



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

NBU North East Region 2020 season overview

Hello fellow beekeepers,

First I would like to welcome all the beekeepers in Lincolnshire who are now within the NBU's North East region. I look forward to getting to know you all over the coming seasons.

2020 started for my wife and I in a club in Tenerife listening to a Korean Elvis impersonator destroy "love me tender" and "Blue Suede Shoes". Who would have thought that this was one of the more "normal" things that would happen in 2020?

Dhonn

NBU Changes 2020

Kate Wilson (Office Manager) and Lesley Debenham (Admin and Support) have taken temporary promotion working on other projects within APHA. Adam Parker has similarly taken up Kate's role also as a temporary promotion, and office support is additionally being provided by Diane Gillibrand and Yvonne Wroe based at Lutra House, Preston.

NE Team News

New Inspector

we have a new Inspector in North East region, Mr Keith Bartlem of Bedale. Keith will be covering the North Yorkshire area between Ripon and Teesside and across to the coast north of Scarborough. Keith is an accomplished beekeeper holding the BBKA Master beekeeper certificate and is well known on the speaker circuit. Keith started with North East Team at the latter end of the inspection season and will be accompanying the more seasoned inspectors in spring to familiarise him with the role of SBI.

This will mean a little shuffle of the existing inspectors will be necessary and Adrian Wilford will be covering East Yorkshire as he did prior to 2016.

New County

After a regional reshuffle NE region acquired Lincolnshire from Eastern Region. North East team has also welcomed Simon Oglesby who joined the unit in spring 2019 and transferred along with Lincolnshire in spring 2020. Beebase does not reflect this change yet but it's something we are hoping to get sorted out over winter.

The Sheffield Shake

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the actions of Sheffield BKA this summer. After a rise in EFB cases last year in the area, Sheffield association, led by Phil Khorassandjian in his role as association secretary, members were encouraged to attempt an area wide shook swarm initiative.

The Club purchased frames and foundation and made them available to members at cost price. Presentations were delivered by me and committee members on the benefits of shook swarm regarding disease control and the added benefits of getting the bees off old comb and onto new foundation. The benefits being pathogen loads for Chalk brood and Nosema are reduced and the reduction of Varroa infestation without hard chemical treatments. There are several other benefits from clean comb, ease of inspection, reduced clogging of frames with pollen and reduced areas of old drone cells to mention the obvious.

Phil informed me that the take up was good and subsequently we have seen reduced numbers of foulbrood infections in member's apiaries this season.

This kind of proactive response to the situation is something I believe associations should be more involved in and we now have a representational model to follow if anyone thinks their area would benefit from this approach.

If any of the associations in the region would like more information they can contact me or Phil in the usual way.

I must add that although we have seen a reduction, there is still EFB around Sheffield and I ask that anyone with bees in the area update their Beebase information to reflect any changes, remain vigilant and check their stocks regularly.

Details on how to perform a Shook swarm can be found at WWW.Nationalbeeunit.com enter Shook Swarm into the search box, this will take you to the fact sheet page where you can scroll down to the pdf fact sheets. Shook Swarm can be performed as a Varroa control method or to change comb but If you suspect your bees may be infected you must contact your local NBU inspector who will confirm a diagnosis and take over from there.

Colony losses by County

This information is gathered by inspectors during their inspections of your apiaries.

County	2019	2020
West Yorkshire	5.5%	3.8%
South Yorkshire	3.3%	3.7%
East Yorkshire	1.3%	0.6%
Nottinghamshire	5.8%	1.9%
Derbyshire	0.9%	2.9%
North Yorkshire	0.9%	2.9%
Lincolnshire	4.3%	9%

Inspections

The work of the NBU Inspectors comes under the flag of essential key work and our Inspectors have been classified as key workers, therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the applause.

As you can see from the table below North East team covered a lot of ground during the season with the highest inspection figures recorded for some time. This was due to having a full compliment of staff this year and the acquisition of Lincolnshire along with the Inspector that goes with the county. The roads being empty during lockdown resulted in less travelling time between appointments.

