



June meeting | 5th June 2019

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

Editor | Jane Harding janeh@xtra.co.nz

Monthly meetings recommence on 1 July 2020

Topics for the July meeting

Beginners session. No beginners session this month, we will begin at 7.00 pm with our AGM downstairs in the main meeting room

Main Meeting In the main hall at 7.30pm

Topic: Small group Q&A and then come together to share answers to member questions. Bring you questions and observations from your hives during lockdown to share and get answered.

Keeping Ourselves Safe. We will be recording the names of all attendees at our monthly meetings, please sign the register as you come into the meeting room. And so you can keep track of where you've been, we will also be displaying the NZ Covid Tracer QR code for the WBA meetings. If you haven't already done so, download the NZ Covid Tracer App to you smartphone before you come.



Contents

3. AGM –

- Agenda
- Minutes of previous AGM
- Presidents Report

10. In My Apiary – Judith de Wilde

14. Competitions coming up

14. Beginners course information

14. Queen Rearing course in October

15. Nucs available from October

15. Membership now due

15. Get your gear ready for the new season

16. Interesting Links

17. Honey production and prices in NZ

18. APINZ update

22. Who can I speak to?

23 Meeting location



WBA AGM 2020

Agenda

2020 Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Beekeepers Association

1 JULY 2020

**To be held at the Johnsonville Community Centre,
Frankmoore Avenue, Johnsonville at 7pm**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. Matters arising
4. President's Report
5. Treasurers Report
6. Election of Officers –

President

Treasurer

Secretary

Additional roles of -
webmaster

newsletter

librarian

general committee members

Bio-Security Officer

7. Membership Fee

8. AFB Fee and infected hive reimbursement

9. General Business



Minutes of the 2019 AGM

2019 Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Beekeepers Association

1 July 2019

**Held at the Newlands Community Centre, Batchelor St, Newlands at
7pm**

Tricia Laing welcomed everyone to the 80th AGM of the Wellington Beekeepers Association and meeting. Tricia advised that the committee will be organising an appropriate function later this year to commemorate this anniversary.

1. Present - Frank Lindsay, Jane Harding John Burnet, Richard Braczek, Eva Durrant, James Scott, PK Tan, Patricia Laing and about 50 members.
2. Apologies – James Withington
3. Election of Officers:
 - President – James Withington – moved Tricia Laing, seconded Jane Harding. Carried
 - Vice-President – John Randall – moved Frank Lindsay, seconded Tricia Laing. Carried
 - Treasurer – John Burnet – moved David Henderson, seconded Steve Pettigrew (?). Carried
 - Secretary – Jane Harding – moved John Burnet, seconded Dave Henderson. Carried
4. Election of Other Committee members
 - PK Tan
 - Frank Lindsay



Barbara Parkinson

Tony Coard

James Scott

Jill Dalton

Claire Hart

Eva Durrant

Tricia Laing

Move the above nominees be elected by Mary-Ann Lindsay, seconded Tricia Laing. Carried.

5. President's Report – No President's report.
6. Treasurer's Report – John Burnet presented the draft accounts, still subject to Review. The Association ended the year with a surplus of \$6435 of income over expenditure and a total bank balance of \$25959. There are no creditors outstanding. John moved the Financial Accounts be accepted (subject to review), seconded Tricia Laing. Carried.

Noted: Wayne Wild did not want to be paid for the work he does with the wax dipper for the club. Dave Henderson moved a motion "that the Committee consider ways to use the money that would have been paid to Wayne for another use that would benefit the association". Seconded Jim Smith. Carried.

7. Membership Fee

Club membership fee recommended to stay at \$25.00, \$7.50 of which goes into the AFB fund to reimburse members who need to destroy AFB infected hives.

8. AFB Fee and infected hive reimbursement

John moved a motion that the reimbursement amount remain at \$120 per hive. Seconded Jane Harding. Carried.



9. Minutes of previous AGM.

Jane Harding presented the minutes of the previous AGM, which had been circulated in the July newsletter and moved they be accepted. Seconded Eva Durrant. Carried.

10. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

11. General Business

There were no items of general business raised.

Meeting closed at 7.35pm.



President's Report for 2020

This is the Wellington Beekeepers Association's 81st AGM and my first President's Report.

Membership is still very high with 285 financial members, three life members and several associate memberships from educational groups, such as schools.

Overall membership has dipped a little since the influx that came with the world-wide "Save the Bees" campaign in 2018 when it reached a total membership of 340. It has also been a concern that we are not retaining many members with three or more years of beekeeping experience and to this end we hope that the changes we have made and are planning to make will keep everybody interested and learning. At some point in our own beekeeping journey we arrived at the club not knowing much and relied upon the seasoned keepers to provide the information to get us going. I'd like to think those with this mid-level of experience would also pass on their knowledge gained as a pay it forward to the new members.

I would like to thank those members who have assisted with all the club's activities and with the schools; John Burnet and John Randall. It's great to see the results of the projects that come out of these schools. In addition, acknowledgment of the committee members who behind the scenes are heavily involved in ensuring the club keeps on chugging on. Thanks to James Scott who maintains the club's website, Eva and Jane for producing and publishing the newsletter and of course Barbara, who does a wonderful job in the kitchen each month with her amazing baking selection each month. She is one of the unsung heroes who keeps the social atmosphere going.

The committee continues to ensure that members are getting value for money and a lot of time and consideration is given into planning the monthly meetings. This has seen the introduction of new meeting topics such as in June where we feature using honey in the kitchen. Unfortunately, due to the lockdown Martin Bosley was not able to attend, but he has agreed to return next year. Another change to the agenda for the December Christmas meeting providing a more enjoyable occasion with an early start meal provided by a food truck and the annual bee quiz along with the newly introduced "honey or the bag" game show.



I would like to thank all those who assist in running the beginners' sessions each month and Frank Lindsay, John Burnet and Brett Richmond for running the five week beginners course each spring.

There are a number of other activities that committee members give their time towards, such as the honey competition and the photographic competitions. Thank you.

We have decided for the next 12 months to look at bringing in more guest speakers from outside of the Wellington region to the club nights. This will increase the range of speakers and topics and should cater for those with several years' experience. An example is Gary Jefferies, from the West Coast who will be presenting on queen rearing and introducing varroa resistant traits into his queens. I would like to thank the guest speakers we have had this past year and look forward to bringing more speakers in the future.

You may have noticed a number of changes to the way the monthly meetings are run this last year:

- The minutes are no longer taken at general meetings because most things are now discussed at committee meetings.
- The attendance book is no longer circulated at meetings and instead, a name tag system was tried but this still needs some work. Incidentally, we had to institute the attendance book again during the Covid-19 Alert Level 1 so that we have a record in case tracing is required.
- We now have a break between the ending of the beginner's session and the start of the main meeting to give time for members to have a tea or coffee and cake, and mix and mingle.
- The library isn't being used to its fullest, so our librarian has been given a budget each year to purchase some new modern books covering all aspects of beekeeping.

With the continuing evolution of the modern electronic world, we need to keep pace to ensure engagement in what we are doing online. Our website is getting a little dated so our plan in the next 12 months is to update and improve our website. Likewise the club now has in excess of 1,200 followers on its Facebook page, and this includes a large presence outside of the clubs catchment region. Perhaps it's the Friday funny postings that has attracted them but there is a thirst for beekeeping knowledge worldwide which hopefully in the future we may be able to assist in.



The Association has its apiary on Wellington Council land at Chartwell. It's a teaching apiary and is used to produce a number of five frame nuc hives to start new members in beekeeping.

During the year the club was offered beekeeping gear from a retiring member and the committee decided that this would be used to start off a second teaching apiary in the Hutt Valley as it's quite a trip to come from Upper Hutt to Chartwell.

The Lower Hutt City Council has given permission for us to establish an apiary in Lower Hutt on the same property as the model car club. This is an enclosed area which offers good security. Members have cleared part of the land and have already set up a number of nuc hives. A storage container has been ordered to store the spare gear in and should be on-site shortly. Thanks for all those who have put time and effort into this venture.

