

B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd and B-TRACE Australia.

ABN: 37 096 945 694 an AHBIC Company

Manager of the Australian Honey Industry QA and Food Handling programs.

MARCH NEWSLETTER. Issue 9 Vol 23



General enquiries for B-QUAL & B-TRACE:

3 Windsong Pass Chirnside Park Vic 3116

Phone: 0404 38 1942

B-QUAL email: admin@bqual.com.au

B-TRACE email: admin@btrace.com.au

Web sites:

www.bqual.com.au

www.btrace.com.au

Contents.

Page 2. Steritech

Page 3. Organic Audits

Page 4. Organic Audits. B-QUAL News

Page 5. B-QUAL and B-TRACE News

Page 6. CMV Farms

Page 7. Biosecurity and Traceability

Page 8. What happens on an audit?



®

B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd and B-TRACE Australia
are owned by AHBIC.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council.



TM



Steritech is the most prominent and trusted contract sterilisation and decontamination processor in the Asia-Pacific region, and one of the largest worldwide.

We believe in working closely with our customers to provide the most innovative, client- focused solutions that deliver results above and beyond expectations.

We can eliminate potentially disastrous microbiological contamination, bacteria and successfully destroy harmful pests.

Maintenance of bee equipment and replacing contaminated hives can be a very costly exercise.

Gamma Irradiation stands alone in offering the most effective method of eliminating pathogens and insects from contaminated equipment.

Gamma Irradiation Kills:

- **Nosema Ceranae**
- **Ascosphaera apis**
- **Small Hive Beetle**
- **American Foulbrood**
- **European Foulbrood**

The bee equipment remains in the irradiation chamber for a specified period.

The gamma rays penetrate all areas of the bee equipment. Chemical treatments may not reach every area of the equipment which is why irradiation is so trusted.

Bee equipment is safe to be handled from the point it exits the irradiation chamber.

Gamma irradiation treatment is a chemical free process. There are no residues in the bee equipment, so no quarantine periods are required.

Victoria:

160 South Gippsland Highway, Dandenong 3175. Phone. 03 8726 5566.

NSW:

5 Widemere Rd Wetherill Park 2164. Phone 02 8785 4400

QLD:

180 -186 Potassium Street Narangba 4504. Phone. 07 3385 8400

Steritech have been strong supporters of B-QUAL for the past 4 years and we gratefully acknowledge their continuing support of B-QUAL and more lately B-TRACE

B-QUAL has added Organic Auditing to our range of audit products.



We are pleased to announce that we have now in place an Organic Audit service to complement our B-QUAL audit program which is undertaken and managed by Safe Food Australia.

Where organic audits are requested we can now complete both the Organic and B-QUAL audits together via Organic Food Chain Pty Ltd.

*Left: Keith Morris. Director
Organic food Chain Pty Ltd.*

The Organic Food Chain Pty Ltd (OFC) is an approved organic certifying body recognised by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries under the *Export Control (Organic Goods) Rules 2021*. OFC is accredited with IOAS to ISO/IEC 17065:2013 *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*. OFC organic certification for beekeeping will give you access to domestic as well as overseas markets, excluding Great Britain, EU Japan and USA.

OFC is a family owned organisation with an agricultural background. The Director, Keith Morris, and his wife Rhondda were farmers for over 40 years, 35 of which were spent practicing organic farming principals. Keith has been active in organic certification for over 25 years. Keith's daughter, Kari Martin, is also a Director, and has been the General Manager since 2016. Kari and her husband Jason also operate a successful vermiculture business.

OFC engages contract inspectors to carry out audits on behalf of OFC; and some of those inspectors are qualified and indeed already conduct food safety audits so that B-QUAL audits can be done at the same time as your organic inspection. This will have the benefit of saving you time and money as the inspector only visits your business once to do both inspections.

