



JUNE 2019 Newsletter. Vol 19 issue 1

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How does B-QUAL certification benefit my business?

Your Enterprise can demonstrate that it is operating in accordance with industry requirements and expectations of consumers, markets, regulatory authorities and the wider community, in relation to the key issues of food safety and industry best practice.

B-QUAL Certification also enables an enterprise to market its product under the B-QUAL logo to show that it meets the B-QUAL industry standards.

Chairman's message

Hi and welcome to all our existing and future members.

B-QUAL has been busy being represented in various state conferences and I would like to thank all board members who have represented B-QUAL at these events.

At one of the conferences I spoke at, I was asked by a beekeeper "what are the advantages for me of being in B-QUAL?" This made me take a step back; so ask yourself these questions:

- Do you want to sell your honey or wax?
- Do you want the best price for your honey?
- Do you want to prove the authenticity?
- Is QA going to be required by packers?

The answer is in 2019 if you produce and sell honey then you need B-QUAL.

You will be much further ahead than those without it.

I know I am preaching to the converted, but there are still so many out there who don't understand the necessity and value that B-QUAL provides for its members.

B-QUAL is an industry owned and run program. It is under our control and as beekeepers it is our responsibility to move forward to meet tomorrow's standards, in biosecurity and product providence and food handling.

Wayne Fuller. Chairman B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd.

B-QUAL news

The recently revised Standards, Approved Supplier Manual and Accreditation Rules manuals have been added to our website www.bqual.com.au. It is recommended that all members review the manual and ensure full compliance.

While on the website, members should check their names and if applicable their email address on the B-QUAL members listing on the home page link to confirm it is correct. Please notify Anne in the office should you require any amendment to your listing or if you decide to have your email placed on it, if not already done so.

Those members taking part in the Almond pollination this year are reminded to first undertake an AFB test and ensure bees are in good condition, disease free and strong hives, more on the program in Trevor Monsons article pages 5 & 6.

The Board has agreed to proceed with feasibility discussions into two projects in conjunction with the Collaborative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products University of Western Australia. (CRCHBP/ UWA). The projects will involve preliminary discussions and work on development of converting B-QUAL into a computer based system. We believe that the industry would benefit from B-QUAL as an audited system, becoming the backbone to enable many other add-ons that could occur such as hive monitoring, security, honey chemistry etc. The other project to be undertaken is for research on the market perception and use of traceability protection, through scanning technology such as NFC tags and QR codes. The Board expects the first reports by October 2019. These projects are seen as vital to the efficacy of B-QUAL and would be a big step in promoting public confidence in our products and the industry, as well as bringing B-QUAL into world best practice. Michael Killer, our program manager, will be heading up negotiations with CRCHBP.

B-QUAL has shown good growth this year with 184 new applications to date for requests for certification packs.

AUS-QUAL have advised that after holding our audit fees stable for some years and in fact subsidising costs they have been forced to implement a small audit fee increase from \$520 to \$ 660. This will amount to around \$ 2.70 per week. The new fees become effective July 2019

Laina Goodwin our exceptional B-QUAL office program administrator has resigned from full time work for personal reasons; we sincerely thank Laina for her dedication and efforts to B-QUAL over the years and wish her well for the future. Laina will be replaced by Ann Falconer who has been involved in other AUS-QUAL programs and is well versed in program operations. We welcome Ann who commenced 20th May. Ann can be contacted through the B-QUAL inbox: bqual@ausqual.com.au or directly 07 3361 9234.

A new auditor Alexandra Dawson has joined our audit team. Based in South Australia Alex will also help conduct audits in both South Australia and Tasmania, Alex is already on board and auditing.

Upcoming State Conferences:

VAA	Mildura	Working Mans Club	June 4 th - 6 th 2019
SAAA	Adelaide	Pullman Hotel	June 10 th – 11 th 2019
TBA	Launceston	Grand Chancellor Hotel	June 28 th – 29 th . In conjunction with AHBIC AGM

All details on respective web sites.

