Supplementary feeding – the new norm

Is beekeeping becoming unviable?

South-western Cape drought bites hard

CAPENSIS ENCROACHMENT IN SCUTELLATA
Peel’s was established in 1924 by Jack Peel, who kept bees as a hobby. His successor, John Smith, started a tradition of sourcing Peel’s honey from local beekeepers.

We build strong partnerships with beekeepers to ensure that we supply only the best quality South African honey from known sources.

We are looking to buy honey from local South African beekeepers in small and large quantities. If you are a beekeeper – why not contact us!
We need to up our game to meet future demands

What is wrong with SABIO? This question in its various forms constantly crops up among beekeepers – and, frankly, it is one that sticks in my crop. The question we should be asking is:

What is wrong with beekeeping in South Africa, and where do beekeepers fit in the agricultural puzzle?

If you want a look of bemusement to cross a beekeeper’s face, ask any of the following questions:

- How many beekeepers are there in South Africa?
- How many managed beehives are there in South Africa?
- How much honey is produced in this country annually and what is it worth?
- How much honey is imported from other African countries, China and elsewhere?
- What is the cost of bee diseases to the industry?
- How serious is the *Capensis* problem in the *Scutellata* areas?
- How many community beekeeping projects, launched with much fanfare, still exist, and are successful?
- Is there a master plan to ensure the survival of beekeeping in this country?
- Will commercial beekeepers be able to meet the growing demand for pollinations services and, if not, what should we be doing about it?

The problem is that we just do not know enough about ourselves, or our industry, and carping about the national body is not going to provide answers.

SABIO is run by volunteers who operate on a shoestring budget and its Board members should be recognised for what they have achieved in the past.

But the past is the past and, looking to the future, it becomes obvious that the
organisation is in danger of becoming irrelevant unless fundamental changes are introduced.

An urgent issue that should be put on the table is whether the organisation’s administrative center should be staffed by full-time employees, headed by a suitably qualified professional person who would take over the duties currently filled by the Chairman and the Board.

Just some of the national and regional issues he or she should deal with include:
- Liaising with government and provincial departments, commercial beekeepers, bottlers and importers
- Membership and marketing
- Transformation
- Research funding
- Pollination policy
- Theft and vandalism
- Adulteration of honey products
- Developing links with beekeeping organisations across Africa
- Publicity
- The importation of honey products
- Website updates, communiques and publishing of the Bee Journal
- Accounts administration.

Change is going to cost money – and quite a lot of it, and new sources of revenue will need to be tapped. It will be painful and difficult to achieve, but in the end the bees and in particular the beekeepers of this country will benefit most.

Donald Marshall

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**BEECON 2018**

**Venue:** Royal Agricultural Showgrounds, Pietermaritzburg

**Tel:** Matt Walker 082 713 4192

**Email:** beecon@kznbeefarmersassociation.co.za

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- Available in ALL sizes

**HARD GAUZE VEILS**

**SOFT GAUZE VEILS**

**GLOVES** with fabric arms

Please contact us on the above number for more information.
SABIO is the official mouthpiece of the bee industry of South Africa. Its mission is to “represent and promote the interests of all persons involved in the beekeeping industry in South Africa in order to establish, support and develop an economically viable and sustainable apiculture sector and ensure the environmental security of the honeybee.”

SABIO contact details:

GENERAL ENQUIRIES, MEMBERSHIP & INSURANCE: info@sabio.org.za

ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION: admin@sabio.org.za

SABIO website: www.sabio.org.za

CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

Tide turning in SABIO’s favour

Like the winds of change which are sweeping through our political arena, it is time for similar winds to shake the beekeeping industry to its foundations and leave in its wake a more representative body that encompasses all players.

An industry cannot be represented by a handful of individuals who are not guided by the key players – the large commercial beekeepers, the bottling sector, the honey importers and the associations which represent beekeepers, predominantly hobbyists, in the regions. Everybody needs to play a part and contribute constructively to create a better understanding of all the issues which confront us.

SABIO has recently changed its administrative system and has sent out notices requesting past members to rejoin and pay their annual subs. Inevitably we receive responses which ask: “What does SABIO do for us?” We are told that SABIO does not provide training, does not organise field trips, does not run an advisory service and that members never hear from the organisation as to what is going on in the industry.

I respond by pointing out that SABIO is not like a local association, which is the body that ought to provide such services. SABIO has a far wider responsibility to the beekeeping community, and if we do not have the support of a large percentage of the beekeeping fraternity in this country we cannot meaningfully engage with legislative and governmental agencies on key issues which directly and indirectly affect our industry.

Yes, it is true that regular communication is a challenge which needs to be addressed, and with technology.
expanding as it is we need to improve our feedback system to reach all who are involved in the industry; but not to the extent that recipients drown in an endless stream of non-essential information.

I do believe, however, that the tide is turning in SABIO's favour and that the majority of beekeepers in this country welcome and appreciate the role which this organisation plays in reinforcing the interests and rights of beekeepers. At the same time, we seriously need to bring other role-players on board; the bottlers, the retailers, the importers, and equipment producers, to create a truly representative body capable of functioning at the very highest level.

We, therefore, appeal to those who have distanced themselves from SABIO for self-serving reasons to take a longer-term look at themselves and the industry as a whole by becoming more involved in the national body. Only then will we be taken seriously and everyone involved in beekeeping will be proud to belong to this national organisation.

Mike Miles

### NOTICE TO REGISTER

All beekeepers are required to register with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). This is a requirement in terms of the regulation: Control Measure R858 published on 15 November 2013 under the Agricultural Pest Act, 1983 (Act no. 36 or 1983).

This registration applies to everyone in the beekeeping business i.e. bee removals, honey producers, pollination as well as hobbyists.

Registration takes place between 1 January and 31 March every year. There are no registration fees involved.

Registration forms can be downloaded off the DAFF website with the following link: [www.daff.gov.za](http://www.daff.gov.za). Production Health Food & Safety, Inspection Service, Forms, Beekeepers Registration Form. Completed forms can be emailed to RofhiwaN@daff.gov.za or MavisMat@daff.gov.za or faxed to 012 309 8774. Failure to comply will result in the deregistration of the beekeeper.

For further enquiries call Mavis 012 309 8763 or Gloria 012 309 8791.
The yield of honey per hive in South Africa is generally low when compared with other Southern Hemisphere countries due largely to a shortage of bee-friendly flora in large parts of the country which are either semi-arid or Karoo. Only 10% of South Africa is suitable for agronomy or other commercial plantation development. The occurrence of natural nectar-producing plants, like Fynbos in the Western Cape, is limited. Other factors which have a negative impact on honey production include low rainfall, frequent droughts and veld fires. They also have a negative impact on the size of swarms used for commercial pollination.

South Africa does not appear to be alone in this regard, as the feeding of honey bees has become common practice worldwide among beekeepers, although the intensity varies depending on the country, region and season.

