

BEEBIZ FEBRUARY 2020

The Newsletter of the Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association Inc.

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<u>Committee Member</u>	two vacancies		

President Report

Hi folks.

Another interesting field day was held at the home of Rob and Rebecca Blair-Hickman. I always seem to learn something new from Rob's extensive experience in apiary management and marketing. Thanks to Rob & Rebecca for sharing their knowledge so openly. Next field day will incorporate the AGM and I encourage all members to attend and share their thoughts on how the club should be run going forward into 2020.

It can be a trying time for bee keeping in this wet humid weather, as hive beetles seem to thrive in it. So it is only timely that a discussion be held on this topic. Maybe someone has the silver bullet and will share it with us. So I hope to see you all there at Ruthven Hall on March 1st.

Cheers Kevin Virgen

Secretary Report

The roll up at the last field day at Pimlico was disappointing. Probably the main cause was a lethargy induced by the long period of hot weather. However, I contacted a club member later over another matter, and she said she did not receive her newsletter. If this happens to you, please let me know, as we rely on this system to work. I will also send you a copy of the newsletter.

The next meeting is at Ruthven, and is a Forum on Small Hive Beetles, followed after lunch by the AGM. The beetles have been around for nearly 20 years now, and beekeepers have developed methods to deal with them. This is an opportunity to hear about the methods used by experienced beekeepers, as well as any new ideas or traps being tried.

The agenda for the AGM is attached. Besides the usual items like Presidents report etc, and the election of office bearers, it includes a move to alter the constitution, making membership of the ABA compulsory, and introducing an associate membership category. The committee unanimously support these changes, and asks you to support them too.

Brian Window, Secretary

Update on Last Field Day.

The purpose of the field day was to expose club members to a vibrant young business, relying heavily on the new technology of the internet. Rob and Rebecca Blair-Hickman have such a business in Ballina Honey, right next to the Pacific Highway in Pimlico south of Ballina.

Rob decided to concentrate their activity on internet sales years ago, and he was the first beekeeper on eBay 12 years ago. This is ongoing and now internet sales comprise 65% of their business.

The business profile is different from what one would expect. Their priorities for beekeeping products are

- (1) Beeswax products
- (2) Honeycomb
- (3) Honey

In order to meet the first two priorities, the hives are managed differently from those of a conventional beekeeper. All wax is recovered. Honeycomb production requires the use of foundation frames, with limited use of recycled stickies. This leads to an emphasis on cleaning and recycling frames through the hives.

First, any wax is reclaimed from the frames using a melter oven. They are then boiled in detergent, followed by a chlorine water dip to sterilise them. After rinsing and airing, they are rewired with foundation and used a few weeks later. Rob said that this procedure is the best that they have come up with over the years. Rob gave members a demonstration of frame cleaning and a tour of his facilities. It was decided not to open any hives, as it was too hot.

Members are invited to look at the website at www.ballinahoney.com.au

The club thanks Rob and Rebecca for their effort in hosting the day.

Flowering Report

The welcome rain will probably have put paid to most of the Bloodwood in the Clubs catchment area, although I noticed that there was still a lot going at Lindendale last time I was there. It is finished here at Bentley. The Tee Tree/ Melaleuca is having a burst of flowering. These bursts will keep happening every couple of weeks probably till June. It is generally considered that it needs wet feet to produce honey, and it certainly has that. The trouble will be if the rain keeps on as it often does and washes out the nectar.

The rain may well set off some ground flora in paddocks that were almost bare. Scotch Thistle, Flatweed and Farmers Friend are all useful pollen sources and sometimes yield some nectar. I see some Ragweed responding to the rain, unfortunately. The pollen protein level is so low that it is regarded by some, including me, as being detrimental to the hive.

As I said last time it looks like an early year for Red Gum and Grey Ironbark, my estimate is around May.

Geoff Manning

From the Hives January 2020

Since the last report, there has been substantial rain in the district, partially breaking a long drought.

Some trees such as the swamp mahogany have been flowering, and the hives at Kyogle and Mongogarie have been bringing in some nectar. The hives have slowed right down, ejecting the drones and cutting back on brood. It would be worth feeding them if there was a honey flow in the near future, but the drought and hot weather have made the flowering of the trees unpredictable.

However, things are looking up; there is a good flowering of the broad leaf tea tree starting, and the hives will be moved on to that when the paddocks are passable.

Brian

Biosecurity

According to the last *The Amateur Beekeeper*, as part of a survey, each club is invited to send 100g samples of honey from three different apiaries for testing for AFB spores. Testing is free, and the details of the apiary are anonymous. You do get the results. Contact the biosecurity officer Ray Smith if you wish to participate.

