

# Research Directions

Office of Research Services

## ***Protection for Honeybee Hives***

**Associate Professor Robert Spooner-Hart, Director of the UWS Centre for Plant and Food Sciences, has recently attracted funding from the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) to explore sustainable control of small hive beetle by the use of insect diseases such as fungi and nematodes to protect honeybee hives.**



‘Small Hive Beetle is an important pest of beehives, especially away from its site of origin in Southern Africa’, says Associate Professor Spooner-Hart. ‘Since its discovery in Australia in 2002 in the Hawkesbury district of NSW, it has spread, particularly along the coastal regions and into other eastern states. It has been reported to cause serious damage to some hives, although its full economic impact has not yet been determined. Its detection and control, both in hives and in soil surrounding hives where beetle larvae pupate, is thus of significant importance’.

The project aims to provide safe and environmentally acceptable alternatives to insecticides for control of Small Hive Beetle out of the hive and around apiaries. Researchers will carry out laboratory bioassays and field studies of common insect disease bio-control agents that are already registered in Australia for use against other beetle species.

Successful completion of the work will provide the bee-keeping and pest control industries with commercially available bio-control agents for field evaluation and registration against Small Hive Beetle. The major and immediate beneficiaries will be bee-keepers. However, the results will also benefit bee exporters, plant industries that rely on honeybee pollination, and the general public through potential for reduced application of synthetic pesticides to beehives.

**Project Title:** *Sustainable control of small hive beetle through targeting in-ground stages*

Funding has been set at: \$44,750.  
October 2006.

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