Thanks to Wayne Wild for allowing us to hold construction sessions at his home in Wainuiomata and for all the hours he puts in dipping new woodware.

Covid-19 has put a dampener on the last few meetings when we were all restricted during the lock down. Hopefully with the present border enforcements we can now get back to normal activities during the next year.

I will be putting my name forward as your President for one more year if that is the members' wishes. To ensure the ongoing survivability we will be looking for members who would like to assist with the running of the clubs online social media (Facebook, and possibly Instagram or any other audience reaching platform), as well as members who'd like join the committee who have the ideas and energy to propel the Association forward. I hope you each will give this consideration as a way to give back to the club.

Beekeeping isn't easy in the Wellington region but it's the object of the Association to make beekeeping an enjoyable and a constant learning experience for everybody. Despite the damp windy weather, members have produced some good crops this last season and hopefully with all your input, the Association will prosper for another year, and enjoy another good honey season.

James Withington
July 2020



In My Apiary – Judith de Wilde

Our “In My Apiary” feature this month comes from Judith, who has hives at the back of Upper Hutt. Judith has provided us with an insight into her apiary and her battle with varroa.

The Ramblings of a Librarian - not on library books but her own bees and varroa.

My bees went into winter 2019 with pretty much a zero varroa count but admittedly this was after a very frustrating three rounds varying treatments, re-infestation, treatment. You get the picture (I vowed to do better in 2020) At the end of May I placed Thymovar wafers in each hive and coming out of winter 2019 in early September my hives, exited with an alcohol wash varroa count of 0-26. Not too bad. Regardless all were given one round MAQS treatment and those with varroa two rounds. All were tested again in mid to late October. Alcohol count varied from 0-3, I was pretty stoked with this. Bayvarol was added only to the hives with varroa.

It was a bumper year for honey and my bees did very well compared with previous years producing on average 2-3 supers of fully capped honey per hive, starting from undrawn wax foundation. I did do random visual checks inside brood chambers from time to time but no specific varroa testing.

All hives had a brood disease checked and the honey supers removed in the first week of February. A week later, mid-February all were given a MAQS treatment. Before placing the wets back on two weeks later, I performed a quick visual check of each hives brood chambers. To my surprise two had bad varroa infestations (PMS) with obvious symptoms of deformed wing, visible varroa, varroa pooh, patchy brood, numerous varroa in capped brood, etc. The kind of stuff that makes you panic and look exceptionally hard for AFB. With no AFB detected these two hives were joined with other hives on site. All hives were given a second round of MAQS treatments.



End of March-start of April, time to check up on the effectiveness of varroa treatments. Random alcohol varroa testing shows that varroa are still present 3-40. Oh bother. Financially tired of throwing money at treatments, I opted to use up what I had. Not ideal but every hive got something. I used a mixture of treatments, Apivar, Bayvarol and MAQS.

Lockdown and time on my side I decided a couple of days ago to start preparing my hives for winter. The plan was to remove unused supers, remove Queen excluders, disease and stores checks, Apiherb feed, ApiLifeVar overwinter strip applied and insulate. I felt fairly confident, after all, each hive had had two rounds of varroa treatment. All sounds excellent but on the first hive which had, had a Bayvarol treatment, the alcohol varroa count was 116. SHIT!!! Absolutely gutted.

Apivar was ordered and arrived overnight from Farmlands. Brilliant service and great to happen in lockdown. All my hives have now had an alcohol varroa count, which has varied from 0 to 116. Apivar has been added to all hives that didn't already have this in it.

Conclusions from this inadvertent experiment and ramblings.

Thankfully the first hive I checked was the most heavily infested, as it was the prompt I needed to check all and not just randomly.

