



## National Bee Unit – Southern Region Update

A review of the 2014 season

December 2014

### New organisation

On the 1st of October 2014 a new agency was formed by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and called, the Animal and Plant health agency (APHA). This combines the former Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) with some parts of the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera), including the Bee Inspectorate, the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate, the Plant Variety and Seeds Group and the Genetically Modified Organisms Inspectorate. APHA's mission is to "safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy" and the bringing together of these strongly inspectorate focused groups will increase our operational effectiveness, flexibility, and capacity to respond to emergencies. Please see <http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/> for further information on the merger and more information about APHA can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency>

From a beekeepers point of view little has changed and the inspectors and office support staff remain the same, however please note that all our email addresses have changed and the new ones can be found on the last page of this report.

### The Season

2014 began with a mild winter but with a lot of flooding in the South. The spring was wet but the summer was glorious with extended sunny periods. Consequently the nectar flowed well and the BBKA honey survey revealed that "Britain's honey bees produce best crop for five years". Of course there is always a price and swarming was very prevalent with both early and late swarming reported.

With what looks like another mild winter so far, those using Oxalic acid should be aware that because of the possibility of laying continuing through the winter it may not be as effective as usual, as the *Varroa* within sealed brood is protected from the action of oxalic acid. Another consequence of the relatively warm winter is that active colonies, especially those rearing brood, use more stores and are therefore at risk of starvation if there isn't adequate provisions in the colony. Monitoring the situation by hefting and if necessary providing fondant directly above the cluster should prevent any risk of starvation.



**The Southern Team**

In 2014, Southern region was able to recruit one new Seasonal Bee Inspector (SBI) and Dan Etheridge joined us on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. He has been fully trained and is settling in well to his Berkshire area.

