

Healthy Bees Plan

Issue 5 - October 2010

Quarterly Newsletter for all those interested in honey bee health

Quarterly newsletter on progress with implementing the Healthy Bees Plan (www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/growing/bees/news/plan.pdf) which the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) is implementing on behalf of Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

News & Highlights:

- The National Trust, jointly with the BBC, have this year launched the 'Bee Part of It' campaign. The National Bee Unit (NBU), its inspectors and York staff have been assisting with various parts of this project, including BBC Radio and Television interviews across the country and providing advice and assistance on all aspects of beekeeping. Contributions from the NBU can be found on BBC iPlayer, to access a list of contributions and quick links to the relevant area of iPlayer please visit the RSS feed on BeeBase (www.nationalbeeunit.com).



Additionally Fera hosted a visit from National Trust gardeners who are involved with Bee Part of It. Which included a tour of the NBU apiary and labs. This visit further strengthens our working relationship with the Trust.



- The NBU was recently featured on the One Show (Tuesday 7th September) in a segment looking at how bees see in ultraviolet light.
- Further to the confirmation in May of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) in Hawaii which was reported in the last newsletter, the EU Commission has now amended the Regulation to remove Hawaii from the list of approved countries for queen imports. To view the amendments, click here: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/downloadNews.cfm?id=80> . The NBU are reviewing the contingency plan for exotic pests including SHB and are in the process of updating the SHB leaflet. The current leaflet is still available on BeeBase as it's important for beekeepers to be vigilant and check their hives regularly for SHB.
- Some 3000 additional beekeepers have registered on BeeBase during 2010. **If you haven't already registered please do so** 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.
- A Healthy Bees implementation workshop was held at Sand Hutton on 21 July with stakeholders that identified our vision, priorities, recommendations and concerns for the next 2-3 years of



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Healthy Bees implementation. The views from this workshop are being fed into the package of proposals for consideration in developing the business case for the next 2-3 years of funding. The Business case is in progress and will be discussed with our Defra owner in October. An update on progress with the case will be in the next quarterly newsletter in January.

Working with others to raise awareness about BeeBase and the importance of registration:

- A letter of encouragement from Helen Crews to register on BeeBase appeared in October's edition of BBKA News. A copy of the 'Beekeeping Essentials' leaflet was also inserted into every copy.
- The 'Beekeeping Essentials' leaflet is also being widely distributed to beekeeping suppliers, interested parties and those running training courses/taster days etc. If you are holding an event and would like copies of the leaflet please contact beehealthinfo@fera.gsi.gov.uk
- 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.

Education and training:

- As we approach the end of the summer season the NBU has created an advisory document entitled 'Preparing Honey Bee Colonies for Winter' [Preparing honey bee colonies for winter](#). We hope this is of use to you as a beekeeper; the document will also be available on the BeeBase advisory leaflets page for future reference.
- 400 beekeepers across England and Wales are to be offered training to help them in their local associations to train beekeepers good husbandry skills as part of a new project funded by the Healthy Bees Plan. It will run in partnership by the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) and National Diploma of Beekeeping Board (NDBB), and jointly funded by Defra.

The partnerships new 'Course in a Case', full of training materials, will be made available to local beekeeping associations. For the first time this will allow consistent training to be delivered across England and Wales, at various levels from novice to expert. In beekeeping,



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there is always something to learn. The first train the trainer workshop as part of the contract will be held in the North West on 23 October.

- The Healthy Bees Plan is still funding the accredited 'Train the Trainer' course and will continue to do so until the end of the financial year. 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. Claims should be endorsed by a member of your local association ie. Secretary or Chair or your local Bee Inspector. Courses tend to run in September and January and we would be able to finance a January course provided we received the invoice by mid March 2011.

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 - www.vmd.gov.uk/VetSQP/Bee/actionplan.pdf - which is regularly updated. Optimal use of available medicines by beekeepers is also important to sustain their effectiveness in treating pests and diseases.
- A sub-group of the Science and Evidence Advisory Group (SEAG), which is a working group of the Healthy Bees Plan, met in September to discuss medicines for bees. The sub-group will meet again this coming quarter where further discussions on medicines and treatment options will be considered. Further details of the sub-groups work will be available in the next quarterly newsletter.

Upcoming key activities:

- Devon Beekeepers Association in association with Devon Apicultural Research Group held a breeding and improving queens workshop at Kenton village hall in October. This event was fully subscribed but the organisers are hoping to hold another event for which there is already a waiting list; if you would like to attend a future event please contact Richard Ball Richard.ball@fera.gsi.gov.uk



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- The Random Apiary Survey (RAS) continues into its second year. The purpose of this survey is to understand the true prevalence of pests, diseases and pathogens across England and Wales. Preliminary results from the first year have been discussed by the Healthy Bees Science and Evidence Advisory Group and the Project Management Board. It is clear that the RAS is successfully generating an extensive and valuable data set, which will help us to understand disease prevalence and to review our prioritisation of inspections to ensure successful management of disease.

Healthy Bees Project Manager, Fera, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ
beehealthinfo@fera.gsi.gov.uk