

**FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB NEWSLETTER**

**FEBRUARY/MARCH 2012**

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**President's report**

It has been most encouraging to see the number of members, and potential new members coming along to the Club Sundays. In spite of the weather this January there were 19 attendees so one supposes we are doing something right. Thanks to all those who come along to add value to our meetings.

The Pohutukawa this season have been magnificent; but sadly here close to the club apiary, the only day one could stand under the tree while it was in full bloom and hear the loud buzzing of bees was Christmas Eve. Other than that day the wind and rain tended to keep the bees in the hive rather than out foraging.

A reminder that in April is the club AGM and **honey competition**, so now is the time to think about entering, winning and going home with the BIG STING. Details of the competition appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Remember it is open to all financial club members. See Dates to Remember.

Although current membership ends 31<sup>st</sup> March, its validity will be carried over to the AGM at which time the following year's membership will be discussed and set, and then invoices sent out. If you would like to join the new committee make sure you tell Secretary Graham. He has some great ideas and will need help to implement them. As mentioned last year I will not be available for re-election. Remember too our intended participation at the **Karaka Vintage Field-days on 1<sup>st</sup> April**; we will be looking for members to staff the stand, probably two at a time for two hours to sell honey and teach about bees and to help set up. This show is only for one day so with two hours on the stand there will be plenty of time to look at the exhibits. Also time will need to be allowed for honey extraction which will take place some time during March- where assistance will be sought. This field-day has in the past been really fascinating and as all the rain is falling now, it will be fine. The day runs from 9.30 to 4.00pm and we plan to set up from 7.30am.

Peter.

**From the Secretary**

Hi all

Well the weather is still pretty unpredictable, after an awfully wet and windy holiday period.

My bees seem a little slow making honey this year but the numbers are good so, just be patient!!

We added 4 more bars to the club Top-bar hive this week, as it was drawn out to the followers.

We have been very busy with swarms this season. One was wasps, one was bumble bees, one was up the top of a 25 metre tree, but most have been a breeze. Quite a few of you now received a swarm; if anyone else would like one could you let me know, though they should be slowing down soon.

Check out the website now as it has been updated ,  
<https://sites.google.com/site/franklinbeekeepersclub/>

The club has purchased a bulk lot of honey jars again, 500g square with lids  
Any financial members wanting them, would you get your needs to me at  
[graham@thewheelers.co.nz](mailto:graham@thewheelers.co.nz) or the club email [franklinbeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:franklinbeekeepers@gmail.com)

First in first served , price should be about 50c each .

Due to popular demand we have ordered more of “Practical beekeeping in NZ”  
see me if you would like one.

I hope to see plenty of you at the AGM and honey show, so check out the rules  
and enter your honey, wax, candles, etc, and let’s have a good competition.  
Cheers Graham

### **Hivemasters Report**

On the last club day held on the 2nd sunday of January those that attended approx  
15 braved the elements. While it rained we all huddled in the vat stand and held a  
discussion on Guess What ?

After about hour the rain eased and we ventured to open the club hives. The hives  
were strong and all had supers filled or partially with honey so we suppered up all  
hives with one or two suppers in anticipation of them gathering more honey.  
The split that we had done on our last clubday [ in December] had no signs of a  
laying queen. But this is not unusual as the split had been done 27 days  
previously. As a rule of thumb I usually wait 35 days before inspecting for laying  
queen and in some cases u may have to wait up to 42 days. This is dependant on  
there beeing fine weather at time of mating.

Ensure the bees have enough space as with all this rain there is likely to be a lot of  
nectar about and the bees can fill boxes rather quickly. Also remember when  
checking your hives keep an eye out for anything unusual- look not only for exotic  
diseases but also for insects not usually seen in a hive.

Note the article in the *New Zealand Herald* dated Friday 6<sup>th</sup> about the parasitic fly  
found in the USA.

Happy Beekeeping Peter

### **Honey Competition**

Who is eligible to enter? – The competition is only open to paid-up members of the  
Franklin Beekeepers Club. How are the points awarded?

You can put in one entry in each of the classes listed in the December newsletter,  
and repeated below.

