

**Date: 30 June 2005**

**Subject: Varroa Controls**

### **Situation**

MAF have run movement controls on material likely to contain varroa in the past. MAF are now out of the movement control business. Responsibility and powers of control have now passed to a newly formed agency called the Varroa Agency Incorporated.

Two National Bee Councils (who contribute \$200,000) and all the Southland Councils and unitary authorities (who contribute \$530,000) comprise the membership.

As of this Friday they will implement, under a national pest strategy, controls on logs between the two islands. Bulk wine grapes and houses, are also included for example. All have previously been associated with inadvertent movement of hives and varroa. Varroa came to Auckland via Rotorua on a log (admittedly not pine).

The restrictions are obviously only north to south.

### **Implications**

The new agency is obliged to operate within the terms of the Biosecurity Act, (Section 61 – controlled area notices is the specific reference). These and the Pest Management Strategy will be supplied to NZFOA at my request.

It is envisaged that anyone intending to transport logs from the North Island to the South Island will need to get a permit. This is likely to be on the basis of a fax sent to an Agriquality office in Hamilton. Agriquality will act on behalf of the Varroa organisation.

Under the Act conditions can be imposed on the permits. At this stage the only requirement that it is expected that will be required is for the person submitting the fax to indicate that they have performed a manual inspection and detected no bees. It is also possible that multiple loads could be covered by the one permit.

There will be no cost for the permit.

Later in the year some audit inspections of loads will be carried out - again no direct costs.

Overall, at this stage, this does not appear to be anything other than a small inconvenience to a minor area of movement.

### **Response**

The Chair of the Varroa agency is Duncan Butcher (former Otago Regional Council) – 0274 343 876

I advised that we do not appreciate finding out about these developments through the media, and that we would like further input from here on in the development of any impositions. This has been welcomed.

I made the point that the forest industry obviously takes Biosecurity very seriously and where there is a real risk we appreciate the need for such security and will want to cooperate. In this case we will want to ascertain what the actual risk is more carefully. I suggested for example that radiata logs are grown straight and fast and generally will not provide much of a hiding place for bees. As such it may be that different rules are needed for pine than for say Macrocarpa which is apparently much more of a risk.

This was acknowledged and there is a willingness to adapt even the current low level requirements accordingly if it can be shown that the risk is minimal.

The agency is supposed to have a Ministerial appointee on their Board. At the moment this is Paul Bolger (Biosecurity analyst at MAF) in an acting capacity until a permanent independent appointment is made. If we have any particular process issues he provides a conduit for us.

Regards  
David Rhodes