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Amateur
Beekeepers
Association
NSW

THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS
AUGUST • SEPTEMBER 2021

COVID 19

What you can
and cannot do during
lockdowns

AFB

Get your honey
tested for free

JOIN THE
PROJECT TO
**FIGHT
HONEY FRAUD**

A bad season for
**SMALL HIVE
BEETLE?**





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The *Amateur Beekeeper* is the journal of the Amateur Beekeepers Association of NSW Inc. It is distributed to members six times a year, in December, February, April, June, August and October. Contents are for general information only and should not be taken as legal advice.

The editor will consider adverts from businesses relevant to beekeepers to run free of charge where they contain a discount or special offer to ABA members. Please email editor@beekeepers.asn.au

Do you have a story or photo you'd like to be considered for the next issue.

Send it in to

editor@beekeepers.asn.au

President's report

THE BEST LAID PLANS. . .

Ah, where do I start? Well into our second year of on-again, off-again events, we thought we were in with a chance of holding our AGM and conference in August. But no, it's all off. Luckily we had a backup plan, so the ABA AGM is now scheduled for Saturday October 16 at the Tocal Beekeepers' Field Day.

Sue and I had teams of volunteers from two clubs standing by ready to pack AFB diagnosis kits and membership packs in July, but nothing works as expected when COVID arrives. Lockdown thwarted our plans for Hawkesbury volunteers to set up a full-scale membership pack production line like last year's, but thankfully Blue Mountains volunteers were able to assemble the AFB diagnosis kits in their individual homes.

With no chance of a Hawkesbury production line, I set about combining 3000 AFB kits (thanks Blue Mountains!) and membership cards with 850 kilos of log books and about 10 miles of address labels at home. Wow, it's been a huge task, but I feel like I nearly know you all personally now I've matched up your membership cards and labels!

But enough about me. Let's talk about you...

Lockdown hasn't just caused logistical problems for the member pack distribution, it's also left beekeepers scratching their heads wondering whether it's ok to visit their hives or not.

We've been discussing the rules around the Public Health Orders with the NSW Department of Primary Industries, and fielding plenty of enquiries from members.

We've put together a decision diagram that's included later in this issue (page 5), and we hope you'll find it useful. (Remember, of course, that rules can change regularly, so please check the current situation on your state government health website or app.)

One thing that's become apparent is that many members are not sure whether their beekeeping counts as a business or a hobby. It can be very confusing, as different organisations use different interpretations of what constitutes a "commercial beekeeper". And of course the rules vary from state to state. If you're wondering if your hobby is on the path to becoming a business, this useful page on the Australian Government Business website might help:

business.gov.au/Planning/New-businesses/Difference-between-a-business-and-a-hobby

Rest assured that the ABA welcomes all beekeepers, regardless of whether they consider themselves recreational or commercial. And the ABA's optional Beekeeper's Public and Products Liability Insurance is available to all members who are registered as beekeepers and have fewer than 100 hives.

If you're in NSW and you've had a significant birthday recently, did you know the DPI offers a concession discount on beekeeper registration? dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/beekeeper-registration

There's no charge for updating your registration details.

Looking forward to putting faces to all those membership cards at Tocal in October...

See you there!

Sheila Stokes president@beekeepers.asn.au

THANKS FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR PACK!



Beekeeping during COVID 19 lockdowns

THIS INFORMATION IS CURRENT AT AUGUST 10, 2021, IN NSW. IT IS FOR GENERAL GUIDANCE ONLY. PLEASE CHECK THE CURRENT REGULATIONS APPLYING TO YOUR LOCATION AS PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS CAN CHANGE AT SHORT NOTICE

Recently, registered beekeepers in NSW were sent an email from the Department of Primary Industries outlining who can and cannot leave home to manage their bees. Since then the ABA has heard from many beekeepers who are confused about what they can do. Here, we offer further guidance, after clarifying several points with the DPI.



One thing is very clear: recreational beekeepers must adhere to the current public health orders in place. While the health and welfare of bees is important, please keep uppermost in your mind: rules to protect human health take priority.

IF YOUR BEES ARE AT HOME. It doesn't matter where you live, you can still look after your bees in the backyard of the place where you live. In lockdown areas you may not be able to invite extra people in to help. (Singles may have a designated lockdown buddy.) Consider if you will need extra beekeeping supplies, such as frames, foundation or beetle traps, and order ahead of time for mail or courier delivery. Parcels may take longer than usual to arrive.

IF YOUR BEES ARE NEARBY If you live in a lockdown area, a reasonable excuse to leave home, as listed by the NSW state government, is "exercise and recreation". Hobby beekeeping is recreation and so is permitted – but you **MUST** follow all rules around how far you can travel (for instance five or 10 kilometres, or within your LGA, depending on your zone), who with, and practice safe behaviours at all times. Plan out your trip to minimise contacts with others.

IF YOUR BEES ARE NOT NEARBY. The main problem for recreational beekeepers at the moment is for those who have bees outside the zone where they are permitted to travel for exercise or recreation. For instance, this would be a recreational beekeeper in Sydney who has a few hives located, say, on the Central Coast.

You are **NOT** allowed to travel long distances and therefore cannot personally manage your bees while current restrictions apply.

