

Some news.

News or items of interest will be compiled each month and sent out as a newsletter with the meeting reminder. Our first newsletter, which is fairly large having been compiled over several months, will go out to as many beekeepers as possible. The months following will only be sent out to members.

If you come across anything of interest that can be used in the newsletter, please forward it to Kate Smith or Frank Lindsay.

Our Group

Our name is the Southern North Island Beekeeping Group Inc. (Not as I put in the letter to Karin Kos the Southern North Island Discussion Group).

We have formed a separate beekeeping identity as our members are a staunch lot and some were for ApiNZ and some were for NZ Beekeeping. If we joined either we would have broken up our group. We have been functioning as a group for many years, so why break up something that works.

Our mission statement is: to educate and cultivate beekeeping in our area.

We have ratified a constitution, set up a bank account, register a domain name (snibeekeeping.nz) and set up a website. It is hosted on a Raspberry Pi3 using the Lindsay's home internet connection. We had a bit of trouble getting it going as Frank had registered snibeekeeping so naturally we couldn't get a connection. It's all been sorted and we now have the correct name registered. The website is still being added too as time permits but we would also like your input on what you would like on the website. If you see anything interesting that you feel would be of interested to other beekeepers please forward it on.

Small groups as well as big groups can make a difference. You just need to know who and when to lobby the right people to get anything done. If you are working with Government, expect it to take two years. Some things can be done a little quicker.

At this stage anybody can join for an initial donation of \$10 to give us a starting bank balance. We hope to raise money to run the group from holding field days. Next year when we will know how much it costs to run our group, we may set a slightly higher subscription.

Our website is www.snibeekeeping.nz

Huge shock at conference - You got an email the same day from the AFB PMP as we received it at conference. Read the conference report.

Time is short to put in submissions as the AFB levy proposal closes on the 10th August. I implore you all to do the survey monkey or add a written submission to the further comments at the bottom.

Last Month's Meeting

Gavin told us of a friend who just lost his factory to fire shortly after the installation of smartmeter. Was it a fault in the meter or a wiring fault or whether the electrician moved some wiring we may never know, however it does highlight a major problem we as an industry have to face. We work with a product that is a reactively safe food but under the right circumstances it does burn. So I wrote this as part of an article for the NZ Beekeeper but cut it out as my apiary article was too long.

Insurance and honey house protection

Have you noticed your insurance cost keep increasing? Yes we are all paying a little more for the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes but beekeepers in general are paying more.

There have been vehicle claims and theft claims (I've just had five hives stolen four weeks ago which I suspect are now in the Wairarapa), but fires are a big problem in honey houses, houses and farm buildings. For farmers, rats and bird nests in tractors are a big cause. We put out bait stations so these are mostly controlled around our buildings.

Six months ago FMG put out a brocher on the causes of house fires and what to watch for; <https://www.fmg.co.nz/globalassets/advice/fmg0575-risk-advice-house-fires-web.pdf>. Overloaded multiboxes, fires caused by items being too close to a fire or heater, appliance fires. We had a kitchen fire when my wife left something on the stove to attend to a baby; (he's now nearly 48). Only smoke damage, thank heavens.

What caught my notice was that 20% were in switchboards and for this reason, insurers now want factories to have their switchboards tested using a thermal device for heat every six month.

In my time as a technician, I was covered by a limited registration to replace plugs on extension cords, etc., so know a "little" about electricity and how to wire things safely.

I wrote back to FMG and asked why so many but no reply as this goes out. This got me thinking. We never heard of switchboard fires thirty years ago, so what is the difference. Was it because the meter now has a plastic case, was it caused because of wiring being the wrong gauge carrying too much current or did the electrician disturb some of the wiring. We will never know.

We are now using more gadgets connected to plugs. Apart from the computer, I have printers, computer speakers, modems, Wi-Fi router, etc., on a multi-board which is connected to a single plug in the computer room, however I turn most of them off at night.

So I asked a couple of electricians and they believe it's the way things are wired these days. Even in an old house with buzz-bars, (a strip with all the neutral wire connected to it) a loose connection on the bar will vibrate electrically and cause the connection to fail or heat up, hence the test with a thermal camera.

