



B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd

December 2020 Newsletter Vol 19 issue 6

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Chairman's Message

As I write this, we are a year on from the peak of the drought and devastating bushfires and quite a few of us are still trying to cope with the ongoing effect on our hives and business. Some beekeepers still need to feed sugar and pollen supplements for the health of our bees. This is OK but don't forget to let your packers know and keep accurate records (easy due to B-QUAL!).

On a more exciting note - plans for the honey library are well underway to create a database of Australian honey to prove the authenticity of our honey which has been a problem in the past. This can only be a positive outcome for our industry as our products can now be verified and should protect us against claims of adulteration. There is a lot involved in this project but the following article will explain the process. I know a lot of us don't like change but I believe this will bring us into the 21st century and is part of the future of beekeeping

Finally, I would like to wish you, your family, friends and staff a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year

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Wayne Fuller

Chairman
B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd.



The Board of B-QUAL, Wayne, Trevor, Paul, Rodney and Don along with the admin staff, auditors and all involved at B-QUAL wish every member, their families and staff the very best wishes for the upcoming Festive season.

We know this has been a difficult year and we sincerely thank everyone for their support of B-QUAL.

We look forward to you all, enjoying a safe, prosperous and successful 2021.

B-QUAL NEWS

The B-QUAL AGM was held on Monday 26th October 2020. During the meeting voting for Directors positions took place and all current Directors were re-elected.

The current Board is Wayne Fuller (NSW, Chair), Rodney Ruge (QLD), Trevor Weatherhead (QLD), Paul Costa (NSW) and Don Muir (Vic). Helen Goodall (AHBIC CEO) is company secretary.

Pollination Standards review

The Board considered that a review of the *Pollination Standards* was required. It was noted that the standards were written 20 years ago. A review has now been completed and a draft has been prepared and will be distributed to the board for final approval. We thank Wayne Fuller, Janine Rudder and Michael Killer for their dedication and swift work in completing this important review. On approval the revised standard will be forwarded to all members for inclusion into the work manual.

Australasian Honey Bee Conference 28th June – 3rd July 2021

The Bee Industry Council of Western Australia (BICWA) and the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), have joined together with the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Honey Bee Products to hold the Australasian Honey Bee 2021 Conference – ‘Better bees, better business’.

Honey Library

Work associated with the Australian Government grant awarded to B-QUAL for establishment of a flora database and honey library is progressing in accordance with the grant plan. B-QUAL members will be asked early 2021 to collect samples and send to state deposit centres to commence data sampling and testing. Emails will be sent to members early in the new year asking for registrations to collect samples.

Sponsorships

Our sponsors contributions have made it possible for B-QUAL to be able to have resources to further develop our business plan and enable us to take a more prominent industry role on food safety, traceability and to be able to assist members to facilitate the quality production of honeybee products and underpin safe and trusted Australian honey products and assist in securing domestic and export markets.

We thank our financial partners for their continued support, and as always, where possible please support them. Our sponsors industries include Biosecurity treatments, car and truck sales, almonds, wine and honey packing, all industries we need.

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



Delivering Quality Assured Australian Honey Bee Products

Project timeline for current in scope program components from September 2020 to July 2021.

B-QUAL as we announced in the September newsletter has been awarded a Federal Government grant to create a testing regime and deliver an auditable and digitised traceability system. This is designed to strengthen consumer trust and boost Australia's honey brand as a safe and premium food to both domestic and overseas markets.

B-QUAL as the Project Manager has joined forces with the CRCHBP and University of Western Australia to complete this important industry project. Research headed by Dr Liz Barbour and Professor Sharon Purchase have assembled a team of exceptional researchers who captured our brief and we are confident that this project will when completed in June 2022, will offer the industry significant advantages and a long lasting legacy that ensures Australian Honey maintains our world advantage of quality and purity.

A brief plan outline of the current in scope, and objectives are listed below.

In Scope (what we are currently working on)

- Develop a specification document on Honey Testing for future inclusion into B-QUAL digital Quality Assurance System.
- Begin building the Australian Honey Library including Honey chemistry testing results and flora data.
- Develop a document outlining an industry process for an Australian Batch Numbering system to improve traceability information for future inclusion into B-QUAL Quality Assured processes.
- Improve anti-counterfeiting packaging strategies for Australian Honey
- Undertaking negotiations with International verification organisations to include Australian honey within international testing regimes.
- Aim to characterise Australian Honey based on flora data and honey analysis

Objectives we are seeking to achieve from the in scope work.

