



THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

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

Better Apiculture Through Knowledge

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TOCAL FIELD DAY see page 4
**There will be a committee meeting
of the ABA executive
when the Field Day closes.
All Welcome**

ABA Club Grant Program 2009

Following a suggestion made at the AGM there was discussion about a grant program from the ABA to support clubs. This proposal was moved and passed at the meeting and so clubs applied for a grant. The grant application required clubs to detail equipment that they would buy to support their members and to promote amateur beekeeping. All clubs applied for the grant. The submissions were considered individually by the ABA Executive using the following criteria:

- | |
|--|
| Does the application provide the basic details needed for each of the eight headings |
| Does the application make some explanation as to how the capital items how the item(s) will promote amateur beekeeping and support club members? |
| Does the application make some explanation as to how the success of the item(s) in promoting amateur beekeeping and supporting club members will be measured or assessed? |

If the answer to each question was "yes" then in the opinion of the executive member the grant should be successful. If the majority of the executive approved the grant then the grant was deemed to be successful. All grants from the seven clubs were successful. It was interesting to read the grant applications since it gave me a greater appreciation of the efforts made by individual clubs to support their members and promote amateur beekeeping.

Some extracts from the club's applications are detailed below:

The **Parramatta Branch** is building a new "extracting room" and requested funding for plumbing and electrical fit out of the room. This room is intended to allow honey extraction from club hives to be completed in a larger less cluttered, safer and a cleaner environment. The new space will allow the existing store room to better function as a store and a shop for members.

The **Macarthur Beekeepers** requested funding to purchase a new electric powered extractor. The club will fund the extra needed to complete the purchase.. This club attends a minimum of 11 shows each year and plans to take the extractor to demonstrate to the public equipment associated with modern beekeeping. The new purchase will be good for club spirit and will support the image of the club in the local community.

The **Northern Rivers Branch** aims to purchase some beekeeping "starter kits" including smokers, gloves, bee suits and a smaller three frame extractor. The club has over 40 members, many travelling long distances (200 km is not unusual) to attend meetings/field days. The club has actively promoted beekeeping with media notices and on local radio. The "starter kits" will be available on loan to new members to allow them to get started on beekeeping.

The **Illawarra Branch** is a large well established club that runs an extensive series of "beekeeping tours" over its hives and facilities and provides guest speakers for local schools and community organizations. They requested funds for a laptop computer to facilitate data projector power point presentations as well as using databases and spread sheets to maintain hives and member records

The **Nepean Branch** requested funding to cover the purchase of bee suits, smokers, veils and hive tools to support prospective new members and visitors to field days. They also requested a data projector to support teaching tutorials as well as community presentations. The items will exceed the grant money and the balance will be funded by the club.

The **Hunter Valley Branch** have constructed a basic "extracting room" and like the Parramatta club need resources to line the walls, tile the floor and provide basic sink and wash facilities and electrical power. They aim to have the room meet food preparation standards. As with

other clubs they accept that the cost to complete the project will exceed the grant but will fund the balance from club resources.

The **Central Coast Branch** aim to replace an old “non compliant” extractor with a new for frame stainless steel extractor, a new bee suit and gloves for visitors. The club attends many shows and displays to promote beekeeping and the new equipment will illustrate modern beekeeping equipment. The extractor will be available for members to use as well.

On behalf of the ABA executive I thank for the effort they made in preparing the submissions and wish them well on their projects.

On a personal note I appreciate the emails I received from some clubs commending the ABA on this project and thanking the ABA executive for the time they spent analyzing the grant applications.

The Web Site www.beekeepers.asn.au

Remember that the old ABA Hotline phone system no longer operates. Police, Councils and other agencies that receive requests for swarm collection will refer people to the ABA website with advice to use the “swarm” page and to enter their postcode. If you want to collect swarms this spring and summer you will need to enter your details on the web site using the members page. You will need your user name and password. If this gives you any difficulty then please contact me and I will provide “phone support”. The table summaries the current club numbers and indicates the numbers of members from the clubs using the web based swarm system and the total number of postcodes covered.

