

AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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Mystery Mites—page 10 Prophylactics—page 16 Bee Intelligence—page 19 Resistance Reverberates—page 29



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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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The Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc. (VAA)



The VAA was founded in 1892 and is the peak body for beekeeping in Victoria.

The Association advocates to federal, state, and local governments to protect and improve Victoria's honey resources and to ensure beekeepers' interests are safeguarded and promoted. We work to secure effective legislation and encourage scientific investigation and research in all aspects of beekeeping.

Our achievements include:

- Introducing the Victorian Apiary Code of Practice allowing bees to be kept in urban areas
- Contributing to the new Apiculture on Public Lands Policy through our involvement with the Buzz Committee
- Working with Plant Health Australia which contributed to the development of the Australian Biosecurity Code of Practice.

The VAA advocates for the beekeeping industry on behalf of all beekeepers in Victoria.

Management

The VAA Board meets a minimum of six times a year. Members of the 2025 - 2026 Board

Administration Officer

Tino Corsetti
PO Box 721
Woodend, Victoria, 3442
Mob: 0498 461 460
vaa@vicbeekeepers.com.au
tino.corsetti@vicbeekeepers.com.au

Treasurer

Samantha Muir
treasurer@vicbeekeepers.com.au

President

Lindsay Callaway
(Bendigo Branch representative)
0498 461 460
president@vicbeekeepers.com.au

Vice President

Andrew Wootton
0481 392 798
andrew.wootton@gmail.com

Other members:

Tony Wilsmore
(Melbourne Section Rep.)
0400 817 146
tony@suburbanbees.com.au

Richard Collins
0488 199 629
admin@collinshoney.com.au

Olivia Ducommun-Dit-Verron
0468 526 400
o.ducommun-dit-verron@latrobe.edu.au

Millie Enbom-Goad
0400 083 582
millie_enbomgoad@yahoo.com.au

Lachlan Goode
0497 365 963
lachlangoode@gmail.com

Matt Petersen
0407 689 849
sweetdcfhoney@gmail.com

VAA sub-committees & conveners

Contact by email is preferred

Biosecurity

Olivia Ducommun-Dit-Verron

Finance & Insurance

Tony Wilsmore & Lindsay Callaway

Education

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Lindsay Callaway

Recreational beekeeping

Tony Wilsmore

All beekeepers and interested groups are welcome to join the VAA. Membership benefits include:

- The VAA's monthly magazine *Australian Bee Journal* (ABJ) including one free classified ad per year
- Access to the members' only section of the VAA website www.vicbeekeepers.com.au
- Discounts for beekeeping services and products, including insurance
- Borrowing rights to the extensive VAA library
- Voting rights at VAA regional group meetings and the annual VAA state conference
- Opportunity to participate in and contribute to VAA sub-committees
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- Opportunity to contribute to advocacy to government and development of policy on beekeeping

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President's Report

> varroa pressure > varroa reinfestation, acute phase > next year worse > varroa chemical resistance on its way, probably to hit hardest during or after the acute phase passes > apiculture on public land policy confirmed, endorsed, enabling industry > pollination industries heading towards a production cliff and they don't know it > VAA Apiary Business Navigator Program underway > industry action plan for more flexible chemical use > VAA annual conference is looming to be one of the more important conferences in recent times > industry on edge, beekeepers stressed, concerned and demanding to be heard > biosecurity grants delivering for industry at a time of need >>>

Dear Beekeepers,

We continue to be in a steady flux of change and stress – a complete industry paradigm shift to a new industry norm. We are grieving the old and doing our best to accept the new. As a result, we are leaning on our mates and industry supporters more than ever. Our bees will also need us more than ever. Varroa is a beast, and the looming resistant strain poses an even greater threat to the viability of our industry than the first incursion.

The first step forward is to support and talk to each other, including your peak body - VAA. My email is president@vicbeekeepers.com.au. My phone number is 0429 857 835. And I'm keen to hear feedback, concerns and suggestions. If there are any other ways that you can be heard, please let me know.

> varroa Pressure > varroa reinfestation, acute phase > next year worse > varroa chemical resistance on its way, probably to hit hardest during or after the acute phase passes >>>

For many Victorian commercial and recreational beekeepers, we have had our first round in the fight against varroa. Most have had one or more rounds of treatments through their hives.

The next two years promises to be tough with relentless monitoring, treatment and the likelihood of reinfesting occurring. Plus, the likelihood of the resistance to synthetic pyrethroid and formamidine. We are going to have to get even more efficient at monitoring and very good at using organic treatments.

> Apiculture on public land policy confirmed, endorsed, enabling industry > pollination industries heading towards a production cliff and they don't know it >>>

VAA Resources Committee: a state-wide win for Victoria's commercial apiarists.

VAA recently took part in a landmark workshop with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). Titled **Commercial Apiculture in Victoria: Building a Strategic Roadmap**.

Building working relationships between commercial beekeepers and the Victorian government, the workshop marked a deliberate and structured effort to discuss and embrace our industry concerns with the view of making improvements.

Commercial Pollination: recognising what's at stake.

A central theme of the workshop was renewed appreciation of the economic weight that commercial pollination carries for Australian agriculture. The numbers are striking. Australia's honeybee industry underpins an estimated AU\$14.6 billion in agricultural production nationally, with Victoria's commercial beekeepers playing a critical role in pollinating crops across the state. Even more so once varroa wipes out the vast majority of the feral, unmanaged populations across the state.

The high risk is that agriculture crops are going to fail, quality and quantity are going to suffer. Pollination demand and income for our services will go through the roof. Our hives will be booked solid from August to October, coast to coast, state to state.

The workshop gave both sides an opportunity to acknowledge that the future of the beekeeping industry and the broader agricultural sector is, quite literally, intertwined. With the demise of unmanaged feral colonies our honey flows and our progeny management will improve.

> apiary Business Navigator Program underway>>>

Friday 1 May marked the beginning of our delivery of the Apiary Business Navigator Program in collaboration with the NEAA and facilitated by Gavin Beever, Cumbre Consultants.

The day included the presentation of the resource documents from Ag Vic. All the documents from the workshops are available for download from the VAA's website in a new section specifically for this program. You can find the link under the Resources tab.

<https://vicbeekeepers.com.au/Apiary-Business-Navigator-Program>

The workshop program consisted of:

- overview of the entire program
- quality assurance as a business driver
- strategic planning for apiary business owners
- the business cost of varroa
- commercial apiary benchmarking project
- questions and answers.

There were robust discussions between both presenters and participants. I'd personally like to thank Tino Corsetti who was a driving force from the VAA, and James Rowe who was a key driver at AgVic kicking this program off. It is worth noting that through this program and our Edcomm program, we are taking VAA into a new era of delivering relevant and practical education to our membership.

> Industry action plan for more flexible chemical use>>>

An industry action plan (IAP) is a hot topic for our industry - nearing a flash point with our members. With resistant mites looming, options are king in beekeeping, and we need a full arsenal to fight this beast. As a state, we are in a very good position to be at the foothills of collaborating with AgVic to deliver an IAP to help deliver what our beekeepers want including

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President's Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 5)

more options, safe use of chemicals, beehives that survive, to be economically viable and for consumers to trust our products and our practices.

> Annual conference is looming to be one of the more important conferences in recent time>>>

VAA Annual Conference & AGM 2026: Register Now!

It is hard to believe we are just a few weeks away from this year's annual conference and AGM. The conference organising subcommittee has been working extremely hard to bring together another exciting and engaging program. This year, the event is being held at the Novotel Melbourne Airport. An accessible and central location for attendees travelling from regional Victoria, metropolitan Victoria, as well as interstate and overseas.

We are particularly excited to welcome these three distinguished industry experts:

Dr Peter Neumann, professor at the University of Bern and Director of the Institute of Bee Health, and chair of the COLOSS Association - the international non-profit working to improve bee well-being across more than 120 countries. (Via Zoom)

Dr Stephen Martin, chair in social entomology at Salford University, Manchester. Widely recognised for his pioneering work on the varroa mite and its association with viruses, including deformed wing virus.

Dr Cooper Schouten, senior research fellow and director of Southern Cross University's Bee Research and Extension Lab, whose work focuses on strategic beekeeping industry development with international experience across the Indo-Pacific.

VAA has held registration fees steady at the same level as the past three years, reflecting our commitment to making the conference as accessible as possible. Registrations are now open at www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/events. Last year's conference sold out. We are getting better and bigger at delivering our state conference. You will not want to miss this year's program. With varroa establishing itself across our state, and the threat of resistant mites on the horizon, now is the time to invest in your personal and professional development as a beekeeper and, more importantly, take every opportunity to engage with the wider beekeeping community. Together, we build resilience. Together, we are strong.

Industry on edge, beekeepers stressed, concerned and demanding to be heard >>>

Beekeepers need *one voice* more than ever, need *one home* more than ever, and *one guardian* more than ever. VAA is your peak body, and as a board we are more than willing to hear your concerns, suggestions and needs. We have an excellent long and established relationship with our friends at AgVic.

VAA is looking to strengthen its ties with our affiliates. If your club needs VAA to act, to listen, to take your concerns further then we want to hear from you.

Here are some additional resources to help beekeepers navigate these challenging times:

Lifeline: Provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

[Website](#) Phone: 131 144

Beyond Blue: 24/7 telephone mental health and support service.

[Website](#) Phone: 1300 224 636

(Continued on page 7)



HiveMeet

"Live from the VAA Annual Conference"

Guest Speakers: Various

Streaming Live  Thursday 4th June, 8pm

youtube.com/VictorianApiaristsAssociation

VAA HiveMeet is sponsored by B-Qual



President's Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 6)

Managing Stress on the Farm: A downloadable booklet from the National Centre for Farmer Health. The easy-to-read booklet designed to help you spot signs of stress early so you can take action.

[Website](#) [Downloadable PDF](#)

General Resources: AgVic has assembled links to a wide range of support resources for agricultural business owners and workers.

[Website](#)

>biosecurity grants delivering for industry at a time of need >>>

VAA Biosecurity Grants: Education and Research in Action

Ironbark Forest Research

The first project will result in published research providing a prescriptive strategy to save Victoria's Box Ironbark forests. This species is vital for honeybee health, yet due to its slow-growing nature, Ironbark forests cannot regenerate quickly after drought, fire or logging. Our findings will be sent to government to serve as a road map for future forest restoration. Thanks go to the working group who have already trekked across Victoria photographing exemplar forest sites as the foundation for this research. The project team and our lead researcher have already produced a highly detailed preliminary report, and the final report will be presented at this year's VAA Annual Conference in June.

Biosecurity Education and Communication

The second grant provides up to \$50,000 per year over three years for the development of honeybee biosecurity education and communication programs. It's designed to fill the gap left by the end of the T2M and VDO programs earlier in 2026. With an outstanding committee driving this work, we have already designed and delivered two highly successful full-day workshops:

- 09 March 2026: an Advanced Varroa Management workshop for commercial beekeepers in Swanpool, attended by almost 100 commercial beekeepers from across Victoria.
- 02 May 2026: a Varroa Specialist workshop for recreational beekeepers and regional bee club biosecurity officers in northwest Melbourne, which reached registration capacity within just a few weeks, again almost 100 beekeepers.

Videos from these workshops can be viewed on the VAA Educational YouTube channel. This online video library is expanding every month and now boasts over 75 videos and almost 500 subscribers. Some videos have over 1,300 views.

See you in June at the conference.