There are 6 classes for honey in jars, four classes for frames and two for wax. Each  
class has a first place with 3 points awarded, second place with 2 points and third  
place with 1 point. The more classes you enter the higher your possible total scores.  
The entrant with the highest score overall is judged the winner, and will win the  
Big Sting Trophy for the year. So the more classes you enter the higher your possible  
score.

Honey should be presented in clear 500g jars for both the liquid honey and the  
creamed honey. Frame should be presented in a clean super with a mat or base to  
prevent dripping, and with a cover or in a nuc box.

When you have chosen the frames you wish to present, you can store them in the  
freezer to prevent them from loosing too much honey in the interim. This also stops  
the wax-moth from damaging them.

Liquid honey will also stay liquid in the freezer, whereas creamed honey is made  
by seeding the liquid honey with 5-10% of creamed honey of your liking, and re-  
ducing the temperature to 10 degrees and stirring twice a day for three days or till it  
becomes too stiff. Temperature can be reduced by placing the honey to be creamed  
in a chilly-bin along with a frozen 2-litre bottle of water.

### **Classes:**

**Extraction Frame** – Select a frame drawn out evenly on both sides to make for  
easy uncapping and extraction. Frames should be drawn out wider than both the top  
and bottom bars.

**Cut Comb Frame** – Select a frame for clean appearance with no surface discolora-  
tion and no pollen. Comb should be filled right out to the edge. Frame should be  
of even thickness and not as wide as the extraction frame.

**Heaviest Frame** – Encourage the use of fewer frames in the hives and thus, more  
honey per frame and less work extracting. Don’t worry about how the frame looks

**Section Honey** Two required. Presented in the small wooden or plastic boxes.  
Filled out to the edge. Of even depth with clean white cappings. No pollen.

**Granulated Honey** Judged for taste, colour and freedom from froth and impuri-  
ties. Pack in clear 500gm jars. Competitors to classify as LIGHT, MEDIUM or  
DARK with only **one** entry in each section.

**Liquid Honey** Also judged for taste, colour and clarity., freedom from froth and  
impurities. Pack in clear 500g jars. Competitors to classify as LIGHT, MEDIUM  
or DARK with only **one** entry in each section.

**Novelty Wax** – Something modelled from pure wax. Judged for art form and pu-  
rity of wax. Use can be made of rubber moulds, candles, carving etc.

**Wax** – a 500g block of pure clear wax. Judged for purity and colour.

### **Alcohol Section**

**Wine** – Judged by members tasting

**Mead** – Judged as for wine.

## Protecting bees from Insecticides

The National beekeepers Association in 2011 decided to take a proactive position with respect to ensuring that the appropriate controls are applied to new and existing chemicals that harmful to bees. There have been a number of global concerns expressed about the use of some insecticides which have resulted in this issue.

- a. The problems experienced with bee deaths especially with the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in Europe during the past decade.
- b. The possibility of a link between chemical use and colony collapse disorder in the USA.
- c. The growing fact that many of the new insecticides are systemic in the plant, very safe to mammals (includes humans) and highly toxic to insect pests and especially bees.
- d. Local experience from beekeepers. The NBA President Barry Foster talks of two major concerns in his area;
  - 1 Experiencing a 20% drop in bee numbers per hive when conducting kiwifruit pollination.
  - 2 The bee dead zone of the Gisborne plains experienced by local beekeepers.

The first step the NBA did was to ask the Environment Protection Authority, EPA (formerly called ERMANZ), to review the use and the controls with respect to the neonicotinoid chemicals.

The NBA was asked to fund this total review and reassessment.

In June of 2011 the NBA appeared before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Pollinator Security to present the case for help in protecting bees, our most important pollinator.

The third step was to take a more active role in discussing with the EPA new applications for new insecticides that may or not affect bees in New Zealand.

I am an amateur beekeeper with a day time consulting job that directly involves me with the approval process of pesticides and hazardous chemicals. I had decided to make my own submission on the EPA application to approve the pesticide Yates Super Shield Advanced, and had shared my thoughts with the Franklin Beekeepers Club of which I am a member.

One thing led to another and I attended the 2011 conference for one day and soon after I was asked by President Barry Foster to assist the Technical Committee of the NBA. That is to work with the professional beekeepers of New Zealand, which is an honour for a beekeeper apprentice like me.

