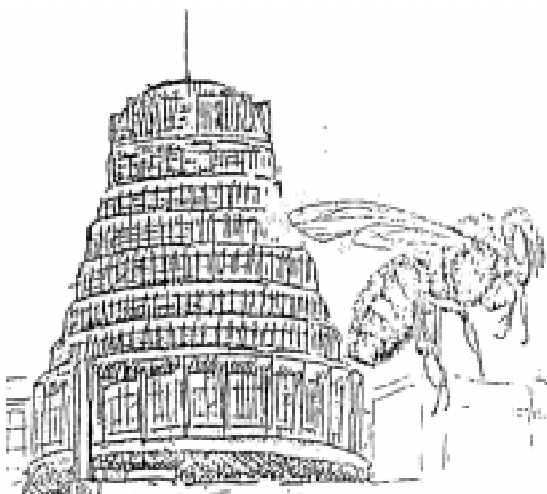


Wellington Beekeepers Association Inc.



Our Next Meeting:

When:

**Monday 9th August, 1999
at 7:30 p.m.**

Where:

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

Theme:

**Annual General Meeting
and Mead Competition**

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

**Wellington Beekeepers Association Inc.
Monthly Newsletter – August 1999**



This newsletter can be delivered 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 July Meeting

PRESENT: Andrew Beach (Acting Pres.), John Burnet (Sec.) and 28 members and visitors as listed in the attendance book.

APOLOGIES: Nancy Fithian, Alistair Lockie, Andrew Yung, Ken Breden, John Robson, Marie & Chris Christofel, David Parkes, Richard Hatfield, Frank & Mary-Ann Lindsay.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Minutes of meeting held 14 June were read and confirmed.

MATTERS ARISING: Some beekeepers reported receiving two DECA AFB manuals in error and others none. Some redistribution required by AgriQuality.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Alan Gibb advised he was giving up beekeeping and thanked the Club's beekeepers for their support and guidance over the years. He strongly recommended the buddy system for all new and inexperienced beekeepers.

The bee product labelling issue was reported as currently before Government's select committee.

PRESENTATION: Vicki Alexander introduced Polly Greeks from the SAFE Foods Campaign who spoke on the risks associated with the introduction of Genetically Modified Foods. Main points from Polly's speech:

- New Zealanders have been unknowingly eating GM food for nearly three years and are now questioning the ethical and moral issues presented by cross-species to enable growers to grow crops which will keep longer, bring higher returns and permit reduced herbicide application, and the implantation of human genes into animals, to produce cures for incurable diseases.
- No one is certain how much GM food is currently on NZ supermarket shelves however there are no wholly genetically modified processed food products and no genetically modified fresh fruit, vegetables, fish, poultry or meats on sale in NZ. Some GM food is imported packaged food. Others are foods made in NZ with widely occurring food industry ingredients which have been genetically modified at source in the USA.
- Until the govt announces its decision on ANZFA's recommended labelling, you will only know if your foodstuff is genetically modified if the manufacturer or the retailer has taken the trouble to label accordingly. The govt has no immediate plans for mandatory labelling or local testing of GM foods. The Grocery Marketers Assoc has vigorously defended the safety of approved GM ingredients in NZ manufactured foods on the basis of its prior testing by USA's Food and Drug Administration and food safety authorities in the UK, Europe and Australia. It opposes labelling for other than wholly or substantially GM foods. However in response to public concerns, some local food manufacturers have, voluntarily, begun to label some of their products e.g Sanitarium. and Goodman Fielder Wattie.
- According to the US Ambassador the US Government would take a dim view if NZ introduced mandatory labelling and banned GM crops originating in USA. Unless

they are substantially different from their unmodified equivalents, GM foods are not required to be labelled in USA or Canada. If NZ were to make labelling mandatory USA would regard the requirement as a challenge to free trade.