Lindsay Callaway

President,

Victorian Apiarists' Association

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Bendigo Branch Report

Welcome to the April Bendigo Branch Report. This is being written as the weather cools down to single digits at night and the trees are well into Autumn shut-down, with a splash of colour. Brood size is shrinking in the hives and most of the drones are gone.

The last month has seen some changes in the Bendigo Branch with our annual committee elections taking place and Bendigo Branch taking on four donated hives from one of our members for the club to use as a training source. The hives have been located on the Bendigo Branch bee site at Golden Gully.



Photo top: Hive clean up

Bottom: Jamie transferring frames into a new box

A working-bee to rehome and inspect the hives was conducted by the new Executive Committee. This proved to be very good training activity but also allowed the committee an opportunity to work together and get to know each other in preparation for a busy year to come.

The new committee has a diverse range of skills both in apiary activities and also in their professional

sphere which can be leveraged for the Branch. Committee positions and new incumbents are:

Chairman / VAA Rep – Stafford Kelly;

Vice chairman / Lead Varroa Specialist – Jamie Trimby;

Secretary – Peta Dawe;

Assistant Secretary – Angelique Perry;

Treasurer – Michael St Clair;

Assistant Treasurer / Librarian – Ben Flood;

Master Beekeeper / Education – Zac Long;

Club Bee Manager – Doug Barrett;

Events – Kris Barker;

Media / Communication – Jessica Ruebin;

Resources VAA Rep - Jacob Nixon.

Congratulations to all new incumbents and I am sure this will prove to be a dynamic committee.

Apart from the changeover of the committee, this previous month has been a busy one with our annual pack down activity conducted at Margie's in Huntly. The ability to have open hives, live extraction and running commentary by the instructors made for a very interesting and enlightening day. Well done Jamie for co-ordination.



Above and below: Packdown



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Bendigo Branch Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 8)



Extraction

The Branch has had some interesting presentations during April notably by Sandy from the Native Plant Group. Her presentation was both well presented and accompanied by numerous photos and other media. She held the attention of all the audience throughout and fielded many questions both during and after the presentation. Thanks Sandy and well done.

One of our members, Jo Griffiths, will be presenting at Aspire Early Education and Kindergarten in White Hills later in May. She will provide feedback next month how her presentation to the young children went. Our June information meeting will have Ag Vic providing us with an update and in July we will have our Make and Mend. This weekend proved one of the most popular on the calendar last year, giving the attendees the opportunity to construct their own bee equipment from boxes to frames to pollen patties and more. Tools (air guns, table saw and multiple hand and power tools) allowed attendees to construct flat packs and other equipment at considerable discount and learn from more advanced instructors.

The biggest activity on our calendar is the Bendigo Field Day on the 11 October 2026. The field day is conducted at the Harcourt Recreational Reserve. The recent fires that decimated that area also impinged on the area where the field day is conducted. The intent, if feasible and practical, is to conduct the field day in this location to show support for the community and encourage trade to help the Harcourt community to recover. Please save the date to support the Harcourt community.

In closing it is nearly time to put the bees to bed for winter and concentrate on "make and mend" activities. I hope that in reflection the "year that was" finishes with a good honey crop and bees in a good condition for over wintering before we start a new season.

Stafford Kelly



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Mystery Mites

By Kris Fricke

(*& substantial quotes from Bruce Ward*)

Werribee Mystery Mite

On the evening of Monday April 6th Werribee area beekeeper David Ross posted on the Werribee Beekeepers' facebook page:

Tonight I had a bee come inside that was clearly struggling, I put it out of its misery with a cloth and a large number of mites came off it. Any ideas on what it is? Will be doing another hive check tomorrow on all 3 hives and see if I get any more. Size is less than 1mm.



Credit: David Ross, Werribee

He immediately reported it to AgVic as well. On Facebook people didn't hesitate to start guessing: chatGPT says it's a varroa, which it clearly is not; someone else said it was a pollen mite while posting a picture that was equally not a pollen mite either. To me it looked very alarmingly like a *Tropilaelaps* mite, but there are actually a lot of mites that look very similar so all we could do was wait anxiously for the official diagnosis.

AgVic staff rushed out there the next morning, took samples and checked the rest of the hives. They delivered the sample to the AgriBio diagnostics lab on the La Trobe University campus, staff there worked overtime into the evening to identify the mystery mite. Unfortunately, apparently the samples were both slightly damaged and not fully adult, which made things harder, but finally they were able to identify them as mites of the genus *Parasitus*. These mites are not harmful to bees, can be found in compost and leaf litter, can be phoretic (hitching a ride) on dung beetles or other similar insects, and eat nematodes and other small arthropods including other mite species (I don't believe anyone has tested if they'll eat Varroa...). They were unable to identify it to the species level, but I note the most common species of *Parasitus* have all been found in bee hives (though it is not believed to prey on bees or bee larvae).¹ Interestingly I note on a map² on the Atlas of Living Australia³ while there are a few sporadic identifications of *Parasitus* mites elsewhere in Australia, findings are more

common in Central Victoria and in Werribee very specifically there are four specimens collected and preserved by NSW DPI, so it seems to be a hotspot for this mite.

Pollen Mite

On the evening of September 4th, 2024, I, then an AgVic employee, was just sitting to dinner when a call came in about a suspicious mite reported near Geelong about forty minutes from me just then by former NSW apiary officer Bruce Ward. Obviously by default I can't share the details of what I did for AgVic, but conveniently Bruce himself wrote about it for the Geelong club newsletter, and because he's a good writer himself, I'll quote him directly, writing in September 2024:

With the arrival of Varroa in Victoria last month, I decided to increase my Varroa testing, and have started a detergent wash every month. You can imagine my surprise when on my very first monthly wash, I spotted several brown spots in my wash bottle. My first reaction was that they were too small to be Varroa, but I wanted to take a closer look.

I strained the spots onto a paper towel and had a look with a hand lens. I was expecting to see lumps of pollen or debris.

My heart sank when I saw two brown mites that looked very similar to Varroa. One was on its front and had a domed back. The other one was on its back, and I could just make out little legs.

My first step was to make an online report through the exotic plant disease hotline. Within an hour I was contacted by the bee biosecurity team from Agriculture Victoria. The biosecurity staff arranged to have the mites collected by a Varroa Development Officer (VDO). We took the opportunity to re-check the hive and uncapped the few drone brood cells available, with no further concerning signs. By this time I had also been able to take a relatively clear photo of the two mites.



With the head of a toothpick for size comparison.

Credit: Bruce Ward, Geelong

At that time, even though pollen mites are much smaller than Varroa, I (Kris) personally had happily not seen Varroa first hand in nearly 10 years so I felt I couldn't rule out the possibility. The next day I met one of the biosecurity officers at the Geelong ringroad

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Mystery Mites, cont'd

(Continued from page 10)

servo to hand-off the specimens, like some kind of illicit drug deal, and he drove them the rest of the way to AgrBio. They were able to identify them as *Mellitiphis alvearius*, which name means “Bee-associated of-the-hive,” commonly known as the pollen mite, another innocuous occasional inhabitant of beehives. It primarily feeds on pollen that has fallen to the bottom of the hive⁴ and has been found throughout the world, meaning it probably has been a natural commensal (non-harmful) inhabitant of European bees’ hives since pre-history and rode them to distribution around the world. They have been little studied since being determined to be harmless, but it’s possible natural commensal inhabitants of beehives like this are killed off by Varroa treatments.

Back to Bruce:

In less than 24 hours from the sample being collected, I had a reassuring text message that the mites were pollen mites. I have thought a lot about this between finding the specks in the wash and getting the all-clear. Since the official identification, I have read up on pollen mites and talked to the biosecurity team and to my former colleagues in NSW DPI.

Pollen mites are sometimes found in beehives, and can often be seen on the bottom board or in the

tray under a screened bottom board. They are smaller and more active than Varroa.

Pollen mites are routinely seen in sticky mat surveillance, but do not normally show up in alcohol washes.

They are harmless to bees and feed on pollen.

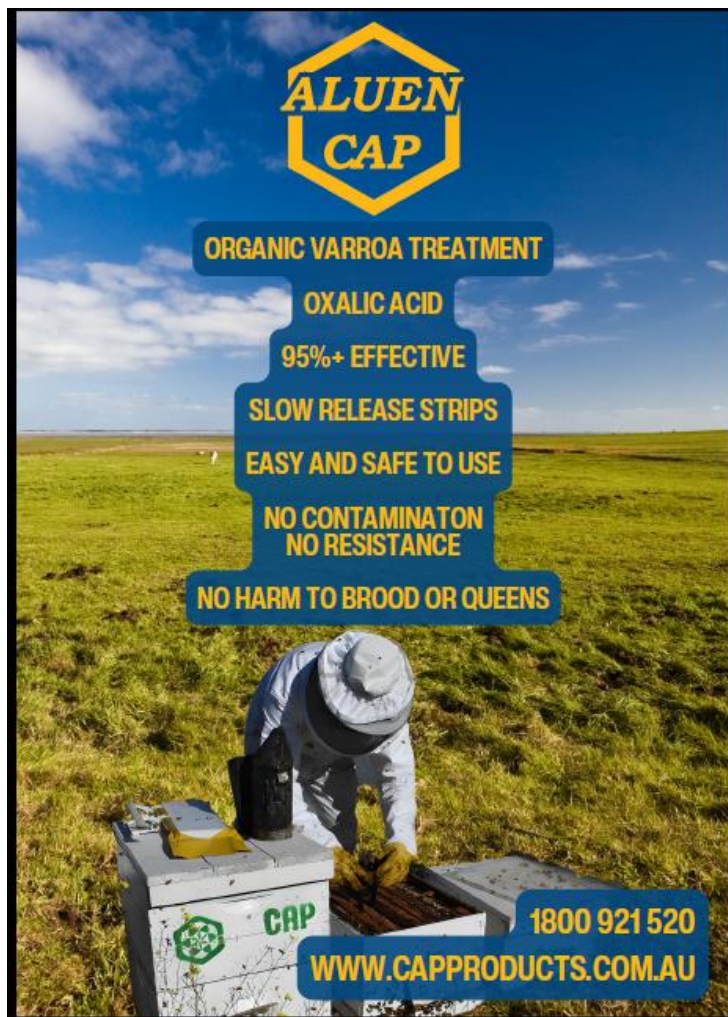
I don't think it is possible for the average person to accurately identify pollen mites without Varroa for comparison. It really needs a good quality microscope to see the distinguishing features. Needless to say I am relieved not to be the first beekeeper to find Varroa this far south. But I am also relieved that I am sure it was not Varroa. I won't be lying awake at night wondering.

That last sentence carries a bit of ironic foreshadowing, 17 months later he was indeed the first beekeeper to find Varroa this close to Geelong (which distinction he held for an hour or two that day only). It's no coincidence that it's the people looking most closely who find it first.

Other Things

John Edmonds recently sent me this picture of a pseudoscorpion he found in a hive (see photo next page). While there's nothing for scale in this picture they're tiny but bigger than mites, typically 2-8mm (Varroa is about 1.6mm for comparison).

(Continued on page 12)



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Mystery Mites, cont'd

(Continued from page 11)



Pseudoscorpion.

Credit: John Edmonds, Geelong

Various interesting and uncommon little creatures have been found recently by Victoria's beekeepers now that people are looking more closely at the tiny things in their hives than ever before. Some are just interesting novelties, but there are still other mites that would be a five alarm alert if discovered here (*Tropilaelaps*!) so if you're at all unsure, don't hesitate to report it. As Bruce's original article concluded:

If you are like me, it is hard to think straight when your alarm bells are ringing loudly.