Region	Apiaries	Colonies	Year
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North East England	633	3187	2017
North East England	435	2172	2018
North East England	588	3576	2019
North East England	744 (881)*	3374 (4509)*	2020

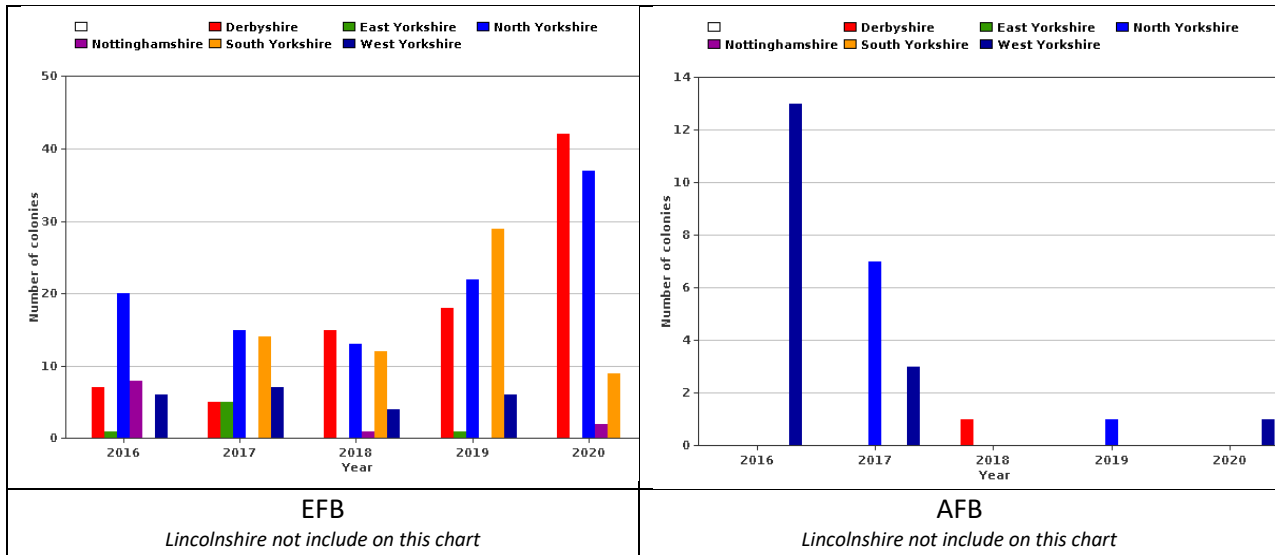
**In brackets includes Lincolnshire*

Foul Brood

Diseased colonies by County

County	EFB	AFB
Derbyshire	42	0
Nottinghamshire	2	0
South Yorkshire	9	0
West Yorkshire	0	1
North Yorkshire	37	0
East Yorkshire	0	0
Lincolnshire	1	0

Trends of EFB and AFB by colony in North East region over the last 5 seasons.



Imports

One of our main priorities over the summer is to ensure any imported nuclei, packages or queens are checked in accordance with DEFRA policy to safeguard the regions stocks:

Table below shows all imported queens, nuclei and packages for the U.K.

Country of origin	Number of consignments imported	Batched number of queens	Batched number of nucleus	Batched number of packages	Batched number of Colonies	Number of consignments inspected
Austria	1	5	0	0	0	1
Belgium	2	4	0	0	0	0
Croatia	1	3	0	32	0	1
Cyprus	1	20	0	0	0	1
Czech Republic	6	91	0	250	0	1
Denmark	44	2405	0	0	0	23
France	4	420	0	0	0	4
Germany	10	64	0	0	0	5
Greece	51	2872	0	0	0	13
Hungary	15	713	0	0	0	12
Italy	104	9701	60	1595	363	75
Lithuania	1	0	0	5	0	1
Malta	18	2062	0	0	0	4
Netherlands	2	9	0	0	0	1
Poland	4	110	150	0	0	0
Portugal	1	66	0	0	0	1
Romania	21	1576	0	0	0	9
Slovenia	32	1284	0	0	0	7
TOTALS:	318	21405	210	1882	363	159

IMPORTERS/EXPORTERS PLEASE NOTE

Importing or Exporting Honey Bees after 31st December 2020

The UK has left the EU, new rules apply from January 2021

The transition period comes to an end this year on 31st December 2020. To find out how this affects Imports and Exports of honey bees as of the 1st January and what you can do to prepare please refer to guidance on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bringing-honey-bees-into-the-uk) and the [Border Operating Model](#), which provide information on the new processes.

