

A FOLLOW UP TO THE HIVE COUNT IN 2015

A Big Thank You

Jason Learner, National Bee Unit

In January, many beekeepers will recall having received an e-mail or text message asking for the information on colony numbers on BeeBase to be updated.

This was part of a pilot project titled 'Hive Count'; the UK's contribution towards an EU-wide study to find out more about beekeeping across the 28 Member States.

The data submitted by each country to the EU's Apiculture Programme will be used to apportion funds according to each country's national estimate of beehive numbers. It will also provide more robust data on hive numbers across all the Member States.

Annual Hive Count

Although this was a pilot exercise to test protocols, it will become an annual requirement for each Member State to carry out this survey. In the long term, it is also envisaged that the Hive Count will help to contribute towards how we monitor changes to and the overall health of the UK honey bee population.

Thank You

The National Bee Unit would like to say a big 'thank you' to all those beekeepers who took part, not only by providing us with their colony numbers but also by being patient while we worked through the many administrative enquiries received regarding the project.

We would also like to encourage all those who did not take part to do so in the autumn when the project is officially launched.

Hundreds of people e-mailed us and please be assured that, although we could not respond to every e-mail we received, we did update colony numbers when advised. Additionally, through this pilot project, we have learnt a great deal of do's and don'ts for the next Hive Count, some of which we would like to share with you here.

Things are Best Kept Simple

Many of you commented that access to BeeBase is too complicated for some people and, once logged in, the field that needed to be updated was

not obvious at first glance.

Based on your feedback, we plan to improve the way you can provide this information in the next Hive Count. Hopefully, these changes will make the process easier and quicker. This is particularly important, as beekeepers are going to be asked to fill in their colony numbers every year.

Results

From this project, we now have the baseline numbers of colonies and beekeepers, ie, the before and after figures from the Hive Count pilot. The information supplied to us from the partners was anonymised to protect personal data. The estimate of the number of UK hives will be submitted to the EU before the end of March.

Partners

The project is led by the National Bee Unit and supported by Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government, DARDNI, (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Northern Ireland [UK]), the British

Beekeepers' Association, the Welsh Beekeepers' Association, the Scottish Beekeepers' Association, Bee Disease Insurance (BDI), the International Bee Research Association, and the National Diploma in Beekeeping.


We thank you for your assistance in this project.

Sign Up!

We encourage all beekeepers to register on our BeeBase database. Although not compulsory, it is important to sign up to BeeBase so that we can help protect your colonies.

By registering your e-mail address, you will receive pest and disease alerts regarding incidences in your area, enabling you to take extra precautions when inspecting your colonies.

If we don't know where apiaries are then, in the event of a foul brood or an exotic pest outbreak, we will not know where to send our Bee Inspectors and our eradication and containment efforts will be seriously jeopardised.

You can register on BeeBase via <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm> 



**Don't put your bees at risk
Register on BeeBase**

BeeBase is a FREE online service provided by the National Bee Unit to help protect you and your fellow beekeepers from colony threatening pests and diseases.

Register online today - www.nationalbeeunit.com