

**Summary Note of the Bee Health Advisory Forum
18th Meeting – 29 September 2016
Foss House, York**

Present:

Richard Watkins (Chair)	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
Kevin Beattie	
Louise Mount ☎	
Marie Holmes	Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA)
Nigel Semmence	
Kirsty Stainton	Fera Science Ltd (Fera)
Margaret Murdin	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
John Hendrie	
Margaret Ginman	Bee Farmers' Association (BFA)
Ken Basterfield	National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB)
Jane Jones ☎	Welsh Government (WG)
Martin Ball	Chemical Regulations Division (CRD)
Norman Carreck ☎	International Bee Research Association (IBRA)
Steve Sunderland	Scottish Government
Anna Burrows	Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
Chris Hartfield ☎	National Farmers' Union (NFU)
John Hill	British Bee Veterinary Association (BBVA)

Apologies:

Andy Wattam	APHA
Mike Brown	
Giles Budge	Fera
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
John Bowles	
John Heard	BFA
John Mellis	
Ivor Davies	NDB

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were given by each member of the Forum. The Chair also welcomed Martin Ball from Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) who would be discussing his work and observations on the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS).

2. Minutes of last meeting & Highlight report

Actions arising from the 17th meeting were discussed.

Action 1 – *Contact Policy if interested in participating in animal health law working group.*

The Chair was engaging with the Commission, John Hill and Margaret Ginman indicated they would still be interested in joining.

ACTION 1: Richard to look into whether a working group was still required.

Action 2 - *Create timetable for Apiculture Programme discussions including key dates in the process.*

Louise will be putting this together; EU exit and Asian hornet had taken priority. A question was asked whether the Commission would still be requesting Member States what they considered as minimum requirements. When the claim was submitted for the current programme (next 3 years) we committed to delivering the minimum requirements that were submitted.

ACTION 2: Louise to create Apiculture Programme timetable.

Action 3 - *Provide dates to BFA for discussions regarding their role in the hive count and husbandry survey.*

Complete. Richard had discussed with APHA Press Officer and others regarding the hive count for the coming year.

Action 4 – *Provide BBKA membership churn information.*

BBKA churn was between 4000 and 5000 beekeepers per year. BBKA hoped to address how those beekeepers could be retained, in particular experienced beekeepers.

Action 5 – *Meet to discuss ways of testing the assumption that beekeepers without email had similar numbers of colonies to those with email.*

Matthew and Giles have had discussions on how to improve and this task was on Giles' work list. A fuller update could be provided at the next meeting.

Highlight report

The Chair invited comments on the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Risk 1 – Insufficient project team resources. The risk would be elevated due to EU Exit and Asian hornet outbreak but not as high as amber.

Risk 2 – Lack of progress with extending range of authorised medicines. One new bee medicine was authorised in April, Apitraz 500mg strips (active substance Amitraz). There were others being developed but these were still commercially sensitive. Apivar would continue this year through the cascade. However, once Apitraz was available next year, Apivar would cease being available.

Risk 3 – Delay in commencement of 2016/17 education programmes. This risk could close. Marie provided an update that 2016/17 contracts had been awarded and that open tender wasn't required for the next 2 years due to potential extensions factored into the open tender process. Extensions beyond 2017 would be granted on satisfactory 2016/17 deliverables and sufficient funding.

Risk 4 – Risk to continuation of HBP and BHAF due to NPS. Close risk.

Issues

Issue 1 – Stakeholder aspirations exceeding budgetary constraints – Close issue.

Issue 2 – Lack of corporate funding when IPI and other work are moved into practical beekeeping – Much work was completed on publishing the outputs in journals and also translating outputs to communicate to lay people. Close issue.

Issue 3 – Bumblebees imparting pathogens to honeybees – Potentially being imparted both ways. However, this was difficult to control with wild bumblebees. Close issue.

Issue 4 – Apiculture programme matched funding – Defra were currently reviewing. Keep issue open.

Q) *What was the process for bumblebee importation, and what numbers were imported each year?* Bumblebees were required to be reported through Traces from EU countries and 3rd countries through Border Inspection Points. Policy didn't have a number to hand but would investigate and report back to the Forum at the next meeting.

ACTION 3: Louise to investigate numbers of bumblebees imported each year.

3. Update from CRD on WIIS bee investigations scheme

WIIS was a long standing UK reactive, post approval monitoring scheme. It relied on interaction between the public, interested parties, Government Departments/Agencies and laboratories. The scheme had two objectives 1) to provide information to the regulator on hazards to wildlife and companion animals and beneficial invertebrates from pesticides; and 2) to enforce the correct use of pesticides, identifying and penalising those who deliberately or recklessly misuse and abuse pesticides.