For movements both ways between Northern Ireland and GB guidance may be found in the [Northern Ireland Protocol](#).

If you are planning to import or export bees it is your responsibility to follow these new rules and protect GB biosecurity.

Guidance on changes for businesses and citizens may be found at <https://www.gov.uk/transition> where you may use the Brexit checker to obtain a personalised list of actions.

If you import Bees:

- [Check what you need to do to import from the EU from 1 January 2021](#)

You risk not being able to bring or receive goods from EU countries from 1 January 2021 if you are not prepared for the end of Transition

- [Check what you need to do to import animals, animal products, high risk food and feed into Great Britain from 1 January 2021](#)

There will be new processes that importers must follow. These processes to import from an EU country will be introduced in 3 stages:

- [1 January 2021](#)
- [1 April 2021](#) (included for completeness but only relevant to animal products and high-risk food and feed)
- [1 July 2021](#)

- **You will need to register for the UK's new Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS)**

You will no longer be able to import using the TRACES system from 1 January 2021.

More information:

[Importing animals, animal products and high-risk food and feed not of animal origin from 1 January 2021](#)

EU law prohibits or restricts the import of specific goods from third countries that are deemed to present an unacceptable level of animal, plant or public health risk. These prohibitions and restrictions will be transposed into UK law at the end of the Transition Period.

As GB and the EU are expected to be treating each other as third countries from a bee health point of view, these restrictions and prohibitions will currently prevent or restrict mutual trade in bees.

As a result, importers will only be able to import queens from the EU. Any associated packaging (including queen cages and attendant workers) will have to be sent to a designated laboratory for examination and for honey bees this is Fera Science. Importing packages or colonies will no longer be possible after the 31st December 2020. From 1st July 2021 imported queens will have to pass through a Border Control Point (BCP). Currently, only BCPs at Heathrow and Manchester airports will accept imports of invertebrates, which includes bees. The National Bee Unit will continue to carry out physical checks on consignments of queens according to risk.

If you export Bees:

- [Check what you need to do to export to the EU from 1 January 2021](#)

You risk not being able to send or take goods to EU countries from 1 January 2021 if you are not prepared for the end of Transition.

The position regarding exports is similar to imports. The EU would also consider the UK to be a Third Country. This will mean that the EU would only accept exports of queens from the UK – providing we are listed as a third country approved to export to the EU. The export of packages and colonies will no longer be possible.

Further Advice:

Please review the Gov.uk pages linked above for more detailed and the most up to date guidance. [BeeBase pages](#) containing Import and Export guidance will be updated on a regular basis for easy reference.

Varroa



Varroa is still the biggest problem the inspectors see when inspecting colonies. The levels of infestation this season have again been varied across the region, with such a large and varied terrain this is to be expected. Varroa mites prefer drone brood and seek to get into the cells when they appear.

Bio-mechanical controls reduce the need for chemical intervention and if done at the right time can reduce the mite population considerably.

When using the short frame method always remember to remove drone brood once its sealed and destroy it along with the varroa it contains, otherwise you could be helping them along.

The NBU suggests and promotes Integrated Pest Management. Most beekeepers follow this practice to a degree, whether by design or not, using bio-mechanical controls such as drone culling, splitting, induced brood breaks, and open mesh floors.

When it comes to treatments it's important to use products **AUTHORISED** by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), administered as directed in the instructions, and not to apply the same Varroa treatment several times in a row. Since my last annual report there have been no new Varroa treatments authorised for use in the UK, however there are a number of highly effective products on the market containing more natural active ingredients including thymol, formic acid and oxalic acid as well as the chemical miticides containing synthetic pyrethroids or amitraz. Beekeepers the world over have demonstrated how easy it is to breed Varroa for resistance to miticides, simply by using effective products without rotation or other bio-mechanical methods.

We are still seeing Varroacides used incorrectly, please read the manufacturers instructions. Half dosing for double the time is not sustainable and leads to resistance with some products.

In my last report I mentioned the use of icing sugar as a treatment for Varroa and the problems this presents. My inspectors have noted a reduction in its use this season for which we are grateful. It shows us that the advice we give in the field is being taken on board, thank you.

