REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN
SOUTH AFRICAN BEE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2\textsuperscript{nd} JULY 2016

1. First and foremost I would like to congratulate the Western Cape Bee Industry Organisation for having organized a truly successful and informative BEECON here in the Klein Karoo Region in Oudtshoorn. This in my opinion is what annual gatherings of beekeepers and persons interested in the apicultural industry in South Africa is all about; creating a platform to get together and socialize, participate in forums and presentations which are of vital importance to our industry, and to reinforce the importance of a strong and organized beekeeping industry. So on behalf of SABIO, congratulations to Danie Vorster, Lynette Barnes, Dawid Smit and the other members of your Organizing Committee for putting together a fantastic BEECON.

2. I must be quite honest it has been a difficult year for the Bee Industry, and especially SABIO, but then every year brings its challenges and opportunities so the 2015 / 2016 period has been little different to previous years in which I have held the position as Chairman of SABIO.

3. The first biggest challenge arrived some three days after I last addressed this forum at our 2015 AGM when in June last year Hortgro, based in Paarl, who were administering the affairs of SABIO gave us notice of their intention to withdraw such services. The reason provided was that they needed to focus more on their core clients in the deciduous fruit industry and needed to dispense with the smaller agricultural organizations to whom they provided services. As a result of this the SABIO Board was faced with the challenge of restructuring its operational services and the decision was taken to retain this internally, spread amongst the Board

Board Members
CR Campbell, T Engelbrecht, ME Miles (Chairman), S Muller, CW Salmon, P Walker JJ Wolfaardt
members rather than outsource the facility. To a great extent this has enabled us to improve our administrative, financial and communication services to our members. Theunis Engelbrecht made available his offices and staff ladies in Douglas to centralize the functions of SABIO. A big thanks to Amanda le Roux and Andrea Visagie for all the hard work they have put into making this function a professional one as the finances had to be recaptured on to the system used by SABIO and all databases had to be realigned into a user friendly and accurate format. This remains an on-going task but with the new strategic plans we are putting in place with the running of SABIO you will find an improved and fast responsive administration service in place through our offices. Theunis has offered to continue to offering this service through his offices to the industry for the next three years and although SABIO contributes a small fee towards this, it allows us to have a secure and stable administration in the years ahead. In addition we have tried to improve the communication channels through the e-mail system as all direct “info” enquiries come through my offices and where they cannot be answered directly are channeled to the appropriate persons for attention.

4. A further major achievement for SABIO during this past year was finally the registration of SABIO as an NPC (Non Profit Company) in terms of the Company’s Act. This process had been going on for the past 5 years since the decision was taken at the Heidelberg BEECON in 2010 to convert SABIO from a Voluntary Association to a Section 21 Company (in those days); a recommendation made in the NAMC Report of 2008. Following the decision by Hortgro to discontinue administrative services to SABIO and the fact that by this time no progress had been achieved in registering SABIO, the SABIO Board was able itself to take over this process and within three months of commencing the process afresh was registered on the 29th January 2016 as a Non Profit Company, registration Number 2016/038841/08 with the CIPC (Companies and Intellectual Property Commission of South Africa). The Board Members are registered as the Directors of the NPC and each having the legal responsibilities of Directors in terms of the Companies Act.

5. As a result of the discontinuation of the administrative services by Hortgro we have also had to take a decision on the appointment of the auditors of the financial accounts
of SABIO. We had been using the services of Hortgro’s auditors but due to the cost thereof and concerns raised at the last AGM regarding their fees the Board has engaged the services of Willems van der Westhuizen Professional Accountants, based in Johannesburg, as they were the firm which professionally processed our NPC Registration with the CIPC.

6. Membership figures in SABIO have stabilized although they are always of concern as this forms the main means of financing the organisation. In terms of our constitution we have three categories of membership referred to as Primary Members, Affiliated Association Members and Ancillary Members. For ease of reference at an earlier Board meeting this year we suggested a change to reflect them as Individual Members, Association Members and Corporate Members. Currently we have 232 Primary Members which is slightly higher than the figure at the last AGM. Out of the six functional Beekeeping Associations, only three, Western Cape Beekeepers Association, the KZN Bee Farmers Association and Northerns Beekeeping Association have renewed their annual subscriptions. I am pleased to see that Northerns have recently had a resurgent interest in reviving their activities and we welcome them back into the National body. I am also pleased to say that a new body of beekeepers has affiliated to SABIO, the Waterberg Bee Interest Group which comprises a small number of beekeepers in the North West and Limpopo Provinces who have joined us. Earlier this year SABIO put out a proposal to all Associations to restructure the fees paid by Associations by suggesting that they pay the basic double Individual Member fee plus R80 per head for each association member. In so doing SABIO would then be able to supply each Association with copies of the Bee Journal to distribute to their members. This proposal was rejected by many of the Associations as most felt that an annual payment of R80 per head was too exorbitant and unaffordable. One coastal Association proposed to SABIO that they reduce the Individual SABIO member fee to R40 per year. The inland Associations also feel reluctant to affiliate and support the National body. We only hope over time that we can regenerate the support and participation by these Associations in our affairs. SABIO appreciates the support that we receive from those 232 individuals who are members in their own right of the organisation and to those Associations which have affiliated and support what we are trying to achieve at National level.
7. Quite frankly it is not discouraging to report the membership figures of SABIO. At the most recent meeting with DAFF we were informed by the Registrar that in total this year 570 beekeepers throughout the country are currently registered as beekeepers in terms of legislation. Since the commencement of the registration process by the Department of Agriculture in 2014 a total of 1312 persons have registered but if the currently legally registered beekeepers in 2016 is 570 then SABIO represents 40% of the industry. Only registered beekeepers can be Primary Members of SABIO. No other Beekeeping Association can claim to be as proportionately representative of the beekeepers in the country as what SABIO is. However we need to constantly work on improving our own membership numbers.

