



## September 2019 Newsletter. Vol 19 issue 2

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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*

Value adding:

In my travels I notice that everyone wants more money for their honey but most aren't prepared to do anything about it.

So, what can you do? (preferably quick and easy)

Unfortunately, there are no quick fixes but take a step back and have a think about this. You already have a premium product to sell.

One obvious point is marketing to advertise you have a Quality Assurance program. This confirms you have a quality product. As well, your honey can be traced back to the source and we are seeing more demand from the consumer wanting this personal connection. In fact, in the near future you may be able to pick up a jar in the supermarket and scan the special barcode with your smart phone to find the full history of the product. This will certainly appeal to the growing market of tech-savvy shoppers and stop any cynics of the industry.

It is a well-known fact that consumers are prepared to pay more for a product that they trust so display your B-QUAL logo proudly knowing you have the marketing edge!

Regards

*Wayne Fuller*

Chairman B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd.

## *B-QUAL news*

Amendments to the *Livestock Disease Control Regulations 2017* to incorporate the Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice became effective in Victoria from 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The new regulations cover activities that all beekeepers should already be undertaking to minimise the impact of pests and diseases on their own hives and those of fellow beekeepers. Some of the new regulations will apply to all beekeepers; others only to those operating 50 or more hives. For those Victorian B-QUAL members a copy of the regulations can be downloaded from <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>. At the site click on Victorian Law Today to search for the Regulations.

As previously advised the Board has agreed to proceed with feasibility discussions into two projects for the B-QUAL Standard to be administered to improve traceability through the supply chain in conjunction with the Australian Government funded Collaborative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products University of Western Australia. (CRCHBP/ UWA). Discussions re the program contents and time table have been undertaken and proposed initial IT work is now being developed it is expected that after the October Board meeting members will be fully advised of progress.

We are pleased to announce that this year B-QUAL was invited by every State Association to present at each conference thus giving us a great opportunity to not only catch up with current members but also to generate interest in B-QUAL and promote new enquiries, we appreciate the State Associations for their cooperation.

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

We remind you that it is a requirement under the Code of Practice to have honey tested for AFB, and results should be entered in your B-QUAL records including the date, testing laboratory and result of the most recent independent laboratory honey test for American foulbrood. For further information refer to clause 10 part C of the Biosecurity Code of Practice.

A teleconference was held 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019 of the Harmonization Committee consisting of PHA and State Government departments, in which discussions continued including that B-QUAL become a 3<sup>rd</sup> party national auditor. We are pleased that the committee is progressing this next step as expediently as possible and hopefully we should soon be able to report in more detail the committee progress.

Agriculture Victoria is pleased to announce that Ally Driessen has been appointed to the Bee Biosecurity Officer role while Jess Millar is on Maternity leave. Ally has already been working in Agriculture Victoria within the Plant, Chemical, Invasive and Apiary teams for a number of months.

Ally's work with the Apiary team included contributions to the development of the 2019 almond pollination operation which included pre pollination audits of participating beekeepers. Ally can be contacted at Email; [ally.driessen@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:ally.driessen@agriculture.vic.gov.au) Mobile: 0436819350

The next B-QUAL Board meeting will be held 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019. If you would like an item put on the agenda please forward to Anne Falconer [bqual@ausqual.com.au](mailto:bqual@ausqual.com.au) by 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

## B-QUAL Food Safety Program; what does it mean for my business? Gustare Honey Australia BQ695.



*Gustare Honey Directors Jason, Paul and Kristene at the Singapore fine foods fair.*

Gustare Honey was formed to export quality mono floral and Jellybush honey into the EU markets as Australia's honeys are quite different in taste from European honey, offering a clear point of difference. Gustare packs mono-floral/jelly bush honeys in the UK for the EU market. Bulk jelly bush is also another part of our business world-wide, as is our Gustare Dispenser, a honey/condiment dispenser for the HORECA market in Australia and overseas.

With our vision in place for the business, the next stage was being able to facilitate all the compliance issues to satisfy the EU Regulators to enable our Australian honey being accepted by EU Custom Authorities, and there was a mass of paperwork to complete to obtain certification from Australian Government Departments to facilitate this. Having a B-QUAL food safety program in place in our business was essential in obtaining certification, and it made the process go smoothly. Australian food products have a world-wide reputation of clean and green image in agricultural food production and B-QUAL certification back this up.

Honey is a food consumed world-wide. Consumers require the food they are purchasing on the

The curators of Gustare Honey Australia are Paul Costa and Jason Hayward-Jones. Paul has been Beekeeping with his son Daniel for the past 20 years, and Jason is a farming and rural food expert based in the UK. Paul and Jason meet while working together in remote regions of Central Australia.

