



THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

Bimonthly newsletter for
THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

Better Apiculture Through Knowledge

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NOTES FROM TOCAL FIELD DAY 24th October 2009 from Jim Wright

This, the 30th beekeepers' field day at Tocal Agricultural College, involved the participation of original founders of the event, Bob Gulliford and Bill Winner. Bruce Ward and the late Alan Clemson were founding fathers, and Bruce White had early involvement. Penders Beekeeping Supplies have always had a presence. In his introduction, the MC, Bob Gulliford said that they originally met on a hill in the open and moved to the present auditorium when it became available. It was and still is a joint venture of the CB Alexander College (Tocal), the Department of Agriculture (now Department of Primary Industries), the NSW Apiarists' Association and the Amateur Beekeepers' Association of NSW. Attendance is usually 90-100, the highest 140. Today the auditorium was again full to overflowing with well over 100.

Hive Manipulation for Beginners.

Nick Annand and Doug Somerville

This session, in the field, is perhaps the most popular and important of all. Nick began by outlining the basic biology of the honeybee, the equipment required for management, the code of practice for suburban beekeeping and the importance of protective gear for beginners. Volunteers who had never opened a hive were then dressed appropriately and before the session was over, they had! For the first time two hives were opened simultaneously with Nick Annand supervising one and Doug Somerville the other. Observers participated as frames were passed around.

The importance of hands-on practical learning was emphasised and the best way to get it is to join an active beekeeping association.

Demonstration of Honey Extraction.

John Humphries

This session, in a gazebo in the field, was conducted by the Hunter Valley Branch of the Amateur Beekeepers' Association of NSW with assistance of members of the Hunter Apiarists' Association. John Humphries extracted several frames of honey, explaining the process with added information from Bob Gulliford.

(There was not a bee in the gazebo!)

ABA Annual Field Day hosted by Nepean Branch on 27th February 2010

Nepean High School. 10 min walk from Emu Plains railway station. There is ample parking within the school grounds.

Speakers to be arranged.

**Our major enemy, Hive beetle
Swarm removal/catching
BBQ lunch.**

**Practical demo on foundation making.
Demo on finding a queen and marking her.**

Handling Your Honey. Bill Winner (Capilano)

With 19 years experience with the honey packing firm, Capilano, co-author of the B-Qual manual and author of the Capilano quality control manual, Bill Winner detailed standards required in the processing of honey. He first outlined simple measures, hand washing, disposal of rubbish in open bins, use of white buckets for food (honey) and coloured ones for rubbish and good rodent control and then emphasised the importance of keeping detailed records. Pictures of extraction sheds and major honey processing plants illustrated features such as yellow walls, electrical leads suspended from above, floors of industrial vinyl (honey etches concrete) and the use of stainless steel equipment. Such processes follow standards for food production based on HACCP principles ("Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point"). Honey supplied to Capilano must be free of banned chemicals such as carbolic, PDB (Paradichlorobenzene), insecticides and of contamination by hybrid crops. (In answer to a question it was pointed out that honey has no DNA but there is DNA in pollen residue which is always in honey.) If oxytetracycline (OTC) antibiotic has been used to combat European Foul Brood, this must be indicated.

Extract only capped honey (at least two thirds of the comb capped) as nectar has more than 19% water and will ferment. Some honeys such as bloodwood are dilute and will ferment even in the comb cell.

Honey processed by Capilano is heated briefly to 54 degrees C and rapidly cooled to 38 degrees, just above hive temperature (34-35). There are 154 volatile substances in honey and overheating reduces these and changes colour.

continued overleaf

from previous page

Honeybee Nutrition, the Importance of Pollen. Doug Somerville.

((A background of the basic biochemistry of nutrition will help in understanding what follows. For a healthy diet bees (and humans) need carbohydrate (sugars and starches), protein, fats, minerals and vitamins. Honey is the bees' carbohydrate, made from sucrose (cane sugar) which is broken down by the enzyme in the bees honey stomach to smaller molecules, glucose and fructose. Pollen is the source of their protein and fat. Proteins are made up of chains of amino acids, some of which are essential to life. Fats are made of glycerol and fatty acids, some of which are also essential to life. Since no one pollen provides all the essential amino acids and fatty acids, the bee must source a variety of pollens for a balanced life sustaining diet, just as we must have a variety of protein sources; we cannot "live on bread alone."))