In South Africa the feeding of honeybees is as yet somewhat limited since most beekeepers view this as unnecessary. Whatever supplementary feeding does occur is generally confined to the feeding of sugar syrup, which can vary from normal sugar-water mixes to commercial syrups, or from cane to corn syrup. The debate about which is best will probably continue for some time to come. When comparisons are made, the concentration of the sugar(s) needs to be taken into account.

The fact that the feeding of sugar syrup can be beneficial to the overall health of a colony is not in doubt. The addition of other stimulants, however, also needs to be thoroughly researched.

While I am convinced that the feeding of bees has become essential, I also believe that there is a place in the Western Cape for a full-time queen breeder to boost the quality of bee swarms. The last people actively involved in breeding queens in the Western Cape were the late Walter Hartmann and his wife, Ilse, who terminated their programme in the late 1990’s.

“IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT BEES, LIKE FARM ANIMALS, CAN BE FAT OR SKINNY. IT IS NOT APPARENT TO THE NAKED EYE (MUCH LIKE GUINEA FOWL), BUT CAN BE DETERMINED BY WEIGHING THEM IN GROUPS OF 50 OR MORE.”

With this in mind, I set out in 2016 to look into the possibility of rearing queens and my 10-month project was launched during autumn the following year. Three study sites were chosen, based on the availability of natural food: the back yard of my home in southern Paarl; Kleinjoostenburg, near Stellenbosch; and Morreesburg. I then had to select swarms large enough for the study and 12 were singled out at the conclusion of the honey harvest. It later emerged that none of the swarms met the criteria in terms of size or strength, because for queen rearing each hive should contain at least eight frames of brood and be populated by at least 30 000 bees.
Looking inside the hives, I discovered that the probable reason for the weak state of the colonies was that very little or no pollen had been stockpiled for the coming winter months, probably because there just wasn’t any available from natural resources – a worrying situation.

In an effort to build up their food reserves, and thereby the swarm numbers, so that the queen breeding project could proceed, it was decided to feed the swarms pollen substitutes and sugar syrup. This alleviated the situation to some extent, although not nearly enough, and in the end the queen breeding project failed. One could not ascribe it to the limited size of the swarms only as there could have been many other reasons.

What it did reveal, however, was that supplementary bee feeding had become a requirement – and not just a nice to have – when keeping bees in the Western Cape.

**Drought**

Readers need to keep in mind that this supplementary feeding initiative would not have been necessary up to 10 years ago. However, after a three-year drought and little expectation that the situation would improve in the foreseeable future, this had now changed and it had become necessary to supplement their natural food intake most months of the year.

Such a feeding programme needs to include both protein and carbohydrates. The efficiency of the aforementioned has already been proven, so this article will focus on the feeding of protein.

Protein (pollen) is necessary not only for the growth of new-born larvae up to the pupa stage, but also afterwards when the young bees emerge and until they become fully fledged workers. The quality (measured by amino-acid content) is also of utmost importance. Most South African pollen is quite low in protein, and therefore contains fewer amino acids. Examples include sunflower pollen (14% protein) and eucalyptus pollen (less than 20% protein). In contrast *Aloe Davyana* is an excellent protein source (28% protein) and this is the reason bees flourish on this source. *Canola* and *Ramanas* falls in the same category.

*Echium* is another excellent source, with 40% protein. The downside is that this is not as common as the other named sources. Honeybees need a source of protein above 25%.

Insects like flies, moths etc. lay their eggs on any suitable surface, with the resultant larvae being left to fend for themselves once they hatch. Honeybee larvae in contrast need to be fed from the start. This feed also needs to be of high quality. A comparison would be the colostrum produced by a cow after giving birth having approximately double the protein content of normal milk. In the words of Randy Oliver: “They must swim in a milky like substance”. Young larvae fed a low protein diet die quickly before they even reach the pupa stage. This will explain the buckshot pattern that sometimes manifest with young larvae (Figure 1 & 2). Underfed larvae may survive on moderate protein diets but similar to other animals, their life quality and production potential will be severely impacted when they reach adulthood.

As an aside, day-old chicks are also fed a high protein diet after which the protein is scaled back, coupled with an increase in carbohydrates. The literature also refers to instances where adult bees cannibalise young larvae in times of pollen scarcity.

The feeding of carbohydrates (sugar syrup) is only of immediate to moderate term importance in the effective management of honeybee swarms. The feeding of protein in the form of pollen or pollen substitutes, however, is important in the medium to long term functionality of a honeybee swarm.

It is interesting to note that bees, like farm animals, can be fat or skinny. It is not apparent to the naked eye (much like guinea fowl), but can be determined by weighing them in groups of 50 or more. The larger the sample size, the smaller the margin for error.

Over a period of four weeks, over 30 samples were weighed with the following observations:

1. It is fairly certain that a single adult bee normally weighs about 100mg.
2. Baby bees weigh 75mg or less.
3. There is a direct correlation between the weight of the babies and the weight of the adults of a single swarm. In all instances the babies weighed in at around 25% or less than the adult bees’ weight.
4. Bees from a good area (Klein Joostenberg) weigh on average 113mg. These samples were taken from strong swarms (20 000 bees or more with four or more frames of larvae and plentiful pollen, including *Echium*, in reserve).

The next critical stage is when the young bees hatch from the pupa. They are referred to as “baby bees” and their first need is the intake of protein. This is also potentially the reason why, in smaller swarms particularly, the pollen is stored right above the young bees in the hive. “Baby bees” who consume high quality protein live longer and are functionally better equipped for their future roles.

![Figure 1: Gunshot brood pattern before feeding pollen substitute.](image1)

![Figure 2: Brood frame on right, four weeks later. Brood frame on left, indicates better brood pattern after feeding pollen substitute. All frames from same hive.](image2)
5. Bees from less than ideal areas (Moorreesburg) weighed on average 95.5mg. These swarms averaged 10 000 to 12 000 bees with no larvae or pollen reserves.

6. Bees from Klein Joostenbeerg (see Point 4) were moved to Moorreesburg and weighed again after four weeks. Their weight averaged only 104mg. There were no natural sources of pollen, and they therefore lost weight.

7. The bees at Moorreesburg were twice fed with a pollen substitute over a period of seven days, and weighed 98mg after four weeks.

8. A moving swarm’s bees weighed 104mg on date of occupation and nine days later 89mg. After a further seven days they weighed in at 81mg. No feed was introduced. It is therefore accepted, as Randy Oliver mentioned, that the bees use their own bodily reserves to feed the larvae. After another 30 days the bees weighed 110mg and their babies 80.2mg.

From the above observations, the following conclusions were drawn:
1. Baby bees need feed in order to mature and build the necessary bodily reserves for later use. As with new born calves the feed has to be protein-rich and high quality, as this will help ensure the maximum productive adult life.

2. Bees kept in areas with high pollen concentrations have more bodily reserves than bees kept in lower pollen areas.

3. Bees use their bodily reserves to feed larvae (See Randy Oliver: Scientific Beekeeping – Part 2).

4. When commercial pollen substitute is mixed with hand harvested pollen, 50g is consumed within eight hours. It is necessary to note that the harvested pollen came from honeyframes, and therefore contained quite a bit of honey.

