver Leafed Ironbark, Mallee Box and Coolibah.

Wide Bay Burnett and South East Coast

River Mangrove produced very well during October. Brush Box appears to be going to growth with very little bud, however, there will be some small areas that will be okay. Grey Ironbark is producing in the small areas where it is budded. Prospects for January, February and March, at this stage, are poor.

Overall Queensland Production - December/January

At this stage I believe this will be below average, however, with short term budders, anything can happen.

Roy Barnes

DPI NEWS - Nick Annand , Livestock Officer (Bees) - Bathurst - Phone (02) 6330 1210

Each year we usually run a queen rearing course at Tocal on the last weekend of February. It is a very hands on practical course providing the knowledge and skills required to breed your own queen bees. However this year we have changed things around a bit and are heading to northern NSW to run the Queen bee course.

Since we are going north we thought we way as well run a few courses while we are there. So both the Beginning in bees and Queen bee courses will be run in late March early April. The Beginning in bees course is well suited to budding beekeepers who have recently started, or are thinking about getting into bees. The trainers for the courses will be Doug Somerville - NSW DPI Technical Specialist (bees) and Nick Annand - Livestock Officer (bees).

2009 Dates and locations for the courses are as follows:

DATE	LOCATION	COURSE
25-26 March	Wollongbar	Beginning in bees
27-29 March	Wollongbar	Queen bee course
31 March-1 April	Coffs Harbour	Beginning in bees
2-4 April	Tamworth	Queen bee course

For further enquiries about the courses or registration please contact Cassie Gardiner at Tamworth on: Ph 02 6763 1276 or email cassie.gardiner@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Also at the same time Des Cannon (ex school teacher come professional beekeeper) will be running the Beekeeping as a business course to be held on the 28-29 March 09 at Camden. This course covers all major aspects that hobbyist/part time beekeepers need to consider if thinking about becoming professional or semi professional apiarists. For further information about this course please contact Maryke Archbold-Hession on: 02 4640 6484 or email maryke.archbold-hession@dpi.nsw.gov.au. Courses being run will be dependant on participant numbers so please if you are interest do not leave things until the last couple of weeks. Get in early and secure your place.

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AUSTRALIAN PLAGUE LOCUST COMMISSION

8 December 2008

SITUATION: - SOUTHERN RIVERINA (NSW)

A widespread population of Australian plague locust adults that developed from an earlier nymphal infestation persists across the New South Wales Riverina and Central West regions.

The Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC) ceased aerial control of a population of Australian plague locust (*Chortoicetes terminifera*), in an area south of Deniliquin (NSW) in the Riverina Rural Lands Protection Board on 3 December 2008. Four targets suitable for aerial control totalling almost 6.5 square kilometres [642.8 hectares] were treated.

Activity of the regional population has increased as swarms form and re-form while redistributing as part of breeding and dispersion behaviour. Significant egg laying continues across the region and a subsequent generation can be expected into the New Year.

In cooperation with affected parties and counterpart agencies, APLC is monitoring and evaluating the situation through ground and aerial surveillance to assist coordination of management efforts at all levels of responsibility.

At present, infestations in the region are generally considered to pose a low immediate threat to interstate agriculture, but could escalate to a moderate or high threat level depending on the success of any subsequent generation.

Reports and ground control by landholders and local authorities play a very valuable role in the management of locust infestations. Reliable information on any swarming and laying activity can greatly assist future control efforts.

Landholder ground control remains a very important element in helping to reduce the impact of this pest, as many infestations consist of small 'bands' and can be otherwise unsuitable for aerial control. Also, due to the likely nature of the potential locust population, the APLC may only be able to aurally control the largest and densest infestations. It is likely that a substantial proportion of the population will comprise small, lower density infestations not suitable for aerial control by APLC. Populations that do not form targets suitable for aerial control can cause localised damage and concern - warranting control by affected landholders.

More closely settled districts and a higher incidence of sensitive areas restricts opportunities for aerial application – emphasising the need for ongoing commitment to ground control by affected landholders and local authorities.

IF NOT CONTROLLED, THE RESULTING POPULATION CAN POSE A SERIOUS THREAT TO LOCAL AS WELL AS ADJACENT AREAS AND SUSCEPTIBLE STATES.