DPI COVID SUPPORT TEAM ADVICE: TO RECREATIONAL BEEKEEPERS

"Recreational operators (DPI recreational registration) are required to adhere to the Public Health Order and stay at home. Given the current health risks, there is nothing in the NSW Biosecurity Act that compels recreational beekeepers to breach, or be exempt from, the Public Health Order.

DPI will not be enforcing registration requirements on recreational beekeepers who have been impacted by the COVID-19 lockdowns.

At this time, DPI considers that the human health risk posed by COVID-19 outweighs the biosecurity risks posed by recreational beekeeping. Should the situation change DPI will advise accordingly.

Bee-swarm Removal

The removal of swarms can occur as this is an important role in community safety. Operators should follow all mask wearing, hygiene and social distancing requirements. You should travel with evidence of being requested to assist with the removal of a swarm."

If you are caught in this situation, maybe you know someone who lives close to your hives who you could ask to manage them? Or perhaps consider if there is a local beekeeping group who may be able to advise? The ABA has 33 affiliated clubs in its network. Check out where they are at beekeepers.asn.au/find-a-club

SWARMS Collecting swarms is regarded as an essential community service and so IS allowed. If you are asked to collect a swarm, carry proof that you left your home to do this. That could be a recent text message from the person requesting help or details with their name and address written in your log book. Be especially careful, minimise your contact with others, and follow COVID-safe behaviours.

BIOSECURITY OBLIGATIONS NSW DPI recognises that beekeepers affected by the lockdowns may not be able to meet all the legal requirements of their registration as a beekeeper – such as carrying out regular full brood inspections. It will not be penalising beekeepers caught up in COVID lockdown restrictions.

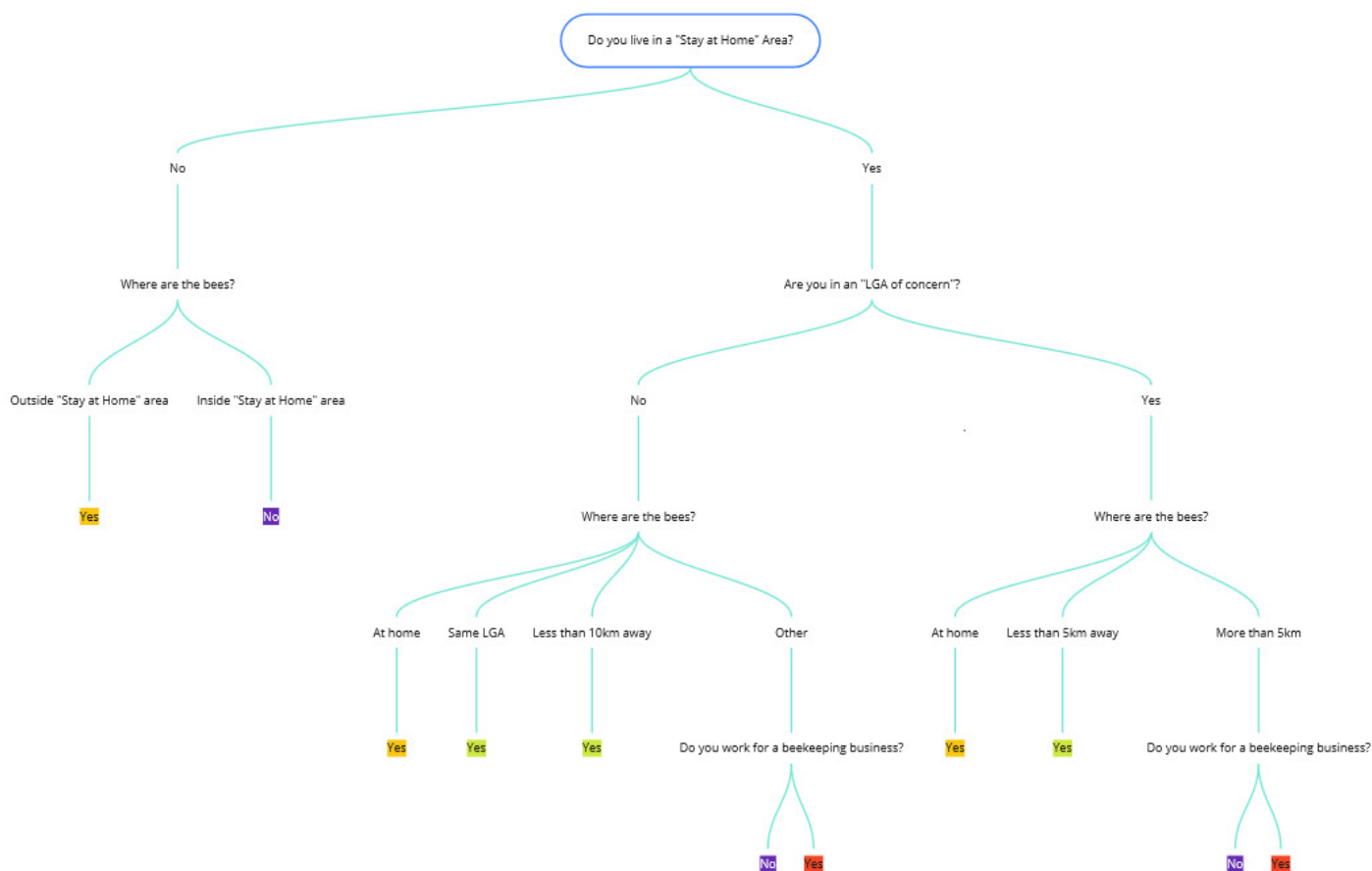
THE ABA HAS CREATED A DECISION TREE. SEE NEXT PAGE

Beekeeping in NSW lockdowns

Use this decision tree to work out how Public Health Orders apply to your beekeeping

