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Tuesday, 15 April 2014

Lucerne Australia 2014 Pollination Survey

Lucerne Australia first completed a pollination survey with members in 2008. There were 30 respondents and the questions were as follows:

1. Do you have an apiarist stocking bees on your farm?
2. Do you run bees on dryland lucerne? What is the stocking rate of hives per HECTARE?
3. Do you run bees on irrigated lucerne? What is the stocking rate of hives per HECTARE?
4. Would your apiarist be open to higher stocking rates?
5. What are your approximate hectares of lucerne seed production?
6. What is the current price you are paying per hive (Dryland)?
7. What is the current price you are paying per hive (Irrigation)?
8. Do you consider your apiarist to have good hive strength?

Following feedback from grower members, Lucerne Australia completed a second survey in February and March 2014. The questions included:

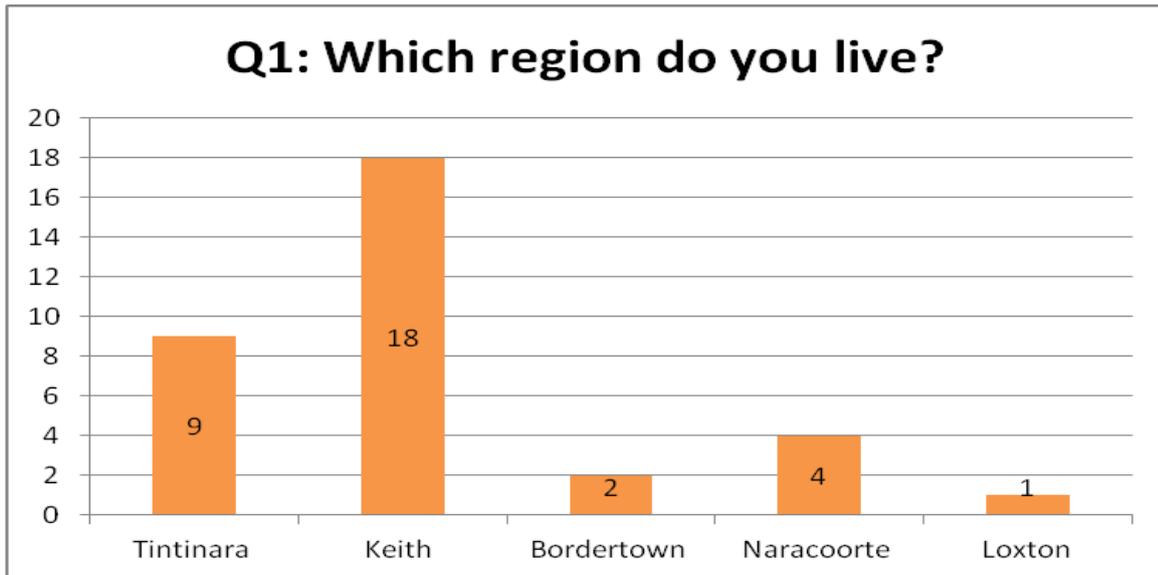
1. Which region do you live?
2. Do you have an apiarist stocking bees on your farm?
3. Do you run bees on dryland lucerne? What is the stocking rate of hives per HECTARE?
4. Do you run bees on irrigated lucerne? What is the stocking rate of hives per HECTARE?
5. What are your approximate hectares of lucerne seed production?
6. What is the current price you are paying per hive (Dryland)?
7. What is the current price you are paying per hive (Irrigation)?
8. Has your bee keeper raised their price per hive within the last 12 months?
9. Do you consider your apiarist to have good hive strength?
10. Do you ask (or receive) an AFB test for your bees?
11. Would your apiarist be open to higher stocking rates?
12. Finally, how do you describe working with your bee keeper?

The 2014 survey was completed by telephone interview, whereas in 2008 responses were received by fax or email by a dedicated form which grower members completed. This report outlines the results of the latest (2014) pollination survey, which includes 34 grower member respondents. It also compares these results with the data analysed in 2008. There is also some insights and conclusions made in this document.

Results from the 2014 Survey

- 88% of those surveyed use an apiarist on their property for pollination services.
- The average stocking rate for bees on dryland lucerne is 1.23 hives per hectare.
- The average stocking rate for bees on irrigated lucerne is 2.44 hives per hectare.
- 65% of those surveyed manage more than 100 hectares of lucerne seed production.
- 55% of those surveyed with dryland, pay no fee for pollination.
- 47% of those surveyed with irrigated lucerne pay no hive fee for pollination.
- Those surveyed in Naracoorte and Bordertown pay the highest rates for pollination.
- 71% of respondents believe that their apiarist has "strong" hive strength.
- 80% of respondents describe working with their beekeeper as either 'excellent' or 'good'.

QUESTION 1:



There were 34 responses to this question.