Three or four pollen sources most of the year round will provide adequate nutrition, but volume is important; bees need a lot of a poor pollen and less of a good one rich in nutritional value. Protein content of pollens varies from 8% to 40%, less than 20% is poor. Ten amino acids are essential to bees. Most of the pollen collected is consumed by nurse bees 3-6 days old, and they still need it to 15-18 days. A colony may consume 50-100 grams of pollen a year.

Pollen has high moisture content and will deteriorate quickly; if collected it must be freeze dried.

It is significant to note that a lot of Australian native plants do not provide adequate nutrition for the honeybee which evolved in Europe with different flora.

Good sources of pollen include:

Paterson's Curse (28-30%), Spotty Gum (25%-30%), Gorse, Scribbly Gum, Lupin, Banksia, Vipers Bugloss. Medium or Average: Wattle (25%-30%), Apple Box, River Red Gum (26%), Sydney Blue Gum (37%), Canola (24%).

Poor: Pinewood, Sunflower, "Egg & Bacon", Silky Oak, Casuarina.

There is much more to learn about fatty acids. Some are essential for insects to communicate with each other.

"What we are is what we eat" References: The book "Fat Bees, Skinny Bees", Website www.rirdc.gov.au

Seasonal Management. Bruce White

There are many variations and seasonal management methods; these are the guiding principles.

Bees are subject to temperature and climate. The hive temperature is about 34 degrees C; the outside

temperature dictates flying activity, when and how far the bees will fly.

The availability and the quality of flora are critical to management practices, and the beekeeper needs to be able to recognise such quality. Look at the trees in bloom; if there are no bees on it or if bees there do not linger there can't be much nectar. If bees are there and stay a time with each flower, there is a good flow. Listen to the hive; a buzz means the bees are fanning nectar to dry it out. Look in the hive and see if there is fresh nectar. Note the number of bees; if there is a good pollen flow they will breed well.

**Start preparing now
for our Association
AGM & Inter-Branch
Colonel Pulling Competition**
We hope more branches will consider
entering this year?

Bees in suburban situations do well all year round because of the variety of accessible flora.

ALL YEAR ROUND:

Check hives for pests and diseases; use the resources of the Department for identification of problems.

If colonies are weak, find out why.

WINTER:

Place hives in a sunny position, in shade bees are prone to Nosema.

Down size, leaving adequate honey stores for winter, at least five frames.

Wax moth control: If storing, fumigate with phostoxin, or, leave on a hive with an incomplete layer of plastic below so the bees can get up and control the pest.

SPRING:

Feed with sugar syrup 50/50 by volume; starvation can be a problem as numbers rapidly increase in spring.

Requeen

Late spring extraction of honey

Add super(s) with foundation, replacing combs every 3-4 years

Continue surveillance for disease.

SUMMER:

Check that the queen is laying

Requeen if aggressive

Comb replacement

Extract when possible

AUTUMN:

Reduce size, 3 decks to 2, (most winter with 2 decks), or with a single deck, compact bees, frames should be covered with bees.

Continue surveillance for diseases

Feed with sugar syrup (now 2:1 sugar:water so the bees do not have to expend a lot of energy drying it out) or use dry white sugar.

Pests and Diseases:

Doug Somerville and Nick Annand

This is a short summary of a two day course on diseases of the honeybee to be held at Tocal on 21st-22nd October 2010.

Brood Diseases:

- Bacterial: Foul Brood - American and European
- Fungal: Chalkbrood
- Viral: Sacbrood

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American foul Brood, a notifiable disease of brood:
Caused by a spore bearing organism related to Anthrax.
Spores remain viable for decades.

Infected larvae turn brown and “rope” when a match stick is placed in the cell and withdrawn. The larva dies in the base of the cell. Infected hives must be burned or irradiated. European Foul Brood: The larva dies of starvation, wanders in the cell and dies anywhere leaving black scale in the base. There is no “roping.”

Samples can be sent to a laboratory to diagnose AFB or EFB, but the lab will not indicate if it is chalk or sac brood.

Adult Bee Diseases:

- Nosema caused by a protozoon, now called microsporidium.
 - Virus Diseases
- Nosema: There are two species, Nosema apis which appears in spring and Nosema ceranae which can occur

all year round. They weaken bees and shorten their life span. They probably bear a causal relationship with Colony Collapse Disorder.

Viruses: There are many and are being studied in relation to CCD. They take advantage of weakened colonies.