Locust activity should be reported, in the first instance, to the nearest Rural Lands Protection Board [RLPB], the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries and/or to the Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC Free call: 1800-635 962).

SITUATION:- ELSEWHERE

Although a significant outbreak of Australian plague locust was also expected in northern central Victoria, this threat appears to have largely been averted – although some adults now appear to be drifting across the border from adjacent areas of NSW.

Elevated numbers of Australian plague locusts are also present in parts of central NSW that are responding well to recent good rains. With access to improving conditions, locusts could breed and / or migrate and eventually pose a threat to local agriculture or in other areas further afield.

Population levels of locust species in other areas of APLC responsibility are generally at low to very low background levels but, landholders should remain vigilant and report any unusual levels of locust activity to the nearest state department of Primary Industry.

APLC will continue to monitor within its operational area and act and advise on any developments as appropriate.

Locust activity should be reported, in the first instance, to the nearest Rural Lands Protection Board, to the relevant Department of Primary Industries and / or to the Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC Free call: 1800-635 962)

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BEE ALERT

Updated web link for Apiarists and Cotton Growers

While the current drought conditions have affected the number of active hives, we hope this will change in the near future. BeeALERT allows cotton farmers to identify the location of honey bee hives in their surrounding area.

A updated service – ‘Bee Alert’ – is being provided by the Cotton Catchment Communities CRC on their new web site to assist communication between apiarists and cotton growers.

The service enables apiarists to notify cotton growers and spray applicators of hive locations within cotton-growing regions. This is particularly important during the summer months when there is more frequent use of insecticides.

Apiarists can place information about hive locations and expected duration of bee foraging in the ‘Bee Alert’ on the Cotton CRC web site at any time. Cotton growers monitoring the information in this service are then able to consider the time of insecticide application, prevailing wind direction and insecticide choice based on the knowledge that bees are present. Apiarists can be contacted to temporarily close or move hives in high-risk situations.

Cotton growers and consultants are very familiar with the CRC’s website and many are already frequent users of the agronomy and weather tools on this site. Once apiarists begin lodging information, the addition of the ‘Bee Alert’ service to the website will be widely promoted to cotton growers through the cotton extension network.

Stage 1 of the site has been constructed and is now ready for apiarists to add information about the current locations of hives in cotton areas. Once data is available the ‘Bee Alert’ service will be promoted in the cotton industry. Growers, consultants and aerial operators will be notified of its existence by all-of-industry email and through examples in the CRC’s regional, weekly newsletters which are distributed by fax as well as email.

When data is entered, the date the hives are proposed to be taken out of the area is included. The record will not display on the web site past this date. This ensures that all records displayed are current. If the apiarist decides to extend the time of foraging, they will need to re-notify the CRC of the change.

As the site is used we will adapt to make it as easy and useful as possible – feedback is welcome.

www.cotton.crc.org.au

(Go to the Industry Group - look under menu Tools for Bee Alert)

2009 FIELD DAY

Expression of Interest

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FOOD INDUSTRY MUST RAISE ITS GAME

Rabobank Media Release - 24 October 2008

www.rabobank.com.au

The food industry must raise its game by either producing different products, or lowering prices, in order to stay competitive, says professor of food marketing, Dr David Hughes from the Imperial College London.

In his address, Consumer and Food industry trends: Business opportunities and threats in an uncertain world, the Rabobank visiting expert told guests in Perth that the food industry can no longer stand still and, consequently, will have to raise its game to adapt to the changing economic climate of the global industry.

He highlighted the need for food products to stand out from the pack, “unless you have a quality product that consumers are willing to buy it will be a squeeze. Producers need to develop a niche brand.”

Professor Hughes, who was in Perth recently as part a Rabobank client event, said that changing consumer demand and rising fuel and food costs are all set to become major threats for producers of premium products.

“They will need to quickly identify what consumers are prepared to pay for a niche brand and which segments are best to target”.

The most fundamental way for the food industry to maximise their opportunities is to listen to what their customers are saying.

“Consumers are saying they want a better world – for themselves, their well-being and their environment,” he said.

“As shoppers tighten their belts, they are now looking more carefully at premium food prices and questioning why they should pay more for a particular product. We know that they will pay more for a better tasting or healthier product, but they will not pay more simply for fancy packaging,” he said.

