



Next meeting | Wednesday 3rd September 2025

Where | Johnsonville Community Centre

Editor | Jane Harding janeh@xtra.co.nz

Beginners Session: 6.45pm Upstairs. Legal Requirements for Beekeepers, including local bylaws -Trisha Laing

Main Meeting: 7.30pm

Pike Stahlman-Brown will talk about last year's Colony Loss Survey results and what they mean. The 2025 Colony Loss Survey opens this week.

Contents

2. From the Editor
3. 2024 Colony Loss Survey results
5. Queen Bee Rearing – course planned for Intermediate Level beekeepers
6. AFB research – Hive Tool and Feeder swabs
7. Results of the Member Survey
8. Reminder – photo competition in November
9. Nucs for sale
10. WhatsApp Swarm Collection list
11. Reminders - Waxdipping and Hiveware collection
12. Varroa Treatments available through the club
13. Hive Site available in Karori
13. Golden Rod
14. What's coming up
14. Who can I talk to?



From the Editor

September marks the beginning of spring and arguably of the busiest time of year for beekeepers. Spring build up of brood and bees, swarm prevention, spring varroa treatments, making sure your growing hives have sufficient food for the unpredictable spring weather, and of course getting ready for the honey flow when the bush starts flowering in October and November. So, get ready to get busy!

Pike Stahlman-Brown from Manaaki—Whenua (Landcare Research) will talk to us about the 2024 results of the Colony Loss Survey and why it is so important to fill in the 2025 survey.

Also at the meeting this month, Tim Lunt, who works with Phil Lester at Victoria University will be taking swabs of hive tools and feeders as part of his research into AFB. Tim requests that you bring your tool/feeder to the meeting in the same state that you use it, i.e. don't clean it first! Tim will be using the "foster" test to determine the prevalence of low levels of AFB in our hives.

And, last but not least, Mark Grenfell will talk to us about running a Queen Bee Rearing course for intermediate level beekeepers later this year.

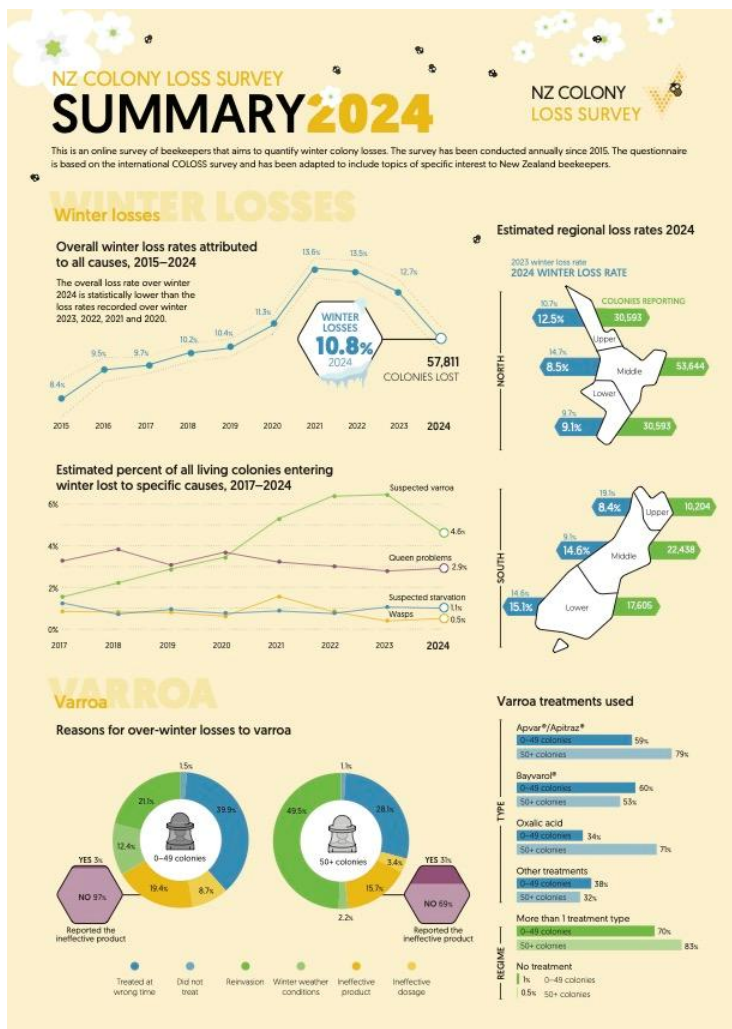


Queen Bee emerging from her cell



2024 Colony Loss Survey

We presented this graphic in the May newsletter, reprinted here again for your information.





Wellington Beekeepers Association

Support and encouragement of beekeeping and beekeepers

POLLINATION



of beekeepers with 50+ colonies provided commercial pollination services



colonies providing commercial pollination services

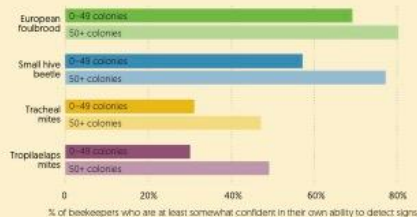


The average colony commercially pollinated...

