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## **From the President**

Hello everyone. I hope you all enjoyed the last meeting. With numbers elevated once again, there didn't seem to be enough time to get around to everyone. Although we had an appetite for the food that was on offer, there was also an appetite for knowledge of beekeeping, with the interest in bees growing on a weekly basis. I hope the activities were fruitful for beginners on the day.

You never know what bees are going to throw at you. When you open a hive and the lid is packed with honey, it's never easy to deal with. The job gets messy. I robbed a dozen hives the day after the meeting and I think I got more honey from the lids than from the frames. I'm getting a lot of practice at gouging honey out of lids and into buckets.

Unfortunately the get together for the next meeting/Christmas party in Grafton, linking up with the Mid North Coast club, has had to be cancelled due to an issue with the venue. So we will be having our Christmas party in Ballina instead. It should be a great day. Hope you can make it.

Cheers,

Tony.

## **Last Meeting**

The last meeting took place at the Lamont's home, Tomki. The meeting was very well attended, once again.

Interest in the field activities was high. Tony gave demonstrations on cleaning/processing wax, the transfer of a nuc into a full-size hive and splitting a hive. And, of course, the morning tea and lunch was of the usual high standard, so a big thank you to the people who toil behind the scenes to make this happen.



*Tony Transferring a Nuc to a Full Size Hive*

Thanks to Tony and Dianne for hosting the meeting.

## **New Equipment**

Stephen and Janet Fowler carry most common beekeeping equipment, including a range of extractors, both manual and electric. They also carry a range of jars and pots for honey sales.

Frames are now in stock. Wax foundation is proving difficult to get, but some will be available in late November.

Please contact Stephen or Janet regarding your equipment requirements (see the Equipment Officer contact details above).

Robert Stone has pre-assembled and wired frames for sale. Please contact Robert on 02 6683 2222 for further information.

### **Hives and Nuclei**

Please contact Stephen Fowler if you are able to supply hives and nuclei to other club members.

### **Steritech**

The disease American Foul Brood (AFB) continues to be prevalent in the area and beekeepers, particularly beginners, must be on the alert for it in their hives. If you are in any way suspicious, ask one of the more experienced beekeepers to come and have a look immediately.

The disease can be easily spread to other hives in the apiary by the beekeeper, and if the diseased hive is let go to the stage of being so weak that robber bees can get in, the disease can be spread to most hives in the vicinity.

The club sent up five pallets of gear to be treated at Steritech on Friday 11 November i.e. approximately 200 boxes full of contaminated gear.

Please contact Brian Window or Stephen Fowler regarding your Steritech requirements.

### **Update - Townsville Varroa Mite Incursion**

Since the October newsletter was published, Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) have been detected at two further locations in the Townsville area. No Varroa mites were found.

Full-time positions have been advertised as part of the eradication program.

Updates on the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council website can be found at the link below.

<http://honeybee.org.au/category/news/>

### **From The Hives - November**

The 32 hives at Bungawalbyn arrived at the tail end of a flow, probably forest red gum, and are now sitting there without a lot of activity. The last of the macadamia honey will be taken for extraction, before the other flowering species such as white mahogany, narrow leaf red gum, or swamp box, get going.

There were eight weak hives that had swarmed recently; they have been checked over to assess whether they managed to make a laying queen, and whether there was any AFB present. Seven were fine, but one was in trouble; it had no eggs, larvae or capped worker brood and very few bees. There were scattered drone cells, and it was clearly a case of a drone laying worker bee. The hive had not managed to produce a new queen. It was surprising that it had not succumbed to small hive beetle - they were there, but not in large numbers. Maybe the Haselmaier-type beetle baffle that was on this particular base had limited the number of beetles.

Anyway, the hive was shut down, after shaking the few bees off, and brought home. The brood combs showed no sign of AFB scale on the walls of the cells, and the equipment is going back into service.

This queenless state after swarming is quite common, and it is accepted that only 80% of queens make it back to the hive after the mating flight. Only one failure is a good result; a few years ago, there were 13 queenless hives after the same move, leading to a big scramble to source new queens to save the hives. Also the practice of placing the pairs of hives equally spaced in a very neat row was abandoned!

Brian.

### **November Flowering**

There is not much change from last month in the flowering in most places. As I said previously, the only things to look forward to are very unreliable, both in their flowering pattern and in their yield; brush box, grey box and bloodwood for instance. Swamp turpentine/mahogany (*Lophostemon suaveolens*) is common on the flats

west of Lismore and on occasion gives heavy flows. It is one of those trees that flower in bursts, rather like the paper bark *Melaleuca quinquenervia*.

