



Apiculture New Zealand – Election Manifesto

Our priorities for the new Government in 2017

About Apiculture New Zealand

Apiculture New Zealand is the national body for apiculture in New Zealand, representing all sectors of the industry. The organisation was established in April 2016, bringing together a broad membership base that includes commercial and non-commercial beekeepers, packers and exporters, affiliated clubs and associations, landowners and other stakeholders in the industry.

The vision for our industry is:

The New Zealand honey and beekeeping industry is a vibrant and growing contributor to New Zealand's economy, nationally respected; internationally recognised.

Apiculture New Zealand's mission is:

A trusted and united body creating value and opportunity for our members.

About New Zealand's apiculture industry

The New Zealand apiculture industry has experienced phenomenal growth over the last ten years, largely because of strong international demand for New Zealand mānuka honey.

Today, our industry is worth over \$5 billion to the New Zealand economy with an increasingly diverse revenue stream derived from honey and bee products, as well as increasing demand for pollination services with the growth of New Zealand's horticulture sector. A healthy bee population has other wider benefits across our primary sector, and for our ecosystems.

Key facts

- The 2015/16 honey season produced an estimated honey crop of 19,885 tonnes, a record crop for industry, and almost double the amount ten years ago (10,423 tonnes in 2006).
- Honey export earnings to 30 June 2016 were \$315 million, up 35 per cent on the previous year, an almost ten-fold increase over ten years (\$38.4m in 2006).
- Total registered hives at 30 June 2017 were 811,357 and have doubled in the past five years with close to 8000 registered beekeepers (commercial and non-commercial) in New Zealand. These numbers have doubled in the past five years.

Key priorities for our industry

To continue to grow sustainably and contribute to New Zealand's economy we have outlined five priorities that sit within Apiculture New Zealand's Strategy and which we would like the next Government to address. These are:

- **Strengthen biosecurity & research**
- **Underpin consumer trust and market confidence**
- **Grow our workforce and skills**
- **Stronger action on beehive and honey theft**
- **Implement a Commodity Levy to fund industry initiatives and programmes**

Strengthen biosecurity & research

Strong biosecurity systems play a key role in the ongoing protection of our bee colonies and contribute to a thriving beekeeping industry. Biosecurity and the health of our bees is consistently rated as the key concern for our beekeepers.

To continue to protect our country from pests and disease it is critical that biosecurity is well-funded and supported by government, with thorough screening and testing to prevent arrival at the border, supported by strict reinforcement of biosecurity requirements.

While New Zealand's biosecurity system stops many potential incursions, the increasing number of people and goods arriving in New Zealand has raised the risk of exposing New Zealand to a broader range of pests and diseases.

Our ability to respond effectively to these types of incursions requires two things – adequate resourcing and a collaborative approach between government and industry, one that considers both immediate response and long-term management including investment in research. We need Government partnership and commitment to ensuring strong biosecurity systems are in place. We also recognise the role our industry needs to play, and Apiculture New Zealand is currently seeking support from its members to sign a Government Industry Agreement (GIA).

In addition, we ask Government to continue to oppose the import of honey and bee products from countries of known risk.

A 2016 national survey of New Zealand's managed honey bee colonies showed beehive loss is low compared to other countries with only 9.78% colony loss compared to 12% in the northern hemisphere.

Source: Ministry for Primary Industries Bee Colony Loss Survey

Underpin consumer trust and market confidence

New Zealand honey and honey bee-related products are internationally recognised for their premium quality, with strong international demand for New Zealand honey, and particularly mānuka honey, lifting average export prices over the past ten years.

With the success of mānuka honey, there has been a growing recognition of the need for a robust definition of New Zealand mānuka honey – a definition that is clear on what mānuka is, and isn’t, and which gives consumers confidence in the integrity and authenticity of the product.

Apiculture New Zealand supports the Ministry for Primary Industries’ drive to establish a regulatory, science-based definition for monofloral and multifloral mānuka honey, sharing its stated objective that “the science definition is essential to maintain New Zealand’s premium position in overseas markets and for the continued growth of our export honey industry.”

We have reviewed MPI’s science definition with that objective in mind and while we have welcomed the overall approach MPI has taken with the incorporation of chemical markers as part of the ID test, we flagged a number of serious issues as part of our full submission of June 2017. These include the proposed DNA test producing false negatives results for honey that by any other measure would be considered high-purity mānuka honey; and concern that the proposed chemical markers will not accurately discriminate mānuka honey.

We have proposed to Government and MPI an industry-wide solution that we believe will strengthen the definition and will deliver a standard that will give our consumers and international partners confidence in the source and authenticity of New Zealand mānuka honey.

We ask that the elected Government works closely with industry to resolve this issue and that we build on this collaborative approach to ensure a shared role in supporting future industry standards and definitions.

New Zealand mānuka honey exports are estimated at around \$260 million per annum with strong investment and research into value-add products including exciting new medicinal products and supplements.

Grow our workforce & skills

The significant growth of the New Zealand apiculture industry has seen a shortage of skilled workers across the spectrum of skills, from experienced beekeepers to scientists and researchers involved in innovation and new product development.

Apiculture New Zealand is developing an apprenticeship scheme to attract and support New Zealanders into beekeeping to meet the increasing demand and lift industry skills. However, this needs to be balanced with support for immigration policies focused on meeting the current supply shortage of workers, particularly in the beekeeping sector.

We need Government to support industry in the new apprenticeship programme and ongoing skill pathways through partnerships, as well as allowing more skilled workers to enter the country and work in New Zealand for a longer time period than is currently allowed. This two-way approach will ensure greater certainty for overseas workers but also gives our industry confidence in investing in skills and training for their staff.

Corporate and iwi investment in beekeeping enterprise via acquisitions, joint ventures and internal growth drives much of the increase in hive numbers with 29 ‘mega commercial’ enterprises as at June 2016 (compared with 25 in 2015).

Source: MPI 2016 Apiculture Monitoring Programme

Stronger action on beehive and honey theft

Beehive and honey theft has become increasingly prevalent throughout New Zealand and is estimated to cost industry millions each year. The increasing value of New Zealand honey, particularly mānuka honey, is a key factor driving this theft and New Zealand Police are aware that this has made beehive and honey theft attractive to organised crime.

These are serious crimes, and for beekeepers the loss of their bee livestock is devastating. Beekeepers have also raised their concern around personal safety for themselves and their staff, particularly in isolated rural areas. While Police have acknowledged the increased theft, more resources are urgently needed to solve these crimes, with the need for improved response rates and improved police intelligence at a national and regional level.

From October 2016 to March 2017, NZ Police received around 400 theft reports involving either beehives or honey.

Source: New Zealand Police

Implement a Commodity Levy to fund industry initiatives and programmes

Apiculture New Zealand will be seeking an industry mandate to collect levies to invest in critical industry activities such as research and development, biosecurity and bee health, and industry training and education. As part of this process we will be looking for Government support in implementing the Commodity Levy; one that is fair and equitable across all of industry, and aimed at supporting the long-term success of the industry.

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