

Evaluation of hemp oil as an enhancement in Feedbee patties for overwintering honey bees

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Colony starvation has been identified as a significant cause of colony loss by New Zealand beekeepers. Sugar syrup supplementation is a common way providing carbohydrates and protein patties are also given. Our concern is that protein patties are very low in lipids that are important precursors for the honey bee pheromones within the hive. In 2015 we evaluated hemp oil as a suitable supplement and in this presentation we will describe the background to the formulation of how much oil to add and describe the impacts on spring bee and brood numbers along with the interactions with five common hive pathogens. Patties were placed in hives in May and again in August. At the end of these months patty residues were weighed and samples of bees collected. Bees were screened for pathogens and degutted abdomens of the August collection were assessed for lipid values. Bee numbers in each hive were assessed at each entry and brood area was measured in late August.