5. When pollen substitute is mixed with 10% – 20% honey it is also consumed rather quickly.

6. Larvae and bees from trapped swarms fed with pollen substitutes increased quickly in number.

Over a four-month period, from September 2017, several swarms were observed through glass. Different kinds of pollen and combinations thereof were investigated. These observations were done in a normal residential home in southern Paarl, which made it possible to do observations any time during the day or night. There were adequate amounts of natural pollen available.

The following was observed:
1. Bees did not take to the commercial pollen substitute provided. (Note that there are quite a few wild swarms in the area which proceeded to steal honey or sugar syrup when left outside.)

2. Bees don’t eat the commercial pollen substitute in the hive.

3. When commercial pollen substitute was mixed with 25% Chinese canola pollen, 50g was consumed within 96 hours. The most recent observations point to natural pollen, when mixed with substitutes, becomes more attractive to honeybees.

4. When commercial pollen substitute is mixed with hand harvested pollen, 50g is consumed within eight hours. It is necessary to note that the harvested pollen came from honey

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It is no longer a question whether pollen substitutes are necessary – it has been established that they are. Latest news from Australia about feeding pollen is that it is “getting very popular”, according to Doug Somerville.

Honeybees need to maintain a healthy bodyweight in order to function optimally. This includes wintering. Similarities exist with breeding cattle as well as plants like apple trees, vineyards and blueberry bushes, which are treated with fertilizer after the harvest. This ensures adequate resources for the next production cycle.

There are still problems that need to be addressed. There is obviously no need to feed if a sufficient quantity of natural pollen is available. It has to be noted however that bees need higher quantities of lower quality pollen in order to obtain the adequate levels of amino acids necessary. (See Fatty Bees Skinny Bees – Doug Somerville). It might be necessary to supplement feed with additional high quality (30%-plus) pollen. Surplus pollen is probably converted to energy, as with farm animals, therefore feeding too much can be expensive and unnecessary. Stored pollen also comes with a “best before” date: stored pollen older than six months has very little value.

Feeding pollen substitutes still needs to be refined. To feed this flat above the breeding frames is possibly best, but it has the side effect of drying out and then becoming less appealing to the bees. If it could be fed outside the hive in a communal feeding trough, this would simplify matters considerably. Quantity and frequency is also still uncertain. At the moment it would seem 1g – 2g per 1 000 bees per day can be used as a guideline.

The biggest problem with pollen substitutes is to get it ground finely enough. There are also differences between harvested pollen and stored pollen that needs to be taken into account: natural pollen contains unidentified...
yeast, while when pollen is stored, the yeast turns the pollen to bee bread.

In an initial study it was found that bees fed with both honey enriched pollen substitutes and sugar syrup fared better than bees fed with one or the other in isolation. All three groups however fared better than the control group, which did not receive any feed. Unfortunately the number of hives in the study was too few to obtain significant findings.

When bees are being fed, cost also becomes a factor. Moving any hives the beekeeper wants to feed, especially smaller, struggling hives, closer to base might be beneficial as this saves both time and money. Also, not all hives in the same apiary will react in the same way to a given feeding programme.

**Behavioural patterns**

During the study it was also observed that bees from different hives in the same apiary tend to work in separate areas. This could mean hives in the same apiary might fare differently depending on the quality of the pollen they collect.

Swarms in the same apiary also have different behavioural patterns. Some swarms will hungrily consume pollen, while others might have a lesser affinity to do so. The latter is however in the minority.

The supplementary feeding of honey bees has already become important, and will only become more so in the future. Knowledge on the topic, however, is limited to the practical experience of beekeepers.

Here might be an opportunity for research by post-graduate students.

Sources:
1. Fat Bees, Skinny Bees – Doug Somerville.
2. Scientific Beekeeping – Part 2 – Randy Oliver.
5. Personal experience & communications – Theunis Engelbrecht.

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**Nico** is a qualified agricultural research technician who specialised in poultry husbandry. When retrenched in 1994, he decided to turn a 30-year beekeeping hobby into a full-time career. At the time of selling the business in 2008 at the age of 68, he had 1 000 hives and was producing some 15 tonnes of honey and doing 1 500 pollinations a year. During this time he served on the Western Cape Bee Association’s committee, as well as the then Federation of Bee Keepers Association. He was the last chairman of the federation before it became SABIO.

He still actively promotes beekeeping, particularly in raising pollination standards and supporting the present Bee Forage project in the Western Cape. Nico was voted Beekeeper of the Year in 2016.

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**BOOSTER BEE™ Protein Plus**

A Pollen Substitute for feeding bees in times of protein scarcity, winter feed and depleted rainfall periods. Also a boost feed for bees prior to start of natural honey flow & pollination contracts. Not intended as a permanent feed for bees as they will prefer natural organic pollen from flora when available. Feed as dry powder form in large container placed close to apiary site. Fortified with natural pollen.

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Tel: 011 476 5626 (mornings only: 08h00-12h00)

Deliveries throughout South Africa by courier at purchasers’ cost can easily be arranged.
Honeybees are hard-working insects and their activities ensure that most of the fruits, nuts and vegetables that we eat are pollinated. Some of the plants that are almost totally dependent on honey bees are deciduous fruit like apples, pears and plums; vegetables like pumpkins, zucchini, watermelon; berries like strawberries, blueberries and blackberries; seed oils like sunflowers and canola and nuts like almonds and macadamia.

Wild honeybees are still widely available in South Africa. Wild bees can be found in suburban gardens and parks in cities (where they most likely pose problems) and are found throughout the natural environment where there are enough forage plants to sustain them. However, the habitat that wild honey-
bees depend on to nest and forage is rapidly disappearing due to modern farming practices and urbanisation. Mike Allsopp, one of the ARC’s experts on honeybees, stated that ‘as housing developments expand and land is grazed to death through bad farming practices, the available habitat for bees is declining. In addition, modern travel means a smoother passage into the country for new diseases.’

**HOW LONG SOUTH AFRICA WILL STILL HAVE WILD POPULATIONS IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IF THERE IS NOW A BOUNTY ON EVERY HONEYBEE SWARM. WILL HONEYBEES HAVE ANY SANCTUARY IN REFUGE AREAS WHERE THESE ‘HARVESTING’ ACTIVITIES DO NOT HAPPEN?**

Due to expanding cultivation of horticultural crops, the increased need for commercial pollination services compelled commercial beekeepers to devise a plan to increase their stock of honeybees – they subcontract smaller beekeepers to catch wild swarms for them. Although the current price placed on these swarms in South Africa is far from the $92-115 (USA) and £100 (UK) paid for captured bee swarms in other parts of the world, the question remains how long South Africa will still have wild populations in the natural environment if there is now a bounty on every honey-bee swarm. Will honeybees have any sanctuary in refuge areas where these ‘harvesting’ activities do not happen?

