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Lucerne for Bee-keepers

Address by Dr. Cherry, Director of
Agriculture, at the Annual Con-
ference of the Victorian Apiarists'
Association, Melbourne, Australia.]

When asked to speak to the bee-keep-
ers Dr. Cherry said he was at a loss
to know what subject to choose; he
eventually decided on addressing them on
the subject because he thought he
could get bee-keepers to act as propa-
gandists in the cultivation of lucerne.
There is no question if lucerne were
universally provided the bees would
produce more honey. Honey produced
from the leguminosa is of the best qual-
ity; this family of plants produces ni-
trogen and material of which the gum
is lacking. Last year he spoke
of nitrogen as being associated with
the production of bees, and from our
experience there was a difficulty of supply-
ing such in the form of protein, and
as protein food for larvae of high
quality is within the reach of bees, it
is probable the bees reared with such
food having a deficiency of protein.
They do not have a proper stamina. Lu-
cerne is at the head of all protein pro-
ducers, and he thought there was an
every possibility of lucerne culture

in Victoria. If they could get five
million acres planted with lucerne in
Victoria there would probably be dou-
ble the production of honey. While
lucerne does best in irrigated districts,
it will grow almost anywhere except
on the dry Malee and the southern
portion of the colony; little flats in
the bottom of gullies, and between
hills will grow lucerne luxuriantly.
Every bee-keeper should remember
that by growing one or two acres of
lucerne for fodder purposes he will
have an abundance of fodder for his
live stock. Most bee-keepers in Vic-
toria have had the experience that
they have had to buy food for their
stock; if they planted lucerne they
would be able to supply them with
all food, and be helping on their in-
dustry. Lucerne will grow almost
anywhere where bees are kept, and
when once established will go on in-
creasing. Lucerne paddocks in Mexico
are known to extend over 300 years.
He has had a sample of lucerne root
grown at Bacchus Marsh, in Victoria,
which was over 20 feet in length. Any
place where fruit will grow lucerne
will do well; deep alluvial is not neces-
sary, for he finds lucerne doing well
where brick-clay is only 6 inches from
the surface. To get the best out of
lucerne there should be no water
around the roots. When once estab-
lished there is a life-long possession.
Everyone should have at least a quarter