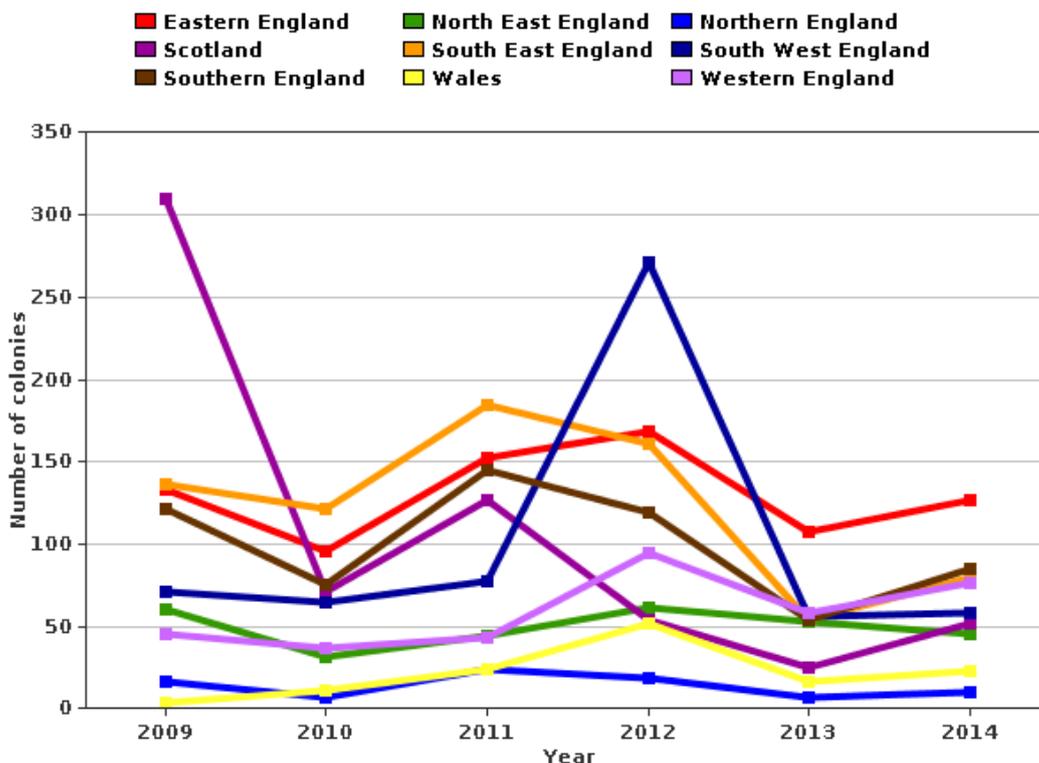
**Recruitment For 2015**

With no one leaving Southern region this year I am happy to say there will be no recruitment in 2015. Southern region has a good mix of experienced and newer team members and therefore with no recruitment, I won't need to focus on interviewing and training this year, and will be able to concentrate on ensuring that the newer team members are fully trained and comfortable in their role. It is discussed amongst the Regional Bee Inspectors (RBI's) and agreed that in general it takes about three seasons for an SBI to settle in to their region, develop a good working relationship with local associations and beekeepers, and to ensure they are familiar with all aspects of this demanding role.

**Inspection Programme**

In 2014 in England, Scotland and Wales a total of 40,322 colonies were inspected across 6,442 apiaries. 558 colonies were diagnosed with EFB and 103 with AFB. Currently in total there are 33,644 current beekeepers with 153,752 colonies in 44,181 apiaries in England, Scotland and Wales registered on BeeBase.

**Figure 1.** Below is a graph showing the number of colonies with EFB in each of the regions of the inspectorate over the last 6 years.

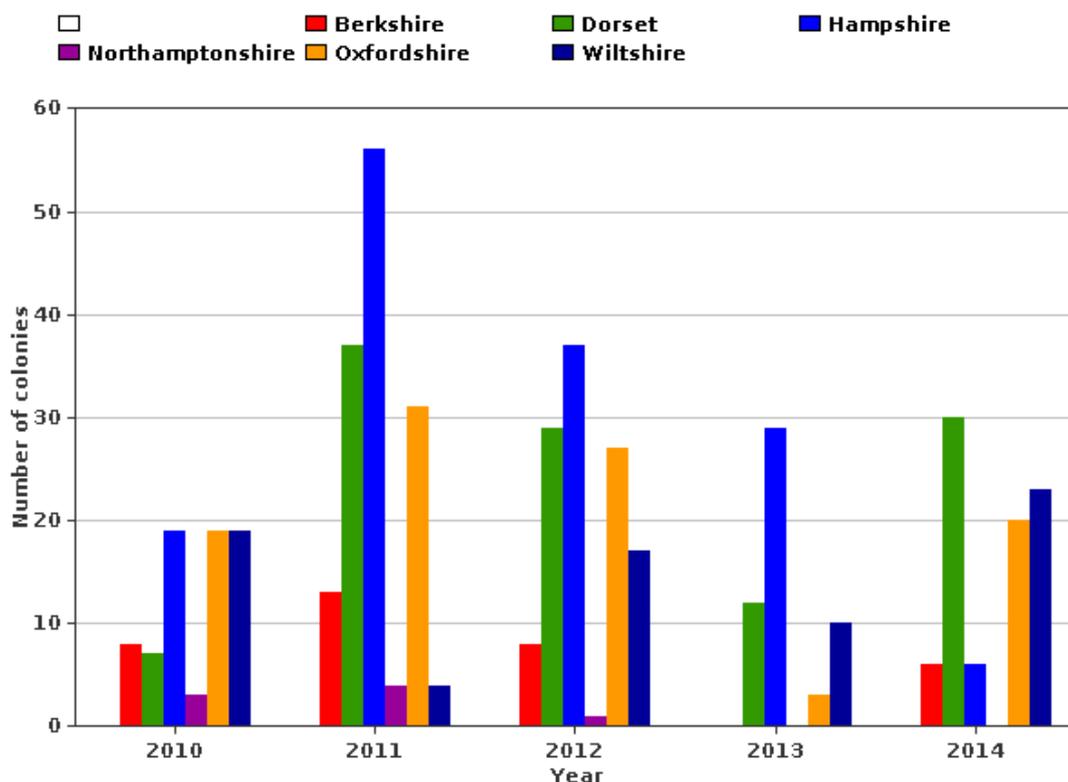




### Regional Inspection and Foulbrood Summary

This year 6061 colonies were inspected in 852 apiaries in Southern region; 85 colonies were found with EFB and 3 with AFB. Southern region currently has 4908 current beekeepers with 21,425 colonies in 6427 apiaries, registered on BeeBase.

