



**Amateur
Beekeepers
Association**
NSW MID NORTH COAST

The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

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October 2018 Newsletter

President's Report

Monthly Field Day and General Meeting 14th October 2018, Coffs Harbour Christian Community School - Bonville Creek Farm, Bonville.

The meeting started a little late due to lots of new members and the rain. Ideal venue for a wet day as there are plenty of undercover areas – thanks Paul and the school.

We had a busy morning with a highlight being the link up on Skype to Cedar Anderson, the Flow Hive man with lots of Q & A.

Bruce White also addressed the group on AFB which was a very informative presentation. (Bruce White OAM (Order of Australia Medal) is the Retired Principal Apiary Officer of NSW, and Chairman of the ABA.)

Paul took interested folk down to look at two Flow Hives during a break in the rain. He opened one and then demonstrated how to harvest the honey.

Mention needs to be made of our refreshing newsletter make over, thank you Dasha and thank you to Mal for putting all the material together.

Phil our Secretary and Mal our Treasurer, do an amazing job behind the scenes and I for one appreciate their dedication.

The raffle was done later in the day (apologies from me!), the table was a little light on items so the club added some Apithor traps to the frame parts already there. If members would kindly bring something for the raffle table, everyone could go home with a prize. Please bring plants, eggs, fresh produce, honey or an unwanted gift... but not too many vases please!

The Fowlers were down from Lismore with their very competitively priced beekeeping equipment. I saw one bee club member trying to fit a new honey extractor into his vehicle. (He had a big grin on his face & cooks a mean curry).

Thanks for letting me fill the President's shoes for the day. It was fun if not a little nerve racking.

Next meeting is at Leeharne's at Coramba. See you there!

Merridy Huxley

Acting President for the day

Next Meeting

Date: 11th November
Time: 10am for 10:30 start
Address: 1448 Coramba Rd
Coramba
Phone: 0488 736 347

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Paul and our new Flow-Hive

Flow Hive

The first activity was with Paul who dissected a Flow Hive that was donated to the club from the Flow Hive people. Paul was able to demonstrate the assembly of such and fielded questions from those present. A lot of new people have come to the club due to them starting off with a Flow Hive.

Video Conference with Cedar Anderson

Thanks to some great technical work from Phil, Paul and Bruce, our first video conference was a great success, and also thanks to Cedar for giving the club his time and enthusiastically fielding questions.

Paul began the chat with Cedar by updating the school's situation - now having sixteen Flow Hives, and then Cedar gave a quick outline of how the Flow Hive was developed. Flow Hive was released in 2015 after ten years of research.

Flow hive Q & A with Cedar

Cedar is available every Wednesday morning for Q & A on facebook.

Paul: *What is the expected life-span of the frames?*

Cedar: *A very long time hopefully, a good 20 years. If those with flow hives have any problems, contact me and I will address your issue.*

Paul: *What causes flow of honey down the back/sides of hive?*

Cedar: *A little is normal, bees will clean it up. Check the slope of the hive. If there is a large flow then the problem will have to be addressed.*

Paul: *Would you recommend cracking half the frame, followed by the whole frame?*

Cedar: *I don't think that is necessary.*

Paul: *Do candied cells cause a problem?*

Cedar: *So far, no problems like this have been reported. Just leave the bees to clean up the candy. With the Flow Hive, honey doesn't usually last long enough to candy.*

Paul: *The frame can be only half full even though front window indicates frame is full?*

Cedar: *It is advisable to check behind the window, but not necessary to take out the frame to check. The Flow Hive was designed for minimum disturbance of the hive. If both ends are capped then honey will generally be filled throughout. Get to know what end of frames look like when the frame is full. The bees fill the frames from the centre of the box out, but eat out honey from above the brood nest. Good observation of brood may give indication. The biggest risk is harvesting some uncured honey, but this can be picked by the viscosity.*

Paul: *About tensioning the wiring - what should one look for?*

Cedar: *If frames start to sag a bit there is a need to re-tension, but not a common problem.*



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Nicole: *Have you ever used pollen extractors at the entrance to the hive?*

Cedar: *No, not really, but shall think about it.*

Nicole: *What can be done about wax build up on the side windows?*

Cedar: *Depends a bit on the genetics of the bees. Can be removed but be careful not to scratch the acrylic. Use the 'tool' and if it gets scratched we'll send you a new one.*

Paul: *Do others report less Small Hive Beetle?*

Cedar: *Our mesh bottom boards seem to help.*

Paul: *Metal queen excluders vs plastic excluders?*



Cedar on Skype

Cedar: *Pros and cons for both. Metal ones - ants can get in corners and once bent, difficult to straighten. They do have rounder edges for the bees.*

Plastic - can get brittle, and may be harder on the bees wings. Moving towards black ones as they don't get as brittle.