B-QUAL Partnerships

Robbie and Nicole Charles

Directors of

Australian Quality Honey Pty Ltd BQ-001

T/as Blue Hills Honey

Mawbanna Tasmania

Blue Hills Honey began its path to B-QUAL late in the 2002/ 2003 season by accident. By accident - yes we were scheduled into a workshop in Tasmania that mentioned quality in Beekeeping practice or as we know it now - best practice. We were given the wrong date and as fate had it missed the workshop. Not to be deterred we gathered the reading materials, studied and thought this seems doable without the workshop. After a number of hours putting together our manual to suit us and the realisation that we had a lot of the documents already, we chose to get audited. Success on the first round, and little did we know it we were the first apiary to achieve the B-QUAL standard. We proudly promote the B-QUAL number 1 certificate.

Now 16 or so years later what has it meant to us? We now export 70% of our honey. We believe it is because of the B-QUAL program, and its pursuit of quality, that has helped us achieve success in a number of markets and with it a number of export award recognitions. We don't believe this would have been achievable without the structure and prestige of the program. We have built our apiary and packing facility on B-QUAL principles. The structure of the program and audit requirements helps us maintain a product of excellence from the hive to the palate.

We have been challenged at times in this industry ranging from fire to flood & drought to name a few and each time the B-QUAL system played an integral component in recovery (insurance) and not to mention integral in the growth of our business (Banks). The greatest challenge for all beekeepers is to produce a consistent quality product and with B-QUAL it helps to do this. Record keeping is the key to quality and improvement and above all consumer confidence.



What's the next phase for us and B-QUAL? We hope to bring into our systems some high tech options that assist the outcomes of the B-QUAL program.

We would encourage all beekeepers no matter how many hives to adopt the program. It gives you structure and knowledge to achieve on all levels and a great bunch of likeminded beekeepers that can mentor you in all areas of growth and challenge. B-QUAL opens up your supply options in an increasingly competitive space.

Credit needs to be given to those that had the foresight to set the original program up and those industry players that assisted, gave their own quality program templates and have been the driving force behind the Australian Honey bee industry.



Robbie and Nicole Charles

Blue Hills Honey BQ-001

Tasmania

B-QUAL food safety program

The honey industry recognises that quality and food safety standards are required by customers, wholesalers and regulators. The industry must comply with the requirements of Food Standards Australia New Zealand – including the development of a HACCP-based food safety program – to ensure that honey products meet international, national, and state and territory food safety requirements.

The B-QUAL food safety program is a voluntary program for apiarists and honey-processing businesses, ensuring that the honey bee industry's standards meet best practice, and domestic and international market demands. The program is owned by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, managed by the B-QUAL Australia board and administered by AUS-QUAL (a certification body accredited by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand).

B-QUAL standards encompass all facets of honey production and industry services, including honey production, queen bees, pollination and honey packing. B-QUAL is a cost-effective and easy-to-use program. Beekeepers who wish to become certified first receive a certification pack and undertake self-training in HACCP principles and the B-QUAL requirements.

Once a beekeeper has integrated the B-QUAL requirements into their operation, the business is audited by an Exemplar Global third-party auditor. Certification is provided by AUS-QUAL. Beekeepers selling direct to the public are audited every year. Those selling bulk honey to packers are audited once every two years.

The B-QUAL program provides comprehensive work instructions and record forms and templates that must be maintained for:

- hive management (identification, location, movement and disease status)
- extraction (process, facilities and equipment)
- biosecurity
- hygiene (personal, machinery maintenance, sanitation and vermin control)
- purchases (inventory lists and stocktake activities)
- equipment calibration
- internal and external audit results
- staff training
- occupational health and safety issues.