I have a couple of pointers from my experience:

If you have a suspect Varroa test, make a report through the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline. The best way to find that is to search for "plant pest hotline Victoria." The first site that comes up is the national hotline. You want the Victorian one, which was second on my search results.

The online report is very easy to do.

The 'Suspected threat' list does not include Varroa, so choose "Exotic Bee Mite".

Suspect Varroa cases are investigated by the Honeybee Biosecurity staff at Agriculture Victoria

References

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Pollen mite (left), braula fly (top), Varroa (right) and Tropilaelaps (bottom) – Courtesy of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Crown Copyright

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Raft Of New Bee Book Releases

By John Kennedy

Northern Bee Books, the UK based publisher with a list of over 400 titles, quite rightly claims to be the world's largest source of English language beekeeping books. Their website at www.northernbeebooks.co.uk is professionally run and known to respond promptly to local orders with dispatch and postage. Their UK prices are quoted in pounds Sterling, so an Australian dollar conversion plus postage will be given on your enquiry.

Here are three new titles which I judge to be of principal interest to Australian beekeepers keen to advance their knowledge of aspects of beekeeping interest.

Local Queens are Best

- with the subtitle of how to simply rear your own.

This is the first edition of a paperback of 72 pages and is authored by Bruce Henderson Smith.

The prelude to the book notes, "say "queen rearing" to most beekeepers and they will usually run a mile.

"This book aims to demystify simple queen rearing,

"It sets out to explain a method of queen rearing on a small scale, which can be used by any beekeeper with a few years of experience and a small number of hives".

It is richly illustrated with the author's photographs and his first hand commentary of what to look for, and the message to just trust the nurse bees to know their job.

It is highly recommended for any beekeeper, even with modest experience, who wants to improve their

stock. It is available for 18 pounds Sterling.

Natural Medicine from Honey Bees – Apitherapy

This is a translation in English, of an original in Dutch by Jacob Kaal, which dates to 1991, and contains an impressive international bibliography and a systematic detailed record of known and potential medicinal properties of bee products - Propolis, Bee Venom, Royal Jelly, Pollen, Honey and Apilarnil.

The publisher says it's a practical approach and pioneering research underpins this work, "making it a very valuable source of information for beekeepers, medical practitioners, pharmacists and patients seeking alternative medicine".

It comes as a softback of 100 pages and is listed at 49 pounds sterling.

Swarm Control

A softback of 38 pages, first edition, written by Richard Ball.

It is described as an excellent little book designed to help beginners to understand the processes that lead to this natural event in the colony's lifecycle, and to learn that with new queens and plentiful space in the hive this impulse may not occur.

The author gives good summaries of the main tried and tested methods – i.e Demaree, Pagden, Heddon and Snelgrove and their various adaptations, also showing how some of these can help in reducing the varroa load in a colony.

It is priced at 24 pounds Sterling.

AgriFutures Honeybee & Pollination Panel Commercial Honey Producers and Researchers Wanted

Applications now open for AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Program Advisory Panel.

The [AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Program](#) is seeking to appoint four new members to the Honey Bee & Pollination Advisory Panel.

These positions are open to commercial honey producers, commercial pollinators and researchers working in honey bee or related fields, who are not currently engaged in AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Program-funded research.

Applicants should demonstrate:

- industry experience and a desire to contribute to the industry
 - understanding of industry research priorities
 - strategic leadership and governance capability
- ability to contribute effectively to the Advisory Panel. Applicants with experience in research and development management, extension or training are also encouraged to apply. Governance and financial management experience will be highly regarded.

Applications close 12pm (AEST)
on 20 July 2026.

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Virus Transmission

Put under the microscope to improve beekeepers' access to overseas genetics

AgriFutures 2026 March 18th

Experiments look to improve beekeepers' ability to import desirable genetics, by understanding how deformed wing virus is transmitted from queen bees to eggs through drone semen.

New insights into the transmission of a significant honey bee virus could pave the way for safer access to imported genetics that could help Australia's honey bee and pollination industry adapt to varroa mite.

Breeding varroa-resistant bees using imported genetics is one approach in the suite of promising methods to manage *Varroa destructor*. Genetics can be imported from overseas in the form of drone (male honey bee) semen or queen bees. Desirable genetics can improve honey production and influence a range of other attributes. However, ensuring the best-possible genetics are safe from damaging viruses is critical.

Honey bee viruses, including deformed wing virus (DWV), can be transmitted to queens and their offspring through infected drone semen, which can devastate colonies. Fortunately, DWV has not been detected in Australia.

Dr John Roberts of CSIRO, co-researcher Dr Jody Gerdt of Bee Scientifics and their collaborative team are working to understand the transmission process of DWV so that beekeepers can be confident in the use of imported beneficial genetics, such as drone semen.

"DWV is common around the world. A challenge that our industry faces in trying to access overseas genetics is finding source material that is virus-free," John explained.

"This project is looking at ways we can reduce the risk of DWV from imported overseas genetics by better understanding the transmission process."

The researchers are interested in understanding the transmission threshold – the amount of virus that needs to be present for transmission to take place.

"We know that DWV can be transmitted vertically – from the queen bee to the offspring – through semen. But we know this doesn't happen every time," John said.

"We want to explore whether there is an acceptable low virus level in semen where vertical transmission won't occur."

A second objective is to assess the feasibility of treating drone semen with virus-targeting agents to reduce transmission risk. These agents might be specific antibodies or molecules with virus-fighting effects. This aspect will be undertaken in collaboration with Prof. Phillip Lester of Victoria University of Wellington, Dr Biko Muita of CSIRO and Dr Emily Remnant of The University of Sydney.

"If we can have a few extra approaches – including treatment options that reduce that risk of transmitting DWV – that would be a really positive outcome," John said.

Getting on the front foot of varroa and viruses

DWV is one of the most common honey bee viruses around the world and is primarily spread through varroa mite. The virus can impact all life stages of the honey

bee but one of the main symptoms is wing deformities in adult bees, which is the most obvious indicator of the virus. DWV can also result in the mass death of bee colonies.

Varroa has the potential to worsen the spread and impact of viruses like DWV, as the double threat to a colony increases the likelihood of collapse.

"Varroa causes its own damage through feeding on developing bees and weakening them, but it is much worse when there's the spread of viruses as well," John explained.

"DWV in particular has formed a close relationship with varroa and virus levels get very high in infected colonies."

Varroa acts as a vector, helping to spread viruses to uninfected bees and colonies. Varroa carries DWV without any symptoms and transmits the virus to honey bees as they feed. DWV can also multiply within the body of varroa mites, further increasing the risk of infecting honey bees.

Pathogenic viruses represent a significant biosecurity threat to the industry, and as a result strict import requirements and virus testing are in place. This research aims to provide industry with more information to help overcome the barriers encountered when importing semen presented by virus testing, while still maintaining this important biosecurity measure.



*Beehives in Cressy, Tasmania.
Image by Devaka Seneviratne (Island Light Photography).
Supplied by AgriFutures Australia*

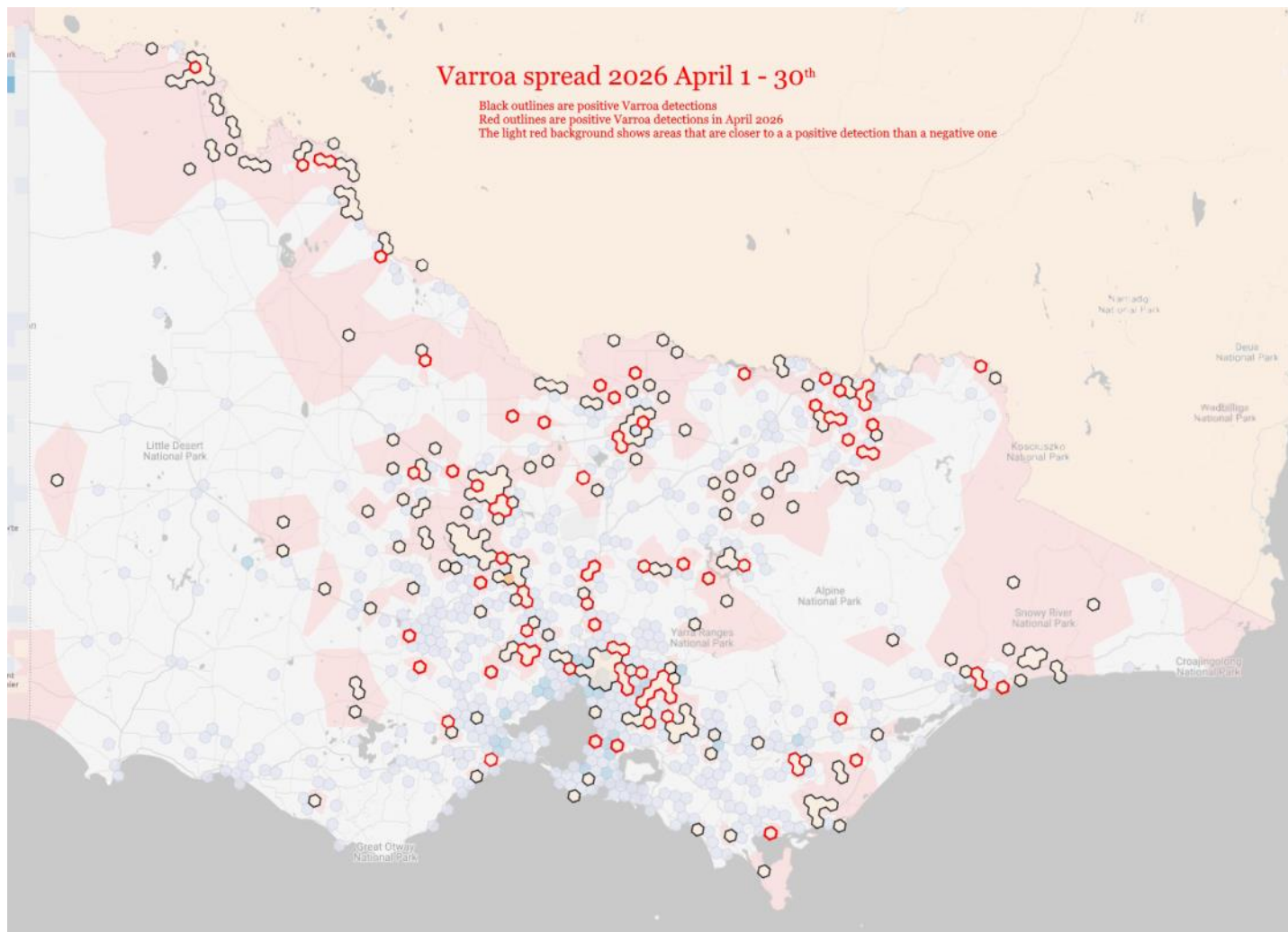
This project is expected to finish in July 2026.

This article was [originally published by AgriFutures Australia on 18th March 2026](#). For more information about the AgriFutures Honey Bee and Pollination Program, visit agrifutures.com.au/rural-industries/honey-bee-pollination.

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Prophylactics

By Kris Fricke

I'd have thought we can all agree that you shouldn't engage in "risky behaviour" with multiple partners of unknown infectious disease status without any protection, right? But that has been the policy recommendation of the National Varroa Mite Management Program. "Don't use miticides prophylactically" they say, (ie, as a protective measure) if you do not yet have mites or are not near threshold.

It makes sense not to use miticides when you don't need them, and that's in keeping with the principals of Integrated Pest Management, but the extension of this rule to times when in any analogous situation you would definitely want to use protection is a bit more questionable.

