

Newsletter Edition - December 2023



CEO Update December 2023

CEO report

AHBIC's time is still being consumed with the Varroa response. We have been focused on getting agreement to the transition to management plan to enable the rollout of broad scale training for beekeepers as quickly as possible. We are hopeful for CCEPP agreement in December and final sign-off from NMG in January.

AHBIC has been strongly advocating for training and education across the country, boots on the ground to support beekeepers across the country and a number of other activities including a national heat map, Coloss survey, updating of the CoP, queen breeding workshops and a queen breeding sector capacity and capability report.

Achieving agreement to the plan is slow as there are 26 votes from 26 parties that all have their individual requirements and needs.

Plant Health Australia AGM and associated meetings

I attended the PHA AGM in Canberra in November and met with several other plant industries. We had presentations on a number of topics across the week. DAFF presented on the proposed Biosecurity Protection Levy (BPL) which created robust discussion discussions from industries.

Unfortunately, it appears the consultation from the department is not considering if the levy should be applied but more around how it is applied and collected. Despite significant push back from AHBIC and many other industries it appears that it will be implemented in July. This will mean that an additional 10% increase in the honey levy is likely to be applied from July 2024.

Bee Connected App

In partnership with Croplife the Bee Connected app was relaunched in Canberra with some significant improvements making the app more beekeeper friendly. I encourage all beekeepers who do pollination or place hives near crops that are likely to be sprayed to check out the new look app <https://beeconnected.org.au/>.

Red Dwarf Honey Bee incursion in WA

The first Red Dwarf Honey Bee (RDHB) detection was in March 2023 at Dampier in Western Australia. There has been a total of 12 nests discovered to date. *Eugaroa sinhai* has been detected on many of the RDHB's but has not been found on European honey bees yet. *Eugaroa* is a relative of *Varroa destructor* (the species found at Newcastle). It is unclear if this species of varroa can survive and reproduce on European honey bees with mixed reports in peer reviewed papers. Continual surveillance by DPIRD and DAFF is being conducted to delimit the incursion and monitor European honey bees in the area with 12 swarms being detected so far.

Imported Honey Fighting Fund

The fund has been receiving good support from beekeepers with a pool of money to start the testing of honey. The subcommittee will meet to decide on the specific testing protocols that will be used to ensure we can make the money stretch as far as possible without compromising the data. We have been gathering honey from different locations across the country ready for testing.

We have been working with DAFF to improve testing protocols but also discussing the potential for DWV to enter Australia through imported honey. There is some scientific work being conducted to determine if DWV can remain viable in honey.

Standards Australia and the International Standards Organisation

As previously discussed AHBIC has initiated the Australian membership of the

international committee for honey standards. The Australian committee has met several times and worked through the international documents. Good progress in being made and when the committee is comfortable with final draft we will share the documents with wider industry for consultation.

AHBIC thanks the work of Liz Barbour who has been feeding the comments into the international committee. The Australian committee has reviewed the international royal jelly standard and are in the process of agreeing to circulate through industry to see if we will adopt here in Australia.

The Month Ahead

It has been an incredibly tough year for beekeepers across the country and perhaps one that many want to forget. AHBIC will be taking a break over Christmas, however we will continue to work to ensure agreement to the T2M plan and support beekeepers as best we can. The new year will continue to provide challenges for our industry, but AHBIC will work as hard as possible to minimise the challenges and help our industry get through the next couple of years.

I wish everyone a Safe and Merry Christmas.

Danny LeFeuvre



Chair Report – December 2023

Acting Chair – Jon Lockwood

The last two months have been another very busy period for AHBIC.

Before I was involved as an executive of AHBIC I did not realise the importance and the volume of work required of the organisation, we are lucky to have our CEO and Varroa Coordinator passionately working hard for our industry. Acting Chair for the last few months, has highlighted to me the intensity of this roll, I give acknowledgement and credit to the work of our current Chair and previous AHBIC Chairs.

Transition to Management and CCEPP

As we are moving toward a formal transition to management phase of the response, NSW DPI have distributed over 43000 miticide strips to over 140 beekeepers that have formally identified mites at threshold levels. Being that Bayvarol is the treatment being issued, at 4 strips per hive, this equates to over 10,000 beehives being treated for Varroa destructor management. NSW DPI have stated that the free supply of treatments will cease in the near future.

There are reports from several suppliers that various treatment options have

arrived in the country, and they are readily available for sale to NSW beekeepers. Currently available chemicals are supplied under emergency use permit with New Zealand labelling until they become fully registered products under the APVMA and eventually will be produced and provided with Australian labelling. Our AHBIC Industry Updates have a comprehensive table of approved chemical treatments which is reviewed regularly to reflect changes that take effect.

Please adhere to the terms of the emergency permit, the permit outlines the lawful product use. Many questions around treatment methods using oxalic acid are being asked from industry. Please note, AHBIC are actively engaged in work to push the registration process and will be publishing a factsheet explaining details regarding oxalic acid in the coming weeks when further information is available.

