

Healthy Bees Plan

Issue 9 - January 2012

Quarterly Newsletter for all those interested in honey bee health

Education and Training:

Education and training continues as a high priority for the Healthy Bees Plan which co-funded with the BBKA and the NDB the development of new training materials and courses in 2010 and 2011, and also supported initiatives to increase the number of beekeeper trainers. These new materials and courses continue to be offered or are available for purchase, as described below.

NDB Short Courses

These courses are intended for those who are studying towards the more advanced UK Beekeeping Association assessments, or for those involved in teaching within their local associations. They are led by NDB-qualified tutors and are restricted to small groups, offering a challenging environment in which real learning and useful discussion can take place.

Three venues are used which allows courses to be run close to students from most parts of England and Wales. Each venue is equipped with modern teaching and laboratory facilities. Details of local accommodation and transport links will be provided upon receipt of an application form.

| Month | Date | Course Title | Lead Tutor | Venue |
|-------------|--------|---|-----------------|----------|
| January | 14, 15 | Adult Bee Diseases | Dan Basterfield | Cheshire |
| January | 28, 29 | Microscopy for Beekeepers - full | Graham Royle | Kent |
| February | 11, 12 | Pollen – Nature’s Little Wonder | Robert Smith | Cheshire |
| February | 25, 26 | Anatomy and Dissection - full | Graham Royle | Devon |
| March | 17, 18 | Teaching for Beekeeping Tutors | Bridget Beattie | Kent |
| March | 19, 20 | Integrated Pest Management | Bridget Beattie | Kent |
| March | 27, 28 | Pollen – Nature’s Little Wonder | Robert Smith | Devon |
| March/April | 31, 1 | Microscopy for Beekeepers | Graham Royle | Kent |
| May | 3, 4 | Seasonal Management | Ivor Davis | Kent |
| May | 26, 27 | Queen Raising & Stock Improvement | Dan Basterfield | Devon |
| June | 9, 10 | Queen Raising & Stock Improvement | Dan Basterfield | Devon |
| June | 15, 16 | Pollen – Nature’s Little Wonder | Robert Smith | Kent |
| June | 21, 22 | Queen Raising & Stock Improvement | Dan Basterfield | Devon |
| July | 7, 8 | Queen Raising & Stock Improvement | Dan Basterfield | Devon |

The fee is £140 per student per course; this includes all consumables, course handouts, refreshments and a light lunch on both days. For expert tuition by highly-qualified tutors, this represents very good value for money.

Please note that a £115 subsidy is currently available from the Fera Healthy Bees Project for the Teaching for Beekeeping Tutors course for eligible students nominated by their beekeeping association.

The following document summarises the dates and content for each course: [NDB Short Courses summary](#)

Further information and application form can be found on the NDB website www.national-diploma-bees.org.uk

City and Guilds 7303 'Train the Trainer' Course

The Healthy Bees Plan has so far funded 58 beekeeper trainers to attend the accredited City & Guilds 7303 and similar 'Train the Trainer' course. We've had very positive feedback from beekeeper trainers who have taken the course attended . For example:

- 'I have more confidence [as a result of the course] because the planning skills learnt on C&G 7303 means I can control the flow of information and stick to the brief. Understanding how to structure a session, cover all the points necessary and checking out the outcomes [what the students had learnt] was extremely helpful.'
- 'with a better understanding of how people learn and the range of learning styles, the content of my sessions has been improved as well as the delivery. I hope to persuade the other tutors [in my association] to produce lesson plans for all the modules of the beginners course.'
- 'I have reduced and simplified the content to avoid overloading [the learners] with detail, broken up the session with practical elements to encourage greater participation and used questioning to test understanding. I have also presented the objectives of the session and the learning outcomes to the learners to ensure they understand what I want them to leave the session with.'

Fera is continuing to offer this course until the end of the 2011/12 financial year. If you are a beekeeper trainer and would like to brush up your training skills this course could be for you. Alternatively, you may be interested in the NDB course on Teaching for Beekeeping Tutors (see NDB course section in this Newsletter).