Let's examine what the authorities we've looked to in building our policies say about this.

"Control of Varroa: a Guide for New Zealand Beekeepers" encapsulates a lot of the findings of our nearest neighbors and last-to-get-it-prior-to-us, and is written by serious authorities Michelle Taylor and Mark Goodwin.

*"A good example of preventative treatment is when hives are used for kiwifruit pollination; colonies may have finished varroa control treatment before entering pollination so by the time they are moved into orchards, they have very low mite numbers and should not need to be treated until the following season. However, in some kiwifruit areas, colonies are placed at very high densities (up to 600 colonies per km² [similar to our almonds]). Thus, there is a significant risk of treated colonies being invaded by a large number of mites from other colonies where varroa has not been controlled (managed or feral). The effect may not be immediate but may require treatments to be conducted in mid or late summer."*¹

The Honeybee Health Coalition, another major source for our policymakers, does not say anything one way or another about prophylactic miticide use, but they do say:

*"Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a set of proactive control methods that offer beekeepers the best "whole systems approach" to controlling varroa." ... "Successful varroa control solutions are proactive. They control varroa before the mites reach levels that threaten colony productivity and survival, rather than respond after the damage has occurred."*²

They do not otherwise address prophylactic miticide use either for or against.

The other "holy text" of varroa management policy is the Jack and Ellis 2021 paper "Integrated Pest Management Control of Varroa [...]." It doesn't directly address the use of miticides in a preventative role, but they do have a section on prevention:

Prevention

One aspect of IPM that is often overlooked is prevention. Prevention involves removing the conditions that attract pests or help them to build their populations. As Varroa occurs throughout much of the world,

*complete prevention is nearly impossible. Furthermore, Varroa only feed on honey bees and only reproduce in their brood cells; thus, there currently is no way for beekeepers to remove the conditions that attract Varroa. While some beekeepers' primary goal is to prevent the arrival of Varroa in their area, beekeepers should employ preventative practices to keep Varroa populations from spreading to different areas.*³

So these sources don't really weigh in on it directly, a simple logical analysis is probably better anyway. The fundamental idea of Integrated Pest Management is to ensure you are spending less on treatment than the cost of not performing the treatment. This is the idea underpinning all the monitoring and thresholds, etc. As you've no doubt heard explained, obviously treating 12 times in a year will cost more than the damage the mites were going to inflict. Treating too few times will allow the mites to do more damage than another treatment would have cost you, that's the whole idea of IPM, by monitoring for numbers, treating on thresholds, you can avoid unnecessary costs ... if varroa only steadily builds up evenly over time. But that doesn't account for the possibility that strategically treating at a particularly high risk moment can disproportionately reduce your costs later.

Imagine you don't have varroa, let's go back in time to when most people didn't have varroa because yes this is about what should have been policy as much as what should be policy going forward. Back in the heady days of 2024 we all knew some people would come to almonds with varroa, but we had to go because we needed that sweet sweet almond money.

Scenario 1:

You are told not to use miticide protection, so you don't. You get a dozen mites via drift. You don't realize you have 24 mites in October, 60 mites in November, 190 in December, 376 in January⁴... you detect it some time between then and April, hopefully, because April you hit treatment threshold, congratulations you're on the Varroa treadmill probably spending money on at least three treatments a year for the next 20 years.

Scenario 2:

You pay for one miticide treatment, you have Apistan in the hives the whole time you're at almonds. Those same dozen mites enter your hives on drifting bees. Apistan (in the early days without resistance) is 99% effective, the odds of one of those mites surviving is just around 11%. The overwhelming probability is 89%* odds of congratulations you have dodged getting mites at the highest risk part of the year, if everyone else had been doing likewise, odds are very good you could make it the rest of the year with no added treatment costs, no varroa damage, you have successfully minimized your costs greatly.

(Continued on page 17)

^{*}(Because I've been asked about this: Chance of none of 12 mites surviving is 0.99¹², which is approximately 0.886, turned into a percentage that's 89% chance none survive.)

Prophylactics, cont'd

(Continued from page 16)

Scenario 3:

The incoming beekeepers with varroa had been told to have strips in on arrival, the amount of varroa able to drift into other hives is reduced by 99%. Varroa-free beekeepers such as yourself also have a treatment in, so any of the small number of varroa who do manage to drift out of infected hives will 99% be killed on arriving in the hive. Total number of varroa surviving into previously uninfected hives is almost incalculably low, varroa does not spread at the almonds.

In which case did you spend less money and have less impact on your bees? Very obviously scenarios 2 and 3. The spread could have been significantly slowed down and the cost to industry significantly reduced if the policy advisors had encouraged prophylactic use of miticides instead of advising against it.

The above scenarios are backwards looking though, to a time when we didn't have mites. Let's look forward, most commercial beekeepers in Victoria by this point unfortunately have varroa:

Scenario 4:

So let's say you go to the almonds, with less than the detectable threshold of mites because you're a responsible beekeeper, but of course your hives will wake up beside partners from all across Australia. Some of whom come from hot sweaty places with no brood break and relied on the "she'll be right" method. These

hives are itchy with varroa and in intimate proximity with your own. So 200 mites drift into each of your hives. You'd come out with detectable levels of mites and hit threshold in January. Do a treatment then and you might still have to put another one in in April. If you had had a treatment in while at the almonds you'd come right back out again with undetectably low levels of mites and not hit threshold till May.⁴

Bottom line is regardless of your current threshold status, your biggest risk of the year is the almonds (and possibly ironbark) and if you ensure your mite numbers are as low as possible coming out of almonds you'll have the best shot at a good year. Without protection you risk leaving with a peculiar burning sensation ... in your wallet from treatment costs.

There's surprisingly little research on spring mite immigration, probably because in the United States or Europe all the hives are just coming out of a long brood-free winter, but that is not the case with many of the beekeepers we'll be sharing paddocks with in the almonds.

In wider veterinary medicine, prophylactic treatment for diseases before specific high risk situations is common.⁵ The specific treatment of healthy animals before being commingled with animals of unknown disease status is called "metaphylaxis." In 107 randomized field trials, preventatively treating healthy cattle before

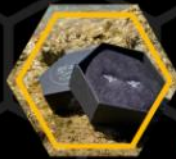
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Prophylactics, cont'd

(Continued from page 17)

entering the heavy concentration of feed lots reduced morbidity by 80-90%. In fact NSW DPI explicitly recommends cattle likely to go into feedlots be vaccinated.⁷ This isn't just a "vaccination: good" scenario, cattle that are not bound for high risk concentration environments do not typically receive this preventative treatment. This is a directly analogous situation. Like with bees, blanket treating would drive up costs and lead to resistant strains of the disease.

Prior to resistant strains of mites emerging I recommended counting back ten weeks from when you planned to put honey supers on and putting in Apistan for those last ten weeks of winter including almonds. Now we really don't want these resistant strains, so I would recommend having slow-release oxalic in.

When your hives are not in a high-risk situation, it remains true that treating prophylactically is just a waste of money and time, needless contamination and resistance building. If a treatment isn't timed to reduce the total number of treatments you have to do in a year, you really shouldn't do it.

But if you're in a specific high-risk situation where not protecting your hives stands to set you back against varroa for the whole upcoming season – or especially poses the most overwhelming risk to get mites if you don't have them yet, there's no scientific or logical argument why you would not want to protect your hives. Do you really trust that every one of your numerous anonymous industry partners has been practicing safe and responsible varroa management and is perfectly safe to promiscuously interchange drift with?

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Victorian Apiarists Association

May 7th – [Paul Roder – “Varroa resistance breeding in Australia”](#)

PODCASTS:

Two Bees in a Podcast:

April 7th: [“Understanding Honey and Botulism with Dr Joshua Jakum”](#)

Amy Vu and Dr. Jamie Ellis are joined by Dr. Joshua Jakum, MD, a pediatrician and an Eastern Apicultural Society Master Beekeeper, to discuss honey and its connection to botulism.

April 23rd: [“Viral Infections of Honey Bee Queens with Dr Leonard Foster”](#)

Amy Vu and Dr. Jamie Ellis are joined by Dr. Leonard Foster, a Professor in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Faculty of Medicine, as well as the director of the Life Sciences Institute at the University of British Columbia. They discuss elevated virus infections in honey bee queens and what that means for colonies.

Beekeeping Today Podcast:

April 13th – [“Varroa Management Guide Update with Dewey Caron”](#)

A wide-ranging discussion on Varroa management, beekeeping education, and the evolving work of the Honey Bee Health Coalition.

April 27th – [“Queen Biology and Quality with Dr David Tarpy”](#)

Challenging a common oversimplification: the queen is not just an “egg-laying machine,” but part of a dynamic, cooperative system shaped by both biology and worker perception.

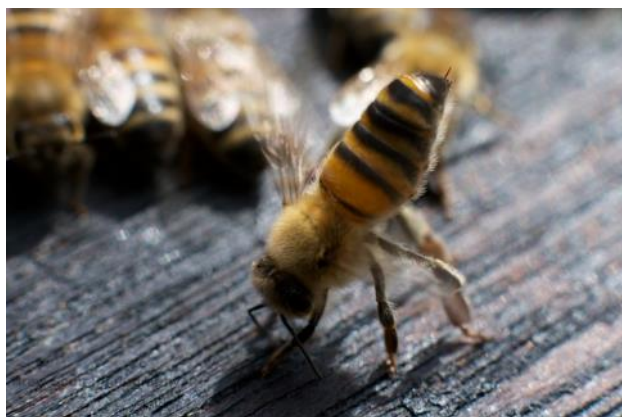


Bee Intelligence



By Bruce Ward,
Geelong

Honey bees display a surprising level of intelligence for tiny insects. Their ability to communicate, organise, and adapt to changing environments has fascinated scientists and beekeepers for generations and



Most of the behaviour we observe in our bees is purely instinctive. The fanning of this bee is a good example of instinctive behaviour. Learned behaviour is much harder to observe but can be observed in controlled experiments.

have led some to claim that bees are to some degree, sentient, feeling beings.

The bee's apparent intelligence is expressed in their complex behaviour. Bees can recognise patterns, solve problems and learn from their experiences. In addition to signs of individual intelligence, the honey bee colony as a whole shows signs of collective intelligence, particularly the ability to make consensus decisions that are in the best interests of the hive as a whole.

There is little doubt that the honey bee's intelligence is enabled by its brain, which has the capacity to process complex information from a variety of senses, solve problems and make decisions. It also has areas dedicated to memory, which allows the bee to learn from its experience. For example, a foraging worker can remember where they found a good supply of nectar. They can then return to the same location and recognise the shape and colour of the good flowers before homing-in on the familiar aroma of the good nectar source.

Other aspects of the bee's intelligence are instinctive. Embedded in the DNA of every bee are hard-coded rules that govern how they respond to different situations that they may encounter. For example, if a worker bee encounters the alarm pheromone, they instinctively switch into defensive mode. The intensity of their defence depends on their strain (breed), but all

(Continued on page 20)

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Bee Intelligence, cont'd

(Continued from page 19)

honey bees instinctively react with defensive behaviour. In laboratory experiments, worker bees can be easily distracted from learning if they are exposed to alarm pheromone. Instinct overrides other brain process in the presence of the alarm pheromone.

The honey bee hive functions like a superorganism, with each bee acting as a cell in a larger body. Communication within the hive is almost certainly at the heart of collective colony intelligence. Bees communicate with a range of behaviours ranging from simple sharing of pheromones and food, to performing complex dances to pass on learning to worker sisters.

