



# B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd

## March 2020 Newsletter Vol 19 issue 3

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#### B-QUAL Board Meeting.

The Directors will be holding a Board meeting on Monday March 30<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Should any member wish to contribute any agenda items or questions to the board please draft an outline of the topic and send to Ann Falconer at [bqual@ausqual.com.au](mailto:bqual@ausqual.com.au)

Before 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

### *Chairman's Message*

Well, 2019 may not have been the best of years in the beekeeping industry but we now must look ahead to consolidate our businesses and hopefully implement measures to recover and improve.

Thank you to all our beekeepers that have rung each other and offered to help each other out. This makes me proud to be part of this industry knowing that we are there for each other in difficult times.

I might not have been busy with B-QUAL lately but I sincerely thank my fellow directors who have stepped in and carried out the necessary administrative works which has kept B-QUAL running smoothly and has enabled me to devote my efforts to rebuilding my business and dealing with the damaged caused by the drought, fires and floods.

In this difficult period of preparing insurance claims and other returns it has occurred to me how much easier this trying time has been made by the easy access to my records I have kept in conjunction with my B-QUAL accreditation program.

Hopefully you have had some rain (but not too much) and are seeing some improvement with your bees. Quite a few beekeepers have had to start feeding and will continue to do so for some time. That's not a problem but don't forget to include it in your paperwork. So easy when you are set up with B-QUAL!

Take care and stay safe.

*Wayne Fuller*

Chairman B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd

***B-QUAL NEWS*****Fire losses.**

*Latest available figures estimate industry hive losses from drought, fires and recent floods currently as 11,013:*

State	Hive Losses	State	Hive losses
NSW	6563	SA	2300
QLD	900	WA	450
Vic	800		

At least 50,000 hives throughout Australia have lost field bees and now functioning at reduced strength.

Australia's professional beekeepers are our forgotten farmers. These important primary producers are often overlooked when it comes to the effects of drought, bushfire and other natural disasters. Hive Aid is overseen by AHBIC, and will provide financial and practical support to professional beekeepers. The campaign directs 100% of donations received to beekeepers in need. If you are a beekeeper, registered as a primary producer and require immediate drought and/or bushfire assistance, please contact Hive Aid by accessing the AHBIC website and register, or contact Rural Aid on 1300 327 624 during business hours.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Party Accreditation.**

After a January 2020 meeting with Department of Primary Industries NSW, details have been finalised and our application for audit accreditation approval is lodged with the Department. It is expected final approval shall be received from the NSW Department of Primary Industries by May 2020.

**Indonesia Australia free trade agreement.**

Once implemented, the trade agreement will provide preferential access for more than 99 per cent of Australia's agriculture goods imported by Indonesia. Australian farmers will benefit from IA-CEPA, while Indonesian businesses and consumers will have improved access to Australia's premium produce, including for processing and export to regional and global markets.

*Honey has a phased elimination of the 5% tariff on honey products to 2033.*

**Honey Assurance.**

An outcome from the Honey Assurance meeting held in Melbourne in January will result in B-Qual working closely with CRCHBP to develop a program to better consumer trust through innovative packaging and labelling technologies for verification purposes. An industry wide workshop to educate honey packers on anti-counterfeiting strategies will investigate the business case for the development of a 'unique verified batch code'; possible implementation processes required and labelling requirements to build consumer trust and negate counterfeiting.

Building on current CRCHBP projects investigating consumer behaviour around the use of QR codes and NFC tags to make available product information to the end consumer, further investigations will analyse the viability of unique identifiers and other labelling technologies.

This step is critical to build trust with our end consumers and protect the image of Australian honey. The program will form part of a larger overall industry drive towards characterisation of Australian honey.

**Changes to AHBIC and B-QUAL.**

It is with great regret that Sarah Paradice has had to tender her resignation as CEO of AHBIC and as Secretary of B-QUAL due to the illness of a close family member which will require much of her time. We thank Sarah for her contribution to B-QUAL and our best thoughts go with her and family.

A new CEO Helen Goodall has been appointed and will commence with AHBIC on April 6<sup>th</sup> 2020.

## *TIME'S UP FOR BEES.*

Continued and expanded access to public lands was identified in June as the number one concern across Australia by professional beekeepers and there is no more time for decision makers to delay.

Peter McDonald, Chair of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) said, 'The bee industry, like so many others, has been devastated by the fires and while I'm pretty sure that decision makers know the extent of the damage they don't necessarily understand the implications for our almond and avocado growers - even those that have not been burned out.

'No bees, means no pollination'.

'Where honey-bees have escaped the blazes, they will starve before spring unless urgent action by both industry and government is taken to save them,' said Peter.

Two things need to happen, in order:

1. Hives need sugar syrup and pollen patties. These simulate pollen and can be used in the short-term to keep bees alive. They are expensive and Government subsidies would help. The NSW Department of Primary Industries has already provided a short-term food source of sugar supplements for bees in the affected fire areas. Even with supplements some mortality is expected because of the extended period. Pollen patties contain pollen or a substitute. It should be noted that crops such as almond and avocado will provide pollen for some bees but only for the short period of flowering, not for the rest of the year.