Beekeeping is covered under section 1.23 *Bee Products* in the National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce. Hives must be under a system of inspection for at least 12 months before any products can be labelled as organic or bio-dynamic. Numerous aspects of B-QUAL certification and organic certification overlap, so if you are B-QUAL certified, you are likely already have many of the systems in place that are necessary for organic certification as well.

The process to become organic certified is as follows:

1. Complete and submit an apiculture or processor application from Organic Food Chain web site.
2. Once the application is approved, you will be sent an Organic Management Plan to be completed and submitted for approval prior to your inspection.
3. An initial inspection is arranged by us with one of our organic inspectors. An initial inspection is conducted for those new to organic certification as well as those transferring from another organic certifying body.

4. OFC's inspector writes a report, which you will be asked to sign.
5. OFC certification staff review the inspection report for compliance to the National Standard.
6. Ongoing annual inspections and sampling of product will occur to determine compliance to the National Standard in order for you to maintain organic certification.
7. In addition, other random or unannounced inspections may occur.

Further information about OFC and organic certification can be found at:

<https://organicfoodchain.com.au/> Tel: 0400 979 435. Email: ofc@organicfoodchain.com.au

B-QUAL / B-TRACE News and updates:

Honey testing; we have been able to secure some additional funding to undertake specific Ironbark honey varietal species testing. Similar to what has been done in WA with their iconic honeys, we are hoping to conduct a number of tests on East Coast honey, namely Ironbark varieties including Mugga, Yellow Iron Bark, Yellow Box, Yellow Gum, Broadleaf, Grey Iron Bark, SA Blue Gum, River Red Gum, Red Iron Bark, Forest Red Gum. Once testing has been completed we can then produce marketing data which can be accessed by a QR label code or other device tracing back to a producers web site or central data base showing the approved standards for that honey and providing the provenance and authenticity of the purchase. This is being done now by some producers in New Zealand with great success.

Once we have all the tracing and reference data bases in order B-QUAL will be talking to all involved stakeholders and will increase our efforts to obtain maximum prices for our members who will be able to show authenticity, traceability and provenance. It should be noted that we produce a fine food, and as such, B-QUAL recognises that our members should be able to be justly rewarded for their efforts.

Standards Australia has formed a mirror committee FT-039 Bee Products, and AHBIC and B-QUAL have both been invited to participate in this mirror committee of the International project to review and revise Bee Products standards.

AHBIC has formed a committee to investigate Anti-Dumping of imported Honey in Australia and to prepare any submissions that may be required. B-QUAL has a seat on this committee and will do all it can to protect its members marketplace.

Should any reader find suspected evidence of cheap imported honey available to Australian consumers in supermarkets, or other outlets, please send details including name, brand, importer, country of origin and price to admin@bqual.com.au or post small jar to 3 Windsong Pass Chirnside Park Vic 3116. WA readers please email admin@bqual.com.au for local redirection.

Audits have been undertaken in all States and Safe Food Australia would remind that members prior to audit should check and ensure records are up to date, including any receipts, and that your Quality Manual is up to date along with code of Practice declaration. Once SFA have contacted you to set an audit date that is the time to complete a final check to ensure you are ready for the audit. The better prepared you are will equate to less time for the audit and save you costs.

More about audits on page 8.

B-QUAL web site has undergone some rework mainly on improving security settings and including a member's only section which should be fully functional around mid-March. This section will only be accessible by password and will request you to join the section by applying on your first visit; this will require a login and password reset linked to your BQ number.

B-TRACE membership continues to grow and it is pleasing to see that many new members are applying for audits well within the required time. The level of audit form answers, record keeping and overall business conduct according to the Auditors is very high. There is certainly a willingness of many to ensure that they run their businesses with as best practice as is possible, which in the long run only helps their businesses and our industry.

Labels just a reminder that B-QUAL and B-TRACE labels are available for packaging purposes and for those who print their own labels high resolution art work is available. For supplies contact admin@bqual.com.au or admin@btrace.com.au

B-TRACE members are invited to participate in the honey sample projects if their honey is within the required variety. Members who submit a sample for testing will get a copy of the CODEX and HPTLC test results. So if any B-TRACE members are producing an Iron bark variety please contact admin@bqual.com.au and register. In future we will place current projects on both web sites.

