

ApiNZ Science and Research Focus Group Meeting Notes Summary

Friday 12 February & Wednesday 12 May 2021

The ApiNZ Science and Research Focus Group met via Zoom on 12 February and 12 May 2021 to receive updates and prepare actions going forward.

Glyphosate Submission Discussion

The Group discussed the submission on glyphosate to be made to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). A separate session on glyphosate-based herbicides and formulations to clarify the content of the submission is planned.

Native Bees / Honey Bees – competition for pollen

An issue was raised on the impact honeybees might have on native bees and birds in the environment and the competition for pollen. At this stage there is no data to support this, it appears to be anecdotal, but this view could gain momentum in future.

Giant Willow Aphid update on hyper-parasitoid

John McLean provided an update on progress made on the giant willow aphid work carried out by Scion.

- An aphid group meeting is planned next week in Gisborne to discuss in greater depth the recent findings. It was agreed that an update on the GWA hyper-parasitoid be prepared for the next Beekeeper journal.
- The research will be completed by mid-2022; and for the most part will be about monitoring and releasing of the hyperparasitoid.
- A map is being prepared that will document all of the release sites in New Zealand.

Succession planning, rejuvenation of its group members, and the mandate of this group

The Group discussed:

- The role of this group as primarily an advisory group of critical expertise for ApiNZ.
- Extensive networks are in place that make possible broad engagement and information flow with science communities in New Zealand, but the role of this group needs to be more defined, eg: how could this group do more; how could we support this group more and how do we ensure we continue to engage with new ideas, while operating with no commodity levy in place.

Ashley Mortensen, Plant & Food research update

Ashley Mortenson from Plant & Food provided an update on some projects including practical varroa control, the impacts of overstocking on honey bee colony physiology and the environmental risk posed by agrichemicals on native bees in comparison to honeybees.

Overview of ApiNZ Strategy

Karin Kos shared an overview of the current ApiNZ Strategy.

- The strategy retains the focus of the three pillars: sustainability for long term beekeeping success, identifying commercial opportunities, and together we are stronger, but looks at what we may need to revise and add to the Strategy to meet current challenges in the industry.
- It was noted that any industry review/report to better understand the opportunities and challenges would need evidence-based research and funding would need to be acquired for this, and that initial discussions have already been held with MPI and a few others.

2021 Conference Science session

- With the Science Symposium being held the day before Conference, the science session would need to follow a different format to the traditional abstract presentations. The Group discussed holding two in-depth panel discussions based on topical and sometimes controversial subjects.
- It was agreed to develop one session around innovations in science, eg. gene editing, considering the consumer, science and industry perspectives. The second session would cover how to use science to lift the profile of non-mānuka honeys.

Miscellaneous

- Karin Kos noted that our industry should, via the Science and Research Focus Group put in a submission on the recently released Climate Commission. A draft submission for feedback from the Focus Group will be circulated.
- Pike Brown shared some interesting statistics from the MPI NZ Colony Loss Survey. This information will be available in March in time for the ApiNZ April journal.