Martin Ball presented an update on the WIIS scheme. Key points included:

- Scope and remit of CRD
- Under one roof chemicals regulation - Plant protection products, Biocidal products, REACH, EU classification labelling and packaging, import/export prior informed consent,

detergent regulations, COSHH, control of lead at work, asbestos control, dangerous goods in harbour area and dangerous substances and explosive atmospheres regulations

- Reporting routes - Inter-Departmental Steering Committees, Defra, HSE and Defra/DWP Ministers
- Objectives, funding and responsibility for WIIS - provide information to regulator and enforce correct use of pesticides. Partly funded by a levy on UK pesticide sales and is operated independently in all four countries of the UK
- Organisations involved with WIIS - Natural England, Animal and Plant Health Agency, Fera Science Ltd
- WIIS categories - Approved use, misuse, abuse, unspecified and unknown

The following questions were raised during discussions:

Q) Was there any experimental evidence on Fipronil transmission from cats to honeybees? There were some published papers where transfer from cat collars had been reported.

Q) How could CRD assure beekeeper confidence in WIIS? Interaction was strongly encouraged, if incidents weren't reported CRD would have no idea of what was happening in the field. Reporting builds a body of knowledge to enable CRD to regulate. The chemicals used were approved products and if CRD weren't advised to the contrary then it would indicate those products were acceptable.

Q) Long term trends – were there any trends in incidence levels and approved use? Many bee cases were unspecified or unknown and most data was in relation to vertebrates.

Q) Was WIIS identifying trends or increased instances relating to neonicotinoids? Information collated over 2 years' worth of data suggested there were limited instances of Thiacloprid in background levels. There didn't appear to be issues coming through from the data. It was reiterated about the importance of receiving in data from beekeepers for analysis.

4. Contingency Planning

Nigel Semmence provided an update on the two types of contingency plan: Asian hornet and Small hive beetle.

Nigel also presented an update on the Asian hornet outbreak in Tetbury. Several teams of inspectors were working 7 days in teams of two searching apiaries and ivy sources up to 20km and placing fish baited traps as hornets were attracted to the odour.

Q) What bait was recommended for the traps? Dark beer and sugar, but Tetbury also recommended shrimp for protein.

Q) A number of members would be interested in natural history and lifecycle and to see what hornets looked like whilst hawking a hive. The following link provides further information: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208> . Scroll down to useful media links, click You Tube Channel and click the picture of a honeybee.

Q) Was the nest found a secondary nest? Yes, a primary nest consists of queen on her own in a small grapefruit sized nest with circa 100 workers to scout out the main nest site. The nest found was a larger secondary.

Q) What technologies were used to trace the hornets? Technology was explored such as transponders, radio tracking and thermal imaging. The Tetbury team used thermal imaging, triangulation and lines of sight which worked well; the first line of sight was within 50 yards of the nest. Transponders and radio tracking was quite limited, due to weight of tags and the urbanised area they were used in.

Q) Why Bristol? How did it get there? The first interception of Asian hornet was anticipated on the south coast. It wasn't clear how it arrived in Tetbury, it was potentially through airports and harbours, and could have arrived through trade on pots, furniture or perhaps accidental transport.

Q) At what point would it turn to management? As with any outbreak it was an operational challenge. There were no reports from other areas of the UK and the team would keep going and reacting to sightings and carry out work through the winter into spring and build readiness for any emergence. Spread of Asian hornet can be very rapid with 1 nest producing up to 200 queens who can fly several kilometres.

Q) Had many more beekeepers signed up to BeeBase? Yes, in addition to beekeepers updating their details on apiaries and colonies.

Q) Were there any indications of pollinator population reductions in France from the hornet? There was a large biodiversity threat from the hornets as they had a wide consumption of useful insects, although detailed literature on this hadn't been seen.

Q) What effect did the hornet have in China? It was damaging but not to the same degree as was experienced in France.

7. AOB

News:

DIRD noted an upsurge of AFB in Northern Ireland, associations and affected beekeepers were working together to control.

Resistance to Amitraz imported from Spain was discussed. VMD noted this should be reported to them as an adverse event in addition to any incidences of noted resistance.

ACTION 4: All - Please report resistance to VMD as an adverse event as it could be used to evaluate resistance and efficacy.

All Party Parliamentary Group on bees had convened with increasing activity – BBKA’s Tim Lovett was Secretary to the group.

The Chair asked if there were any views on the Forum’s fears/hopes on EU exit.

- 1) Concern regarding the future of NBU and continuation of the Bee Inspectorate.
- 2) Concern regarding imports of bees and kit from Europe.
- 3) Loss of EU funded research projects, particularly those with large consortia bidding for funding under the 2020 programme.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and valued input.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 8th December (11:00-15:00) Nobel House, London.

Table of Actions

No.	Action	Assigned to
1	Investigate whether a working group was still required for EU Animal Health law.	Richard Watkins
2	Provide a timetable for Apiculture Programme discussions including key dates in the process.	Louise Mount
3	Investigate number of bumblebees imported each year.	Louise Mount
4	Please report resistance to VMD as an adverse event as it could be used to evaluate resistance and efficacy.	All