

**Summary Note of the Bee Health Advisory Forum
3rd Meeting 25th March 2013
Room LG01, Ergon House, Defra, London**

Present:

Helen Crews (Chair)	Food & Environment Research Agency (Fera)
Mike Brown	
Andy Wattam ☎	
Richard Watkins	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
Kim Chadwick	
David Aston	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
Tim Lovett	
Margaret Ginman	Bee Farmers' Association (BFA)
John Mellis	
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
Dinah Sweet ☎	
Mark Tatchell	Science Adviser
Ken Edwards ☎	Husbandry Adviser
Bob Smith	National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB)
Amy Byrne ☎	Welsh Government
Steve Sunderland	Scottish Government

Apologies:

Chris Hartfield	NFU
Huw Jones	Welsh Government

Welcome and Introductions

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the 3rd meeting of the Bee Health Advisory Forum. The Chair announced that Huw Jones was retiring from the Welsh Government and on behalf of the Forum, she thanked him for his valued contribution to the Forum's work. His successor was Irene Allen and she would be attending future meetings.

New apiculture programme

2. The new apiculture programme for the period September 2013- August 2016 had to be submitted by Defra to the European Commission by 15 April. The programme provides up to 50% of a member state's expenditure on eligible measures to be reimbursed by the Commission. Defra had issued a consultation paper to members of BHAF on the content of the England element of the new programme in February. (The Devolved Administrations each have their own programmes). The BFA, BBKA and NFU had submitted responses. The BFA's proposals for the new programme, which were supported by the NFU, were for :

- 50% of the available funding to be allocated to training events to benefit beekeepers generally but with an element of the funding made available for events organised by the BFA.

- 25% of the available funding to be provided as a contribution to bee farmers' labour costs in administering varroa treatments
- 25% of the available funding to assist bee farmers with restocking and to develop the ability to replace lost colonies with domestically produced stocks

3. These proposals were on the basis of:

- The current programme did not meet the specified aims and had been of little benefit to bee farmers
- Winter losses had steadily increased and this year had been particularly bad with losses in excess of 30%

4. The BBKA, whilst acknowledging the valuable work undertaken by the NBU, considered that current programme had had limited impact on varroa control. It therefore proposed that the programme should be refocused to strengthen the management and control of varroa and include:

- Quantification of the resistance to varroa to synthetic pyrethroid varroacides
- An appraisal of the efficacy of products implicitly or explicitly claiming to exert an effect on varroa
- Evaluation of the biotechnical control methods and methods using chemicals and produce simplified optimum best practice management strategies and tools for the beekeepers.
- Conduct a coordinated programme of training – practical and theory based.

5. Defra noted that any change to the current programme would reduce funding to the National Bee Unit (NBU) possibly resulting in reducing the amount of work that it will undertake with consequential increased costs for beekeepers. As regards, including restocking in the programme, this could not be done as it was not current Government policy to provide compensation for stock losses across the agricultural sector. Ministerial agreement would be needed for any change in this policy. Contingency funding was only available for national emergencies.

6. The recent consultation on the policy for managing and controlling pests and diseases had provided an opportunity to work together to do things differently in the future. As changes could be made to the apiculture programme after submission, any refocusing of the programme, particularly as regards Varroa, could be made following the outcome of the policy review.

7. Ministerial approval would be sought for the new programme with the recommendation that the programme remain unchanged but that this would be reviewed in the light of the outcome of the policy review.

ACTION: Defra to seek Ministerial approval for an unchanged apiculture programme but would note that this could be amended in the light of the outcome of the policy review

consultation. The beekeeping associations responses to the apiculture programme consultation would accompany the submission.

Beekeeping associations proposed education and training programmes for 2013/14 and reports form 2012/13

8. Funding had been provided to the beekeeping associations in 2012/13 under the Healthy Bees Plan for jointly funded education programmes. There was £55k available under the Plan for 2013/14. The beekeeping associations were invited to provide reports of the work they had undertaken in 2012/13 and present their proposals for 2013/14.

BBKA

9. A report was presented on the Education Coordinators' Workshops in 2012/13. Six regional workshops had taken place and 65% of the Branches, Divisions or Associations that make up the BBKA were represented. Attendance was very good with 221 delegates attending out of a possible 286. Feedback from the workshops was still being collated but initial reaction was very positive. Expenditure was expected to be within budget.