The professor claims that food producers need to respond quickly – but intelligently – to the changing needs of consumers in order to stay competitive in the current economic climate.

“Fundamentally, a business revolves around understanding what your customers – and your customers’ customers – value and are willing to pay for. Then, it’s simply a matter of delivering what your customers value at a sufficiently low cost that you can make a good profit!”

Accordingly, Professor Hughes discussed the impact that a convergence of oil price spikes and food inflation will have on consumers. “Consumers will be affected by both rising food and oil prices, therefore less money will be spent on food,” he said.

“Food and oil price inflation will squeeze more than just consumers in the food industry. Farm input

inflation escalates sharply, and retailers profit from food price inflation,” he said. “Slowing and erratic economic growth, in mature and emerging nations also has a consequential impact on exports and imports.”

“Consumer confidence is also an important issue. As producers seek lower cost ingredients solutions they increase their risk of food integrity disasters. Food safety is a widely reported issue, consumers will always know when something fails,” he said.

In addition, Professor Hughes says that food and oil price inflation, and world food shortages, will give consumers the opportunity to embrace alternative methods of food production, such as genetically modified crops.

“As food shortages increase around the world, consumers are likely to see the benefits of genetically modified crops in combating drought, producing green energy crops and in feeding poor nations,” he said.

“Using science sensibly is the key to genetically modified crops. Drought tolerance, disease resistant and efficient green energy crops is top of mind for consumers.

“Consumers want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Consumers who oppose genetically modified crops will be given the opportunity to embrace them as one part of the solution as food shortages spread around the globe,” Professor Hughes said.

The outlook for the food industry according to Professor Hughes will be “business as usual by 2010.” The 2007/08 food price inflationary period is just a blip – like what occurred in 1973/74.”

“The outlook is to a new era – with focus shifting to greater sustainability, more local, much greater emphasis on environmental aspects, a mix of high technology and improved traditional practices,” Professor Hughes concluded.

Rabobank Australia is a part of the international Rabobank Group, the world’s leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking. Rabobank has more than 100 years’ experience providing customised banking and finance solutions to businesses involved in all aspects of food and agribusiness. Rabobank has a AAA credit rating and, in recent years, has twice been awarded the title of the world’s safest bank by Global Finance magazine. Rabobank operates in 35 countries, servicing the needs of more than nine million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1900 offices and branches. Rabobank Australia is one of Australia’s leading rural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the Australian food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 46 branches throughout Australia.

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World Honey Update

November 2008

www.skamberg.com

A good US raw honey crop has helped the world raw honey supply a bit, but the demand is still high for honey. The Canadian raw honey crop starting to sell honey into the world market and India will be getting some honey into the market very soon. This too should help on the supply side, but somewhere down the road it is believed that demand is going to have to drop to equalize the supply or allow supply to overtake the demand. At that time prices will most likely soften. We are not at that point yet. We are probably several months to a year away from that, so some would argue that raw honey prices have not yet peaked.

What we have seen though, is that as new crop honey enters the market, it tends to be offered at a lower price than what has been typical, but prices quickly firm up and start to rise as demand warrants. This is a slightly different trend than what we have seen in the past, where prices start high and then are reduced when buying stalls. If this trend continues, this could help to stabilize prices down the road. The Argentina drought is still a concern, although they have had some beneficial rains recently. It is still too early to get a good prediction of that crop.

The bottom line feeling is that raw honey prices are still trending higher, though not as dramatically as we have seen since last February.

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RECIPES

HONEY RICE STUFFED LAMB SHOULDER

1 x 2kg shoulder of lamb, bone removed
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup honey
2 tablespoons peanut oil
1 cup dry white wine

Stuffing

¼ cup peanut oil
1 large onion, peeled and chopped
1 cup raw rice
½ cup dried apricots, chopped
¼ cup honey
¼ cup pine nuts
2 tablespoons fresh mint, finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh coriander, finely chopped
2 cups hot water
Juice of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Make stuffing by heating ¼ cup oil in a frypan and frying onion until golden. Add rice, apricots, honey, pine nuts, mint, coriander, water, lemon juice, salt and pepper and simmer with the lid off for 30 minutes until all liquid has been absorbed. Stir occasionally to prevent mixture from sticking. Allow stuffing mixture to cool.