A world-renowned environmental economist, Pavan Sukhdev, made the following statement: “Not a single bee has ever sent you an invoice. And that is part of the problem – because most of what comes to us from nature is free, because it is not invoiced, because it is not priced, because it is not traded in markets, we tend to ignore it.”

Although beekeeping is a popular small-scale agricultural activity, it is becoming increasingly difficult for commercial beekeepers to profitably keep bees in South Africa. The input costs (fuel, packaging material, labels, equipment, hives and disease control) of commercial beekeeping, as well as hobbyist beekeeping, have increased dramatically, while the income generated from honey sales (the main income generator for most) have not increased proportionally.

More pressure is placed on beekeepers by retail chain stores who want to push the price of honey down. In a survey of supermarkets and health stores in Pretoria, we established that the price of a 500g bottle of honey (mostly plastic containers) range between R55 – R127 per bottle.

By studying the labels, that are compelled by law to state origin of the honey, we established that imported honey was between 20% and 50% cheaper than local South African honey. Due its cost, pure South African honey is mostly found in the specialised chain stores and in health shops.

Apart from price difference for honey and the depletion of natural forage resources, beekeepers also face other constraints. They have problems securing access to land as forage sites for their hives and there are massive losses of hives through veld fires, theft of hives and brood and the wanton vandalism of hives in apiary sites. Beekeeping in South Africa is therefore increasingly becoming an unviable venture.

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- [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/17/why-are-bees-important](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/17/why-are-bees-important)
- [http://www.canr.msu.edu/nativeplants/pollination/](http://www.canr.msu.edu/nativeplants/pollination/)
- [http://www.aphnet.org/page/PollinatorFacts](http://www.aphnet.org/page/PollinatorFacts)
- [http://www.foodreview.co.za](http://www.foodreview.co.za) January 2011

**Aloe Dayyana,** found between Hammanskraal and Plenaarsriver, is a favourite plant among beekeepers for building up a bee colony. Bees collect pollen and nectar from these plants.
In December 2016, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries appointed Impumelelo Agribusiness Solutions, based in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, as the designated Assignees in terms of the Agricultural Products Standards Act for the inspection of certain regulated processed products.

The products covered included fruit juices and drinks, frozen fruit and vegetables, jam, jelly and marmalade, rooibos, honey, table olives, fat spreads, mayonnaise and salad dressings, vinegar and canned processed products, including pasta, mushrooms, fruit and vegetables.

The purpose of this inspectorate service is, as in the words of DAFF to:

Prevent unintended consumer health risks that may arise due to the presence of foreign matter and other contaminants in the processed products;

Prevent intentional deception using processed products / food for economic gain through adulteration and this may include but not limited to the following:

a. Mislabelling
b. Dilution
c. Substitution
d. Unapproved enhancements
e. Concealment
f. Counterfeiting
g. Grey Market Production

The objective is to ensure compliance with the regulations of the Agricultural Products Standards Act.

During the course of 2017, the appointed Assignees attempted a series of consultations and presentations to the affected industries and the chairman of SABIO attended a number of these to gain an insight into how it would directly, and indirectly, affect the honey producing industry. The process to enforce them includes both locally produced and imported honey.

Discussions between SABIO and the Assignees on a standard operating procedure for the honey producing industry have progressed reasonably well, although agreement has yet to be reached on the following outstanding issues:

1. An exemption for smaller producers be applied, and proposing that those whose annual honey production is less than a certain amount should be exempt from the inspection requirements.

2. The definition of a “batch” for sampling purposes.

3. What constitutes a “sample” in terms of the quantity of product to be tested.

4. What tests need to be carried out on honey samples. The Regulations list 17 required standards but we need to ascertain whether these requirements, dating back to legislation passed in 2000, are still relevant and necessary.

5. The costing factor. It is the intention of government for this to be a self-sustaining expenditure for each industry affected. In other words the government doesn’t pay for it – the industry must pay for its own compliance. However what are the costs? Firstly, there will be a fee for every inspection. The proposed fee (in 2017) is R1 450 (+ VAT). However the debate here has been whether this is a once-off inspection fee, or as has been suggested, an inspection fee per sample. We cannot accept the latter. If there has to be an inspection fee it has to be per visit. Secondly there is the cost of the samples to be taken. This will depend on how many tests need to be done on the product but the average testing sample at most requires only 150 grams of honey. The biggest issue is the actual cost of the test required. There is no SANAS accredited laboratory in South Africa which is capable of carrying out all...
the designated tests for honey. After consulting with a German laboratory SABIO has ascertained that if all tests required in terms of the legislation were to be carried out by them the total current cost (based on end February foreign exchange rate) would be R4 926 per sample. We have pointed out to the consultants that it is unacceptable to expect the industry players to have to pay such large sums for testing and if they were to expect three inspections per year this would financially ruin the industry.

We hope that this situation update will give readers a perspective of the sensitive issues SABIO is dealing with. We are informed that the process will go ahead and that Assignees will commence their work shortly. It is SABIO’s intention to ensure that the bona-fide players in the industry are protected in terms of fair play and to warn the implementers that over taxing genuine players with unnecessary expenditure and regulation will seriously undermine our local honey producing industry.

6. Another big issue is where will be the point of inspection? It is unlikely to be at point of sale in the smaller retail outlets; but the larger retailers selling the “non-standard” honeys could receive inspections. It is however more likely to be at the point of production/packaging (ie. bottling) and of course with the importers.

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Deur Ferdie Du Preez

Richard Booth
‘n Byeboer wat kan uithou

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Richard het na Natal getrek waar hy en Nola gedurende 1980 in die huwelijk getree het. Hy het begin werk by Pat Nolan wie in daardie stadium sowat 1 000 korwe besit het. Pat was ’n bedrewre byeboer en Richard het kosbare ondervinding onder sy leiding opgedoen.

’n Geluk – maar ook ernstige teespoed

In 1988 het die egpaar na Harding (die “bye hoofstad” van Natal) getrek waar Richard sy verbintenis met byebenutting sou voortsit. Geluk was aan die Booths se kant en hulle het woonplek in ’n ou plasshuis gekry, waar hulle nou, na 27-jar, steeds huurvry woon. Die huis was onbewoon en geplunder met al die deure en vensters deur dieu verwyder. Die eienaar het egter gesê: “As julle dit kan regmaak, kan julle maar huurvry daarin woon.” Natuurlik het Richard met dankbaarheid hierdie gulde geleentheid aangegryp.

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Voorspoed – gevolg deur vasbytjare

Richard en Nola het die besluit om ten spyte van al hierdie geweldadigheid vas te byt en op die plaas te bly woon. Met die byebenutting het dit voorspoedig gegaan. Tydens hul eerste seisoen in 1988 het hulle 11 ton heuning van 180 korwe ge-oes. Tog was hul bankbalans ’n nederige nul. Met slegs ’n paar muntstukke in die sak en ’n tenk vol diesel, het hulle met hul volgelaade ou Toyota bakkie afgesit na Durban. Die verkope was goed en hulle kon weer ’n slag asemhaal.