**Figure 2.** The distribution of EFB amongst the counties of Southern region is displayed on the graph below.



More information on the location of disease can be accessed by visiting the disease incidence page on BeeBase:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/public/BeeDiseases/diseaseIncidenceMaps.cfm>



**Figure 3.** The following table shows the 10km squares in Southern region that had foulbrood in 2014.

County	10 km square	Area name	Colonies with EFB	Colonies with AFB
Berkshire	SU37	Lambourn	4	
	SU46	Newbury	1	
	SU86	Crowthorne	1	
Dorset	ST60	Minterne Magna	1	
	ST80	Blandford Forum	1	
	ST81	Iwerne Minster	6	
	ST90	Tarrant Rushton	2	
	SY58	Abbotsbury	3	
	SY69	Stratton	1	
	SY79	Puddletown	4	
	SY89	Bere Regis	3	
	SY98	Wareham	2	
	SY99	Lytchett Matravers	3	
	SZ08	Brownsea Island	2	
	SZ09	West Bournemouth	2	
Hampshire	SU22	White Parish	1	
	SU51	Bishops Waltham	3	
	SU72	Petersfield	1	
	SZ79	South Hayling	1	
Northamptonshire	SP76	Northampton		3
Oxfordshire	SU58	Blewbury	1	
	SU68	East Wallingford	19	
Wiltshire	ST85	Trowbridge	4	
	ST95	Great Cheverell	1	
	SU04	Shrewton	5	
	SU07	East Calne	7	
	SU23	Winterslow	6	
<b>Totals</b>			<b>85</b>	<b>3</b>



## **Bee Health Consultation**

In 2011/12 a review of Bee health was undertaken by Fera's Bee Health Policy team, on behalf of Defra and the Welsh Government, with representatives from the National Bee Unit (NBU), commercial and amateur beekeeper associations and an independent scientist. They considered how best to manage pests and diseases in the future so that the optimum policies and interventions are in place. An in depth article was published in **BBKA News, 221 Jan 2014 pages 11 to 15**, and this explains the consultation process and the recommended proposals.

We are now in the implementation phase and this is being guided by the Bee Health Advisory Forum (BHAF), <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=339>. This will be a 'work in progress' for a while but ultimately will guide the functioning of the National Bee Unit and its Inspectors.

There were 5 key areas within this and below I will update how Southern region is getting on with implementing these proposals.

- **Association Forums.**

Southern region holds an association forum every spring and association representatives are invited to this. The overarching goal is to develop the relationship between the inspectorate and local beekeeping associations to aid in the combating of bee diseases and pests.

The next forum will be held shortly after the general election in May and I will send invites to association secretaries in due course.

- **BeeBase Registration of Beekeepers and Association Membership Lists.**

Voluntary registration is very important and can be done online at [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com) or by calling our office on 0300 3030094. This should be followed by periodic updating of your personal and apiary details. To do so you will need a username and password and this can be obtained when registering or by calling the office. Once into your records click on "my apiaries" where new apiaries can be added by clicking on the green plus sign and entering a name for the apiary and a map reference.

Your association can send us their list of members if they wish but can only do this if they satisfy the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

- **Streamlining Training Events**

Training events are a key part of the education remit of the NBU; however, we are under a lot of pressure to ensure these are delivered in an efficient and professional manner. We will only deliver education events that cover pests and diseases and associated husbandry. The RBI's are focussing on county level talks with large attendances (>50), bee health days and comb workshops. SBI's will focus on bee safaris and apiary demos and will help the RBI



at bee health days. We will no longer give talks for beginner's courses on diseases or "health and hygiene" as this can be handled by the local association trainers.

