Risk Management: Biosecurity and the Future of the Apiculture Industry

This brochure provides information that will help members of the apiculture industry make an informed decision about the future of honey bee health, biosecurity management, and the apiculture industry’s positioning within the primary production sector.

Apiculture New Zealand needs to achieve a mandate from registered beekeepers to advance the Government Industry Agreement (GIA).

A survey link has been emailed out to all registered beekeepers with a few simple questions along with room for your feedback. If you require the survey in hard copy, please email info@apinz.org.nz or phone 04 471 6254.

In this brochure we have strived to keep it easy to read and understand. We have provided factual information and all the necessary references to the appropriate websites where more detail about GIA may be researched.

We are now seeking a mandate from beekeepers to support the apiculture industry to become a signatory to GIA. To ensure we have a mandate, we ask you to complete the survey (link at end of brochure) as to whether our industry should be part of the GIA.

Most other primary industries have signed up to the GIA; there are currently 13 primary industry organisation signatories.

Included in this brochure are answers to many key questions, such as:
- Why is biosecurity important?
- What is GIA?
- How does it work?
- What are the advantages for us?
- What will happen if we don’t sign?
- How much will it cost?
Why is biosecurity important?

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility that benefits all New Zealanders. We all have to be aware of how important it is to work together responsibly to protect our borders from the threat of all types of incursions.

Within our industry, the greatest incursion threats may well be microscopic in the form of viruses or spores. Honey can easily harbour the spores of European foulbrood (*Melissococcus plutonius*) or viruses such as Israeli acute paralysis virus, which are not currently present in New Zealand. This makes the biosecurity risk of imported bee products entering New Zealand a primary focus. The impact of their entry on our bee health (stock) would be devastating.

Another scenario that would possibly be far more devastating for beekeepers would be the consequences of the small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) larvae arriving in New Zealand. This could happen as easily as a handful of larvae-infested earth jammed under a pallet.

There are many threats from which we need to protect our bees. Some of these include the parasitic fly *Braula coeca*, the tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*), the Asian mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae*) and not forgetting the African and Africanised honeybees; the Cape honeybee (*Apis mellifera capensis*) and other exotic *Apis* species such as the Asian honeybee (*Apis cerana*).

Because of the nature of our industry, we also need to be very aware of the threats from biosecurity incursions which do not affect us directly, but will affect hive movements and access. For example, think about an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease; we would not have access to our apiaries on affected farms. What future implications to our livelihoods and businesses could there be from response decisions made following incursions such as myrtle rust or a next land-based incursion incident?

Fortunately, our country has a very strong biosecurity focus. The Ministry for Primary Industries represents the front line of protection. MPI’s role is imperative to the continued safety of our bees from exotic threats. One mistake has the potential to seriously affect bee health, and therefore our businesses, through loss of bee product supply or closed market access; we simply cannot afford to take biosecurity threats lightly.

So, what is GIA and how does it apply to apiculture?

The GIA story started in 2003, when the government directed that a biosecurity strategy with a fresh approach was needed on how biosecurity is managed in New Zealand. A system of partnership relationships between primary industries and MPI was proposed with the objective of strengthening our biosecurity by utilising the expertise of both industry and government to mutual benefit. This proposal is now known as the GIA, and is covered in part 5A of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

This partnership intention is now finally documented within an agreement described as the GIA Deed. This Deed is an agreement between government, through the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), and industry organisations that sign it. It establishes the basis for a
transparent, consistent and equitable partnership to improve biosecurity readiness and response outcomes. The government’s intention is to involve the primary sectors directly with a more collaborative approach to managing risk across the whole biosecurity network.

All this does not just happen without support. Signatories to the Deed have appointed a Secretariat, whose role is to facilitate the implementation of the partnerships described in the Deed. The Secretariat is independent and acts in the interests of all those who are signatories, facilitates negotiations, and assists in the drafting of operational agreements, should industry determine this is of benefit.

Once a primary industry organisation can confirm it has the support of its membership to join GIA, it may make an application to the Minister for Primary Industries to sign the GIA Deed. Joint decision making for response commences once the deed is signed. Joint decision making and cost sharing for readiness is covered in Operational Agreements. Signatories also have the entitlement to appoint one person to represent their industry on the Deed Governance Group (DGG). Signatories sit at the governance table, with a single vote, and are part of any decision-making process that the DGG may be involved in.

The solid lines represent formal lines of accountability, i.e. the Secretariat is accountable to the GEC, which in turn is accountable to the DGG. Note that this does not prevent the DGG from interacting directly with the Secretariat when it chooses to do so, but the solid lines represent the normal, everyday situation.

