

Healthy Bees Plan

Issue 4 - July 2010

Quarterly Newsletter for all those interested in honey bee health

Quarterly newsletter on progress with implementing the Healthy Bees Plan (www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/growing/bees/news/plan.pdf) which the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) is implementing on behalf of Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

News & Highlights:

- Following confirmation in May of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) in Hawaii, APHIS (The US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) has stopped issuing export health certificates for honey bees until further notice. In addition, on 28th June, the EU Commission suspended the import of honeybees from Hawaii.
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- The NBU has checked all consignments of queens imported from Hawaii; before the ban was put in place, nothing was found. In the event of SHB arrival here, we have clear procedures in place to manage the pest. Bee inspectors would work closely with beekeepers to achieve this. Fera's Contingency Plan for exotic pests and diseases of honey bees is being updated and will be published this summer. The Contingency Plan can only be effective if all beekeepers are registered on BeeBase, this highlights the importance of registration.
 - In the 2nd quarterly newsletter we called for volunteers to participate in the Defra-funded study of beekeeping practices carried out by People, Science and Policy. Thank you to those who responded and participated. The full report can be found on Defra's website http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Complete_d=0&ProjectID=17049#RelatedDocuments The August edition of Beecraft will include an article on the study and its key findings.
 - Defra's website also includes the recently completed risk assessment on small hive beetle which can be found by visiting: <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=17051&FromSearch=Y&Status=3&Publisher=1&SearchText=PH0510&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description>. The risk assessment on nosema will follow shortly.
 - Some 1700 additional beekeepers have registered on BeeBase during 2010. **If you haven't already registered please do so** by visiting www.nationalbeeunit.com or by phoning the NBU on 01904 462510. By letting us know that you keep bees and the location of your hives, you will be helping in our ongoing battle against disease and our efforts to sustain honey bee populations.



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Working with others to raise awareness about BeeBase and the importance of registration:

- Fera has completed a second phase of writing out to partner organisations such as Defra agencies, beekeeping suppliers and wildlife/countryside associations etc. requesting that they include a link to BeeBase on their websites and providing them with detail on the benefits on registration. A good response has been received so far.
- If anyone reading this Newsletter would like to help encourage beekeepers to register on BeeBase, particularly given the benefits to beekeepers and for control of honey bee diseases, the Healthy Bees Project Manager would be delighted to hear from you, contact details below. This may simply involve including the BeeBase address (www.nationalbeeunit.com) on your own websites or publicity material.

Education and training:

- The 4 pilot roadshows held in Wales, South West, North West and Eastern regions received overwhelmingly positive feedback from delegates on the day. In response to the question 'Taken overall, how did you rate the show' there were four options; poor, satisfactory, good and excellent. There was a 95% positive response to the shows with either good or excellent and 60% of those responses being excellent.
- In order to help us assess the effectiveness of the roadshows, in May we asked 20 attendees selected at random whether they had changed their beekeeping practices as a result of the roadshow, and whether they would attend another training workshop. Almost all had changed their beekeeping practices to some degree as a result of attending the roadshow, particularly changes to improve varroa management and hygiene practices. The majority of those interviewed stated that they would attend any future workshops. In September, we will ask a further 20 attendees about the changes they've made to their practices as a result of the roadshows.

Medicines for bees:

- The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) continues to implement its action plan to increase the availability of authorised medicines for honey bees and also to ensure their correct use, which is paramount for food safety. Residues in honey, due to improper use of medicines, could undermine its image as a healthy natural product. Further details are given in the VMD Action Plan - www.vmd.gov.uk/VetSQP/Bee/actionplan.pdf - which was updated in June. Optimal use of

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available medicines by beekeepers is also important to sustain their effectiveness in treating pests and diseases.

- As reported in VMD's updated Action Plan:
 - Thymovar 15g Bee-Hive Strips for Honey Bees, a thymol product, was authorised for use in the UK on 15 June 2010;
 - A reminder to beekeepers that products authorised in other Member States may be imported to treat bee diseases in the UK under the Cascade, and that **any** veterinary surgeon may apply under the Special Import Scheme to import a product for use under the Cascade. Such products must have an import certificate. The 5 products currently available for import under the Special Import Scheme are shown on VMD's 'Bee Information' page. <http://www.vmd.gov.uk/VetSQP/Bee/imported.pdf>

Upcoming Key Activities:

- The NBU will be attending the following shows. If you'd like to have a chat and pick up our latest leaflets please feel free to visit the stands.
 - 19-22 July – Royal Welsh Show
 - 31 July – Oxfordshire County and Thame Show
 - 26 August - Melplash Agricultural Show
 - 28-30 October – The National Honey Show
 - 13 November – Hampshire Bee Convention
 - 21 November – West Dorset Convention
- The Random Apiary Survey continues into its second year. Results from the first year will be reviewed in September by the Healthy Bees Science and Evidence Advisory Group.
- As part of the recent revamp of BeeBase, the NBU have introduced a new email update system, which means they can notify you; free of charge, of up-to-date information, surveys and newsletters if you wish to subscribe to this option. If you registered on BeeBase some time ago before this option was available and would like to receive these updates, please click [here](#) to do so. You are able to unsubscribe at any time simply by logging in to your BeeBase account. Your details will not be passed to any third parties.

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