AQBBA (Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association) have produced a new standard which has been accepted by B-QUAL and a copy of both the standard and templates will be placed into our B-QUAL web site member's only section which interested parties can download. A precis copy will also be placed onto the B-TRACE web site once approved by AQBBA.

AHBIC has recently appointed Bianca Giggins as the new Varroa coordinator for AHBIC supported with funding from DAFF, Bianca has joined AHBIC to assist in the Varroa incursion. Based in the NSW Hunter Valley, she has been beekeeping for 10 years and has completed the Certificate 111 in Beekeeping in 2017. Bianca was previously employed at NSW Department of Primary Industries in two roles, one as Varroa Surveillance Coordinator and prior to that as Honey Bee Training Coordinator for the Certificate 111 Beekeeping at Tocal College. Bianca says that engagement and discussion with beekeepers, will be high on her agenda, alongside continuing AHBICs involvement in the Varroa Response, industry education and research, including several aspects to help our industry professionalise their business in efficiencies, record keeping, resource access and pest and disease management.

You can contact Bianca to discuss your beekeeping concerns or to have a chat about anything bee related that you believe she or AHBIC can assist you with.

Email: Bianca@honeybee.org.au Mobile 0402 467 780.

AHBIC in partnership with Sugar Australia have launched the Sugar 4 Bees program. Sugar dust will be supplied in 1 tonne bulka bags. The dust is available to assist beekeepers maintain hive health whilst impacted by the current Varroa incursion. Conditions re Bee Feeding must comply with the current Emergency Order.

For full details contact Bianca Giggins, AHBIC Varroa Co coordinator, 0402 467 780
email: Bianca@honeybee.org.au or website www.honeybee.org.au

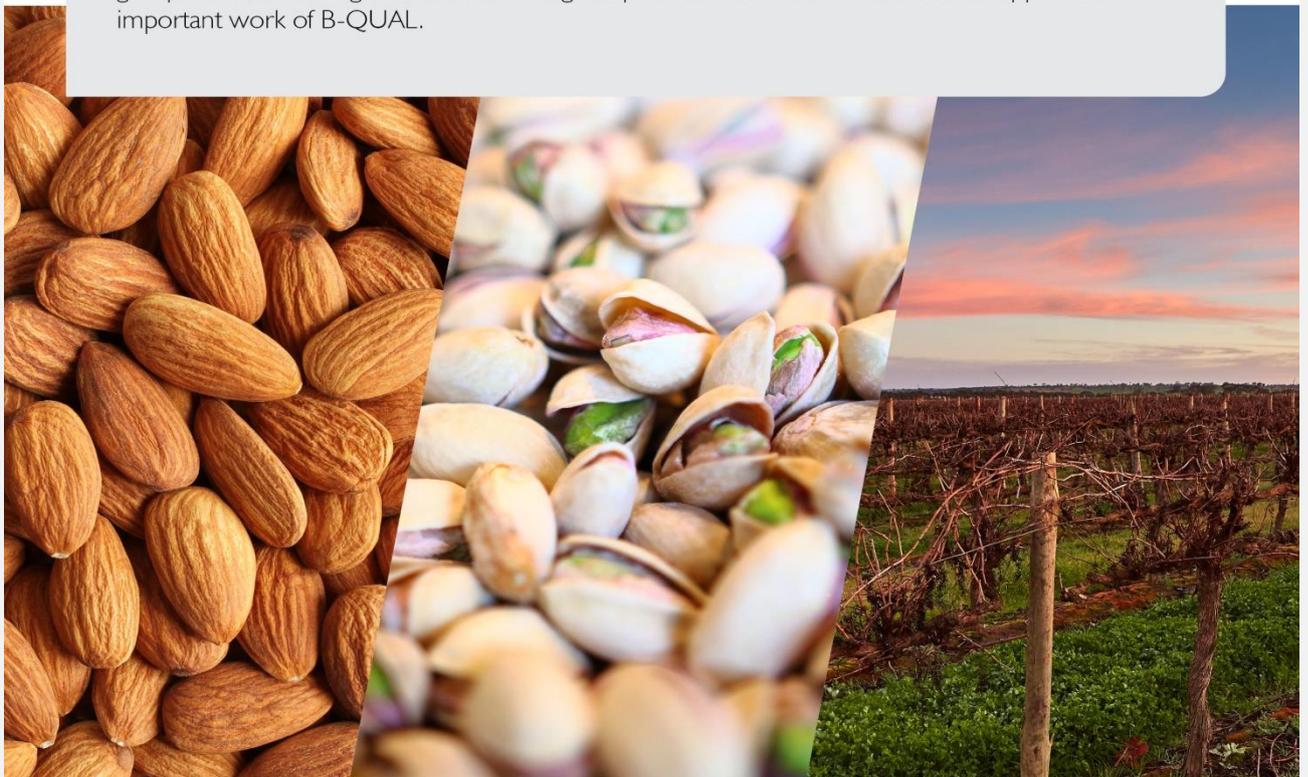
The Directors of B-QUAL are pleased to announce the CMV Group have agreed to continue to support our work as they have done for the past 4 years. We have formed a close association with CMV and look forward to continue working with them.