10. For 2013/14 the BBKA proposed building on last year's work. The proposed programme was:

I. Development of a Web-Based Register for Trainers and Training Events

Currently no register exists - either of trainers with their qualifications, or of training events taking place. This was identified at the first Regional Training Co-ordinators' Workshop as a major limiting factor in Associations' attempts to improve the training of their members.

II. Training towards the "General Husbandry" level of competence and preparation for the BBKA Assessment in General Husbandry (GH)

Over two years the BBKA anticipated 120 trainees towards GH.

III. National courses on "Preparing for the Advanced Husbandry Assessment" including "mock" assessment sessions.

This is the highest level of BBKA training. Providing preparation would ensure that all those with the required competence passed the assessment. There are 19 candidates this year.

IV. A revision of the existing Courses in a Case (CiC) in the light of feedback from users.

This mainly entails increasing the number of and enhancing the quality of the visual material and video clips. A large filming programme was planned for this coming year (weather permitting) which would hopefully produce a valuable resource. This resource would then need editing and processing into a format suitable for the CiCs.

V. Regional courses aimed at Study Group leaders.

These Study Groups usually choose to follow the syllabus of one of the BBKA Module Examinations, as this provides structure and also the offer of a correspondence course, in

which the students can participate as a group. This initiative would train those who wish to set up or lead a study group in effective technique and organisation.

VI. Standardisation training for all Assessors for the BBKA General Husbandry and Advanced Husbandry Assessments

Although every assessor is trained before being placed on the list, some of the longer-serving assessors have not had any training in the actual assessment for some time. This would be a useful opportunity to bring together groups of assessors to discuss techniques, problems, do's and don't's, to perform Mock Assessments together and discuss and standardise the evaluation of these

11. The BBKA ambition was for 50% of beekeepers to be trained to basic level and this was making good progress. At General Husbandry level, beekeepers were likely to teach and show good practice.

12. The Chair asked the BBKA to revise its proposals to include a table showing the priorities for 2013/14 together with costs and details of the BBKA match funding.

BFA

13. Funding had been provided to the BFA in 2012/13 towards the initial costs of setting up an apprenticeship scheme to bring 30 young people into the industry over the next three years. The BFA was committed to taking this initiative forward and had two requests for funding in 2013/14:

- I. The setting up of an apprenticeship scheme by C&G and the Wax Chandlers. This was progressing and the first apprentices and employers were already lined up.
- II. The administration, verification and assessment of the scheme over the three year period.

14. The Chair asked the BFA to discuss with the NBU the cost of setting up the apprenticeship scheme with the C&G and to revise its proposals accordingly and include details of match funding.

NDB

15. Seventeen short courses had taken place during 2012-13 providing 157 training places for 110 beekeepers. Feedback from attendees had been positive. The knowledge and skills gained on the NDB short courses was being cascaded to beekeepers at all levels through local associations.

16. The programme for 2013-14 aimed to continue the short course programme. Twenty courses were proposed including 2 new titles – Varroa and botany. Fourteen courses would be held in Devon and Kent and 6 in the Midland and north to improve the geographical spread. Funding was requested to subsidise students attendance with the students providing the match funding.

17. The NDB was requested to prioritise its proposed course programme. Defra would consider whether the match funding by students was acceptable under the terms of the Business Case approval.

ACTION: BBKA: revise proposals to show priorities with costings including match funding.

BFA: Discuss with NBU cost of C&G course and revise proposals accordingly and provide details of match funding.

NDB Revise proposals to show priorities.

Defra: Consider HBP objectives to enable priorities to be assessed; consider meeting with all associations to discuss proposals.

Minutes of 2nd BHAF meeting: sign off and actions

18. Minutes were agreed with slight changes to the 5th para of item 4 and Action 13. Actions 3,4,5,6,7,8(part),9 (part) and 10 were outstanding.

AOB

19. Consultation on review of pests and disease policy

There had been 184 responses to the consultation. These were being considered and a response and implementation plan would be available for discussion in June.

Table of actions

Action Number	Action	Person(s) responsible
1	Submission to be sent to the Minister on the apiculture programme.	Kim Chadwick/Richard Watkins
2	BBKA: revise proposals to show priorities with costings including match funding BFA: Discuss with NBU cost of C&G course and revise proposals accordingly and provide details of match funding NDB to prioritise proposals Defra: Consider HBP objectives to enable priorities to be assessed; consider meeting with all associations to discuss proposals	David Aston Margaret Ginman Bob Smith Richard Watkins
3	Revise minutes of 2 nd BHAF and publish on BeeBase	Marie Holmes
4	Actions outstanding from 2 nd meeting to be completed.	As indicated