

AFB PMP Management Agency Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 10 May 2019

Location: Board Room, ApiNZ Offices, Level 4, 187 Featherston Street, Wellington

ATTENDANCE

Present

Mr John Hartnell (Chairman)
Mr Jason Ward
Ms Kim Poynter
Mt Russell Marsh
Mr Gabriel Torres
Hayley Pragert
Mr Clifton King (National Compliance Manager)

Guests

Mr Byron Taylor AsureQuality (item 5)
Karin Kos Apiculture New Zealand (item 3)
Mr John Sanson Ministry for Primary Industries (items 3 and 4)
Mr Ian Govey Ministry for Primary Industries (items 3)
Mr Mike Harre Ministry for Primary Industries (items 3 and 4)
Mr Marco Gonzalez Management Agency (item 5)

1. Meeting opening

1.1. Chairman's welcome

John welcomed Hayley to her first Board meeting and the Board to the meeting.

1.2. Apologies

The Board noted that the MPI Board position had not been filled since Geoff Gwyn had transferred to the *Mycoplasma bovis* response. The Board agreed to send a letter to the MPI Director General requesting that the position be filled by an appropriate Director.

1.3. Director conflict of interest disclosures

No changes to the interest register.

Hayley to advise Clifton of her interests for the register.

1.4. Previous Minutes

1.4.1. Confirmation

Change the 3rd bullet point in section 2 to "The Board agree that beekeeper apiary and hive statistics will not be published in the upcoming April Beekeeper Magazine due to accuracy concerns."

John Hartnell moved that the February 2019 minutes be accepted. Kim seconded, and the motion was carried.

1.4.2. Action list

Clifton highlighted the outstanding AsureQuality tasks.

Clifton advised the Board that the Hobbyist DECA had not been offered to hobbyist's yet as the Management Agency was waiting for the costing to offer the Hobbyist DECA to existing DECA holders.

The Board directed that:

- Posting the Hobbyist DECA application online and ensuring that all new hobbyist DECA applications used this form was an immediate priority, and should not be held up by planning for existing DECA holders.
- Clifton to ensure that tasks assigned to AsureQuality had explicit due dates

2. National Compliance Managers Report

Clifton presented the National Compliance Managers report. He also advised that the following changes to the approach to compliance operations was required to ensure that non-compliant beekeepers understood how their failure to comply with their DECA had resulted in their beekeeping gear becoming contaminated with AFB:

- AFB contamination of beekeeping gear should be assessed at the same time as hives were inspected, and
- The initial audit of the beekeeper's compliance with their DECA should be complemented by a full DECA audit completed as part of the compliance operation.

The Board inquired about arrangements to care for beekeepers' welfare during and after the compliance operations. Clifton advised that beekeepers were being referred to Rural Support Trust.

The Board was also concerned to ensure that any AFB elimination advice given by AP2's and AsureQuality was suitable for the heavily infected beekeeping operations that were subject to compliance operations and this advice was provided in a timely manner

The Board confirmed that:

- all beekeepers that are the subject of compliance operations should be referred to the Rural Support Trust (with the beekeeper's agreement),
- beekeepers that accept responsibility for their non-compliance will be offered AFB elimination advice by AsureQuality,
- AP2s are to be briefed/trained on the advice to give to beekeepers subject to compliance operations
- Clifton to provide AsureQuality with written instructions for producing an AFB Management Plan.

The Board also confirmed that:

- Increasing beekeeper compliance with Certificate of Inspection requirements should be discussed at a future Board meeting
- Future communications should highlight that when a DECA is cancelled the DECA held by all beekeepers named in the agreement as responsible for disease management will be cancelled also.

3. Analysis of Levy Proposal Submissions

Clifton presented the provisional draft report on the levy proposal consultation findings to the Board. He reminded the Board of the Biosecurity Act 1993 requirements for making a levy order and the Treasury and Auditor General guidelines.

The Board discussed the proposed increase in levy and the financial hardship that many beekeepers are experiencing. The Board noted that the levy order would require the Management Agency to consult with beekeepers prior to notifying the levy rate each year, and that the Board had the ability to propose lower rates than what were proposed in the March 2019 levy proposal.

The Board considered submissions highlighting the financial hardship many beekeepers were experiencing and whether the levy order should make provisions for beekeepers that were experiencing financial hardship. The Board decided that cases of financial hardship were most appropriately addressed through changes to the Management Agency debt collection process and not the levy order as:

- The Management Agency has a duty to collect the levy equitably from all beekeepers
- The administrative costs associated with assessing claims of financial hardship are likely to be considerable
- The proposed levy increase is a maximum of approximately an additional \$1.80 per hive. This cost is small relative to the value of a hive and its production.

The Board considered submissions stating that the existing apiary and beekeeper levy should be replaced in favour of the proposed hive and beekeeper levy. These submissions stated that hives should not be used as a basis for calculating the levy as it is too easy for beekeepers to underreport hives. The Board noted that the Management Agency would need to develop new mechanisms to audit beekeepers hive declarations, however, they were not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to suggest that the underreporting of hives under a hive levy would be any greater than the current underreporting of apiaries under the apiary levy.

The Board considered the submissions received in response to the July 2018 levy proposal and decided that the July 2018 submissions made a better case for changing to hive and beekeeper levy than the March 2019 submissions opposing the change as:

- An apiary levy is unfair to beekeepers that have small numbers of hives per apiary
- An apiary levy incentivises high hive concentrations with a higher disease risk
- Replacing the apiary levy with a hive levy removes the financial incentive for beekeepers not to register all of their apiaries.