QUESTION 2

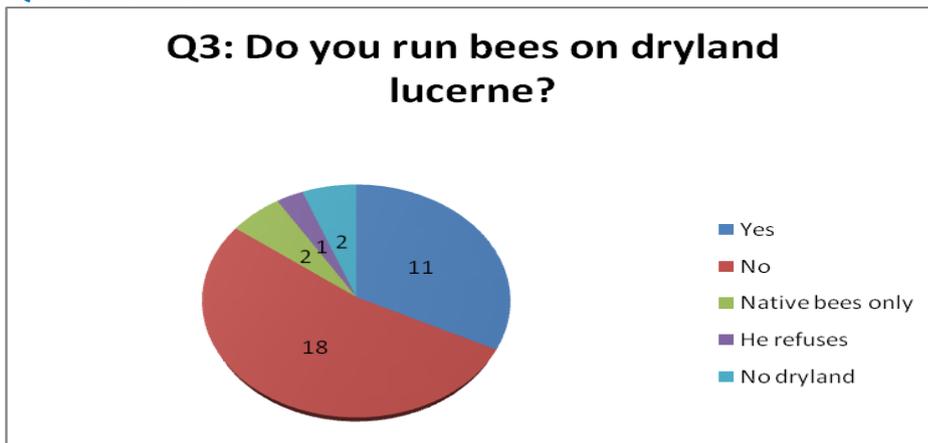


There were 34 responses to this question.

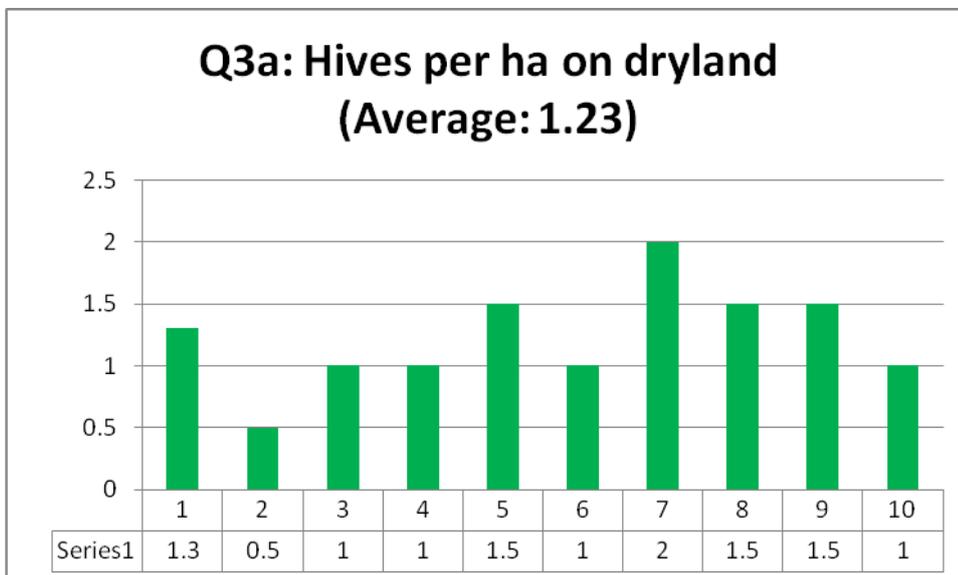
Comments:

88% of respondents currently use an apiarist to stock bees on their farm. One respondent confirmed they are unable to locate a beekeeper willing to stock bees on their property. This respondent is based in the Naracoorte region.

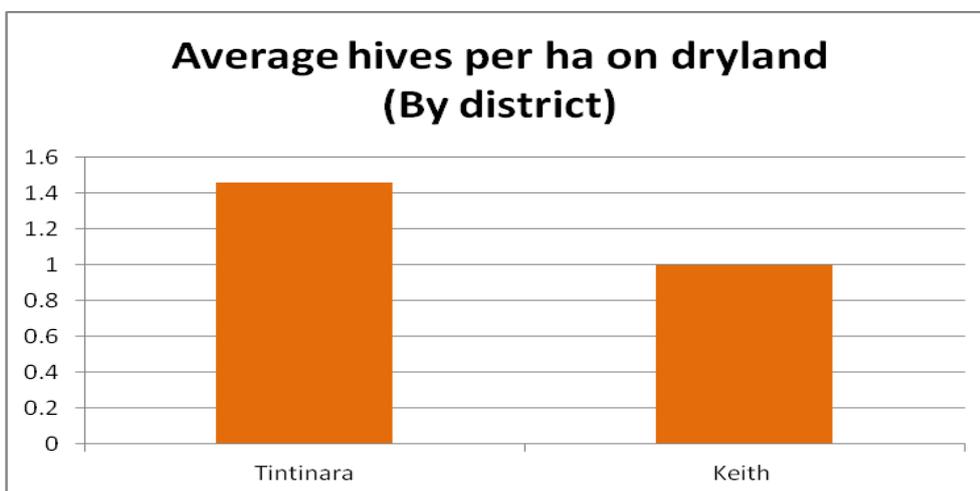
QUESTION 3:



There were 34 responses to this question. Two respondents confirmed that they have no dryland lucerne. One respondent confirmed that his beekeeper refuses to run bees on his dryland paddocks, only his irrigated area. Two respondents specifically stated that they rely on native bees to pollinate their crops and 18 respondents stated that they do not run bees on dryland lucerne.