Compiled August 10

Check your current restrictions at nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules



You can continue as normal

RECREATION
You can work your hives with one other person
Do not share a car with anyone you don't live with

WORK
You must comply with your business's COVID Safe Plan

Authorities won't be penalising beekeepers who cannot meet their Code of Practice obligations due to the lockdown

"Stay at Home" areas
as at 10 August 2021
Armidale, Ballina, Byron, City of Lismore, Richmond Valley, Newcastle, Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Port Stephens, Singleton, Tamworth, Greater Sydney, Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong, Shellharbour

"LGAs of concern"
as at 10 August 2021
Blacktown, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Georges River, Liverpool, Parramatta and some suburbs of Penrith local government areas



BIOSECURITY

Get your honey tested – for FREE!

Now you can get your apiary screened for microscopic evidence of AFB. Join this ABA project – limited places available

THE ABA is inviting members located in NSW to submit a sample of honey so it can be screened for evidence of AFB. Spores of this fatal bee disease may be present in a hive before signs can be detected by visual inspection. Laboratory screening is an important way of catching problems before they become fatal.

Now, in a special project run by the ABA in collaboration with NSW DPI, a limited number of recreational beekeepers can get their honey tested for free

Individual results remain confidential between the ABA's biosecurity officer and the beekeeper submitting the sample, but generalised data will help scientists track AFB hotspots and develop plans to minimise spread. And if your honey is clear, that's important news too – not just for you and your bees but it will help map changes to infection levels across the state over time.

To participate: you must be in NSW and have a 110 gram sample of honey collected from one or more of your own hives last time you extracted.

If you wish to participate, send your honey (it must be packaged securely) to:

Bruce White, 14 Rondelay Drive, Castle Hill, 2154.

Do NOT stick an identifying label on the jar. Instead attach a sheet with an elastic band that includes:

- your name, email and phone number
- how many hives the honey was extracted from and when
- the apiary location (town or postcode).

Please double check that the honey sample is at least 110 grams. (Underweight samples cannot be accurately analysed so will be excluded from the project.)

Bruce will code each sample, retain the beekeeper's identifying details and then deliver the honey to NSW DPI's Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute. EMAI diagnosticians test honey for *Paenibacillus larvae* spores by culture, the most reliable and recommended method.

A test result of '1+' indicates 60% likelihood of AFB disease in the hives from which the honey was extracted, '2+' indicates 80% likelihood, and '3+' indicates virtually 100% likelihood.

When Bruce receives each set of results he contacts the beekeeper to give guidance on their next steps to manage the affected hives.

The honey analysis and follow up advice is free. (The test normally costs \$37.37.) All you pay for is the postage to mail your sample to Sydney. Limited places available on this project, so don't delay.

To read about how honey is tested for evidence of AFB, go to the [August/September 2020 issue of The Amateur Beekeeper](#).

Back issues of the association's bimonthly journal, packed with interesting and informative stories are available at beekeepers.asn.au/tab

42nd Annual

Free
event

2021 Tocal Beekeepers' Field Day



Saturday 16 October at Tocal College and online from 9am

Over 13 presenters confirmed including:

- Ashley Zamek - Hort innovation
- Jody Gerdts - Bee Scientifics
- Dan Cook - QUT
- Mel Parker - Beekeeper
- Dr Cooper Schouten - SCU, Bees for Sustainable Livelihoods - ACIAR
- Soumi Paul Mukopadhyay - NSW DPI
- Tobias Smith - Native bee expert
- Belinda O'Rourke - EMAI Disease Diagnostics
- Fiona Chambers - When Bee Foundation
- Anneliese Austin SCU - Bees for Sustainable Livelihoods - ACIAR

FREE ENTRY, Covid-19 Safe, over 18 exhibitors with both bee equipment and food stalls, and live bee demonstrations

Hear about the new publication from Tocal College, *Products of the Hive*



For more information

Follow us! 

www.fb.me/TocalBees

Email: tocal.bees@dpi.nsw.gov.au



Department of
Primary Industries

Tocal
COLLEGE
RTO 91166



Amateur
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NSW

EDUCATION

Tocal Beekeepers' Field Day 2021

Save the date: Saturday October 16

It's been an annual event for over 40 years: a day out at Tocal College, the DPI's agricultural education venue in the Hunter Valley, where hundreds of beekeepers gather to listen, learn, shop for essentials and bargains, and meet fellow enthusiasts and old friends.

Organisers have been busy lining up a range of speakers from industry and research, and devising a programme of practical demonstrations that cater for all interests and levels of experience.

Presentations will be live streamed to make the event accessible to everyone who cannot get there in person or if COVID-19 restrictions prevent the face-to-face event from safely taking place. Last year the event was live streamed for the first time, with beekeepers able to pick and choose whether they participated all day or just for one or two talks.

So mark Saturday October 16 in your diary. This is a free event. And for many beekeepers, a must-do on their calendar of

activities before the season gets too busy.