2. Alternative nectar and pollen sources must be found and for this, access to National Park areas that have not been burned is vital. This is not a 12-month panacea; it will be an ongoing requirement for years to come as the natural bush regenerates.

Peter said, 'The AHBIC is seeking urgent action from the Federal Government to coordinate State Government land managers in providing immediate and ongoing access to unburned public land such as National Parks and State Conservation areas over autumn and winter.

'This is a national problem which threatens food crop production and will also lead to shortages of Australian honey,' said Peter.

Individuals and corporations can also help struggling beekeepers, sometimes referred to as Australia's "Forgotten Farmers". Hive Aid is a drought and bushfire relief campaign managed by Rural Aid, one of Australia's largest rural charities, Hive Aid contributes financial assistance and practical support to professional beekeepers impacted by the ongoing drought and bushfires and donations can be made at [https://www.ruralaid.org.au/donate/?supporter\\_id=14254](https://www.ruralaid.org.au/donate/?supporter_id=14254)

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) aims to ensure the long term economic viability, security and prosperity of the Australian Honey Bee industry in Australia.

Peter McDonald. Chair AHBIC.

*Are you a member of B-QUAL? If so please contact Ann at the office and order your B-QUAL logo labels. We ask you to proudly display your commitment to quality assurance by incorporating the logo label on your packaging ensuring your customers are aware of your commitment to the B-QUAL industry standards.*

*New taskforce to drive economic opportunities for South Australian honeybee industry.*

A new apiary taskforce has been formed to drive further economic opportunities for South Australia’s bee industry, with a further 20,000 hives required to meet pollination demand in the local almond industry.

The taskforce is made up of representatives from the Apiary Alliance South Australia, the South Australian Apiarists Association, Forestry SA, SA Water Department for Environment and Water and Primary Industries and Regional SA.

Minister for primary Industries and Regional Development, Tim Whetstone said the taskforce would take an economic approach to growing the bee industry in South Australia.

The apiary taskforce will discuss future opportunities to strengthen the bee industry in South Australia and support growth for the state’s horticulture industries.

Honey production contributes about \$ 11 million to the South Australian economy, but the value of pollination services is \$1.7 billion.



“Pollinating agricultural and horticultural crops is the most significant role our bee industry plays and exploring opportunities to increase access for pollination is crucial”

The Minister said a key focus for the group will be to determine how new beekeeping sites can be identified, assessed for suitability and managed.

Apiary Alliance South Australia Chair, Danny Le Feuvre said the apiary industry plays an important role in South Australia’s agricultural and horticultural industries.

“Ensuring beekeepers have the tools to maintain honeybees will ensure our industry has the capacity to provide pollination services,” said Mr Le Feuvre.

“As a honeybee industry we provide pollination services to numerous crops including almonds, apples, cherries, avocados, berries, small seeds and some broad acre crops.

“With the growing pollination pressure on the honeybee industry, it’s critical we create additional quality refuge sites where bees can build strength before pollination events, and recover post pollination. “This new taskforce is an important collaboration and we are looking forward to the opportunities we can identify together.”

Source: Australian Tree Crop

B-QUAL acknowledges and thanks our financial partners: ***Please support those who support us.***



## What is B-QUAL?



The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council Quality Assurance Program has been in existence since 2001. It has been designed by beekeepers for beekeepers and packers.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

B-QUAL certification underpins a business's food safety, biosecurity and quality program. It involves conducting a hazard analysis of all control points from the apiary to packing the final product.

The industry has established Standards to which beekeepers and packers must meet to become certified. These Standards include but not limited to regulatory requirements, food safety requirements, and biosecurity and specialised activities such as pollination.

To become certified a business must complete a self-paced training program. Once completed an audit can be completed by a Certified Auditor who will assess the business against all aspects of the B-QUAL Standard. If non-conformances are raised, the business is required to correct non-compliance so that certification can progress.

Once certified, the business can use the B-Qual logo on all certified honey. The benefit of being certified includes accessing both domestic and export markets that require implementation of a HACCP based food safety program. B-QUAL certification adds value to businesses by meeting industry and customer requirements through a simple yet rigorous process.

## HOW TO BECOME B-QUAL ACCREDITED IN 3 EASY STEPS

- Step 1.** Contact B-QUAL 1800 630 890 for your self-learning package Including the NSW DPI Ag Guide "Honey harvesting and extracting". In your own time complete the self assessment. On completion send the B-QUAL Self-Assessment document to B-QUAL.
- Step 2.** Contact B-QUAL for your first enterprise audit.
- Step 3.** After the successful completion of your first Enterprise Audit you are granted Certification by B-QUAL.