In 2015 two bee health days are planned so far, the first in Hampshire on the 25<sup>th</sup> April and the second in Wiltshire on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

- **Better Regulation Approaches**

The Disease Accreditation Scheme for Honeybees (DASH) has been set up in collaboration with the Bee Farmers Association (BFA) as an accreditation scheme for beekeepers with large numbers of colonies. People who join the scheme are trained in disease recognition and barrier management and will carry out self-diagnosis, reporting and destruction or shook swarm of foulbrood infected colonies.

In 2015 the first tranche of bee farmers were trained and had their baseline inspections completed and were subsequently accredited.

- **Bee Health Advisors**

Bee Health Advisors (BHA's) are experienced beekeepers who volunteer to provide a first line of advice for local beekeepers in an association and have previously been known as Disease Liaison Co-ordinators, Disease Liaison Contacts or Disease Liaison Officers. They are not paid, and are additional to Bee Inspectors, helping local beekeepers when they have a suspected disease or unidentified problem in a colony. BHA's have no powers of entry and will only inspect a colony when invited.

The reason we are encouraging associations to set up BHA's is so the support for local beekeepers is increased and to hopefully increase the discovery of foulbrood by beekeepers. This will formalise something that already occurs in some associations. BHA's will be provided with a day's training at which they will be shown how to detect foulbrood and issued with lateral flow devices for identification of it in the field.

With some 5000 known beekeepers in Southern region we will be running this training at county level. If an association can come up with some names of people with the appropriate knowledge and experience who are willing to provide this service to local beekeepers, and contact me then I am happy to provide a day's training. As a starting point I would suggest one BHA per 100 beekeepers. The training will be at a local venue and will be run on a week day sometime between May and August.

In 2014 BHA's were trained in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and in this year Berkshire has declared an interest in setting them up and discussions are ongoing. If you are interested in being a BHA or think your association should provide them then please talk this over with your local secretary or chairperson and they should contact their county secretary who will arrange the training with me. This will be a key discussion item at the next forum.



### **Small Hive Beetle in South West Italy.**

On September 11 2014, the Italian Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie, (IZSV) confirmed the first detection of the presence of Small hive beetle (SHB) in South West Italy, in the port city of Gioia Tauro.

Following the initial discovery of the SHB the Italian authorities established a 20km radius protection zone and a 100km surveillance zone around this site. Surveillance and control activities were focused on the 20km zone and movement restrictions placed in the 100km zone preventing any export or movement of bees, bee products and equipment from the zone.

A rigorous inspection programme has shown a number of additional apiaries affected within the 20km zone in the province of Reggio Calabria and the southernmost border of Vibo Valentia. The protection zone is extended to cover the area 20km around each new detection. At the time of writing over 50 apiaries are known to be affected within the original 20km zone and one apiary affected in the Siracusa region of Sicily. This new outbreak was determined to have resulted from the movement of colonies from within the Gioia Tauro area to Sicily in August before the first discovery of SHB and demonstrates the ease by which the pest can be spread by the movement of colonies. The situation in Italy continues to evolve, so please see further details as they are reported on the IZSV website.

<http://www.izsvenezie.it/aethina-tumida-in-italia-2014/>

The information is also on the EU Reference Laboratory for honey bee health ANSES website and added in chronological order with additional photographs and video. See

<https://sites.anses.fr/en/minisite/abeilles/detection-aethina-tumida-small-hive-beetle-southern-italy-0>

At present the Italian authorities are still attempting to eradicate the pest with all apiaries affected being destroyed and the surrounding soil treated with insecticide. Although SHB larvae have so far been detected in only four of the positive apiaries, the spread within the original 20km zone indicates that SHB has been present long enough to go through at least one breeding cycle. The area is a popular one for migratory beekeeping and queen rearing and naturally there is concern that SHB may have spread into other provinces through the movement of bees or equipment before the first detection.