8. **Meetings with DAFF.** SABIO continues to meet with and liaise with the Department of Agriculture on all aspects relating to the bee industry and I believe we have a good working relationship with them in this regard.

During the course of 2015 SABIO held four meetings with DAFF to address *inter alia* the AFB Outbreak as well as other issues of importance to the Bee Industry. These were as follows:

i. **Stellenbosch 22 January 2015** – meeting with DAFF delegation and ARC representatives to discuss measures to adopt in respect of AFB outbreak;

ii. **Pretoria 8 May 2015** – follow up meeting with DAFF and ARC on implementing AFB Strategy and De-limiting Survey;

iii. **Pretoria 16 July 2015** – meeting between Mr. Ernest Phoku of DAFF (Director: Inspectorate) myself representing SABIO and Mr. Jan Steenkamp of SAAFED as further follow up on DAFF’s initiatives in dealing with AFB outbreak;

iv. **Pretoria 7 December 2015** – a further follow-up meeting with DAFF and ARC, and the DAFF Inspectorate.

Again on the 6th June this year (2016) SABIO held a further follow-up meeting with DAFF and the Inspectorate in Pretoria to discuss a number of issues although focusing primarily on disease control measures and the potential threat of AFB spreading throughout the country. Some of the key points which arose out of this meeting included:
Laboratory testing of samples of honey and bee products from beehives to be speeded up;

Spoor counts on samples should be included in test results. Where spoor counts are greater than 50, immediate management processes need to be implemented;

Long Term Research projects need to be implemented to determine changes in spoor counts in suspected contaminated areas;

The feasibility of registering OTC for use on honeybees thereby legitimizing its usage and prescribing its application practically in the field;

The conclusion of a National Strategic Plan for dealing with AFB for implementation by the 1st August 2016;

Enforcement of Control Measures by Inspectorate; all beehives to be properly marked; all pollination units not marked or pollinators’, who are not registered, beehives will be confiscated;

Apicultural Advisory Council to be re-established following consultation with all role-players in the industry; SABIO has undertaken to send to DAFF all records relating to the operations of the original AAC;

The issue of the HEPRO contaminated honey in Cape Town; Mr. Phoku undertook to go there himself and ascertain why his instructions to destroy the honey had not been carried out;

The issuing of Beekeeper Registration Certificates to be improved and speeded up;

The importation of Beeswax from China which was found to be mixed with paraffin wax and thereby released by SARS without irradiation certification. DAFF undertook to follow up on this;
SABIO recently referred to DAFF complaints from consumers about **adulteration of honey products** particularly coming out of the KwaZulu Natal region. DAFF was following up on this through their Inspectorate Department.

And an undertaking by DAFF to **schedule regular meetings** with the BEE Industry. The next meeting is scheduled for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} August in Pretoria.

Personally as Chairman of SABIO I am encouraged by the liaison we have with the Department of Agriculture. From both sides it is not always so easy to schedule meetings but when we get together the full day meetings we hold are informative and progressive and I hope we maintain this on-going dialogue.