- Develop processes and begin to build an Australian honey library whose data can be used for verifying adulterated honeys and eventually in honey provenance claim cases concerning Australian honey products.
- The long term objective is to build data around various Australian honeys that can be used internationally to verify provenance of Australian honey.
- Include processes within the existing B-QUAL quality assurance system to collect further traceability data, thus improving the responsiveness and data available from the system.
- Improve awareness of anti-counterfeiting packaging options available to honey packers to minimise adulteration of Australian honey within our export markets.

Outputs this will offer

- Develop the digital dictionary for the Australian honey library to connect with B-QUAL.
- Training on anti-counterfeiting packaging for the Australian honey industry.
- Database specification developed for Australian honey bee native flora sources within each sub-biogeographical region.

The plan Milestones. These are the milestones as set by our grant conditions.

December 2020

Laboratory Ring Test undertaken to standardise results and methodologies of

Australian analytical laboratories for honey chemistry testing and align with international standards.

March 2021

Database specification document focusing on native bee flora sources within each of the Australian sub-biogeographical regions.

Equip honey library sites to begin accepting honey samples with storage vessels, metadata and storage facilities.

July 2021

Designing anti-counterfeiting packaging workshop held in conjunction with the Australasian Honey Bee 2021 Research Conference (on-line and in person to reach Australian-wide audience).

Our project plan is fully developed and has been accepted by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment Community Grants Hub and all remaining milestones for the project to June 2022 are fully funded and our research team advise all remaining milestones and final reports will be completed by that date.

B-QUAL members can contact the Project Manager Don Muir 0404 381 942 email donhmuir@optusnet.com.au at any time to enquire about progress or raise any questions they may have.



Early 2021 we will be sending out expressions of interest for members to collect samples.

Details of sample collection, chain of custody and methods along with the sample containers and a collection data app, will be supplied at the time.

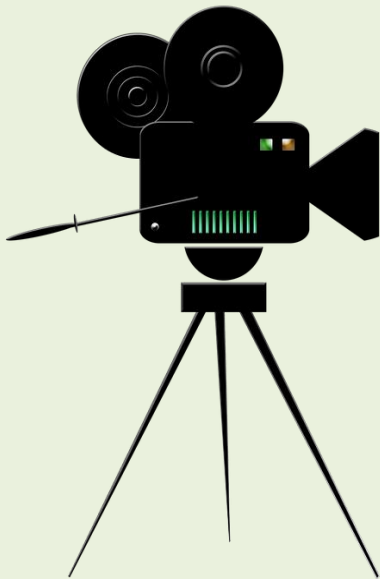
We invite members to participate in this important industry initiative.

The B-QUAL digitisation program has progressed to the stage of final software adjustments to accept biosecurity and further hive management data these adjustments were made after a review of the digitisation program by the researchers, B-QUAL management and Auditors. We are satisfied now that the program captures all data required and it is hoped that initial field trials will begin prior or immediately after Christmas and a broader B-QUAL member's trial early in 2021 before full release.

We thank the CRC and University of Western Australia and the software builders for the great work they have done. The software developers were able to grasp the brief fully from the research development team, and have produced what we think will be a great asset for B-QUAL members.

The Almond Board Australia has developed a *Honey Bee Best Practice Management Guidelines for Australian Almonds* which should be studied by all undertaking almond pollination.

<https://industry.australianalmonds.com.au/growing/pollination/>



Agrifutures small grant training videos.

The Agrifutures small grant received in July has been put to good use and we have produced the 7 planned videos.

Due to the travel restrictions that have plagued Australia over last 12 months, making it impossible to conduct training days as we had hoped, these videos have been produced as a self-training guide and can be viewed any time on the B-QUAL web site.

Plans are that all will be posted to the website by Monday 14thth December 2020.

The videos are intended to reinforce the protocols of B-QUAL, the audit process and how B-QUAL can assist in your business. We have also included 2 videos on Financial Health and Mental Health, we urge all to view and reflect on these two important issues.

Video presenters and titles are:

Video 1.	Wayne Fuller and Michael Killer.	An Introduction to B-QUAL and certification levels.
Video 2.	Lindsay Bourke	The importance of B-QUAL
Video 3.	Samantha Muir.	Managing your financial health
Video 4.	Nicola Charles.	B-QUAL how it assists my business.
Video 5.	Alexandra Dawson.	B-QUAL Auditing
Video 6	Ally Driessen.	National Biosecurity code of practice
Video 7.	Dr Rob Gordon.	Managing stress and your mental health

Some stress is good.