I still have a few old ceramic fuses in my meter board and learnt that these become less effective each time a fuse blows. When a fuse blows, copper residue is left when the fuse wire evaporates. After a few times, this has the potential to continue to provide a partial electrical circuit so the holder should be replaced. Fuses can sometime take half an hour to operate if they are running at their rated current. How many simply put in a heavier gauge fuse wire when they have a fuse blowing all the time.

Electrical protection for houses and factories have improved over the years. If you are in an old house or building, consider having your electrical switchboard upgraded to include circuit breakers and have these protected by RCD's (residual current device). As a reference view the clip on <http://www.firstcallelectrical.com.au/electrical-blog/whats-the-difference-between-a-safety-switch-and-a-circuit-breaker>. Knowing this made me look at my fuses in a new light.

I borrowed a thermal imaging camera and have been playing with this around the house looking for cool spots where I had just installed wall insulation. Our house was built around 1950's so had no insulation. Power was so cheap back then that you ran big electric wall heaters during the winter and opened door and windows in the summer.

I had noticed the kitchen extension cord plug was warm and used the camera on this. As well as heat being generated at the plug connection, it also showed heat 25 cm in the cord away from the

plug. I cut out the plug and that section of cord and it's now cold showing a good connection. I don't think we are getting extension cords of as good a quality as we did years ago when things were made to last.

My honey house is in the basement so I am very aware of the dangers of fire. I could lose everything so I never leave anything on if I can help it when I'm not there. Wet hands and honey are a dangerous combination. I was turning off a light switch one night and heard the switch arching. I ran and physically tripped the circuit breaker but by this time, perhaps 30 seconds later, the switch was already black. Sometimes you are just lucky.

So, now as part of my winter maintenance I also clean my 230 volt portable switches on the extension cords that manually power the uncapper and pumps, (after disconnecting them from the power). These don't have plastic protective covers to stop honey getting into the mechanism and I am constantly aware that a build-up can cause arching and start a fire. These are mostly old style switches (set up more than 40 years ago) that have an open rocker mechanism with large contacts so are easy to take apart and clean. Modern switches are not so easy to clean so I soak them in hot water, then remove the water with methylated spirits several times and air dry them for a few days. All are then checked by an electrician before being reused.

Before putting wall insulation the basement, the 230 volt wall switches had a tiny sticky build up on the connectors. Warm air going through the switches carried tiny droplets of honey, and when this hits a cold surface it condenses, like water vapour on your windows. Over the years this can build up. I insulated the walls to prevent heat loss and this also stopped the air flow, have cleaned the switches which has eliminated a potential problem.

What we all should be doing at this time of the year is having a look for potential problems. Write things down so everything becomes part of your regular winter maintenance scheduled.

Smoke alarms

Simon Morton's "This Way Up" programme on National Radio gave us some information on smoke detectors, via consumer magazine. I was impressed by Google's "nest" detector. Yes, it cost NZ\$ 219 (US \$170 in the USA from Best Buys) but it communicates with your cell phone and links each smoke detector together using Wi-Fi to give an audible as well as a vocal alarm.

One of my concerns with my extracting plant under the house is that I don't at the moment have my smoke alarms connected to each other. I might not hear it going off down stairs if there was a fire. I have to either, purchase units that are wired together or use Wi-Fi. I think the latter has more benefit especially if you also purchase their alarm units.

There are nest security products like their door bell which records every person at the door and can use facial recognition. These are not cheap in the region of \$500 and require a \$5.00 fee per month for storage but neither is replacing everything after a fire or burglary.

For those with separate building perhaps connect using a Wi-Fi range extender.
<https://bestreviews.com/best-wi-fi-extenders>.

If however you already have an alarm system in the house, perhaps hard wiring in your fire alarms to that system would be a better idea.

Webinar

The other morning at 4am, I tuned into the Kim and Jim show run by Bee Culture (<https://www.beeculture.com/kimandjimshow/>). Each show is about an hour long and there are one or two shows a month.

