

**Summary Note of the Bee Health Advisory Forum
24th Meeting (WebEx and Teleconference) – 19th June 2018
11:00 – 13:00
Run from: Room 52F23 National Agri-Food Innovation Campus,
Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ**

Present

Richard Watkins (RW) (Chair)	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
Kevin Beattie	
Louise Mount ☎ (LMO)	
Frank Petherbridge	
Mike Brown	Animal & Plant Health Agency, National Bee Unit (NBU)
Nigel Semmence ☎	
Rebekah Clarkson (RC) (Secretary)	
Steve Sunderland (SS) ☎	Scottish Government
Jim Crummie ☎	DAERA
Ken Basterfield ☎	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
Marin Anastasov ☎	
Ged Marshall ☎	Bee Farmers Association (BFA)
Dan Basterfield ☎ Teaching @ Pershore	National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB)
Kirsty Stainton	Fera Science Limited
Anna Burrows ☎	Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
Norman Carreck ☎	International Bee Research Association (IBRA)
Wally Shaw ☎	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
Chris Hartfield ☎	National Farmers Union
John Hill ☎	British Bee Veterinary Association (BBVA)
Ian Fenn ☎	Defra Pollinator strategy

Apologies received from:

Paul McCullough (PM)	Welsh Government (WG)
Simon Bilsborough (SB)	
John Mellis	BFA
Margaret Ginman	
Julian Parker	Animal & Plant Health Agency, National Bee Unit (NBU)
Margaret Murdin	BBKA
Belinda Phillipson	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
Laura Stevens	
John Bowles	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
Diane Stephenson	DAERA

1 Welcome and introductions

The chair welcomed attendees to the WebEx meeting and everyone introduced themselves. People were asked to mute phones so everyone could hear. New attendees dialling in for the first time included; Ian Fenn, Defra Pollinator strategy, Frank Petherbridge who has just joined the Bee Health Policy team and Marin Anastasov representing the BBKA.

This was the third use of 'WebEx'. The agenda and papers could be seen by all those who were able to log on. Everyone was invited to provide feedback on their WebEx experience.

2.1 Highlight report – including addition of any new risks

Risk register had been updated to include EU exit.

No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date
1	Send all papers on webinar that have not been sent prior to the meeting BHAF	RC	26/06/2018

2.2 Minutes of 23rd meeting – sign off and run through actions

Minutes broadly agreed except for 6.2 SMART bees and Eurobest are separate projects and this could be made clearer.

No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date
2	Amend 23 rd minutes to clearly differentiate between SMART bees and Eurobest	RC	30/06/2018

3 Asian Hornet Update

Nigel Semmence updated the BHAF regarding the Asian hornet sighting in April 2018. A member of the public photographed an insect that had emerged from a cauliflower and reported it to the NNSS alert system. The hornet escaped whilst being photographed. It is difficult to rule out whether the hornet hibernated in the cauliflower or was transferred from other material. French colleagues advised hornets may overwinter in vegetables.

A Forward Operating Base (FOB) was set up in Boston Lincolnshire. Traps were set locally and in apiaries. NBU looked in 190km of hedgerows for dead nests in Lincolnshire where the cauliflower was traced to have being grown. The field margin search provided an opportunity to test an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) with Fera Science Ltd. The UAV enabled safe observation of potential nest sites at height prior to leaf emergence.

Surveillance: no nest was found and no hornets have been trapped at either site. The available traps are most effective for queens early in the season, so traps have now been withdrawn. Local associations have been informed.

NBU is encouraging the use of monitoring traps across the country. Please encourage your members to log surveillance traps on BeeBase.

Further surveillance in both Bury Lancashire and Boston Lincolnshire will be carried out in Aug/Sep 2018. The level of surveillance will be determined by other work pressures.

NBU and the BBKA continue to work together to define the remit of an Asian Hornet Action Teams (AHAT).

No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date
3	Please encourage members to log Asian hornet traps on BeeBase	All	Asap

4 Healthy Bees Plan update

Rebekah Clarkson gave an update on the Healthy Bees Plan Review including timescales and outline briefs of the evidence identified to form the review.

Timescales

- Agree evidence to form the review
- Publish review of evidence in December 2018
- Develop new plan in consultation with BHAF
- Publish New Plan December 2019

The BHAF was asked to review the prioritised evidence and commit to providing their evidence.

