

SOUTHERN NORTH ISLAND BEEKEEPING GROUP INC.

Commodity Special

Sorry if you are a hobby beekeeper but most of this effects beekeepers with 25 or more hives. It's political but its necessary to keep you informed. These are mostly my opinions.

You may agree or disagree.

I have put my comments to the proposal in red or green depending if I disagree or agree with a tick or a cross.

What is important that you have a thorough understanding of how the levy will operate. It only cover one commodity. There are others; beeswax, propolis for instance. Put in a submission to Apiculture New Zealand stating your suggestions or an opinion before the end of December.

If you have just increased you hive numbers above 25, ask to be included in the vote as its taken from season's (June) ADRs. You have a right to be included as you could be paying the levy if it passes.

The Apiculture New Zealand Story

(This was taken from the brochure on the ApiNZ website).

The need for change - our industry is growing.

We need to manage and leverage this growth, and importantly, ensure we sustain a healthy bee population.

To do this we know that we need to invest more in:

- research relating to bee health
- biosecurity
- education and best-practice beekeeping
- sustainable beekeeping, including stocking levels
- supporting industry generally, including on market access issues

Apiculture New Zealand is doing what it can, but realistically we are a voluntary organisation with limited funds.

This means national work programmes and multi-season projects are beyond our financial capability. Our aim is to implement a commodity levy that is fair, equitable, and aimed at supporting the long-term success of the entire industry. What is a commodity levy?

The commodity levy needs to be run by an industry association that has the credentials and infrastructure in place to support the work that needs to be done. ApiNZ already has good infrastructure and a strong management team in place.

Consultation Process

ApiNZ launched its first commodity levy proposal for industry consultation at its national conference in July 2018.

The proposed design for consultation was:

- A flat \$0.10 per kg levy on all honey
- Applied to honey extracted for commercial purposes
- Collected at the point of extraction (by extractors) and passed on quarterly to ApiNZ
- A maximum levy rate of \$0.15c/kg of honey during the levy period (6 years) only to be increased with the consent of levy payers
- A minimum levy collection of \$86

ApiNZ proposed that voting on this design would take place throughout October 2018. ApiNZ undertook nine consultation meetings across New Zealand during August and September as well as a workshop at the ApiNZ Conference in Blenheim. These meetings were also supported by a dedicated website for all levy information. www.apinz.org.nz/levy.

Consultation Feedback The consultation meetings were well attended by a good cross section of industry participants. Key feedback themes included:

- Some support for a tiered levy system, with manuka honey paying a higher levy than non-manuka
- The levy being applied to as broad a base as possible. For example, including comb honey
- Levy funds ought to be collected by ApiNZ, not by extractors (with extractors passing on extraction information to ApiNZ)
- A minimum volume being applied for levy collection, in place of a minimum levy collection
- Moving the levy payment further from the extraction date to allow more time for honey to be sold ahead of levy payments being due
- Seeking additional levy-payer representation on ApiNZ's Board to ensure that levy payers are well represented
- The ability to track and to audit honey volumes at the time of voting
- Requests for additional time to consider this proposal and vote

ApiNZ's Board met following these consultation meetings and is now seeking feedback on the following amended levy design.

Following the feed Back

Key proposed design parameters:

- \$0.10 per kg on all harvested honey* - including honey comb honey
- There is no levy payable by any producer with an annual production of less than 750 kg per annum.
- For producers of 750 kg or more per annum the levy is payable on the annual full production
- The vote on the levy will open 1 February 2019 and close 1 March 2019 – we anticipate that the result will be published around 11 March 2019

- The first levy won't be payable until early 2020

This model captures those producers who hold over 95% of all hives in New Zealand, based on actual numbers of commercial beekeepers who easily produce the majority of honey in New Zealand. Non commercial members represent just over 3% of all hives while packers and marketers don't produce the commodity that is honey – *Only the commodity can be levied.*

* During the consultation meetings ApiNZ had feedback that the levy would be fairer if applied at a higher rate for manuka honey. We looked closely at this option and considered introducing a tiered levy system where all non monofloral manuka is levied at \$0.10 per kg, while monofloral manuka would be levied at a higher rate (eg \$0.20 per kg).

MPI has asked us to consider the practicalities of implementing the two-tiered levy.

The proposal is to impose levy on honey at the point of extraction, but testing for manuka usually occurs after extraction, and so there may not be reliable information available to base the two-tiered levy on. This will be particularly difficult for honey sold in the domestic market where currently no testing for manuka is a legal requirement. For that reason we are, for now, proposing a single rate at \$0.10c per kg for all honey.