- The British campaign against GM food has been marked by a series of direct action strikes by Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. Alarmed retailers such as Tesco have subsequently banned the use of GM ingredients in their own-label products. The Tory party is opposed to GM foods.
- What are the ethics and moral issues of giant multinationals such as Monsanto, Novartis, Rhone-Poulenc Agro, Dow AgroSciences and Du Pont owning genes (the property of everybody) and having a monopoly on the world's seed supply? These agrochemical companies are currently buying up seed companies and can guarantee rapid uptake by farmers of their new GM plants and exclusive use of their chemicals. These companies play tough when they discover farmers growing their patented plants, either deliberately or accidentally without having paid a licence fee. Monsanto has taken hundreds of US farmers to court including those whose non-GM canola crops were evidently contaminated by GM canola seed which drifted onto their land from nearby plantings.
- There have already been field trials of GM crops in NZ i.e potatoes, barley, sugar beet, canola, broccoli and maize however there are no GM food crops being grown commercially in NZ. There is currently no commercial GM crop growing in the UK although there are numerous field trials. Canada has been growing GM crops since 1994 and currently around 40 genetically modified farm plants are grown mostly canola, corn, potato and tomatoes. South Africa, Brazil and Argentina are also growing GM crops.
- Europeans are highly sensitive to food safety issues and support for organic food is strong and growing. The French and Germans have persuaded other European governments to agree to a global inquiry into the safety of GM foods and some European countries have called on the EU to impose a moratorium on commercial releases of GM crops.

Meeting closed about 8.30pm with supper.

John Burnet

New Zealand Beekeeping Web Site

The August issue of BeeCulture - the Magazine of American Beekeeping, will have a review of the NZ Beekeeping site! Dr Malcolm T (Tom) Sandford does a monthly column on Beekeeping in the Digital Age. The August column is entirely devoted to NZ beekeeping on the internet, with some very nice comments both about the site and about our beekeeping!

<http://bee.airroot.com/beeculture/digital/1999/column12.htm>

The issue isn't out yet (and the address above isn't in the list of columns yet) but I thought you guys might want a preview!

Nick Wallingford

Membership

Membership subscriptions for the 1999/2000 year are now due. The annual subscription will remain at \$20 unless altered by a resolution passed at the AGM. Please complete the following form and send with your subscription payment to the Treasurer,

Mary Ann Lindsay, 26 Cunliffe Street, Johnsonville (ph 478 3367)

Wellington Beekeepers Association Inc.

Please accept my \$20 subscription for the 1999/2000 year, due July 98.

Received From:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Enclosed: \$20 Cheque / Cash

E-mail address: _____

(if you would like to receive newsletters via e-mail).

Treasurer's Use only

Date: _____ Receipt No: _____

Genetically Modified Food

Prince Charles' web-site (<http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/forum/>) contains his views regarding GM. Below is a copy of the relevant material.

"I have already explained my own concerns about genetically modified food, in some detail, in a series of speeches and articles. But I am keen to encourage wider public debate about these fundamental issues, which concern us all, and have chosen this as the subject of my first Online Forum.

Perhaps I can just summarise the things I have said previously, as follows:

I believe that genetic modification (GM) is much more than just an extension of selective breeding techniques. Mixing genetic material from species that cannot breed naturally, takes us into areas that should be left to God. We should not be meddling with the building blocks of life in this way.

I do acknowledge that genetic manipulation could lead to major advances in medicine, agriculture and the good health of the environment. There are certain highly beneficial and specific medical applications which have brought massive benefits to mankind. But advanced technology brings its own dangers.

I am not convinced we know enough about the long-term consequences for human health and the environment of releasing plants (or, heaven forbid, animals) bred in this way.

I suspect that planting herbicide resistant crops will lead to more chemicals being used on our fields, not fewer. But this isn't the whole story. Such sterile fields will offer little or no food or shelter to wildlife, and there is already evidence that the genes for herbicide resistance can spread to wild relatives of crop plants, leaving us with weeds resistant to weedkiller.

Plants producing their own pesticides sound like a wonderful idea, until you find - as the scientists have - that beneficial insects, like lacewings and ladybirds, are also affected. And because the pesticide will be everywhere in the crop it is predicted that the pests will rapidly acquire resistance to it. What do we do then?