This month they interviewed the board members from Project Apis m, named after our honey bee. (<http://www.projectapis.org/>).

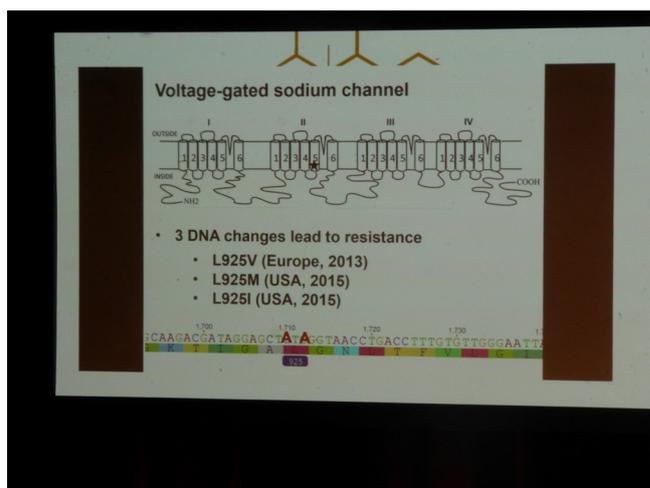
Project Apis m's mission: *Is to fund and direct research to enhance the health and vitality of honey bee colonies while improving crop production.*

Big corporates like Bayer, Syngenta, the Almond Industry and Costco have put funds into their research projects along with lots of beekeepers. We as beekeepers can learn from their research and see if what they have found is applicable to us in New Zealand.

There are several groups in the USA helping beekeepers. The pollinator Stewardship Council; (www.pollinatorstewardship.org) and the pollinator partnership <http://pollinator.org> support all pollinators. The Honey Bee Health Coalition mainly focuses on varroa mites and sustainable ways to manage varroa. All these are interesting websites as far as I'm concerned as we need to enhance our habitat for all invertebrates which pollinate.

Resistant Mites.

ApiNZ's Friday newsletter for the 13 /07/2018 from Karin Cos had a bit about Bayvarol® resistance stating that Bayer haven't been able to detect the changes in DNA that take place in mites when resistance occurs. (They have publicised this in the NZ Beekeeper and conveyed this message at the ApiNZ conference). They use a very narrow DNA test that looks at three letters in the DNA strand which are very close together. These change in resistant mites. These changes have been detected elsewhere in the world whenever resistance has occurred to synthetic pyrethroids but for some reason not in New Zealand. The test costs \$4,000.



However, several beekeepers have proved we have had mites that weren't killed by Bayvarol. In my case six strips in a three high hive. The mite level after six weeks was still 10%. This wasn't due to re-invasion as I had already moved these hives to an apiary where most of the hives had no mites.

In talking to John Mackay from dnature lab, he's not seeing the normal changes that occur in the DNA either, so he was interested in getting some of the mites and testing them further to see if some sort of new mutation shows up.

The O'Brien's from Otorohanga had the same resistance problem. They have to get mite levels low in order for their bees to qualify for export and it just so happens that they still had sticky boards

with these mites, so nature now has something to start testing with. It will be interesting to see what comes out of it.

Reminder: Even though some of the bigger beekeepers are not seeing resistance to this miticide, if you are within a couple of kilometres of a beekeeper who migrates his hives north to follow the mānuka flow, check mite levels before and after the eight weeks to see that your treatment has worked. Just pick a couple of hives and do a mite wash but it is better to do all hives as mite levels vary from hive to hive. Then check these hives again when the strips come out and alternate your treatments so that a different family of insecticide is used each spring and autumn. We don't want to lose any more hives.

Speaking of miticides, have you noticed that Apivar® has changed the label requirements. This is a French product and the French mostly use Dadant hives. A big single brood nest one quarter deeper than our Langstroth hives.