Paul: *The hole in the roof - do you cover it up?*

Cedar: *Yes, to stop comb building up. It is intended for a feeder, but can be plugged. Latest Flow Hives come with a plug.*

Paul: *Is it good management to add another super?*

Cedar: *I would recommend splitting before swarming occurs. If flow frames are not full a single is best for fast production. Mostly we make splits and add to our hive numbers.*



2 of the school's 16 Flow Hives

Mal: *Are there any modifications planned?*

Cedar: *We have recently released a new Flow Hive, and this comes with adjustable legs for the base with built in levels to make it easier to get the right levels for harvesting. The lids can be an issue with high winds, the included wing nuts or latches can secure the lid tightly.*

Paul thanked Cedar for his presentation and there was warm applause from the audience.

Thanks to all those who provided notes to make the editorial job so much easier.

The hive activity was Paul showing the workings of two Flow Hives, including harvesting some honey.



Harvesting honey from the Flow Hives



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October - AFB Awareness month

Retired DPI Apiary Officer and now Biosecurity Officer for the ABA, attended our meeting and gave an informative power point presentation on American Foul Brood (AFB).

Some points from Bruce's talk.

AFB can be controlled if detected early enough. It is not as infectious as European Foul Brood (EFB), however, it cannot be treated like EFB, therefore, early detection and hygiene are vital to help prevent the spread of the disease. Chalkbrood, EFB, AFB and sacbrood can all exist together.

What is AFB and How Is It Spread?

- AFB is caused by bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae*.
- AFB virus can last 50 years.
- The spore stage of the bacteria gets into wood, wax, honey etc.
- The spores only grow when fed to the young larvae. 10 spores will kill the larva, then 10's of thousands of spores can emanate from that cell. The bees then clean up the dead larvae and transfer the spores onto other young larvae.
- It takes a period for the larvae to die. This usually happens when they are capped over.
- Disease can spread really quickly.
- Older larvae and adult bees are not affected.
- Bees rob from other hives especially from colonies that have died and can bring spores to your hive/s or contribute to further spread of disease within your own apiary.
- Equipment can spread disease and is a common cause of disease spread within the apiary.
- Metal items, providing they are properly cleaned, are OK to re-use. Hence a metal extractor is safe from transmission of the disease.
- People do not get sick from AFB and can consume the honey safely.

Prevention

- Do regular hive inspection to catch the disease early.
- Never feed or expose honey to robber bees in the open, it is illegal to do so as it can spread diseases.
- Do not feed contaminated honey or honey from an unknown source to bees. Honey can contain the spores.
- Maintain good hygiene and avoid chance of spreading the disease by:
 - Cleaning beekeeping tools such as the hive tool between hives. E.g. by burning it in the smoker or some beekeepers push it in and out of the soil as spores wash off easily from smooth steel surfaces.
 - Not interchanging materials from hive to hive. Use the barrier system - either an individual hive barrier or separate apiaries that contain a group of hives. Equipment, including boxes and frames are always returned to the same apiary and/or hive. Colour coding frames and other equipment can help.
- If you suspect disease, send a glass slide or a sample of brood off for testing. Contact your local DPI for more information.
- Free glass slides can be obtained from DPI.

Procedure

1. Inspect

- Shake the bees off the frames to see every cell.
- Learn to identify healthy brood and pollen:
 - The pattern the brood is being laid in – should not be scattered/patchy and uneven.
 - Nice evenly coloured convex cells – should not be discoloured dark or sunken in.



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- Diseased cells may have perforations or sometimes be de-capped with dead larvae.
- Healthy larvae should be pearly white and C shaped. Diseased larvae are discoloured light to dark brown and eventually drying out to become a dark scale if the larvae died before the pupa stage. If the larvae die at a later (pupa) stage, you may see a thread like tongue at the top of the cell.
- Learn the difference between worker cells and drone cells. Drone cells are more bullet shaped.

2. Test

- Suspect brood needs to be sent off for testing to make a proper diagnosis.
- Take 7 to 8 suspect larvae, squash and mix on a glass slide. Scrape of excess back into the same hive.
- Write on the glass slide to identify the hive the sample came from.
- Place glass slide into the supplied plastic carrier box for safe posting.
- You can also send off a piece of brood comb for testing. Make sure there is no honey in the comb and wrap it up in newspaper only. Do not wrap in plastic or place into a plastic bag.

3. Notify

- Notify DPI if you have disease.