Genetic material does not stay where it is put. Pollen is spread by the wind and by insects. GM crops can contaminate conventional and organic crops growing nearby. This cannot be right.

Major problems may, as we are assured, be very unlikely, but if something does go badly wrong with GM crops we will be faced with a form of pollution that is self-perpetuating. I don't think anyone knows how to clean up after that sort of incident, or who would have to pay for it. And I expect someone thought it was a good idea - at the time - to introduce the rabbit and the cane toad to Australia!

I wonder about the claims that some GM crops are essential to feed the world's growing populations. Is it really true? Is the problem sometimes lack of money, rather than lack of food? And how will the companies who own this technology make a sufficient profit from selling their products to the world's poorest people? Wouldn't it be better to concentrate instead on the sustainable techniques which can double or treble the yields from traditional farming systems?

The public discussion so far has concentrated on the risks and capabilities of the technology and the effectiveness of the regulations. These things are important, as are effective and comprehensive labelling schemes to ensure that those consumers like me who do not want to eat GM foods can avoid them.

But there is an important public debate needed also on whether we need GM crops at all. You may want to use the response section of this Forum to add your views to the discussion. We shall monitor responses and publish a selection from both sides of the debate on a regular basis."

The Prince of Wales, St James's Palace, December 1998

Mead Competition Rules

The mead must be derived from fermented **honey**. There will be three classes: Dry, Sweet, and Sparkling. Entries must be in a **clear** glass bottle (preferably 750ml) and secured with a cork or replaceable stopper. Sparkling mead should be presented in stronger bottles designed to hold a liquid under pressure. The judge's palate is final (only un-marked \$10 notes will be accepted).

AFB Levels

The following extracts are from a “conversation” which occurred recently on the New Zealand Beekeepers e-mail list operated by Nick Wallingford. These notes highlight the progress being made in reducing and eventually eliminating AFB from New Zealand.

For those that haven't done the maths, this year's reported AFB levels (0.31%) are the lowest in 22 years and the third lowest ever recorded in New Zealand. This is only 25% of the 1990 peak (1.2%) which means the number of hives reported and destroyed have decreased from 3831 in 1990 to only 938 this past year.

I understand there are one or two Annual disease declarations outstanding but hopefully they will not change the stats much.

As Agriquality is also having more and more difficulty in finding AFB hives the trend of decreasing disease levels is likely to be a true one. We can however never be sure of how many AFB hives are never found and how many are not reported if they are found.

Even with this it has to be a very positive trend

Dr R.M. Goodwin, Hort Research

This is 2,893 hives per year that we are now not burning. At a cost of \$100 per hive (cheap!) we are saving \$289,300 per year, or around a 100% return on our [current] investment for our Disease control/PMS. Sounds too good to be true to me!

Peter Bray

I do not believe this is too good to be true - even without the missing declarations still to come into the Management Agency. The trend is the important aspect of these figures - and it is definitely DOWN - both in numbers of reported cases of AFB, and in cost to the industry and beekeepers alike. THAT was exactly what the PMS was designed to achieve and it looks to me like it is succeeding, very nicely thank you !

AT this year's Conference, Ian Berry (who was the Chairman of the AFB Committee when the PMS was first designed) made a statement that the primary method adopted to bring about eradication of AFB from NZ beehives was through education. Mostly education of beekeepers, because they are the principal vectors of AFB spread, through their beekeeping practices.

In my opinion, the PMS has more than succeeded so far in achieving that aim, even before it is fully implemented. We are still to get the education and competency testing procedures fully underway, which is a cornerstone to the ongoing education process of the PMS.

The educational effects began some time ago, before the PMS was in place. Most of us can recall the “roadshows” which Mark Goodwin and Cliff Van Eaton took around the country a year or so back. The first of these was to teach a technique for all of us to use to test our own hives for AFB. The second was the PMS consultation roadshow prior to the completion of the strategy design.

From both of these events, and as a result of some sound scientific research on the nature of AFB, we have seen a much wider discussion of the disease amongst beekeepers than has ever been done in our industry's history I imagine. The result: - more education = better beekeeping = less AFB = less cost to us all.