1.5 crops

BIOSECURITY

Beekeepers generally had more confidence in being able to identify signs of European foulbrood or small hive beetle, which may be because these have more obvious visual signs in beehives.



Beekeepers are somewhat confident that the biosecurity system could detect new pests and diseases and not at all confident that the biosecurity system could eradicate them.



INDUSTRY PRACTICES

27% of non-commercial beekeepers and 11% of commercial beekeepers are essentially solitary.

The most common activities among NON-COMMERCIAL beekeepers are:

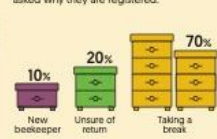


The most common activities among COMMERCIAL beekeepers are:



10% registered beekeepers have 0 colonies

Beekeepers with no colonies were asked why they are registered.



OVERVIEW

We surveyed 2,828 beekeepers, who collectively had 153,856 colonies. We estimate that 10.8% of New Zealand's colonies were lost in New Zealand during winter 2024. This means 57,800 colonies died over winter, from a total of 535,185. It is the second year in a row where winter loss rates have fallen, and reverses a long trend of increases. Loss rates were lower this year because varroa did not kill as many hives. Only 4.6% of all colonies died from varroa during winter 2024 compared to 6.4% during the previous winter.

Commercial beekeepers (those with more than 50 colonies) represent approximately 10% of all registered beekeepers and manage approximately 94% of all registered colonies. However, the majority of beekeepers are non-commercial (1-49 colonies). About 10% of registered beekeepers do not currently keep any bees, although most plan to return to beekeeping.

Non-commercial beekeepers said the main reason they lost colonies to varroa during winter was that they had applied varroa treatment at the wrong time. The main problem commercial beekeepers had with varroa was reinfestation of their hives. Even though beekeepers generally considered their varroa treatments were effective, 78% of non-commercial and 16% of commercial beekeepers said they lost colonies over winter because the products they used were ineffective. If a product had failed, most

beekeepers said they did not report it to anyone (e.g. authorities or manufacturers).

Questions about beekeeper perceptions of biosecurity were new in the 2024 survey. Most beekeepers were at least somewhat confident that they could identify the signs of European foulbrood or small hive beetle. However, beekeepers were less certain that they could identify the signs of tracheal mites or tropilaelaps mites. Overall, beekeepers had some confidence that the biosecurity system (described as a collaborative effort in which every New Zealander has a role to play) could detect exotic pests and diseases, but beekeepers were much less confident that these exotic pests and diseases could be eradicated.

Pollination was an important activity for commercial beekeepers. More than 102,000 colonies were used for commercial pollination during the 2023/24 season, with each colony pollinating an average of 1.5 commercial crops.



View additional results at: www.landcareresearch.co.nz/bee-health



Data summary commissioned by Ministry for Primary Industries



Queen Bee Rearing Course

Mark Greenfell, one of our experienced beekeepers and queen bee breeders has offered his services to run a queen bee rearing course for club members. This course would be suitable for intermediate beekeepers with several years experience who have access to an apiary for housing any nucs with queens that they make.

Mark suggests a two-day course in the November-January timeframe. Either a weekend or two consecutive Saturdays.

Mark will present details of the course and answer questions at the meeting on Wednesday.



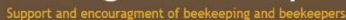


AFB Research – Hive Tool and Feeder swabs

As advised in the email earlier this week, Tim Lunt will be taking swabs of hive tools and feeders as part of his research into the incidence of AFB in our apiaries. The goal of Tim's research is to find out if the bacteria behind AFB is more common than most people think, and what factors increase the chances of unknowingly passing on these bacteria.

- Researchers at Victoria University want local beekeepers to bring in their **used** hive tool(s) and feeders to the next beekeepers meeting in Johnsonville (3rd September)
- Swabs will be taken for free, for the purpose of American Foulbrood testing, as part of an MSc thesis
- We will be using the same [foster method](#) as many might be familiar with
- We will also be requesting participating members to fill out a short survey (1x A4 questionnaire) about beekeeping practices
- All information and results will be confidential; members may find out the results of your own test if they wish to do so. We will not be sharing names and test results of others without explicit permission
- We urge beekeepers to not change their sanitation habits leading up to the next meeting, **we are trying to sample equipment as they would typically be found on any given day**
- Swabbing will be undertaken directly after the meeting finishes, likely in the same building.

Tim will have a table set up at the meeting for members to answer the survey and have their hivetools swabbed.





Reminder: Photo Competition in November

We've secured the services of the well-known Wellington photographer, Simon Woolf, to judge the annual photo competition. Simon is a very experienced nature photographer so we are pleased that he has agreed to being the judge.

As in other years, we will ask members to upload their photos to the club website and Simon will access the website to judge the photos. We'll also have our people's choice competition on the night, so we'll be asking people to bring a printed copy to the November meeting as well.

More on how to upload your photos shortly.