4. Act

- Destroy the bees at night time when all the bees are inside the hive. Best method is by placing 1 cup of petrol under the lid of the hive in a container and seal the hive. The fumes will kill the bees. (You can use soapy water to kill bees but it is more difficult to get right).
- Extract honey and use for eating and cooking only. DO NOT feed to bees.
- Clean extracting equipment really well with cold water to get rid off all the wax. This will wash off the bacteria as it can't hide in the steel.
- Either burn the hive and frames by digging a hole in the ground and burning the hive in the hole, then covering the ashes with dirt or
- Send off for irradiation – costs about \$11 per cardboard box. ABA boxes can be purchased for \$3 (free during AFB month) and can be re-used several times. To pick up your cardboard boxes for the first time, seal the hive in a plastic bag and bring it to the irradiation facility where you can purchase your boxes. You can also send in a pallet of multiple hives for a cheaper rate (Queensland irradiation facility) if you have many hives or if you organise a group of other people.
- Irradiation is 100% effective and does not destroy wax or pollen in the frames. Frames with honey however cannot be sent as the honey will leak.
- Some people asked about irradiating honey – this can be done with buckets filled to $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Note: irradiated honey is not allowed for human consumption in Australia.
- Note: heated wax can kill AFB (e.g. hot dipping of boxes) however, it needs to be kept at particular temperature for a specific time frame and works out more expensive than irradiation.

AFB is a widely spread disease that affects the wild population of bees and beekeepers but it is the beekeepers who find it. We need everyone to support each other and help to control the disease. Do not be afraid to ask for assistance or advice from your ABA members or DPI.

Interesting Fact:

- NSW was the first in the world to irradiate beekeepers' equipment.

Bruce had some AFB frames that had been irradiated with the bee larvae remains visible at the bottom of the cells. With active AFB, bees can't clean out the dead cells, but they can once the frame has been irradiated.



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What has been Flowering in October

In the Garden: Hawthorn, macadamia, grevillea, jasmine, lavender, wisteria, climbing rose, quince, strawberries, citrus, grapevines, borage, onion, native frangipani, viburnum.

In the Bush: Forest Red Gum, Tallowwood, Ironbark, grevillea, wattle, bottle brush.

Weeds: Privet, fireweed, plantain grass, billy-goat weed, clover.

From Our Members

Alert

Textbooks contain warnings of bee pests, namely - Small Hive Beetle (SHB), Greater and Lesser Wax Moth, European Wasp, Ants, Cane Toads, Bee birds. However, Andre has discovered a new pest to our poor bees.

Water Dragons. They were seen to be standing outside the hives and jumping up to snatch the bees. Any solutions? Can't wait to see the photos!

Speaking of pests - below is an interesting video of a talk on SHB.

<https://youtu.be/Tzkrz1Ufew>

Queen Bees Piping

Keith was lucky and observant enough to hear a queen piping in one of his hives the other day.

Piping describes a noise made by virgin and mated queen bees during certain times of the virgin queens' development. Fully developed virgin queens communicate through vibratory signals: "quacking" from virgin queens in their queen cells and "tooting" from virgin queens free in the colony, collectively known as piping.

Since queen piping occurs more commonly when there is more than one queen in a hive, it is believed that the piping is a signal that a virgin is ready to fight for the honour of being the one-and-only. During swarm season, workers hearing the sound may try to keep the virgins separate in order to have more than one queen available in case she's needed.

Mated queens, too, sometimes pipe when they are released into a colony. This also may signal that she is ready to head the colony and all would be wise to agree.

Piping occurs rarely, but when it happens it is truly an amazing sound. The first time I heard it I thought something—something totally non-bee related—must be in there. Even though I knew about piping, and realized what I was hearing, it was still a surprise. It's amazingly loud.

For those who are musically inclined, queen piping is said to be G-sharp or A-flat and occurs for about one second followed by a string of quarter-second pulses. Queens still in their cells make the short pulses without the preliminary long toot, which is referred to as quacking. *Info taken from Wikipedia and "Honey Bee Suite" website.*

Have a listen - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xK8fEPsAc6U>

Frank's Hive Hint No. 1

Sometimes when there is a shortage of nectar you could have a problem when opening a hive. Robber bees are very quick to enter and could rob out your hive. If this happens close the hive immediately. If there is fighting at the entrance, cover it completely with a couple of handfuls of grass. It will deter the robbers and make it easier for the bees to defend their hive, even if it is weak. This is better than blocking the entrance, especially in summer because they will get the air they need. The hive bees will eventually clear the entrance. LOVE THOSE BEES.



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Club Business

Thanks to everybody who brought raffle prizes. It does raise money for the club. Thanks to everybody who helped to clean up etc.