The CCEPP will meet again on the 19th of December. The transition to management package is close to being approved after a rigorous drafting process to get it right, it is hoped that agreement unanimously will soon be reached by all parties as soon as possible. Education will be a large focus, with aims to begin roll out Nationally in the new year. AHBIC is expecting all beekeepers in Australia will have an opportunity to access and participate in the training content and materials to upskill those willing to learn.

Monitoring and State Borders

Monitoring may feel like a laborious task but is the new way of life in Australian beekeeping. Whether it is to identify a new infestation or determine varroa

numbers in your hives, regular and consistent monitoring by alcohol wash, soapy water wash or sugar rolling is now a crucial activity for beekeepers here in Australia.

There are reports from industry the State boarder restrictions are having adverse effects on business continuity. Bees not being able to cross boarders impacts beekeepers that would usually relocate, seeking good conditions and carrying out their regular business activities. AHBIC are regularly involved in State boarder conversations and advocate for the best business outcomes while being respectful to each of the jurisdictional biosecurity protocols.

Honey Production

Honey prices are concerningly low. With exceptions from some areas, our National production has reportedly been high, creating a surplus of product domestically and unfortunately importations remain constant, AHBIC continues to actively address this issue.

Despite a very tough year of challenges and uncertainty for a lot of our industry, I sincerely wish you a Merry Christmas and hope the New Year to come will bring you and your family prosperity.

Jon Lockwood
Acting Chair



Bee quick: New honey bee and pollination development grants to boost the industry



AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Program Industry Development Grants are now open for the 2023-24 application period.

The grants seek to expand industry understanding, knowledge and skills to drive the Australian honey bee and pollination industry into the future. This year there is a particular focus on supporting Early Career Researchers (ECR) on their research journey.

Annelies McGaw, Manager, Research AgriFutures Australia said the industry development grants were introduced to address current challenges.

“It’s been a tough few years for the industry. The 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires, the floods in Northern NSW earlier in the year, and now biosecurity threats like varroa mite have resulted in significant hive losses, with potentially devastating implications for the nation’s agricultural sectors and food security resources.”

“While research and development will play a role in rebuilding the industry, participation and innovation are key to

ensure the profitability and sustainability of the industry,” said Ms McGaw.

Applications for the Industry Development Grants (up to \$7,000) may focus on, but are not limited to, research funding including PhD top-ups, industry body development, personal development or travel.

“Ultimately applicants must clearly demonstrate a strong benefit for the industry at large and not just to one organisation or individual,” said Ms McGaw.

Applications must also address one or more of the strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan.

These include to:

- Identify and develop technology for improved hive performance

- Increase capacity within research community and future industry leaders
- Improve understanding of nutrition best practice and disease interaction
- Improve understanding of the benefits of honey and develop chain traceability
- Improve understanding of pollination strategies that impact crop yields and improve hive health
- Improve understanding of floral resources as assets for the Australian honey bee industry.

For more information on application requirements, evaluation criteria and Terms of Reference visit:

<https://agrifutures.com.au/funding-opportunity/honey-bee-and-pollination-program-industry-development-grants>

Applications close Monday, 5 February 2024 at 12 noon (AEDT).



Honey Glazed Ham



Everyone loves a 100% Australian honey glazed ham on Christmas day!

Ingredients

1 x 2kg ham

1/2 cup Cloves

12 Pineapple pieces/slices

12 Maraschino cherries

Glaze

¾ cup 100% Australian honey

¾ cup pineapple juice

1 tsp mustard

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Serves: 12 (based on a 2kg ham)

Method:

While ham is baking, place glaze ingredients in a saucepan and simmer until the mixture is thick.
Approximately 30 minutes before the ham is ready, spoon on the honey glaze

mixture and decorate with pineapple slices, cherries and cloves.

Return to the oven for 30 minutes.

Serve sliced.

Source: Cooking with Honey, Queensland Beekeepers' Association Incorporated.



Member Bodies Conference Dates 2024

Set your calendars, find your state association and member body below, make sure to support your annual conference.

Association	Date
<u>New South Wales</u> <u>Apiarists</u> <u>Association</u>	23 & 24 May – Wagga Wagga, NSW
<u>Tasmanian</u> <u>Beekeepers</u> <u>Association</u>	31 May & 1 June – Launceston, TAS
<u>Queensland</u> <u>Beekeepers</u> <u>Association</u>	11 & 12 July – Townsville, QLD
<u>South Australian</u> <u>Apiarists</u> <u>Association</u>	TBA
<u>Victorian Apiarists</u> <u>Association</u>	TBA
<u>Australian Honey</u> <u>Bee Industry</u> <u>Council – AGM</u>	10th July – Townsville, QLD
Honey Packers and Marketers Association	TBA
<u>Australian Queen</u> <u>Bee Breeders</u> <u>Association</u>	TBA
<u>Bee Industry</u> <u>Council of WA</u>	TBA



Varroa Mite update

AHBIC Industry Update 51 – 537 days of response

Varroa Update

The total number of infected premises across NSW has risen to 396. The heat map has had some gradual increases across southwestern Sydney, Central Coast, North of the Hunter and also in the Kempsey region.