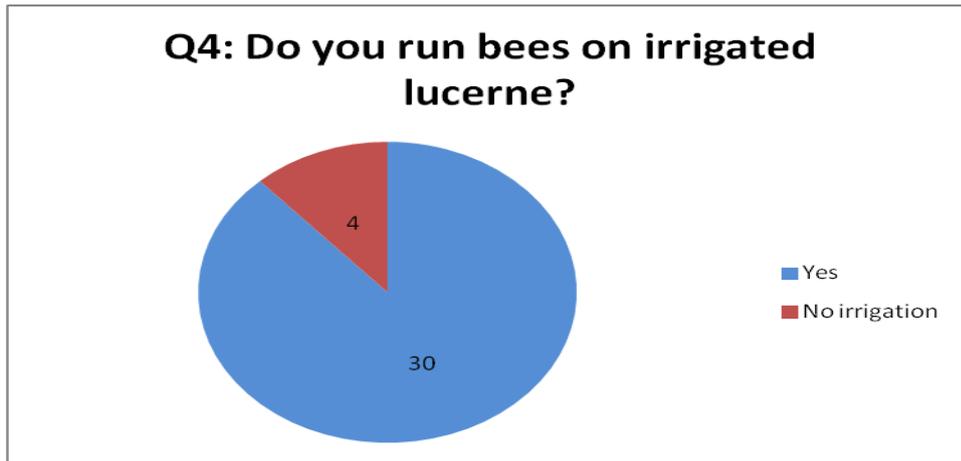


There were 10 responses to this question. Of the 11 respondents who answered 'yes' to question three above, 10 responded with their stocking rate, whereas one respondent confirmed he "didn't know". The stocking rate varied from 0.5 hives/hectare to 2 hives/hectare. The average for all respondents was 1.23.

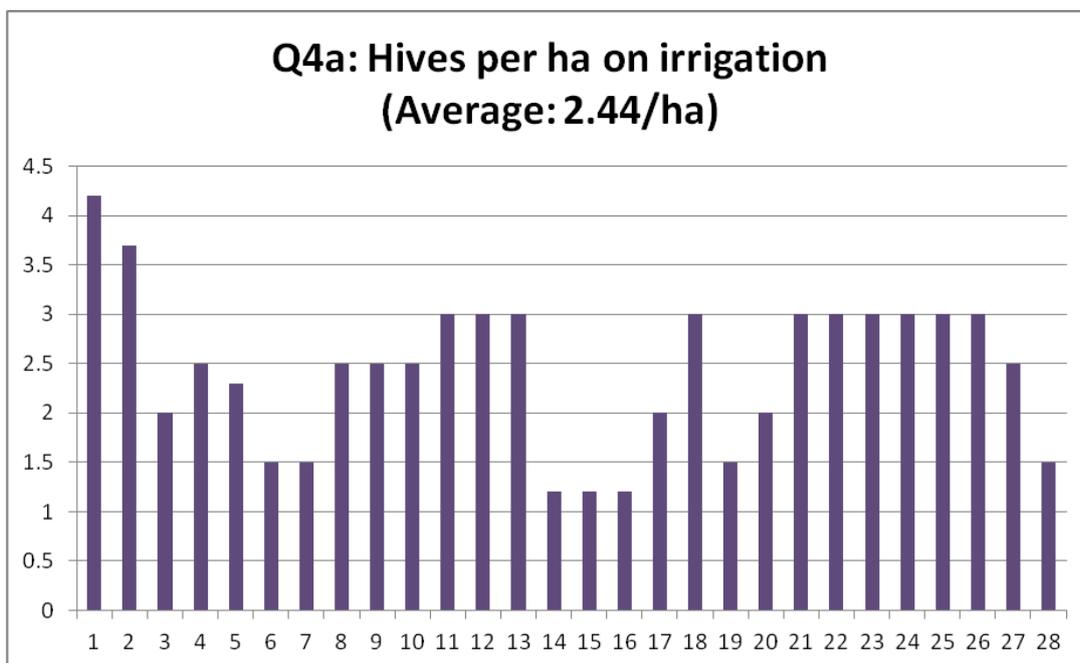


When reviewing results by region, Tintinara averaged 1.46 hives per hectare, and Keith region averaged one hives per hectare.