Chris Hartfield queried whether the science review could also capture BHAF stakeholder's science and evidence, e.g. research involvement and experience nationally and internationally. As this extended science expertise informs UK Bee Health through the BHAF.

Norman Carreck who has been involved since the start of the healthy Bees Plan explained how the original Science and Evidence team initially involved more scientists and he felt not as much science has been brought into the HBP as he had originally envisaged. It may be useful to understand how the science input has changed over the 10 years of the healthy bees plan and if there is an opportunity to improve science input in the future plan.

No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date
4	Send out prioritised evidence share and ask for feedback. Seek commitment	RC	30/06/2018
5	Discuss BHAF query regarding reviewing/recording BHAF science input with Defra science and evidence team to understand best practice and report back to BHAF	RC	31/07/2018

5 Queen replacement survey

Kevin Beattie shared results from the recent English queen replacement survey and discussed the six proposals identified by the working group. 4763 people had responded to the survey.

Encouragingly 50% of beekeeping respondents had a beekeeping qualification. This pays testament to the work of the BHAF in educating beekeepers and improving husbandry standards. However, beekeepers felt there was more training that could be offered and 47% said they would like help with queen rearing. 41% said they did not have the experience to raise queens. In percentage terms, training was requested by more keepers with 1-9 hives than any other group of respondents.

Marin Anastasov noted that the BBKA are looking into the development an accreditation scheme, which could demonstrate knowledge or competence in queen rearing. BBKA suggested the scheme could also work with NBU/BeeBase to ensure that queens are produced in disease free areas. The draft scheme has not been published/ marketed yet. A new queen rearing module was agreed in 2017 and the scheme would need more people who have passed the course.

Page 2; A low number of respondents are currently part of bee breeding/improvement groups.

Proportionally, beekeepers with more bees were more likely to ask for financial support. This likely highlights the significant investment in material and labour required for breeding programmes.

There appeared to be a desire for near native bees; however, it will be down to market demand to indicate what queens suppliers will need to produce. Where people are interested in native bees, this will create demand.

There will need to be a clear differentiation between an education programme whereby individuals raise small numbers of queens, and a national breeding programme.

The survey failed to get a large number of beekeepers with a large number of colonies. These are the people that could more quickly supply the demand for UK raised queens.

Ged Marshal asked if imports have increased this season. 9000 queens imported to date and more nucleus colonies. (25 colonies imported to date). Both show increase from the 2017 season.

Further discussion is required to develop possible support options.

BHAF asked to consider and give opinion on the 6 options and make recommendations for progressing identified support options.

A published list of suppliers could not be run by Defra as this would need to be an 'open' list where all suppliers can choose to be listed, otherwise commercial advantage is given. Associations, however, may choose to provide lists of suppliers that meet the demands of their members.

Defra is preparing an article for beekeeping magazine to clarify the purpose of the survey and share results. Kevin invited those on the working group to jointly write the article.

No	Support option	Basis for support	Initial comments
1	Education/training – Increasing beekeeper knowledge of queen rearing and queens	<p>Increasing beekeeper knowledge of queens so they can make informed decisions.</p> <p>Increasing capability within the beekeeping community to rear queens either individually, or as part of the bee improvement group.</p>	<p>Working group could stocktake existing education programmes on queen rearing. Identify any gaps in curriculum and geographical spread of events and the need for post-course support.</p> <p>Defra note the great work already taking place on this. Does the BHAF need to coordinate more on an agreed programme of education</p>
2	Autumn re-queening/over-wintered nucs	Less reliance on imported queens at the beginning of the season	The survey data shows that most re-queening takes place in May and June. Is this primarily due to perceived availability or is it a recognised practice to introduce queens at this time of year or because colonies have been lost overwinter? To encourage more autumn re-queening we would presumably need to include this in our education work or discussions in local meetings?

