



B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd

An AHBIC Company

B-TRACE Australia



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Current projects underway.

- ✓ Finalising our audit services to include Organic Auditing and B-QUAL audits at same time
- ✓ Introducing cost saving remote audits
- ✓ Involved in industry traceability and provenance standards
- ✓ Working to integrate B-SPATIAL into our app
- ✓ Further HPTLC testing to increase honey data base and complete honey library data for industry dissemination.
- ✓ Initiating an industry wide membership drive for both B-TRACE and B-QUAL
- ✓ Working with AQBBA to introduce queen breeding standards into B-QUAL
- ✓ Supporting AHBIC in Standards Australia project proposals for international participation on ISO/TC 34/SC 19 Bee Products.

The Board Members along with the admin staff, auditors and all involved at B-QUAL and B-TRACE wish every member, their families and staff and our sponsors, the very best wishes for the upcoming Festive season.

We know this has been another difficult year and we sincerely thank everyone for their support of B-QUAL and B-TRACE

We trust that you all enjoy a safe, prosperous and successful 2023.



The CRCHBP moves on.

This last month the CRC for Honey Bee Products closed, and the outcomes of the research found new homes.

The digitisation of B-QUAL and B-TRACE are now owned by B-QUAL Australia, and available to all Australian beekeepers. With the recent Varroa incursion and appreciation for good beekeeper record keeping, this delivery was timely.

Without the stalwart support of Don Muir, the wisdom of the B-QUAL board, the hard work of Prof Sharon Purchase, and being successful with the Traceability grant, we could not have delivered.

Affordable testing that can be used for marketing purposes was spun out to Y-TRACE based at Yanchep in WA. Based on the work from the Australian library and other research projects, nectar signatures within the honey can now be identified showing true authenticity and terroir. Using a single analytical technique, sugar adulteration and HMF can also be measured. This service, together with pollen counts and antioxidant analysis will be available to everyone in December 2022. Watch out for the Y-TRACE website launch.

The CRC legacy website will be up in December – and I hope you have the time to look at all the work the researchers explored to help you.

Honey bees are fascinating and being a botanist, B-SPATIAL I see as particularly powerful tool for future honey bee adaptability. Climate change or fire – both have the biggest impact on resource flowering. Monitoring each season and understanding the fire impact will help with decision-making and the health of your bees.

New tools were our focus and I hope that as these become available they help you sustain the production of the best honey in the world and ensure your bee health.

Thanks for the journey- beekeeping is challenging, fascinating and an indicator of our environmental health. Once hooked, difficult not to remain engaged and focussed. I look forward to continuing to help the industry

Text Dr Liz Barbour.

B-TRACE AUDITS.

A number of B-TRACE members are nearing their annual audit. If you are ready to undertake your audit please email admin@btrace.com.au and we will email you the Audit form.

Remember before doing the audit either complete or have proof of the BOLT course completion, ensure you have the Code of Practice declaration completed and uploaded to your app. Have your hive registration number on record.

Have all records completed and entered into your app.

There is no time limit in which to return your audit, so you can get your audit form and take your time to work through it and CHECK it before submitting.

Just be aware that at this time of the year it may take up to 2 weeks to have your audit processed once it is received and certification issued.

Honey bee biosecurity

Here are six easy ways beekeepers can reduce the threat of exotic and established pests affecting their livelihood. Each of these practices should be embedded in the everyday management of an apiary as it makes good business sense to reduce the risk of spreading pests and or diseases.

1. *Be aware of biosecurity threats*

You and your workers should be familiar with the most important exotic and established honey bee pest threats. Conduct a biosecurity induction session to explain required hygiene practices for people, equipment and vehicles in an apiary.

2. *Use pest-free honey bee stock and apiary equipment*

Ensure all queen bees and package bees are from trusted sources, pest free and preferably certified. Keep good records of the apiary inputs.

3. *Keep it clean*

Practicing good sanitation and hygiene will help prevent the entry, establishment and movement of pests within and between apiaries. Workers, visitors, vehicles and equipment can spread pests, so make sure they are clean before entering and leaving the apiary.