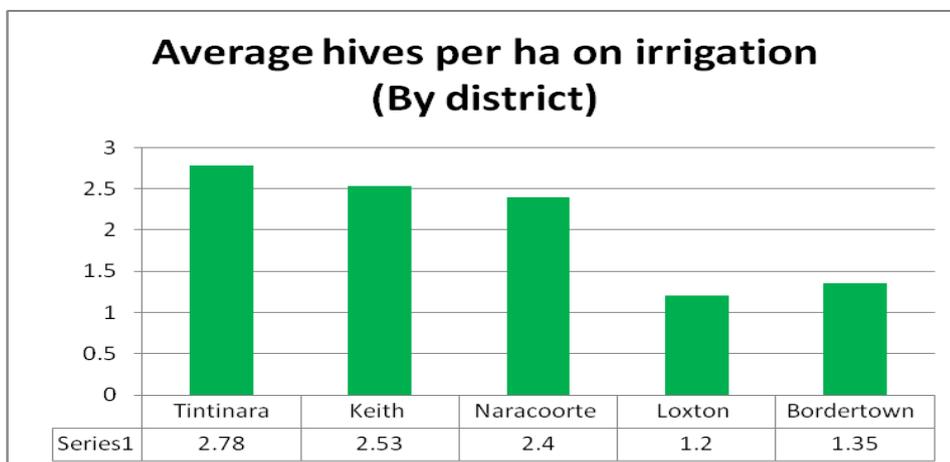
QUESTION 4



There were 34 respondents to this question. Four respondents did not have any irrigated lucerne.



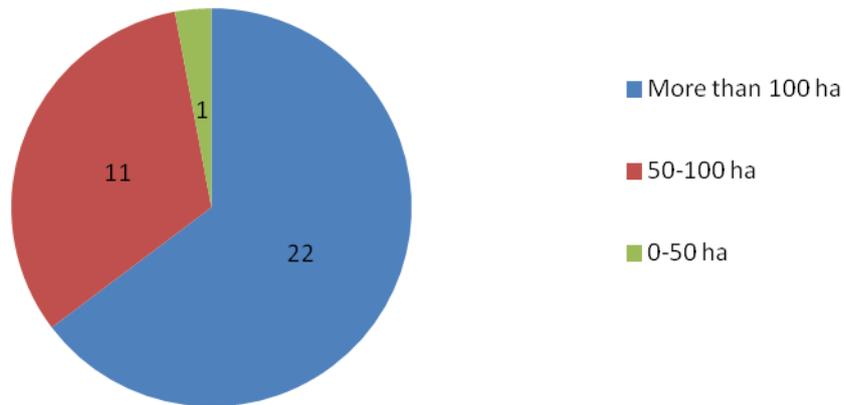
There were 28 respondents to this question from the 30 surveyed as two respondents did not know their stocking rate. The stocking rate on irrigated lucerne varies from 1.2 to 4.2 hives/hectare. The average for all 28 respondents is 2.44 hives/hectare.



When reviewing stocking rates per region, Tintinara had the highest rate and Loxton and Bordertown the lowest.

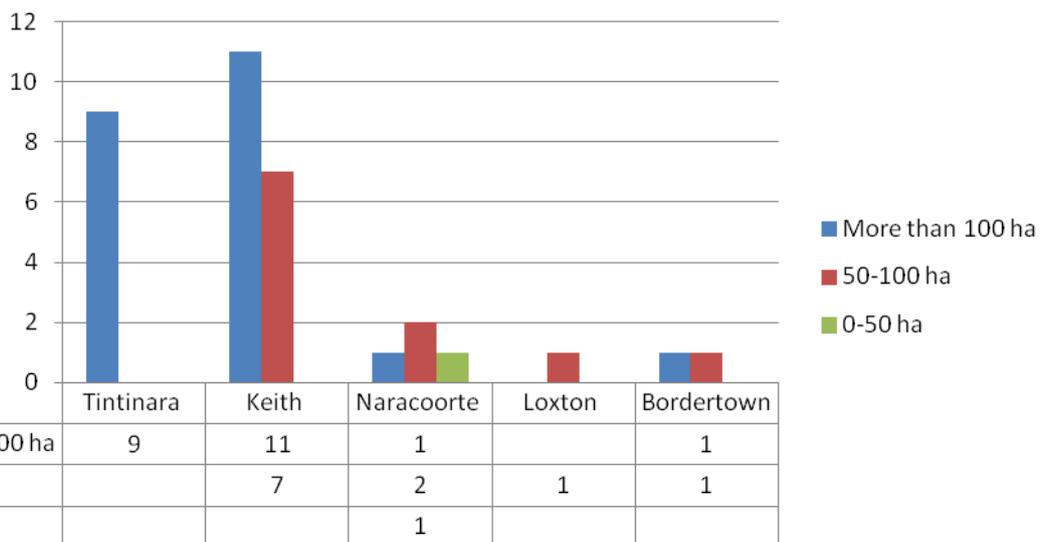
QUESTION 5

Q5: What is your approximate hectares of lucerne seed production?