By communicating to other bees what they have learned, bees are extending the memory of their experience to other members of the colony and this is in effect a 'colony memory' that extends beyond the life of individual bees.

Communication is also an important factor in how a hive makes collective decisions. Some of these decisions occur only once a year, others occur many times each day. A swarm's choice of a new home is the classic case of collective decision making. Individual scout bees find potential sites and communicate the location by dancing. Other bees follow the directions and return to dance themselves. If a worker had a negative experience at the new site, such as close encounter with a predator, they will stop other workers from dancing directions to that location. When enough bees are dancing the same location, that is a majority vote in favour, and the decision is made.

Collective action is based on many individual decisions. Every field bee makes a daily or even hourly decisions on whether to forage for nectar, pollen or water. These decisions are mostly based on things we cannot see or perceive. It is likely that things like temperature, humidity and the balances of specific hormones and pheromones combine, but the collective result of the individual decisions is the complex behaviour that we see in the hive. For example if humidity in the brood nest started to fall, field workers about to leave on a foraging flight might decide to collect water. While the humidity remains low, more and more foragers would divert to water collection until the humidity level increased.

It is important to note that the intelligence that we measure in bees is directly relevant to their biological needs. This is easier to explain with something that bees don't do as well as their relatives, the social wasps – that is logical problem solving. In laboratory experiments, honey bees are able to learn that food from a blue container is better than food from a red container and that the red container is better than a yellow container. But they are unable to translate that learning to know that the blue container is better than the yellow. This sort of logic does not have a role in the hive. Some social wasps can solve these simple logic problems, which is probably related to their different social behaviour. These wasps have multiple queens in one colony and the queens develop a dominance hierarchy. An individual wasp most likely uses the logic ability in

working out their position in the hierarchy.

Most of the scientific study of intelligence has focussed on worker bees, but it makes sense that drones and queens must also use their intelligence to enhance their specific roles in the hive. Drones are capable of sophisticated learning but it is finely tuned to their specific biological mission – finding and mating with a queen.

There is recent evidence suggesting that the learning and memory capabilities of queens are highly advanced and potentially play a crucial role in long-term colony stability. Queens may be even more intelligent than their worker daughters. This may play some role in longer term colony memory.

With all the evidence of the intelligence of bees, it would be easy to over-play the evidence and draw conclusions that are unlikely to be true. A bee's brain has perhaps a million neurons. Imagine that the bee's brain is a 300-page book with a very good index. The bee can easily find and use information from its brain, which is a marvel of miniaturised processing power. The bee applies a relatively small set of instinctive rules to the information coming from their senses, and their memory, resulting in the complex behaviour that we observe.

But for all the marvels of bee behaviour, they are still working with an insect brain with a very limited capacity and their intelligent behaviour is very closely tied to their life and survival.

A human brain has 86 billion neurons, equivalent to the millions of books in the US Library of Congress. While our brain takes more time to find and process this massive information base, we have much larger capacity for memory and learning, including learning about things that have nothing to do with our survival.

It is possible in laboratory experiments to train worker bees to recognise and distinguish between human faces. The bees are almost certainly using the parts of their brain that recognised flowers, and this pattern recognition works with the patterns of human faces. But it a huge leap to suggest that bees learn to recognise their owners.

I don't believe that bees have any awareness that humans exist. We are just a part of the landscape—something that is there and something that sometimes represents a threat. There is a mythology surrounding bees and beekeeping that I don't subscribe to. To my mind, this is largely a construct of our human brain and our propensity to look for a meaning behind everything that we observe, even when there is no meaning there.

Beekeeping implications

In April 2024, some of the world's leading scientists signed the *New York Declaration on Animal Consciousness*, which concludes that there is a realistic possibility of consciousness in insects, including honey bees. It argues that where this possibility exists, we have an ethical obligation to consider their welfare.

I believe that managing beehives can be ethical and humane if beekeepers prioritise bee welfare. Opinions clearly differ and some of our beekeeping decisions involve complex ethical issues.

(Continued on page 22)



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Bee Intelligence, cont'd

(Continued from page 20)

Most real bee “keepers” (as distinct from bee owners) would agree that their bees deserve their respect and most of us go out of our way to look after the welfare of our bees. This includes taking steps to avoid unnecessarily crushing bees when manipulating hives and working hard to place minimal stress on our bees. When it is necessary to kill bees, such as disease control varroa testing or requeening, we try to avoid unnecessary suffering.

In my mind, it is not ethical for a beekeeper to allow

their hives to die of starvation or neglect, just as much as it is with a pet animal. Similarly, I think that good protective equipment is there to protect the beekeeper, not to enable rougher handling than would otherwise be possible.

Bruce has been keeping bees on and off since he was 16. He worked as an apiary officer in NSW for 15 years in the 1970s and 80s, then moved into management roles in the Department of Agriculture for the remainder of his working career. In retirement, he has moved to live in Geelong and has resumed beekeeping as a hobby.

Season Report

By John Edmonds

The weather in the start of April has been cooler than average, causing the bees to begin reducing brood and back filling around the brood to get ready for winter. When looking at the brood nest it is deceptive as the bees have fresh nectar but the hive scales around Geelong region have consistently recorded less weight day by day.

At the end of April, we have enjoyed nice sunny autumn days with temperatures of low to mid 20s and little wind. Where the bees are able to find flowers, they are still breeding and have strong clusters of bees. Some hives have little or no brood and have thrown out drones but other hives in areas with more pollen available still maintain drones. The future predictions are for more of similar weather for the next 10 days.

It is disappointing that varroa has been found around Geelong, as I hoped we would have a longer time before it becomes a problem. The news is that it appears another varroa incursion has happened in NSW and Southern Queensland with varroa resistant to the four synthetic treatments that we are allowed to treat the bees. I am reliably told that in the first few years of varroa infection oxalic acid will not eliminate varroa, just maintain the levels. The problem being reinfection causes huge increases in varroa levels.

Kris Fricke pointed out that spread of varroa around the world has been mostly due to queen transfer. Purchasing queens from known infected areas is bound to result in infection. At present the varroa levels are low but spring will require treatments. Fortunately, Aluen Cap is now available. This treatment will not contaminate honey and will be easy to use. Beekeepers wishing to not use synthetic chemical treatments will have the oxalic acid treatment and along with brood breaks will be successful. Beekeepers must be careful, as I have seen on YouTube a clip recommending purchasing oxalic acid from Bunnings. This may contain heavy metals and nasty poisons. 100% clean oxalic acid is required.

A beekeeper that has reported finding two varroa at Inverleigh believes they came from drifting drones. The first one was in a wash and the next week he applied oxalic acid vapour and one was found on the sticky mat. His hives on the outskirts of Inverleigh did

not have drones or drone brood when shifted to the red gum [*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*] honey flow as they had suffered heat damage previously, but he noticed many drones appeared in his hives, possibly transferring the varroa.

A beekeeper when hearing of the varroa being found at Bellbrae shifted his bees to Torquay and inadvertently transferred varroa to a new area.

I am glad the Geelong Beekeeping Club is taking the varroa incursion seriously and the sub-committee is working well to educate members. I am still amazed by the number of beekeepers or new beekeepers that have very little knowledge of varroa. The first two to three years will need constant attention to your bees.

Washing bees for varroa detection is a time-consuming operation for beekeepers with many hives. Marking queens is very important as I expect many unmarked queens will be killed in the washes (as I discovered). I have found a piece of heavy white plastic works well for me as I place it near the hive and have another look for the queen and after the flying bees have departed, give it a shake so the bees group in the centre and the poor young bees are tipped into a spray paint lid, the extra bees overflow into the brood nest over the open brood box frames the required number of bees tipped into the wash bottle. I prefer using detergent, as it is not a fire risk and does not damage the seals of the wash bottle. Alcohol damages the seals and they leak. I have been surprised at how much debris can be in a wash. I found my first varroa and was in disbelief at hives located south of Ballarat. Small specks of debris confused the wash results. Magnification is required to make sure of what you are seeing. I resorted to using a blue veil and my offsider's coffee mug to strain the liquid and take a photo with the mobile phone at 5 times magnification and still could not work out what the debris was. I could not find my 100mm round make-up mirror which would have been a help [*previously John has noted this good idea that placing a magnifying make up mirror on a flat surface can enable you to inspect your varroa shaker from underneath without having to actually get underneath it yourself, as you can look in the mirror from your comfortable standing position -ed.*]. The varroa are very small. I cannot keep hives in this location over winter as it is too cold and the

(Continued on page 23)

Season Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 22)

ground boggy, so I have other bee sites in areas already infected with varroa so they will over winter there. Since I have improved my wash technique I have found varroa. I have used windscreen wiper wash and found it works.

I wrapped up varroa mites in a serviette to take home for inspection with magnification. At home I discovered they were still alive!!!! And walking around.

At a bee site that has a lot of wild mustard [*Sinapis arvensis*] I was surprised to find seeds in the wash. I don't know if they came from the plants during the shaking or if they were attached to the bees? I have found a Pseudoscorpion and a miniature fly about the size of a varroa, which unfortunately we dropped while

examining it.

When I bring honey home for extracting, I keep it locked up in the big shed until any bees that have remained on the frames are dead so they don't transfer the possible varroa to home area.

Consulting my commercial beekeeping friends who have had varroa for 12 months: when using brood uncapping, only on drone brood have they seen varroa mites. They conducted tests and found that Bayvarol treated hives had no varroa in test washes after treatment. Oxalic acid strips initially had only one mite but since all mites seem to have been killed. The bees chewed up the oxalic strips over 10 weeks to almost nothing. Where their hives are located the varroa is only in the initial phase and no mite bombs.

A Mildura beekeeper is getting 200 varroa in wash-

(Continued on page 24)



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Season Report, cont'd

(Continued from 23)

es because another commercial beekeeper placed a large number of hives near him. He went for a walk around the area and found a large number of hives in an apiary that were riddled with varroa. It was obvious that zapping the hives with oxalic acid was not stopping the varroa infection. Worse was his bees were robbing the weak hives.

As a result, his bees have been robbing the dead outs and returning with reinfesting varroa. I am getting told that reinfection is rife in central Victoria with bees dying.

Already some of the larger beekeepers are having problems as they try to maintain more beehives than they can reasonably manage with the intention of making money from almond pollination.

I have been told that an almond farm has offered the same price as last year (\$225 per 8 frame hive, increasing \$5 per additional frame strength up to a maximum \$250 for 12 frames or better). NSW beekeepers get a fuel levy added but almond farms want a 3-year contract to supply hives and if the beekeeper cannot supply beehives of the agreed strength, he has to get replacements from other beekeepers. (Good luck with that.) I predict the almond farms will discover beekeepers are not going to take their bees to the pollination event due

to the cost of fuel, the unknown strength of the hives and possible infection of diseases from other bees.

Another offer from the almond farms is they will purchase beehives, keep the pollination fee and after the pollination beekeepers can take them and use them for honey production but return the beehives in suitable condition for the next season almond pollination. The cost of fuel, varroa treatments, uncertain honey flows and low prices being paid by packers for honey makes this a very poor deal.

The almond farms and brokers have been in Western Australia purchasing beehives for \$400 each. By the time the hives are placed into the orchards it is expected they will have cost \$600 each including the freight etc.

I have been told of an excellent NSW beekeeper that has had a truckload of beehives destroyed due to the hives robbing feral hives that had American foulbrood. This is a real possibility in Victoria.

Small hive beetles are proving to be a real pest as they attack beehives weakened by varroa. The north coast of NSW and south-eastern Queensland are having a battle with both varroa and small hive beetles.

