



B-QUAL Australia

Newsletter

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In this issue:

Chairman's message:	Page 1.
B-QUAL news.	Page 2.
Case study. Paul Koch Gum Tree Apiary	Page 3.
B-QUAL news.	Page 4.
Safe Food Handling Bill Winner. Capilano Honey	Page 5.
The Audit process Michael Killer.	Page 6.
Record Keeping and legislative Requirements.	Page 7.

B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd.

For More information on how you can improve your business and become a B-QUAL member contact:

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Chairman's Message.

Following the 3rd Australian Bee Congress, I can report that our B-QUAL stand generated lots of interest and as a result we are seeing increased membership not just from new beekeepers but from others that have let their membership lapse! However we still need more people on board so please spread the message to encourage others that you know to join and gain the benefits of our industry run quality assurance program.

While there I was able to meet with a number of the state biosecurity staff from around the country and discuss how we can work together to ensure B-QUAL meets the biosecurity requirements of our industry

B-QUAL is currently re-writing the manual and standards to make the process easier for you and to meet the requirements of the current biosecurity guidelines.

What this means is that if you have B-QUAL then you are recognised as conforming to the Biosecurity Code of Practice.

When this code becomes mandatory, your record keeping will be your proof of compliance. Remember "if it's not written down, it wasn't done".

<http://beeaware.org.au/code-of-practice/>

Regards

Wayne Fuller

Chairman
B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd

How to become B-QUAL in 3 easy steps.

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

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

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

B-QUAL at the 3rd World Bee Congress RACV Royal Pines 27th – 30th June 2018



L-R. Don Muir, Wayne Fuller, Michael Stedman (SA Biosecurity) Michael Killer.



B-QUAL had a display stand at the congress and it was pleasing to see a good number of our members come up to introduce themselves and for us all to put some faces to names, we certainly appreciated the encouraging feedback with regards to B-QUAL and the service and benefits members say they are receiving from being involved in the program.

AHBIC recently released the new 5 year plan with a call for financial help. if you have not yet signed up to be “A friend of AHBIC” please consider and do it now. For further details and/ or make a donation you can access the full plan at [www.https://honeybee.org.au/](https://honeybee.org.au/)

B-QUAL Partnerships.

Gum Tree Apiary Pty Ltd
Western Australia



Paul Koch – Beekeeper/Director

The Gum Tree Apiary has been a B-QUAL member for 8 years and has never looked back. We are fortunate here in WA with the abundance of pollen and honey producing plants which can flower throughout the year, from north of Perth to the south, which can keep you busy for a good ten or eleven months. With this workload, keeping on top of things can be a struggle.

This is where the value of B-QUAL comes into its own, by following the guidelines and working to the principles of best practice the apiaries function well. The Gum Tree Apiary has never experienced a disease problem in any of the Apiaries and I put this down to a great barrier system and record keeping within B-QUAL guidelines. It goes without saying that this all leads to greater honey production and profit for the business which in turn leads to other opportunities.

The Gum Tree Apiary has since pursued the export market with success albeit on a smaller scale, which would not have been possible without the B-QUAL certification. The Certificate accompanies all of our export documents and plays a vital role in quarantine through our trace back system and HACCP requirements.

The B-QUAL Program has been developed as an independently audited food safety program for Australian beekeepers and the records can be used to show compliance with FSANZ food standards and gain HACCP approval.

Another bonus is that if you are B-QUAL certified, you will see that the record keeping templates include all the things you need to keep track of in order to demonstrate compliance with the National Code of practice.

Biosecurity standards are included in this quality assurance program, and the templates available from B-QUAL are simple and easy to use for recording your actions, such as: the dates of apiary inspections; tasks carried out; hive and honey movements; and all other observations, such as noting any diseases found in a hive and details of how they were managed.

I would encourage all beekeepers to become a B-QUAL participant and get certified, not only for your own business but to help secure the future of the Australian Honey Industry.