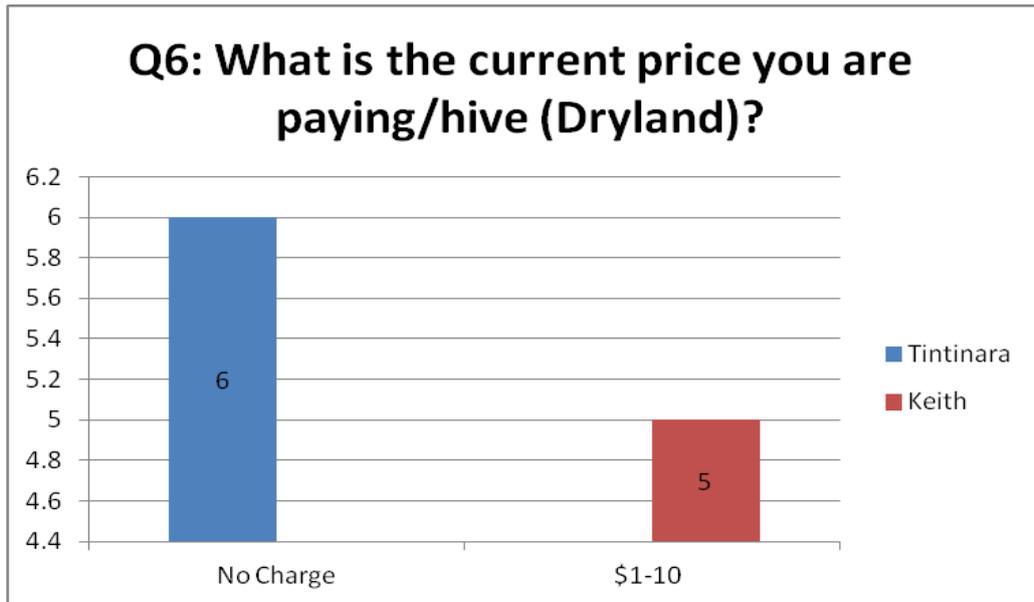
There were 34 responses to this question with 65% of respondents having over 100 hectares of lucerne seed production on their property.

Q5: Hectares per respondent (by district)



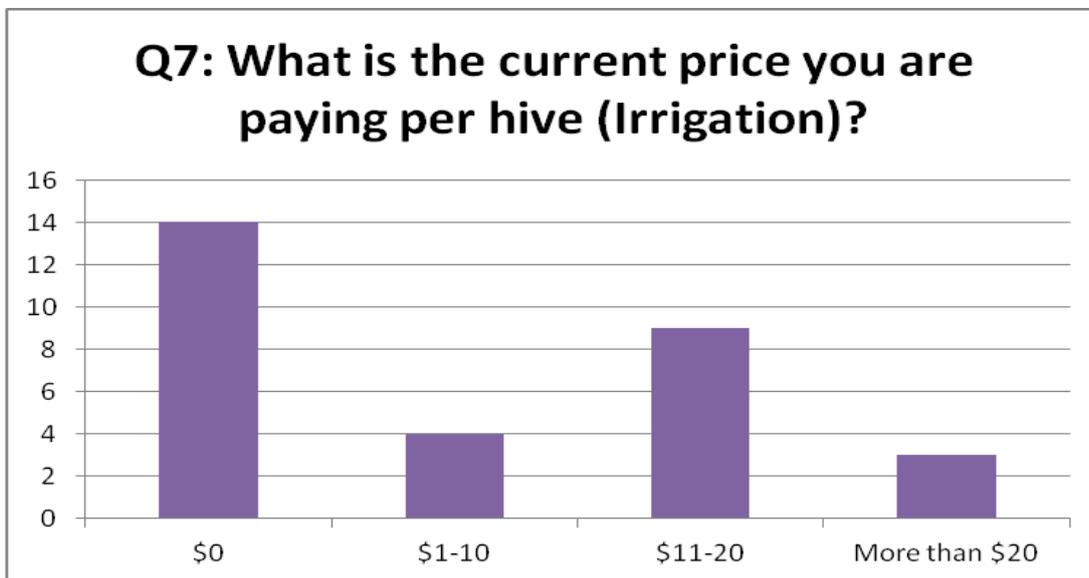
When reviewing the data by region, respondents from Keith and Tintinara had the largest number of hectares.

