

Some facts in relation to Fire Blight and Bees/Beekeeping.

If Fire Blight establishes itself in a major apple/pear growing area in Australia, the optimum time for the disease to spread is when trees are flowering and bee hives are present in orchards for the pollination of these fruit crops.

- A Contingency Plan has been developed which calls for the destruction of all bee hives in any declared Fire Blight quarantine area.
- Fire Blight spores as with pollen grains adhere to the hairy bodies of foraging honey bees to be spread from bee to bee, flower to flower, orchard to orchard.
- **Streptomycin** is the accepted antibiotic control of Fire Blight in New Zealand, being sprayed onto the blossom of the plant/tree. Streptomycin does not break down. When sprayed onto fruit blossom, it would be collected by honey bees in the plants' nectar and become a chemical contaminant in honey/the hive. This antibiotic has been banned in Australia for many years. A further unacceptable risk to the Australian Apiculture Industry should this treatment be transposed to Australia.
- clean image of Australian honey gone in both domestic/export markets.
- horticulture/large/small seeds production threatened.
- New Zealand honey/ apiary products are allowed entry into Australia. Years of ongoing debate between Australian/New Zealand Beekeeping Industries re the export of honey apiary products from Australia into New Zealand.
- the honey bee disease European Foul Brood is endemic in Australia - said not to be present there. Pasteurisation of honey kills the European Foul Brood spores.

Why then has not the Australian Government taken New Zealand before the World Trade Organisation for this restriction of trade?

Further information:

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