Club	Membership	Active Swarm Collectors	Post Codes covered
ABA supporters	7		
Central Coast	23	2	2
Hunter Valley	46	1	4
Illawarra	56	7	57
Macarthur	40	1	7
Nepean	23	1	11
Northern Rivers	38	0	0
Parramatta	59	11	128
totals	292	23	209 (58 duplicates)

Publicity for amateur beekeeping

I was contacted by the Herald recently about amateur beekeeping. A story duly followed with information from myself, Doug Somerville and a photo and comments from Ramesh Snell, a Parramatta member.

Within a day or so interviews were also arranged with ABC Newcastle (Jim Wright), ABC Dubbo (Paul Atkins), ABC Sydney 702 (Bruce White) and by myself on Sydney 2GB. Hopefully clubs should gain some new members and the worth of keeping bees will be boosted. Thanks to those who willingly (and with some persuasion) gave the interview.

Dave Wilson – Secretary

Notes from Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Field Day University of Western Sydney July 8th 2009

Colony Collapse Disorder - Denis Anderson

The number of honeybee colonies worldwide has decreased by 25% since the 1970’s when Varroa first appeared in Europe, having spread from the Korean peninsula and thence to USA, South America, and South Africa. It has reached New Guinea. Varroa is held responsible for the decline in honeybee numbers and causing a 30% increase in production costs. The mite sucks the blood of bees and spreads viruses.

In early 2007 Dave Hackenberg in Pennsylvania reported massive autumn loss of bees, initially calling the phenomenon Fall Dwindle Disease. The name Colony Collapse Disorder was later coined by an American working group. Bees disappear quickly over two weeks but there are no signs of dead bees. Despite good food stores, wax moth and small Hive Beetle are slow to invade collapsed colonies. Many diverse causes or contributing factors have been invoked: Nosema, Varroa, malnutrition, fungi, insecticides, viruses, and irradiation. The fact is that the signs of CCD are the same as for these other conditions.

Denis Anderson believes that *colony collapse events* have been with us in Australia for many years, and prefers to use that term. On one occasion 2,000 colonies died and Nosema was found to be the cause. He advocated looking at the total picture and the changes in the honeybee’s environment: urban sprawl, modern iindustrial agricultural practices, the use of chemicals, movement of bees, international trade.

In answer to a question about Australia’s preparedness for the arrival of Varroa, he said that the greatest threat is from the arrival of a swarm of Apis ceranae carrying the mite, and there are plans to cope. (Varroa infests Apis ceranae, the Asian honeybee which is resistant to it, but it will rapidly jump to Apis mellifera which is very vulnerable.)

Nosema Ceranae in Australia - Michael Hornitzky

Nosema apis has been recognised in Australia since early 1900’s. Nosema ceranae was primarily a parasite of the Asian honeybee, Apis cerana, but in 2005 it was found with Apis mellifera.

The speaker gave details of an extensive search for evidence of Nosema ceranae in Australia, sampling bees from all states. Old bees, collected from the hive entrance and under the lid are collected and processed to detect the organism. N. apis and N. ceranae look the same under light microscopy, but are detectably different using an electron microscope, and they have different DNA sequences.

Nosema ceranae was found in specimens from Queensland (33.7% of samples), NSW (15.8% of samples), Victoria (4.5% of samples), South Australia (4 of 25 samples, all escort bees from NSW). Western Australia and Tasmania were clear, but the parasite has since been found in Tasmania.

It seems that N. Ceranae is taking over from N. Apis. How did N. ceranae get into Australia? Carriage on queen bees is unlikely as they are quarantined and only daughter queens are released, and pollen is unlikely as imported

pollen is irradiated. This leaves unrestricted importation of honey as the likely source.

Relation of Nosema ceranae to Colony Collapse disorder:

The symptoms are similar and all colonies exhibiting CCD have *N. Ceranae*, and 83% had Israel Acute Paralysis virus. It is clear that *N. ceranae* "plays an important role in CCD", but *N. Ceranae* can be present without CCD and there are some differences, such as the absence of evidence of defaecation and crawling bees in CCD.