3	Financial support	Reduce the financial burden of rearing queens	Defra are currently exploring the options available to us under what will be the future domestic agriculture policy (consultation closed 8 May), working alongside the teams that are overseeing this work. One option could be to offer grants or loans for queen-rearing equipment but there are competing demands.
4	Accreditation	Accredited bee suppliers that meet specific standards may provide increased confidence in supply chain	Whilst the survey indicated that people were in support of accreditation, there are likely to be substantial hurdles to putting this in place. Most notably, funding but also uptake from commercial suppliers as was discussed at the meeting and experience in Scotland. Such a scheme would most probably need to be a commercial service, chargeable to industry to administer.
5	Code of practice	A code of practice would ensure an agreed set of standards and could act as a guide for those seeking to take up queen queering	A joint industry code of practice that suppliers sign up to – it could identify standards we can all promote and is perhaps a means to share best practice.
6	List of suppliers		Defra thinks this probably sits better with the associations to provide lists of suppliers that best fit the needs/desires of their members. It would be difficult for the government to produce a list and it would essentially have to be an 'open' list; we wouldn't be able to pick and choose who is listed as this offers commercial advantage. It would perhaps be an option if there was accreditation involved, but as identified above, this is difficult.

No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date
6	Forward further comments to Kevin regarding the options	All	30/06/2018
7	Agree queen rearing article for publication.	Queen rearing working group chaired by Kevin Beattie	31/07/2018

6 EU Exit and Future Farming Policy - consultation update Louise Mount

Louise thanked everyone for their responses to the recent consultation:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment>.

Around 44k responses had been received either via Citizen Space, events or emails. Campaign responses have been analysed centrally. A link to the summary of responses and the government response will be sent upon publication to BHAF. Michael Gove recently gave evidence to the EFRA committee and announced that the new UK Agriculture bill is due to be published in July 2018. A trade paper will be issued to BHAF shortly and a teleconference on trade issues will be set up.

7 Denmark Beekeeping BFA trip

Margaret Ginman had prepared a talk on the Bee farmers March trip to Denmark. Ged Marshall delivered the presentation.

Their commercial association has 40 members who have to be VAT registered to qualify. The commercial organisation gets approx. 100,000 euros p.a. to provide training for members in accounts management, marketing, disease recognition and other CPD subjects including subsidy for excursions for fact-finding visits to other countries. (circa 2,500 Euros per member)

Denmark run bee disease recognition courses for 900 beekeepers annually
Training opportunities for apprentices (partially funded by Defra's Healthy Bee plan education contracts) were discussed on the trip

Danish beekeepers have virtually zero incidence of EFB because of the culture of frame replacement

8 AOB/comms/news

8.1 Data sharing/ GDPR (RC)

Update provided by Kate Wilson from the NBU and shared with the forum by Rebekah Clarkson. Implementation is being led by APHA's Privacy and Data Sharing Team. The NBU is reviewing and updating its guidance and notices as necessary and appropriate. Ability to data share will depend on an organisations specific arrangements with the Data Subjects as to whether you can share this information; the ICO website (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/>) provides guidance on how best to do this. The NBU is unable to give direct advice in relation to compliance with the new legislation. It is the responsibility of individual organisations to ensure compliance.

8.2 DASH (MB)

Mike Brown provided the report in the absence of Julian Parker. Dash had been a great success. The scheme for skilled beekeepers with >40 hives reduces the inspections required if audits are passed. Any non-conformity results in further inspections

- Outstanding Dash Baselines from 17/18 intake to be completed this season
- 14 audit inspections due this season (15/16 intake)
- DASH prequalification questionnaire developed due to be sent to Bee Farmers' Association who have shown an interest this year (18/19)
- Training events in August/September. Dates TBC

Bee farmers asked whether DASH be contracted to the Bee farmers to reduce burden on bee inspectors as the BFA were concerned about the lack of resource within the NBU. GM noted that the BFA includes several former bee inspectors.

No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date
8	NBU to discuss DASH management with BFA.	JP	

8.3 Animal Health Law update (LM)

The secondary legislation under the Animal Health Law was being discussed.

¹The regulation on transmissible animal diseases (“Animal Health Law”) was agreed and published in the EU Official Journal on 31 March 2016 and will apply from 2021. It was not clear how some of the detailed rules will apply to bees (defined as terrestrial animals in the regulation).

Several proposals were being discussed, including a proposal on the registration of keepers, including bee keepers. Proposals have been sent to the BFA for review by the Animal Health Law team.

John Hill asked if there is likely to be any change to the list of the notifiable diseases. John expressed concern that any reduction would reduce biosecurity procedures in the UK. Defra confirmed current EU bee notifiable diseases would still be notifiable in the current version of the legislation. Varroa would still be on the list of diseases to allow islands which were still free to apply trade exemptions. Although European foulbrood was not listed the UK would still be able to retain notifiable status in the UK, providing we did not restrict trade from EU countries.