When this product was first introduced to New Zealand early 2000's, commercial beekeepers lost hundreds of hives because we didn't know how the product worked. Their scientist came out to NZ and at a Waikato field day explained the mode of operation. The chemical takes time to come out of the polymer strip and to build up in the hive before it starts killing mites. It took about three weeks but is nullified by high moisture so if the weather was wet or you have high moisture levels in your hives, it took longer. What else was also interesting is that he showed the product didn't reach 96-98% kill until 12 - 14 weeks but was only registered for eight weeks. Once we knew of its mode of action, and knowing that it was ineffective if the hive was on the verge of collapsing from PMS, we could treat a hive with just two strips and it worked wonderfully.

Now the treatment is one strip per five frames of bees. Beekeepers have also noticed that it starts killing immediately. My question is what has changed? Speaking to their representative sales girls in the USA last year they said nothing had. So is it the extra strips per hive that gets the chemical to a killing stage on the first day? I wasn't convinced that the manufacturer hadn't changed something; perhaps the polymer so that the chemical passes through it more readily.

At this year's ApiNZ conference last week, I met the USA representative and he confirmed they had changed a molecule in the polymer so that the miticide now passes through quicker.

The same sort of problem happened with MiteGone which was initially stocked by NZ Beeswax. This is an oasis pad covered with cellophane that can provide a month's treatment of formic acid by delivering 12 grams a day via evaporation. Didn't work well here in New Zealand so Bill Ruzicka, its developer came out to New Zealand and checked out some hives.

In BC Canada where he lives, the humidity in his hives during the Fall (Autumn) is 50%. In our hives the humidity averages 60% going to 70% some days in the central North Island. (This is the reason I purchased two sets of BroodMinder scales - I wanted to know the humidity in my hives as I'm using formic acid on paper towels as a flash mite treatment).

Bill found the product wasn't delivering the correct amount of evaporation. Simple solution, just cut the oasis strip at a 15 degree angle instead of straight across. This gave a larger cross section so the correct 12 grams a day was released. Just a pity that this treatment hasn't taken off perhaps because its corrosive, you need lots of safety gear and is a bit fiddly to put in the hives but it could become a worth while product when the strips start failing. It can be left in all winter giving off a little formic acid which helps keeping re-invading mites low.

New beekeepers should remember that we are perhaps going through the best time and the worst time in beekeeping in New Zealand. We are (were) getting the highest prices in the world for our

honey but we are also facing over stocking, increased mite re-invasion, viruses and diseases. We all have to be on our guard.

Refractometer

I purchased my refractometer 40 years ago for \$300. Now they are on sale from aliexpress for \$28.00 They are cheap, because the northern hemisphere is just about finished pulling honey. If the price reverts to normal put them on a watch list or wait for the 11th November sale.

Hand held brix Honey Refractometer brix 58~90% RHB-90ATC for jam syrup controlling concentrations with ATC 45% off

What is important is that they have automatic temperature compensation and a screw to adjust to the correct reference level using a drop of canola oil.

Some commercial beekeepers in the USA use these in the field to determine when the honey is ready for removal; sometimes before the honey is capped. They have a long hot, mostly dry summer so they can pull their honey early whereas we in NZ have to be very careful with our moisture content as our climate is so varied.

For a quick reference, measure the outside and middle frames and average the result as this is what you will get in the tank. If you have to pull (remove honey) early, reading the moisture content may indicate you have to dry it further in a hot room with a dehumidifier. Set the temperature to 35°C with supers either stacked alternately or with fans pushing air through each stack (supers slightly raised off the drip tray). You can get cheap fans from the recycling centres at the dump. Disconnect the elements so you only use the fan.

CONFERENCE REPORT

We are back from the ApiNZ conference in Blenheim. It was a good conference. Good food is always number one, but the real reason we go to conference is to catch up with other beekeepers, learn what's new, what we can use in our beekeeping and catch up on science.

Request for submissions coming at us from all sides.

The AFB PMP levy increase, MPI on the local mānuka definition and ApiNZ Commodity Levy proposal.

