

ApiNZ Science and Research Focus Group Meeting

August 2023 Member Update

Varroa resistant queen breeding – Bee Smart Breeding

Linda Newstrom-Lloyd and Rae Butler updated the group on their research. The pilot study researching the expression of the varroa sensitive hygiene (VSH) trait in commercial colonies has been completed and the protocol for testing for VSH in queen breeding operations is also almost complete.

The researchers delivered a presentation on their research at the 4th Honey Bee Research Symposium and conducted a workshop at the annual ApiNZ conference and trade show. They also presented their research at the latest field day run by the Canterbury Hub and have written articles for the NZ Beekeeper Journal and for the Apiarist Advocate. They are also setting up a website to publish the protocol and education materials.

NZ Avocado

NZ Avocado have been running a mirid spray programme since 2019 as some avocado growers were not seeing any return on their crops. Some growers had contacts in Australia who had similar problems where the plants were flowering but there was no fruit development.

Pyrethrum was chosen for the trial as it can be applied at night and permission was always sought from any beekeepers with bees at the orchard prior to any spraying. Growers are being encouraged to go through the NZ Avocado approval process prior to spraying as it contains a lot of information such as getting permission from beekeepers prior to spraying.

The focus group will meet regularly with NZ Avocado in the future to monitor this spray programme.