The ABA is a joint organiser of the event and is planning to hold its postponed annual general meeting in conjunction with the Field Day.

The ABA will update all members with details of the programme nearer to the date and, of course, will let everyone know if arrangements for the in-person event need to be changed.



RECIPE

French honey loaf

225 g honey
225 g caster sugar
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
250 ml (1 cup) boiling water
450 g (3 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
2 teaspoons ground ginger
pinch salt
butter, to serve

- Preheat oven to 120 C
- Grease and line a 10 x 21 cm loaf (bar) tin with baking paper. Set your oven shelf to the lower third of the oven so the top of the loaf won't overbrown
- Place honey and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer with a paddle attachment
- Mix the bicarbonate of soda and boiling water in a jug and pour in
- Mix on low speed until the honey dissolves
- Sift flour, ground ginger and salt into a bowl and add to mixer
- Mix on low speed until flour is incorporated, then mix on medium speed for 1 minute until it becomes a smooth batter
- Bake for 2½ hours until the centre springs back when gently pressed
- To serve, slice thinly and spread with butter



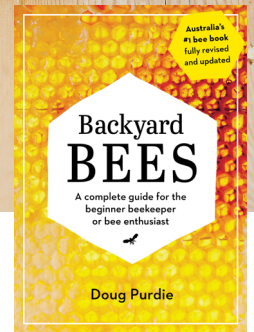
Keeps for 5 days in an airtight container.

If hot or humid, store in the refrigerator.

Preparation: 10 mins

Cooking: 2½ hours

Serves 12



FROM THE NEW AND REVISED EDITION OF DOUG PURDIE'S BACKYARD BEES, AVAILABLE FROM GOOD BOOK RETAILERS ON AUGUST 31, OR PRE-ORDER FROM BOOKTOPIA.

POLLINATION NEWS

Spring, bees and blossoms

It takes billions of honey bees to pollinate Australia's almonds

This year's almond pollination season sees commercial beekeepers moving some 277,000 hives from around the country into almond orchards across Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. The season is brief, with beekeepers paid up to \$160 per hive for the work of their bees in a six-week period in late winter. Without this vast army of workers that are trucked in and moved on once the fruit have set, Australia's expanding almond industry would struggle – the wind and other insects living in or near the orchards simply couldn't get the job done successfully or on such a large scale.

More than 70 per cent of commercial bee hives in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia are involved in pollinating Australian almond trees this season.

For more on managing bees for pollination services, go to extensionaus.com.au/professionalbeekeepers/almond-pollination-hive-management/





Blame it on the beetle!

NSW Department of Primary Industries

Bee Biosecurity Officer Rod Bourke explains how to get the upper hand in the war against SHB



This past season has seen a large increase in numbers of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) observed in NSW beehives. There have been many reports of SHB forcing colonies to abscond and taking over and sliming out their hives. This has particularly been the case in coastal regions and especially where flooding events earlier this year caused the demise of many bee colonies.

Unfortunately SHB are here to stay and will be worse in some years (wetter ones) than others. This past year was a great one for them. Being that SHB are so opportunistic they're going to make the most of any easy target, and among the easiest of targets is a weakened bee colony.

Many beekeepers have told me how "hive beetles killed the beehive".

When I ask a few more questions it's alarming how many of those hives were not managed properly. The number of brood checks were nil or last undertaken the previous season, the hive had swarmed "a few months before" or they "had not seen many bees around for a while".

Many of those situations were highly preventable if only the beekeeper had undertaken an appropriate amount of work managing their bees properly.

More importantly they wouldn't have bred up all those extra beetles that then went on to wreak more havoc for other beekeepers.

The main reasons that hives become overrun by beetles often revolve around stress. If a hive has a high loading of beetles then just opening it up and pulling it apart (to do brood checks or under-super) can be sufficient disruption to give beetles the opportunity they need to defeat the colony of bees and get the high-protein prize contained in the brood frames.

When working good hives you will often see large groups of beetles corralled into an area under the hive mat or comb area between boxes or excluder. The bees have worked tirelessly to drive those beetles into that prison. While they are contained they pose very little risk to the colony. The moment the beekeeper disturbs all that hard work and the beetles escape, they immediately become a major risk.

While a hive may contain a number of SHB devices or traps, these devices will often not completely control the beetles, and at times the numbers of SHB can still become very high. When experienced beekeepers see lots of beetles in the top box they generally accept that working that hive will be counterproductive. The best approach is to add a couple (more) beetle traps around where the beetles were concentrated and close the hive back up. If you haven't disturbed the bees too much then they will very quickly get back to herding beetles.

The next day (or site visit) there could be HUNDREDS of beetles inside each trap, and, due to the sheer volume of SHB, not all of them may be dead. It is best to quickly get those traps into a large Ziplock bag

FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT
RESEARCH AGENCY



SLIME OUT:

When SHB larvae defecate in a hive's honey stores, causing honey to ferment, froth and ooze out of the comb. Along with secretions from SHB, this mixture turns to slime, coating frames and boxes and making it impossible for the colony to recover



and freeze them to kill any live beetles. If there are still lots of beetles in the hive then add new traps and close it up again. If the beetle loading has dropped right off it may now be safe to work that hive.

Always remember that if there are lots of beetles around (and you don't want to risk losing the hive) then the best thing you can do is not work it until you have thinned the SHB out.

