

Annual Bee Report 2011 – Northern Region. (Covering Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the Wirral, Lancashire, Cumbria, Tyne and Wear, County Durham & Northumberland)

Foul brood Disease

There has been an increase in the amount of foul brood disease found in the Northern region this year.

American Foul Brood (AFB) has been found in the following 10km squares: -

- NY04 Allonby - 5 colonies 1 apiary
- NY35 Carlisle West - 1 colony 1 apiary
- NY45 Carlisle East - 1 colony 1 apiary
- NY56 Brampton - 1 colony 1 apiary
- SD53 Preston North - 1 colony 1 apiary
- NY65 Geltsdale Forest - 2 colonies 1 apiary
- SJ 38 Bromborough – 2 colonies 1 apiary

European Foul Brood (EFB) has been found in the following 10km squares:-

- SD30 Haskayne – 1 colony 1 apiary
- SJ79 Irlam – 2 colonies 1 apiary

As National Bee Unit protocol, we have completed 5 km inspection sweeps around the infected apiaries.

Varroa

Unfortunately, as often happens, some beekeepers have found high levels of Varroa in their colonies late in the season; this can be due to poor Varroa monitoring/management or invasion from nearby colonies.

Varroa monitoring is very important and should be done regularly and throughout the year (at least 3 to 4 times).

On every inspection beekeepers should really be asking themselves '**what can I do help to control Varroa at this inspection?**'

It is usually the large stocks that haven't swarmed that show high varroa levels (due to constant brood rearing – i.e. no brood break)

Also later in the year, beekeepers should be on the lookout for invasion from collapsing colonies in the surrounding area, levels can increase to danger levels in only a few weeks, particularly if as stated earlier a colony is collapsing nearby.

Beekeepers must remember to use different treatments regimes and management techniques at different times of the year. If using low efficacy products, it is often necessary to undertake a 'summer' Varroa control, usually by making the colony/ies brood less and treating the brood less stocks.

For more information on Varroa please visit our web site www.nationalbeeunit.com or read the 'Managing Varroa' leaflet produced by the NBU. This can be downloaded off the web site. Please remember Varroa and its associated viruses are still the biggest killers of honey bee colonies here, in Europe and throughout the World.

Possible new Varroa treatment

It is likely that a new Varroa treatment will be available to beekeepers in the UK soon (hopefully sometime in 2012). BASF and NOD Apiary products are seeking full approval from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) for the product - MAQS (Mite Away Quick Strips) in the UK and then hope to move to EU approval following this. The treatment is Formic Acid based formulated into a saccharide gel strip. The strips are placed on top of the brood frames and are active for approximately 7 days. There is no need to remove the strips after treatment as they will degrade. Formic acid has a proven track record for Varroa control and has the benefit of penetrating the cappings to kill the mites in the cells as well as the phoretic mites. The product has been registered for use in honey bee colonies in The United States of America, Canada and Hawaii and has been tested in Germany and England.

As always, if using, follow the label instructions to the letter.

Disclaimer - No mention of a treatment or proprietary product in the report constitutes a recommendation by the National Bee Unit or DEFRA, neither does it imply registration under English law.

Approved Bee Medicines

I have been asked on several occasions this year 'What medicines are approved for use as treatments in honey bee colonies in this country?'

For your assistance, I list the current authorised medicines below, please check the VMD web site regularly (www.vmd.defra.gov.uk) or ring the VMD to confirm that products are still legal and current to use.

Please note that treatments are approved for use in honey bee colonies in this country by the VMD (Veterinary Medicines Directorate) and not by the National Bee Unit.

There is a link from Beebase to the VMD website.

<u>Product name</u>	<u>Active Substances</u>
Apiguard Gel (25% Thymol) for Beehive Use	Thymol
Apilife Var Bee-Hive Strip for Honey Bees	Camphor Racemic, Eucalyptus Oil, Menthol
Apistan 10.3% w/w Bee Hive Strip	Tau Fluvalinate
Bayvarol Strips 3.6 mg	Flumethrin
Fumidil B Powder for Syrup 20 mg/g	Fumagillin

Thymovar 15 g Bee-hive Strips for Honey
Bees

Thymol

The 2011 honey season.

