

those of April when Argentina exported slightly over 17 million pounds (7,756 metric tons) at an average price of 43 cents per pound (96 cents per kilogram). During April and for the first time in the last 13 months, Germany became the number one importer of Argentine honey, virtually doubling U.S. imports (8.9 million pounds versus 4.3 million pounds). This change (prior to the ITC determination of May 4) may be the beginning of a trend that the bulk of Argentine exports will be shipped to European destinations instead of North American markets.

The Argentine House of Representatives finally approved a Value Added Tax (VAT) reduction for honey from 21% to 10.5%. Now it is up the Argentine Senate to approve this change. Hopefully, when this new tax becomes a federal law, it will help to prevent the VAT evasion. To support this initiative, the June 3<sup>rd</sup> Argentine Federal Register announced a new piece of legislation, which requires registration of all beekeepers.

#### CHINA

During the bimester May/June, China exported more than 40 million pounds of honey at an average price of 37 cents per pound. Thus, Chinese exports for the first six months of year 2001 account for 103 million pounds.

Antidumping duties severely affected Chinese exports to the United States, which suffered a sharp decline, dropping to only 2.2 million pounds, in this two-month period. This volume represents just 5.5% of total Chinese exports, compared to the previous 40% from total exports for the period Jan./April 2001!

On the other hand, exports to Germany have doubled from 10% of total Chinese exports (during Jan./April), to more than 20% during May/June. However, Japan continues to be the number one customer of Chinese honey. During the first half of 2001, Japan imported 30.5 million pounds at 41 cents per pound.

#### AUSTRALIA

Good rains have fallen in some of the eastern states. These rains are very important since many parts of Australia have been having severe drought. Some eucalyptus species such as yapunyah have yielded well, and ground flora has provided good pollen supplies for brood rearing. Later flows from gray ironbark and blue gum are also expected. Beekeepers are also hoping periodic rains will continue to keep ground flora blooming for broodrearing.

Western Australian beekeepers are still suffering from extreme drought, which has also hurt crops planted in the state. As would be expected, bee pasture is in very short supply and colonies are under stress or dying in some locations. Beekeepers were hoping for some good rains in August and September, in order to salvage the approaching new honey season.

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