Lie de-boned shoulder out flat, spread stuffing mixture down the centre, roll lamb up and tie securely with string. Place lamb on a rack in a baking dish, dust with salt and pepper, spread with honey, brush with 2 tablespoons oil and pour in wine. Bake at 180°C for 2½ hours. Remove lamb from dish and allow to stand for 20 minutes before carving. *Serves 6*

Serve with a gravy made from the thickened pan juices and *Regal Jelly*.

REGAL JELLY

1 tablespoon gelatine
1/3 cup water
1/3 cup honey
1/3 cup vinegar
1/3 cup finely chopped fresh mint

Place gelatine and water in a bowl and stir over boiling water until gelatine has completely dissolved. Add honey, vinegar and mint, pour into a mould and refrigerate for several hours until set. *Serves 6*

HONEY-GLAZED SWEET POTATOES

1/4 cup water
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges
Cracked black pepper or chopped herb of choice (rosemary, sage or thyme), to taste

Preheat the oven to 375° F. Lightly coat a 9 x 13 inch baking pan with cooking spray. To make the sauce, in a small bowl add the water, brown sugar, honey and olive oil. Whisk until smooth. Place a single layer of sweet potatoes in the baking pan. Pour the sauce over the sweet potatoes. Turn to coat them.

Cover and bake until tender, about 45 minutes. Turn the sweet potatoes once or twice to continue coating them. When tender, remove the cover and continue to bake until the glaze is set, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish and top with pepper or chopped herb of choice. Serve immediately. *Serves 6-8*

HONEYED-FIG & ORANGE POLENTA CAKE

3 tbsp honey
200g dried figs
200g butter
200g castor sugar
1 orange, juiced and zest finely grated
1 lemon, juiced and zest finely grated
4 large eggs
½ tsp baking powder (optional)
125g polenta
200g almond meal
Mascarpone or thick cream, to serve

Syrup

½ cup honey
½ cup orange juice
½ cup lemon juice
2 tbsp orange zest, finely grated
2 tbsp lemon zest, finely grated

Preheat oven to fan-forced 165C (185C conventional) and grease and line a 10x28 centimetre loaf pan with baking paper. Warm 3 tbsp honey in a saucepan over low heat until runny (about 2-3 minutes). Remove from heat, place figs in honey and toss to coat. Set aside.

In a mixing bowl, cream butter, sugar and citrus zest until pale. Beat in eggs one at a time, ensuring each is combined before adding the next (it's okay if the batter looks a little separated). Sift baking powder (if using) and fold in with the polenta and almond meal. Stir in citrus juice and pour batter into loaf pan.

Arrange half the honeyed figs on top and bake for about 50-55 minutes or until cooked when tested with a skewer. About 10 minutes before cake is ready, place remaining figs in an ovenproof dish and roast for roughly 10 minutes. Remove cake from oven and set aside.

Meanwhile, for syrup, bring ingredients to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until thick and syrupy. While cake is still warm, prick holes in the top with a skewer, then pour over warm syrup and allow to soak in. Serve with roasted honeyed figs and a dollop of mascarpone or thick cream on the side. *Serves 6-8*

Apimondia 2009

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

My name is Laurent Mercury, I am a French student. I live in the southeast of France where me and my family have a farm where we produce honey. I used to work in hive during more ten years with my father. I also worked with others beekeepers in France during internships (two months) and occasionally for a punctual task like harvest and extraction. My project for the future is to create my own farm where I want to produce honey and bees. I just finish a formation specialized in beekeeping. During ten month, I learnt the different aspects of the work. Before creating my own farm, I desire to acquire a new experience and to perfect my technique.

Australia is an important honey producer. Farms are bigger than in France and technique must be different. In order to enlarge my work experience and to learn from an experimented beekeeper, I would like to work with a beekeeper who likes his job and works in respect of bees, if possible located in the South of Wales. I am interested in doing all tasks concerning beekeeping.

If I permit myself to contact you today, is to ask your help in finding names and addresses of beekeepers interested in hiring persons during a season. I am available from now to May. I already did all the procedure to get my visa (work and holiday visa), my international driving licence and credit card.

