

Healthy Bees Plan

Summary note of 2nd Meeting of the Communications Working Group (CWG)

14th December 2009 - Nobel House, London

Present:

David Bancalari	Bee Farmers' Association	Gay Marris	NBU, FERA
Dan Basterfield	Bee Farmers' Association	Liz McIntosh	FERA (Temporary Co-Chair)
Amy Byrne	WAG	Trish O'Donnell	Defra (Strategic Communications Adviser) (Co-Chair)
Brian Clark	Welsh BKA newsletter	Robert Smith	Beekeeper
Helen Crews	FERA	Claire Waring	Editor, BeeCraft
Robin Dean	Bee Farmers' Association	Alison Wilson	FERA
Georgina Hodges	Defra (Head of Strategic Communications)		
Marie Holmes	FERA (Secretary of Group)		

Apologies: Sharon Blake, Editor, BBKA News (who has now withdrawn from the Group) and Richard Ball, NBU Education and Extension Officer.

1. Welcome and feedback from Project Management Board on first draft of Communications Strategy

Trish O'Donnell (Co-Chair) welcomed the Group including new members Bob Smith, Gay Marris and Ali Wilson and noted that Sharon Blake had withdrawn from the Group. For the next meeting, a member of the Scottish Beekeeping Association would be invited as an observer.

ACTION: Marie Holmes to invite a member of the SBA.

The Chair stressed that the communication strategy was a draft at this stage and when signed off by this Group, would still be a living document for further review and development.

Before reviewing the draft communication strategy, the Chair paused to check whether the CWG was content with how we were approaching this work and whether there were any comments on the note of the first meeting, the Group's terms of reference and the note on ways of working which had been circulated at the first meeting:

- The Group was content with a summary note of the meeting which reflected key issues of agreement and disagreement, agreed actions, and points for future discussion. The Group also agreed that during meetings, the Chair or the

Secretary should make it clear when there was an action to note or a decision to record in the summary note.

- The Group agreed that the Terms of Reference should include a reference to using best available evidence in the course of its work. **ACTION:** Liz McIntosh to add to terms of reference.
- The Group agreed that, in relation to ways of working, articles for the press should be circulated and cleared with the CWG if the article was speaking on behalf of the CWG or if the article named individuals on CWG. It was also important to distinguish between personal observations and those of the Group.

The Chair noted the Group's view that the number of 'unknown' beekeepers was perhaps less than had been suggested to date, and their suggestion that communications activities, and the Healthy Bees Plan more generally, should focus on the beekeepers we already know about.

Turning to the draft communications strategy, during a brief discussion, the Group agreed the following points:

- CWG should make progress with implementing the strategy based on current circumstances and available evidence on effectiveness of communications channels, while at the same time gathering additional evidence on effectiveness in support of implementation.
- The strategy was the first stage setting the overall framework for CWG's coordinated communications activities (by Defra, Fera and beekeeping press interests) to ensure that the agreed 'healthy bees' messages reach their intended audience and are acted upon. There are no plans to publish the strategy, it is simply intended as a basis for CWG's coordinated communications activities. Fera was already implementing key parts of the strategy, for example, articles in the beekeeping press and implementing an action plan to raise beekeepers' awareness of, and encourage their registration on BeeBase.
- The next stage for CWG would be to consider how best to implement other elements of the strategy, including considering the various channels and their effectiveness (covered further in agenda item 2). A suggested implementation plan for further development and discussion is attached at Annex A. Implementation of the Strategy would form a key part of the Group's work plan.

The Chair was keen for the Group to sign off the communications strategy in early 2010 and requested any further feedback by 8th January. [Postscript : the aim of signing off the strategy as a basis for CWG's work, is to make sure we press ahead with getting across 'healthy bees' messages by continuing to exploit the paths we know and understand, while keeping a watch on the potential new ones. At the same time, we also need to consider how best to gather evidence on communications channels to strengthen our effectiveness].

ACTION: ALL – Any further strategy feedback to Liz McIntosh by 8th January.

Helen Crews reported that the Healthy Bees Project Management Board (PMB) at their meeting on 10 December had requested that CWG should produce a work plan of deliverables for the next 15 months, taking into account the communication activities of the soon-to-be-established 2 other working groups (Science and

Evidence, and Husbandry and Education). The Group agreed and, after an initial discussion proposed the following:

- (i) A cost benefit analysis of two or three communication channels. It was agreed that David Bancalari would develop proposals for the Group to consider on how best to run some simple assimilation tests on key channels;
- (ii) Assessment of costs and benefits of the 4 pilot roadshows;
- (iii) Assessing implications of results from study of beekeeping practices on communications channels which were due at end of March.
- (iv) Communications plan for publication of contingency plan on exotic pests in spring 2010.
- (v) Identify and contact potential sponsors who might help fund incentives to encourage registration on BeeBase.