We would be open to looking at the tiered option again once there is more clarity around this. We are interested in hearing from you on this point and urge you to send us your feedback at: levy@apinz.org.nz.

Who is eligible to vote for the levy?

- You are eligible to vote if you have 26 hives or more (estimated to produce 750 kgs)
- Those with 25 hives or less will not be eligible to vote. How will the vote work?

Under the Commodity Levies Act, Apiculture New Zealand must demonstrate over 50% industry support for the introduction of a commodity levy. A result in favour of the commodity levy will occur if:

- The 'YES' votes equal more than half of all the votes cast, AND
- The 'YES' votes represent more than half of the total registered beehives of those who voted.
- This approach, on a hive basis, ensures voting for a commodity levy is legitimate and can be easily audited **using the AFB database, based on the 2018 Annual Disease Return Individual Beekeeper Declaration (ADR).**

This approach also captures those producers who hold over 95% of all hives in New Zealand.

Voting can be done online or by post – all beekeepers will receive a ballot paper and voting form before the beginning of February, along with instructions for electronic voting.

How much money will be spent:

Science & research: 40% \$800,000 ✓



This will give us 1.6 million a year if you include the 50% Government but this is competed for by every industry. Plant and Food have been just awarded \$3 m over three years for bee research.

Bee health: for example, new treatment methods for Varroa, such as research into oxalic acid and glycerine towards an approved treatment method; *(already done overseas - just need registration of a code of practice as both are already registered chemicals.)*

research into treatment resistance (*done by the chemical companies - we know we have resistance to two products - don't use them - use only once every two years and then withdraw them again.*).

- Investigation into biocontrol (*Supplements? Research already being undertaken here and overseas. If talking about mite control, just need to adapt Canadian and European methods.*)
- Ongoing Colony Loss surveys: to benchmark bee health domestically and internationally (shared Government and Industry funding) (*Yes, but those with big losses are not contributing so swaying the results. Gives good information but it would be better to put the money into continuing the pathogens programme finishing in March as the findings benefit all beekeepers. -\$300,000?*).
- Pesticides: research into the impact of toxins on bee health; (*Already done over seas. EPA uses chemical company information so its biased the committee doing this is doing a splendid job. Get surfactants registered [R. M. Goodwin research], just pay the committee for their time and travel as what they do effects all beekeeping*).
- Identifying the levels of toxins in our soils & water; how we can mitigate the impact of pesticides. (*Testing to-date shows we are unique in that although we are a heavy user of neonics, they are being washed away and broken down by sunlight unlike Europe and North America which get covered in snow so they remain in the soil*).
- Sustainability: for example, research into a bio-control for passion vine hopper to mitigate the risk of Tutin in honey. ✓ (*Research into the distribution of scollypopa would be helpful as NZFSA just took a punt at the 40 parallel. Testing is now showing the high risk areas. Areas without scollypopa should be fee of testing, and yes to biocontrol*).
- Science extension: a technology transfer programme between scientists and beekeepers, facilitating discussion around completed, current and potential research. ✓ (*Yes, adopt what they have done in Canada. Means that you pay people to help beekeepers. basically what MAF did when we had apiary advisory officers. should be part of the AFB PMP. \$200,000*).

Biosecurity : 20% = \$400,000 X

- Control and management of incursions and/or eradication programmes for new pests and diseases, identifying new bee diseases at point of entry, introducing sentinel hives and programmes of work in consultation with industry.
- Management programmes for Varroa, Giant Willow Aphid, Wasps, Myrtle Rust and others.
- Readiness funding. Including the ongoing involvement in Government Industry Agreement (GIA) mechanism – so any GIA levy introduced can be established at zero unless a specific incursion warrants a targeted response.

Biosecurity Not necessary. This part comes under a GIA Levy not a Commodity Levy.

What ApiNZ is not being indicated is there going to be a GIA levy as well as the commodity and PMP levies. GIA will cost between \$30,000 and \$70,000 in administration to belong and to cover industry member's time. \$300,000 for increased biosecurity (surveillance hives), targeted to finding exotics a lot earlier. 50/50 with Govt.

It was going to be set at 0% for funding an incursion, but after the M Bovis incidents, Government now wants industries to have funds available instead of levying everybody after and incident. Realistically \$5,000,000 is used in a few weeks when paying MPI officials and ground support @ \$165 +GST per hour.

