The flip side of feeding bees... What's at stake if bee feeds end up in the food chain?

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About Me

• Food Safety and Quality Compliance Specialist
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• Experienced Food Safety Auditor
• Food Safety and Quality Trainer
• Expert in the Identification and Management of Risk
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Australian Honey is renowned Internationally for its Clean Green Provenance... imagine how that could change if the integrity of Australian Honey was tarnished by the adoption of practices that turn a natural wonder into a something from a chemistry lab?

After all... Bees themselves are the most exquisite of chemists... They don’t need humans to assist them in doing what they do best!

The flip side of feeding bees... What's at stake if bee feeds end up in the food chain?

• The bee feeding trend
• What’s at stake?
• What could happen?
• How can we mitigate risk?
• Why does it matter?
The bee feeding trend...

What am I referring to?

• Pumping hives full of sugary liquids on a commercial scale... ultimately for profit!

• Not the periodical supplementation of bee feed for operational purposes (E.g. For baby bees, drought scenarios etc).

From a ‘Risk’ perspective, regardless of scale of application, the feeding of bees can introduce chemical or biological hazards!
What’s at stake...

- Regulatory non-compliance...
- Reputational damage...
- Livelihoods lost...

What’s at stake? Regulatory non-compliance

- It’s only a matter of time until someone takes the practice too far or takes some shortcuts that have dire consequences!
- Imagine a scenario in which:
  - a chemically tainted solution is fed to bees?
  - biological vectors are transferred to a healthy population of bees through bad hygiene practices?
What’s at stake? **Reputational damage**

- **Social media wildfire...**
  - Consumers are “informed” and have easy access to information which can be disseminated through social media platforms.
  - The question is... **Are they Well Informed or Ill Informed?**

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What’s at stake? **Reputational damage**

- **Brand Damage**
  - You’ve worked exceptionally hard as an individual and as part of the Australian Honey Production and / or Processing Sector to create a strong recognisable brand!
  - That could all disappear overnight if a significant Food Safety incident were to occur.
What’s at stake? Livelihoods lost

• Bad things happen when the Food Sector gets it wrong... and it’s not just the consumers who suffer!

• Let’s take a look at some real life examples of where we got it wrong... The cost is much higher than you may expect!

What could happen? Listeria in Rockmelons

• Misadventure in Food Safety Management
• Serious illness and death (multiple cases)
• Sales down up to 90% for months following the event (earlier in 2018)
• Sales still down up to 60% in June 2018
• Tonnes of produce left to rot in fields
• Distrust in the produce sector
What could happen? Melamine in Milk

• Caused by direct human intervention as a way to increase profit
• Serious long term illness and death (multiple cases)
• Death sentences or significant jail terms for those implicated
• Estimated tens of millions of dollars spent on testing of dairy products since (industry impacts)

What could happen? Horse Meat Scandal

• Economically motivated adulteration
• Massive public moral / ethical backlash
• Large multi-national companies impacted... brands destroyed
• Distrust in food supply chain integrity
• The integrity of EU food regulations questioned
What could happen? Horse Meat Scandal

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What could happen? **Horse Meat Scandal**

- Findus was a multi-billion dollar global brand.
- The brand was so damaged by the horse scandal that it basically disappeared from supermarket shelves following the scandal!
What could happen? Bee Feed in the Food Chain

• The outcomes could manifest in any number of ways, particularly when you consider Chemical and Biological hazards.
• Additionally when you consider the impact on Australia’s Clean Green Provenance, the “moral and ethical” backlash on social media could be equally damaging as Chemical and Biological risk.

How can we mitigate risk?

• Strong focus on Risk Assessment
  • HACCP (General Food Safety and Quality Risk)
  • VACCP (Food Fraud Focussed)
  • TACCP (Sabotage Focussed)
• Engagement of Industry and Regulatory Bodies regarding known risk and emerging risk on a global scale.
Why does it matter? A part of the Food Chain...

• Contemporary Food Safety and Quality Management systems rely on all participants of the Food Sector to ‘do their bit’.
• The idea is that if every step of the Food Chain identifies and controls risk, the likelihood of related risk causing issues further down the Food Chain is significantly lowered.

Why does it matter? A part of the Food Chain...

• Global Food Standards such as SQF and BRC have provisions for ‘Animal Feed’ within their certifications.
• This ensures that if a Food Processor or Manufacturer makes their materials (including waste) available for Animal Feed, they must manage related risk to ensure their participation doesn’t cause Food Safety or Regulatory non-compliance within those Animals (or further processing).
• The ‘theory’ behind this is the same as for the risk associated with Bee Feeding scenarios!
Questions?