The Coolgardie honey flow

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Economic development programmes for agriculture in Western Australia—such as the adjustment of farm size to technological progress, the development of agriculture in association with the pastoral industry, and the adjustment of farm supplies to local and export prices.

Farm Policy.

The centre will also publish “Farm Policy”, a bulletin dealing with economic and social problems of agriculture, and written for the farmer and interested laymen. Editorial policy of the bulletin will be to publish the research findings of the John Thomson Agricultural Economics Centre, as well as articles by experts in Australian agriculture.

The current issue of “Farm Policy” includes articles on promotion of demand for agricultural products, an economic comparison between jarrah, pines and farming in the South-West, and regional development. Future issues will deal with such topical subjects as development in the Kimberleys, Esperance, and the European Common Market.

After the current issue (No. 3) “Farm Policy” will be available only on a subscription basis, and will be issued quarterly. Details may be obtained from the John Thomson Agricultural Economics Centre.

THE COOLGARDIE HONEY FLOW

DURING October-November, 1961, a new area for honey was found in the Coolgardie district. Many hundreds of tons of honey were extracted. This honey had a choice flavour, and was light amber in colour—in fact it was honey of very high export grade.

The nectar was dense and the hives filled rapidly, although the bees appeared to be “loafing” on their job. At the height of the flow, the hives were filling in from 7 to 10 days, a fact that makes it the fastest flow known in Western Australia. Marri and karri, at their best, fill the hives in from 10 to 14 days.

Many bee farmers had shifted to the Goldfields area to collect the nectar from the Goldfields coral gum, *Eucalyptus torquata*, but it was obvious that the bulk of the honey came from the blue snap and rattle (*E. calycogona* Turcz), a low blue-ish coloured mallee.

The flow could not have come at a better time. The beekeeping industry has had two bad years in succession, and the gross returns of most beekeepers have not covered their expenses. In some cases beekeepers have had difficulty in keeping their bees alive.

Points Learnt from the Flow.

1. There is honey to be found in the mallees.

2. It is likely the mallee flows will occur in years when the forest and coastal flows are poor.

3. The Goldfields coral gum, if it does produce nectar attractive to the bees, could not compete in attraction to the snap and rattle or yorrel.

4. Yorrel or snap and rattle, is a very poor producer of pollen.

5. The bees consume very large amounts of water with this flow, and provisions for water should be made at two pints a hive each day.

—From a report by R. S. Coleman, Officer-in-Charge of the Apicultural Section, who visited the area recently. Mr. Coleman collected over 100 specimens of possible honey flora, most of them from *Eucalypts* of mallee habit. These are now being classified and studied by the Department’s Botany Branch.
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