4. *Check your apiary*

Monitor hives and the health of the honey bee brood frequently. Knowing the usual performance of the hives and honey bees will help beekeepers recognise new or unusual events and pests. Keep written and photographic records of all unusual observations. As pest numbers increase rapidly, constant vigilance is essential for the early detection of honey bee pests and pest honey bees.

5. *Abide by the law*

Respect and be aware of laws and regulations established to protect the honey bee industry, Australian agriculture and the local region.

6. *Report anything unusual*

If you suspect a new pest – report it immediately to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881

These 6 basic steps can all be recorded and filed for future reference easily by using the B-QUAL and B-TRACE app.

All members have free access to our apps if you are not currently using the app contact for B-QUAL members admin@bqual.com.au and for B-TRACE members admin@btrace.com.au and a new link will be emailed to you with logon instructions.

HELP WANTED:

We are looking for someone with good social media skills to administer our B-TRACE Facebook and Instagram pages. Although we set both up when the new web sites were developed we have not encouraged enough usage and would welcome someone to regularly post and encourage members to use the outlets to advertise their market dates, products or just post interesting QA and biosecurity messages. If you would like to assist us with our social media please contact admin@btrace.com.au we will get back to you.

Transparency is key to business success.

In recent years, consumers interest in where their produce comes from has grown massively, which coincides with farmers and suppliers wanting greater visibility on their own product's journey along the supply chain. Here's why traceability is such a big deal in agriculture today.

- ✓ Traceability helps track produce from farm to table in domestic and international export markets.
- ✓ The Australian agricultural industry all up is subject to \$2 billion in food fraud each year.
- ✓ Traceability can increase consumer confidence by validating food claims and building trust
- ✓ The Australian Government National Traceability Project is helping fund some 30 tech innovations to improve traceability by 2023

The importance of traceability.

The pandemic has shed light on a central issue for the Australian agricultural industry - traceability. Stifled imports and exports over the past year have increased Australia's demand for greater visibility over where their food originates and how it's grown. Not only that, Aussie farmer's want assurance that their product is handled well and remains in top quality on its journey to local retailers or overseas markets.

Our key motivation is to maintain Australia's global reputation for grade A produce. In recent years, food fraud has threatened this standing, especially in popular export markets. **Fraudsters have taken to mislabelling non-Australian produce as Australian.** The problem has become so prominent that it is costing the Australian agricultural industry upwards of \$2 billion each year.

Improving traceability across the board could fix both of these problems. Specially designed systems can help farmers and other stakeholders trace their products along the supply chain. Consumers on the other hand will be able to take advantage of technology by tracking their produce all the way back to the original source. This will enable more conscious consumption and build confidence and trust when purchasing.

What is B-QUAL doing for the honey industry?

We have digitised our certification and audit program.

Constructed the Australian Honey chemistry database; undertaken by a Federal Government grant under the Federal Traceability grant program.

Once we have completed the last data entries into our chemical library we will be in a position to implement the next stage of our traceability program to provide our members with a batch numbering system.

If you use the app and want in on the batch number system The B-QUAL and B-TRACE apps will have the ability to link to the Australian Batch Number system (ABN) which will show that the contents have been tested to CODEX standards comply with all standards and legal requirements. The consumer via the ABN on the label, (or it may be a QR code or other technique) will be able to see at a glance that they are assured that the content is pure Australian honey. Packers will be able to go as far as stating provenance (and mono-floral) and vintage, all the requirements of a fine food product.

B-QUAL and B-TRACE logo labels

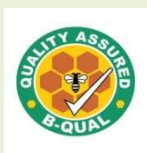
We encourage all members to use the B-QUAL and B-TRACE labels as a measure to show you're an accredited supplier

We now have container labels available on request at a cost of:

B-QUAL 15mm diam container labels \$22/1000. Colour print

B-TRACE 35mm diam lid labels \$ 7/100. Colour print.

For members incorporating BQUAL or B-TRACE labels into their own printed labels, free artwork is available.



15mm diameter.



35mm diameter lid label

B-QUAL / B-TRACE App

We still have a few issues with the initial app login by some members. It should be noted that you cannot access the App by the web sites. It is a web based app and only accessed by the following method once your profile and access has been granted.