9. There are a number of exciting projects ahead of us in SABIO.

10. **The South African Bee Journal.** The SABJ must be one of the oldest publications in South Africa (according to our own Apiculture Historian) and has become the flagship of the National Association and must remain so. Particular thanks must go to Theunis Engelbrecht and Douglas Bee Farms who for the past number of years has continued to sponsor the publication of the magazine, the costs of which could not have been met from SABIO’s annual subscription fees alone in addition to the other costs we incur. In addition for the past few years Amanda le Roux from Theunis’s office has been personally responsible for editing the magazine, collating articles and arranging its printing and distribution. We truly appreciate all the hard work which goes into producing this quarterly magazine. Despite what I have revealed above that SABIO currently only has 232 paid up members the magazine has been distributed to over 1460 persons in each edition. Unfortunately the time has had to come for the SABIO Board to review this policy of sending out the magazine freely to non SABIO subscribers. Notwithstanding this I am pleased to announce that SABIO has taken the decision to consider a new look at the production of the journal particularly in view of advances in technology, as well as the costs of distributing the journal in printed format. We need to consider whether the day of the hard copy alone has passed, the costs of only distributing a hard copy version and the feasibility and acceptance of producing both a hard copy for the traditionalists and an electronic version for the technocrats. A serious feasibility study is already well under way and the prospects of
producing a completely new look A4 size magazine along the lines of the American Bee Journal and other international journals is on the cards. SABIO is looking at acquiring the services of a professional editor and establishing an editorial board. Content of the magazine would include local and international trends in beekeeping, research papers, joint lifting rights on articles from other reputable publications, government policy, reports from Regional Associations, and advice on practical beekeeping methods, pest and disease control measures. Advertising will become an essential component both for the make-up of the magazine but also for income purposes. The journal will remain the mouth piece of SABIO and will become the channel for communication and distributing information about the industry to the wider public. Every beekeeper will want to receive his or her own copy of the quarterly journal. If our revamp goes according to plan the new Journal will commence distribution in 2017.

11. The AGCHEM / Pollinator Forum was revived two years ago and we are pleased to see that following extensive research the Agricultural Inputs Control Directorate has published a new document entitled *Guidelines on the Management of the Risk of Agricultural Remedies on Insect Pollinators*. Craig Campbell, responsible for Pollination issues in SABIO recently attended a meeting in Pretoria to discuss and address SABIO’s interests in this field. In addition I would like to thank Dirk Uys of Bayer for having organized a meeting of the Pollinator Forum for all stakeholders here in Oudtshoorn on the day before this BEECON.

12. This brings me on to another project which SABIO has up its sleeve. For years we have had the Blue Book on Beekeeping in South Africa which is now in its third edition. What the Bee Industry now needs to complement the Blue Book is a Green Book: *Guidelines on Honeybee Pollination in Southern Africa*. There is such a wealth of knowledge out there on pollination on different crops: Apples, Blueberries, Canola but where is it published? The ABC of pollination Guidelines. As this Conference has shown Pollination is the future of the commercial beekeeping sector in this country. If we don’t have a record of the vast knowledge on the subject we will be throwing away years of knowledge and expertise in this field. If you feel this is a worthwhile project then please support SABIO’s initiatives to produce such a publication.
13. SABIO also intends to shortly publish Guidelines on Bee Removal Services, Beehive Standards and Honey Judging Standards. At the moment the KwaZulu Natal Beekeepers Association claims to hold the monopoly on Honey Judging Competitions in the country. I am pleased to hear that Southerns Beekeepers Association in Johannesburg is looking to revive the annual Honey Judging Competition at the Rand Easter Show. What we should incorporate in every annual BEECON is a National Honey Judging Competition for beekeepers from all over the country to challenge each other into producing the best country honey, beeswax, and mead.

14. On the international front I am pleased to announce that SABIO, through the initiative of Jaco Wolfaardt is looking to arrange Apimondia Tours for South African beekeepers to attend the international conferences, starting with the 2017 Apimondia in Turkey. Whilst we are still contemplating the notion of once again hosting an Apimondia here in South Africa we have to be realistic about the costs and the difficulty of securing committed financial sponsors, firstly to put in the bid and secondly to run the Conference. In the meantime if we cannot bring the Apimondia to South Africa let’s take South Africans to the Apimondias in the rest of the world.

15. I thus hope this gives you some indication of some of the initiatives, projects and achievements which SABIO has undertaken in the year under review.

16. Finally in closing I would like to extend a special thanks to the rest of my team on the SABIO Board for their involvement and commitment to running the Organisation. Being a Board Member is a voluntary job and often despite some open criticism from some elements in the beekeeping fraternity; that they cannot see what SABIO is doing for the industry, we on the Board will continue to go about quietly in a professional manner to address the needs of beekeeping in this county. I must say that I welcome criticism because at least it shows that some people are taking an interest in the bee industry and without criticism you are not kept alive to the needs of the industry and cannot look at ways of improving the functioning of the National Organisation.

17. So to Theunis Engelbrecht, Jaco Wolfaardt, Craig Campbell, Phil Walker, Sandy Muller and Charles Salmon, thank you for your role on the SABIO Board. A special
thank you must go to Theunis Engelbrecht who has decided to step down from the Organization after some umpteen years of serving the industry. I think he thinks he can run and hide from us but we all know where he lives, even if there is always apparent bad cell phone contact in the remote outbacks of the Northern Cape.

18. For all the beekeepers in the country, both those who support us as paid up members and those who in spirit support what we are doing, as well as the many other persons who pledge their time and commitment to the bee industry of South Africa, we thank you and encourage you to continue supporting what SABIO aims to achieve. SABIO is not going to close its doors on our honeybee population.

Thank you!

MIKE MILES
Chairman: SABIO
2nd July 2016