

PRESS CUTTING

Publication: Yorkshire Post
Issue: 17 May 2005
Circulation: 65,000



Research tool: Mark Evamy from East Yorkshire Honey, James Fearnley from Nature's Labs and Roger Benson, adviser with Business Link York and North Yorkshire.

Firm gets a buzz in health care revolution

Greg Wright
Deputy Business Editor

It helped Egypt's Royal family stay mummified for thousands of years, and might rid Britain's hospitals of the MRSA superbug.

Introducing Propolis, a material produced by bees that could revolutionise health care.

It's a substance that dominates the life of James Fearnley, the founder and managing director of Nature's Laboratory, based in Goathland, North Yorkshire.

He's received a £75,000 DTI

research and development grant to see if Propolis can be used in drugs and medicines.

If the conclusions are positive, Yorkshire could soon be dotted with bee-hives as farmers find a lucrative sideline.

Mr Fearnley said: "It was used in ancient Egypt for mummification and also to treat wounds and sores.

"I have spent the last 15 years gathering scientific research into the medicinal properties of Propolis.

"If we hit the "golden shot" then we have got the option to go to market for some seri-

ous money." Propolis is composed of resins which bees collect from trees and plants. Inside the hive, which operates at the same temperature as a human body, the bees process these resins into a package containing up to 200 chemicals.

These chemicals have antibiotic qualities which, among other uses, can combat MRSA, the superbug that affected more than 3,500 NHS patients last year.

Mr Fearnley, who founded Nature's Laboratory two years ago, is working with the University of Strathclyde to try and find medical appli-

cations for Propolis. He's also got his own range of BeeVital products, which are being analysed to see if they can combat everyday infections such as mouth ulcers and skin rashes.

His successful application for DTI cash was backed by Business Link York and North Yorkshire.

Business Link's adviser Roger Benson said: "Not only could the research lead to a better understanding of Propolis and its uses, it could also encourage local beekeepers to diversify and begin harvesting the product on a larger scale."