Gustare Honey Australia P/L (BQ 695) was formed in 2015 to develop a premium quality brand to obtain healthier margins for our honey. The global honey market is extremely competitive and with numerous countries producing cheap and some questionable honey doesn't help.

supermarket shelves, food markets, and other retail outlets must be produced and packed to the requirements of Food Standards Australia/New Zealand or for Europe the European Food Safety Authority for EU member states. B-QUAL Food Safety Program Certification is a quality audited food standards program based on HACCP principles and is recognised world-wide. The B-QUAL Program satisfies all world-wide requirements completely from the hive at a bee site to extraction/packing to the end consumer. Being B-QUAL Certified has played a major role enabling Gustare Honey in gaining Certification in enabling our Australian honey gaining entry into EU Countries.

Gustare purchases honey from Certified B-QUAL Beekeepers as it gives everyone in the supply chain certainty that we are dealing with a quality product. Gustare is founded on high quality premium foods for all our world-wide customers.

The first question asked by all our world-wide buyers is "...do you have a Quality Assurance program in place?" Gustare Honey can answer this with 'YES'!

Gustare wouldn't be where we are today without our B-QUAL QA program.

All honey producers and vendors should note If you're selling honey to the general public and something goes wrong with your product and you haven't an audited HACCP program in place your insurance company may not cover you.

It's a significant business risk not having a B-QUAL QA program in place!

*Paul Costa*

Director Gustare Honey Pty Ltd

## CRC update on electronic database B-QUAL system.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products is collaborating with B-QUAL to deliver an electronic database-driven B-QUAL system. The University of Western Australia has been contracted to deliver specifications for the system with Professor Sharon Purchase as the Project Leader (Business School) and Robert Banks, Research Assistant (Computer Science and Software Engineering) carrying out the project.



Additionally, the B-QUAL board has allowed Michael Killer to contribute his time to the project. As promised, we are keeping you updated of our progress. Rob is presently focussed on the data specification that will outline the required data and data formats beekeepers must provide to the proposed B-QUAL database to remain compliant. A database skeleton has been produced which will be improved over the next few months as Rob meets with compliant businesses across Australia.

These meetings will allow Rob to develop the database in greater detail and ensure it fulfils B-QUAL and biosecurity compliance requirements while also meeting the needs of beekeepers and honey packers. This database will also be accompanied by a web portal that will allow B-QUAL members to input their data easily and efficiently. This web portal will enable simple traceability across the supply chain and aims to also improve the efficiency of the auditing process. In support of this, a group of final year UWA computer science students has been brought on board to produce a prototype of the web portal which is due for completion towards the end of the year.

*Text Supplied by Dr Liz Barbour CEO, CRC for Honey Bee Products .UWA Perth WA*

Show your support of both B-QUAL and your commitment to the production of high quality products produced in accordance with the highest HACCP QA based food production methods.

Include the B-QUAL logo on your product; labels are available from B-QUAL office, just contact Anne at B-QUAL. 1800 630 890. [bqual@ausqual.com.au](mailto:bqual@ausqual.com.au)

## Provenance and Technology. Dr Larry Hower.

AusNFC and Dr Larry Hower have contributed technical data to B-QUAL as part of the B-QUAL computerisation and providence program.

Consumers are demanding more information when purchasing honey, especially high value honeys. The industry is being asked to "prove" the origin and the quality of their honeys. In simple terms: Provenance and Quality.

This is no small task. However, technologies are now available that will reduce the time and cost involved.

Employing RFID tags to track honey from apiary through to extraction and packing, and NFC tags and QR codes to track the honey from the packing room into the hands of the consumer. It is a compelling and efficient apiary to plate solution.

It begins in the apiary, where a simple scan of an RFID tag on a hive/super confirms GPS location, date and time of apiary visits and hive movement, together with data related to many other hive management tasks. This data is captured with no paperwork.

The honey in a super can be tracked from the apiary, into storage, into extraction, and then into a drum. At

this stage, the pertinent characteristics of the honey have been recorded, providing full provenance of the honey(s) in the drum, with very little paperwork needed.

Subsequently, during packing, an NFC tag and/or a QR code is placed on the jar. This enables the honey to be tracked from the packing room to the consumer.

When a consumer scans the NFC tag and QR code on the jar, selected provenance and quality assurance information is presented on their smartphone, usually in less than 5 seconds.

Software development continues with the goal of including the B-QUAL program compliance data and report templates.

The result will be a complete provenance and quality assurance system for Australian beekeepers and packers.