1996 was hul produktiefste seisoen en is daar 34 ton van 511 korwe afgehaal. Die Booths het in daardie stadium vyf inwonende kinders gehad. Die opbrengs van dié verkoop is aangewend om die hele gesin vir een jaar na die VSA te neem waar die tyd op ’n Christelike gemeenskapsplaas deurgebring is. Die vlugkoste alleen het R50 000 beloop.

Die afgelope aantal jare het hierdie voorspoedige tye tot ’n einde gekom. Die afgelope park van die nadelige uitwerking van globale verwarming, tevel byeboere, die *Capensis* probleem en ongeidentificeerde virusse, het produksie huidiglik tot slegs ses ton gedaal. Gedurende 2014 moes daar groot tale korwe vernietig word om sietekverspreiding te voorkom.

Weens die goeie prys wat heuning tans behaal, kan die Booths steeds daarin slaag om kop bo water te hou. Richard sê: “Onlangs het ons aangesit vir ’n ete van plasshoender, groenigheid en aartappels. Ook die drink van heuning gemeng met suurlemoen – alles op die plaas voortgebring.”

Deur Ferdie Du Preez

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Die toekoms

This biennial event is held under the auspices of SABIO and will this year be hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal Bee Farmers Association. SABIO’s annual meeting is also held during the congress.

Possibly the most contentious subject this year will be the presentations and discussions on the destructive Capensis problem in traditional Scutellata regions. Expect a lively discussion when Mike Allsopp mounts the podium to deliver his presentation on Capensis for, as he puts it: “Black bees! Swart-bye! That is how beekeepers tend to describe the Capensis problem, or Cape Bee problem, our unique and home-grown bee disaster, arguably more damaging to the industry over the past three decades than the loss of bee forage, varroa or American Foulbrood, or even theft and vandalism. Year after year commercial beekeeping operations in the Scutellata regions of the country live with annual colony losses of up to 50%, due to the Capensis problem, with these losses made up by harvesting wild bee colonies on a grand scale.

“Just how serious is the problem, what exactly is the Capensis problem, and why have we made almost no progress in solving it? And what is the legal situation regarding the Capensis problem, and should this be changed?”

Beecon 2018 will try to answer all the above... and more.

Crop pollination
This is reason enough for any beekeeper – large or small – to attend the conference. And it’s not just beekeepers who should attend, because the conference is open to anyone interested in bees, according to Craig Campbell, chairman of the organising committee.

With the envisaged explosion in demand for the use of bees for crop pollination, this will be another hot item on the conference agenda. Another topic in this field will cover the nutritional aspect of feeding bees under intensive beekeeping.

Professor Sue Nicolson (Social Insect Research Group) has been approached to speak on the nutritional aspects of beekeeping, while bee forage in general will be covered by Timo van der Niet, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Nico Langenhoven, a commercial beekeeper with extensive experience in bee nutrition, will provide further insights into his ongoing study of supplementary feeding (see page 12 for his latest findings).

Another arresting subject is food fraud, with the adulteration of honey becoming a huge topic, both here and internationally. Dr Harris Steinmann from FACTS (Food and Allergy Consulting and Testing Services) will deliver a presentation on the sciences behind possible testing and identification of adulterated honey.

The use of pesticides in our industry is another contentious issue, and Dr Hannelie Human, a researcher at SIRG, who has a particular interest in the effects that neonicitoids have on bees, will endeavor to shed more light on this dark and gloomy subject.

Bayer, as always, are a great supporter of our industry and research efforts, and Dirk Uys will represent them in addressing the conference on correct crop spraying methods that should be followed to protect the environment.

The programme includes field trips to local apiaries to identify bee diseases, focusing on the Capensis issue, as well as the supplementary feeding of bees.

The conference will be held at the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds, close to the city centre.

Accommodation in Pietermaritzburg extends from the inexpensive to the luxurious and delegates needing accommodation should do so online through Google. Access to the venue is relatively easy, although normal morning traffic can slow things down and we suggest that delegates arrive at the venue well before registration starts.
Honey production in the South-western Cape plummets as drought bites hard

Bees and beekeepers in the Western Cape have experienced their third year of drought. The low rainfall resulted in little to no germination of some annual weeds (an important source of nectar and pollen), poor nectar secretion and the severe die-off of some of the other more reliable bee forage plants. This shortage of bee food placed the bees and beekeepers under stress and tested their resilience severely.

During these dryer times beekeepers reported catching fewer and smaller swarms, and feeding large amounts of sugar syrup (at a cost) became necessary to build up colonies for pollination and honey production.

The dry vegetation was also highly combustible and beekeepers had to contend with a new phenomenon called “fire season”, due to the dryer conditions and strong summer winds. This was very stressful. Climatic conditions and vegetation vary significantly across the region, so beekeepers representing all areas were asked to comment on how the drought affected their operations during the past summer:

Brendan Ashley Cooper, of Oude Raapkraal Honey and Cape Pollination Services, Lakeside, Cape Peninsula

Our bees came out of winter in the fynbos looking strong. Winter was dry and mild allowing our bees more and longer working hours to forage.

The canola, which we use in the Durbanville area, was two to three weeks later than in past years, and this resulted in a later build-up of colonies used for pollination. We were also not able to achieve our spring splitting target, even after feeding large amounts of syrup.

In addition, we suffered an unusually high incidence of badger damage at one of our sites placed in the canola and this was probably due to the lack of other badger food.

AFB levels were again at 2,5% and these colonies were destroyed, as usual.

Catching of swarms around the canola areas of Durbanville and Malmesbury was a complete flop with very few small colonies moving in and surviving.

My beehives on the peninsula, which rely on a lot of urban exotics, wild flowers, weeds and Eucalyptus Ficifolia, were very disappointing this summer and produced only about one-third of their normal late spring production.

Our hives outside of Cape Town work on lucerne and eucalyptus. The lucerne flow was good in early December and then just stopped due to the low water table and hot dry winds, but at least there was some honey. These hives have been split and are now in fynbos to build up again and stay healthy.

Frans van der Westhuizen retired beekeeper from Citrusdal and Clanwilliam areas

Vir plus-minus 20 jaar hou ek al rekening reenval syfers en vanself-sprekend ook my heuning opbrengs. Dit gee vir my ‘n duidelike korrelasie tussen die twee statistieke. Natuurlik is daar ook ‘n hele paar ander faktore wat ‘n rol speel, soos vandalism, ratels, varroa, hive beetles, swak bestuur, min jong trek swerms en ten laaste maar nie die minste, boere wat weier dat bye in of naby die boorde staan. Die belangrikste van al hierdie faktore is in elk geval ‘n ondergemidelde reenval.

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This survey of the effect of the drought in the South-western Cape on honey producers and apiarists who offer pollination services, was compiled by Brendan Ashley Cooper, himself a victim of the searingly dry conditions which gripped the region this past summer.

This is his report...