If you sell to a packer then you will be required to have an audit biennially, If selling to the public an annual audit would be required

Speak to B-QUAL for a cost structure applicable to your business. Toll Free 1800 630 890  
Email. [bqual@ausqual.com.au](mailto:bqual@ausqual.com.au)

### 2020 AGM Dates

Bee Industry Council WA	15th May	Mandoon Estate Caversham Perth
NSW Apiarists Association	20-22nd May	West Tamworth League Club Tamworth
Tasmanian Beekeepers Association	29-30th May	Tall Timbers Smithton
South Australian Apiarists Association	11-12th June	Berri Hotel Berri
Queensland Beekeepers Association	11-13th June	Oaks Oasis Resort Caloundra
Victorian Apiarists Association	2-4th July	All Seasons Resort Hotel Bendigo
AHBIC Council meeting (VAA)	5th July	All Seasons Resort Hotel Bendigo

Please refer to associations web sites for further information.

## *EDETE'S pollination technology for Almond market in California and Australia*

Edete Israel has developed an end-to-end artificial pollination service comprised of 2 steps that mirrors the action of honey bees – collecting and distributing pollen:

(1) Edete mechanically harvests flowers, separates the pollen from the flower, and then stores the viable and germinable pollen for more than one year using our proprietary method, overcoming the problem of desynchronization of different cultivars' blooms.

Ensures fertilization and fruit setup by matching the best pollinizer with each commercial variety regardless of the timing of their bloom, guaranteeing, and even increasing, crop yield.

(2) During blooming, the stored pollen is loaded into Edete's proprietary high-efficiency artificial pollinator which disperses dry pollen on the trees. The 2B<sup>™</sup> pollinator uses LIDAR sensing to algorithmically reach as near as required to each tree contour, and use electrostatic deposition onto the targeted flowers. Edete's 2B<sup>™</sup> mechanical pollinator units can operate day and night, rapidly and thoroughly covering any open flower in its range and are not limited by daylight or low temperatures conditions.



The field trials are crucial for advancing the company's planned entry into the almond market in California. The trials resulted in a substantially increased yield in Israel.

Edete has tested its technology in Australia and proved its ability to produce high-quality viable pollen.

### **Towards an alternative pollination solution**

There has been a decline of nature's pollinators, namely insects and specifically honeybees, that together with some other shortcomings of the good old bee has led to an intensified search for a solution to solve the challenge facing farmers who need to grow more fruits.

This challenge must be met in order for more food to be produced to meet the needs of the world's growing population.

About 75 per cent of the world's crops rely on insect pollination for yield and quality. Without an alternative pollination solution to reduce the dependency on honeybees in the coming years, food prices might climb sharply and supply might not meet the growing demand.

Larger commercial scale testing of Edete's new system is expected to continue in Israel and Australia. The company plans to begin a pilot programme using the technology in 2022 in California, the world's largest almond growing region.

"We are initially focusing our efforts on almonds, but our game-changing technology has huge potential for a wide range of other crops as well," said Eylam Ran, CEO and co-founder at Edete.

The global almond market is estimated at more than US\$7bn annually, while 80 per cent of it is in the USA, most of which is in California. Costs are rising, as growers spend on beehive pollination services over US\$400m per season. "We will be targeting top tier producers in California, where seven per cent out of

7,400 growers account for more than half of the cultivated area,” noted Ran. The market structure is much the same in Australia.

Edete’s chairman, co-founder and one of the seed investors in the company Ori Inbar noted, “The transformation that Edete hopes to bring about in the world of plant pollination will be no less revolutionary than what artificial insemination using frozen semen brought to dairy farming.

Source: Far Eastern Agriculture & Tree Crop.

## *B-QUAL working with CRC to develop a strategy to characterise Australian Honey.*

B-QUAL in conjunction with CRC and industry partners has prepared and submitted a funding application to the Commonwealth Government, to progress this important industry initiative.

Australia is recognised as producing pure honey bee products, thanks to our biosecurity status and wild forests. However, our endemic flora produces rare and unusual honey bee products and this causes challenges when meeting international standards, especially when the product has not been characterised. The honey bee industry plans to develop a strategy to characterise its products for biological identification, develop a batch numbering system that aligns to current quality assurance processes, track and trace and inform the industry of anti-counterfeiting packaging strategies to assure customers provenance.

Already the industry is committed to traceability from field to packer through B-QUAL, an audited traceability system currently being digitised.

Australian honey bee products are presently trusted and this project will characterise honey to maintain this trust in a rapidly growing and diversifying export industry. Protecting consumer trust is paramount to domestic and export market success.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) represents the Australian honey industry and owns B-QUAL with one seat on the B-QUAL board. AHBIC, CRC and B-QUAL received many letters of support from various sectors of the industry while preparing this submission further enhancing wide industry support for the scheme and assistance by way of in kind and participation offers if required and where applicable.

B-QUAL will be the lead manager for the project as it represents honey bee activity Australia wide. This will also enhance B-QUALs position as the predominant honey industry QA and food safety program in Australia.

On behalf of the Honeybee Industry, we thank all contributors who have donated to Hive Aid, and especially to 2 outstanding companies who are great supporters of our industry. Hive and Wellness not only for their efforts in helping set up Hive Aid but also for their donation of \$ 50,000.00 and their ongoing industry support, and Olam Orchards for their contribution of \$100,000.00 to support our beekeepers. Sincere thanks to all contributors.

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