



On Property Best Practice: Timing & Management of Hives.

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Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

17th Australian Almond Conference

Pullman Hotel Melbourne, Albert Park, Victoria

November 8th - 10th, 2016



HOSTED BY:
The Almond Board of Australia



SUPPORTED BY:
Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd



Ian Zadow



Principal, Zadow Apiaries Former Chair, Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

Ian Zadow is a commercial beekeeper based at Tintinara in the Upper South East of South Australia and has been involved with almond pollination for 20 years in the SA Riverland region.

Ian is heavily involved in industry leadership within the Apiary Industry. He has been an executive member of the South Australian Apiarists' Association for 14 years including 3 years as president. He has been an executive member of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council for 8 years and has just stepped out of 3 years as Chairman.

Topics I will discuss

- Hive standards & auditing of hives
- Timing of moving hives in and out of pollination
- Disease risks with pollination and our new Industry Biosecurity program
- Chemical use during pollination

Hive standards & auditing of hives



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Hive Standards



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- Almonds are the first crop to be pollinated after winter and management of hives is critical to ensure hives are in good condition
- Hive standards for pollination should be set by growers
- The current minimum standard used is
 - 6 frames of bees
 - An active laying queen
 - Adequate stores of honey

Auditing Hives



- Beekeepers should check hives are to standard prior to delivery to pollination
- Growers should audit their beekeepers hives to the standard
- Ideally the audit should be done within 7 days of the hives being delivered and about 10% of hives checked.
- If dead or very weak hives are found action needs to be taken to remove and replace them

Timing of moving hives in and out of pollination



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Moving hives in



- The timing of moving hives in and out of pollination is important to ensure good pollination and also minimise stress on the hives
- Due to the high density of bees required for pollination, at the start and end of flowering there isn't enough flower to sustain all the bees and this can be a stress factor on the bees
- By staging the movement of hives in and out of the orchard in relation to the amount of flower it helps reduce the stress on the hives.

Moving hives out



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- Moving the hives out should also be staged in relation to the amount of flower.
- After full bloom and as the flower starts to reduce, the hive numbers should also be reduced from the orchard
- Providing additional floral resources in the orchard can help reduce stress on hives

Disease risks with pollination and new Industry Biosecurity program



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Disease Risks

- Due to the high density of hives required for pollination and the close distance between different beekeepers hives, there is an increased risk of disease spread.
- If dead or weak hives are brought to pollination they pose a huge threat of disease transfer and if the bees are left in too late at the end of flowering there is a great risk of disease transfer through robbing.
- It is important that beekeepers don't take diseased hives to pollination.

Industry Biosecurity Program



- Over the last three years the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council has developed a new National Bee Biosecurity Program
- The program is underpinned by a Bee Biosecurity Code of Practice which outlines minimum best practice for pest and disease control. All beekeepers will be required to comply with this code and complete an annual Certificate of Compliance to the Code
- We believe that in the future, almond growers should be requesting a copy of the Certificate of Compliance each year from their beekeepers to ensure disease spread is avoided during pollination

Chemical use during Pollination



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Chemical use during Pollination



- Chemical use around the orchard is another issue of concern to beekeepers and the health of their hives
- We understand that chemicals need to be used to grow your crop but prefer minimal use while the bees are present and that applications are made while the bees aren't working the flowers
- Communication with your beekeepers about your chemical usage during flowering is highly recommended

Questions



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- Any Questions?