8.4 Suspicion of small hive beetle *Aethina tumida* in France (MB)

Mike Brown advised on the update from the EURL on the import of queen cages into France from Argentina and the suspicion of transmission of Small hive beetle. The update is available on <https://sites.anses.fr/en/minisite/abeilles/suspicion-introduction-small-hive-beetle-aethina-tumida-france>. The French General Directorate for Food (DGAI) asked ANSES on 23rd April to assess the risk of introduction and spread of SHB in France from this queen import. The expert opinion concluded to a nil to nearly nil probability of establishment of SHB.

However in order to prevent any risk, the DGAI asked the regional veterinary services to set up a surveillance in colonies located around the premises where queens were transferred to new cages, set up inspections in colonies where queens were introduced, and reinforce surveillance around the airport of Aix-Marseille where queen cages arrived in France.

9 Meeting closed 13:00

Next meeting: 7th September in London

¹ Specific detail was not outlined in the meeting but is noted in the minutes for clarity

RAG STATUS; **Red: Target date cannot be met, Amber: Target date at risk, Green: On target**

Date Action log reviewed: 19-06-2018

Date Action Agreed	Action No.	Agenda No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date	RAG	Progress Review/Action Completed
29/06/2017		2	Investigate whether the BBKA funded project with Keele university had concluded and send to Marie (or replacement) to circulate an update or final report to the Forum.	MM	ASAP	Red	Awaiting *
21/09/2017	21-2	3	Forum members to consider ways to collate Citizen Science data and send ideas to NS. Asian hornet.	All	31/01/2018	Amber	Awaiting * reminder to be sent policy)
12/12/2017	22-3	3.2	Collate comments, provide a product journey plan and include points relating to Trade raised which were raised at the meeting in June 2017.	LM			ongoing
12/12/2017	22-9	10a	All to review BHAF Terms of reference (merged with later action 23-3 action 2	All	31/01/2018		Discussed verbally
12/12/2017	22-10	10a	Prepare draft TOR incorporating comments to be discussed in March's meeting.	RC	28/02/2018		Asked to discuss over email ongoing
20/03/2018	23-4	3	Forward summary reports	RC			Clarify with contractors
20/03/2018	23-5	3	Request questionnaire data regarding mentoring and passing on skills. Merged with 23-7action 5 request evidence and case studies where HBP impacted on Beekeeping. (As part of HBP review)	RC			ongoing
20/03/2018	23-6	5	Update Indicators	Fera/ BBKA			Not received all yet
20/03/2018	23-8	5	Review governance and look at developing sub groups to look focus on areas of the review.	RW			Project board action ongoing
20/03/2018	23-11	6.4	Discuss a national AHAT protocol with BBKA	NS/ KB			Met in May, ongoing
20/03/2018	23-12	6.5	Forward hive count information to BHAF	KBe			On 25 th Agenda

RAG STATUS; **Red: Target date cannot be met, Amber: Target date at risk, Green: On target**

Date Action log reviewed: 19-06-2018

Date Action Agreed	Action No.	Agenda No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date	RAG	Progress Review/Action Completed
20/03/2018	23-13	6.5	National pollinator strategy to be an agenda item at next BHAF	LMO			Invited to 24 th to be on 25 th agenda
19/06/2018	24-1	2.1	Send all papers on webinar that have not been sent prior to the meeting BHAF	RC			
19/06/2018	24-2	2.2	Amend 23 rd minutes to clearly differentiate between SMART bees and Eurobest	RC			
19/06/2018	24-3	3	Please encourage members to log Asian hornet traps on BeeBase	All	Asap		
19/06/2018	24-4	4	Send out prioritised evidence share and ask for feedback. Seek commitment	RC	30/06/2018		
19/06/2018	24-5	4	Discuss BHAF query regarding reviewing/recording BHAF science input with Defra science and evidence team to understand best practice and report back to BHAF	RC	31/07/2018		
19/06/2018	24-6	5	Forward further comments to Kevin regarding the options	All	30/06/2018		
19/06/2018	24-7	5	Agree queen rearing article for publication.	Queen rearing working group chaired by Kevin Beattie	31/07/2018		
19/06/2018	24-8	8.2	Forward further comments to Kevin regarding the options	All	30/06/2018		