Samples have to be in by 28th February.

Everyone should know by now that beekeepers have to report cases of AFB to the DPI via their website within 24 hours. The question arose at the last field day of how long does the beekeeper get after reporting to actually kill out the hive and make it secure from other bees. It was possible in the past to put the hive in a hospital apiary, kill the queen, and wait 21 days before killing all the bees, and closing off the hive. The beekeeper then extracted all the honey and radiated all the frames.

The answer at least after July 1st is 7 days, according to the experts.

A quote supplied by Geoff Manning

The Male, and his Business

I don't suppose you knew this?

A Late Author affirms, that the Drone Bee is the Male, and that his Business is to sit upon and hatch the Eggs, and nourish the Young, whilst the Females follow their Work ; and, that he was made without a Sting, and is of the same Species of other Bees, differing only in Sex; and, that you may compare the male to a Man, and the female to a Woman; so that the male Bee or Drone is absolutely necessary to the breeding of Bees, managing the Young while the female or Honey-Bee goes abroad to gather Honey; all the while they are gone the Drone stirs not from the Brood, but about 1 or 2 a-Clock the female Bee returning home, she takes his post, and gives him liberty to fly abroad to recreate himself.

Therefore I caution Bee-masters against the unhappy Error of killing the Drones as fast as they can, for by this means they hinder their Breed, and damage or utterly destroy their whole Hives ; but they had better kill six Honey (or female) Bees than one Drone in May or June; for 'tis as if they would encrease animal Creatures by destroying the Males : And indeed the Male or Drone is but short-life'd at best, therefore spare him, and he will make you amends. 'Tis a gross Error to say the Drones have loft their Sting; so grow idle, and live by robbing.

From: "A Sure way to order bees and fruit-trees, or, A complete bee-master : shewing, I. The way to manage and encrease them. A platform for a bee-hive. What food ought to be propagated about the bee-houses. To raise large stocks of bees. Their errors that kill the drone-bees." By John Worlidge, active 1660-1698

Services Directory

Summary of available products and services

NRABA Members

Paul Davey (hive care)(Mullumbimby) 0491 608 272
David Fairhall(queen cells, mated queens, nuclei) (Lismore) 0444 513 771
Leland Eglington (Steel beehive stands) (Alstonville) 0455 555 136
Brian Window (nuclei) (Lismore) 0466 790 736
Ross Wood (mated queens, nuclei)(Grafton) 0421 817 710

Not NRABA Members

Stephen Fowler (nuclei, hives, all sorts of bee equipment, buys wax) (Alstonville) 0418 412 621
Merv McDonald (nuclei, hives, hive care)(Alstonville) 0439 166 016
Rob Stone (mated queens, nuclei)(Casino) 0487 598 105

Corrections and additions welcome

February Field Day March 1st

The February field day will be held on March 1st at the Ruthven Hall, Lismore-Coraki Road, commencing at 9.30 am and finishing probably before 2 pm. There are two activities planned, the Forum on Small Hive Beetles before lunch, and the AGM after lunch. Flyers are attached for both these activities. All beekeepers are welcome at the Forum on Small Hive Beetle.

Morning tea will be available from 9.30am, and the program will start at 10 am with a welcome from our President. Lunch at about 12 midday will be BBQ sausages and mainly contributed salads, and will cost \$5. Plates, cups and utensils will be provided.

All attendees are asked to bring an item for morning tea or a salad for lunch.

So, remember to bring

- A morning tea item or salad
- Chairs (your own may be more comfortable than those at the hall)
- Nametags

Directions

From Lismore, take the Bruxner Highway towards Casino. A few kilometres past the airport, take the left turn towards Coraki, past the Wyrallah turn off, and proceed along the long straight towards Coraki. At the end, there is Flood Reserve Road on the right, Ruthven Hall on the left, and Pelican Creek dead ahead. Be considerate when you park.

Forum On Small Hive Beetle

Are you troubled by small hive beetle? Have you had a Slime out? What can you do?



Come to the Forum on Small Hive Beetle and hear experienced beekeepers discuss these and other issues. What traps are best? What chemicals you should not use? Are traps absolutely necessary? How do you clean up an infested hive?

Small hive beetle came into Australia in about 2001, and appeared in the Northern Rivers a few years later. It is essentially everywhere in Eastern Australia now, and a major pest in our humid sub-tropical climate. It is also a significant pest in the USA, and inventions to cope with it have come from there and Australia. And they are still coming.

Beekeepers have been dealing with beetles for quite a few years, and now have considerable experience with different traps, in hive management, and in cleaning up infestations. A few of our club members have been around beekeeping throughout this entire period. They have been asked to give their recollections as well as thoughts about where the amateur beekeeping field is today.