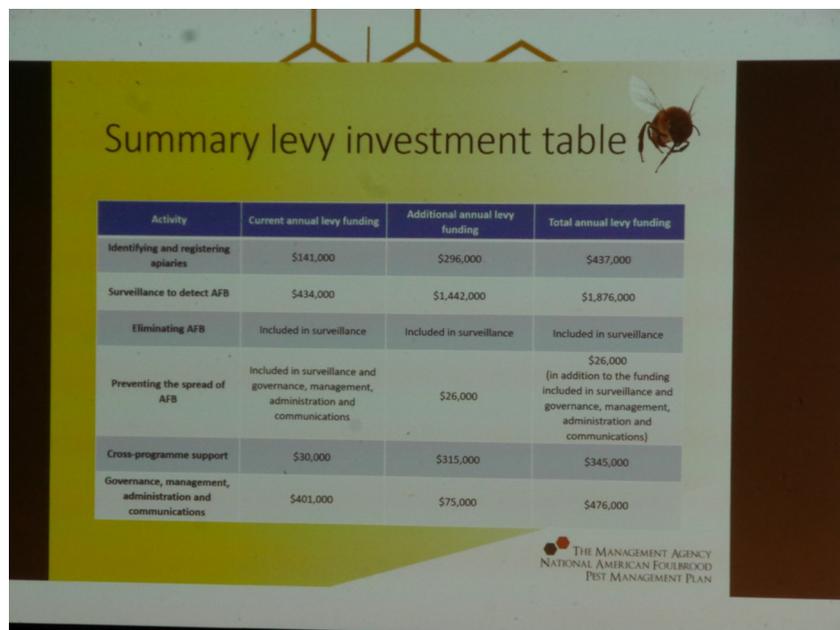
You can read MPI's document on

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations/manuka-honey-sold-in-new-zealand-is-further-regulation-needed/>

Small amounts of mānuka honey are being purchased by tourists and MPI is concerned that local honey should be the same quality as export honey. Good reasoning but the only drawback to using the same definition for local honey is the cost of the testing which for a small producer with only a few kg will be prohibitive.

AFB PMP Levy increase.

The Management Agency is seeking beekeepers' views on the plan to increase the apiary and beekeeper levy to a maximum of \$40 per beekeeper and \$50 per apiary. A bit of a shock in that the proposed increase is 100% for the beekeeper part and 300% for the apiary registration side. From the latest email from the board, it will gradually increase over three years to the \$50 per apiary amount.



Summary levy investment table

Activity	Current annual levy funding	Additional annual levy funding	Total annual levy funding
Identifying and registering apiaries	\$141,000	\$296,000	\$437,000
Surveillance to detect AFB	\$434,000	\$1,442,000	\$1,876,000
Eliminating AFB	Included in surveillance	Included in surveillance	Included in surveillance
Preventing the spread of AFB	Included in surveillance and governance, management, administration and communications	\$26,000	\$26,000 (in addition to the funding included in surveillance and governance, management, administration and communications)
Cross-programme support	\$30,000	\$315,000	\$345,000
Governance, management, administration and communications	\$401,000	\$75,000	\$476,000

THE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
NATIONAL AMERICAN FOREBROOD
PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

Unfortunately this is going to penalise any beekeeper with a small number of hives in an apiary and those in the business of providing hives in urban areas.

If beekeepers see it as unjustified and if it is profitable to do so, beekeepers will start de-registering summer and small sites and consolidating hives into larger apiaries for winter (before the 31st March). Smaller beekeepers may not register their hives which will compromise our biosecurity system.

Please put in a submission if you are adversely affected or have a suggestion as to how the PMP Board can work better.

Where do we get the submission form? On line via the AFB website or <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KCZ3SQD>.

Submissions close 10th August, two weeks away.

Not to be too syndical, Government ask for submissions because they have to, but need not take any notice of them as demonstrated by NZFSA several times.

In looking at the AFB PMP, some increase is perhaps understandable.

They have finally woken up that AFB is increasing at a rate of 15% a year but that's on the reported cases. We know it's not being controlled early in commercial outfits as hobbyist hives are getting AFB close to commercial apiaries in areas where we have never seen it before.