Established in 1980, CMV Farms is now diversified across three crops and operates properties in multiple regions around Australia. Farming nearly 1,800 hectares across almonds, pistachios and wine grapes, our focus is to remain key growers in each industry with interests at each stage of the supply chain, whether that be through strong partnerships, wholly-owned businesses or key shareholder interests.

At CMV Farms, we are committed to supporting and developing our regional communities as well as our surrounding environment. Our properties have significant plantings of native vegetation and ground cover, providing corridors of vegetation to assist the movement of native animal populations through the properties as well as natural forage areas for our bee populations during pollination periods.

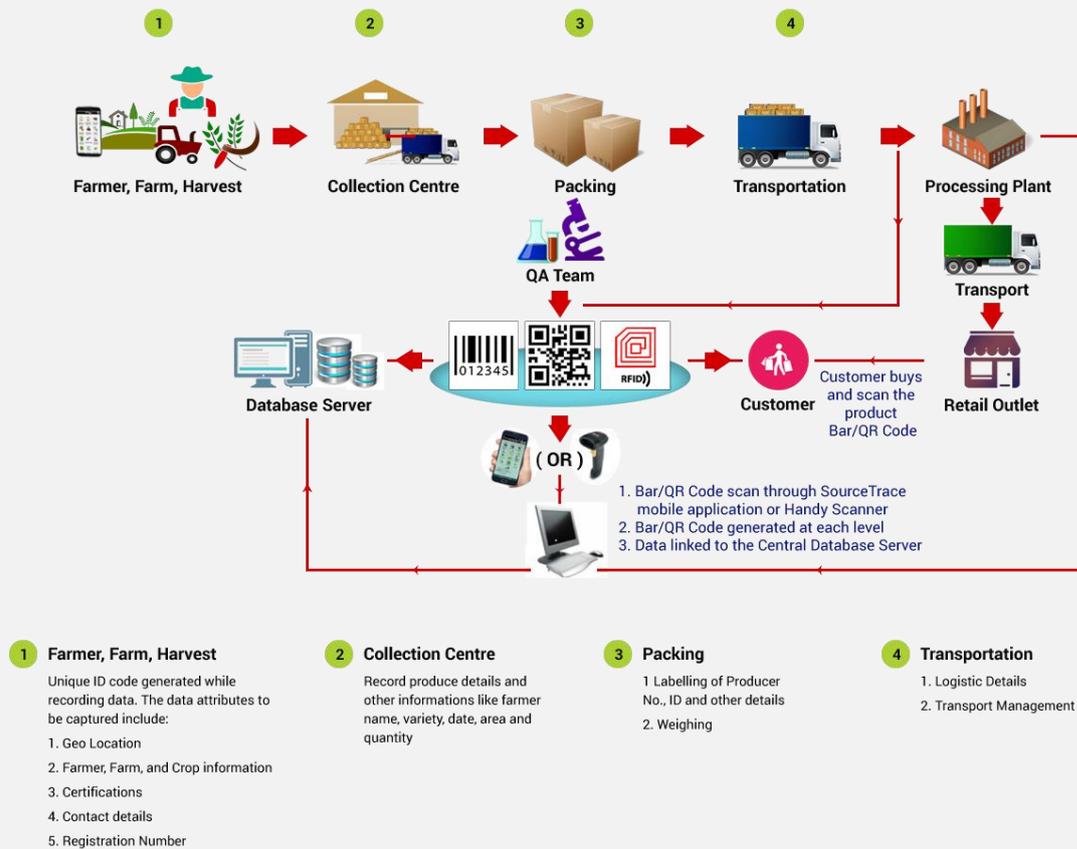
Through the CMV Group Foundations, we keenly support individuals in need and community groups around our regions, and it is with great pleasure that we also continue to support the important work of B-QUAL.