Black bean is a tree with a large pea-shaped flower which can hold a thimble full of nectar. Yet it is seldom worked by bees. There are large numbers of the species growing along Back Creek, the creek that follows the Lismore Kyogle Road for much of its way. I have had a good crop off it once, and a bit of a crop once, but have grown old waiting for it to yield again.

There are probably a number of plants that would yield if there were enough of them. The Grafton lads tell me that jacaranda can yield but has an objectionable flavour. On the Richmond it is mostly planted as scattered specimens, as opposed to Grafton's effective plantation. That said, a member tells me that there are large numbers planted on an estate near to him.

Geoff.

### **Beekeeping of the Future?**

An article appeared on the BBC News website in September which discussed services and products being developed by technology companies. One company has developed a small box of sensors that attaches to the hive's frames and monitors parameters such as temperature, humidity, hive activity and sound. Data is sent to the cloud, processed and the results are sent to the beekeeper, allowing the beekeeper to monitor their hives remotely from the apiary.

In the UK, another tech company has proposed a remote monitoring and site visit service for beekeepers, with hives provided to the client and 28 visits per year to check and work the bees.

A new treatment for Varroa mites is also being proposed, using solar power to heat the inside of a hive to 40°C for 150 minutes. It is claimed that this destroys mites but does no harm to the bees.

The full article can be found at the link below.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37386490>

### **A Swarm in a Pecan Tree**

Simon Morrison, one of our members, sent in the picture below of a swarm from his hive that settled in a pecan tree in his front yard. The swarm measured approximately 1.6m in length.

Brian Window recovered the swarm. Thanks for the photo Simon.



*A Swarm in Simon's Front Yard*

### **Code of Practice**

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice (July 2016) was developed in consultation with beekeepers and governments and provides a framework for best-practice biosecurity measures.

Some components of the code are mandatory while others sections are voluntary, currently, with a view to mandate them in the future.

A phase-in period of 24 months is anticipated. After the code is mandated by governments, compliance will be monitored through self-

certification and inspection of beekeepers' records. Record keeping will be critical in demonstrating compliance with the code. The initial monitoring will focus on beekeepers with 50 or more hives.

It is recommended that all members of our association become familiar with the requirements of the code, which can be found at the link below.

<http://beeaware.org.au/code-of-practice/>

Further information can be found on the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council website, including a summary of the code, links to which are included below.

<http://honeybee.org.au/programs/code-of-practice-and-national-bee-biosecurity-program/>

<http://honeybee.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/National-Code-Rev-1.13-summary.pdf>

### **Upcoming Events**

11 December, 2016 – Monthly meeting/Christmas Party, Ballina.

18-19 May, 2017 – NSW Apiarists' Association Inc. Conference, Ballina.

21 May, 2017 – Colonial Pulling competition and AGM of the ABA, Ballina.

### **Newsletter Submissions**

Thank you to all members who contributed to the newsletter.

Newsletter submissions can be emailed to [Newsletter\\_NRABA@bigpond.com](mailto:Newsletter_NRABA@bigpond.com) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Photos are always appreciated.

### **Next Meeting – 11 December, 2016**

The next meeting will be our annual Christmas party at Ballina.

**Location:** Meldrum Park, on the corner of Fox and Norton Streets, Ballina.

**Time:** 10am start.

**Directions:** Travelling from Lismore, make your way towards Ballina following the Bruxner

Highway. At the large roundabout under the Pacific Highway, take the Ballina exit onto River Street. Follow River Street for approximately 3.5km. Turn left onto Kerr Street, at the Shell service station intersection. After approximately 750m, turn right onto Bentinck Street, then drive for approximately 1.2km to Norton Street. Turn left onto Norton Street. Meldrum Park is about 250m along Norton Street, on the right, at the Fox Street intersection.

If travelling from the south on the Pacific Highway, the Ballina exit takes you to the large roundabout mentioned above. From the roundabout, follow the directions above.

If travelling from the north on the Pacific Highway, take the Ballina exit onto Tamarind Drive. Travel straight through the roundabout at the highway exit, staying on Tamarind Drive. Stay on this road for around 6km, heading towards the town centre (it eventually becomes Bangalow Road and then Cherry Street for a short distance). Turn left onto Fox Street, at the Ballina Homestead Motel. Follow Fox Street to the end. Meldrum Park is on the left.

**What to bring:** Please bring the following items:

- Seats or picnic rugs;
- Picnic set;
- Christmas spirit!