Paul Koch.

*Director
Gum tree Apiary. Sawyers Valley. Western Australia.*

As a result of the change in Chair at AHBIC with Lindsay Bourke stepping down, we welcome the new AHBIC Chair Peter McDonald to the B-QUAL board, replacing Lindsay. We look forward to working with Peter and growing the close association between AHBIC and B-QUAL to the greater benefit of the industry. Peter a commercial beekeeper from Central Victoria already has a well-known and respected industry profile and will bring genuine industry knowledge and experience to our table. The board thanks Lindsay for his outstanding input and wise council over the past years with B-QUAL. Lindsay has been a pioneer of biosecurity and QA in Australia over many years and a driving force behind B-QUAL. Knowing Lindsay I can say we have not heard the last of him and indeed wish him well for the future..... Sincere thanks Lindsay.



Peter is the Chair of Australia's peak industry body, the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC). As a commercial beekeeper, Peter operates a family run business in Central Victoria producing bulk honey and providing pollination services. The business has a long history of family involvement through multiple generations dedicated to both beekeeping and beekeeping industry development.

Peter has been involved in promoting whenever possible the benefits of Quality Assurance systems, something he has had in place since 2004 when he returned to beekeeping. Prior to that he had careers in both the Army and computing after completion of his degree.

Peter believes that if our industry is to be profitable, sustainable, capable and prepared, we need to harness the massive revival and interest in the value of quality varietal honey and make sure we can protect that through a documented quality system. Our Australian honey is the best in the world.

Proposed changes to B-QUAL website.

The B-QUAL Board has made the decision to include listing B-QUAL members to the web site.

The Board believes that by listing members on the website, it recognises those members of the beekeeping community who meet the strict food safety and biosecurity requirements of the B-QUAL program. It also promotes and markets those businesses as being certified to the wider community.

The only information that will be listed on the website will be the business name & B-QUAL Certification Number. This will protect the privacy of members but acknowledges their business as being certified.

The Board of Directors recognise that this change should be voluntary, and that members may wish to opt out if they wish.

If you **do not** wish to have your business listed on the B-QUAL website please contact 1800 630 890 or email bqual@ausqual.com.au.

B-QUAL PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE PACKING SECTOR

Article contributed by Bill Winner. Beekeeper Relation Officer Capilano Honey Limited.

The packing sector is indebted to B-QUAL for the advances in HACCP principles being applied by honey producers across Australia.

Capilano Honey Limited has been able to gauge the success of B-QUAL through the auditing process and its intimate knowledge of Australian beekeeper honey handling practices, generated by its Beekeeper Services Department and Quality Assurance Program.

Our Delivery Dockets have a section titled “*Quality Assurance Conditions*” that spell out our QA Program. The result is that the standard of honey handling has improved. We conduct 6 monthly micro-organism testing where the level should be less than 10,000 cfu. On average due to QA programs like B-QUAL we achieve between 100 – 1500cfu, which is excellent. Our yeasts and mould testing revealed counts less than 10cfu again keeping Australian honey at a very high standard.

We do add a word of caution with water, commonly used for wash down, if not allowed to properly dry water can become a high risk for mould and yeast contamination. Do not hesitate to use a hair dryer to dry hard to get to areas on your extracting line.

We regularly test for allergens, that could be found in protein supplements now in common use. The result? We have not detected milk, soy, fish or gluten products. Indicating good practice on the part of honey producers.

From our customer’s point of view, food safety programs like B-QUAL provide another level of security and confidence that we as proud packers of Australian Honey under the Capilano Brand, comply with safe food handling guidelines. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the B-QUAL program.



Photo supplied by Bill Winner. Capilano Honey Ltd.

B-QUAL Accredited?

Yes! This facility is of a very high standard. Coupled with the accurate and easily followed record keeping, so vital to QA programs this facility shows the beekeepers pride in his business.