OAs are accountable to their signatory partners, and where applicable, to the sector-body council (SBC) that includes their signatory partners. Dotted lines represent liaison and consultation relationships. So, although the DGG does not ‘supervise’ the SBCs or OAs, its overall responsibility for GIA and the Deed means that two-way consultation between DGG and SBCs should occur. In practical terms, the overlapping membership of these bodies ensures this occurs.

Want more information? Visit the GIA website at www.gia.org.nz

Apiculture has contributed in the early days leading to the development of the GIA. Our industry was represented on the joint working group for the second draft version of the Deed in 2011 as well as for the final GIA deed in 2013.
To date, 13 primary industries have become signatories to GIA. There are a number awaiting the Minister’s approval or, like apiculture, which are working through the process of attaining that required mandate from their respective members. As part of this process, consideration must be given to other primary industries that depend on our bees for the pollination of their crops. As recognised beneficiaries, they also have a vested interest in maintaining the good health of our bees, and could potentially be a party to biosecurity response cost sharing, involving future apiculture operational agreements. These industries, our primary business partners, have an expectation that the apiculture industry will also
become a signatory.

There are many sensible reasons why we should sign up to the GIA:

- The apiculture industry has a huge investment to protect.
- The whole industry depends on the health of our bees.
- There are biosecurity risks that can detrimentally affect our bees; therefore we need to position ourselves so we are able to offer industry knowledge and expertise in any biosecurity decision-making process.
- We need to control our costs directly, not be at the whim of others.

You would not ring a plumber to fix your computer, so why would we leave decisions that directly affect our livelihoods to others who may not have the depth of knowledge required? Clearly, it is up to us as an industry; the obligation rests with us to limit risk for the apiculture sector. We have a responsibility to sign the Deed and take our rightful seat at the GIA governance table. Achieving a mandate and signing up to GIA is a sensible first step.

The GIA includes, for example:

- **Minimum commitments**: minimum commitments include securing appropriately skilled and committed people to engage in readiness and response activities, communication with industry membership, working with MPI on developing operational agreements, and generally keeping up to speed with biosecurity issues. All these industry costs need to become budgeted items for the apiculture industry, through the proposed signatory body, Apiculture New Zealand.

- **Operational agreements**: the nature of the incursion would determine if this would be covered under a previously approved operational agreement, or if an operational agreement will need to be agreed to as per section 6.3 of the Deed.

- **Biosecurity levy**: the mandate would include a zero-rated biosecurity levy that would be activated, *if and only when*, an incursion of a serious nature triggered a response requirement. Industry’s views will be sought on how activities should be funded via an industry-wide survey.

A core element in Apiculture New Zealand’s Mission Statement is to deliver benefit to the New Zealand Apiculture Industry. The Apiculture New Zealand Board believes strongly that the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) is the correct pathway and direction required to protect the future of our industry in biosecurity matters.

Industry needs to work through a consultation process to show that we do have an industry mandate to become a signatory to the GIA.

If we achieve a mandate and become a signatory to the GIA, we will have specific rights and privileges that are not available to non-signatory industries. GIA provides a co-operative multi-industry approach, which, partnered with the New Zealand Government, means costs are shared between all benefiting industries, whether or not they are signatories.

The other benefits of being a signatory include:
• Pre-public notification
• Discussion privilege
• Decision making
• Fiscal caps
• Operational agreements

Pre-public notification
When a biosecurity incursion occurs that is not of public health risk, MPI is obligated to notify industry as the emerging risk is identified, whether already in New Zealand, or off shore (GIA Deed sections 3.1.1.d, 3.2.2.b, and 6.3.1). Knowledge about a risk at the pre-border stage is invaluable, as it allows early intervention where possible and an ability to prepare, in advance, a response plan. This can mean the difference to an industry’s survival.

Discussion privilege
At the time of incursion notification, the affected GIA signatories jointly decide whether to initiate a response. The signatories have the privilege to have their say during response discussions. This privilege is a voice to air industry concerns about the incursion effects, concerns about other industry/government proposed responses to the incursion, or to put forward an industry proposal for a response.

Signatories also have the privilege to begin discussion for readiness against any potential biosecurity threat to this industry.

Decision making
Once a party signs the GIA Deed, it shares decision-making rights for any response to any incursion that affects its members. How these decision rights work in practice would be set out in operational agreements (OA) that signatories only commit to once they agree to the OA.

Each signatory also has a critical role in the overall governance of the GIA Partnership with a seat on the Governance Group which oversees the implementation of the Deed.

Fiscal caps
In preparation for a potential biosecurity incursion resulting in a response, signatory industries have the right to set the maximum financial commitment they are willing to invest.

All industries affected by an incursion share up to a maximum of 50% of the response cost. The remaining cost is funded through MPI, which may take action to recover costs from all benefiting non-signatory industries. This cost-recovery outcome will be formalised mid-2018. There is no fiscal cap set by government on costs to be recovered from benefiting non-signatories. As noted previously, non-signatories also have no rights to be included in discussions, votes, or response plans; their industry’s future is not under their control.