Sincerely

Laurent Mercury
332 rue Hyppollite Taine
La Pivote 83100 Toulon, France
Tel: 06 22429273 - Email: laurent.morientes@hotmail.fr

Dear Sir,

My name is Faris Heyari. I am from Jordan and now live in Bondi Beach. I was a beekeeper in Jordan and would like to work as a beekeeper in Australia.

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Apimondia 2009

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You should prepare your tour and bookings as soon as possible to make it possible for us to give you the best service. For exhibitors it is important to book as soon as possible as the exhibition area is becoming limited.

The main Congress theme is "*The bee, sentinel of the environment*". This is to stress the importance of the honeybee to the environment and the livelihood of mankind. Special attention will be given to the massive losses of bee colonies around the world and scientists attending the Congress will present the results of their latest research findings. Beekeepers and scientists will meet and discuss in order to understand the causes of the problems and try to find the most appropriate solutions.

ApiExpo will be very large offering a huge variety of equipment and products for and from apiculture. Honey traders, beekeepers and their organisations will meet and discuss prices, quality issues, marketing and problems encountered in the international honey market.

In organising this international apicultural event, we also want to celebrate the friendship among beekeepers worldwide. This is a unique feature for the Apimondia Congresses. Everybody involved in apiculture will be there to facilitate the horizontal and vertical exchange of knowledge and information and meet friends.

Individuals as well as organisations should therefore prepare their participation in Apimondia 2009 now.

We are all looking forward to meeting you in Montpellier, France, at Apimondia 2009. We are working hard to make your visit at Apimondia 2009 one to remember.

Yours sincerely,
Asger Søgaard Jørgensen
President of Apimondia
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Excerpts from November - December Update

SEASONS GREETINGS

On behalf of the AHBIC Executive Committee and office staff, we wish all a happy and safe Christmas and we look forward to a prosperous 2009. The AHBIC office will be closed from 5pm Friday 19 December and will reopen at 9am on Monday 5 January 2009.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Following a survey of industry members it has been resolved to move the AHBIC Annual General Meeting forward by one day. The reason for this being that NSW have added an extra day onto their Annual Conference and a number of members indicated that not only the cost but the time away from their businesses was a factor and they would like to see the AGM changed.

A brief survey of industry found that the majority favoured changing the AGM even if it was only for one day and therefore in order to save costs and assist members of industry we have decided to try a new format. We have undertaken to do this as a trial for this year. I trust the change in dates will not affect too many people and I can confirm that the venue remains unchanged at the Penrith Panthers Club.

Accommodation is available at the venue and more details along with transport arrangements will be advised in the New Year.

NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES - RESPONSE TO MINI BUDGET

Last week's mini-budget announced some tough measures to enable the State to adjust to the difficult global economic situation and meet its financial targets.

The impact of the mini-budget means that the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) expects to undergo some change over the coming months and years. While this presents challenges, it also provides a catalyst and an opportunity to improve and modernise our way of doing business and utilise the latest technologies to help our clients as much as possible.

Our focus will be to ensure that the excellent services NSW DPI provides to primary industries continue. NSW DPI will continue to remain a strong and effective organisation, with a critical mass of over 3,000 people supporting the mineral, agricultural, fisheries and forestry industries across the State.

In the weeks and months ahead, the Department will be working with our industry partners and stakeholders with our focus firmly on opportunities that already exist, and others that can be created, to further enhance the State's primary industries. Throughout this process our priority is to ensure that the relationship between NSW DPI and your organisation continues with the long-term future in mind.

We are implementing a range of initiatives to reposition NSW DPI in line with business trends and to enable us to adapt within the difficult global context. These initiatives include: working with industry to develop an extension and advisory strategy which identifies the best way of obtaining the latest information, technology solutions and research and development results to farmers

an external review to help us set research and development priorities for NSW DPI that are aligned with the national research and development strategy and government priorities

- an external review of diagnostic and analytical services to improve the commercial viability of this function
- reprioritising Departmental resources to effectively manage the upcoming commercial fishing reforms
- implementing a voluntary redundancy program across the Department to help meet the budget targets
- reducing our agency costs by proposing to close sites at Alstonville, Berry, Condobolin, Glen Innes, Gosford, Griffith, Jindabyne Hatchery and Temora. Discussions are already occurring with affected stakeholders, local communities and staff regarding the options and future strategies for each site.

