



B-QUAL Australia Pty Limited

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NEWSLETTER

A NEW PHASE FOR B-QUAL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

With the partnership between AUS-QUAL as the National Service Provider (NSP) and B-Qual now firmly signed off I would encourage everyone to continue with the program as it will now develop strongly. It is now apparent that the industry needs B-Qual to work more than ever with the increased negative publicity that the industry seems to be placing on itself.

Up until now, the B-Qual program has been, to a certain extent, underwritten by AHBIC. Now that the program is running successfully it is time to manage B-Qual's activities through the appointment of a National Service Provider (NSP).

As previously advised, the NSP appointed to conduct the day to day management of the program is AUS-QUAL Pty Ltd. AUS-QUAL currently manages many other agribusiness quality assurance programs on behalf of industry sectors. A centrally managed program offers cost efficiencies for the program as well as a professional service.

As at July 2004, an annual renewal fee of \$110 (inc. GST) has been implemented to allow activities of the program to be self funding while being managed by a NSP. Benefits from B-Qual certification are already starting to flow through to participants with some packers implementing a price premium for B-Qual accredited product.

In addition to the normal day to day operation of the program, AUS-QUAL will also be responsible for all auditors to the program and the provision of training services. With respect to auditors; you as the participant will still be able to select an auditor; it is AUS-QUAL's responsibility to ensure that the auditor conducts B-Qual audits in a manner that is consistent with other B-Qual auditors. AUS-QUAL will maintain a list of auditors that are contracted by them to conduct your audits. Auditors that do not contract to AUS-QUAL will not be recognised by the B-Qual Board.

With AUS-QUAL now managing the program the integrity of the program will be maintained. Industry needs to remind itself that we do have a clean and safe product; however consumers will not recognize this unless we have the documentation to support our claims. B-Qual is an AQIS approved program and is designed to deliver ongoing assurance to the end user through the application of quality assurance principles. Beekeepers who supply directly to a packer will benefit from this as they will find that a small increase in paper work will develop into a sound management tool that may lead to a premium to suppliers with B-Qual accreditation.

It is anticipated that packers who choose to use the B-Qual logo on their labels will find an increase in market share through and increase in consumer confidence. It is anticipated that the consumer will purchase honey with the recognized B-Qual logo that assures them of a safe product, 'from hive to toast, clean and green'. The board has recognized the need to sell the logo to the public, therefore we need industry to have their B-Qual program up and running, this will allow the board to work on selling the logo to the consumer.

NO B-QUAL - NO GUARANTEE

Ken Gell
Chairman
B-Qual Australia Pty Ltd

BIANNUAL AUDIT - YOU MAY QUALIFY?

The B-Qual Board considered if Beekeepers may be audited once every two years under certain conditions. The Board has approved biannual auditing of beekeepers where the beekeeper supplies directly to a single packer only.

If you qualify for this level of audit, you are required to provide evidence of these arrangements and provide this in writing to AUS-QUAL to ensure the audit schedule for your operation is noted as such.

Note that the Board was clear to state that B-Qual reserves the right to audit all participants of the B-Qual program in surveillance audits as it determines from time to time.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN RENEWING B-QUAL ACCREDITATION?

B-Qual has implemented a renewal fee for all accredited members so that the program is self funded. The renewal process is as follows:

1. AUS-QUAL will mail renewal packages to all participants.
2. Pay renewal fees; by tearing off the remittance and attaching it to the cheque/credit card details.
3. Mail the renewal fees and remittance to:

**B-Qual Accreditation
AUS-QUAL Pty Ltd
PO Box 3175
South Brisbane, QLD 4101**

4. If you need assistance or would like to discuss the renewal process with AUS-QUAL, please call Bevan Blacklock on 1800 630 890; or 0428 736 793.

MOBILE EXTRACTING FACILITIES

From: Bill Winner

With the development of modern mobile extracting vans there has been renewed interest in their design and suitability when it comes to food safety.

Fully lined, well sealed vans using the latest developments in honey extractors have made a welcome appearance in South Australia and as a result the word has spread and honey producers in other states are now interested in operating mobile extracting facilities.

South Australian beekeepers are required to provide water for all apiary sites to allow bees to gather water and not seek water from stock troughs or dams. The use of clean drinking water allows the honey producer to have a large volume of quality water available at all times to facilitate plant wash down a key factor with mobile facilities.

Extracting systems such the JB Engineering 42 frame Horizontal Radial with a Beequip Uncapper or quality stainless steel semi-radial and radial extractors are well suited to these units. Purpose built mobile extracting vans of high quality and providing excellent food safety conditions can be obtained from Miegel Bros (08) 853 23222 or www.miegelbros.com.au (South Australia) Van size is 18' x 8', 16' x 6.

Construction is heavy duty with a galvanised chassis, heavy duty axles, insulated panel body, aluminium floor and trim, gas bottle facilities power and lighting installed, extracting machinery may also be fitted.



MODERN MOBILE EXTRACTING VAN

The illustration above clearly demonstrates the excellent quality standards that can be applied to modern mobile extracting plants. Extracting system is a JB Engineering 42 frame horizontal radial.

