

**Summary Note of the Bee Health Advisory Forum
23rd Meeting – 20th March 2018
Room 52F23 National Agri-Food Innovation
Campus, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ**

Present:

Richard Watkins (RW) (Chair)	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
Alison Wilson	
Liz Macintosh (LMc)	
Kevin Beattie	
Louise Mount ☎ (LMo)	
Mike Brown	Animal & Plant Health Agency, National Bee Unit (NBU)
Julian Parker ☎	
Nigel Semmence ☎	
Sarah Chadwick (Secretary)	
Rebekah Clarkson (RC)	
Maureen Wakefield	Fera Science Ltd (Fera)
Kirsty Stainton	
Ken Basterfield ☎	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
Margaret Ginman ☎	Bee Farmers' Association (BFA)
Ged Marshall	Welsh Government (WG)
Paul McCullough (PH) ☎	
Dan Basterfield ☎	National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB)
Steve Sunderland (SS)	Scottish Government
Anna Burrows ☎	Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
John Bowles	
Chris Hartfield ☎	National Farmers Union
John Hill	British Bee Veterinary Association (BBVA)

Apologies:

Margaret Murdin	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
John Mellis	BFA
Norman Carreck	International Bee Research Association (IBRA)
Willem Roelofs	Defra
Belinda Phillipson	
Simon Bilsborough	WG

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone and confirmed who was dialling in. Introductions were given by each member of the Forum.

2. Highlight report and Minutes

- The following changes were noted: Correct National Diploma in Beekeeping abbreviation and amend queen rearing information in previous minutes.
- Highlight report. –Bee Health Advisory page had been updated on BeeBase. A brief

update was provided Healthy Bee Plan activities.

- BHAF Actions were discussed.

3. Education Contracts annual summary

RC gave a brief summary of how she has been working with contractors to provide evidence of delivery of key performance indicators set out in the contracts in line with auditing requirements. RC had sent tables to contractors to help record key monthly metrics consistently.

BBKA, NBD and BFA gave updates on this year's successes.

4. EU Exit and Future Farming Policy Liz McIntosh

Liz Macintosh and Alison Wilson from the Defra Plant Health Policy provided the Forum with an overview of the consultation paper on Future Farming Policy. LMc explained the background and key points of the consultation – in particular the chapter on Plant and Bee Health. She invited everyone to submit formal responses into the consultation which would close on the 8th May and to consider attending one of the regional workshops. The consultation was a chance to help shape future policy and would feed into developing the agriculture bill.

Discussions highlighted that animal health/biosecurity issues (Chapter 7) are relevant to bees but also the environment and resilience section (Chapter 10) in relation to apiculture funding. LMo explained that one option may to provide funding for equipment for UK queen producers and guidance to beekeepers on UK queen availability.

LMc explained how Defra wanted to understand views. Key milestones outlined: consultation period Mar to May - Agriculture Bill to be introduced in the summer 2018. Defra were collecting informal notes from consultations and they will be used to inform policy.

LMo offered to attend CONBA meeting being co-ordinated by MG if that would be helpful.

5. Healthy Bees Plan – group session

RC gave short presentation on the review so far and key milestones of the future plan and asked for support from the BHAF for their experience and suggest case studies from the last 10 years. The current plan has 5 outcomes – we need to reflect on how we have delivered on each outcome as part of the review to inform the future plan.

RC noted the 'HBP indicators' document had not been reviewed since the 2013 consultation. The indicators do not give the full picture but are a useful tool to look at some trends.

An internal review had collected a list of evidence that could be used to review HBP, how education has impacted on beekeeping.

The next steps would be – finalise details of project; collect and review evidence from the BHAF, 'Where has HBP impacted on Beekeeping'; review evidence by the end of year. The aim was to publish a review of the last 10 years by Dec 2019.

BHAF discussed HBP successes and possible data sources. The following areas were highlighted:

- DASH
- COLLOSS – useful metric
- Husbandry survey data
- BFA – knowledge transfer pilot scheme very successful
- PM – Wales want to retain partnership.

There was general agreement to support the review.

AOB/comms/news

6.1 Queen Rearing Survey released 16/03/2017 - Kevin Beattie

Queen replacement practices had been used as the title for the survey instead of 'Queen Rearing' which NBU felt might have led people to a particular response. 4000 responses had been received at the time of the meeting, which was considerably higher than anticipated. In the first 2 hours 650 people had done the survey by the end of Friday 1500 and by the end of Monday 3600. The survey was not sent to Welsh Beekeepers as it originated out of the England Apiculture Programme consultation.

Negative comments have been observed on social media and from Bee farmers who were concerned that the survey is skewed towards the needs of hobbyist beekeepers and may influence the limiting imports. Those who have taken the time to call NBU have been assured that the survey was created with the BHAF. BBKA asked for the date to be extended to 01/04/2018 so that the readership of the magazine can get the opportunity to respond.

6.2 EURBEST (EUROpean honey BEe breeding and Selection Team, www.eurbest.eu) and SMARTBEES

MB explained how NBU had been invited to join the EU funded EURBEST project.

MW updated BHAF on the SMART bees which Fera Science Ltd was contributing to. The programme would finish in October. The management protocols of the programme for queen rearing meant that there was limited uptake amongst UK beekeepers.

6.3. UKAS Technical experts

Margaret Murdin had expressed BBKA's concern verbally prior to the meeting that beekeepers with potentially less experience than NBU Bee Inspectors could be invited by UKAS to audit NBU Inspection processes. JP was aware and written formally to APHA's Quality Manager to assure NBU that appropriate experts e.g. SG, WG or NI Inspectors would be invited to assess practices with UKAS.

6.4. Asian hornet local action teams (AHAT)

NS confirmed he was aware that some BBKA's wish to set up local action teams for Asian Hornet and explained how it may be beneficial if we could agree on a set of guidelines for these groups. Nigel proposed developing an AHAT protocol to help coordinate group working in a consistent way.

Following an open meeting in Devon in January, KBa contacted various associations about their different approaches.

NS invited to speak at SW Beekeepers Association meeting by KBa.

6.5 Hive Count

WS – Asked for an update on how many people had updated their records.

Environmental audit lords select committee

BHAF were made aware of the House of Lord's Committee's inquiry which plans to examine key decisions and the overall ambition and approach of the Government's 25-Year Environment Plan. For further information:-

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/25-year-environment-plan-17-19/>

National Pollinator Strategy - LMo

To be an agenda item at next meeting

6. Meeting closed