Beehives damaged in Gordons Bay fire.
Nic Lawrence, from Little Creatures in Penhill
My bees seemed to do really well on this seasons canola, which is in stark contrast to last season. I put this enthusiasm down to the extremely mild winter we experienced in 2017, with many more days of good flying weather and good nectar production in the warm weather. We were able to split twice as many hives as last year, and also found many of our catch boxes filling up with new swarms. Of around 100 catch boxes I think we caught something in the region of 70 swarms this season, a far cry from our dismal catch return of the previous canola season. Sadly, after the canola our optimism was fairly short-lived.

We didn’t really get into the pollination this season, and rather moved our bees to the Echium, hoping for a good crop of spring honey. Despite our efforts, we received a less than average crop. One or two of our Echium sites produced fairly well, but by far the majority didn’t. Again, I put this down to lack of rain – or more specifically, a lack of the right amount of rain falling at the right time to really get the Echium going.

The lack of rain and ongoing drought in the Western Cape continues to plague us beekeepers. It seems that the water table is now so low that even the normally reliable eucalyptus are taking strain. So far this season our supers are not being filled like they normally do. They are also filling quite a bit later, too.

Graham Hill, from My Father’s Honey in Somerset West
The build-up for last year’s pollination on canola in the Caledon and Malmesbury areas was below average but there were enough swarms at pollination strength to satisfy my pollination requirements. After pollination, I used Echium to build up and maintain swarm strength in preparation for the Cladocalyx honey flow. Due to the drought, Echium was very short and as a result, swarms were not at their normal strength at the start of the gum flow.

I placed bees on Cladocalyx in Somerset West, Caledon, Grabouw, Villiersdorp and Franschoek areas and honey production for January and February was just 30% of last year’s crop.

Honey from the fynbos in the Stanford-Caledon area has started early so let’s hope for a good flow this year to compensate for the gum disaster.

Pieter Theron, of A1 Honey in Durbanville
I operate with 350 hives, mainly in the northern suburbs, ranging from Durbanville, Malmesbury and Paarl, with a few hives in the Klapmuts area. 2017 was a year of utmost disappointment as we saw bees weakening and even dying as a result of honey shortages.

It has become clear that we cannot rely solely on nature to supply food. Due to the involvement of blueberry pollination I needed to start feeding as soon as April 2017 to stimulate the bees, as they had to be brought up to strength.

Everything went well until the end of October, when the drought really kicked in and bees which did not receive supplementary feeding after pollination did not produce honey in January, while bees that were fed did.

Danie Vorster of the Overberg Honey Company and Cape Pollination Services in Stanford

Colony strength: Bees didn’t go into winter well due to a below-average honey season. Building up swarms for pollination time in canola wasn’t causing any difficulties as the warm days were in abundance and the bees had enough time to build up. The canola was much later in 2017 due to the late rains. The swarms came out of pollination in a strong state, but the subsequent dry conditions then took their toll.

Spring build up: The bees built up quite nicely for pollination as the weather was in their favour.

Feeding: We had to feed the bees that were placed in dryer areas to sustain them till the canola came into flower. We identified one swarm with AFB, plus a couple of EFB hives.

Catching swarms: We didn’t catch a lot of bees because our biggest catching sites on canola only started flowering very late so there was not enough time for bees to build up and swarm in those areas. The fynbos areas where we catch bees suffered a lot of fire damage.

Pollination: The 2017 pollination season went reasonably well, but the Packham pears had extended flower and put the hive numbers under some pressure.

Fires: We lost honey-producing and catching-sites due to fires.

Honey flows: It was an average flow for eucalyptus honey, fynbos struggled due to lack of rain. Not too bad but also not too good.
Frustrations: Badgers are becoming a bigger and bigger problem. There are no predators for badgers so their numbers are increasing.

Louis van Niekerk, of Kraai honey in Stellenbosch
It has been one of the toughest beekeeping years in a long time… due mainly to the drought and fires.

On the positive side the honey price went up considerably, which is good and bad for us. Good because we get a better price, but bad because we will get more cheap competition entering our market.

Colony strength has been up and down this past year. Overall, I would say that the bees coped very well in a difficult foraging year.

I had very little AFB this year and the bees seemed not to be bothered by it.

As it was a very dry year, the bees did not swarm well and very few swarms were caught and this made it difficult to replenish our losses and replace colonies.

Nelson de la Quera, Q Bee in Stellenbosch
Klapmutskop Byeboerdery het die ergste droogte beleef die afgelope seisoen. Ons het heelwat swerms verloor en die heuning produksie was 70% minder as ander jare. Dit was nood-saaklik om die bye te voer om verdere verliese van bye te voorkom.

Hierdie droogte het ook sy uitdaging op bestuwing gehad om genoeg bye te he, wat op sterkte is. Oudshoorn en die Weskus waar die ander broers boer was niks beter nie. Groot uitdaging le voor vir ons bedryf as dit nie die winter goed reen nie.

Helena and Pierre van der Westhuizen, of Simply Bee in Hopefield, West Coast
The drought has not just affected humans and cattle, our lawns have turned brown, vegetables are smaller and fewer, and plants are dying.

Honey production became one of the victims of this crippling drought. Beekeepers, from hobbyist to mid-size to commercial operators, all reported that the honey harvests were severely down, anywhere from half to no production. The problem is most severe on the West Coast, which suffered extreme drought conditions.

At Simply Bee we felt the effects of the drought too, as our normal harvest would be between 15 and 20 tonnes a season, while in the 2017-2018 summer season we harvested only about 500kg.

Daff Contacts – Beekeeping
Mr Riaan van Zyl and Mr Kobus Kemp are the persons who beekeepers should contact if they have any suspicion about bee diseases such as AFB or suspicions about the presence of AFB.

They can also be contacted regarding legislation concerning honey labelling and standards and import requirements of honey.

They do not provide advice on beekeeping practices, but will if possible direct persons with enquiries to the correct or experienced sources.

Please contact them.
Riaan van Zyl: (Capensis) Tel: 021 809 1702. Cell: 083 414 2494 Email riaanvz@daff.gov.za
Kobus Kemp: (Scutellata) Tel: 012 309 8762. Cell: 082 873 1678 Email kobusk@daff.gov.za
The workers of the parasitic lineage of *Apis mellifera capensis* are a problem in *Apis mellifera scutellata* colonies in the northern parts of South Africa.

The entry of parasitic workers into host colonies is most likely facilitated by hive inspections. It is thought that colonies under stress are most vulnerable. The *Capensis* parasite invasion results in the dwindling of the host worker force. These parasitic workers are able to lay eggs that give rise to female offspring, which perpetuates the parasitic life-cycle. Their ability to mimic the queen's pheromones is one reason for their success in taking over a colony. It is important to understand that these cape workers do not contribute to any hive maintaining activities, such as foraging, hence these colonies become unproductive and eventually starve to death, thereby serving only as a source of infection for other uninfested colonies in the vicinity.