These changes will not happen overnight, but instead will be managed over a three-year period to minimise disruption to stakeholders and staff. This will be an ongoing process, evolving out of discussions between the Department, stakeholders, unions, staff and local communities.

In addition, the following recent changes to the NSW DPI Executive will ensure NSW DPI remains ideally positioned to implement these changes.

The key change is the appointment of Mr George Davey to the position of Deputy Director-General of NSW DPI. George, who is the former Director-General of the NSW Food Authority, brings to NSW DPI a wealth of experience in public sector administration and issues management. Other changes include Ms Renata Brooks and Dr Nick Austin exchanging roles.

The new NSW DPI Board of Management team is:

- Mr George Davey, Deputy Director-General and Executive Director, Fisheries, Compliance and Regional Relations Ph: (02) 8289 3944; email: george.davey@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Mr Nick Roberts, Deputy Director-General Primary Industries Trading and Chief Executive Officer, Forests NSW Ph: (02) 9407 4259; email: nick.roberts@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Ms Renata Brooks, Executive Director, Science and Research Ph: (02) 6391 3333; email: renata.brooks@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Dr Nick Austin, Executive Director, Agriculture, Biosecurity & Mine Safety Ph: (02) 6391 3307; email: nick.austin@dpi.nsw.gov.au

- Mr Brad Mullard, A/Executive Director, Mineral Resources Ph: (02) 4931 6422; email: brad.mullard@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Ms Wendy Stamp, Executive Director, Strategy Policy & Communications Ph: (02) 8289 3906; email: wendy.stamp@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Ms Jeannine Biviano, Executive Director, Corporate Services Ph: (02) 6391 3319; email: jeannine.biviano@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Mr Doug Hocking, Executive Director, DPI Reform Ph: (02) 6391 3334; email: doug.hocking@dpi.nsw.gov.au

I welcome you to contact any of my Executive team as we work together with you to implement our future initiatives.

I thank you for your patience and cooperation during this time of change.

Richard Sheldrake, Director General
NSW Department of Primary Industries - 21/11/08

AUSTRALIAN TAX OFFICE - OFFICIAL RULING ON BEEKEEPING

Taxation Determination TD 2008/26 *Legally binding Page 1 of 3 Taxation Determination*

Income tax: are bees kept for use in a honey production business trading stock as defined in section 70-10 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*?

This publication provides you with the following level of protection:

This publication (excluding appendixes) is a public ruling for the purposes of the *Taxation Administration Act 1953*.

A public ruling is an expression of the Commissioner's opinion about the way in which a relevant provision applies, or would apply, to entities generally or to a class of entities in relation to a particular scheme or a class of schemes.

If you rely on this ruling, the Commissioner must apply the law to you in the way set out in the ruling (unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the ruling is incorrect and disadvantages you, in which case the law may be applied to you in a way that is more favourable for you – provided the Commissioner is not prevented from doing so by a time limit imposed by the law). You will be protected from having to pay any underpaid tax, penalty or interest in respect of the matters covered by this ruling if it turns out that it does not correctly state how the relevant provision applies to you.

Ruling

1. Yes, bees kept for use in a honey production business are trading stock as defined in section 70-10 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (ITAA 1997)¹ because they are livestock.

Date of effect

2. This Determination applies to years of income commencing both before and after its date of issue.

However, the Determination will not apply to taxpayers to the extent that it conflicts with the terms of settlement of a dispute agreed to before the date of issue of the Determination (see paragraphs 75 and 76 of Taxation Ruling TR 2006/10).

Commissioner of Taxation - 19 November 2008

¹ All legislative references are to the ITAA 1997 unless otherwise stated.

Page 2 of 3 Page status: **not legally binding**

Appendix 1 – Explanation

This Appendix is provided as information to help you understand how the Commissioner's view has been reached. It does not form part of the binding public ruling.