*Text from Dr Larry Hower Ausnfc. Tasmania.*

Sample code labels



QR Code



NFC Label

B-QUAL Program Manager Michael Killer with a copy of the revised manual.

The newly revised B-QUAL Accreditation Rules and Standards Manuals along with the revised Approved Supplier Manual are all completed and now in distribution and on web site. B-QUAL thanks those B-QUAL/AUS-QUAL staff who undertook this large job and produced such a high quality product...well done to all.



## Pollination Agreements with beekeepers, prevent getting stung



Trucks carrying millions of bees – with water supplies and forklifts – move at night after all the foragers have returned to the hive.

Image: courtesy of Ian Zadow

The annual spring movement of hives has commenced, as beekeepers move hives from one area of the country to another following the flower blossoms of nut, fruit and vegetable plants that need pollination by bees to produce a crop.

The season starts with almonds, usually in August, which are almost entirely dependent on bees for pollination and seed set.

Plant Health Australia's National Manager for Surveillance, Dr Sharyn Taylor, says that many commercial beekeepers move their hives for pollination contracts and to follow honey flows as the season progresses.

"Around 200,000 bee hives are placed in orchards in north west Victoria for almond pollination alone, which takes only a month to complete," said Sharyn.

"Hiring hives is the most common way growers get the hives their crops need for pollination. Long distances are travelled by some beekeepers in the migration, often between states".

This movement of hives, as well as the drifting and robbing habits of honeybees, means that any pests or diseases can be difficult to contain.

"Events like this can be a cause for biosecurity concern," advised Sharyn.

'Every beekeeper should be using industry best practice guidelines to provide a high standard of pollination service by making sure hives are strong and disease free', said Sharyn.

"When hiring hives for pollination, many beekeepers and growers find it a good idea to have a pollination agreement. This approach has the advantage that the growers can specify exactly what they need and what they expect to get."

Although they can vary, key aspects of a pollination agreement should specify:

- names, addresses, location of the crop and number of colonies
- timing of delivery and the strength (number of frames of brood and bees) of the colonies
- distribution of hives throughout the crop
- rental fees and terms of payment
- provision for an independent audit of hive quality and the name of an arbitrator
- protection of bees from pesticides



Image courtesy of Almond Board of Australia.

Almond pollination and yield is highly dependent on honey bees, which can be brought into the orchard in large numbers over the flowering period.

“Agreements, or contracts, are useful because there’s no confusion over what the grower thinks they are hiring and what the beekeeper thinks they need to supply” said Sharyn.

They become very important if there are any problems with what’s supplied or something happens to the bees when they are working the crop. To get an idea of whether you’re getting what you pay for, growers should have a look to see if bees are moving in and out of hives.

Beekeepers providing pollination services should be particularly vigilant for pests and diseases as they prepare hives for movement, and also when hives return back home, to make sure no diseases have been picked up.

If you see anything unusual on bees, call the hotline 1800 084 881 and you’ll be put in touch with your local department of primary industries.

Reprinted from Farm Biosecurity newsletter 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019 with approval of Plant Health Australia.

### Do I need to lodge a honey levy return and make a payment?

A producer of honey, the person who owned the honey immediately before sale, uses the honey in the production of other goods, or exports honey is liable to pay the levy and charge.

If you produce more than 1,500 kilograms of honey in a calendar year and you sell your honey by designated sale you must lodge a return and make payment to the department. ***If you have determined you should be paying the levy please register and contribute your share to the industry.***

For more details of eligibility see:

www. <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/rates/honey>

## How to decipher results from an AFB test

Positive results are usually expressed as +1, +2 or +3 with the scores representing the likelihood of visual symptoms of AFB appearing in the hives the honey was collected from. +1 indicates a 56% chance of observing AFB, +2 an 80% chance and +3 a 100% chance.

Note that while a negative result will provide a good indication that there are no AFB spores present in the hives the honey came from, it cannot say this with certainty. Regular brood inspections for signs of AFB should always be a part of your beekeeping practice.

## What to do if you get a positive result.

If the sample you had tested was pooled from several hives and tests positive, you will not know which specific hive or hives from that group is infected. You will then need to go and inspect all of the hives that contributed honey to the sample for symptoms of AFB.

Record your test results in the B-QUAL “Disease Monitoring Record” template Record 03 in Reference Manual 2.4 Records.

Due to a number of requests we reprint the list of receiving depots and instructions for AFB samples. We also remind members it is a requirement for commercial beekeepers (50 hives or more) to have an annual, independent test of their apiary for the disease.