The B-QUAL Board is committed to maintaining the integrity of the B-QUAL program and ensuring it remains relevant and beneficial to the industry. To this end, the Board has recently completed and updated the program manual. The board has a policy of continual review to ensure the program meets all current requirements.

Some B-QUAL advantages;

- record keeping made easier
- allows you to work out production costs and cash flows
- shows true value of bee sites
- good record keeping increases the value of the business

Preparing for the Almond Pollination Program. Trevor Monson.



Almond pollination 2019 is fast approaching and it's time to touch base and get things rolling. The orchards have had a very good crop. Excellent drying weather has enabled them to finish harvest three weeks early, but saying that, the kernel size is down, maybe because the flowers and set were unusually high last year.

With the addition of new farms coming into production, we will need 120,000 hives this year. This increase of approximately 15,000 is expected to continue for another two years till 2021. I've also heard of the purchase of enough budwood to plant up another massive 10,000 hectare property, which would increase the total industry to 50,000 hectares; then of course, there are other crops that need pollination at the same time and huge plantings of new crops in Queensland. One asks how they'll survive, with no water and no bees!!

The quality of hives required varies from farm to farm.

Most farms require a minimum quality standard of an 8 frame average across each drop. A frame of bees is defined as a frame that's three quarters covered with bees at 15° Celsius. At lower temperatures bees will cluster more tightly in the centre of the frame. But, to meet an 8 frame average we can't count hives below 6 frames of bees, which means you need to make up the balance with a number of hives at a higher standard, or supply more hives of 6 frame or above at no extra cost. Note that it is very difficult to meet this average with 8 frame boxes, as all of them would need to be strong and have room for growth. Again, a number of larger hives of similar strength would need to be in the mix. If you are on a farm that requires a 9 frame average the same principal applies, with hives below 7 frames not counted as part of the average, and hives of higher strength needed to make up the average over the drop, or provide extra hives of 7 frames or above at no extra cost. (if a 9 frame average is required, it will be indicated on your contract with the farm you are assigned to). Here is an example of 4 hives with the following estimate of frames, which are three quarters covered in bees:

1x6 frames, 1 x 7frames, 1x9 frames, 1 x 10 frames. If you count all these frames and divide them by 4 you will get an 8 frame average

Compulsory Beekeeping Biosecurity Requirements.

By now each of you should be operating according to the Biosecurity for Beekeepers Code, outlined below.

1. Be a registered beekeeper
2. Report notifiable diseases
3. Inspect regularly for pests and diseases- at least twice a year and at least one hive in every apiary.
4. Eradicate pests and diseases and manage weak hives
5. Maintain records of inspections, observations and actions
6. Use appropriately constructed and branded hives
7. Not allow exposed hives or appliances to be exposed or neglected
8. Allow operations to be assessed
9. Know how to identify and manage pests and diseases
10. Have an annual honey test for AFB
11. Provide a truthful Certification of Compliance with the code
12. Maintain a barrier system of hive management.

Certification of compliance with the code is now required with the expression of interest form.

Victorian Biosecurity has requested that all supplying beekeepers for 2019 fill in and return a completed *Certification of compliance with the code (which includes your latest AFB honey test result)*

The code requires you to do an AFB Honey test each year. We need to get on top of the AFB problem, as it seems to be getting worse, rather than better. No beekeeper wants or needs to experience the detection of AFB. A list of AFB honey test facilities was listed in the March edition of the B-QUAL Newsletter which can be viewed on

www.bqual.com.au

Information and preparation for the Almond Pollination.

Most of the farms we manage are situated in NW Victoria within a large triangle of Robinvale across to Hattah and to Tooleybuc to the East, Hives need to be on the farms by the first week of August and stay for most of the month, going out late August early September. Beekeepers with multiple loads can arrange with us to start bringing hives in early to get them in on time. At the appropriate time you will be given Sign in / out cards, site maps and full instructions as part of your induction to your farm.



Preparation for the contract and associated OHS paperwork – starts now!