The Board considered submissions that expressed concerns that compliant beekeepers could be subject to compliance and enforcement including cost recovery. The Board confirmed that the Management Agency does not intend to subject compliant beekeepers to compliance and enforcement actions or cost recovery charges and this should be clarified in the Management Agency's response to submissions.

The Board considered submissions that the plan was too punitive and should focus instead on education and cooperation. The Board noted that the Management Agency already has a large emphasis on education: training over 1,300 beekeepers to recognise and manage AFB each year, and that additional funding for AFB extension and regional workshops is included in the levy proposal.

The Board also noted that there is a small core of highly non-compliant beekeepers that have been and continue to be resistant to efforts to educate and advise them on changes they should make to reduce the level of AFB in their hives. These non-compliant beekeepers present a serious and ongoing AFB threat to compliant beekeepers hives and managing compliance and enforcement of NPMP rules is the responsibility of the Management Agency.

The Board provided the feedback that the executive summary in the draft report needs to be re-written. Its too detailed and doesn't give the reader a high-level view of the submissions.

4. Draft Business Case for the replacement of ApiWeb/Apiary Database

Clifton presented the business case to the Board and advised that effective business case management provides a critical foundation for successful information technology projects.

The Board sought clarification of the budget. Clifton advised that the budget included in the business case was the same as the budget included in the levy proposal. He also clarified that the costings included in the business case included the costs to build and maintain the National Bee Health System, but did not include the Apiary Registrar to Apiary Advisory Officer salaries to run and enter data it as these are accounted for separately.

The Board requested that the first sentence under the "Management Case" heading be changed to "The proposed investment in the National Bee Health System is integral to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Management Agency."

The Board:

- Confirmed that the business case is appropriately aligned to the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan
- Agreed the business case objectives
 - Encourage beekeepers to comply with their NPMP apiary and AFB notification, and ADR reporting requirements because it is quick and easy for them to do so.
 - Improve the efficiency of managing NPMP information for both beekeepers and the Management Agency
 - Improve the quality of NPMP information
 - Ensure that NPMP information is available to support informed decisions on how the NPMP is implemented by beekeepers and the Management Agency.
- Agreed the expected benefits:
 - Reduce beekeeper time and effort required to comply with NPMP obligations through the provision of an efficient and user-friendly system

- Improve the cost efficiency of monitoring and managing beekeeper compliance with NPMP obligations
- Enhance the quality of strategic (long term) and tactical (short term) NPMP implementation decisions by the Management Agency as these decisions will be based upon accurate information
- Enhance the quality of beekeeper, apiary and hive information to support MPIs surveillance and incursion response programs
- Enhance the quality of apiary information to support the traceability requirements for exporting honeybee products to official assurance countries
- Agreed that the preferred option is to develop the new 'National Bee Health System' based on commercially available Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and 'Enterprise Resource Planning' (ERP) software
- Agreed that the procurement will be consistent with government procurement guidelines and will use GETS.
- Agreed to spend up to \$20,000 on specialist procurement and technical expertise to assure the quality of the procurement processes
- Agreed that the funding of the National Bee Health System should be formally agreed between the Management Agency and the Ministry for Primary Industries before the procurement is initiated.

5. Operations Reports (via Skype)

5.1. Operations Manager Report

Marco presented the Operations Manager Report to the Board.

The Board was concerned to know what steps were being taken to support non-compliant beekeepers during and after compliance operations. Clifton advised that two of the three beekeepers concerned had been referred to the Rural Support Trust and one beekeeper had been referred to AsureQuality for AFB Counselling.

The Board decided that:

- All beekeepers that are subject to compliance operations should be referred to the Rural Support Trust for support, and
- Referral for AFB Counselling services will continue to be judged on a case by case basis dependent on the beekeeper accepting responsibility for their non-compliance with NPMP rules.

5.2. AQ Bimonthly Report

Byron presented the AQ Bimonthly report to the Board.

The Board discussed persistent nature of ADR and COI defaulters. Clifton advised that the beekeepers whom defaulted on both their ADR and COI were being prioritised for default inspections.

The delays to the implementation of the Hobbyist DECA were discussed. The Board directed that:

- The Hobbyist DECA is to be offered to hobbyist beekeepers immediately via the AFB website, and that all new DECA applications from hobbyists should use the Hobbyist DECA
- Existing hobbyist DECA holders are to be offered the opportunity to transfer to the Hobbyist DECA
- AFB Recognition Course Trainers are to be informed of the Hobbyist DECA at their May workshops.

6. Matters for Discussion

6.1. Health and Safety Report

Clifton presented the Health and Safety Report.

Clifton asked the Board what the Management Agency should do when a beekeeper refused to follow safe work practices around a fire pit managed by the Management Agency. The Board decided that Management Agency should provide beekeepers with a letter advising them of safe work practices around a fire pit and request signed acknowledgement that they have received the letter.

The Board agreed that 'Health and Safety' should be changed to 'Safety and Wellbeing' as this better reflected the Management Agency's focus.

6.2. 2018/19 YTD Finance Report

Clifton presented the Finance report.

6.3. Training Report

The Training Report was noted.

6.4. Complaints Report

Clifton presented the Complaints Report.

The Board requested that verbal complaints received were recorded in the complaints register.

7. Board member only section

8. Matters for noting

The Board discussed the 'AFB Controversy' section planned for the 2019 ApiNZ Conference including potential speakers. Follow-up tasks are listed as follows:

- MPI speaker on how MPI dogs work, are trained, and most importantly verified – Hayley to organise
- Richard Hall on Bee Pathogen Programme – Hayley to contact
- Directors Institute speaker – Gabriel to provide contact

9. Meeting finalisation

Next meeting Wednesday 5 June 2019

Meeting closed 4:45pm Friday 10 May 2019.