Advocacy: 10% = \$200,000 X

- Representing industry needs and concerns to decision makers through regular advocacy to
- Government Ministers and agencies, including submissions and policy support.
- Supported by industry-based Focus Groups to ensure policy represents levy ✓ YES

Basically administration; Yes its important to talk to MPI and different industry groups but to-date from a beekeeper's point of view, some poor results. Focus groups are performing well.

Leveraging 3rd party funding: 5% = \$100,000 X

- Quantifying the real value of a thriving bee population to New Zealand biodiversity, pastoral, forest, and horticultural industries.
Funding opportunities include:
- Sustainable Farming Fund
- MBIE funding, including: - Partnerships Scheme - Endeavour Fund

Basically administration. Anybody can put in submissions for funding, research groups do this. They put proposals together. The administering body recommends which proposal gets their approved. We need an independent science committee to make these decisions as to what our priorities are made up of all groups.

Education & skills: 3% = \$60,000

- Identifying industry needs and developing supporting programmes in response, for example, running specific training to support beekeepers in disease detection.
- Ongoing development of the NZ Apprenticeship in Apiculture.

Basically administration: Disease training is covered under the AFB PMP and government agencies like AsureQuality as part of our biosecurity.

APINZ have set up an apprentice scheme and good on them for doing this. However once operational, there is very little cost to the Assn unless it is providing subsidies. Govt. provide a subsidy for the first year then its user pays.

What is really required is leadership training so the beekeepers can manage their businesses better and be part of the bodies controlling our industry. Two persons a year, \$20,000.

Identifying NZ bee product benefits: 3% = \$60,000 X

- Grow the value of all our New Zealand native mono floral honeys and bee products, positioning these as part of our New Zealand honey story

Exporters do the marketing for themselves; (they make 100% on what they pay beekeepers). Unless its for internal marketing of different honey types. This has already been done but could be repeated with the down turn in honey prices. Otherwise it covered under research. It also could be looked upon as an Administration cost.

Market access: 3% = \$60,000 X



- Working with industry and regulators to ensure that New Zealand honey and bee products meet overseas market access requirements, including addressing regulatory requirements such as C4 sugars, Tutin, residues etc.

This is paid for by Exporters or RMP holders. If APiNZ is involved, its administration.

Reserves: 6% = \$120,000 ✓

- multi-year projects
- unbudgeted expenditure, in the event of unforeseen events or opportunities requiring early action
- years of low yield

This is necessary for next review 5 years review, but 6%? Do we need \$120,000 a year put away. It should only cost \$200,000 to do a review and road show to get the levy to another vote. The NBA under Nick Wallingford built up reserves of \$150,000 but this was all used in administration over two years. Its a good idea to have reserves but basically it is to cover short falls in levy collected in a bad year.

Administration: 10% = \$200,000 X

- Ensuring that the key activities are managed efficiently and effectively, including levy collection, administration of funds and reporting to levy payers.

Why are they collecting this when everybody is charged an \$86 administration fee.



The Proposed Commodity Levy - My thoughts

In my beekeeping lifetime I have seen a few levy proposals, the last being from memory around the year 2000/1 and so want to give you a little background. The 1998 levy proposal took more than a year for the committee involved to formulate a proposal before it was taken to the beekeepers for approval. It took three revisions to formulate/get to a voting procedure and how to interpret the votes in place. Votes are counted by an independent person. We haven't seen any of this coming out for beekeepers to scrutinise. This is my observation on the current situation.

Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ) has had the freedom to lead our industry for two years. They have done well in some areas but overall are not concentrating on things that benefit the beekeeper or if they are, we are not being told about it.

This has now lead us to set up our own autonomous group with a membership of beekeepers who just wanted to get together and talk about beekeeping. Some of those beekeepers have retained their ApiNZ membership, some either didn't want to belong to ApiNZ or couldn't see a benefit to continuing their membership. Our group has united the beekeepers of the Southern North Island and our increasing membership numbers show that this is a desire of beekeepers across NZ. Most don't like the corporate "top down" approach" and feel this hasn't worked. From the outside ApiNZ as a body have accepted decisions MPI have made without much consultation with the wider industry; some to the detriment of small beekeepers.

An example is MPI 's branding of honey boxes to assist with traceability and to stop theft. How does branding of the honey boxes help traceability for the beekeeper with their own extracting plant who only extracts their own honey?

