



TASMANIAN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INC.

www.tasmanianbeekeepers.org.au

President –
Mr Lindsay Bourke

Launceston. Tas 7250

Secretary-
Mrs Maxine Ewington

Flowerdale. Tas. 7325

Email:secretary@tasmanianbeekeepers.org.au

SUBMISSION INTO THE REGULATION OF AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE

The Tasmanian Beekeepers Association (TBA) is the peak body representing the beekeeping industry in Tasmania.

The State affiliated associations include –

- North West Branch Tasmanian Beekeepers Ass Inc
 - Northern Branch Tasmanian Beekeepers Ass
 - Southern Branch Tasmanian Beekeepers Ass
1. The TBA supports the continuing moratorium of GMO's in Tasmania as the clean green image is an essential part of marketing Tasmanian products and is against the draft recommendation 6.1 in the Productivity Commission Draft Report Overview of the Regulation of Australian Agriculture.
 2. In 2015/16 there were 216 registered beekeepers in Tasmania but as registration is voluntary the number would be greater.
 3. Tasmanian Beekeepers sell honey on the domestic and international markets as Tasmanian GMO free products.
 4. As one of the only states in Australia to have a moratorium on GMO's Tasmanian honey is accepted in to the EU market as it has no GMO's in the pollen due to Tasmania's moratorium. EU states that GMO pollen was an ingredient not intrinsic to honey as in normal honey and as such must not be in honey in the EU who tests down to 1 pollen grain per 10000. The New York and Japanese market ask for a GMO free declaration and many Chinese markets are now also requiring declaration.
 5. If the moratorium was to lapse 40% of our state's honey sales to EU would be stopped and the effect on the Tasmanian beekeeping industry would be devastating. Leatherwood Honey is unique to Tasmanian and has a premium price in the EU.
 6. In 2007, RIRC estimated that honey bees contributed directly to between \$4 – 6 billion of agricultural production in Australia. The latest estimate from ABARES (2010 -11) is that Tasmania

accounts for 3% of the gross value of Australian's agricultural production. It is therefore possible to extrapolate that honey bees were responsible for between \$120 - \$180 million worth of agricultural production in 2007, which (assuming a 3% growth rate) would now be worth approximately \$140 - \$210 million. (Figures assumed by the Agricultural Policy Group, DPIWE 2013)

7. The TBA is against any GM crops being grown in Tasmania. As an example if GMO poppy crops were grown and the crop was within 3km of a crop the bees were pollinating or collecting nectar from there is every probability that some of the GMO pollen from the poppy will end up in the honey and it would then make the honey not eligible to be sent to the EU. GMO pollen getting into the honey is not just for the one time when the bees are working the poppy's pollen but will threaten future honey as the pollen can be stored in the hive and be distributed over several supers (bee boxes) thus making the possibility of having GM honey pollen in many extractions of the honey and thus ruling out export to EU.
8. GMO contamination makes it all but impossible to market bee products in certain markets because they no longer meet regulatory standards and are rejected by retailers and consumers.
9. If GMO crops, either food or non-food was introduced in to Tasmania it could have a devastating effect on the number of hives available for the pollination of crops in Tasmania. It is hard to say how many bee hives are used for pollination but one example is 4,000 hives are required for the pollination of carrot seed this year. The level of hives required for pollination each year has substantially increased with some commercial beekeepers increasing their hive capacity just so they can pollinate the many and varied crops that require the bees each year. Crops that are being pollinated include carrots, cherries, apples, apricots, onions, canola, lucerne, clover, blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. Crops in Tasmania are highly dependent on bee pollination.
10. With increase in irrigation schemes in Tasmania the demand for pollination of crops will only grow but the industry also needs the high priced honey markets in EU to keep the price of pollination at a reasonable level. Without any honey production the cost of pollination would have to be greatly increased.
11. Many commercial beekeepers have stated that if GMO crops are introduced to Tasmania they would not pollinate crops anymore but would rely on honey production particularly leatherwood and manuka honey which would be outside the 3km fly zone of the bees.

SUMMARY-

To maintain a vibrant and long term honey & pollinating industry in Tasmania the Tasmanian Beekeepers Ass strongly opposes any change to the present moratorium of GMO's for the future security of honey production and pollinating.