In some instances, the heat map has extended beyond the known Varroa management zones. Stay up to date with the risks of Varroa near you by checking the heat map.

NSW DPI are still supplying chemical treatments, but have stated that this arrangement will be phased out soon. The ability for NSW beekeepers to purchase chemical treatments from retail suppliers is gradually increasing as stocks begin to arrive in the country.

Monitoring hives & Reporting results

Beekeepers looking for information on alcohol wash method and equipment details can visit either this Rod Bourke Bee Biosecurity Officer [VIDEO](#), the [NSW DPI Varroa webpage](#) or the [BEE PEST BLITZ](#) website where all state jurisdiction reporting lines are listed.

Beekeepers are reminded at the very least, complete your monitoring and

report every 16 weeks. If you detect more than 6 Varroa mites, you must treat all the hives at the premises using a method approved by the APVMA, complying with all label directions and permit conditions no later than 14 days after the date on which Varroa mite is detected.

It is critical that beekeepers then perform mite monitoring as soon as practicable after treatment application to determine efficacy of treatment. It is our collective goal as beekeepers to keep our bees healthy so that our hives do not become overrun with mites, this is why monitoring for mites will be at the forefront of management of Varroa.

Treatment Registration Progress

AHBIC has been working with NSW DPI and the APVMA as well many manufactures to progress as many management tools for registration as possible. Whilst we do not have visibility on all applications submitted, through conversations with manufactures and resellers we are aware of a number of registration applications that have either been submitted or are close to submission, this includes:

- Bayvarol
- Oxalic Acid (fogging and dribble)
- Formic Pro
- A number of Oxalic Acid strip products
- BeeGate
- Apitraz
- A formic acid + Oxalic Acid mix in a dribble form

Processing applications through APVMA is a slow process and typically takes 8-9 months, if the application is complete on submission. After lobbying from AHBIC, the APVMA has agreed to prioritise any

Varroa registrations but the process will still take 6 months at best. AHBIC will continue to encourage manufactures to submit registration applications ensuring beekeepers have as many options for management as possible.

Chemical Treatment Table

Product name Current 12/12/23	Bayvarol® PER94055v2	Apistan® PER94055v2	FormicPro® PER94055v2	Apivar PER94153	Apitraz PER94153	ApiGuard® PER93639	Api-bioxal™
Registration Status	Emergency use permit active Full Registration submitted	Emergency use permit active	Emergency use permit active (Formerly Mite-Away Quick Strips)	Registered	Registered	Registered	Full Registration progressing
Active ingredient	Flumethrin	Flumethrin	Formic acid	Amitraz	Amitraz	Thymol	Oxalic acid
Chemical Type	Synthetic pyrethroid	Synthetic pyrethroid	Organic acid	Synthetic formamidine	Synthetic formamidine	Organic extract	Organic acid
Product Type and dose for full size hive	plastic strips 4 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	gel strips 2 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	gel product 50g per hive	dribbling, fogging TBA
Temperature/hive type limitations for treatment	Not critical	Not critical	Only treat when ambient daytime temps are between 10°C – 29.5°C	Not critical	Not critical	Only treat when ambient daytime temps are between 15°C – 40°C	No
Treat with supers on hives	Yes But comb honey cannot be collected and sold if treated when supers present	No	Yes	No	No	No	TBA
Treatment time	6-8 weeks	6-8 weeks	7 days	6 to 10 weeks	6 to 10 weeks	2 weeks then additional tray for 4 weeks (Total of 6 week)	No details - not an approved product
Can nuclei colonies be treated	Yes – (2 strips per nuc)	Yes – (1 strip per nuc)	Colonies need to be a minimum of 6 frames of bees	Yes - (1 strip per nuc)	Yes - (1 strip per nuc)	Yes (25g per nuc)	No details - not an approved product
Withholding period	Not required when used as directed	Do not harvest honey when strips are in.	2 weeks from the end of treatment	0 days after removal of strips Do not harvest honey when strips are in.	2 weeks from the end of treatment	0 days but honey tainting may occur	No details - not an approved product

AHBIC, its employees, executive and consultants expressly disclaim all and any liability to any person in respect of anything, and the consequences of anything, done or omitted to be done in reliance, whether wholly, partly, upon the whole or any part of the contents of this industry update document.

You can reach out to AHBIC via:

Varroa Coordinator

Bianca Giggins

bianca@honeybee.org.au

0402 467 780



Friends of AHBIC

If you aren't already a Friend of AHBIC, we welcome you to join our group of organisations and individuals who are supporting Australia's national beekeeping industry that supports you.



B-QUAL

How does B-QUAL certification benefit my business?

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B-Trace

The specially designed app will assist in maintaining hive record information that satisfies the requirements of the National Biosecurity Code of Practice. The program is intended for small commercial and recreational beekeepers who sell honeybee products direct to:

- Farmers Markets
- Direct to consumers
- Food stalls
- Boutique shops, such as Bakeries, Fruit and Vegetable, Delicatessens, Restaurants and similar

The low annual fee includes the use of the hive management app and an annual desk audit.

For further information go to

www.btrace.com.au