Nucs for Sale

There are a few over-wintered nucs available for members who want to get a head start with their hives this summer:

John Randall advises he has a few nucs for sale:

- Five frame nucs – $\frac{3}{4}$ depth only
- Overwintered laying queen – provides good head start for spring
- Take your nuc box (or hive) to John and he will insert frames with bees and queen into your box
- Five replacement sheets of foundation required
- Cost \$250 (cash)

Richard Hall has two great nucleus colonies for sale, ready now.

Both are full depth, five frames. Bursting with bees. AFB check completed, Bayvarol just installed today and varroa alc wash counts very low at time of treatment installation (0%, 1%). Young queens laying well. Good stores. Can deliver. They'll be in a brand new corflute box, for delivery (Ceracell box). Pretty good for rebuilding lost hives over winter, or new beekeeper getting a head start this spring. Pics attached.

\$330 each.

Delivery to Upper Hutt is free.

Delivery to Wellington, Lower Hutt or Porirua is extra \$20 for diesel.



WhatsApp Swarm Collection and Swarm Receiving Group

In preparation for the coming swarm season we are planning to use the same WhatsApp method that was used last swarm season.

Jim Hepburn will administer the group with support from James Withington and John Burnet.

Swarms from the Wellington region including Kapiti for collection will be posted to the forum. They will then be collected by paid up WBC members on a first response basis.

This is a service being provided to the community and councils free of charge. I will send those final collectors some guidelines and protocols once the list is setup. If you are considering going on the collectors list then you must be sure you will be able to respond promptly. Last season we had a lot of names on the list but only a few committed collectors.

If you wish to be an active collector then please email Jim Hepburn at cameronjhepburn@gmail.com with a subject: Swarm collector Include your contact mobile phone number

We also need a list of members who would like to receive a collected swarm so please email Jim Hepburn at cameronjhepburn@gmail.com with a subject: Swarm recipient

Include your contact mobile phone number

Thanks

Jim Hepburn



Reminders - Wax Dipping and Hiveware Disposal

Thanks to everyone who has advised the club of their waxdipping requirements. We still need a few more boxes to make it economic to fire up the dipper, so if you have any boxes to be dipped, please let us know asap. We can dip used gear if it is scraped clean of propolis and wax.

Hot wax dipping of boxes is a great way to preserve boxes before they are painted. There is a cost of \$5 per box. Please email info@beehive.org.nz if you have boxes to be dipped.

And, as also advised, we are offering to collect and dispose of any old beekeeping gear that is surplus to your requirements. Again, please email info@beehive.org.nz your name, address for hive-ware collection and amount of gear to be collected i.e. estimate of number of boxes, bin bags etc.

Any enquiries to John Burnet 0274-379-062.



Old gear like this.....maybe



Varroa Treatments available through the Club

Club has a stock of various varroa treatments at present:

- Apivar (amitraz-based) - \$50 for pack of 12 – two strips required per brood box.
- ApiLifeVar – thymol-based) - \$1 per pack of two wafers – one wafer between brood boxes cut into four sections. Repeat after 3-4 weeks.
- Oxalierine strips (oxalic acid-based) - \$15 for pack of 20 strips or \$55 for pack of 80. Three-four strips per brood box.
- Formic Pro (formic acid-based) - \$9 for pack of 2 strips. Shipment expected shortly. Two strips between brood boxes.

Please talk to John Burnet at the club meeting.



Get rid of these pesky nuisances now!



Hive site available in Karori

Stephen Hogg is keen to offer a good site for anyone who might want to put a hive/hives on a lifestyle block at 60 South Makara Road. Tel 0277554439.

Golden Rod

Some of you will know of the plant Golden Rod and some of you may have picked up a piece of the rhizome at the meeting last month. Golden Rod is the name for a group of plants in the sunflower family, usually in reference to the genus *Solidago*. Golden Rod is a very useful bee flower, flowering as it does at the end of summer. It is a native of North America and a mainstay of the American honey harvest.

The plant is also a great spreader, the rhizomes can spread a very long way and are very hard to get rid of. It is not a pest plant in Aotearoa New Zealand, but it has the potential to become so if it gets out of hand.

So, be very careful where you plant it, preferably keep it in a pot and dispose of all parts of the plant carefully.



Solidago nemoralis



What's Coming Up?

October – Phil Lester and some of his research students will present the latest in their varroa research

November – Photo competition with Simon Woolf to judge

December – Christmas social, Christmas quiz and the mead competition. Richard Braczek will be judging the mead this year.

Who can I speak to?

President – Janine Davie president@beehive.org.nz

Treasurer – Eva Durrant treasurer@beehive.org.nz

Secretary – Jane Harding 027 421 2417 secretary@beehive.org.nz

Membership – John Burnet – 0274-379-062

Web Master - Jason Bragg - (021 527 244)

Supper co-ordinator - Barbara Parkinson – (04) 2379624

Swarm WhatsApp Administrator - Jim Hepburn (021 926823)

Newsletter Editor - Jane Harding - 027 421 2417