

## Editor's Buzz Words

**I**t is very exciting that two Apimondia Gold Medals from the 2009 International Conference are now resident in Devon. For the many readers who are new to the craft, Apimondia is a biennial event, held in a different country on each occasion; the venue being decided by voting four years ahead by the member countries of Apimondia - just about every country worldwide. In 2013 Ukraine will be the hosts and in 2011 the event will be in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As well as competitive exhibits, apicultural scientists from around the world present dozens of lectures and posters on their latest discoveries and research. A great occasion, as the host country also puts on a programme of local events and tours. Every beekeeper should attend at least one Apimondia in his or her lifetime.

There is a massive rise in financial support for bee research. The support from allied industries and the UK & USA governments are well known, but throughout Europe, North & South America, the Middle East and the Far East the plight of the bee is being considered as essential for study as climate change.

I was very disappointed therefore to receive recently an angry email, widely circulated I believe, which rather churlishly condemned Syngenta, the giant agro-chemical company, for announcing a major investment in research into the declining populations of bumble and honeybees. It is better that Syngenta does not further research the possible role of its own pesticides. Others are independently. The email writer took the opportunity to condemn BBKA and its working relationship with the company and promote his new charity "Friends of the Bee". It sounds cosy

but although well intentioned, it aims to deprive bees of the treatments and medicines they need to help them overcome the pests and pathogens that modern trade and transport have spread around. This is cruelty not friendliness. The exposed hatred in the email for the entire agrochemical industry shows that the core concerns of the writer are more political to the point of religion than apicultural. **Of course, the new generation of systemic pesticides called neonicotinoids continue to cause anxiety. These compounds include the infamous Imidacloprid, a seed dressing for Oil Seed Rape in UK and Fipronil, which is the active ingredient in many cat-flea collars. BBKA has never been confident with the bee-safety of these compounds. The action of Imidacloprid within plants is very complex and its reported appearance in nectar of some species is cause for concern. However, from research so far, the chemical is apparently not clearly linked to CCD in USA nor bee deaths in France and UK. I know BBKA will insist that bee research is objective and certainly will not be silent with the agrochemical industry during their regular meetings.**

We all feel uneasy with the massive global corporations that now dominate our lives. There seems no control over mega-profits and bonuses but that is another battle & not bee-keeping's. In the meantime we need as much research as we can get. Bee-keeping and agriculture will become even more technical and we have to have a sound understanding of developing environmental trends and the technologies that can help bees and people in this increasingly complicated, over-human-populated world. We cannot return to conditions as they were a generation or more ago.