The hot weather last summer may be the reason that some hives have failing queens or have slight EFB infections. Requeening or feeding the bees with sugar syrup will help.

AHBIC Update

AHBIC Chair & CEO Update

By Danny LeFeuvre & Jon Lockwood

Just as we almost start to get used to the new world with varroa, along comes resistance. Another devastating game changer for the industry. As we head into conference season, I am sure beekeepers will be soaking up all the information from the expert presenters around managing resistant mites. As we have said in many of our communication the basic principles still remain the same. Rotate your modes of action and monitor your mite numbers.

It is extremely upsetting to learn that Australia has identified resistance genes in both Pyrethroid; L925I/L925M (*Bayvarol* and *Apistan*), and Amitraz; Y215H (*Apivar* and *Amitraz*). NSW DPIRD have determined the AMR1 virus associated with new varroa points to it being most similar to samples from North America and Belgium as the origin. Fortunately, no new viruses have been identified, once again, we may have dodged the deformed wing virus bullet. AHBIC has been communicating with the investigators and government to identify the pathway of entry. It simply is not acceptable that not one but now two separate mites have entered our shores without a definitive pathway. If you know of any suspicious activity, no matter how small, please contact AHBIC or [REDLINE](#).

AgriFutures

AHBIC is committed to further develop and foster

the relationship between the honeybee industry and AgriFutures. AHBIC feels it is extremely important to ensure that AgriFutures deeply understand the challenges and needs of our industry.

Over the past months, AHBIC have had several engagements with the AgriFutures staff. Amanda Olthof the Senior Manager of Levied Industries and Luke Evans the Program Manager for the Honeybee and Pollination Program came to the AHBIC executive meeting to discuss issues and learn how we can build a stronger

(Continued on page 25)



Thumbs Up! A brave Luke Evans, AgriFutures Program Manager Honey Bees, in the apiary alongside staff from Goldfield Honey, Vittoria. NSW, in a recent visit and catch up with Jon Lockwood.

AHBIC Update, cont'd

(Continued from page 24)

relationship. Luke Evans also came to visit AHBIC chair Jon Lockwood at his base. Luke explained that the visit was very important for him to see in person how a commercial bee operation works. He will now have a greater understanding of beekeeping.

In March, Mick Vetch, the new Chair of AgriFutures called to visit Jon at his premises. They discussed the dynamics of our industry and Jon gave him greater context as to our industry's needs. Mick was involved with our industry in the past when he sat as the NSW Shadow Agriculture Minister. It's great to have someone with prior knowledge and understanding in the role.

There are [four positions coming up to sit on the Honeybee and Pollination advisory panel](#) in the next 12 months. Please take a look at the AgriFutures website, and keep this in mind for yourself or someone that may be suitable: [Advisory Panel Recruitment | AgriFutures Australia](#).

Honey and Pollination

Honey production has remained average over the past quarter nationally. Stockpiles in beekeepers and packers sheds are diminishing. Recently we have seen the price slowly start to creep up, however this is not enough to provide beekeepers financial sustainability. Diesel prices have had a significant effect on running

costs. Thankfully over the last week prices have come down to a more realistic figure. Looking forward, it is predicted that much of the country will experience a dry winter and spring which will impact next season's production immensely.

AHBIC patiently wait for DAFF to unpack the findings of the recent imported honey survey, this is extremely frustrating, but nothing happens fast in this area.

Almond contracts and prices are currently being negotiated. Brokers, growers and beekeepers are becoming nervous as many reports are coming through that varroa is significantly impacting hive health. Almond growers in some regions are reporting a tough harvest as many received unwanted rain in January. The horticulture industry are important partners of the bee industry, and we need to navigate the tough times together.

APVMA and product registrations

There has been commentary in industry around the APVMA process and what role AHBIC plays. I have provided a brief explanation on AHBIC's role for both emergency permits and full registrations in a separate article (see page 31).

There has also been some commentary around the recent Canadian oxalic acid strip registration supported by the Canadian honey council and comparisons to NZ

(Continued on page 26)



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AHBIC Update, cont'd

(Continued from page 25)

own use permit system and again AHBIC's role. The Canadian registration system is very different to Australia. They can register active ingredients by providing a shared common data set. Multiple labels/products can then leverage that common data set to expedite the process. This does not allow for the use of generic products as some are suggesting. Only products registered with the PMRA (Canada's version of the APVMA) can be used, which in that aspect is similar to the Australian system. The devil is always in the detail.

Alternative varroa treatments

AHBIC continues to meet with manufactures searching for new products and encouraging them to expand to our market. We also work with our RDC's in Hort Innovation and AgriFutures to ensure research is occurring to find new solutions. We sit on many steering committees to ensure the outcomes of the research is practical and useful for beekeepers. Some of the work that is underway includes;

- Fungal bio-control through Macquarie University
- RNAi interference technology with multiple projects and some startups progressing this technology in Australia. This is the same technology as Norroa (Canadian based RNAi product)
- Projects by Southern Cross University (Dr. Cooper Schouten) and NSW DPIRD to assess and compare treatments and efficacy including off-label work
- Macquarie Uni (Dr. Theotime Colin) developing non-chemical control methods of mite management
- Australian Queen Bee Breeding Association national varroa mite breeding strategy to select for varroa tolerance.

Operation Decker

– Federal Investigation into Varroa

AHBIC has lobbied DAFF to re-initiate the investigation in light of, what is now confirmed, a new varroa incursion. AHBIC continues to provide information where they can, along with NSW DPIRD. We have not had any confirmation from DAFF that they will re-open the investigation as yet. Anyone who has information around either of these two incursions can anonymously report by calling Red Line on 1800 803 or via their website: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/legislation/compliance/redline>.

Imported Honey

AHBIC continues to work with DAFF who now have the testing results from the national imported honey survey. DAF is working with participating jurisdictions on next steps. This is a positive outlook with DAFF recognising the seriousness of the issue and commitment to finding solutions.

Red Dwarf Honey Bee Incursion – Burrup Peninsula WA

The most recent situational update from the WA DPIRD team has again reported no further detections of

foraging red dwarf honey bees in the quarantine zone. This is very encouraging with no new detection since July 2025. The proof of freedom surveillance will continue through to the end of 2026 and with no new detections proof of freedom will be achieved.

Biosecurity preparedness work

We are pleased that AgriFutures has funded the development and updating of our key industry biosecurity preparedness documents. These include the biosecurity plan and several high priority pest contingency plans, including *Tropilaelaps* mites. These documents provide the foundation for any future responses with the current versions outdated or missing, so this project will significantly strengthen our preparedness as an industry. Industry consultation is a feature of the project, and beekeepers will have the opportunity for input.

The Month Ahead

Conference season starts in the coming weeks with NSW in Bathurst being the first. AHBIC will have a presence at all state conferences culminating with the Tasmanian conference in Launceston early July along with the AHBIC AGM.

AHBIC continues to participate in the fuel crisis meetings, food security discussions and continue overseeing the Plant Health Australia managed biosecurity programs. The Plant Health Australia AGM and deed meetings are in Adelaide this May. This will include a deed review meeting where AHBIC will feed in the lessons from the varroa response.

AHBIC Biosecurity Update – Resistant Varroa Mites

(Combined updates of April 10th, 23rd, & 29th, 2026)

Amitraz Resistant Varroa Confirmed in NSW, New Mite Incursion

Amitraz resistance has now been confirmed in New South Wales. The same populations in NSW that previously tested positive for pyrethroid resistance, are also now confirmed to have amitraz resistance. This confirmation is in addition to the previous confirmation of pyrethroid and amitraz resistance in Southeast QLD.

NSW DPIRD have confirmed that the resistant mite populations detected in QLD and NSW are a new population of mites unrelated to the original 2022 detection. Further work is being undertaken to determine how these mites arrived in Australia and how far they have spread.

So far, the hives tested have not shown presence of any new exotic viruses. However, further genetic analysis of the endemic virus AR1 (aka *rhadovirus*) found with these mites, confirms it is an exotic strain and different in origin to the existing endemic AR1 virus associated with the Newcastle original population.

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP), drawing on NSW DPIRD tracing and laboratory testing, has verified that this resistant population is present across Queensland and New South Wales. Tracing and subsequent lab testing has also identified that the first mites detected in South Austral-

(Continued on page 27)

AHBIC Update, cont'd

(Continued from page 26)

ia's Riverland to be part of the new population but is not considered to be established.

The CCEPP members agreed that the new incursion of resistant mite populations cannot be eradicated due to a lack of containment and the unknown entry pathway.

Varroa synthetic chemical resistance is considered established broadly across NSW and southern QLD. It is no longer considered geographically confined with reports of treatment issues being confirmed across large areas.

Beekeepers are experiencing reduced or even complete failure of treatments due to populations of *Varroa destructor* having resistance to synthetic pyrethroids

and amitraz products this affects Bayvarol, Apistan, Apivar and Apitraz branded products, pictured.

Resistant mites appear to be spreading through the trade and movement of live bees and colonies as well as proximity to affected apiaries in both NSW and QLD. The resistance has been recorded across NSW and southern QLD, additional areas are likely to be impacted.

These miticide resistant varroa mites will eventually become widespread, meaning beekeepers will eventually have lower efficacy from key synthetic control tools, and there will become an increased risk of high mite loads and colony losses across Australia.

Within these resistant populations, both pyrethroid (Bayvarol and Apistan) and amitraz (Apivar and Apitraz) treatments are less likely to be effective and, in some cases, complete treatment failure has been reported.

For the majority of beekeepers in both NSW and QLD, treatments will continue to be effective due to the resistant populations being limited in their distribution.

This means that beekeepers who do not have confirmed resistance should continue to use all available options to control mites. Beekeepers must ensure they ROTATE modes of action and MONITOR for effica-



(Continued on page 28)

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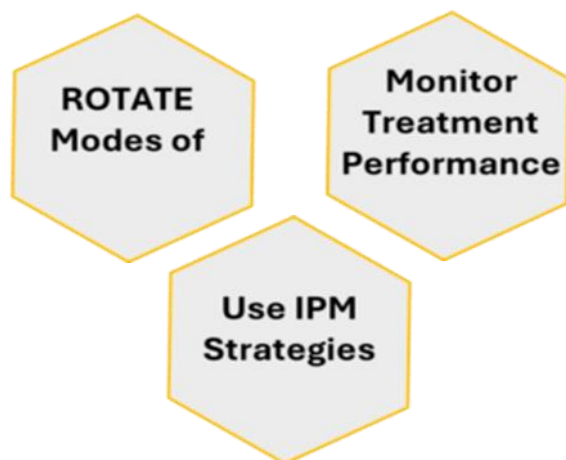
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AHBIC Update, cont'd

(Continued from page 27)

cy of treatments [that is, do a soap/alc wash *after* the treatment to confirm it was effective].



If you suspect that pyrethroid or amitraz resistance-carrying mites are in your apiaries or in your area, you should not use amitraz or pyrethroid products where possible. Instead use organic acid-based products as there is no known resistance.

If you are already treating with synthetics and suspect resistance, then act swiftly to test your colonies via state Bee Biosecurity Officer assistance or privatised testing facilities. Confirmed synthetic treatment failures will require changing management practices including integrated pest management and using only organically derived treatments to give your colonies the best chance of survival.

We acknowledge that this news, on top of existing pressures on beekeepers, is a lot to cope with.

Economic Thresholds – Can be Adapted

The current thresholds are a good guide for beekeepers to adopt. However, they are not fixed or legislated nor stipulated on product labels. It's up to individual beekeepers and their risk appetite and situation to determine mite thresholds.