The beekeeper is only required to have one test conducted on a pooled honey sample collected from at least 20% of their hives. More extensive testing, either through a laboratory or by using AFB test kits, is recommended to assist with AFB detection and control

### *Where to send samples for honey testing in each state or territory.*

#### **New South Wales**

State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory  
Officer-in-charge  
Courier: Woodbridge Road, Menangle NSW 2568  
Post: Private Mail Bag 4008, Narellan NSW 2567.

#### **Victoria**

Gribbles Veterinary Pathology  
Contact the help desk on 1300 307 190 and select option 3.  
Staff will arrange for a honey test kit to be sent to you with instructions for submissions. Samples can either be posted back in the supplied post pack or dropped off at one of the many Australian Clinical Labs Collection Centres. Please ask for your nearest collection centre when you call.

#### **South Australia**

Annual AFB Honey Test Submission Form  
Apiary Unit  
Primary Industries and Regions SA  
33 Flemington Street  
Glenside SA 5065.

#### **Western Australia**

Animal Health Laboratories DAFWA South Perth  
Locked Bag 4  
Bentley Delivery Centre  
W A 6983.

#### **Queensland**

Call 13 25 23 to arrange for a honey sample advice

sheet. Mail the completed honey sample advice sheet with payment and a 100 mL honey sample that represents all the hives to:

Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory  
Health and Food Science Precinct  
PO Box 156

Archerfield BC Qld 4108

OR

Specimen Receipt (Loading Dock 12)

Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory  
Health and Food Science Precinct  
39 Kessels Road  
Coopers Plains Qld 4108.

#### **Tasmania.**

Animal Health Laboratory  
165 Westbury Road  
Prospect. Tas. 7250.

Prior to sending sample, email Karla Williams BBO for a submission form

[karla.williams@dpiw.tas.gov.au](mailto:karla.williams@dpiw.tas.gov.au)

#### **Northern Territory**

All suspect samples should be submitted to your regional Department of Resources (DoR) office for a laboratory diagnosis.

Consistent with the Honey Bee and Pollination Program RD&E Plan 2018/19, AgriFutures Australia commissioned consultants AgEconPlus to investigate the status of propolis production in Australia, the market for Australian produced propolis and whether there is opportunity for additional profitable supply.

The project, designed and delivered in consultation with commercial beekeepers, showed that profitable production of propolis by Australian beekeepers is possible. There is a market for Australian produced propolis and the market is forecast to grow. Learn more at [agrifutures.com.au/honey-bee-pollination](http://agrifutures.com.au/honey-bee-pollination)

## Extract from Agriculture Victoria, Media Release. 28th August 2019.

An estimated 110,000 hives arrived in North-West Victoria for the annual almond pollination season.

This large movement of bee hives increases the biosecurity risks that are associated with hive-to-hive transmission of bee pests and diseases, most notably American Foulbrood disease.

Foulbrood can spread from an infected hive whether it be weakened or already dead, known as 'dead outs', by robber bees who take the infected honey back to their healthy hive.

Prior to conducting field operations, apiary staff undertook a risk assessment on each beekeeper known to be bringing hives to almond pollination. The risk assessment using the Honeybee Biosecurity Code of Practice as a foundation was based on whether each beekeeper;

- had completed honey culture tests (HCT) and how recently and what the results indicated;
- had completed the Biosecurity On-Line Training (BOLT);
- was a B-QUAL Member;
- and whether they have any known history of AFB.

Apiary staff completed an extensive engagement campaign to contact all beekeepers flagged as high or medium risk or their brokers, who were known to be attending pollination prior to their arrival. The purpose of the contact was to remind them of their obligations under the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994 (LDCA) and let them know that apiary inspectors would be onsite conducting audits and inspections.

Beekeepers flagged as a 'high risk' were the highest priority for field inspection, followed by those flagged as 'medium risk'.

In addition, sugar shakes were conducted on hives from all Queensland beekeepers and random New South Wales beekeepers to ensure no exotic bee pests were present.

With Victoria's almond industry worth an estimated \$380 million annually, and currently 68 per cent of Australia's almond production coming from Victoria, ensuring compliance with the LDCA is a priority for Agriculture Victoria.

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### Supplementary Feeding.

- If the disease free status of bee food is not known, no non-irradiated bee derived products are used, except in the production of organic products.
- Feed is only purchased from quality assured suppliers, operating a biosecurity program.
- The number of external bees foraging at feeding sites is minimised.
- The feeding of honey to birds is discouraged.

*From B-QUAL Accreditation Standards 2019.*

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## 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](mailto: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](http://www.bqual.com.au)).

Yes  No

Please display our email address on the B-QUAL website ([www.bqual.com.au](http://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.