To log in for the first time, you will need B-QUAL / B-TRACE to set you up with an account by sending you an email asking you to set your password. This is usually done when you join either group, but if already a member and you have not yet signed on, email us requesting app access. Click on the link in the email to set your password. Once you have set your password, visit bqual@azurewebsites.net and fill in your email and new password. You can also use <https://bqual.app/login>. Same for both B-QUAL and B-TRACE users. Remember keep your password simple, it is case and spelling sensitive.

If you did not receive or answer the initial email link, please advise the office admin@bqual.com.au or admin@btrace.com.au and we will resend the link to enable you to set up your account. The initial link does have an expiry time. If you do not get the link before requesting a new one look in your spam or junk file first as we have had instances where this has happened.

The app is free to all members and we strongly encourage all to use it.

Great news from our sponsors!

We are very happy to report that our sponsors have agreed to continue their agreements with us for a further 2 years. We sincerely thank them for their support over the last 3 years during the worst times many in our industry have experienced. We also acknowledge it has also been difficult for our sponsors as well, so we see their continued support of B-QUAL as an indication of the esteem and confidence they have in the Australian Honey Industry.

So we just do not want to say support those who support us.....but...
when you need equipment irradiation go to Steritech.

Do you want a new/used Kenworth, DAF, Hino Truck, Mercedes Benz or Toyota car make sure you contact CMV; and those beekeepers supplying to CMV farms give them your best.

Lastly we all know how much Hive & Wellness help our industry and have for many years so make sure you keep supporting them.

We hope we will be able to have links to sponsors websites on both B-QUAL and B-TRACE web sites.

Please support those who support us.



Are you up to date with the food label laws?

The information that is required on your honey labelling in Australia and New Zealand is prescribed by the **Food Standards Code**. Complying with the **honey labelling requirements** of the Food Standards Code will ensure that your honey can be sold legally. All packaged foods sold in Australia must comply with the labelling requirements stated within the Food Standards Code.

Honey is a product that sells according to its looks and so the information you give on the label is not only a legal requirement but can also be a sales aid. This is usually all the information that the consumer has to go on in deciding whether to buy the product. For example, it is not possible for the consumer to know, just by looking, whether the product is authentic honey. Therefore, attractive, informative and effective labelling is important. It is best to market honey indicating its exact geographical origin: this gives the consumer confidence in the product, and to some extent to visualise and feel identification with a blossom or a region. In addition to attracting customers to the product, the label on honey should give the following information.

1. The name of the food. Packaged food must be labelled with a name or description that will not mislead consumers. **“Honey” is a prescribed name and that name must appear on the label.**
2. Source of the honey (e.g. yellow gum, mixed floral, Orange blossom); should also be shown.
3. Weight of the contents (e.g. 500g);

Research suggests that consumers want quick and accurate information to assist with their purchase.

Food labels are required by law to carry essential information so that consumers are informed of the nature and properties of foods prior to purchase – this includes statements about the presence of allergenic ingredients. Some information may also voluntarily be offered on food labels by food businesses, giving consumers greater information to make informed purchasing choices. Food businesses must also ensure that they are not potentially misleading or deceiving consumers with any claims that are made on food labels (whether intentional or not).

Therefore food labels need to be clear, consistent and honest. It is against the law for suppliers to mislead or lie about where their food product comes from.

If a priority food was grown, produced or made in Australia, its country of origin label will also feature:

A kangaroo in a triangle logo to help quickly identify that the food is Australian in origin.

A bar chart and text identifying the proportion of Australian content in the food.

As a honey or honey products vendor it is likely that you will be required to comply with the Country of Origin (Australian) Food Labelling Information Standard of 2016.

The standard marks are for food products that were grown, or produced, or made (substantially transformed) with 100% Australian ingredients. The standard mark will have the kangaroo logo, full bar chart and text. All the below are acceptable marks (logos) for raw honey



Honey is classed as a priority food and the label must be present on the product.

It is illegal to use logos as above without an explanation clearly showing the percentage of Australian content in raw Honey. All examples above should show the full bar infill and include **“100% Australian Honey”** text.