As for theft, already some potentially stolen boxes have been found with the brands sanded out. The Police don't appear to have the funds or inclination to send the boxes for lab testing to identify the change in the wood that branding does to identify the owner. My own personal experience is that with just two days of motorway surveillance camera footage to look at, I was told after two weeks the camera footage has been overwritten which is correct. What I wasn't told is the footage is held for three months on backup disc so the officer put his time into other priorities rather than spend time on my hive theft.

There appears to be apathy or lack of understanding/education with what's going on amongst the newer, younger beekeepers. Perhaps they just want to get on with their own beekeeping and leave the political and marketing side to others.

The ApiNZ Commodity Levy proposal looks good from a distance and most would agree in principal that it would be a good thing to have regular research money but when you take a closer look, you wonder why some things are there.

The first question when looking at a commodity levy is why do you want it, then the next how will you fund it? The intended levy conversation started with the reason to gather money - to fund research for the NZ beekeeping industry. Our lack of funding for critical discovery work within the hive will impact beekeeping at the bottom of the pyramid, ie research that has a direct impact on bee health within the colony. A lack of this sort of research has impacts further up that can ultimately impact any direct benefit the bees give – to pollination (paid and unpaid) and then any bee products that are derived from their work in the field.

Basically the greatest amount of the commodity levy collected should be spent on things that directly benefit the levy payers – in the case of this proposal that is the commercial beekeeper, those with over 25 hives. As with any business there will be administration costs, however this must not detract from the bulk of the levy going to research. Historically in our industry, the administration part of our previous Commodity Levy over time swallowed up first, the marketing and then research section money, so the money that was being paid under the levy was simply funding the organisation. In 2002 when the commodity levy came up for renewal the only way for beekeepers to revolt at this blatant misdirection of levy money was to reject the Commodity Levy entirely, which has had the sad consequences of a lack of collaborative industry input into science projects in NZ.

This is what was put in the December 1999 Otago University report on the honey industry: .Strategies for 'Greening' the New Zealand Honey Industry: Diane Bourn, Bronwyn Newton and Hugh Campbell.

2.3.5 The Commodity Levy of the NBA *One of the most contentious aspects of the current structure of the industry is the NBA's commodity levy. The levy is considered by many to be essential for underwriting co-ordinated strategies for the national industry while being bitterly opposed by many other beekeepers. Issues and problems surrounding the levy reflect the difficulties of attaining a 'fair' levy system in an industry increasingly marked by heterogeneity of interests. There are on-going discussions concerning the levy and it is likely that new proposals will emerge in the future.*

Anybody interested can read the whole report :

<https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/5322/Honey%20Report.pdf?sequence=1>

Under the new commodity levy proposal there appears to be a plan to wrap all services of ApiNZ and the levy into one big basket. Is this what we want as an industry? Some maybe. Most see the benefit of paying directly to fund research and some individuals have been contributing directly to projects along the same lines when we, as the Southern North Island Branch have. Most voluntary contributors see the benefit of this and encourage industry wide participation but never with the strings attached of being forced to pay for an industry wide organisation, especially if they question the benefits.

The levy amount.

Why are we starting out at 10 going to 15 cents per kg to achieve a figure of \$2,000,000 with \$600,000 for research. This is the figure floated in 2015 with the setting up of ApiNZ with most going to cover the operational costs of ApiNZ.

The proposal is to impose levy on honey at the point of extraction, but testing for manuka usually occurs after extraction, and so there may not be reliable information available to base the two-tiered levy on. This will be particularly difficult for honey sold in the domestic market where currently no testing for manuka is a legal requirement. For that reason we are, for now, proposing a single rate at \$0.10c per kg for all honey. - from the ApiNZ proposal

MPI / ApiNZ don't know much about our industry. A beekeeper knows whether the honey is likely to be manuka or not at the time of extraction; by the colour, thyrotrophic, taste, wax capping's, etc. its separated off as to have other honeys with it will only down grade it. the beekeeper just doesn't know if it will meet the standard at that point of time. A beekeeper will test the honey before its offered for sale so not knowing what type of honey it is shortly after extraction doesn't hold water. It has to be in a drum to calculate the amount extracted.

MPI already has a document out asking to apply the export manuka standards to local honey because local honey can be purchased and sent overseas. So its almost certain to become law as well.

So MPI's statement to ApiNZ is very dated. Another reason to delay the implementation of the levy.

Government has said having our own research money will make it easier to tap into government research grants. We have to be very choosy with where we spend research money. A lot of what we would like to know has already been studied overseas. All we have to know is, is their research applicable to NZ conditions. If not then we repeat the research. This could lead to additional benefits if we could tap into the start of overseas research projects and they do our summer and their summer, much like Monsanto has done with Northern and Southern Hemisphere research.