Time is running out to apply. If you would like to attend a course please contact beehealthinfo@fera.gsi.gov.uk in the first instance and we'll send you a form and letter explaining what you are able to claim etc. Applications should be endorsed by a member of your local association ie. Secretary or Chair or your local Bee Inspector. Please note the closing date for applications is 29 February 2012.

Red and Green Courses in Cases for Beekeeper Trainers

The new red and green courses in a case were exhibited at the National Honey Show in October and are available for beekeeper trainers to order from the BBKA:

- the red course in a case is aimed at trainers of improvers ie, beekeepers who have grasped the fundamentals of beekeeping;
- the green course in a case is aimed at trainers of proficient beekeepers, ie, those who have managed a number of colonies and are able to advise colleagues. These individuals will require little tuition or mentoring to maintain high standards.

These courses are in addition to the white and yellow courses in cases (for beginners and novices respectively) which are also available for beekeeper trainers to buy through the BBKA. Simply contact your local association or (the membership area of) www.bbka.org.uk .

Working with Others to Raise Awareness about BeeBase and the Importance of Registration

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.

5528 additional beekeepers registered on BeeBase during 2011 leading to 25,400 registered in total as of December 2011.

If you haven't already registered please do so and join your fellow beekeepers 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.

Developing Best Practice Guidance on the Sale of Nuclei

In recent years there have been a number of outbreaks of statutory notifiable diseases which have been attributed to the sale of bees or nuclei by some bee suppliers. In the light of this evidence and the growing demand for bees from many new and inexperienced beekeepers, the Healthy Bees Plan Project Management Board considered that measures needed to be developed with bee suppliers to reduce the spread of disease through the sale of bees.

Fera have been working with some of the main beekeeping suppliers to produce a best practice guidance for suppliers of honey bee nuclei. Purchasers who buy through suppliers that have adopted the guidance would have more confidence in the quality of the nuclei supplied. The current aim is to circulate this guidance to suppliers and purchasers before the 2012 beekeeping season



Healthy brood

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](#). Optimal use of available medicines by beekeepers is also important to sustain their effectiveness in treating pests and diseases.

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Update on the Random Apiary Survey

The Random Apiary Survey was commissioned by Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government to help the NBU obtain an accurate estimate of disease prevalence by visiting apiaries in all areas, rather than concentrating on high risk areas. Over the last 2 seasons the NBU have checked for disease at over 4700 apiaries selected at random from across England and Wales. We know from this massive surveillance exercise that the priority inspection programme, routinely used by the NBU, detected significantly more American and European foulbrood than the inspection of apiaries selected at random. Also, the apiary risk classifications used by the NBU to prioritise inspections were confirmed as being very useful for targeting disease.

The final part of this exercise was to look at 13 pathogens in adult bee samples collected from each visit, including viruses, fungi and bacteria. We can confirm that every one of these pathogens was detected across England and Wales, but the prevalence of each ranged from being very common, to a single finding in the survey! Some good news is that the viruses linked to Colony Collapse Disorder in the United States were of very low prevalence, and none of the 19,615 colonies assessed in the survey, were suffering from this condition. The final report for this surveillance exercise will be shared with beekeepers in spring 2012, so look out for updates in magazines, on BeeBase ([see www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)) and presentations at the WBKA and BBKA Spring conventions. NBU staff will also throughout the year be giving presentations across the country as well which will include these details.

Asian Hornet

The Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*, is an aggressive predator of honey bees and other beneficial insects. Physically, it is superficially similar to our native European hornet, *V. crabro*, but despite its fearsome reputation *V. velutina* is slightly smaller (2.5-3cm long).

There are multiple routes by which the Asian hornet could enter the UK. In the event that it does arrive, it is highly likely to establish and spread. It is difficult to assess the full impacts of arrival, but it is likely to have implications for the UK's beekeeping sector.

The Non Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) have produced an [identification sheet](#) describing the species; what the key ID features are and field signs.

You may report sightings, along with a photograph and details of where you saw them, to alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk If possible send in a sample to the National Bee Unit (NBU) for examination to confirm identity. However, do not under any circumstances disturb or provoke an active hornets' nest.



Photographs courtesy of Jean Haxaire