They need \$500,000 to upgrade apiweb but we have heard that one of the apiary management software providers is willing to assist for considerably less than this which might also incorporate an electronic harvest document.

Computer software requirements need very good scoping: what extra fields are required, what documents you want to be incorporated, where you want to see them, etc...

MPI has held exercises, one on a small hive beetle incursion and its implications, and from that exercise we made recommendation as to changes in the apiweb.

AsureQuality has had numerous complaints about the software, so where is their list. This should be put out to industry asking for their input. This should be put all together, everything laid out field by field, page by page which then makes the software programmer's job easier. What really costs is when a proposal is open ended and when the client makes modifications. Why is our industry not using the expertise we have within our membership?

Years ago, the NBA got interested beekeepers, formed a committee and they did all this work for free. Now industries seem to prefer to pay outside groups to do this for us but we are the users and know where the system is letting us down.

The PMP plan to spend money on training apps. There are better ways to train beekeepers and Apps won't work unless you are in cell phone range.

Beekeepers have lost confidence in the PMP. What we need is a demonstrated confidence in their ability to do the job.

Having to request minutes of Board meetings through the Ombudsman using the Official Information Act is stupid. They have paid lawyers for information circumvent the necessity to comply with these requests as they thought they didn't have to comply. What have they got to hide? The world knows within 15 minutes of what's going on. They are monitoring us.

Suggestions: Lay out the budget with everything correlated into sections so everybody can understand it. Spend money following up incidences instead of accumulating reserves. The new manager is making a difference. He is showing trends which is a start but again these are only from reported cases.

The Board seems to prefer spending \$60,000 training new AP2's instead of increasing the inspectors hourly rate to what AP2 are prepared to do the work for. Their contract is "take it or leave it" and unfortunately some of their most experienced beekeepers are not prepared to do it for this. Where is their cost benefit analysis.

By dropping the experienced AP2's, they are endangering the ability of MPI to initiate an exotic incursion response. Beekeepers are the only ones who can check hives and they are not going to neglect their own business to be paid \$40 an hour when MPI and AsureQuality staff are being charged out at an hour \$170+. This just swallows any reserve funds and now this will be levied on the beekeeper under GIA.

We have in the past asked that the costs be equal spread as MPI and the beekeeping industry have the same costs in the long run.

We want the PMP to use better technology for detecting AFB. Sniffer dogs work well in the right conditions: when there is very little wind, when bees are not flying and the dog is comfortable. They detect the disease before there are clinical signs. When is the best time to use a dog - during winter when hive movements are stable. Follow up suspects in the spring with visual inspections and recommend quarantining suspect hives not showing visible signs.

They should put money into researching swabbing of hive entrances to detect AFB. This can be done by an untrained person at anytime during the year. Dnature is looking at this technology.

They propose to test 2,000 honey samples better than the 60 - 80 samples from retail outlets out of the thousands of batches of honey produced which didn't really give an indication of disease levels, just a trend. The Chinese have found AFB spores in: Canadian, Australian and now our honey. Australian authorities put out an alert to all the beekeepers. We have seen nothing. Why not alert all beekeepers to this problem.

Look at breeding resistant bees. We now have the technology to pull out sections of DNA to identify this allele.

They have a 5 year plan but it just involves changes to the legislation. Where is their map for 5 years, 10 years and 20 years ahead. Where does the industry want to be in 20 years. (I'll be 92 and may just have one bee hive).

All this extra money is required because there is so much non-compliance.

They need to clamp down on non-compliant beekeepers with unregistered apiaries. Beekeepers are using the 30 day rule but we all know that to produce honey, the apiary site must be registered.

Cowboys putting hives on the side of the road are endangering the public. Cancel the beekeeper's export registration if they are non-compliant so none of their honey can be exported. Put a movement control on the site or just remove the bee hives. The beekeeper pays all the costs to get them back within a certain time or they are destroyed. This is better than taking beekeepers to court with all the associated costs that can't be recovered which is why they have been reluctant to do so.

These are some of the reasons beekeepers are upset with the PMP. The board is not doing what it set out to do. They have a mandate under the Biosecurity Act and AFB compliance is tied to export certification which in turn can put costs on compliant beekeepers.