Research is currently directed to management.

Anti-Varroa Boards and Honey Production - Robert Spooner-Hart

This was a report of a study to determine if special bottom boards designed to trap Varroa decreased honey production. Two types of board were studied, one with a metal mesh bottom and the other with a bottom made of transverse tubes close together, with the hive elevated on short legs. The idea is that the Varroa falls through the bottom board on to a trapping device below. There was no attempt to address the efficacy of the boards in Varroa control, the study being entirely directed to assessing their effect on production.

There was no significant effect, so the boards can be used confidently when Varroa arrives.

The Value -added potential of pre-biotic Components of Australian Honeys - Patricia Conway

A *pre-biotic* was defined as a food which provides nutrients for the essential "friendly" bacteria in the gut. Examples include honey, inulin, Soya oligosaccharides, fructo-oligosaccharides and galacto- oligosaccharides. (Oligosaccharides are carbohydrates made up of linked monosaccharides such as glucose and fructose)

A *pro-biotic* was defined as a food containing live "friendly" bacteria such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* in yoghurt.

The speaker described the bacterial content of the human alimentary tract, emphasising the vast number of organisms in the bowel, especially the large intestine, which normally are not pathogenic, working with us not against us. The study was directed to assessing in the laboratory whether particular bacteria could utilise the oligosaccharides on honey, using honey from all states. The growth of pro-biotic bacteria was tested with honey and a control.

The conclusion was that honey is a very effective pre-biotic, promoting growth of "good" bacteria but not "bad" bacteria. Thus, honey and yoghurt are foods which protect the health of our digestive system.

Small Hive Beetle - Nick Annand

This was a detailed report of Nick Annand's research into aspects of Small Hive Beetle behaviour and management:

1. Thresholds for survival and multiplication of the SHB:
SHB thrives in high humidity. At 81-86% 89% of SHB eggs hatch, at 32-34% none hatch. Protein (pollen) is essential for SHB to breed.
2. Susceptibility of weak hives to SHB: Strong hives attract more beetles, but low bee populations allow more damage. Queenless colonies do not attract more beetles.
3. Movement of Beetles in and out of hive:

More movements in October, and two hours before and after sunset.

4. Recovering combs damaged by SHB: Four methods of cleaning combs before replacing for a week in the middle of a super in an active hive; soaking in water for 2 hours, hosing, cold water rinse and no treatment. There was no difference in the outcome, the bees cleaning all combs equally well.

Small Hive Beetle Refuge Traps - Garry Levot

The basic objectives of this research were:

1. To develop an appropriate contact insecticide with no vapour. The best is Fipronil.
2. To develop a delivery system which protects the bees from the insecticide.

An internal harbourage trap consisting of a plastic case containing corrugated cardboard impregnated with insecticide out of reach of the bees' tongues was demonstrated. After one month the insecticide was undetectable in the honey, there was no effect on the bees and 540 beetles were found in the trap achieving a significant reduction in SHB numbers in the hive.

Fipronil is still under patent, not released for such use, but other manufacturers are showing interest. As soon as the chemical is available, efforts will be made to select a commercial partner, an emergency permit for its use will be sought and further residue studies undertaken.

Biological Control of Small Hive Beetle - Diana Leemon, Queensland Primary Industries.

This was a report on the use of fungi to control SHB, provoked by observation of dead beetles in the vicinity of a fungus. The fungi *Metarhizium* and *Beauveria* were studied and a high percentage kill of larvae was noted, but there was a disappointing adult mortality rate. Larvae in the soil are killed quickly, and *Beauveria* particularly warrants further investigation.

"Honeybee Blues" - A film premiere

This is an excellent film, shown here for the first time, featuring Denis Anderson addressing the threats to the honeybee industry posed by "industrial agriculture" (monocultures such as the massive plantations of almonds), pesticides, herbicides, "an increasingly toxic landscape" and the possibility of Varroa arriving in Australia.