## **Application APP200839 Yates Super Shield Advanced**

This is a home garden pesticide, which contains two insecticides tau-fluvalinate and imidacloprid and a fungicide myclobutanil. It is a new formulation to replace Yates Super Shield, which contained acephate, which is being reviewed by the EPA.

This application was the first chance for any submitter to ask the EPA to review the future use of a neonicotinoid insecticide, imidacloprid, since the discussions held between the NBA and the EPA about reviewing and reassessing the neonicotinoid insecticides.

The EPA has to date not scheduled a review and reassessment of the use of neonicotinoid insecticides but thought clearly in their wisdom to publish a paper titled, **“Neonicotinoid insecticides in New Zealand and overseas regulatory status of neonicotinoid in relation to the effects on bees”**. Note this paper had no public input and was we believe pre-empted by the submissions on Yates Super Shield Advanced. And the publication of this paper should not be taken as an EPA review and reassessment of the neonicotinoid insecticides, which would cover the total environmental effects of these chemicals in greater depth.

Two submissions were made, one on behalf of the NBA and the other from myself and we presented both at a public hearing on November 24<sup>th</sup> November. I believe we got an extremely good hearing from the 3 members of the EPA who heard our submissions. For example the hearing went longer than the 30 minutes combined time we were asked to use when speaking to the commissioners.

Some of the key issues of this process are worth recording and repeating.

Dulux Yates had prepared the application in Australia and it was noted that there were a few cut and paste errors in the application. Note; this is a very common fault – the more errors the bigger the company.

The marketing manager for the product said repeatedly that imidacloprid did not kill bees, even after being advised that the EPA had already decided this fact. I will also point out that the Dulux Yates Application in Table 11, said both insecticides were toxic to bees.

The two submissions to the EPA focussed on these key issues.

- a. The importance of bees as pollinators and their contribution to our economy.
- b. The importance of home gardens as diverse year round refuge of food resources for bees.
- c. The concerns with the main regulator the EPA (formerly ERMA NZ).
  - i. Complete lack of enforcement

- ii. The EPA lacks any outreach education to pesticide users, especially home gardeners. When was the last time you saw a pesticide safety sign in Mitre 10 or Bunnings home garden section?
  - iii. The HSNO Regulations are overdue for review
  - iv. EPA has made many past poor decisions especially with respect to systemic insecticides. The EPA has failed to update substance controls when new information becomes available. The EPA are slow to react, reassess and review.
- d. The ‘wild west’ market of home garden chemicals, which are often made exempt from HSNO Act Controls, such as the requirement to have an approved handler. Note; many of the products do not have to be registered as pesticides under the ACVM Act if they not applied to food crops and are for ornamentals use only.
- e. Both the two insecticides in Yates Super Shield Advanced require approved handlers to use when used commercially. But when mixed and used together in the home garden, the approved handler requirement is dropped by the EPA, “as it is too difficult to administer.” In fact there are more exemptions for home garden chemicals, such as the dropping of the tracking of hazardous substances, packaging and labelling requirements, many based on the small volume of containers supplied.
- f. Products containing imidacloprid when assessed by the EPA have varied from “extremely toxic to bees” to “toxic to bees”. This has had a marked effect on how the application of **HSNO Substances (Classes 6, 8, and 9 Controls) Regulations 2001** Section 49 is applied. One would think that a gram of active ingredient is the same as any other gram of that same active ingredient – except the EPA does not think that way.

**HSNO Substances (Classes 6, 8, and 9 Controls) Regulations 2001** Section 49, has two options for the EPA to determine when approving a chemical for use in order to protect invertebrates due to the ecotoxic nature of the substance. The Section is designed to protect these invertebrates by forbidding the application of the substance if bees are foraging in the area (option 1) or to forbid spraying on plants bees are likely to visit, by not spraying 10 days before flowering until or during flowering, (option2).

In 2010 the EPA (ERMA) approved Cyrus (Approval HSR100355) an insecticide containing 350 g/l imidacloprid and based on the data supplied made the 10 days before flowering a necessary control

(option 2) of Section 49 of the Regulations. This was the correct decision I believe based on the data supplied in the application.

What the EPA has not done is apply that control to all previous formulations of imidacloprid (at least 6 other products have been approved) and to future approvals such as Yates Super Shield Advanced.

