40 Years of Successful Isolated Bee Breeding

John Davies
Chairman - Better Bees WA

From Necessity Comes Success

• The WA border was closed in the late 1970’s to the importation of bees.
• Isolation and Quarantine restrictions have driven our success
1980-1990 Agriculture WA

- In 1980 bee stock was requested from beekeepers all over WA by the Agriculture Department
- They ran a closed breeding program for 10 years

AI + Open Mating + Field Testing

1990-Present
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- In 1990 industry took over the program
- Closed breeding program on Rottnest Island
- Stock selection, among other things, includes:

Production + Brood Pattern + Temperament
Rottnest Program in Brief

Why Repeat for 30 Years?

- Positive consistent results
- High commercial success/production
- High quality breeders for replication
Why is the Program Successful?

• Commercially based program
• Production apiary selection pressures
• Breeding from the best hives

What we select for?

• Production, Brood Pattern, Temperament….
• Other desirable traits
• Each of the members have a different emphasis
• Resulting in generational improvement
The Program has its Challenges

- Normal business challenges
- Spring breeding conditions & nutrition
- Seasonal conditions & weather
- Maintaining lines
- Member dedication
- Genetic diversity

Further Measures of Success

- Membership demand
- Demand for breeders
Always Seeking to Improve

- DNA Evaluation - 2006
- Hygienic Behaviour testing
- Linkages with CIBER
- CRCHBP collaboration

Future Outlook for WA – Challenges

- Climate change
- Clearing
- Logging
- Burning
- Chemicals
- Salt
- Mining
Future Outlook for WA
New Horizons

- Pollination
- Plantation Honey
- Speciality Honeys
- New Beekeepers
- New Ideas

The Future of Better Bees WA

- Good quality queens will always be demanded
- Rottnest will always be there
Thank you

Better Bees Western Australia Group