When a fiscal cap is reached, the signatory has the opportunity, should it so elect, to increase the fiscal cap or alternatively, to withdraw from the response and incur no further
financial obligation. At that point, MPI may review its commitment to continue any response activities under the operational agreement.

Cost sharing is based on pre-established agreements with other industries, where applicable, that are determined by impact, size and benefit. Therefore, a signatory is not bearing the full financial burden, nor are they burning through their fiscal cap quickly during an incursion response.

**Operational agreements**
Signatories can create agreements with other benefiting industries outlining readiness activities or high-level principles of how an incursion response is governed. The kiwifruit industry is a very good example of this, and more information about their operational agreements can be found here: [www.kvh.org.nz/GIA](http://www.kvh.org.nz/GIA)

The GIA Deed provides for agreeing an Operational Agreement, after a response is initiated in the event an OA has not previously been agreed. It is ideal to have a sector operational agreement (SOA) in place prior to the occurrence of an incursion. The SOA allows signatories to engage in readiness and response activities. Signatories pre-agree cost-sharing arrangements before an incursion takes place. Additionally, the SOA allows the signatory to nominate non-signatory industries that would benefit from a response, ensuring that the non-signatory becomes financially responsible under MPI cost recovery.

What this means, is that even if the apiculture industry decided to **not** become a signatory to GIA, as an industry, there would still be a responsibility to pay a share of any cost that directly or indirectly benefits apiculture. The apiculture industry would also have no input into any decisions being made by MPI and the other industry groups that have signed the GIA. Also, because no operational agreements would be in place, there would be no signed cost sharing agreements with other beneficiaries that could be in our favour.

**How much will GIA cost us?**

The costs related to GIA fall into four areas:

1. Getting the agreement of industry members to sign the Deed and presenting this in an application to the Minister for Primary Industries.
2. Meeting the minimum commitments outlined in section 3.2 of the Deed.
3. Funding the industry organisation’s involvement in Deed governance processes, including our share of the costs of the GIA Secretariat after 1 January 2020.
4. As a Deed Signatory, an industry organisation makes a future commitment to pay its share for readiness and response activities agreed in any Operational Agreement signed with MPI. Cost sharing for biosecurity responses is targeted for mid-2018.

The costs of GIA will be specific to the circumstances of each Signatory, depending how they choose to meet minimum commitments and any operational agreements they enter into.

Should the industry proceed with becoming a signatory with Apiculture New Zealand as the representative body, the initial cost areas 1–3 with industry support, will be covered
through membership fees payable to the Apiculture New Zealand body. Area 4 would be covered by a pre-agreed levy for response activities, and options to cover costs for readiness activities are asked as part of the consultation survey. As part of the survey, Apiculture New Zealand will be asking industry to outline what they would be willing to invest on a per hive (beekeeper) or per kg (processor) basis. This will provide an indication of where the industry fiscal cap should be set at, and what the industry feels is a reasonable levy aimed to respond to a biosecurity threat to our industry, as well as funding options for readiness activities.
How do we sign the GIA?

The industry must go through an application process and provide evidence to the Minister for Primary Industries of the following, as per section 100ZA of the Biosecurity Act 1993:

1. Legal entity: an eligible industry organisation needs to be a body corporate.
2. Sector representation: the industry organisation must be able to demonstrate it represents the interests of the sector it wishes to represent.
3. Funding arrangements: arrangements for meeting the organisation's minimum commitments and cost sharing commitments must be evident.
4. Consultation: the industry organisation needs to adequately consult the individuals they wish to represent. The consultation must explain and invite feedback on:
   a. The proposal that the organisation become a party to the GIA; and
   b. The way in which it is proposed that the sector's views will be represented by the organisation during joint decision-making under the GIA; and
   c. The arrangements proposed to fund the organisation's commitments under the GIA.
5. Sector feedback: the organisation must be able to show it has had due regard to the views of the sector that it received during consultation. The application should include a summary of the feedback received during consultation and how it was addressed.

The Apiculture New Zealand Biosecurity and GIA Focus Group was formed to begin the GIA application process, and perform subsequent related tasks following a successful application.

Industry consultation is our first step in this process, and we need to hear from you. Below is the link to an online survey that will ask you relevant questions that we need the industry to answer before we can move forward on an application. There is a section for comments, and we do ask that you provide us contact details so we can respond to any questions or concerns you have.

If you require the survey in hard copy, please email info@apinz.org.nz or phone 04 471 6254.

On behalf of the focus group, thank you in advance for taking the time to provide us industry feedback.

Take the survey now:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/Apiculture-GIA