Explanation

3. Section 70-10 states that trading stock includes:
 - (a) anything produced, manufactured or acquired that is held for purposes of manufacture, sale or exchange in the ordinary course of a business; and
 - (b) live stock.
4. The use of the word 'includes' in the definition of trading stock in section 70-10 signifies that a thing may be trading stock for the purposes of the provision if it meets the requirements in paragraphs 70-10(a) or 70-10(b) or is otherwise trading stock within the ordinary meaning of that term.²
5. The term 'live stock' is defined in subsection 995-1(1) to 'not include animals used as beasts of burden or working beasts in a *business other than a *primary production business'.³ The High Court in *Federal Commissioner of Taxation v. Wade*⁴ considered this definition of 'live stock' when it was then found in subsection 6(1) of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936*. Dixon and Fullagar JJ stated that the definition, by inference, makes it clear that all animals used in a primary production business are included as live stock.⁵
6. Bees, being insects, are animals.⁶ Paragraph (b) of the definition of 'primary production business' in subsection 995-1(1) includes as a primary production business a business of 'maintaining animals for the purpose of selling them or their bodily produce (including natural increase)'. Honey is the bodily produce of bees.⁷ A business of keeping bees for the production and sale of honey is a 'primary production business' as defined in subsection 995-1(1) and the bees kept for use in that honey production business are live stock.
7. As bees kept for use in a honey production business are live stock, they are trading stock as defined in section 70-10.⁸

² See Stephen J's observations in *Federal Commissioner of Taxation v. St Hubert's Island Pty Ltd* (1978) 138 CLR 210 at 216; 78 ATC 4104 at 4106; (1978) 8 ATR 452 at 454-455, and also see *Federal Commissioner of Taxation v. Suttons Motors (Chullora) Wholesale Pty Ltd* (1985) 157 CLR 277 at 281-282; 85 ATC 4398 at 4400; (1985) 16 ATR 567 at 570.

³ An asterisk appearing before a word in the ITAA 1997 denotes that the meaning of the word is defined in section 995-1 of the ITAA 1997 for the purposes of the Act.

⁴ (1951) 84 CLR 105; (1951) 9 ATD 337

⁵ *Federal Commissioner of Taxation v. Wade* (1951) 84 CLR 105 at page 110; (1951) 9 ATD 337 at page 342.

⁶ *The Australian Oxford Dictionary*, 1999, Oxford University Press, Melbourne defines 'bee' as:

(1)(a) ... a stinging hymenopterous insect of the genus *Apis*, which collects nectar and pollen, produces wax and honey, and lives in large communities. (b) a related insect of the superfamily Apoidea, either social or solitary; (2) any insect of similar type.

The dictionary also defines 'insect' as: (1) (a) a six-legged

arthropod of the class Insecta, frequently having one or two pairs of wings; (b) (loosely) any small invertebrate animal with several pairs of legs.

7 The website of the Honeybee Industry Council of Australia (<http://www.honeybee.org.au>) describes the process by which honey is created as follows: 'As [the bee] sucks the nectar from the flower, it is stored in her special honey stomach ready to be transferred to the honey-making bees in the hive...When her nectar "sacs" are full, the honeybee returns to the hive. Nectar is delivered to one of the indoor bees and then passed mouth-to-mouth from bee to bee until its moisture content is reduced from about 70% to 20%. This changes the nectar into honey... Finally, the honey is placed in storage cells and capped with beeswax...'

8 The accompanying Law Administration Practice Statement PS LA 2008/4 (GA) provides guiding principles on how to calculate the value of bees held as trading stock.

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References

Previous draft:

TD 2007/D7

Related Rulings/Determinations:

TR 2006/10

Subject references:

- agriculture
- honey bees
- livestock industry
- livestock valuation
- trading stock
- primary production

Legislative references:

- ITAA 1936 6(1)
- ITAA 1997
- ITAA 1997 70-10
- ITAA 1997 70-10(a)
- ITAA 1997 70-10(b)
- ITAA 1997 995-1
- ITAA 1997 995-1(1)
- TAA 1953

Case references:

- Federal Commissioner of Taxation v. St Hubert's Island Pty Ltd (1978) 138 CLR 210; 78 ATC 4104; (1978) 8 ATR 452
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- Federal Commissioner of Taxation v. Wade (1951) 84 CLR 105; (1951) 9 ATD 337

Other references:

- Law Administration Practice Statement PS LA 2008/4 (GA)
- The Australian Oxford Dictionary, 1999, Oxford University Press, Melbourne
- About the Honey Industry - www.honeybee.org.au

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