The words “Australian Honey”, “Product of Australia”, “Produce of Australia”, “Produced in Australia” or “Made in Australia” are all acceptable. Priority foods can only claim to be produced or grown in Australia if they contain 100 per cent Australian ingredients.

The standard does not set a minimum size for the country of origin element on your labels, only that it must be displayed in its entirety in English, is legible and prominent. In other words, be clearly visible so consumers can understand it.

The standard allows for packages with a surface area of less than 100cm² to omit the kangaroo and bar chart elements and simply include the explanatory words in a box.

Honey in the FSANZ Standard is defined as:

Standard 2.8.2 Honey

Note 1 This instrument is a standard under the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991* (Cth). The standards together make up the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*

2.8.2—2 Definitions

Note In this Code (see section 1.1.2—3):

Honey means the natural sweet substance produced by honey bees from the nectar of blossoms or from secretions of living parts of plants or excretions of plant sucking insects on the living parts of plants, which honey bees collect, transform and combine with specific substances of their own, store and leave in the honey comb to ripen and mature.

2.8.2—3 Requirement for food sold as honey

A food that is sold as ‘honey’ must:

- (a) be honey; and
- (b) contain:
 - (i) no less than 60% reducing sugars; and
 - (ii) no more than 21% moisture.

2.8.2—4 Prescribed name

‘Honey’ is a *prescribed name.

The composition of honey varies from one floral source to another. The average composition of Australian honey produced from native and exotic plants is: water 15.6%, fructose 42.5%, glucose 30.6%, sucrose 2.9%, minerals 0.16% and other constituents 8.24%. Honey is a natural food. Every effort must be made to maintain its natural qualities during processing and storage and to ensure it has a long shelf life. It should receive minimum heat treatment.

Product Identification

It is essential that each batch of honey produced be identified so that the product is traceable in the event of a recall (B-QUAL program allows this without any additional recording). Honey recalls are rare due to the stable nature of the food. However, honey is not exempt from the requirements.

The Food Standards Code 1.2.2 has details of lot identification as;

A “lot” is defined as a quantity of food which is prepared or packed under virtually the same conditions, usually from a particular preparation or packing unit and during a specific time ordinarily not exceeding 24 hours.

Your lot identification can take many forms however it is typically the harvest, extraction or the packing date.

For example, if you extract honey once in 2018, then your lot identification could be “2018”. In a better year where you extract honey in January, March or April your lot identifications could be “01/18”, “Mar2018”, or “04/2018”.

The lot identification on your honey labelling can also be a best before date provided you can correlate the best before date to a specific batch of honey.

The Name and Address of Supplier

All honey labelling must include your name and address. The Food Standards Code 1.2.2 specifies this requirement.

The label must show:

- Your name or your registered business name;
- Street address, including number street name, town or suburb, state and post code;

- You cannot use a post box number or a website address as an alternative to physical address details. You can include such detail on your packaging but not as the main contact source.

Honey on its own does not require any health or allergy warning statements.

- You do **NOT** have to declare the presence of pollen, propolis or royal jelly on your honey labelling;
- Similarly, your labelling does **NOT** have to carry a warning about not feeding honey to infants under 12 months of age due to the risk of botulism.

Under the label standard bee pollen only needs to be declared when the pollen itself is presented as food or if pollen is an ingredient in food. It is advisable to add an “advisory statement” if selling bee pollen or propolis separately. An example of an advisory statement can be:

Food:

- (a) *Bee Pollen*
- (b) *Or a food containing Bee Pollen as an ingredient.*

Advisory statement indicating that:

This product contains bee pollen which can cause severe allergic reactions.



Nutrition information.

Nutrition information could be included in your label health claims. Nutrition and health related claims are voluntary but you must be careful of any claims that you make.

Ingredients. With some exceptions, food labels must include a statement of ingredients (the term ingredient includes additives). However as “honey” is a prescribed name, this word must be used on the label and no further breakdown is required (e.g. Ingredients: Raw cold-extracted honey).

The Food Standards Code 1.2.5 states that date marking is not required on food with a best before date of 2 years or more.

Weights and Measures

In Australia, it is normal to indicate the net weight of the honey in the package rather than volume. The weights should be expressed in kilograms (kg) or grams (g). Weights and measures declarations are regulated in Australia by the **Australian National Measurement Institute**.