Where there is resistance, beekeepers are reporting they are struggling to reduce high mite numbers with acids alone, so re-evaluating thresholds can help in ensuring you maintain low mite counts in the short term.

If you know or suspect you might have resistance, it's important to consider lowering your mite threshold to ensure low mite counts can be maintained. Beekeepers need to plan for emergency situations when treatment failure is detected to prevent mite run away in hives.

Monitor Chemical Treatment Performance

By knowing your mite levels, you can determine not only when to treat but also whether your treatment is working.

Pre-treatment

- Alcohol wash hives immediately prior to treatment to establish a baseline.

- The more hives you wash the better, but at least 10% per apiary.

Record individual hive mite counts (i.e. note wash result on lids) averaging is also ok but not as accurate.

Mid-treatment

- Alcohol wash hives mid-treatment time, i.e. at weeks 3-4 (Pyrethroid) and 5-6 (Amitraz), to establish early confirmation of efficacy or potential failure.

- Keep the method consistent.

- You MUST monitor the same hives in the apiary each time. This will allow a clear comparison to assess treatment efficacy [note this is distinctly different from general monitoring for varroa levels in which you *should* do different hives each time].

If mite counts are the same or slightly lower than baseline there is no cause for immediate concern, but it is important to follow up with post treatment monitoring.

If mite counts are significantly more than the pre-treatment/baseline in any hive, this is cause for concern and we recommend:

1. Immediately remove the synthetic treatment, use an organic acid treatment to knock down phoretic mite numbers, immediately continue with next treatment in IPM strategy.

2. Contact your state department apiary team.

Collect mite samples arrange further testing immediately.

Post-treatment

Alcohol wash hives at treatment removal, not a week after treatment removal, again following the same procedure as pre and mid treatment.

If mite counts are the same or more than the baseline mite numbers you need to take action

1. Consider following up with an urgent organic acid treatment to knock down phoretic mite numbers as quickly as possible.

2. Immediately continue with next treatment in IPM strategy to ensure colony survival.

3. Contact your state department apiary team.

Collect mite samples and arrange further testing immediately.

Further Information

[AHBIC Varroa Mite Resistance article](#)
[SCU Varroa Resistance In-field Test](#)

Honey bee waggle dance depends on its audience, study finds

A new study by Chinese scientists reveals that the honey bee waggle dance, one of the most famous examples of animal communication, is not a one-way communication but, in fact, a dynamic, two-way interaction shaped by its audience. These findings challenge the traditional view that information flows unidirectionally from dancers to passive followers. The study, conducted by researchers from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and their collaborators, was published on March 23.

JOURNAL: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

Resistance Reverberates

By Andrew Wootton

Once again, we are faced with unwelcome news - amitraz resistant mites have been found in Australia.¹ Perhaps even more alarming is that AHBIC states that these are genetically distinct from the original mite incursion, confirming a second breach of our (once vaunted, now porous) biosecurity border. How long until deformed wing virus arrives? Or *Tropilaelaps*!

Amitraz acts as an agonist for the octopamine receptor, meaning it binds to the receptor,² mimicking the neurotransmitter, triggering overexcitation leading to hyperactivity and paralysis in varroa mites. Three mutations resulting in amino acid substitutions in the receptor have been found, N87S in France, Y215H in the United States and F290L in Spain.³ The Australian incursion is with the USA mutation.

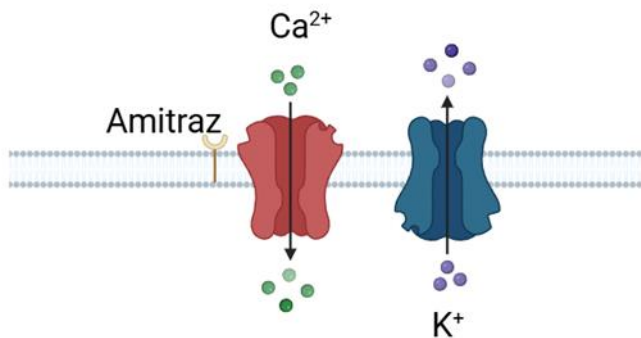


Fig 1. Octopamine β-Receptor showing binding of amitraz leading to influx of calcium ions and outflow of potassium ions (Adapted and redrawn from Waldman⁴).

We now have resistance in Australia to both permitted “hard” chemical miticide groups, the pyrethroids (Bayvarol and Apistan) and amitraz (Apivar and Apitraz). Although currently thought to be restricted in distribution to limited areas of Northern NSW and Queensland, we should expect the almond pollination event this August to result in widespread dissemination soon afterwards.

What are the implications for we poor beekeepers? The best shots in our locker (>95% efficacy) may become largely ineffective. Fortunately, organic treatments show no sign of leading to resistance. Indeed, a study with oxalic acid using 64 consecutive treatments did not lead to a reduction in susceptibility.⁵ We need to treat early and often with oxalic and formic acids. The restrictions currently imposed through their labels, to their use only once or twice a year make no sense. I have been very reluctant to be critical of the APVMA and their permit determinations but change now becomes urgent. We need legally to be able to use best practice.

We must try our best to keep the hard chemicals in reserve, for use only *in extremis*. Rotation of treatments with different modes of action is critical. However, even this may be of limited use due to the low fitness cost to the mite of resistance.⁶ Furthermore, reversion to susceptibility is disappointingly slow, with the suggestion that it may take 4-6 years in the case of fluvalinate.⁷ We can hope for new developments with synergistic chemicals that enhance the toxicity of amitraz⁸ but this will likely take years.

Organic acids, integrated pest management strategies such as drone comb removal and queen caging and restricted use of *rotated* hard chemicals are what we have. It's going to be a rocky road over the next couple of years, but let's not forget that the rest of the world has coped. So too can we.

Andrew Wootton is Vice President of the VAA and a certified master beekeeper with the Eastern Apicultural Society of N America. He first started beekeeping in the 1960s.

References

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FACEBOOK ROUNDUP by Kris Fricke

Effects of Heat on Honey (April 5th)

A [question in Beekeeping Victoria about the affects of heat on honey](#) garnered a discussion with 27 comments. The poster asked specifically for scientifically backed studies rather than “Fred says” or “google says.” Someone pointed to a paper¹ about enzymes degrading at 40-60°C, and concerns about HMF (hydroxymethylfurfural), a common indicator of quality loss in honey, which meaningfully accumulates at 37-40°C (ie a hot shed) over weeks to months, but at hotter temperatures, reaches the EU defined maximum limits in 80 hours at 60°C or 6 hours at 100°C.

I’m only just seeing this discussion and only sat down to write brief summaries here but I would add that the “volatile aromatics,” the subtle and delicate flavors that make a high quality honey amazing,² frequently evaporate just over 40°C, and the same browning affect that happens when you caramelize sugar or brown onions (the “Maillard reaction”) begins to happen slowly at over 35°C (taking months to reach problematic levels),³ measurable after days at 50°C and rapidly over 60°C.⁴

Amitraz resistance (April 14th)

Not surprisingly the announcement of miticide resistant bees got beekeepers talking, with both extensive discussions on the [Central Victorian Apiarist Association page](#) and [Commercial beekeepers](#). In the latter Robert Seagrave offered more information on the origin of the hives he says were the first to show this resistance. In both of these discussions, as you can imagine, a great deal of frustration was expressed.



Commercial
beekeepers



CVAA

Why Can’t We Be Like Canada? (April 22nd)

[The posting of an article from Bee Culture magazine about the approval of oxalic glycerin strips in Canada](#) incited a discussion regarding why the APVMA hasn’t done similar for us here. A particular comment by Nicholas Charters got numerous likes and “well said” responses so I’ll reproduce it here in full:

Hi Rod, the beekeepers in the industry that do what they want with disregard for others [are what] we should all be concerned about. We acknowledge what has been done to date by AHBIC and the govt employees who have the industry at heart.

Of course we need an approval authority to regulate chemical use in the Ag industry. However this discussion is not asking for own use of DDT or even synthetic chemicals! In Canada their equivalent of AHBIC obtained approval for own use OA methodology from their equivalent to APVMA.

The question raised therefore asks can we in Australia seek to do the same. We have an industry that has been under sustained stress. The discussion comes from a posture of seeing good beekeepers lose hundreds of hives, profitability, businesses, relationships etc

Given the evolving situation with mite resistance to Bayvarol and Apivar, and looking ahead at the approved treatment schedule it is pertinent to question does it adequately accommodate:

- Sequential knock down options during spring and summer
- Cost effective treatments
- Year round honey boxes in subtropical climates (autumn bees currently wanting to be in triples not singles)
- Rotating 4 approved treatments per year where resistance is present
- We all want an industry that can:
 - Reduce synthetic reliance with associated residue risks
 - Use organic treatments wherever possible
 - Sustain profitability and still produce premium table honey rather than transition to a pollination-only business model
 - Maintain treatment compliance records
 - legitimately sign off on annual Code compliance

Those of us who have seen our colleagues suffer and fail whilst trying to work with current options have a responsibility to forewarn that there needs to be consideration of further changes for the industry to survive and prosper and we need our representative bodies to listen and back us.

AHBIC CEO Danny LeFeuvre’s article “**Miticide Registrations, APVMA and the Role of AHBIC**” which also appears in this same issue (page 31) is effectively the other side of this same discussion.

Unanswered Questions About Oxalic Acid (April 24th)

A [very spirited discussion about how Oxalic Acid actually works](#) developed in response to the posting of a snippet of a Randy Oliver article on “Aussie Apiarists Online.” 23 people participated in this discussion putting forward numerous theories, though ultimately it is not conclusively known.



References

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²Manyi-Loh, C.E., Clarke, A.M. and Ndip, R.N. (2011). Volatile compounds in honey: a review on their involvement in aroma, botanical origin determination and potential biomedical activities. *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*, 12(12), pp.9514–9532. DOI: 10.3390/ijms12129514. Available at: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3257144/

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Miticide Registrations, APVMA & The Role Of AHBIC

Danny LeFeuvre, CEO AHBIC, 2026

There has been commentary across industry about the APVMA process for varroa miticides and what role AHBIC plays. It is important to separate three things: emergency permits, full product registrations, and AHBIC's advocacy role.

Emergency permits

Emergency permits are temporary approvals used to legalise the use of an agvet chemical product, or active constituent, to address an emergency situation. The APVMA states that the final decision on whether a use qualifies as an emergency use rests with the APVMA, but they often will not approve multiple permits for the same active ingredient or where alternatives exist.

Anyone can apply for an emergency permit, but applications are usually led by a state jurisdiction or sometimes industry bodies. In the varroa response, many treatment permits have been held by NSW DPIRD because of its role as the lead agency. AHBIC also holds permits where appropriate, such as for copper naphthenate but does not hold any varroa treatment permits.

Emergency permits are assessed against APVMA criteria and are generally conservative. The APVMA must be satisfied there is adequate information to manage risks to users, bees, the environment and trade. Where there is inadequate scientific data provided the permit will reflect limitations on use.

AHBIC has strongly advocated for access to emergency treatment options, but AHBIC does not determine or has input into permit labels, withholding periods, treatment limits or other conditions. Those decisions sit with the APVMA.

Full product registration

Full registration is a separate and more detailed process. Before an agvet chemical product can be legally supplied, sold or used in Australia, it must be registered by the APVMA.

For a product registration, the manufacturer or its Australian representative submits the application with a proposed label and supporting scientific data. The APVMA must be satisfied that the product meets safety, efficacy, trade and labelling criteria.