All the other products with the same active ingredient have different controls based on option 1.

The EPA has not seen fit to update these imidacloprid containing products with Class 9.4 Control 49 (1) (b), which I believe is appropriate.

In January the EPA approved for importation and release the substance Yates Advanced Super Shield. The decision can be read on the EPA Website <http://www.epa.govt.nz/search-databases/Pages/applications-details.aspx?appID=ERMA200839#>.

This decision permits the use of Yates Super Shield Advanced in the home garden right up to immediately before plant flowering. The primary control proposed by the EPA to prevent harmful effects to bees is dependent on a written statement on the label. “ ***This product is highly toxic to bees. Do not apply this product to any plant or tree, including weeds, likely to be visited by bees at the time of application or immediately after, or in areas where bees are foraging.***”

Now I have no idea how the EPA will effectively enforce this warning.

#### **Application 200886 GF-2032**

Well you need to be a sleuth to work out what these insecticides are when you read an application.

GF-2032 is a new insecticide supplied by Dow AgroSciences, and nowhere in the application do they tell you how it works and what its intended use is, there is no draft label for the public to read (the EPA get one but not us beekeepers).

You need to read many sections before one realises it is a systemic insecticide effective against sucking insects, aphids, Psyllids, thrips and dimply bug. Oops sorry dimply bug is not yet in New Zealand, it is in fact a pest of mangoes in Northern Australia – a cut and paste error yet again!

We do know that this product is toxic to bees, in fact I would say very toxic with a honey bee Acute Oral LD50 (48 hour) LD<sub>50</sub> = 14 ng ai/bee.

GF-2032 contains the active ingredient Sulfoxaflor, similar but different, related but not close to but just down the corridor from the neonicotinoids (my assessment). In fact they are going out of their way to not relate this product to the neonicotinoid chemistry. Bad news for a new product’s image I imagine.

Since the NBA submission on GF-2032 we are awaiting a hearing date. Of interest is that Dow have requested a meeting before the hearing with the NBA.

## Summary

There are very few submissions made when new pesticide formulations are considered by the EPA. The technical committee is focussing on the key insecticides that have the greatest effects – persistent systemic insecticides that operate as themselves or as metabolites in the plant's phloem or xylem, the goal is to make sure that the EPA makes decisions to protect our most important pollinator the honey bee.

## In the picture

Film, **Vanishing of the Bees** is being shown at the Hawkins Theatre, Papakura at 12.30 and 7.30pm on 8<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March.

## Beehives wanted

A rural landowner with native bush and open pasture situated off Waiuku Road, is looking to have two beehives placed on his property, from which he would like to take 10 – 20kg honey annually and arrange a financial agreement with the bee-keeper for the lease and management of the hives. This is seen as a possible on-going arrangement.

Anyone interested please contact Clive, 09 235 7611 for further details.

**February 12th and March 11th at the club apiary**, with an additional **date to be advised in March for extraction/packing**, and the **AGM on the 15th April** because the second Sunday is Easter. The AGM will be at The Centre as in past years,

## Dates to Remember

**Sunday February 12th, 2012**

**Venue: At the club hives.**

**Program:** 10.00 am Cuppa and discussion, 10.30 open the hives.

**Sunday March 11th 2012**

**Venue: At the club hives.**

**Program:** 10.00 am Cuppa and discussion, 10.30 open the hives.

*Additional club hives in March, date to be advised, topic, honey extraction and packing.*

*Sunday April 15th, AGM*

*Venue: The Centre, behind the Library in Pukekohe*

Venue at Cub Hives: Rapid Rural 733 on State Highway 22, Paerata. Travelling east along SH22 (from Drury), it is on the left hand side: travelling west (from Puke), it's on the right.

At 733 there is a red letterbox and a driveway that forks- left goes to a house, take the right that travels 100m past old sheds and terminates at a turntable by a disused concrete-block cow-shed. Adjacent to this shed is the apiary site. When visiting the site, please ensure you park on the old turntable, taking care that the driveway is kept clear. **WHEN LEAVING THE SITE, TAKE GREAT CARE JOINING THE TRAFFIC, VEHICLES APPROACHING FROM THE RIGHT ARE NOT THAT EASY TO SEE.**