The levy is mentioning the fuzzy parts that beekeepers in general agree with, like biosecurity yet biosecurity is part of the GIA levy, not a Commodity Levy. This is another levy waiting in the wings.

Australia with all its 600,000 hives, each roughly produce around 300 kg per hive in a good season, (when not in drought) which is three times as much as we produce, recently they set their levy at 4.6 cents per kg which covers everything including biosecurity under GIA administered by Plant Health but this does not cover the actual administration cost of the beekeeping organisations.

If you want to know a little about the levies in Australia look up -<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/notices/may-2018-honey>

ApiNZ is proposing that we start at this high level immediately, without taking into consideration the world honey environment and the effect of the recently introduced mānuka standard.

The world is awash with fake honey mostly produced in China. This has dropped the world commodity price below the cost of production in some countries. (Refer to the World Honey Report in Newsletter 1 on the SNIBG website: www.snibeekeeping.nz).

MPI and the rest of the Industry have been concentration on just one product - Mānuka honey.

The mānuka gold rush has created all sorts of problems for beekeepers.
(Short term gain for long term pain).

- Packers concentrated on the monetary return instead of product honesty. I.E. all sort of honey that previously had overseas markets went into boosting mānuka honey.
- Competition between packers cause the non-mānuka honey price to rise artificially high in New Zealand because the packers were getting a greater return under a mānuka blend.

Now with the mānuka standard, honey's like kanuka, rewarewa, honey dew and other honey types that went into boosting 5+ mānuka, no longer have a market.

We are on a downward slide from the lofty highs of the mānuka gold rush. NZ Beekeeping is about to go through a recession.

We have a new honey season upon us yet substantial amounts of last years honey remain in beekeepers sheds and what has already been purchased by packers is waiting for buyers. The real good mānuka continues to sell but at a reduced rate as we are now seeing buyer resistance to the real high prices. MPI is saying there has already been a 7% increase in mānuka sales since July but I think some of this was packed mānuka that wouldn't met the new standard going out of the country. It will be interesting to monitor our export statistic for honey from now on as it will be separated in mānuka and non-mānuka.

There may be too many brands on the world market and with all the publicity that some honeys have not met the standards on the label, overseas shoppers are shying away from certain brands. Already we are seeing price cutting on the local market for some mānuka honey down 70% as beekeepers face financial problems.

There needs to be an adjustment to the fee paid per hive for mānuka honey sites. There are already reports of payments for sites on dodgy mānuka land (pasture honey only obtained) over the last three year' has decreased; \$3000, then \$1000 and now nothing. Those paying on a percentage of the mānuka honey crop after all expenses are taken out, are perhaps better off as the reduced income with today's prices will also see a reduction paid to land owners.

The wholesale prices for bush honey is way down and now sitting at about \$7.00 but could drop as low as \$6.00 a kg or even lower. We have seen this before in 2003 when price of honey fell to below of cost of production for small beekeepers. This drop in price was because through some clever German marketers, going to each major producing country saying we can buy honey for this price, can you beat that and then went round in a circle dropping the world honey price.

An alternative levy.

One of our members suggested we adopt what the Forestry Industry has done for their Commodity Levy. They have two recognised bodies each supporting a different sector. Each support their own associations with their own subscription.

The levy is only for research. 17 cents per ton (approx 17 cents per \$100). This is administered by two representatives from each group with an independent chairman being an accountant. The administration part of the levy covers their meeting costs when they decide research spending similar to our Honey Industry Trust.



With this type of levy, our three industry bodies stand or fall on their own membership. Already we are looking to work with NZ Beekeeping on projects of mutual interest without losing our independence.

I think the levy should be delayed for a year.

Let the mānuka regulation and the consequences bed in see where we are and then get industry agreement.

ApiNZ holding meetings around the country was a smart move to met the statutory requirements so the Minister can pass the levy. At those meetings there should have been 1, 2 or three clear proposals from which beekeepers could have given an indication as to which was more preferable to them. ApiNZ hadn't done their home-work and I don't think they expected so much opposition.

ApiNZ is saying we can look at making changes later but this is not exactly correct. The levy is locked in for 5/6 years and its only when it comes up for review - a vote to continue where change to the proportion of where the money is directed that changes can be made.

Historically its been to increase the levy, however the forestry industry this year decided to reduce their levy as they already had accumulated funds.

