

Standards Focus Group August 2019 Meeting Summary

The Standards Focus Group met in August 2019 and covered a full agenda of key topics for our sector. These included;

Market Access/export

ApiNZ Board is working on this as part of its strategy – looking at potential markets for both **mānuka and non-mānuka honeys** and how to communicate market access opportunities to members. **Small parcel export requirements** were clarified by MPI, noting that under the GREX small parcels need supporting export documentation. MPI to review and work with industry to provide an approach that allows for trade while still ensuring **traceability** and will also look at informing and clarifying the current situation for members.

Tutin 2019/20 campaign

MPI welcomes views on the **tutin campaign** approach – videos, social media campaign and is starting to organise hub/club visits for beekeepers. ApiNZ advised it is working on **discounted lab tests** for members to try to make testing more affordable for its members.

Revised RMP template and Operational Code

MPI advised that the **RMP template and operational code** are ready to be published, and they are working on the process of how to transition to new templates. **Templates have been consulted** on with industry/Standards Focus Group along with verifiers.

The updates will go through an amendment process through the **MPI approvals team** to minimise costs and will be done before next verification visits.

Manuka Honey Science Definition

The Group urged MPI provide an update on the application of the definition to domestic honey. MPI to advise the Group on next steps.

Apiculture Monitoring Report

MPI's market intelligence team recognise industry's need to have access to timely information and are keen to support industry with this. They hold 20 years of reports which will enable collating existing data and some new data and commentary.

AQ has usually put **data (crop estimate)** into the Journal without commentary – now depending on timing of Journal they could release numbers for the Oct Journal. Need ideas on how to make data more robust or how to check domestic market consumption

Focus Group noted the good feedback from industry on the **SOPI reports and market information** provided by MPI, we now get more robust information around **mānuka export sales vs non-mānuka and monofloral vs. multifloral**. The annual **Apiculture report and SOPI report** is used in house to report on the state of industry at a point in time, it is used for the Minister as a reference point for prices, aimed to inform MPI and is a resource for NZ beekeeping industry.

The value of **pollination services** was discussed, and to be reviewed as a possible research project to understand the true value. Included in one of **ApiNZ's strategy priorities** is a discussion with Zespri, HortNZ and ApiNZ on pollination services.

Traceability and Compliance

All agreed the **Harvest Declaration** form is hard to understand. A guide was proposed to accompany harvest declaration form. The guide will be presented at the next Focus Group meeting, focusing on making things easier for beekeeper. Infographics were very useful to explain mānuka definition which could be useful for the **GREX**. MPI suggested practical trial of the guide could be trialled with a couple of industry members.

Traceability and hygiene standards

The standards are a really important part of the Honey Story. An extraction schedule is being created on how to put that information in a stock book – as part of traceability work.

Reducing compliance costs

The Group raised concerns that **two audits** are required for premises that are exporting to countries that require **official assurances** and questioned whether both are required, especially for premises that are compliant. Industry raised the idea of looking at other **verification entities** to provide services. MPI explained they limit their services to allow for competition. At a previous Standards Focus Group meeting, MPI advised it would look at providing a summary of trends from **verification activities**, as they do for other industries to see what are the key issues/common themes coming up for industry to steer the group in how we can address these.

PA's project update

The Group was updated on the PA project plan (funded by MPI through the Sustainable Farming Fund with input from industry). The Phase 2/Year 2 report was presented combining data from 2013-2019 being noted.

C4 Sugars and Diastase research proposals

C4 sugars, a picture of current research and work undertaken in New Zealand was presented to the Group, and will also be presented at Apimondia in September. A proposal for further research was put to the Group. The approach was agreed to with a recommendation to seek funding via both individual members donation and application to Honey Industry Trust.

A similar approach has been taken with a **Diastase research** proposal and these both received approval from the Focus Group to proceed with seeking industry funding initially amongst members to be followed up by a funding application by the Honey Industry Trust (HIT), noting this would require ApiNZ Board approval

Update on ISO Honey Standards meeting in Paris

The Group was updated on the meeting, noting that New Zealand representation as advanced by ApiNZ was important, but that decisions would not be quick.

Key agenda items raised by NZ included a review of current **honey and bee product definitions** (under Codex) to reflect expectations of consumers, sustainable business and rural economies; protocols for expecting new technologies and defining test method specs and equivalence rather than set methods; need for defined specs and protocols for method validations and verifications; global harmonisation around definitions and specifications; and moisture content of thixotropic honeys (eg mānuka) which tended to have higher moisture content