The speakers are Ross Wood, a queen breeder, pollinator, and honey producer from Grafton, Geoff Manning, now mainly a pollinator from Lismore, Kevin Virgen, a honey producer from the Federal area, and Brian Window, a honey producer from Lismore. The speakers have been asked to address the following topics.

- What traps they have used, their problems and their effectiveness
- What killing mediums they have used and threats to biosecurity and beekeepers health
- How to clean up after a minor infestation
- How to clean up after a major infestation
- How have they changed their beekeeping practices
- Is there a connection between beetles and AFB?

There will be many different types of traps on display, and members are encouraged to show their own approaches. There will be ample time for others to contribute to the discussion.

Time 10 am to 12 am Sunday 1st March

Place Ruthven Hall

Minutes NRABA Committee January 2020

Time 5 pm Monday 6th January

Place Lismore Workers Club

- Members present B Window, K Virgen, Greg Booth, Ray Smith
- Apologies Paul Towner, Barry O'Connor
- Appointment in committee

The president Jamie Mudge, being no longer a member of the NRABA, had resigned.

The committee appointed Kevin Virgen as President (moved GB s BW passed).

- Minutes of Committee meeting November 4th accepted. (Moved GB s KV passed)
- Matters Arising

-Email addresses ; Col Rankin not a member, and BW had obtained the email address of Reg Crouch's daughter. The secretary reported that the club now had no mail out newsletters.

-All money owed to secretary has been reimbursed.

-No action yet on using Manager for accounts.

-A gift of beeswax candles (cost \$10) has been given to Maria and Angelo Leo for their hospitality in October.

-ABA has been notified about our supplement being \$5 for the 18 month period.

-Secretary has purchased Somerville book.

-No action taken on opening a new account at the Greater because of impending committee changes.

- Correspondence

-Resignation from Barbara Lukas. Secretary to write to Barbara that she will be missed.

-Secretary has sent welcoming emails to new members.

- Reports

-Treasurer

-Steritech trip went off OK: 3 pallets and a bucket. The bucket was dropped and burst.

Club to refund the cost of irradiation of the bucket(\$33) to Ross Wood (Moved BW s GB passed)

-November Xmas party income from raffle \$106, expenses not available, attendance 30+

- Agenda Business Items

(1) Field Day Program (Tentative)

February 2nd (January) Rob Blair Pimlico

March 1st (February) Ruthven Hall. Forum on Living with SHB and AGM (after lunch)

March 29th (March) Rous Mill Hall Paul Towner

Greg Booth Dunoon (?)

(2) Acceptance of New Members

The following new members were accepted (Moved GB s KV passed)

Melissa Coulton, Flevy Crasto, Renee Eglington, Samuel Eglington, Mark Pritchard,

Isabella Thomas (already approved)

Membership Officer and Secretary to complete registration procedures

(3) Structure of PSO fee

Secretary tabled a document he had sent as an individual to the ABA Committee, pointing out that the way they put the fees on PSO had created a number of problems in our club. He asked them to alter the fee structure to eliminate misleading information. The proposal was refused.

NRABA Committee members asked to consider a club response after perusing document.

(4) Constitution

Secretary outlined the plan to alter the constitution at the AGM to make ABA membership compulsory, and to introduce associates for family members and members of other ABA clubs.

(5) Official Positions were confirmed as

President Kevin Virgen, vice President Greg Booth, Membership Officer and Secretary Brian Window, Public Officer and Treasurer Paul Towner, and Editor Barry O'Connor. (Biosecurity Officer Ray Smith)

(6) Newsletter

Barry O'Connor is about to do his first newsletter.

(5) Brochure and Membership postponed

- General Business

Colonel Pulling Competition should be advertised in newsletter.

- Next Meeting

Time 5pm 3rd February 2020 (subject to availability of members)

Place 54 Donnans Road Lismore Heights

Meeting finished at 6.15 pm.

Annual General Meeting 2020 Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association Incorporated

Time 1pm March 1st 2020

Place Ruthven Hall, off Lismore to Coraki Road

Agenda

- Present
- Apologies
- Minutes 2019 AGM at Tabulam
- Matters Arising
- Presidents Report
- Secretary Report
- Treasurer Report
- Other Business
- Change to Constitution
- Election of Office Bearers
- Election of Committee members
- Meeting finished

Further items of business have to be notified to the members 14 days in advance.

Nominations for Office Bearers and Committee members should be made 7 days in advance to the secretary, signed by two nominators, and the nominee to show he/she agrees.

The proposed new constitution and an argument supporting the changes were previously distributed.