If ApiNZ wanted to strike a voluntary levy on a honey pot of 10 cents for research only, I'm sure beekeepers wouldn't mind paying and passing on the costs to the public. Most don't mind paying a little more when it's going to research.

However any of this is unlikely to happen as ApiNZ has everything to gain from a Commodity Levy.

If we want to change the proposed levy or delay it put in a submission before the end of December. If the proposal remains as it is ie: not to every bodies satisfaction, then the only vote we really have left is NO to the proposal. At this point, if there are enough NO numbers it will be back to the drawing board.

It's important that all voting papers are posted back.

From New Zealand Beekeeping Inc.



Apiculture NZ have made several changes to the proposal since the roadshows. It has shown me that they had little idea of the complexities of our Industry and how a fair and equitable levy could be struck.

Most people I have spoken to would like to see a levy for research, but little else. We certainly do not want to be forced to join Apiculture NZ nor pay for their administration costs.

Some of the comments are still valid:

1 Apiculture NZ are not the appropriate body to oversee a levy – they do not solely represent the proposed levy payers.

2. The levy base is still too narrow.

3 You must vote and encourage others to vote

4. The AFB PMP is not being appropriately run by Apiculture NZ – this needs to be fixed first before they are allowed to consider running another levy.

The two stage voting system has now been changed to the second vote counting hive numbers (and yet the commodity is honey). We do not want the vote to get to the second stage as it is more likely that the Commodity Levy will be passed (due to large corporates supporting Apiculture NZ).

I encourage you to VOTE NO to allow the Industry to consider a better proposal in the future and who is the appropriate body to oversee such a Levy.

NZ Beekeeping Executive Council will be meeting shortly and we would welcome your input.

Regards

Jane PRESIDENT

AFB Levy - another \$2 million.

The shock announcement at this years conference that the AFB levy was to go up progressively to 300% over three - five years, although voted out for next year's budget is still on the AFB Boards books.

It hasn't been put aside as they told us, just delayed while they look at the situation again and ApiNZ put through this levy proposal.

They have a take it or leave it contract. No negotiation on the hourly rate. Well behind out industry rates.

The AFB PMP just have a big bucket they put everything into instead of itemising everything into a proper budget. They use it but there is no cost benefit analysis on anything they do.

For instance budgeting \$60,000 last year on training of new AP2's when they could have paid another \$10 and hour to retain the old ones. Which is the cheapest long term option.

A lot has resigned.

As one AP'2 said "The real cost to industry with the loss of older AP2's is the "industry good" factor these persons operated under, i.e., the net works and confidences developed over time, hours of unpaid networking and tuition given/provided in good faith and intent, intelligence and info gained and provided. These are in most instances lost and will never be regained as new trainees do not have experience in disease control and eradication nor the confidence of the commercial sector and industry generally".

We want to see a marked improvement before approving a levy increase.

Some other comments.

**MPI does some really good things but then lets themselves down.
Perhaps by not consulting wide enough with the other beekeeping groups before putting things out for discussion and industry acceptance.**

The GREX standard put out by MPI is making it difficult for some beekeepers who both, pollinate and export their honey. They stipulate a single brood nest where you are unable to lift brood frames up into the second super as this is usually where the winter stores are put but in a single box system, all the second box honey is extracted and sugar fed back to mostly fill the bottom super with winter stores.

It was modelled on the corporate beekeeping system working to a calendar. Bees don't work to a calendar. Sometimes this works and some years it doesn't but its also a more intensive system of beekeeping.

Works OK if you know how to control swarming but is causing problems for some of the newer commercial beekeepers who don't know the dynamics of how a bee colony works. Putting on new foundation above the queen excluder without a bait frame means the bees don't move up and if the hive has a top feeder, it starves.

They didn't consider pollination hives I.E. used for kiwifruit pollination. All that sugar feeding can restrict the queens laying in a single box system. If you don't have drawn honey frames, the hive becomes useless for honey production. It also means that you either extract the sugar and return the second box for honey or you remove it store it and then put it back on at the end other season for the bees to take the sugar honey down into the bottom super/box.

Fiji Market access negotiated by our MPI.

Beekeepers thought that this was a joke thinking that nobody in in their right mind would approve that but with their limited knowledge, MPI approved the provision to heat honey to kill varroa mites. The world must be laughing at them for their lack of basic knowledge.

Well that's the politics of beekeeping and if you read all this then thanks.

Frank Lindsay