Key design elements:

Care must be taken to locate the mobile facility in a suitable location to avoid contamination due to environmental conditions.

The exterior condition should be of good general appearance.

Home base should have a well maintained and recorded pest control system eg. bait stations to ensure food safety is preserved when the van is parked and not in the field.

- Floor – Wooden floors are not recommended! Flooring recommended is smooth washable marine grade aluminium plain plate, marine grade aluminium treadplate or industrial vinyl over marine ply backing. Flooring secured by stainless steel countersunk screws to maintain a smooth washable surface.
- Walls – The key here is that the internal walls are smooth and easily washed. They may be constructed from insulated panel, stainless steel sheeting, Colorbond or marine grade aluminium sheeting. Ply panels are not recommended due to their tendency to be penetrated by water. Sealing strips should be avoided with all joints sealed with polyurethane mastic.
- Coving – Due to space restrictions coving of 25mm radius or smaller may be considered. Coving assists with cleaning the floor area and is highly recommended. When not used care needs to be taken to ensure where the wall meets the floor (Often a small gap in vans) is thoroughly cleaned.

- Ceiling – The ceiling surface needs to be easy to clean and being low this rarely poses a problem in vans. The low height does however lead to condensation problems and moulds developing. The ceiling should also be free of obstructions that could injure the operators.
- Water Supply: The water supply should be quality hot & cold running water supplied by pumping devices or medium of backpressure from the boiler. The water is usually very hot and can serve as a sanitiser for the facility.
- Drainage – the **internal area** should be designed to allow for good drainage when the internal surfaces have been washed down. Most vans have flat floors and as a result drainage holes need to be fitted and bungs provided to cover these holes when the van is in transit from site to site. The use of mops and squeegee's is recommended. These items should be sanitised following each days production and allowed to dry.
- Hand Wash Facilities – Fit a hand wash basin, with pump action soap dispenser and paper hand towel dispenser at the entrance. The waste paper bin needs to be fixed and the internal bin emptied on a daily basis. Hot water can be supplied from the boiler or hot water supply. (Spitwater, Mile End SA 08 823 42007 supply and excellent portable boiler designed for extracting vans.). The waste water from the hand basin can be held in a tank or used to wash down the wheels of the apiary barrow.
- Chemicals and Toxic fumes – Do not store chemicals inside the mobile facility. Store them either in an external toolbox or on the work vehicles. No poisons should be used inside the extracting facility. If rodents become a problem utilise traps or external bait stations. If the van is to be out of service for long periods of time then internal bait station may be used to control vermin, the internal surfaces should be washed down prior to the next use.
- Windows and roof vents – The mobile facility must be able to be sealed during transport from apiary site to apiary site. Insect screens should be fitted to windows. Doors should also be fitted with seals. Leaving the rear top vent open has been found to pressurise the interior during transit and prevents dust entering. The use of air conditioning units or fans to circulate air and provide "positive pressure", a similar effect to air curtains is recommended. Some operators in the event of robbing have also used plastic strips.
- Lighting – All lighting over food areas must be shielded by either diffusers or other means of shatter proof lighting (IP65 lighting is recommended). This is standard food law in Australia.
- Signs – Clear signs indicating the food hygiene standards required should be displayed.
- Documentation – Use the B-Qual Form B456 for your van. Records should be filed to allow for future auditing.

- Drumming off Honey – Most facilities use a line fill system connected to containers on the back of a truck. These units are sealed and as such are suitable for use. The lines need to be thoroughly cleaned at end of day and stored to avoid contamination by dust or vermin. Covers and dust caps are recommended for all honey lines. Open filling of containers is not recommended but may be practiced. Great care needs to be taken to avoid dust contamination and insect invasion, particularly by robber bees.

MOBILE PLANT HAZARD RISK ASSESSMENT

Note: Mobile plant operators need to assess food safety issues at each extraction site.

The following is recommended as a prompt or guide only:

Operation and Food Safety

Contamination from:

- Ants
- Chemicals (for ants, bees, insecticides, disease)
- Containers, extractors, sumps, melters etc
- Dust, dirt, dung from the field.
- Disease pathogens.
- Hygiene.
- Honey spills
- Pest controls, robber bees, rodents (faecal).
- Residues.
- Unsuitable, unsafe plant.

Start up Operation Checklist

- Available clean water.
- Boiler check
- Steam leaks
- Dust free extractors, sumps, melters etc OK.
- Honey drums checked before use.
- Ramps, barrows etc clean.
- Drums and honey lines secure.

Close Down Checklist

- Secure boiler
- Secure honey lines and drums.
- Hot or cold water clean down of plant
- Secure plant exterior.

CONCLUSION:

Mobile Extracting Facilities have continued to develop to the point where they have real potential for many operations. Honey Producers working in distant areas such as the Channel Country of South Western Queensland could well consider the economics of such a plant. South Australian beekeepers when faced with bee disease issues will at times use mobile plants as part of their barrier system to control the outbreak. The plants are safe to tow, present a clean modern environment in which to work and because of size are far easier to maintain.