



# APICULTURE

## NEW ZEALAND

### **Standards Focus Group March 2020 Meeting Summary**

**The Standards Focus Group met in March 2020. The discussion covered key topics for the sector including:**

#### **Market Access/export issues**

A number of contemporary access issues have been raised by MPI. These include Russia's suspension of honey imports from Russia from the EU and very strict AFB rules for other markets attempting to export to Russia; an MOU for Saudi Arabia has been completed for a range of commodities, and market could be opened following an official signing (postponed due to Covid-19); ApiNZ has been working with MPI on gaining market access to Vietnam. MPI is preparing a submission to gain access to Vietnam, but will likely require audits at a cost to industry.

#### **Harvest Declaration guidance**

MPI has drafted a new guide to completing harvest declarations with the intention of making it easier to fill out and increase compliance at the appropriate time. The Standards Focus Group has provided input into the draft. MPI is now looking again at the text to ensure there is no duplication of information. The primary focus will be on making the document user friendly, which will likely result in greater levels of compliance and better traceability.

#### **Tutin campaign**

Results of the The tutin social media campaign run in association with ApiNZ over January and February reached 15,000 people with 1,500 people engaging in the posts. The final post included a quiz, with 150 people responding. MPI and ApiNZ are continually looking to see what else can be done for education on tutin. The results indicate social media is an important channel particularly in reaching younger audiences and hobbyists.

#### **Small business exemption from registration applications**

Small operators have expressed concern that sales from production of around 50kg of honey makes the cost of registering prohibitive. The option to apply for an exemption exists. Prior to approval MPI asks how tutin is being managed. There is potential to develop this exemption facility by creating a form. The aim would be to reach those selling honey at a farmer's market once a year.

#### **Review of export verification framework**

A review of existing requirements for 6-month verifications on site has become a critical issue for members, particularly as there is continued pressure on industry. ApiNZ has been pushing for a review of the verification process with MPI and it is pleasing that this work is commencing. There is a

need to create a balance between reducing costs but maintaining objectives of minimising obstruction to market access and health risks. Expectations for the market include finding options to introduce desktop audits as a means to reduce costs; understand risks by market and manuka vs. non-manuka.

### **PA Project**

A presentation of Year 3 interim report was made on the collaborative industry approach to reduce the threat of PAs. It was agreed that Catalyst would continue to talk to beekeepers around the country sharing the regional results to date. We also needed MPI to follow up on when we could expect the release of the international JECFA report.

### **ISO Standards and Apimondia**

The Apimondia Committee has determined moisture removal from honey must be eliminated. This provides a challenge to practices undertaken in New Zealand to avoid fermentation. Treatment for moisture in heather honey does have an exemption, and it was felt manuka honey should be in the same category, although that would require some scientific evidence – research in hives and harvest data. There is support for moisture treatment if it is in the context of being naturally produced honey, but the position could be difficult to articulate while protecting the integrity of natural honey. Agreed that New Zealand's position needed to be clarified and articulated to Apimondia.