This just one of hundreds of excellent B-QUAL accredited facilities in Australia. This is a 2004 photo; the facility is just as good now as it was then!

Bill Winner

Beekeeper Relations Officer
Capilano Honey Limited

The Audit Process. *Assisting you to improve your business.*

By Michael Killer.

Policing or Value Adding?



Auditors quite often get a bad rap for being perceived as policing a business however this far from the truth. Auditors are there to value add to the business by inspecting all of the processes and procedures to ensure they meet best industry practices through the B-QUAL Standard. Auditors are there to improve your business.

So what happens at an audit?

Firstly, the Auditor will contact the business several weeks in advance to ensure a suitable time can be organised. Auditors like to group audits together to ensure they can complete as many audits as possible for time efficiency and cost-effective purposes. An audit can take up to 4 hours to complete depending on the complexity of the business. The Auditor will conduct an opening meeting and then examine all policy, procedures and records associated with meeting the B-QUAL Standard. The inspection will involve the Auditor examining the processing plant and determining if all HACCP requirements are being met for food safety purposes, specifically looking at foreign object control, cleaning and pest control, traceability records, personal hygiene, training, and packaging/ labelling compliance. The Auditor will also seek to determine whether the beekeeping biosecurity code of practice is being met through various testing records, use of barrier systems, notifiable diseases, and movement and management of diseased hives. If a control point is not being met, the Auditor will raise either a major or minor non-conformance depending upon the severity of the non-conformance. Businesses have 30 days to close out non-conformances where they will submit evidence to the Auditor to demonstrate compliance. Once all non-conformances are corrected, the audit is reviewed, and certification granted.



Michael Killer

Program Manager

B-QUAL Australia

Working with your auditor to create a successful business enterprise.

Record keeping and legislative requirements.

Record keeping can be defined as the organised and simultaneous transfer into a permanent, extractable and auditable format of all relevant information captured during specified undertakings; whilst records are a management tool that in combination with other tools are used to measure, monitor, benchmark and provide evidence of performance and compliance.

Biosecurity records are records of observations made and actions taken to protect against the introduction and spread of honeybee pests and diseases. Such records benefit not only individual apiarists, but also the honeybee industry and allied agricultural industries, because biosecurity records:

- ✓ Assist apiarists and regulators in the tracing, identifying, isolating, sterilising and eradicating of notifiable honeybee pests and diseases such as AFB
- ✓ Demonstrate to purchasers (eg. Of honeybees, honeybee products, honeybee property and pollination services) and regulators an apiarist's biosecurity and disease status.
- ✓ Are essential tools for regulators attempting to trace, contain and eradicate exotic pest/disease incursions including honeybee industry pests such as Varroa, and allied industry pests and diseases potentially spread by apiarists/vehicle/hives and/ or honeybees, such as Foot and Mouth Disease, Almond Canker, Red Imported Fire Ant, and Fire Blight.

Legislative requirements.

The Livestock Act 1997 (SA) states that apiarists must in relation to honeybees, honeybee products and/or honeybee property kept by them:

- Undertake specified biosecurity related management practices
- Record in biosecurity records the specified biosecurity related management practices undertaken
- In some States submit annually at registration renewal evidence of biosecurity record keeping.

Whilst there are a range of generic biosecurity record options available; in general as long as apiarist's records meet the required elements when recording specified biosecurity related management practices undertaken, they should be sufficient.

For those apiarists choosing to participate in an approved Quality Assurance Program such as B-QUAL the records required to ensure compliance have already been developed to fully comply with all legislative requirements.

If an apiarist decides to use a camera phone as part of their record keeping regime ensure the photo shows time and date and a gps location as well.

B-QUAL Mission.

To accredit and adopt a QA (quality assurance) program for more than 90% production from the Australian honeybee industry. The project develops Certification and trains industry participants in QA standards and biosecurity; as well as providing ongoing third-party audit system.