This means label claims must be backed by evidence. For example, if a manufacturer wants a label to allow multiple treatments in a season, the data must support safety, efficacy, residues and resistance management. If the evidence is limited, the label will be conservative.

AHBIC has no role in assessing or providing input into full registrations. That process is confidential and between the applicant and the APVMA. Once a product is registered, any label change or variations must also be submitted by the manufacturer (not AHBIC) with supporting data. Lobbying AHBIC or the APVMA will not, by itself, change a registered label it is the manufacturer that must be convinced to propose changes.

The issue of influence and industry capture

The APVMA has also been the subject of significant scrutiny. A key review published in July 2023 by Clayton Utz commissioned by the government addressed serious allegations raised through Senate Estimates about industry influence. Whilst the report found there had been no evidence of inappropriately registered products it did identify a perception risk. It noted the regulator's strong focus on approval timeframes and its level of engagement with industry stakeholders.

Importantly the report highlighted the structural reality of the system, in that, while industry, including AHBIC, can

advocate for access to tools and highlight operational impacts, it cannot influence regulatory outcomes, data assessments or label settings.

Product registrations, label claims and use patterns are determined solely through APVMA's statutory, evidence-based assessment process, and any changes require formal applications supported by data from the product registrant.

In practical terms, this means AHBIC cannot "get a label changed" or alter use conditions through advocacy - its role is limited to facilitating industry need, encouraging investment, and supporting the generation of the evidence required for regulatory consideration.

For AHBIC, this is an important distinction. Industry should advocate for access to safe and effective tools, but it should not seek to influence scientific regulatory decisions. AHBIC's role is to identify industry need, communicate practical impacts, encourage manufacturers to enter the Australian market, and support R&D that builds the evidence base required for registrations.

What AHBIC does

AHBIC's role is advocacy, coordination and intelligence gathering. This includes:

- Encouraging manufacturers to register products in Australia.
- Over the last 4 years AHBIC has met with every manufacturer that has registered varroa treatments globally. Many of the current options available to beekeepers is a direct result of our advocacy.

- Advocating for emergency access where identified gaps exist.

AHBIC has lobbied NSW DPIRD and APVMA to allow multiple emergency permits which normally doesn't occur. We have searched globally and identified options that are registered elsewhere and advocated for those to be available for Australian beekeepers. As an example the whole AHBIC executive has met with directors of the APVMA in 2024 to discuss a range of issues (see [AHBIC – APVMA communiqué](#)) including access to 'own use' permits and greater access to oxalic acid.

- Working with R&D providers on new treatment options.
- Working with AgriFutures, Hort Innovations and universities to identify emerging control options and what work needs to be done in Australia to bring them to market. Some of these currently being developed include fungal control, RNAi control, screening of other agricultural miticides to find new effective varroa controls and the development of new actives/modes of action.

- Monitoring global miticide developments and resistance issues.

- Communicating practical information to beekeepers.

- Working with suppliers to assist with bottle necks or regulatory barriers to supply.

This aligns with AHBIC's strategic role as the national voice for the honey bee and pollination industries, particularly in biosecurity, market integrity and industry resilience.

Final message

The miticide registration system is evidence-based, confidential and regulator-led. AHBIC can advocate for access and help build the case for industry need, but it cannot write labels, approve products or override APVMA decisions.

That independence matters. The industry needs timely access to effective varroa treatments, but it also needs confidence that products are safe for bees, beekeepers, consumers, trade and the environment

Contacts

VAA Resources

Subcommittee 2026-2028

Resources Chair & North East:

Andrew McCallum

0448 577 780

rawhoneyvic@gmail.com

Resources Secretary:

Keely McDonald

0467 159 936

keely.mcdonald.connect@gmail.com

Gippsland:

Neil Barraclough

0429 888 706

neilbarra@bigpond.com

Port Phillip:

Paul Davies

03 9738 0456

paul@heathmonthoney.com.au

North West:

Andrew Devlin

0427 102 482

adevlin2907@outlook.com

West:

Daryll Hobbs

0427 340 197

lingmer1@outlook.com

Central:

Matt Lorenz

03 5472 2842

matt@mcdonaldhoney.com.au

Agriculture Victoria:

Agriculture Victoria: Apiary team

Website: Honey bees | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria

Website:

www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/honey-bees

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For enquiries and endemic disease notification please use:

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For beekeeper registration please log onto BeeMAX

www.bees.agriculture.vic.gov.au

or call the Bee Registration

Helpline 1800 356 761

Email: beekeeper.registration@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Current Apiary Officers

Karyn Di Florio

Biosecurity Manager Apiary

1 Taylor Street, Epsom,

Victoria, Australia 3551

Mob: 0448 941 756

Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Karla Williams

Biosecurity Officer Apiary

1 McKoy Street, Wodonga,

Victoria, 3690

Mob: 0417 121 987

Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Adam Maxwell,

Biosecurity Officer Apiary

475-485 Mickleham Road,

Attwood, Victoria, 3049

Mob: 0428 893 595

Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Bee Biosecurity Officers:

Ashton Edgley

Mob: 0427 135 169

Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Junie Rey Bag-Ayan

Mob: 0409 197 551

Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

If you can't reach an Officer and need to talk to someone urgently, please call the Customer Service Centre: Ph: 136 186

DEECA

for bee sites on Crown land

All enquiries should go to a

adminhub@deeca.vic.gov.au

Other contacts

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC):

CEO: Danny Le Feuvre

Mob: 0402 467 780

ahbic@honeybee.org.au

5 John St.

Ardrossan, SA, 5571

www.honeybee.org.au

Crop Pollination Association Inc

President: Steve Fuller,

president.cpaa.us@gmail.com

Ph 0488 434 498

Secretary: Janet Clyde

jclyde.cpaa@gmail.com

Ph 0417 494 867

Honey Bee Research & Development committee (HBRDC)

Annie Stoddart

Program Coordinator Research

02 69236918

Annie.stoddart@agrifutures.com.au

VFF State Beekeeping Branch:

Secretary: Gail Rochelmeyer

Mob: 0408 592 091

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The Editor, PO Box 7425,
SUTTON NSW 2620
Ph: 0427 552 001
honeybeenews@bigpond.com

Contacts

VAA Inc Regional Groups

Bendigo Branch:

Secretary: Peta Dawe

bbvaasecretary@gmail.com

Chair: Stafford Kelly

bbvaachair@gmail.com

Treasurer: Michael St.Clair

bbvaatreasurer@outlook.com

General Information Meetings -

1st Wed. each month (except Jan & Dec)

Dinner at 6.00pm (optional)

Meeting at 7.00 pm.

Lakeside Hotel, Bendigo.

Please register with the

Secretary to attend Meetings

Executive Committee Meeting:

3rd Wed month as required.

Venue: As notified.

Melbourne Section:

Chair: A/Prof James Doery

Deputy Chair: David Basket

Treasurer: Janet Conos

Secretary, Gill Greenstein

Ph: 0422 058 180

[vaamelbournesection](mailto:vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com)

@hotmail.com

[www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/](http://www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/Melbourne-Section)

[Melbourne-Section](#)

Information/ Education Meetings:

from 7:30 pm the last Thursday

of each month except December

Location: Church of Christ,

1 The Avenue, Surry Hills.

Sunraysia Branch:

Naomi Forbes-Wilson

Ph: 0407 243 313

billabonghoney@yahoo.com

VAA Inc. Library Trust

Secretary: Russell Goodman,

Ph 03 9735 3836

Affiliated Organisations

Central Victorian Apiarists'

Association Inc (CVAA Inc.):

Millie Enbom-Goad

Ph: 0400 083 582

cvaa_inc@outlook.com

Gippsland Apiarists'

Association Inc. (GAA Inc.):

President: Stan Glowacki:

jeeralangapiary@bigpond.com

0413 136 878

Secretary: Lorraine Glowacki:

secretarygaa1966@gmail.com

0402 026 111

Treasurer: Sean Paul Smith:

kaledprime@gmail.com

0466 041 199

North Eastern Apiarists'

Association Inc. (NEAA Inc.):

Secretary: Moss McCallum

secretary.neaa@gmail.com

"J" Beekeepers Club Inc.

Meets on the second Wednesday

of every month (Except January)

at the Goonawarra Community

Centre, 20 Dornoch Drive,

Sunbury, VIC 3429

Phone: 0400 667 125 (Secretary)

Postal Address: PO Box 87., 84

Bulla Rd., Bulla, VIC 3428

Southside Beekeepers Club:

Secretary: Ted Cottle

Ph: 0428 429 547

ted@southsidebeekeepers.com.au

7.30pm on the 4th Wed each

month at Monterey Secondary

College,

21 Silvertop St, Frankston North

Geelong Beekeepers Club

President: Nathan Whitford

0403 807 224

Vice President: Stephen Fridey

info@geelongbeekeepersclub.org.au

Meetings third Friday of month at

Belmont Masonic Centre,

25 Regent Street, Belmont

Latrobe Valley

Beekeepers Assoc.

President: Sean-Paul Smith

LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com

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month, Old Moe Netball Courts,

99 Savages Rd. Moe

P.O. Box 323 Newborough 3825

Mob: 0466 041 199

Woodend Bee-Friendly Society

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E: wbfsm@mrsg.org.au

Meets on the third Sunday of

every month (except December)

at Woodend Neighbourhood

House, 47 Forest Street,

Woodend, VIC 3442

South Gippsland Beekeepers

Inc. Secretary: Anna Jones

Mob: 0411 770 062

secretary@sgbeekeepers.org.au

Web: <http://www.southgippslandbeekeepers.org.au/>

Meetings: second Thursday of the month at St Peters Anglican Church Hall, Cnr McCartin St. & Bruce St., Leongatha

Melbourne Beekeepers

Club Inc:

Web:

melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au

E: [secretary@melbourne](mailto:secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au)

[beekeepersclub.org.au](mailto:secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au)

Northwestern Bee Club Inc.

President: Roger Mitchell

Mob. 0407 427 431

northwesternbeeclub@gmail.com

Web: <https://www.nwbee.club/>

Mornington Peninsula

Beekeepers Association :

P.O. Box 186, Mornington, 3931

Ph: 0401 965 558

E: admin@mpba.org.au

Monthly MPBA Club Meeting -

4th Wednesday of every month

at 7pm Mornington Park Pavilion,

9 Flinders Drive, Mornington

Moonee Valley Beekeepers

Club Inc. (MVBC Inc.)

Secretary: Paul Kucera

mvbeekeepersclub@gmail.com

Meets at 7:30pm on the second

Tuesday of each month (except

January) in the hall at

195 Holmes Rd,

Moonee Ponds, VIC 3039

WerriBeeks Inc.

President: Carmel Gerdson

Secretary: Helen Morland

Treasurer: Debbie Conway

E: werribeeks@gmail.com

If any contact details or information on these pages is incorrect please advise the editor at abjeditors@yahoo.com

CLASSIFIEDS

HONEY BUYERS

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Contact Moe Jarrad
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Beemanhoney.com.au

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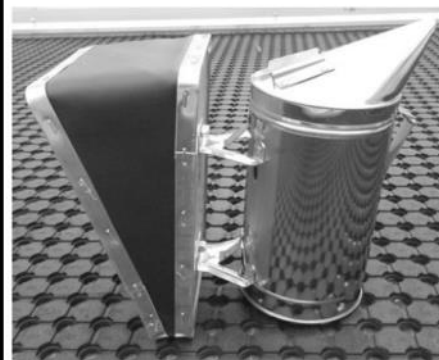
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