- Bayvarol was ineffective. All hives with Bayvarol had counts over 60. *(It is also interesting to note that the two hives with PMS were hives that had had a low varroa count (2-3) with bayvarol treatments going into summer)*
- MAQS. Had mixed results, some had low counts of 2-3 and some over 30. Roughly 50:50. Is this because of hygienic bees, placement of hives effecting temperature, different bases effecting ventilation, repeating treatments?
- Apivar was excellent. Every one of these hives had count of 0

It's that same message that we have all heard - Don't use the same treatment in Spring and Autumn. *(This was my first time doing such. Why when I know better? It was only my first season with this treatment and it worked well in spring, I had some left from spring and it was cheap option to purchase top*



up amount for autumn. My endless spending with no return is becoming a sticking point.)

Would I recommend alcohol varroa counts? Absolutely, it is the most accurate measure of varroa monitoring. You do get used to killing off a few bees.

At this time of year? NO unless to have backup mated queens at the ready, you need to be very certain that you do not have the queen in those washings. To kill the queen at this time of year would be fatal for the colony.

What prompted me to do an alcohol wash? In the first hive, whilst it had two boxes full of bees and plenty of stores; something just wasn't quite right about the brood pattern and that made me look under cappings, check for disease and do a varroa count.

Conclusion is I should have alcohol varroa counted when extracting honey supers. It would have told me where my hives were at and therefore testing post treatment would have been targeted as opposed to completely random. It would have also accurately indicated to me at the start, if treatment used was effective and if my bees are being re-infested continually in this robbing period. Commercial beekeeping activity is doubling in my neighbourhood year on year. Bee activity around the area is intense from over stocking, so I therefore suspect varroa re-infestation is occurring but I do don't have conclusive data to support this.



Getting ready for wintering down. Building paper to be used for hive wrapping



Just to finish, wintering down hasn't happened as planned, but I only have myself to reprimand for that. I've removed extra surplus supers, queen excluders, given an Apiherb supplement and applied varroa treatments where needed. I will need to return to each hive in a few weeks to remove these treatments and settle hives down for winter.



Hive with robbing guard. Heath and gorse flowering behind

Now, in late June, the two hives that had varroa counts over hundred, whilst successfully treated, had too low a number of surviving workers after 4 weeks and they have been joined to other colonies. All are happy, healthy and varroa free. Surprisingly the workers are still very busy gathering and in all hives, stores are fantastic. Lots of heath and gorse in flower, with even the odd Manuka bush, so bringing in lots of both nectar and pollen.



Competitions Coming Up

The club calendar this year is a bit disrupted, but we're still planning to hold the honey, photo and mead competitions. We're trying to fit in the gadgets and gizmos competition also. So, note these dates in your diary and get snapping, brewing or sampling to have something to crow about on competition night!

September - Honey competition. Read the rules [here](#)

October – Photo competition. Read the Rules [here](#)

December – Mead Competition. Read the rules [here](#)

Beginners Course

WBA is once again running our very popular course for beginning beekeepers. This hands-on practical course will give you an excellent start to your beekeeping activities. Held over 5 consecutive Tuesday evenings starting on 8 September and culminating with a half day session at the club apiary in Chartwell. The course costs \$250 and you need to be a financial member of the WBA to do the course. Thoroughly recommended!!

Queen Rearing Course

The club will be holding a Queen Rearing course in October. If you've ever wanted to find out a bit more about queen rearing, requeening your own hives or breeding queens for nucs, now is your chance. Details to be confirmed, likely to be at John Randall's place in Karori.



Club Nucs available from October

The club will have some nuc colonies available for members to purchase from October. These are over-wintered nucs with established queens and will be available early enough to pick up the early honey flow in Wellington. Price to be determined. If you're interested, look out for more information in July and August.

Club Membership now due

A reminder to all those who haven't yet paid membership due for the 2020-2021 year, it is now due. Membership only costs \$25 and gives you access to a wealth of knowledge and support for your beekeeping. You can renew your membership [here](#).

Get Ready for the New Season

Now's the time to get yourself and your gear ready for the new season. Clean up old boxes and frames, throw away anything that is rotten or full of borer – it won't last another year and won't be good for your bees. Make sure you've got lots of frames and foundation for the honey flow, and enough for a bit extra! Clear out your swarm catching box and maybe set up a bait hive to catch a passing swarm!

The club will be organising a hive building and wax-dipping workshop in spring, look out for that if you need help to get some more gear ready.