QUESTION 6



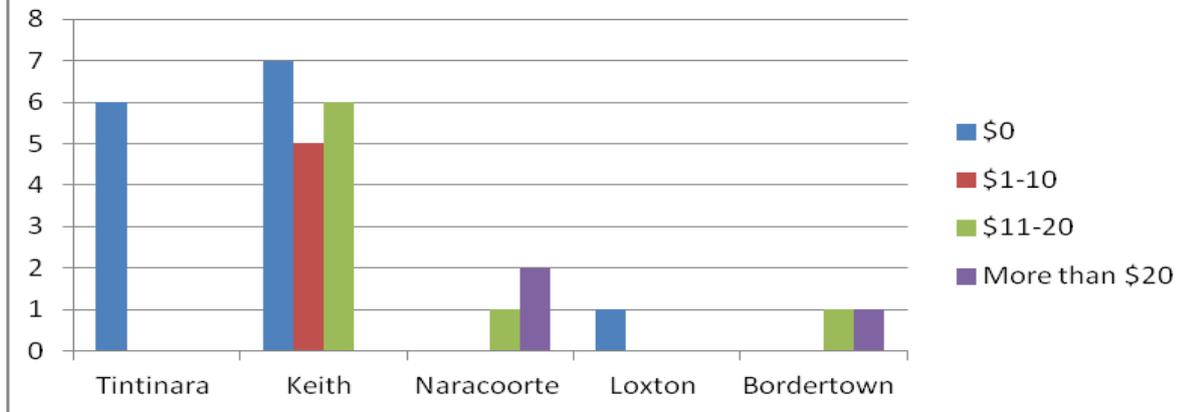
Of the 11 respondents who confirmed that they stock bees on their dryland lucerne, six are not paying their beekeeper for pollination services. All are based in the Tintinara region. Of the five respondents based in the Keith region, all pay between \$1 and \$10 per hive for irrigated lucerne pollination. One respondent stated that he would be willing to pay for a beekeeper to pollinate his dryland lucerne but was unable to identify one.

QUESTION 7



Of the 30 respondents who use beekeepers for their irrigated pollination, just under half (46%) do not pay for this service. Four respondents pay between \$1 - \$10 per hive and nine respondents pay between \$11 - \$20 per hive. Three respondents pay more than \$20 per hive. When prompted, two confirmed they pay \$25 per hive and one respondent confirmed he pays \$50 per hive.

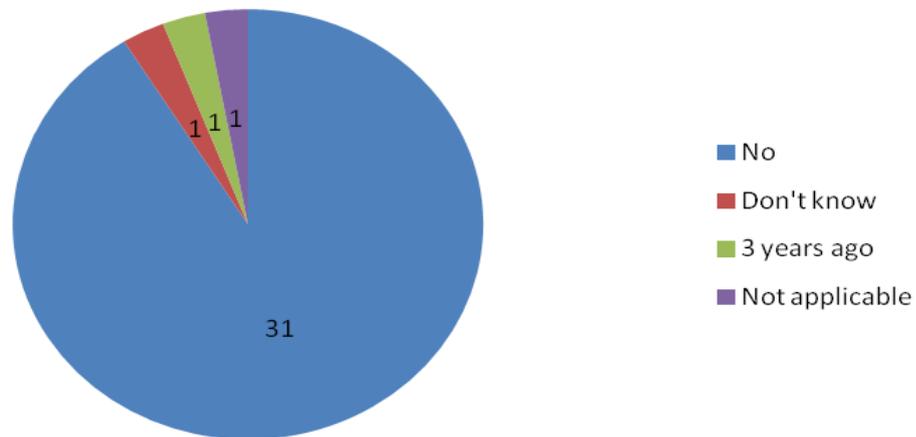
Q7: What is the current price you are paying per hive (Irrigation)? (By district)



The six respondents from the Tintinara region and the respondent from Loxton all confirmed they do not pay for pollination services. Naracoorte and Bordertown region respondents pay the higher rates for pollination services.