That doesn't mean you just don't ever work the hive, it just means you need to deal with the beetles first and then work your bees.

Another great way that beekeepers can cause slime-outs is by allowing hives to swarm, then not managing the remaining colony size (adjusting the amount of space/honey for the reduced number of bees to adequately protect) and queen status, and then allowing the colony to dwindle. At many steps through the swarming process the colony will be under stress and therefore very attractive and vulnerable to SHB. Mismanagement of spring hives and failed recovery from swarming is a major pathway to slime-outs, and breeds up more beetles along the coast as the weather starts to warm up.

Preventing swarming often prevents the SHB issue, so by keeping your bees strong and with younger queens you can reduce the risk.

Everybody wants queens in spring, but a lot of successful beekeepers actually do most of their re-queening work over summer and, depending on their location, through to the end of Feb-April. New queens are unlikely to swarm the next spring (unless you do everything wrong), so they are an absolute pleasure to manage in spring when the older queens are wanting to head for the trees.

As well as those listed beekeeper and hive management related issues causing SHB damage, there is another big one . . . neglected colonies, which often end up being prime SHB targets as they dwindle.

The even scarier point is that an unknown number of these "hive beetles killed my beehive" situations probably also involved American Foulbrood (AFB) as part of the background story.

For frequently managed bee colonies, most AFB is (hopefully) found when the infection is still relatively new. For colonies that get only a spring and autumn brood check, the infection can have progressed much further and the colony may have already dwindled severely before identified as diseased. For colonies that are neglected and receive even fewer (or no brood checks), AFB will run its full course.

These unmanaged colonies are far more at risk of SHB attack. As the colony progressively becomes both stressed and weakened by AFB it will be targeted by robber bees and SHB, causing a double whammy of AFB to be spread and a breeding boom of SHB. A lot of hives that beekeepers put down as "being killed by SHB" were already infected by AFB. So for a couple of reasons they were already a major biosecurity risk.

As a slimed out beehive is often a horrible mess (and potentially harmful to our health because of the *Kodamaea* yeast in the slime) many beekeepers don't spend time examining the brood frames. In their eyes "hive beetles killed my beehive" and the story basically stops there. Unfortunately this mishandling of the equipment fuels the later re-emergence of AFB infections. If you cannot 100 per cent identify and determine what killed your hive, assume the worst and treat it like it was AFB!

I have spoken to quite a few beekeepers who've inspected the brood of slimed beehives and found clear signs of AFB in the mess. Often these were operators doing adequate hive management each season.

If a lot of good beekeepers are finding AFB in slime-outs then it is likely a high percentage of "mystery slime-outs" are also caused by an emerging AFB infection in that colony.

If you get a slime-out, the best thing to do is immediately block the hive up, bag it, freeze it (to kill all stages of SHB) and then decide if you will burn the whole lot or irradiate and clean up the mess later. Often it is actually better to just burn most of it.

As anyone who has had to clean up a slime-out would know, it can be a horrible job, so try to prevent it at all costs. I would much rather deal with an AFB hive (at least you can extract the honey), irradiate and reuse it than deal with the slimy mess that same hive may become a month or two later if not managed properly.

Therefore make it a priority to do a MINIMUM of two full brood checks each season (if not a few more), manage your queen and keep on top of beetle numbers.

Rod Bourke can be contacted on 0438 677 195 or rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au



Membership tips and kits

Here's what's new in 2021/22

A whole beekeeping year:

This is the first year your ABA membership runs from July to the following June. The change has been a long while coming, but now you don't have to worry about renewing over the busy mid summer season.

Understand the insurance:

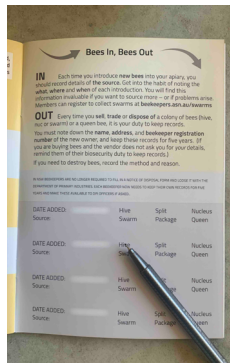
Certificates of Currency are emailed to members the month after purchasing insurance. So it pays to plan ahead if you are considering any activities such as a market stall where you will need to show evidence of insurance. Individual certificates, once issued, are downloadable at beekeepers.asn.au/portal, where you can also manage your listing on the **Swarm Collector Register**. Remember: listing is free, you can list relevant postcodes, you must be a registered beekeeper, and you must offer your services for free or for nominal expenses.

New sections in the log book

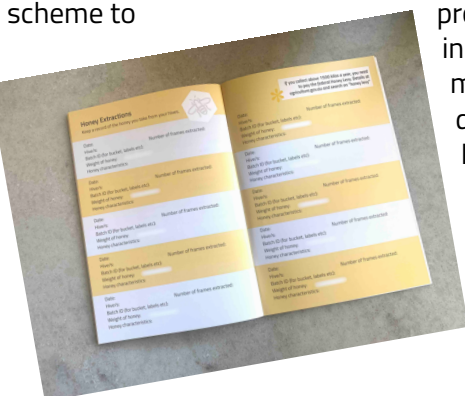
This will be the third year we've mailed log books to members. This year we've added extra record sections for honey harvests and for trading bees.

You can now use the log book to keep track of each honey extraction and note down the weights, characteristics, batch numbers and any other details that are specific to your setup.