Remember to include 100% text if you produced your own honey.

It is imperative that you never mislead your customers by making representations about your honey that are not true. In general terms, you must be able to substantiate any claims you make and this may mean that you have to keep documentation in support of your claims. This is where B-QUAL documentation will assist.

For added customer satisfaction include your B-QUAL logo on your container.

Lastly it is valuable if label space allows, providing additional product information for the consumer, such as explanations and taste descriptions. In order to do so use creativity. Some beekeepers provide information to their customers about the granulation of honey and how to liquefy it should it set hard. It is important to point out that granulation or candying of honey is a natural process, and that the quality of the product is not affected at all, nor has it gone bad. A text that candied honey may be reliquefied by placing the container in a hot water bath at preferably 35 °C but certainly no more than 45 °C until liquefied would be advisable.

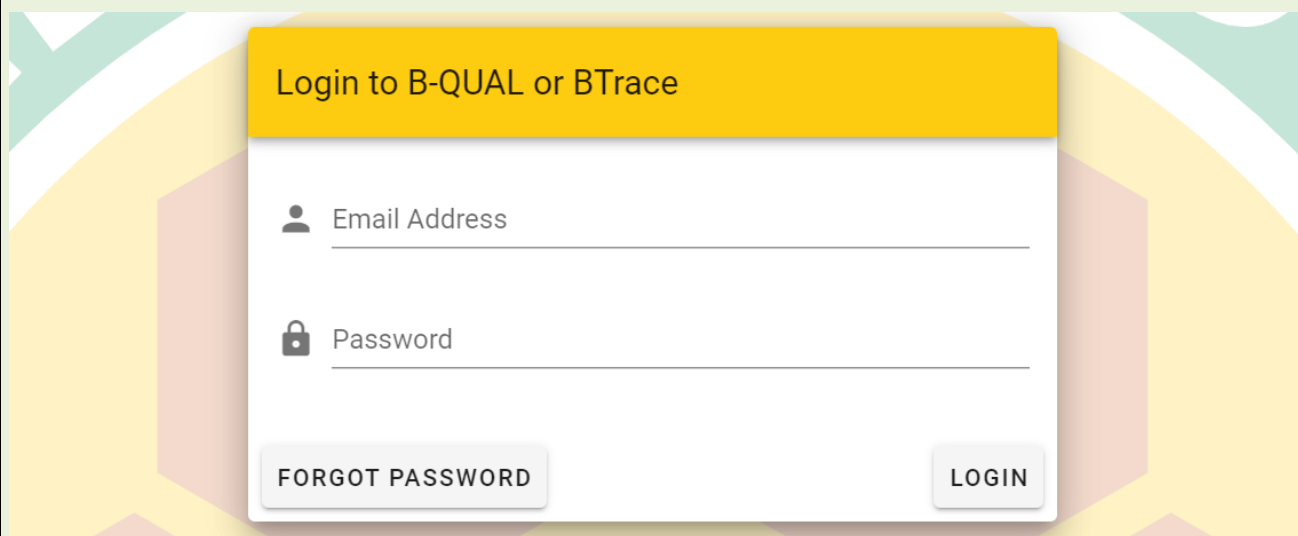
DISCLAIMER: Label laws are quite comprehensive the above is not intended to be the complete guide to labelling. Laws are administered by each State or Territory please check with your local State or Territory food authority for complete information on their particular requirements.

Anti-Counterfeiting Workshop.

For those who attended the workshop below are the links to both the Testimona Miroverse Board instructions and explanations, and Day 1 and Day 2 workshops. These are now an industry open source tool. All links will be placed on both our websites in the next few days.

[Testimona Miroverse Board link](#)

<https://bqual.com.au/2022/08/09/anti-counterfeiting-from-hive-to-table/>



We have developed in conjunction with UWA, CRCHBP and members input, an industry leading hive management app. Please assist in improving the record keeping of the honey industry by using it in your enterprise. The recent Varroa outbreak in NSW has highlighted the lack of many beekeepers in keeping good records and has severely hampered the NSW Department in their hive tracking, putting the industry at even greater risk.

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