**Clinical Symptoms**
- Fighting and dead bees at the hive entrance.
- Queen absence.
- Scattered brood pattern.
- Multiple eggs per cell.
- Multiple eggs per cell above the queen excluder.
- More prevalent disease symptoms.
- Reduced defensive response.
- Workers “behaving” like a queen – e.g. other workers form a ring around her and feed her.

**Diagnosis**
- At least three of the above symptoms have to occur together. For example: multiple eggs in cells (any cells, even on top of pollen), lack of a queen and queen cells, and a scattered brood pattern.
- **Presence of black bees, although colour in itself should not be used as the only feature in the diagnosis of *Capensis* parasites.**

**Treatment/Control**
Control Measure R858 of 2013 in terms of the Agricultural Pests Act of 1998 prohibits beekeepers from moving *Capensis* bees north of the line and requires a beekeeper to destroy an infested colony if management measures are unable to control the infestation.

**Prevention is better than cure**
- Move suspect colonies to an isolated site until it can be confirmed that they are uninfested. Destroy the colony once infestation has been confirmed.
- Confirmation can be obtained through official bee inspectors.
- Do not work with suspect colonies.
At the initiative of the Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association, backed by Apimondia, the United Nations has declared 20 May as World Bee Day. Every year on this day, the attention of the global public will be drawn to the importance of preserving bees and other pollinators. People will be reminded of the importance of bees for the entire humanity and invited to take concrete action to preserve and protect them.

According to the UN announcement, studies by the United Nations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature show that bee populations and the populations of other pollinators have significantly decreased, making them more and more endangered. This is caused by numerous factors which are the consequence of human activity: intensive agriculture, widespread use of pesticides and pollution caused by waste. Bees are also being exposed to new diseases and pests, while the living environment of bees is shrinking due to the ever-increasing global population. Their survival and development are also threatened by climate change.

before working with uninfested colonies – bees sitting on a beesuit or tools could be introduced to uninfested colonies.
• Put all newly acquired colonies on an isolated site for at least 6 weeks to confirm that they are uninfested before introducing them to your apiary sites that already house uninfested colonies.
• During migration – try to reduce stress to the bees (e.g. travelling screens). Ensure minimal interactions between colonies > close entrances.
• If you have to move your colonies, ensure that only uninfested colonies are moved.

Spotted brood pattern can be typical of a Capensis infestation.

Delegates were given the opportunity to visit Turkish apiaries.

The Apimondia conference was very well organised by the organising committee that included representatives from the central Turkish Beekeeping Association, the Turkish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, as well as several universities.

The scientific committee was made up of Apimondia representation from all over the world. Besides a fascinating exhibition, well represented by Muslim countries, of the latest technologies, there was a captivating scientific

Vandalism and theft not part of a Turkish beekeeper’s vocabulary

This is what Guy Stubbs discovered when he attended Apimondia in Instanbul last year. He sets out his impressions below...
Three differences I found between South African and Turkish beekeeping were:

- **No theft** – The Turks were confused when we told them about our problems with vandalism and theft – it simply is not part of their culture. A Nigerian guy spoke about how he had developed metal stands, with chains and padlocks to protect his hives, and a Turkish beekeeper stood up and asked him, what he meant by hive vandalism and theft – he couldn’t comprehend the concept.

- **Beekeeping associations** – One official told me that the Turks had started with a cooperative model for beekeeper development twenty years ago, but had soon steered away because they saw how difficult it was to get them to work. Instead they helped established hundreds of beekeeping associations. Village associations were represented on regional associations, which in turn were represented at a provincial level, which were represented nationally. Quite a structure considering that Turkey has 81 provinces.

- **A supportive government** – similar to the New Zealand Manuka success story, Turkish beekeepers are well supported by their government. It is amazing to see what can happen to an industry when the government supports it in constructive ways. A national registrar of beehives is kept, and again managed through the associations. Apiary sites are made available on government land, and the ministry plants bee friendly flora.

programme that covered the following topics: beekeeping economy, bee biology, bee health, pollination and bee flora, beekeeping technology and quality, apitherapy, beekeeping for rural development.

The Turkish government were very supportive, and bussed Turkish beekeepers to the conference throughout the programme. Although the technical tours were rather disappointing, I arrived a day earlier and managed to visit some beekeepers who have apiaries close to Istanbul.

On one of our technical tours, we visited a very impressive honey processing and packing plant just outside Istanbul. Everything was impressive, from its sheer size, the number of people who were employed there, the laboratories and so on. Their traceability system is so sophisticated that a customer can scan a QR code on a jar of honey and see what plants contribute to their batch of honey.
Apimondia leaves Jaco Wolfaardt covered in Turkish delight

Every two years, beekeepers around the world gather for the International Apiculture Congress of Apimondia which is hosted by a different country every second year. Last year it was Turkey’s turn, which has more than 57 000 registered beekeepers and 6.6 million beehives, and produces about 110 000 tonnes of honey a year.

With 3 900 participants from 127 countries and 9 150 participants from Turkey, customer satisfaction was guaranteed. It was such a great honour to be able to represent SABIO and South Africa in our bid to stage Apimondia 2023 in Cape Town.

Not only did I meet up with old friends and enjoyed Istanbul’s hospitality, but as an official SABIO delegate I had the privilege to attend the Apimondia General Assembly meeting on behalf of South Africa where 56 countries were represented.

I also took part in the voting to choose between Slovenia, Russia, Serbia and Copenhagen to host the 2021 Apimondia Congress.

It was a great experience to attend all the gala events staged by the bidding countries who provided great entertainment at the congress in an effort to win our support.

I was also in the fortunate position to do a presentation about “Bee health and the consequence of it” at the All Africa Round Table meeting with our brothers from Africa. Special thanks to Mike Allsopp for helping to put the presentation together. Many valid concerns were raised during the discussions and, with a panel of knowledgeable beekeepers, many valuable suggestions and possible solutions were put forward. I believe that by working together with the rest of Africa and supporting one another with knowledge, training and guidance we will be able to forge strong ties.

On the last day of the congress there were a few well planned technical tours to choose from and buses lined up to take 600 people to the various apiary sites in the countryside. Meeting up with the local beekeepers was a valuable personal experience and I realised how we as South Africans, and the rest of Africa, still have a great deal to learn.

Part of the technical tour included a visit to Balparmak, a company established in 1980 and ranking fourth in the world with regards to size and capacity.

This company operates from a 30 000-square meter facility and produces an annual packing capacity of 32 000 tonnes. They have a rigorous laboratory analysis process to guarantee the quality and taste of the honey they pack.

The question asked after every Apimondia is whether it was worthwhile, and the answer I can repeat again and again is “yes it was.”

“MEETING UP WITH THE LOCAL BEEKEEPERS WAS A VALUABLE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND I REALISED HOW WE AS SOUTH AFRICANS, AND THE REST OF AFRICA, STILL HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO LEARN.”
Beekeepers and Macadamia growers meet to discuss mutual needs

By Phil Walker

Whichever way you look at it, the growth of the South African macadamia industry over the past 27 years has been astounding.