These pages also contain a reminder that all beekeepers selling over 1500 kilos of honey in a year need to pay a levy of 4.6 cents per kilo to support the honey sector in Australia. This levy helps fund support services, including agricultural research, education and a compensation scheme to



protect producers in the event of a major new pest or disease outbreak, Details of the levy are at agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/rates/honey



The other new section of the log book contains pages where you can write down details of all bees that you bring into or 'dispose' of from

your apiary. Disposal means selling, trading, giving away or destroying, and keeping records are a legal requirement. (Think of it as important information for contact tracers if a major outbreak of pests or disease occurs.)

Although it's not a legal requirement to keep a note of where any bees you get came from, it is a very good idea to have these details to refer to if needed later.

We've also added an outline drawing on the notes pages opposite each inspection template. Many members have told us they like to make a quick sketch of colony strengths and to pinpoint any hive components that need attention.

AFB sampling kit



Nobody wants to open up a hive and see evidence of AFB (American Foulbrood) or something that could spell trouble. That's why we're sending every member a brood sampling kit. Use it if you suspect AFB, and send a sample to the state veterinary laboratory

Registered beekeepers who suspect AFB do not have to pay for the analysis. We've included easy-to-follow instructions and the form you'll need to include for the laboratory. Plus two glass slides and cardboard protective cases for mailing. Keep the kit in a safe place. Replacement kits are available from our online store at beekeepers.asn.au/shop

OOPS! NOT IN THE PLAN!

101 tasks went into designing, ordering, compiling and mailing this year's kits to members. So it's annoying when we discover a hiccup or two.

- Please note: the calendar page at the back of the log book has the dates one day out – the first column in each month should be Sunday, not Monday. (Blame it on an editor in lockdown who lost track of time.) We deeply apologise for this.
- If the mail system has been unkind to your AFB kit, let us know. (Send us a picture of anything that arrives damaged.) We've heard from many members delighted with their kits but also from one or two with a broken slide or split mailer. In the case of any mailers that come unglued, they are still usable – add an elastic band and all should be well.

Zac is delighted every time he inspects his hives (Top Right) Says his father, Ron, "Zac eats, lives and breathes Bees."

Helping Commercial beekeeper Adrian Grew has been a highlight (BOTTOM RIGHT). "Adrian has taught me lots – how to identify different trees and plants, how to make up corflute boxes, how to mark queens, how to transport live bees on the truck and many more little things that will help me with my beekeeping." Says Zac



PROFILE

Zac Filla's future filled with honey

This Blue Mountains student has set his sights on a bee-driven career

MEET Zac Filla, aka "The Beemaster." Zac has four hives in his backyard at Springwood, NSW, and first became fascinated with bees a couple of years ago when he came across YouTube videos featuring beekeeping in Russia.

Fast forward to the 2019 ABA Field Day at Illawarra Beekeepers' apiary at Sutherland, where Zac was enthralled to watch real honey bees up close during the live beekeeping demonstrations.

From there, he was intent on building up his own apiary and learning everything he could discover about honey bees.

So last Christmas holidays, instead of sitting back and enjoying the school break, Zac, then 13, was working bees with commercial beekeeper and queen breeder Adrian Grew, now based at Mendooran. Zac describes the four-day trip he went on with Adrian moving and tending dozens of hives as the "best holiday ever." "I could stare at a beehive for hours," he says. "They are just amazing."

Zac is looking forward to when he is old enough to study for a Certificate III in beekeeping. Until then he is figuring out how to sell the honey (60 kilos this



year) that he harvests from his hives, and planning on expanding his apiary by another 20 hives this season "so that I can start to go to almond pollination next August hopefully."

Already he has registered the business name "Bee Master", the phone number "1800BEEMASTER" and the domain name "www.beemaster.com.au" for when he finishes school and starts his bee business.

"I'm not sure yet what I am going to focus on," he admits, "but I hope to either ultimately become an important person like Bruce (White) or become a professional beekeeper like Adrian Grew."

And Adrian has no doubt Zac has a bright future with bees: "Zac is a great young beekeeper. Extremely enthusiastic with a passion for nature and bees."

Meanwhile the day-to-day challenges of beekeeping are no different whatever age you are.

"The only problems I've had with my bees are with kangaroos chewing on the baseboards," says Zac. "They must like the sweetness,

CLUB NEWS

Learning new skills

Bega Valley club recently partnered with Tocal College to offer local beekeepers free Certificate III training, thanks to a government bushfire recovery grant

IN MARCH, 24 members of Bega Valley and Eurobodalla clubs learned a host of valuable new skills thanks to a partnership with Tocal College, the NSW Department of Primary Industries' training provider. The two dozen beekeepers from across the NSW far south coast enrolled in Tocal's Spring Management programme, covering two core units that contribute to a Certificate III qualification in beekeeping. (The two units are Manipulate Honey Bee Brood, and Re-queen a Honey Bee Colony.)

The full cost of the tuition was covered by the federal government's Bushfire Local Economic Recovery programme, after an application prepared by the club was submitted via Tocal College.

The course was split into two sessions, with theory delivered each morning from the Bega Valley Memorial Civic Centre, and practical sessions from the Tarraganda apiary of the Bega club's recently retired President, Fay Steward.



Course participants boosted their practical skills during several hands-on sessions at the apiary

Among other things, beekeepers learned about the principles and practice of brood manipulation, bee handling techniques, conditions required for re-queening a colony, understanding queen bee behaviour, how to remove an unwanted queen, and successful introduction of a new queen.

