



# THE BUZZ

NON COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPER QUARTERLY UPDATE

PAUL MARTIN, NON COMMERCIAL BOARD MEMBER



Welcome to the first issue of The Buzz for 2020.

I hope you and your families are so far coping with the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) outbreak. Please keep safe, and we will get through it eventually.

As well as going to all Non Commercial members of ApiNZ, 'The Buzz' is sent out quarterly to the secretaries of all

ApiNZ-affiliated Bee Clubs and ApiNZ Hubs. Please feel free to disseminate this newsletter amongst your members and associates.

You may notice a few changes to this e-newsletter. Our plan is to make this a more practical newsletter for our hobbyist members where you can find useful information and answers to burning questions. We'd value your feedback on this.

ApiNZ is always looking at ways to improve value for our members. We understand our hobbyists really appreciate relevant, practical information as well as useful tools which is why we are looking at ways to make the NZ Beekeeper Journal more practically-focused. We are also increasing the content on the members only section of the ApiNZ website, so keep an eye on this.

In 2019, ApiNZ was thrilled to be able to introduce testing discounts through the two main laboratory test facilities. The feedback from clubs and other hobbyists is that this has made testing much more affordable and is giving backyard beekeepers valuable information - including when their honey is not fit for consumption!

Another important part of ApiNZ's work is supporting clubs when local councils review bylaws that affect beekeepers. ApiNZ also works hard to promote bee health, both publicly through the annual Bee Aware Month, and through submissions to government on applications for new pesticides.

I'm always keen to hear about the issues affecting hobbyists, so feel free to get in touch with your questions and feedback. Until next time, happy beekeeping

Paul



## Apiculture NZ Conference cancelled

Following advice from Government, and the ongoing spread of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) ApiNZ has made the decision to cancel the annual Conference and Trade Exhibition planned for June 2020 in Rotorua.

The health and safety of delegates, exhibitions and presenters is the top priority right now, and given the ongoing uncertainty around the future of the pandemic, ApiNZ felt it was best to make a decision early so that everyone can plan accordingly.

It is disappointing as the Conference is a key highlight of the apicultural year, however ApiNZ is looking into other ways to keep members in touch with each other. I would encourage you to make the most of online connections - using social media and online chat providers if you aren't able to meet up with other beekeepers in person.

## Biosecurity ID tool from MPI

Biosecurity NZ has created a handy bee biosecurity guide which can be downloaded onto your phone to help identify apiculture pests and diseases. The tool contains the most common apiculture pests and diseases as well as organisms that are not yet in New Zealand but that Biosecurity NZ want to keep out.

The tool can be downloaded **here**. To report any suspected exotic bee pests or diseases call Biosecurity NZ call 0800 80 99 66.



## Working for you

- ApiNZ members receive:
- Annual subscription to the NZ Beekeeper Journal
  - Quarterly market updates
  - Discounts on lab testing, Insurance and annual Conference
  - Weekly industry updates
  - and much more...



## From MPI: Food Rules for Hobbyist Beekeepers producing honey for sale

There are a few key legal requirements that hobbyist beekeepers, who offer honey for sale, need to follow. The rules are in place because there are important food safety risks associated with honey that need to be managed, such as the risk of tutin poisoning.

The food rules in the Food Act 2014 apply to anyone trading food in New Zealand, including any person selling honey, irrespective of the amount of product sold. Trading covers a wide range of activities, including selling food for cash, bartering food, and giving food away to promote a business.

Most food businesses need to register and be verified (checked) by their local council if offering food for sale. However, a hobby beekeeper does not need to be registered or verified if they only sell direct to consumers (e.g. at a local market) **and** the honey they sell was pre-packed in a facility registered with the council or MPI.

Other beekeepers, who extract and/or pack honey for sale, need to register their operations under the Food Act as a **National Programme level 1 (NP1)** with their local council, and have their activities checked by an approved verifier. NP1 registration is valid for two years.

People packing honey for sale must follow rules designed to reduce the risk that consumers will be poisoned by tutin. A beekeeper will need to keep a record to show how they manage tutin in their honey, and provide this information to anyone extracting and packing their honey.

Packaged honey needs to be accurately labelled. If you want to export your honey, you may need to operate your honey business under the Animal Products Act 1999.

For more information, New Zealand Food Safety has produced:

### **A guide to New Zealand Honey Labelling Guidance for managing risks of tutin poisoning**

New Zealand Food Safety is always here to help, contactable via email [foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz) or call 0800 00 83 33.

*Do you have a good pic that you'd like to share, or a burning question you'd like answered? Do you have a notice or event that you'd like to share with other hobbyist members of ApiNZ? If yes, then please get in touch. Email: [info@apinz.org.nz](mailto:info@apinz.org.nz)*

## How to: do a sugar shake test

With autumn nearly upon us, it's time to think about varroa treatment and monitoring.

The most bee-friendly way to monitor the success of your varroa treatment is the sugar shake test. This is my preferred method because I don't like killing some of my bees, as occurs in the alcohol wash method.

The following advice comes from Mark Goodwin and Michelle Taylor's book: "Control of Varroa" which can be bought through the ApiNZ website.

- Using a 400ml mason jar with a metal ring, cut a piece of wire mesh (2mm openings) in a circle to friction fit it into the metal ring.
- Collect about 300 bees in the jar (about one third full) and add about 1 dessertspoon (10g) of icing sugar to the bees, by running it through the mesh lid.
- Gently roll the sugared bees for about 10 seconds ensuring each bee is coated with sugar. Then turn the jar upside down and vigorously shake the jar above a tray. The mites and sugar will pass through the mesh, but the bees will remain in the jar. The bees won't be killed and can be returned to the hive.
- Count the mites on the tray (if the sugar makes the mites hard to find, put the sugar through a fine sieve).
- About 75% of mites on the bee will be recovered with a sugar shake. If more icing sugar is added, and the shake repeated, 95% of varroa will be recovered.
- Don't reuse the icing sugar as it will become lumpy and less effective. Leaving icing sugar for longer periods of time does not appear to improve the recovery of varroa.
- This method cannot be used in the rain or on bees that are on a heavy honey flow.

The recommended threshold level for treatment for the sugar shake is 40 varroa (per 300 bees and assuming two shakes have been conducted).



Photos supplied by Plant & Food Research