They are also assuming the beekeepers can pay for this increase. Over stocking and poor seasons are causing reduced returns.

ApiNZ Commodity Levy.

We now know a little bit more about it.

The levy will be spent over nine areas:

Science and research 40%

Biosecurity 20%

Advocacy 10%

Leveraging 3rd party funding 5%

Education and skills 3%

Identifying NZ bee product benefits 3%

Market access 3%

Reserves 6%

Administration 10%

They are proposing a 10 cent levy per kg on all honey extracted at a RMP facility to be collected by the extractor, plus an administration fee of \$86 minimum. I suspect there will be GST on this.

this levy is on honey products. What about all the other honey products covered under the RMP system. Can't be too hard to collect if these were included as most of these just go through a few businesses.

A Commodity Levy has its good side in that it stops free loaders. Everybody pays. The only research being done at present is by big companies and the industry is excluded in most cases from the results of this research.

In 1989 the Government introduced new structures to deal with the setting of priorities for research and development in New Zealand. A key element of that policy package was the funding of research and development partnerships between the public and private sectors. The Commodity Levies Bill

was introduced to enable industry groups to participate in such partnerships (Sutton, 1990). The Government's science investment strategy was focussed on getting industry commitment and a good balance and positive interaction between public and private sector research funding (Marshall, 1993).

For background download the PDF on this site:
<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/3736/loggedIn>

Who has voting rights. Under the act, it means everybody affected by the proposed levy but we were told that **only beekeepers who had honey processed at a RMP facility this year can vote.** Yes, every beekeeper will be sent a voting paper **but it could be that most hobbyists and those who normally have their honey processed but didn't this year will not qualify so their vote will be disqualified. If this statement is true it may breach the fairness provision of the requirements under the Commodity Levy Act.**

Is 10 cents per kilogramme a reasonable figure.

Look across to Australia and see what beekeepers pay there.

1.5 cents for research and development which is matched by the Australian government,

2.9 cents for biosecurity,

0.1 cent for the national residue survey to measure chemical residues in honey and

0.1 cent for the Plant Health Australia which is their GIA levy supporting a full time officer in the beekeeping area.

= 4.6 cents per kg.

Their honey production fluctuates widely as it's massively effected by drought but normally it's three to six times our per hive production, so 10 cents in New Zealand looks reasonable.

Unfortunately the levy will be borne unevenly by South Island and North Island producing pasture and bush honey. The value of their honey is now five times less than the value of manuka honey. So naturally they will have to produce five times more honey than Manuka honey producers for the same honey monetary value.

One disappointing aspect to the Commodity Levy is that it doesn't include the GIA Levy. There is going to be a separate levy administration costs.

For the GIA levy, the response/ reserves part will be set at zero so no funds will be accumulated for an exotic incursion. This will be put on all beekeepers after an incident takes place as seen by the dairy and cattle industry at the moment.

The Australian levy also pays for honey residue testing. In NZ this is put on the RMP holder through their yearly MPI RMP registration so again this is being paid separately by only a few in New Zealand.

These two sections are excluded from our proposed commodity levy so is that fair that only a few pay to protect our exports, (when exports prop up the internal price of honey). This argument goes out the window if Government allows honey to be imported into NZ. The price of honey will drop to the import price as it has in Australia.

Biosecurity provisions are covered by the proposed levy.

Biosecurity is the responsibility of Government because Government protects all our people. At present it is mostly up to beekeepers to detect anything unusual in their hives and report it. MPI

surveys hot-spots (around ports and airports) once a year. This is mostly to give assurance to our overseas markets that we are still relatively disease free but it's not really surveillance in my mind as it's unlikely to pick up anything early enough to be eradicated at source.

In Australia their 2.9 cents raises about \$460,000 to fund biosecurity activities. \$385,000 towards their national biosecurity strategy and \$75,000 for honey bee pest surveillance which includes electronic monitoring of bait hives and on-going monitoring of sentinel hives, (hobby hives close to high risk areas). The same sort of thing is proposed to be part of our levy which is a step forward from what MPI delivers now.