Biosecurity and Traceability:

B-QUAL is working toward a tracing program linked to our library with QR codes or similar, so consumers can see just where their purchase came from and that it compares to the appropriate standards.

This is a generic example of how it can work.



It is very satisfying to see Governments of all levels, Federal, State and Territories placing such high priorities on Biosecurity and Traceability. The Federal Government has allocated in excess of \$68 million towards traceability grants in this current year.

Traceability is the ability to follow the movement of a product through stages of production, processing and distribution to show consumers and import countries, that our products are safe, clean, and sustainable from paddock to plate.

The growing importance and interest in traceability needs to include stakeholders from all industry sectors such as producers, employees, state and territory governments, retailers, logistics firms, data services providers and exporters.

Increasingly consumers want to know where their foods come from, and Australia's exports have already created a reputation for clean green product we now need to work to create a National Traceability scheme.

Agricultural traceability provides the evidence to maintain trust as a provider of high quality, safe and sustainable food products. Our traceability systems will be increasingly essential to opening new markets for our exports, as well as keeping and growing the ones we have.

For our particular industry as well as the obvious commercial benefits of the ability to trace and provide provenance of honey products it is also essential that beekeepers and packers keep reliable records of inspections and hive movements to maintain biosecurity preparedness and response to pest incursions, which in turn may also assist industry to recover faster if exotic pests or disease gets into Australia.

Record keeping is essential and we urge everyone to keep records so as an industry we can claim leadership in this field and give our consumers' confidence in our products... that should lead to greater profits for all.

So what happens at an audit?

Firstly, the Auditor will contact you several weeks in advance to ensure a suitable time can be organised. Auditors like to group audits together to ensure they can complete as many audits as possible for time efficiency and cost-effective purposes. An audit can take up to 4 hours to complete depending on the complexity of the business. The Auditor will conduct an opening meeting and then examine all policy, procedures and records associated with meeting the B-QUAL Standard. The inspection will involve the Auditor examining the processing plant and determining if all HACCP requirements are being met for food safety purposes, specifically looking at foreign object control, cleaning and pest control, traceability records, personal hygiene, training, and packaging/ labelling compliance. The Auditor will also seek to determine whether the beekeeping biosecurity code of practice is being met through various testing records, use of barrier systems, notifiable diseases, and movement and management of diseased hives. If a control point is not being met, the Auditor will raise either a major or minor non-conformance depending upon the severity of the non-conformance. Businesses have 30 days to close out non-conformances where they will submit evidence to the Auditor to demonstrate compliance. Once all non-conformances are corrected, the audit is reviewed, and certification granted.