As contracts come with a lot of paperwork, we recommend you make the following preparations now to ease the paper work load later.

1. Send back your Certificate of Compliance with the Code form ASAP.
2. Get your vehicles roadworthy and serviced, so they are ready to go
3. Locate and have ready your insurance covers for public liability, personal (if you have one) WorkCover and vehicle
4. Locate and have ready your vehicle registrations
5. You will need to know the Orchard Safety Guidelines and train your workers, including 'Chain of Responsibility' legislation, road and safety, health and safety guidelines, etc.
6. Inform your workers that in addition to you, they will need to know the Orchard Safety Guidelines, road rules, health and safety guidelines, etc. and will be asked to sign a declaration to that effect, and that they will keep these guidelines to the best of their ability, and that they need to have their licences to drive and operate machinery on hand to record the details.

For any additional information regarding the program or contract requirements contact Monsons Honey and Pollination 03 5024 8674 or monsonshoney@bigpond.com

Our program manager Michael Killer is on a well-earned 6 week break touring Europe. For any enquiry you may have please contact the office and speak with Ann Falconer.

Our Auditor in Tasmania, Geordie Wright will be conducting audit reviews in Michael's absence.



B-QUAL
Your guarantee
for quality
and hygiene



AUS-QUAL
www.bqual.com.au

B-QUAL Industry Owned Quality Assurance System

HOW DOES B-QUAL CERTIFICATION BENEFIT MY BUSINESS?

- Product integrity
- Quality Assurance
- HACCP based certification
- Regulatory Compliance
- Industry best practice
- Biosecurity
- Access to domestic & export markets

B-QUAL Certification also enables an enterprise to market its product under the B-QUAL logo to show that it meets the B-QUAL Industry Standards

Complete your training at home at your own pace!

For more information and to obtain a Certification Information Pack contact the B-QUAL Certification team

www.bqual.com.au

AUS-QUAL Pty Ltd

Phone (07) 3361 9200

email: bqual@ausqual.com.au

This new B-QUAL advertisement is now appearing in all association and trade publications in which we advertise.

Please forward this newsletter on to an associate who you feel will benefit from B-QUAL membership. An application form is on the last page.



B-QUAL Training Form

Please complete all parts of this application form and return to:

AUS-QUAL Pty Ltd

B-QUAL Certification

PO Box 3403, Tingalpa DC, QLD, 4173

Phone: 1800 630 890 (free call) Phone: (07) 3361 9200

Fax: (07) 3361 9222 Email: bqual@ausqual.com.au



Business Name:			
Trading Name:			
ABN:			
Business Operation: (please indicate below)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Honey Producer & Packer	<input type="checkbox"/> Queen Rearing		
<input type="checkbox"/> Honey Producer	<input type="checkbox"/> Comb Honey		
<input type="checkbox"/> Honey Packer	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: (please specify)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pollination Services			
Contact Person:		Position:	
Phone:		Mobile:	
Email:			
Location Address:			
Town/City:		State:	Postcode:
Postal Address:			
Town/City:		State:	Postcode:

Please display our Company Name and Certification Number on the B-QUAL website (www.bqual.com.au).

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please display our email address on the B-QUAL website (www.bqual.com.au).

☐ Yes ☐ No

B-QUAL Training Manual

The B-QUAL Training Manual has a cost of \$300.

Note: Only one manual is required per enterprise, however there is no limit to the number of manuals you can purchase.

Please indicate the number of Training Manuals required:

An invoice will be supplied by email. Please indicate your preferred payment method below.

☐ Credit Card payments, please contact the AUS-MEAT accounts department on 07 3361 9200.

☐ Cheques made payable to: B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd

☐ Direct Deposit payments: Westpac Banking Corporation

Account Name: AUS-MEAT Limited

BSB: 034-051

Account No.: 138793

Note: Please quote your company name as payment reference.