Pests:

These include cane toads in Queensland, mice, wax moth, European wasp and until the advent of the Small Hive Beetle these were just a nuisance.

Non-Infectious conditions include neglected brood, pesticides, chilled brood.

Exotic pests include Varroa mite, Tropilaelaps (Asian mite), Braula fly, Asian bees, Africanised bees, Cape bees.

A surveillance programme is in place to detect arrival of exotic pests and an incursion response is set out in the Ausvet Plan.

Our thanks to Jim Wright for taking these notes

Fees for 2010 These were set at the ABA Council meeting at Tocal held 24-Oct-09.

Despite insurance premium increases of between 3% and 5% all but one fee remains the same. The fees set for personal insurance will only be viable if most members elect personal insurance. Given that \$35 or \$40 represents some seven jars of honey and provides a cover of \$20 million as Members Individual Liability Insurance I would encourage all members to take up this insurance.

Cover for both ABA Branch Liability Insurance and Members Individual Liability Insurance has been maintained at \$20 million.

The ABA Membership Fee covers the ABA Branch Liability Insurance.

The Optional Members Individual Liability Insurance covers personal beekeeping activities and is priced on the number of hives.

The fees for 2010 are as follows:

Joining date	ABA Membership Fee	Members Individual Liability Insurance (from 01-Jan to 31-Dec)		
		1 to 20 hives	1 to 50 hives	1 – to 100 hives
Before 20-Dec-09 “early bird” discount	\$35	\$35	\$50	\$70
21-Dec-09 to 30-Jun-10 Full Year Fee	\$40	\$40	\$55	\$75
Members Individual Liability Insurance (from 01-Jul to 31-Dec)				
01-Jul-10 to 31-Dec-10 Half Year Fee	\$20	\$20	\$27.50	\$37.50

All fees are for either a full calendar year or for the second half of a calendar year. Insurance limitations prevent membership for part of one year and part of the next year for example for October 2009 through to December 2010.

Current insurance cover ceases on 31st December 2009. There is no automatic cover extended into 2010 while members or clubs arrange to pay.

For members to have continuous insurance cover and to attract the “early bird” discount a cheque from the club to cover club members ABA membership fee along with their Optional Member Individual Liability Insurance fee must reach the ABA before 20-Dec-09. Please send the club cheque and the member list to myself, ABA Secretary, Dave Wilson, 126a Sutherland Rd Beecroft 2119 to reach me before 20-Dec-09.

To help the hard working club Treasurers/Membership Officers I attach a current membership list with sections available for the member details to be added/amended and confirmed correct along with a with a record of payment and a receipt number. This membership list should be copied and the original returned with the club cheque. Using this list provides me with ABA ID number of members and will ensure that I can identify each member accurately and will greatly facilitate my work of making the database for 2010 accurate.

After your membership is added to the database a report will be generated for your club and emailed to you. Please check that my membership records for next year exactly match your own. Your cheque will be forwarded to the treasurer for banking. Life members previously approved by ABA have their ABA Membership fee covered by the ABA though they must pay for any Optional Member Individual Liability Insurance they elect. Please ensure they are on the list with their member status noted.

Club treasurers need to be aware that the receipt they write is the proof of insurance payment. The receipt must state: “ABA Membership Fee 2010 \$??” and if appropriate “Individual Liability Insurance 2010 \$??”. The club MUST keep a copy of their receipts and the member MUST keep their copy as proof of insurance.

If you have a question or a concern please send me an email or give me a ring.

Cheers, Dave Wilson ABA Secretary drwilson@tpg.com.au or 02 9484 2596

Vale Derek Humphreys

Derek was a long term member of the Hunter Valley branch. He passed away on 18/10/09.

Born in England 82 year ago he was a very knowledgeable beekeeper. After migrating he worked at BHP Newcastle as a blast furnace man. Many members of other Branches, though they do not realise it, would have been influenced by him. He was responsible, with others, for organising several Tocal Beekeepers Field days.

Around 1992-3 the Hunter Valley Branch nearly folded. The branch met in a Church Hall on Monday nights. These meetings became heated with beekeeping playing a very minor role. The attendance dropped to less than 10. The Branch had six 2 deck hives on a property that most members had not visited and a few spare boxes in a members garage.