Check your smoker, hive tools, bee suit - time to get yourself a new one maybe?



Check your hive locations, do you need to trim branches or clear access ways or mend fences? Make sure you've got what you need for honey extraction later in the season, and enough jars or containers to hold it all.

And good luck for the season ahead!

Interesting Links

Story from the Guardian about Killer hornets in Canada:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/25/hornets-race-to-protect-north-americas-honeybees-from-giant-invader-aoe>

From the Spectator – bees and efficiency

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/what-bees-can-teach-us-about-efficiency>

From the ABC – the ongoing fallout from the Australian drought and bushfires:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2020-05-20/world-bee-day-bees-starving-drought-feeding-sugar-honey/12263374>

And from the USDA – a new food for managed bees?

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/news-events/news/research-news/2020/microalgae-food-for-honey-bees/>



Honey Production and Prices

International non-manuka honey prices have crashed to near record lows summed up by Russell Berry, head of family-owned and Rotorua-based Arataki Honey, said he fully expected a number of beekeepers to be out of business in the coming year as a result of the price slide.

Berry's operation is one of the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, overseeing 20,000 hives across much of the country and supplying 32 percent of the honey sold in New Zealand supermarkets.

Berry has spent more than 60 years involved in the industry.

"It is understood a big portion of the honey coming out of China is fake and the volumes have pushed the price down from \$12.50 a kg to \$3.50 a kg," he said. "Beekeepers need about \$7 a kg to break even."

TABLE 1: KEY PARAMETERS OF THE NEW ZEALAND APICULTURE INDUSTRY, 2013 TO 2019

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Beekeeper and hive numbers								
Number of registered beekeeping enterprises ¹		4,279	4,814	5,551	6,735	7,814	8,552	9,282
Number of registered bee hives ¹		452,018	507,247	575,872	684,046	795,578	881,185	918,026
Honey production								
New Zealand annual honey production	Tonnes	17,825	17,610	19,710	19,885	14,855	20,000	23,000
Honey yield per hive	kg/hive	39.4	34.7	34.2	29.1	18.7	22.7	25.1
Honey prices²								
Bulk honey price range for light clover honey	NZ\$/kg	5.00-7.30	5.50-8.30	7.00-10.75	9.50-13.00	10.00-14.00	8.50-12.00	5.00-9.25
Bulk honey price range for mānuka honey ³	NZ\$/kg	10.45-60.00	8.00-85.00	9.50-116.50	12.00-148.00	10.80-127.00	12.00-135.00	5.00-125.00
Honey exports (pure honey)⁴								
Honey export volume	Tonnes	8,054	8,702	9,046	8,831	8,450	8,692	8,065
Honey export value (at fob ⁵)	Million NZ\$	145	187	233	315	329	348	355
Honey export price (at fob ⁵)	NZ\$/kg	17.99	21.45	25.77	35.62	38.92	40.04	44.02

Notes

n/a Not applicable

1 Registered beekeeping enterprises and hives under the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan.

2 Prices paid to beekeepers for bulk honey. The beekeepers supply the packaging (drums or intermediate bulk containers) and cover freight costs to the buyers premise. The honey prices reported in this report for each season cover the period from July to June.

3 Mānuka honey as identified by the beekeeper/supplier. The range in price is influenced by the rating on industry grading systems such as UMF[®], MGO[™] or equivalent. The Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) mānuka honey definition was finalised in December 2017.

4 New Zealand honey is mainly exported as pure honey in retail packs and in bulk. Comb honey and honeydew are also included in pure honey exports, but typically account for less than 10 percent of total export volumes.

5 fob = free on board

Source:ASUREQuality Limited and Statistics New Zealand.