Who pays the Levy? In Australia anybody that produces more than 1,500 kg pays the Levy. This is the equivalent to about 500 kg in New Zealand's terms of honey production and saves on administration costs. (They have to pay a government agency to collect their levy).

In New Zealand, ApiNZ proposes that only honey extracted through a RMP premise will attract the levy. On their website <https://apinz.org.nz/proposed-levy-model/> it says local honey won't attract the levy as it's too costly to administer. However, **all honey extracted in New Zealand for commercial use is liable to pay the levy.**

Collecting the levy

This will work well for the big beekeepers who process their own and extract other beekeeper's honey. They buy it all and sell it overseas or locally, but what of the small beekeeper who has his honey extracted in a family business RMP premises. The extractor is meant to add the levy to the beekeeper's extraction bill but that beekeeper may have to hold the honey for a year or two and then may be paid over several months before the beekeepers gets full payment for the honey.

You can't expect the extractor to pay the levy and then wait for the beekeeper to pay him/her back. They are not a bank. Neither can some businesses hold honey until payment is received as they do not have the storage area. Beekeepers will have to pay the levy up front to the extractor. when they collect the honey.

We are in a period where marketers have to re-establish markets for blend honeys that were previously added to manuka. Kanuka producers are left with honey nobody wants as it doesn't meet the mānuka standard. (Test it anyway as it might be high in one of the mānuka standard chemicals). Some beekeepers who brought mānuka, land now find that the honey off this land doesn't meet the mānuka standard so have to rethink their finances.

If ApiNZ goes by what the website says, the levy doesn't effect the local market sales who operate under the Food Act.

However in the August NZ Beekeeper, "**Producers of honey extracted by non-registered extractors can self-declare levy payments via a portal on Apiculture New Zealand's website.**

Hypothetically, if it did, those sellers on the local market would have to put in a voluntary return and they could also cop an administration fee of \$86.

If the administration charge was applied to self-declared levy payers, they would have to sell more than 860 kg to get value for the levy.

If this is correct, yes, the honest ones will put in a return but most won't pay unless they get an invoice and will there be GST on top of this? More costs to uncover non-compliance.

Then there are other problems - How do you know if the person selling honey at a stand has paid the Commodity Levy? It used to be that stamps were issued by the Honey Marketing Authority in the old days and these were only put on displayed honey. There was wide selling without paying the levy. This is probably the reason they have restricted the levy collection to RMP extraction premises only.

Disenfranchised: The Levy Act could disenfranchise the small beekeepers as they lose their membership in ApiNZ. No apparently **non-levy payers may join ApiNZ by way of subscription and receive full membership benefits. This will run in much the same way as present.**

At the tech seminar one of the software providers said the day of the small beekeeper has gone. The industry will be taken over by the corporate sector. That software provider is in for a shock, as we are here to stay.

When honey was talked about at conference, it was mostly in reference to mānuka. Rewarewa and other mono-floral honey types were only mentioned once in passing in the form that they and other honeys need more marketing.

Administration under the commodity levy. ApiNZ is proposing that only 10% is spent on administration of the hoped for \$2,000,000 from the levy.

The administration costs under the legislation have to be below 30% of the levy collected. As Russell Berry stated, they might have a hard time keeping to their budget. The NBA couldn't. Initially it was 30% for administration. First the research part of the levy went into administration and then the marketing part. This caused stagnation in the industry and was the main reason the commodity levy was voted out by beekeepers when they tried to renew it again in 2002.

ApiNZ is confident they have the hive numbers but not the beekeeper numbers to pass this levy. They have to communicate with beekeepers and this will be done through consultation meetings throughout the country and through the website and the NZ Beekeeper. Please try and get to a meeting so you have all the facts and then put in a submission if you think there are holes in the proposal or if you have an idea on how to improve the levy.

Form more information on production stats download.
-Apiculture-monitoring-report-FINAL%20(2).pdf

Our meeting = Wednesday 22 August in Palmerston North