The following article is a reprint from data supplied by the National Centre for Farmer Health.

A little stress can keep you on your toes and help you get things done, but persistent stress reduces productivity and is probably doing you damage. Stress is also a contributing factor to many farm accidents.

Farm and work life is busy and often stressful. Stress can be caused by everyday issues like farm or business finances, machinery breakdowns, family and staff relationship pressures, or managing stock. Extreme events like bushfires, droughts and floods can be particularly stressful.

Stress can affect many areas of the body including the nervous system, memory, and the ability to fight off infection, cardiovascular health, and pain and gut problems.

Everyone reacts differently to potentially stressful situations. Learn to recognise your stress triggers and have coping skills ready to use.

Try to:

- Think about your thinking: Consciously focus on halting unhelpful patterns of thinking – “I will never get this done” – and replace with helpful thinking patterns “This job might take me a while, but if I break it into chunks and get someone to give me a hand, I can get it done”.
- Talk to yourself: Instead of getting annoyed and irritable when things go wrong, tell yourself you won’t let this get to you. Try it, it works. Talk out loud – out on the farm or apiary who’s going to hear you?
- Talk to your friends: Chances are you’re not the only one who feels the way you do, and talking may help you find solutions you hadn’t thought of on your own.
- Talk to a professional: If you feel you can’t manage, talk to an expert (for farm or business tasks as well as your own wellbeing). If there are not many services in n your area, or you’d prefer something more private, there are confidential phone lines and online services you can use to support your social and emotional wellbeing.
- Talk to your pet: They are always pleased to see you and great listeners!
- Write a list: Sometimes thinking of all the jobs you need to do can seem overwhelming. Writing a list and prioritising tasks can increase your sense of control. Make sure you tick off items and reward yourself as you achieve them!
- Don’t avoid making decisions: Stress can lead to poor decision making or – worse still – failure to make any decisions. Seek information and make decisions early to ensure you have options in difficult times.
- ***You need to look after yourself, it’s part of looking after your farming business.***

Some key things to reduce stress and improve your health include:

- Get adequate sleep
- Eat healthy meals
- Take time to do something you enjoy
- Take time away from your business
- Remain involved in your community
- Find things to laugh about.

These are the things that we often neglect when life gets stressful, but are also some of the simplest and most effective strategies to help us get through tough times.

With B-QUAL now becoming a major voice within the industry with representation on a number of steering committees for traceability, quality assurance, research projects it is more important than ever that we grow our base membership.

If you know beekeepers mention to them the advantages of having an audited system and the benefits they could get from joining, suggest to them they contact the office who shall be pleased to send further details to them, or ask them if they would like us to contact them, if yes just email their details to bqual@ausqual.com.au

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Take steps to prevent that accident.



Unfortunately we have heard of two serious accidents occurring while loading bees in the last couple of weeks.

We work in a difficult and hard industry often at night, sometimes when we are tired, and usually always against the clock. We urge everyone to take time and carry out basic OH&S checks before undertaking loading and unloading.

Remember a few moments spent checking the site analysing the loading/unloading project identifying any possible danger points is better than a few weeks in hospital.

Prior to loading/unloading carry out a few simple steps:

- Carefully inspect the location for any ground or other hazards
- Make sure your team are all educated about the site conditions
- Prioritise those hazards and discuss with your team
- Before leaving your yard check guards are fitted to fork lifts or other equipment where there is a risk to limbs, or clothing being caught, are any belts or pulleys unguarded.
- Ensure your machinery is fitted with factory approved roll over protection
- Are all operators familiar with the manufacturers operating instructions for the machinery used
- Adopt correct manual handling and lifting procedures and educate your team as well
- Keep your equipment in good repair.

Pay special attention when working, walking or climbing onto a truck tray or trailer, this is when most falls will occur.

- Have a small ladder to climb on to the truck, try and avoid using parts of the trailer, tyres or other to climb onto the tray.
- Have someone pass up straps, nets etc., after you are on the tray.
- Beware of straps, ropes and other equipment hazards on the tray when walking about loading.
- Use the ladder to dismount, don't just jump off the tray.
- **LASTLY BEWARE THAT THERE IS NO GUARD RAIL ON YOUR TRAY, BE VIGILANT LOOK BEHIND BEFORE STEPPING BACK.**
- Make safety a priority at all times for everyone on your team.