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The Central Coast Beekeepers
Are BEELEFT and BEEWILDERED!

For the last few years we have rented a community hall for our monthly meetings. There is a large cupboard shared by everyone where we store our tea things and library books. A couple of months ago SOMEONE decided to clean out the cupboard. Our whole library consisting of many old books, magazines, old minutes, videos, DVD's and photo albums, the whole HISTORY of our club has GONE! We have been told to present a bill to the council but unfortunately some of our books were irreplaceable.

So we BEESEECH you to BEEWARE.
PS We will keep you posted on our progress.

TOTALFIELD DAY Saturday, 24th October 2009

Doug Somerville (NSW DPI)

The annual beekeepers field day held at Tocal Ag College in the Hunter Valley is to be held on Saturday the 24th October. This field day could be the longest continuous beekeeping field day in Australia. It would be interesting if anyone has information to the contrary. It is certainly the longest running field day at Tocal Ag College. This year is the 30th anniversary for this field day. The original field day was started with the input of Alan Clemson (Department of Agriculture), Bob Gulliford (Department of Agriculture) and Bill Winner (Penders Beekeeping Suppliers)and I'm told by Bob that Bruce Ward (Department of Agriculture) also had a fair input into the day. Unfortunately Alan is deceased but Bob and Bill are able to come to the 30th Tocal beekeepers field day and also have active roles in the days proceedings. The Program for the day will be as follows, as always this may change due to unforeseen circumstances.

PROGRAM

- 9:30 Welcome and program out line
Bob Gulliford (retired Apiary Officer)
- 9:45 Hive manipulation for beginners
Nick Annand (NSW DPI, Apiary Officer)
- 10:45 Extracting honey Hunter Valley branch ABA
- 11:00 Handling your honey - Bill Winner
(Beekeeping Services Manager, Capilano)
- 11:45 Honey bee nutrition - the importance of pollen
Doug Somerville
(NSW DPI, Technical specialist Honey bees)
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:30 Seasonal Management - Bruce White
(retired Technical Specialist, Honey bees)
- 2:15 Pests and Disease of Honey Bees
Doug Somerville and Nick Annand (NSW DPI)
- 3:00 Questions and Discussion

The first session conducted by Nick will be for those persons with little knowledge on keeping bees. Very hands on and practical, you should get there early to make sure you don't miss this session. The local Amateur Beekeepers Association will coordinate the

next demonstration on extracting honey in a small way. The club also conducts regular meetings and field days for its members with branches throughout Sydney with a branch in the Hunter Valley. Its well worth becoming a member of this association if you are at all interested in keeping honey bees. Bill Winner has been the Beekeeping Services Manager since 1997 at Capilano Honey, Australia's largest honey packer. He will provide some very valuable advice on looking after honey from the extractor to the jar. Doug will discuss his research on the nutritional values of pollens as they relate honey bee nutritional requirements.

Unfortunately there is no catering for the event so you will need to bring your lunch, morning tea, etc. No protective gear will be provided for the practical bee demonstrations so if this is an issue bring your own veils or jackets.

In the afternoon Bruce White will cover the management issues that you as a beekeeper need to consider over the four seasons. This will be followed by a brief coverage of all the pests and diseases of honey bees in Australia with mention of the major threats to Australian beekeeping. This session will be a summary of the two day course with the same name to be offered by the NSW DPI. The day will finish with a question and discussion session, so if you have any topics that you would like information then that's the time to ask.

Getting there - travel to Maitland, Tocal Ag College is on the road to Paterson about 15 minutes north of Maitland. I should also indicate that Penders beekeeping Goods will be at the field day with merchandise for sale along with other businesses with beekeeping materials for sale. If you want more information on the day contact myself on 02 4828 6619, mobile 0427 311 410, email doug.somerville@dpi.nsw.gov.au or if you are interested in setting up a stand contact Jim Wright the secretary of the Hunter Valley branch of the Amateur beekeepers Association on 02 4959 3138.

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 not 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.