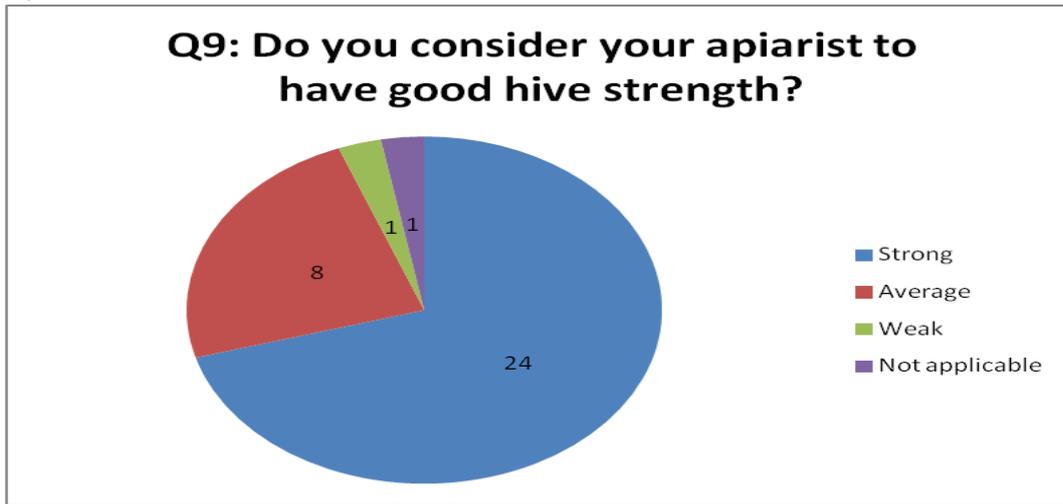
QUESTION 8

Q8: Has your beekeeper increased their rates in the past 12 months?



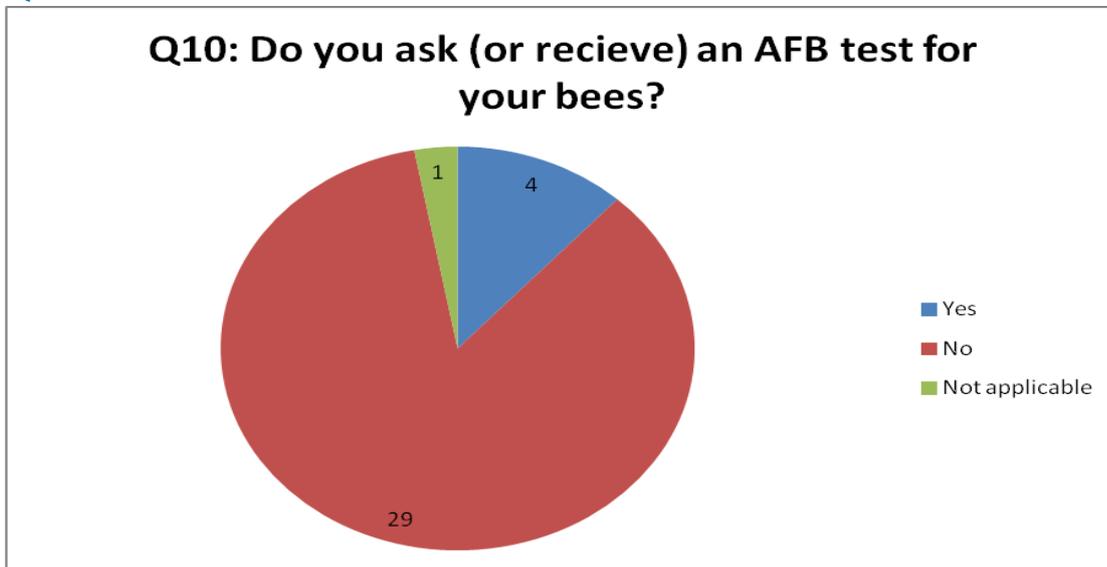
Over 90% of the 34 respondents confirmed their beekeeper has not increased their rates in the past 12 months. One respondent recalled an increase three years ago.

QUESTION 9



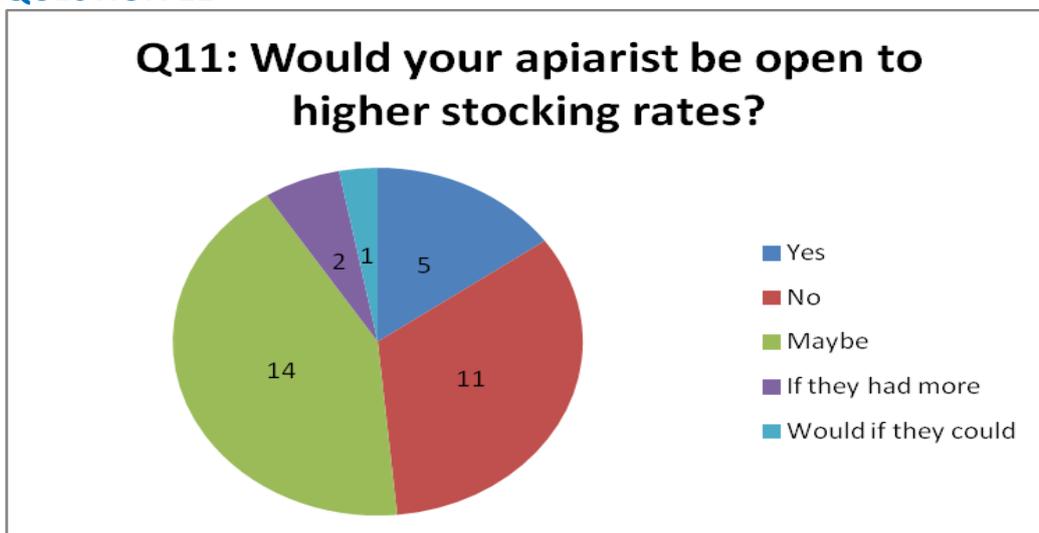
Over 70% of respondents considered that their apiarist had good hive strength.