Going back to Ian Berry again, and I am sure he does not mind me saying this, he showed me some figures for his own operation at Arataki Havelock North which showed a ZERO AFB incidence in their 4,000 plus hives for the past three years - and less than 1% at any stage in the past twenty or thirty years. It can be done, and there are numerous beekeepers who can also show figures like that.

There is a cost to this success for these people - they pay their contribution to the PMS, and they still spend time and money in inspections of their hives - but that is precisely why they can boast a zero AFB incidence. They have the knowledge needed to maintain this level of control in their beekeeping, and they make sure their staff are likewise educated.

So before we allow detractors to dilute or even dissolve the PMS let us hear a few more of these success stories, take a good look at some real figures, and get on with the job. A 100% return on money invested is a mighty good deal - and it is there for everyone if we have the will to make it happen. Vive la PMS !!!

Allen McCaw

Safe Foods

Following on from our speaker, Polly Greek, on Genetic Engineering last month, the 'Safe Food' Campaign advises that the following products may include Genetically Modified ingredients:

SOY Soy flour, soy oil, lecithin, soy protein isolates, hydrolysed vegetable protein, tofu. Soy derivatives may be found in: cereals, veggie burgers, sausages, tamari soy sauce, chips, ice cream, crackers, frozen yoghurt, infant formula, sauces, margarine, soy cheese, cookies, breads, chocolates, candies, vegetable oil, fried foods.

CORN: corn flour, corn starch, corn oil, corn sweeteners. Corn derivatives may be found in syrups, chips, sweets, ice cream, infant formula, salad dressings, cookies, tomato sauces, breads, cereals, tamari, baking powder, baking soda, margarine, vanilla essence, soy sauce, fried foods, powdered sugar, enriched flours, pastas.

CANOLA: salad and cooking oil, margarine, chips, mayonnaise, fried foods

COTTON: salad and cooking oil, chips, peanut butter mayonnaise, margarine

Most NZ chickens and pigs are fed soy meal from the USA which may be genetically modified. Beware of imported tomato sauces and purees. Products made in NZ may contain ingredients imported from elsewhere. Consider them suspect unless the ingredients can be traced to GE free sources.

Vicky Alexander

Annual General Meeting

Don't forget that the Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Beekeepers Association Incorporated is being held on Monday 9th August at 7:30 pm at the Union Church Terrace Centre in Johnsonville. Items on the agenda will include the usual President's Report, Presentation of the Accounts by the Treasurer, and the election of an executive committee. Nominations for positions on the executive committee will be called for at the AGM.

If any of you are willing to serve on the committee, but are unsure of what commitment is involved, please contact one of the existing committee members (Richard Hatfield, James Scott, Doug Purdie, John Burnet, Mary-Ann Lindsay, Bill Allan, Andrew Beach).

Nominations for positions on the committee are to be made from the floor at the AGM. All executive positions are able to be contested.

In addition, the club is seeking someone to manage the library and ensure that the books and magazines received by the club are available for reading by members.

Consideration of modifications to the Constitution of the Association has been deferred until a later date.

Membership

Members are reminded that their annual subscriptions are now due. Please complete the form on page 4 and send to the Treasurer, Mary-Ann Lindsay. Those members who have not paid by September will cease to receive newsletters.

Mead Competition

Don't forget that the annual mead competition is to take place in August along with the AGM. There are three classes of mead: Dry, Sweet, and Sparkling. Refer to page 5 for competition rules. Note that entries are to be submitted in clear round bottles (preferably 750ml size), except for sparkling which should be in standard sparkling wine bottles.

Future Meetings

The committee is looking for interesting and relevant speakers for meetings this year. It is hoped that Andrew Matheson will be available to talk to one meeting. If you have any suggestions please contact John Burnet on 232 7863 (or secretary@beehive.org.nz).

September (13th): (to be advised)

October (11th): DECA certification tests for all members

November (8th): (to be advised)

For Sale

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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.