All students passed thanks to the patience and skills of Tocal's trainer.

Fay says she's hopeful that this type of partnership will lead to more courses in regional locations and recommends that clubs near each other work with Tocal to provide tailored programmes for their members. Fay herself is nearing completion of her Certificate III in Beekeeping.

If your club is interested in a similar training programme, contact Bianca Giggins from Tocal's Honey Bee Education Programme on (02)4939 8815 or email beekeeping@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Also see the article in the [previous issue of The Amateur Beekeeper](#) for details of the various types of funding available that can reduce or completely cover beekeeping training fees depending on where you live and your personal circumstances.

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Put your honey in the Australian Honey Library

This project aims to build a comprehensive database. Now it needs beekeepers to help



EACH harvest of honey, as beekeepers know, reflects the flora on which the bees were working when it was produced. That batch is unique to the location and the season.

And while different honeys look and taste very different, under scientific analysis they also each reveal their own distinct 'fingerprint.'

Scientists can use that 'fingerprint' to determine whether a honey is authentic or whether it isn't quite what it claims to be. But first they need a comprehensive library of genuine samples to compare it with.

Recently **B-Qual** received federal government funding to establish an Australian Honey Library and it needs beekeepers to help "stock the shelves".

B-QUAL, established by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) as an independently developed and audited food safety programme, is appealing to beekeepers to provide samples of honey it can include in the database.

It is currently looking for dominant flavoured honey such as, but not limited to, Yellow Box, Spotted Gum, Stringy Bark, and Blue Gum.

To register simply email to bqualdatabase@ausqual.com.au State your name and trading name, your B-QUAL number if a member, telephone contact, preferred email address, postal address, and how many jars you require.

Shortly after registering you will receive a pre-addressed post paid envelope, details on how to log on to a collection app, a 400ml jar (or as many as you requested, one per variety) and labels.

Once your honey is tested you will receive a copy of the test results. All samples and information requested will be maintained under strict privacy protocols and anonymity.

The honey testing and recording is not a judgment of your honey or beekeeping practices, but solely to gain a record of Australian honey.

To register, email bqualdatabase@ausqual.com.au with your name, trading name, B-QUAL number if a member, telephone contact, preferred email address, postal address; and how many jars you require

Why we need Australian information

Extract from [Review of chemistry associated with honey](#) by Jamie Ayton, Paul Prenzler, Harsh Raman, Amanda Warren-Smith and Richard Meyer
Published by Agrifutures, June 2019

"Recent attention in the Australian media regarding honey adulteration has diminished consumer confidence in Australian honey production.

In September 2018, a report shown on ABC television detailed a study that was commissioned by law firm King & Wood Mallesons, which collected 28 samples from supermarket shelves in Australia on behalf of a client. These samples were subsequently sent to Germany for analysis using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy.

Results indicated 12 of the 28 samples were adulterated. All samples passed the Elemental Analyser-Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry (EA-IRMS) test.

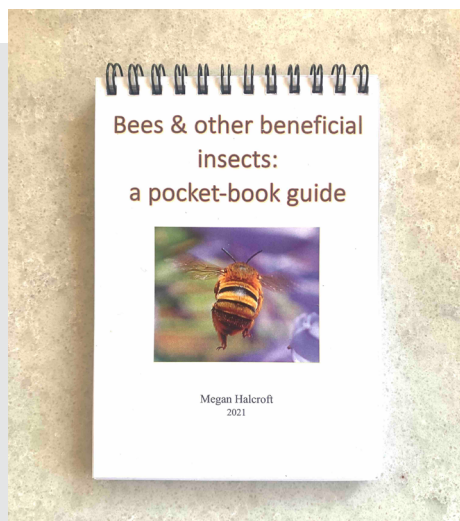
In October 2018, media focus shifted to a study conducted by Macquarie University, which suggested that up to 27 per cent of imported honeys and 18 per cent of Australian honeys were adulterated according to the EA-IRMS.

Anecdotal evidence suggests a 15 to 30 per cent decrease in sales following the media interest; costing the industry upwards of \$10 million

However, some of the analytical methods used to identify the adulteration in honey have inherent problems when used for Australian honey, because they use 'typical ranges' established for honey from other countries, mainly in Europe and Asia. These honeys do not necessarily reflect the origin or diversity of flora available in Australia for honey production."