There's a legal requirement that the use of any treatments are recorded, and these records must be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Full details can be found on this link -

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=110>

The Beebase website has pdf links to numerous free fact sheets including the 'Managing Varroa' booklet. <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

Exotic Pest Surveillance

We have Volunteer Sentinel Apiaries (VSA) and Enhanced Sentinel Apiaries (ESA) across the region. Volunteer Sentinel apiaries are situated within areas considered 'at risk'. A volunteer beekeeper at that location agrees to monitor their colonies specifically for exotic pests. As well as a visual inspection, floor debris from the designated hives are sampled twice a year and tested for any trace of SHB and Tropilaelaps mites.

All postage costs, equipment and paperwork is supplied free of charge to the beekeeper who then collects and sends samples for analysis at the NBU laboratory in York.

ESA apiaries are located near to high risk points e.g. freight ports. They are visited by their appointed SBI in April, June and September. The colonies are inspected in detail, and samples sent for analysis. SHB traps are also provided for placement in colonies at both sentinel and enhanced sentinel apiaries.

I would like to thank those beekeepers who currently carry out this work, but do please contact me or your SBI if you would like to be involved in the future.

Asian Hornet

This year has seen a reduction in confirmed Asian Hornet sightings in the UK with just one Asian Hornet nest found and destroyed by NBU inspectors in an apple tree in Gosport, Hampshire on Friday 11th September. This followed reports from two householders in the area, one of which was a beekeeper who had identified Asian Hornets feeding on his grapes. The nest was small, approximately 20cm in diameter, local beekeepers were made aware through the Asian Hornet Teams (AHTs) and monitoring has continued in the area.



Asian Hornet feeding on grape
Photo Gordon Brooks



Gosport nest in apple tree
Photo Peter Davies

The NBU has close ties with the Jersey Government's Asian Hornet Co-ordinator and team of volunteers, given their location between us and France. NBU inspectors have had field visits there in previous years so that we could learn from their experience. There haven't been as many Asian Hornet nests reported on Jersey this year either, with the tally of those destroyed on the island being 38 by October 15th, which contrasts with 83 found by the end of 2019. The reduction will be partly due to the ongoing eradication of nests and founding queens in previous years. The other most likely reasons given are the damp and variable temperatures between January and March this year making the overwintering queens more susceptible to fungal attack, and the reduction in traffic from France, due to

Coronavirus restrictions, reducing the number of founding queens hitching a ride over from the French mainland in the spring.

We ask beekeepers and the general public to remain vigilant and report any suspect sightings using the iPhone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch', by filling out an online report form or by emailing alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

- The 'Asian Hornet Watch' app is available to download free from the Apple and Android app stores.
- Members of the public can also report sightings by email to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk. Please provide a photo along with where you found it and a contact number to reply to.
- Reports can be sent via the online submission form on the Non-native Species Secretariat website, again with a photo.
- Details on the identification of an Asian hornet can be found on the Bee Base guide or the NNSS Asian hornet ID sheet.

Surveillance of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) in Italy in 2020



A. Tumida Larval Stage



SHB note club shaped antennae

Information from the National Reference Laboratory for Apiculture in Italy, updated in October 2020, shows extensive surveillance for Small Hive Beetle in Sicily with no positives found. Meanwhile in the Calabria region on the mainland one positive apiary and eight positive sentinel Nuclei have been found containing both larvae and adult beetles.

Training

All events since March, gatherings for business and pleasure, for education and training have been absent from our calendars, same as the rest of the country, but we hope it will be a different story next year. In some compensation for this our inspection programme has included visiting many new beekeepers where we offer 1:1 education, socially distanced, at the hive side.

Finally

I would like to thank my team Tim Roper, Adrian Wilford, Phil Khorassandjian, David Bough, Simon Oglesby and Keith Bartlem for their flexibility and dedication to the work. I would also like to thank the support team for the help they provide behind the scenes.

As always, please keep yourselves and your bees safe, dry, warm and fed (and Varroa free) over the coming months and I hope to see you happy, healthy and free to come and go as you please.

Contact Details

Between October and April, the seasonal inspectors are either on leave or working in other parts of the agency, therefore I would appreciate it if you could direct any communications to me.

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Inspector coverage for guidance only, Inspectors will be deployed wherever they are required.*

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