Since 2011, there has been a substantial level of imports of package bees and queens from Italy into the UK The National Bee Unit has completed all the tracing of imports of packages



imported from Italy in 2014, around 600 colonies, and all results have been negative. Fortunately none of the imports were from the region affected.

However, now that the SHB is present in Europe the risk of introduction into the UK is far greater and all beekeepers should be both aware of the appearance of all life stages of the SHB and be examining their colonies on a regular basis. Please refer to the NBU leaflet, 'The Small Hive Beetle – a serious threat to European apiculture' available as a download from BeeBase at [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com) or as a hard copy.

It is also essential that all apiaries are registered on BeeBase (as well as beekeeper contact details) so that we can identify apiaries at risk in the event of an incursion of SHB into the UK and target control measures effectively.

It is not known at present how the SHB was introduced into Southern Italy, though it is possible that it arrived on produce imported into the region through the port of Gioia Tauro. Since 2003 the NBU and its Inspectors have increased statutory surveillance programmes to monitor for exotic pests including SHB at apiaries designated as 'at risk' due to their location near airports, freight depots and ports of entry for fruit and other foodstuffs as well as risks associated with the movement of honey bees and bumble bees for trade.

In 2009 the NBU introduced the Sentinel Apiary Programme in which a selected group of beekeepers has been specifically monitoring their colonies for exotic pests and submitting samples of hive debris to the NBU for examination. Together these two initiatives greatly improve the chance of early interception of SHB if it were to be introduced to the UK, which is the only hope we have of eradicating the pest before it becomes established.

The most serious threat of the introduction of SHB into the UK remains the trade in bees and hive products. Import regulations are our main defence and it is essential that all beekeepers abide by them. If in any doubt, please contact me or the NBU office.

### **Next Season**

2015 will obviously be a busy year for the Bee Inspectors with the continued implementation of the bee health review and with increased inspections close to risk points for the entry of SHB and Asian hornet. Once again may I take this opportunity to thank all Southern region SBI's for their hard work this season.

Thank you and best wishes to all beekeepers for 2015.

Nigel Semmence  
RBI, Southern region



### **Southern region contact details**

#### **Seasonal Bee Inspectors;**

Robert Carpenter Turner	Wiltshire	07775 119464
	<a href="mailto:robert.carpenter-turner@apha.gsi.gov.uk">robert.carpenter-turner@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	
Phil Spillane	Oxfordshire	07775 119470
	<a href="mailto:philip.spillane@apha.gsi.gov.uk">philip.spillane@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	
Kevin Pope	Dorset	07775 119466
	<a href="mailto:kevin.pope@apha.gsi.gov.uk">kevin.pope@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	
Debbie Burton	East Hampshire and Isle of Wight	07775 119468
	<a href="mailto:deborah.burton@apha.gsi.gov.uk">deborah.burton@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	
Adrian Kelly	South West Hampshire	07901 517983
	<a href="mailto:adrian.kelly@apha.gsi.gov.uk">adrian.kelly@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	
Rachel Hall	Northamptonshire	07867 351626
	<a href="mailto:rachael.hall@apha.gsi.gov.uk">rachael.hall@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	
Dan Etheridge	Berkshire	07979 119376
	<a href="mailto:daniel.etheridge@apha.gsi.gov.uk">daniel.etheridge@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	

#### **Regional Bee Inspector;**

Nigel Semmence	North West Hampshire	01264 338694
	<a href="mailto:nigel.semmence@apha.gsi.gov.uk">nigel.semmence@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>	07776 493649

#### **Head Office;**

National Bee Unit  
The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)  
National Agri-Food Innovation Campus  
Sand Hutton  
York  
YO41 1LZ

Tel 0300 3030094  
Email [nbu@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nbu@apha.gsi.gov.uk)

**Website;** [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)