NEW BOOKS

Native bees, their honey, and other insects



Bees & other beneficial insects: a pocket-book guide **Megan Halcroft**

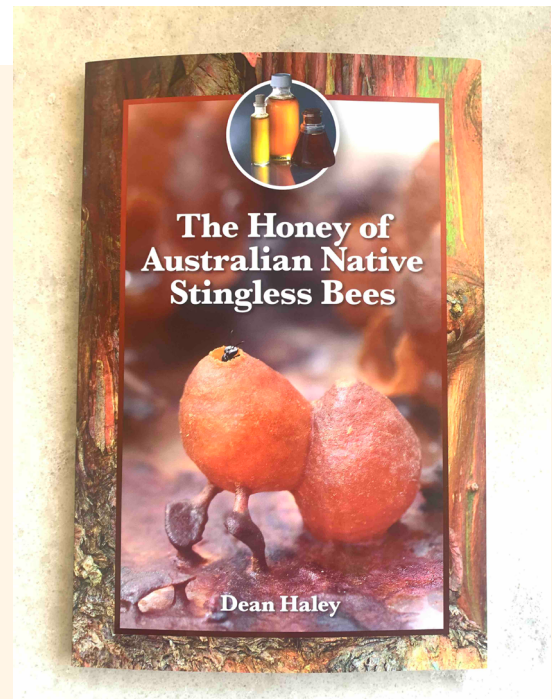
SPIRAL bound, like a reporter's notebook, and with wipe-clean acetate covers, this is one for the backpack, glovebox or jacket pocket. If you just want a spotter's guide that's hardly bigger than a large smart phone, Megan Halcroft's self published guide is a great resource. The photographs are clear and the text concise, and Megan has a knack of describing the distinguishing characteristics of various insects in ways that will stick with you long after you've put the book away ("Stingless bees: 'Dangly' hind legs when hovering is a common behaviour") and for simplifying the technical ("Great carpenter bee: pronounced zye-lo-copa kap-tor-toh-sow-mah").

It starts with FAQs on native bees, runs through basic bee anatomy and explains how to tell the difference between bees, wasps and flies. Half of the book is taken up with profiles of native bees.

Then the book ranges across commonly encountered flies, beetles and wasps and their various benefits (or "ecosystem services"). Don't expect much on *Apis mellifera* (it gets very short shrift as an exotic). But then that's not why you'd buy this book. Instead, treasure it for bite size scientific knowledge that's easy to take in and remember.

Now, who knew that the protective case for praying mantis eggs is an ootheca?

Available on Megan's Etsy shop at [etsy.com/au/listing/981287672/bees-other-beneficial-insects-a-pocket](https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/981287672/bees-other-beneficial-insects-a-pocket) for \$16.50 plus \$5 postage,



The Honey of Australian Native Stingless Bees **Dean Haley**

It's thinner and less sticky than honey produced by European honey bees. It's prone to ferment and has sour characteristics, but native stingless bee honey has delightfully complex tastes, and is a precious treat that's growing in popularity for all sorts of reasons.

In his newly released 104-page guide, Dean Haley has created a book to inspire the enthusiast and delight the casual reader. From indigenous traditions and early European accounts, to extraction techniques and commercial rules and regulations, to flora for native bees, and hive designs, this is set to become a go-to general reference on the topic.

Author Dean Haley has been at the core of various initiatives to encourage interest in native bees and their honey and is currently chair of the Australian Native Bee Association's Honey Committee. Pair it with Tim Heard's classic and award winning [The Australian Native Bee Book](#) and you have two colourful, lively, easy to read and well researched books from authors with a remarkable depth of knowledge on their obvious passions.

Available direct from the author for \$20 plus \$6 postage. Contact Dean at truebluebees@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Learn from home

DISCOVER how varroa mites infest colonies, moving from brood to adults, and how you can inspect your hive correctly in order to be sure you have completed a thorough check. NSW DPI has released this short video, including remarkable closeup shots of varroa transferring from brood to adult bee. Produced with the help of Hayley Pragert, NZ Ministry for Primary Industries. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3tokmDwQFO



BEES FOR DEVELOPMENT has helped many thousands of remote and poor families around the world to earn essential income to meet their basic needs. The charity encourages potential beekeepers to make simple, low-cost beehives so that more people can harvest and sell honey, turning natural resources into sustainable livelihoods with great benefit for the wider environment. Find out about their work at beesfordevelopment.org/our-mission/



LEARN about nest-site scout bees and how they look for new homes, then signal other bees to take flight and steer them to their new site. Thomas Seeley explains his new research on the dynamics of swarming and how it has changed the way he thinks about bees. youtube.com/watch?v=1VI4Rw-ZsGyA&t=62s

ARE varroa mites more like vampires or werewolves? Watch Sammy Ramsey's award winning three-minute thesis presentation explaining his work to discover how bee scientists were barking up the wrong tree for so many years. youtube.com/watch?v=Fyfyj-2047Q



FIND OUT about Australia's Manuka honey and the fight to protect the name manukaaustralia.org.au

FEEDBACK

We're listening!

DO YOU have comments on how the ABA is run? Want to share your ideas? Think you could contribute to our association? The ABA is run by volunteers who give their time, energies and expertise to assist members, raise the profile of recreational beekeeping and lobby for appropriate support for beekeeping across our geographical network.

Our organisation has grown rapidly and needs volunteers to help implement our next wave of projects. Don't be shy! Email us at feedback@beekeepers.asn.au



SHOW US YOUR BEES

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR PHOTOS FEATURED IN THIS JOURNAL, ON OUR WEBSITE OR PERHAPS ON THE COVER OF THE NEXT LOG BOOK?

SEND YOUR PHOTOS and a description of when and how they were taken, to editor@beekeepers.asn.au

YOUR ABA

The Amateur Beekeepers Association represents recreational beekeepers in industry forums, and provides a range of services to affiliated beekeeping clubs and members.

With more than 4500 members at the end of the last membership year, that takes some doing!

We are currently looking for members with business or organising skills who are keen to lend a hand either on a regular basis or when we have special projects..

Contact us if you think you could help.

ABA EXECUTIVE

Sheila Stokes president@beekeepers.asn.au
Ana Martin, secretary@beekeepers.asn.au
and membership@beekeepers.asn.au
Lyllal Zweck treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au
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