QUESTION 10



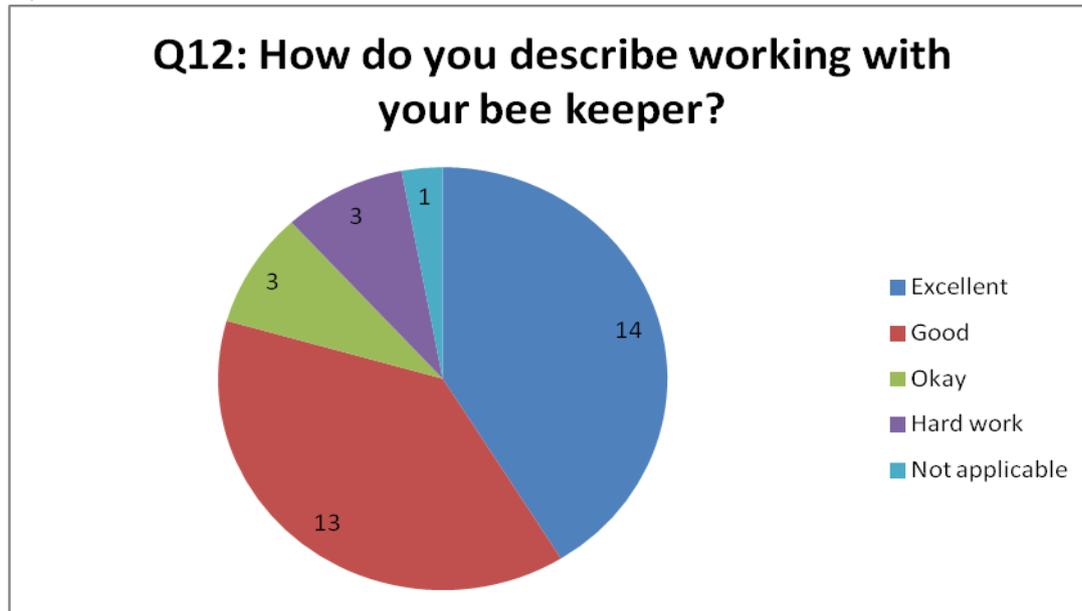
Only four respondents (12%) has asked or received an AFB test for their bees.

QUESTION 11



11 respondents (32%) stated that they would not be open to higher stocking rates.

QUESTION 12



27 respondents (80%) describe working with their beekeeper as either excellent or good. Three respondents are dissatisfied with the working relationship, confirming that it is 'hard work'.

Insights / Conclusions

In the 2008 survey, all 30 respondents confirmed that they use apiarists on their property for pollination services. In the 2014 survey, three respondents of the 34 confirmed that they do not use apiarists. This result is due to the nature of the survey e.g. respondents pro—actively returned forms in 2008 whereas in 2014 random telephone surveys were completed.

In 2008, 63% of respondents believed that their apiarist had 'excellent' or 'good' hive strength. This has improved with 70% of respondents selecting 'excellent' in the 2014 survey.

The number of respondents who run bees on dryland lucerne was greater in 2008 than 2014. In 2008, there were 13 from 30 respondents (43%) running bees. Yet in 2014, there were 11 of 32 respondents (34%).

The number of respondents who run bees on irrigated lucerne in 2008 was 93% (28 of 30 respondents). In 2014 the results are 100% (four respondents had no irrigation, dryland lucerne only).

There is a similar percentage of respondents with more than 100 hectares of lucerne seed in production. In 2008, 20 of 30 respondents (67%) had more than 100 hectares and in 2014, 22 of 34 (65%) respondents have over 100 hectares.

The data compiled from the 2008 survey did not determine how many respondents were not paying any fee for pollination services in dryland lucerne. Yet, 15 of 30 respondents (50%) confirmed that they paid between \$0 and \$5 per hive. In the 2014 survey, six of the 11 respondents (55%) confirmed that are not paying 'any' fee.

Data compiled from the 2008 survey did not determine how many respondents were not paying any fee for pollination services in irrigated lucerne. However, 14 of 30 respondents (47%) confirmed that they paid between \$0 and \$5 per hive. In the 2014 survey, 14 of 30 respondents (47%) confirmed that they do not pay 'any' fee. This suggests that prices have remained static, or even fallen from 2008 levels.

Nicola Raymond
Executive Officer