ACTION: ALL – Further ideas to inform work plan to Marie Holmes by 8th January.

2. Workshop Session – How we address and establish assimilation levels

Liz McIntosh (Co-Chair) introduced this item whose purpose was to start to address questions raised by members of the Group about costs and benefits of different communications channels and which ones we should be using to best effect for implementing the communications strategy.

David Bancalari introduced the range of communications models which were widely used including one to one discussions, group discussions, the Internet, social networking and attention grabbing approaches. This prompted a discussion in which the following points were made:

- Social networking sites presented new challenges on how to deal with questions raised and whether/how the NBU/ Fera should respond. The Group considered that the NBU should be seen as an authoritative source of information for beekeepers. Rather than contributing to social networking sites, which was time-consuming and resource intensive, the NBU might want to monitor what was being communicated in the forums and address the issues/questions raised as part of their routine information dissemination, particularly to counteract incorrect information being circulated.
- The Group recognised that the implementation of the communications strategy was likely to apply many of these models.

A short workshop session followed to consider which communication channels were effective for reaching beekeepers and what supporting evidence was available. Also to consider whether we focus on assessing individual channels or on the suite of communications channels in the round for their effectiveness in getting across good practice messages to beekeepers? The following points were made during discussion:

- The Group recognised that there was a generally accepted rank order of the effectiveness of different channels, with one-to-one being most effective (but also most expensive and difficult to scale up) and something like direct mail being least effective (but also low cost).
- The Group had little appetite to conduct an audit/in-depth analysis of each communication channels currently in use to reach beekeepers to assess their

individual effectiveness in reaching and engaging audiences. However, the Group agreed that there would be value in assessing the effectiveness of some of our current as well as emerging material.

- Opportunities to do such assessments were likely to arise:
 - as part of the forthcoming pilot roadshows at which we could test the effectiveness of one or two advisory leaflets as part of the event;
 - the NBU's husbandry survey - if continuing in 2010 – could include specific questions on the value and effectiveness of NBU's advisory materials;
 - the contingency plan on exotic pests was due to be updated and published in spring 2010. We could assess effectiveness of beekeepers' reception and recall about small hive beetle in response to the communications activities as part of the publication of the plan.
- David Bancalari agreed to develop proposals for simple assimilation tests for the Group to apply to some of our communications channels and to report back to the next meeting of the Group.

ACTION: David Bancalari to consider and report back to next meeting.

3. Workshop Session – Incentives for registering on BeeBase

The group considered 3 elements around BeeBase registration

- (i) Incentives to encourage registration (carrots)
- (ii) Who could sponsor the incentives
- (iii) Ideas for 'less lenient' approaches (sticks)

(i) Suggested incentives for those registered included:

Prize draw

Freebies

Automatic e-mail alert and/or text for pests or disease within a range of their hive

Email distribution of newsletters and/or new information and advice

VAT relief on Varroa treatment

RFID tag

Sugar discount

Insurance discount

(ii) Suggested sponsors included:

Shell/BP

BASF

Syngenta

Co-op/Waitrose/Sainsburys/Tesco/Morrisons/M&S/Asda/B&Q

BAT/Airlines

Nestle

RHS

Garden Centres

Fruit marketing boards

HRH

EDF (green energy)

(iii) Suggested 'less lenient' approaches included:

Compulsory registration

Display of BeeBase registration number requirement for selling honey
More points (environmental stewardship) for landowners
NVQ training with registration (licensing of beekeepers)

The Group agreed that incentives and sponsorship were relevant and appropriate elements of the Healthy Bees communications work plan.

4. Feedback/Review of BeeBase narrative document

Several comments received including, stressing BeeBase is designed and run by beekeepers for beekeepers, world recognised epidemiological database, addition of postcode search facility to locate a local bee inspector and other formatting/word change suggestions.

ACTION: Marie Holmes to finalise narrative based on comments received.

5. AOB

The Group agreed that the third meeting should be held mid to late February 2010.

Healthy Bees Project Team
Fera
21 December 2009

Healthy Bees Outline Communications Planning Matrix
Annex A

Segment	Characteristics <i>Demographics, beliefs, size, locations,</i>	Objectives <i>What do we want the segment to do/believe?</i>	Messages	Appropriate Channels
Beekeepers 1				
Beekeepers 2				
Beekeeping associations				
Land owners				
3rd party interest groups WI, NFU				
Scientists/R&D				
Pollinator Users				
Publics				