Honey Prices

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Bulk honey¹ (\$ per kg)							
Light (clover type)	5.00-7.30	5.50-8.30	7.00-10.75	9.50-13.00	10.00-14.00	8.50-12.00	5.00-9.25
Light amber	5.50-8.50	4.50-8.00	7.00-9.00	9.00-11.50	6.50-13.00	7.50-10.00	4.50-9.25
Dark, including honeydew	4.50-8.50	5.50-10.00	7.00-12.50	8.00-14.50	8.00-16.00	5.00-8.50	3.50-6.00
Mānuka²	10.45-60.00	8.00-85.00	9.50-116.50	12.00-148.00	10.80-127.00	12.00-135.00	5.00-125.00
Beeswax³ (\$ per kg)							
Light	7.50-8.50	8.00-10.50	9.00-12.50	11.00-15.00	12.00-17.00	16.00-17.00	10.00-17.00
Dark	6.50-7.80	6.50-7.80	8.00-10.00	9.00-10.00	12.00-17.00	15.00-16.00	12.00-20.00
Pollen² (\$ per kg)							
Not dried or cleaned	16.00-30.50	16.00-30.50	16.00-27.00	16.00-25.00	16.00-25.00	16.00-25.00	16.00-25.00
Cleaned and dried	40.00-45.00	40.00-45.00	40.00-46.00



APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND

From the CE Karin Kos

Recent trade statistics showing a spike in New Zealand honey exports has seen increased interest from media in understanding what's going on in the honey industry. Honey exports for May 2020, for example, were up 53.4% compared with May 2019. Total exports for year ending May were \$413 million.

There's no doubt there has been a significant jump in demand for New Zealand honey, especially mānuka honey. It's largely the result of consumers responding to Covid-19 with a renewed interest in natural, healthy food sources like



honey. However, we are careful to point out that we won't know for some time if this a long-term trend.

We have an opportunity to leverage this heightened consumer awareness and use this opportunity to increase the market profile for all our honeys. We are making a start by working on the New Zealand Honey Story which we are aiming to launch next month. However, there is so much more that needs to be done. As we know from the experiences of other primary sector industries, like New Zealand wine and kiwifruit, that requires a concerted industry effort with a long-term funding commitment.

NZ Food Safety releases guidance for RMP operators

NZ Food Safety has released a guidance document to assist RMP operators in developing and implementing an effective operator verification system. The document can be accessed [here](#).

Seeking bee advocates for Bee Aware Month



Every September, ApiNZ runs a nation-wide education campaign raising awareness of the importance of bees and teaching New Zealanders how to take some simple steps to improve bee health. Last Bee Aware Month, we had a lot of requests from schools, community groups and libraries for beekeepers to come and share their knowledge. We were able to answer some of these requests – and a big thanks to all of those members and clubs who donated their time and energy to do this!

But this year, we would really like to have a team of bee advocates across the country who are willing and able to share their love of bees with the community. ApiNZ is developing some tools to help you do this including an editable Powerpoint presentation that can be tailored to suit you and your audience, posters and colouring pages for kids. If you are interested in being a bee advocate in September, or you would like to know more, you can contact Charlotte at info@apinz.org.nz

Nominations open for the NZ Biosecurity Awards

Nominations for the New Zealand Biosecurity Awards open next week on 1 July and close on 30 July. These awards celebrate people and organisations making significant contributions to New Zealand's biosecurity through science, research and innovation. There are several categories including a community award for established projects, science



and innovation awards and a schools award. More information can be found [here](#).

FutureBees Online Beekeeper Discussion Group

The next online discussion group will be held on **Wednesday 8 July from 3.30 - 5pm** on the topic: **Varroa - mite it be a problem for you**. Some of the discussion points are: the fear of failure - a long-term perspective on varroa, to treat or avoid - is treatment-free beekeeping still an option, integrated pest management - theory and practice. For more information and to register visit [here](#).



Who can I speak to?

President - James Withington 0272 851206 jwithington2016@gmail.com

Vice-President – John Randall (04) 4769959 john@gingerwillow.com

Treasurer - John Burnet (04) 232 7863 johnburnet@xtra.co.nz

Secretary - Jane Harding 0274212417 janeh@xtra.co.nz

Committee Members

James Scott - Membership and website (04) 565 0164 james@scott.gen.nz

Frank Lindsay – (04) 478 3376

Judith de Wilde – Librarian (04 235 8173) kiwicavingrose@gmail.com

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Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville.