From fairly humble beginnings in the 1960s when macadamias were first introduced into the country, the South African macadamia industry has grown into a major world force, competing with Australia in terms of being the largest producer. It is arguably the fastest growing tree crop industry in South Africa with production increasing more than 20-fold in the past 20 years, and is worth in excess of R3-billion a year, with a harvest of 56 000 tonnes predicted for this year, according to information supplied by the South African Macadamia Growers’ Association.

All of this should be good news for bee farmers, and particularly for those involved in providing pollination services, for it is estimated that there will be a need for between 52 000 and 87 000 hives over the next five years in order to pollinate coming crops.

Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Bee Farmers Association (KZNBA) committee, having been invited to attend a number of macadamia growers meetings in 2016 and 2017, realised that very little information was circulating among the growers regarding bees and pollination.

For these reasons the KZNBA decided to organise and host a macadamia growers’ day to disseminate information about where pollination service providers fitted into the macadamia production cycle. The event was held at the Eston Farmers Club, near Pietermaritzburg, during mid-November.

Researchers

With very few KwaZulu-Natal beekeepers being involved in pollination services at a fully professional level, beekeepers from the Western Cape were approached to participate. Researchers from the macadamia industry, as well as the Agricultural Research Council, were also invited.

The MC for the day was John Moodie, a past chairman of KZNBA, who now lives in the Western Cape and who has himself become involved in commercial pollination.

The aim of the meeting was to instil in the minds of farmers the need for pollination services to be carried out by professional beekeepers to ensure that the greatest benefit could be derived for both the oncoming crops as well as the bees.

Andrew Sheard from Mayo Macs technical services was the first speaker of the day. He emphasised the importance of bees in macadamia nut orchards. The increase in acreage under nuts, both locally and nationally, was a major part of this presentation. In this vane the potential shortfall of managed bees and bee hives for pollination was also put forward.

Dawid Smit, one of the preeminent pollination service providers from the Western Cape, addressed the need for beekeepers who were called on to place their hives in macadamia orchards to be paid for their services. Pollination services need to be seen as a professional service, he said.

“Being a researcher, Mike Allsopp brings a very balanced point of view to any gathering revolving around bees.”

He laid out the structuring of pollination services charges. This information is available on the Western Cape Bee Industry Association website. Although not completely relevant to the situation in KwaZulu-Natal it is pertinent.
Jaco Wolfaardt, another professional beekeeper from the Western Cape, reiterated the importance of paying for pollination services, and also the need to make use of reputable service providers.

As MC, John Moodie facilitated questions and answers, which helped to enhance discussion from the floor. At times there were so many questions being fired from delegates that he had to restrict the questions that he had to appeal to members of the audience wanting more information to make contact with the speakers at the end of proceedings.

Mike Allsopp from the Agricultural Research Council in Stellenbosch, also presented on the importance of bees and his talk, entitled Pollination Principals and Macadamia Pollination, was well received and generated a lot of discussion.

Being a researcher, Mike Allsopp brings a very balanced point of view to any gathering revolving around bees.

As one of the organisers, I was disappointed in the lack of interest shown by the growers of kiwi fruit, avocado pears, and other crop growers, who were also invited to attend so that they could also learn more about pollination from the beekeeper’s perspective.

The general consensus from attendees was that the meeting was well worth attending and several delegates asked whether follow-up meetings would be held and whether it could become an annual fixture.

Phil Walker is a SABIO Board member and secretary of the KwaZulu-Natal Bee Farmers Association (KZNBFA) committee.

Met leedwese word bekendgemaak dat die alombekende byeboer, Hennie du Toit, op 19 Januarie 2018 te Potchefstroom oorlede is. Hy word oorleef deur sy eggenote, Lena, en drie kinders.

Wennie se liefde vir bye het reeds op ‘n jong stadium begin. Sy mentor was die vermaarde Nico Uys, Hennie se houtwerkonderwyser. Nico, ‘n entoesiaste byeboer, het sy leerlinge gereeld in die klas omtrent byeboerdery voorgelig. Hennie en sy skoolmaats het gereeld vir Nico met sy byewerksamhede bygestaan.

Gedurende 1980 het Hennie sy vader se byeboerdery te Christiana oorgeneem, en word hy ‘n deeltydse byeboer. Daarna word hy ‘n voltydse byeboer en besit sowat 1 000 korwe. Hy was ‘n deelsame mens en het sy staanplekke met ander gedeel. Hy was ‘n ywerige SABIO-lid en was vir twee termyne aan die SABIO Raad verbonde.

In 2014 staak Hennie sy byeboerdery weens verswakkende gesondheid. Hy verkoop sy byery aan die bekende Theuns Engelbrecht van Douglas.

In Julie 2016 gaan woon hy en Lena by een van sy seuns in Potchefstroom.

Op 19 Januarie 1918 kom Hennie te stervie weens diabetes. Hy was vir die laatste paar maande voor sy dood aan sy bed vasgekluis.

Hennie was ‘n vriendelike mens en geliefde persoon. Sy huis was altyd oop vir ’n geselsie oor bye. Suid-Afrika se byebedryf is armer aan ‘n man wat met passie sy byeboerdery en byegemeenskap bemin het.

SABIO eer Hennie se nagedagtenis.
SABIO acts as sole agent for the marketing of a special group insurance policy for its members with Van der Laan Insurance Brokers CC which was specifically designed and negotiated for the Beekeeping Community.

An important rule in beekeeping liability insurance is that you must never admit guilt or give any indication that your bees were liable for the damage caused. Thus if you experience any problems where you are accused by a third party of injury or damages attributed to your bees or bee-related actions you need to contact the broker and they will handle the claim. Thus with relatively little money for insurance you buy greater peace of mind. When animals are killed or a bush fire starts due to beekeeping activities it is bad, but far worse if people lose their lives due to aggressive bee activity. This policy does not cover individual hive losses due to fires, flood damage, theft or collapse of colonies or any other personal losses. It is public liability insurance.

Only members of SABIO can apply for this policy.

To renew your policy yearly before 28 February contact SABIO at email: admin@sabio.org.za or for application or renewal forms go to www.sabio.org.za

INTERNET FORUMS

BeesSA Email Discussion Group:
Moderator: Robert Post, Joostenbergvlakte, Boland, Western Cape. Tel: 021 971 1022, Email: cprop@telkomsa.net

Apiculture SA Email Discussion Group:
Moderator: Dean Lennox, Cape Town, Western Cape. Email: deanlennox@gmail.com
Web Address: http://groups.google.co.za/group/apiculture-sa

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

SABIO: South African Bee Industry Organisation
Chairman: Mike Miles, Johannesburg, Gauteng
Cell: 082 456 4177, Email: mikemiles@sabio.org.za
Administrators: Willems van der Westhuizen Accountants, Johannesburg
Email: admin@sabio.org.za

REGIONAL/LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

Eastern Highveld Beekeepers’ Association
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East Rand, Gauteng
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Email: capied@denelaero.co.za

Knisna Beekeepers’ Association
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KwaZulu-Natal Bee Farmers Association
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