We pride ourselves in having the best lunch in town for \$5, but on Sunday we were saved by Keith's curry. Please make the effort to bring along a decent luncheon item and a dessert/morning tea item.

Purchases

I have just purchased a honey colour scaler using plasticised cards to grade the honey colour.

After Bruce's talk on AFB, the way is clear for us to buy a club extractor for use by members. With so many new people coming to the club, it would be very handy for them to be able to extract their first honey with the club extractor. Being metal it just needs a good clean out, with water.

The New England club now has 15 members and is in the early stages of formation.

Beeswax

Australian beeswax is recognised as the cleanest in the world, uncontaminated by chemicals such as pesticides, and in particular the wax-loving chemicals that are commonly used overseas to control the Varroa mite.

Australian beeswax is often pharmaceutical grade. Prices have risen as Australian wax is sought on the world market. Beeswax is now a valuable commodity in its own right. Organic beeswax can fetch \$40/kg. Non-organic wax can fetch between \$16-\$25.

The cost of purchasing foundation has increased, and the temptation to buy cheap wax from overseas then becomes attractive. This however is counter-productive, especially given the dubious quality of Chinese foundation. You run the risk of degrading Australian beeswax, and why risk introducing contaminants into your own apiary and system?

Sourced from the editorial of the September ABK journal.

Service Directory for Members

Smoker for Sale

Monica Rich has a brand new smoker for sale \$85.
0419 298 586, email - monicarich00@gmail.com.

Queens, Nucs, Training, Courses and Services

1. Iven McLennan has for sale:
Italian queens - \$28; Nucs - \$17.50 per frame, plus the cost of the queen.
0432 384 419, email - ivenmclennan@hotmail.com.
2. We all know Glenn Locke has a lot of services to offer. Glenn runs beekeeping courses and workshops.
<https://oraravalleyhoney.com.au/services/beekeeping-courses-mentoring/>
Get an exclusive discount on the biggest innovation in beekeeping for over 150 years.
Use the link below to get 10% off Flow Hives, supers & Flow frames.
<http://mbsy.co/lVWqG>
Glenn also sells queens and nucs and offers bee rescue and pollination services.
3. Ross Wood usually has queens available.
Contact - 0421 817710



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- Our President Al Thomas also runs 'Beginning in Bees' courses from time to time. The course Al is running in Armidale on 27/28 October is fully subscribed.

Bookings / further information contact 0428 712 587 or email - beekeepingworkshops@gmail.com.

- Scott Richardson and Di McQueen, from Richos Honeybee Hives, offer on-site training, hive inspections, nucs and beekeeping equipment.
Contact - www.honeybeehives.com.au or on facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/richoshoney/>
- Steve and Trudi Hayes from LittleStar Bees hold training seminars and courses on Natural Beekeeping and Native Beekeeping at Misabotti.
Their courses are on the 2nd Saturday or Tuesday of November and December.
Contact - 6564 8737, email - buzz@littlestar.net.au
- Ben Laybutt - Offers Beekeeping Services and Nucs
Contact - 0417 905 629, email - lglaybutt@hotmail.com
- Stephen and Janet Fowler, from the Northern Rivers have been attending our meetings lately selling all sorts of equipment. Frames, buckets, honey jars, hive boxes, bottom boards and almost anything else at competitive prices.
Contact 6622 8534, 0418 412 621, email - fowlerstephen@y7mail.com
Call Stephen and place your orders for the next meeting.
Note: Stephen and Janet will have excellent Foundation for sale, on the proviso that you can supply them with some good clean wax. They will pay \$16/kg and you can purchase sheets at a good price.
- New Horizons sell frames, fully assembled and unassembled.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, 11th November at the home of Leeharne Hawley and Paul Bradshaw at Coramba.

Address: 1448 Coramba Rd, Coramba. Phone - 0488 736 347
Time: 10 am for 10:30 start
Lunch: A BBQ lunch will be provided
Cost: \$5.00

What to Bring

- There will be a hive inspection so bring protective clothing.
- Please bring a luncheon item and a dessert/morning tea item.
- A raffle prize would be greatly appreciated. This is a great way to raise funds for the club.
- Also bring a chair and don't forget your name tags.

Directions

From the North, drive through Coramba and under the railway bridge following Orara Way. Their driveway entrance is about 100m on the left.

From the South, their entrance is on the right about 100m past the 50 k/h sign.

Look for the Bee Meeting signs

For more Information contact **Mal Banks - 6649 0990** or **Phil Jury - 6568 5655**

Please give comments, ask questions, make suggestions, or give feedback at the next meeting.