2011 has generally been a poor honey gathering year, mainly due to the poor summer weather. The average main crop yield surveying 34 beekeepers across the Northern region was around 30 to 35lb per honey producing colony. As last year, the rape secreted well due to the good spring weather, although for some beekeepers, this was the only honey their bees produced. Some beekeepers reported as much as 80 to 100lb as their average crop; this was mainly due to the balsam flow, although crops in Cumbria were low averaging between 15 to 25 lbs. Similarly, crops through the Ribble Valley were around 20 to 30lb, and on the Wirral they averaged around 25lb.

Honey prices remained the same as 2010, flower honey retailing between £2.50 to £5 per lb dependant on demand and location. Heather crops were generally poor with an average crop of between 10 to 15lb per colony.

Staffing

Ian Wallace was appointed Seasonal Bee Inspector for the North of the Northern region (Northumberland, County Durham and Tyne and Wear) in May 2011.

Random Apiary Survey

The last samples for the Random Apiary Survey (RAS) were collected at the end of May. All samples have now been analysed and those of you who had samples taken can find results by checking your personal page of Beebase. As a guide we are checking for: Nosema spp, Acarine and viruses, as well as foulbrood and exotic pests.

This has been the largest apiary survey ever conducted and we are expecting some useful information from its results. The initial results indicate that the way in which the NBU works, by doing risk based inspections, is the most effective way to find disease and suggests that the NBU has a good idea where foul brood is located. The RAS indicates that apiaries with shared ownership (joint apiaries) are more likely to have EFB than apiaries run by a single beekeeper and also shows that DWV is the most common virus that can cause colonies to dwindle and die. Also the report shows that high colony numbers in an apiary is likely to lead to higher disease levels.

Please see the attached NBU report for more information.

Imports and Exports

There were 4113 queens imported from Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland & Slovenia. The largest number came from Greece (2850) Also 405 nucs were imports from Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy & Poland.

From third countries – 1762 queens were imported from Argentina, Australia & New Zealand. The largest number came from New Zealand (1242)

Those of you who import queens into the Northern region will normally receive a visit from a bee inspector; this is to check that the queens and nucs have arrived with the correct paperwork and

that the queens have established healthy colonies. If you wish to import queens into the UK, from the EU or third countries then guidance notes and forms are available on our website at www.nationalbeeunit.com click on Bees & the Law and select Imports and Exports from the menu.

Beebase registration

There is a common misunderstanding, that beekeepers who are members of beekeeping associations are automatically registered on Beebase, unfortunately this is not the case. Generally, you are registered on Beebase, if you have been inspected by an Appointed Bee Inspector, been added to the data base by an Appointed Bee Inspector or the office staff at the National Bee Unit in York (with prior permission from the beekeeper or beekeeping association) or registered on-line yourself.

We are currently trying to encourage as many beekeepers to register on Beebase as possible, this so we can contact beekeepers for things like exotic pest surveillance work, but mainly to offer advice to beekeepers and inspect their colonies for notifiable disease.

When we find notifiable disease, we use our Beebase 'sweep system' to search the area around the disease outbreak (normally 3km to 5km). This is so we can visit the beekeepers in the surrounding area to make sure that their bees have not contacted the disease.

We then use our e mail disease alert system to let beekeepers know that notifiable disease has been found in their area, to be alerted you must have a current e mail address in Beebase.

If you are not registered on Beebase, could I please ask you to register as soon as possible.

If you are unsure whether you are registered, please contact me or the NBU office on 01904 462559/510

If you are registered on Beebase, please make sure that your e mail address is current and up to date.

Please note the National Bee Unit do not pass any of your personal information to third parties. To access the site, please visit www.nationalbeeunit.com

Seasonal Bee Inspector Contacts

Merseyside/Wirral/West coast of Lancashire

Doug Jones, (available April to end of September)

Works mobile: 07775 119444

Cumbria/North Lancashire

Stewart Beattie (available April until end of September)

Works mobile: 07775 119443

Lancashire and some parts of Greater Manchester

John Zamorski (available April until end of September)

Works mobile: 07775 119446

Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland

Mr Ian Wallace (available April until end of September)
Works mobile: 07775 119445

Details of disease incidence, research and news updates are regularly placed on the NBU website on www.nationalbeeunit.com or you can access our web based site at <http://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase>

If there are any items in this report you would like to discuss, then please feel free to contact me.

Just to remind you, I am available for lectures and demonstrations throughout the year.

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