To remedy the position Derek took the initiative to reorganise the branch. As a long term volunteer at the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens he approached the Gardens management to get their agreement to the branch meeting at the Gardens on a Sunday morning and to move the Branch hives into a bush location on the Gardens (the gardens have 140 hectares of native bushland.) This was agreed to and in 1994 the move was made.

The Branch operates a display at the Newcastle Regional Show and at the Tocal Small Field Days. These were organised with Derek being the leader of many of these. Several were run by only 5-6 members. These gained the branch a steady flow of new recruits to beekeeping. Many were beginners who learnt the craft on the Branch hives under Derek's eye. These formed the nucleus for the regeneration of the Branch.

Though for the last few years health diminished Derek's attendance at Branch functions, the vitality of the Branch is a testament to his influence. Current meeting attendance is 25 - 35 with the branch apiary of 15+ hives.

Ray Bohlsen

Northern Rivers Branch

President/Secretary: Merv McDonald 66283687

Treasurer: Peter Dickson-Smith 66492009

Illawarra Branch

REMINDER: our meeting formats and the commencement times have changed.

Committee and night meeting will be held on the same night.

President: Ken Simpson

Treasurer: Joan Bell 95250552

Central Coast Branch

Meetings held on 3rd Wednesday of the month commencing 7.30pm at SOHIER COMMUNITY HALL, entry off Shirley Rd., Ourimbah, on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Starting time 7.30pm.

All things relevant for amateur beekeepers. New visitors are more than welcome to attend.

President: Martin Roberts (02) 43721381

Secretary: Toni Mitchell (02) 43321597

THE ASSOCIATION'S FINANCIAL YEAR FINISHES ON THE 31st DECEMBER

Macarthur Beekeepers Assoc Inc

Meetings at Jack Nash reserve at 7:30 pm

President: Bruce Wallis 9605 6688

Field days at Campbelltown apiary at 9:00 am

Treasurer: Jean Haavasalu 46818540

Secretary: Barry Austen 48 851 705

Nepean Branch Inc.

Sunday December 13. We will have a short theory session about how to prepare your hive for an extraction session. We will then proceed to practice the lesson in small groups. After which we will have a debrief session over our BYO Lunch.

Sunday January 17. Extracting and discussing plans for our hosting the annual field day. BYO Lunch.

Further info: Ring Eddie on 4751 3941 or 0408 024 295 or e-mail: sijnstra@tpg.com.au

Sunday Feb 14 Final plans for hosting the annual field day. If you can not attend, please stay in touch via my e-mail or phone (sms) if you must. Hive manipulation as needed, just for practice. BYOL

President: Eddie Sijnstra (02) 4751 3941

Secretary: Paul Richardson (02) 4739 0381

Hunter Valley Branch

Meetings held fourth Sunday in the month at Hunter Region Botanic Gardens.

"Equipment from Les Makin: Members of the executive met before the meeting and priced the items for sale to members,

putting a minimum price of approx. half new prices. The list will be circulated before the January meeting and members wishing to view and purchase particular items asked to come to the shed at 9am on that day prepared to make specific offers in a sealed envelope. The sale will be awarded to the best offer, but it will not be an auction."

President: Ted Flower (02) 49681483

Secretary: Jim Wright (02) 4959 3138

Parramatta District Branch

2nd Wednesday of month. Field Day on following Sunday. Meetings held at James Ruse High School Ag Section, Carlingford

Meetings in Agriculture classroom – field days in club apiary – entrance via Baker St. Wednesday meetings 7:30 pm start.

Secretary Dave Wilson 94842596 Treasurer: Norm Webb Extractors Claudio Natoli 9629 9621 Ray Szymanski 98692400

The Amateur Beekeeper is the newsletter for The Amateur Beekeepers' Association of New South Wales Incorporated.

Contributions to The Amateur Beekeeper are welcome. Material must be submitted, in writing, to the Editor before the 15th of month to be considered to inclusion in The Amateur Beekeeper the following issue or subsequent issues at the Editor's discretion. Articles published do no necessarily contain the views of the Editor unless specifically expressed and whilst every care is exercised, the Editor and/or Council of ABA (individually or corporately) do not hold themselves responsible for errors or omissions. Information contained in this publication is provided as general advice only. For application to specific circumstances, professional advice should be sought. All inserted material must be booked with the Editor and may not necessarily contain the views of the Editor and/or Council of ABA. © 1998 All material in this newsletter is copyright and cannot be reproduced in part or in full without prior written consent.

