



National Bee Unit Northern Annual Bee Report for 2016

Covering Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the Wirral, Lancashire, Cumbria, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Northumberland)

Foulbrood Disease

There have been several cases of notifiable disease in the Northern region in 2016: -

American Foulbrood (AFB) has been found in the following areas: -

- 10km square NY00 - 6 colonies in 3 apiaries (Sellafield, Cumbria)
- 10km square NY01 - 1 colony, 1 apiary (Sellafield, Cumbria)

European Foulbrood (EFB) has been found in the following areas: -

- 10km square SJ66 - 2 colonies in 1 apiary, 1 destroyed and 1 shook swarmed (Winsford, Cheshire)
- 10km square SJ56 - 4 colonies in 1 apiary, all destroyed (Tarporley, Cheshire)

As the National Bee Unit protocol, we have completed 3 km inspection sweeps around the infected apiaries and no further disease was found.

If you have apiaries in any of the above areas, can you please make sure they are registered on BeeBase.

Varroa

As in previous seasons, *Varroa* levels, particularly later in the season have reached high levels in most unmanaged colonies.

Once again my Seasonal Bee Inspectors (SBI's) were reporting damaged/stunted adult bees and deformed wings (Deformed Wing Virus) while undertaking inspections in late summer, many beekeepers have found it difficult to control the *Varroa* levels in their colonies.

Please be aware that most colonies have been rearing brood in this winter period, due to the warm weather. This can lead to high mite levels in spring. If the levels are not controlled, populous colonies can collapse in summer or early autumn.

For more information on managing *Varroa*, please visit our website www.nationalbeeunit.com and please read the '*Managing Varroa*' leaflet produced by the National Bee Unit. This can be downloaded from the website.

Please remember *Varroa* and its associated viruses are still the biggest killers of honeybee colonies here, in Europe and throughout the World. **Regular *Varroa* monitoring is a very important part of your *Varroa* management and should be completed at least 3 or 4 times throughout the year (winter, spring, mid-summer and late summer); action must be taken if mite levels are near or over the injury or economic threshold limit of 1000**



Animal & Plant Health Agency

mites in the colony. Do not rely on physical deformities i.e. Deformed Wing Virus [DWV, damaged, stunted/small/deformed adult bees in adult bees to diagnose *Varroosis*, it is generally too late at this point for colonies to recover

Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus (CBPV)

Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus was noticeable again in 2016, particularly in commercial beekeeper's apiaries. This viral disease of adult honeybee is thought to be widespread. It is thought to lie dormant in most honey bee colonies and often shows no effect in the colony. However when symptoms such as crawling and/or trembling bees, sometimes with shiny, hairless or bloated abdomens become apparent then the disease can spread quickly through the apiary and result in rapid depopulation of colonies affected. The disease only occurs in large 'mature' colonies with drones and can often be seen in the drones first. In severe cases, masses of dead bees may be found on the hive floor and/or on the ground at the front of the hive and sometimes the colony may not survive. It is thought that overcrowding and confinement exacerbate the spread of virus within the colony in periods of poor weather, though cases were being reported right through the summer even some cases were reported in autumn. It is also thought that disease can transfer through contact, so good hygiene practises are suggested (i.e. washing gloves and hive tools between inspecting each colony). Re-queening from non-susceptible stocks is also suggested to further reduce the incidence. In some cases this disease can be confused with spray poisoning. For additional information on this and other viruses please see the NBU leaflet 'Common Pests, Diseases and Disorders of the Adult Honey Bee' and the recently produced fact sheet 'Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus'. These are available as a pdf downloads at www.nationalbeeunit.com.

Approved Bee Medicines

For your assistance, I list the current authorised bee medicines below. Please check the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) website regularly (www.vmd.defra.gov.uk) or ring the VMD to confirm that products are still legal to use.

Product	Active Substances
Apiguard Gel (25% Thymol) for Beehive Use	Thymol
Apilife Var Bee-Hive Strip for Honey Bees	Thymol (8g) Camphor Recemic (0.39g), Eucalyptus Oil (1.72g), Levomenthol (0.39g)
Apistan 10.3% w/w Bee Hive Strip= 834mg per strip	Tau Fluvalinate
Bayvarol Strips 3.6 mg	Flumethrin
Thymovar 15g Bee-hive strips for Honey Bees	Thymol
MAQS Beehive strips 95% w/w	Formic Acid - 68.2g of Formic acid per strip
Api-Bioxal 886mg/g- chemical laif S.P.A.	Powder for in-hive use. (oxalic acid)
Oxovar 5.7% 410mg/ml (Andermatt BioVet	Concentrate solution for honeybees(oxalic



Gmlh	acid)
Apitraz 500mg (Laboratorio's Calier SA)	Hive strips for honeybees(Amitraz)
Please note: Fumidil B is not licensed for use in the UK	

Treatments are approved for use in honeybee colonies in this country by the VMD and not by the National Bee Unit.

As you can see from the forgoing table, there are now two legal treatments of oxalic acid. Please note these are the only products that can be used for oxalic acid treatments in honeybee colonies in this country. Oxuvar is currently being marketed by Agri-Nova Bee Technology and can be only used for trickling.

A new Varroa contact strip, Apitraz 500 is now authorised and should hopefully be available in early spring. This is an Amitraz based product and as with all medicines should be used as per the manufactures instructions.

Please note, there are legal requirement to record all hive treatments used, i.e. when and where purchased, type and amount of treatment or product used, batch number and expiry date if applicable, when applied and when withdrawn. The product, again if applicable, should be disposed of as per the manufacturers' instructions. This information should be kept for 5 years.

The Veterinary Medicines record card can be found on BeeBase at <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/BeeBase/index.cfm?pageid=309>

Other treatments from Europe are available for use under the 'Cascade' system. Please visit the VMD website for information and import regulations, at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk

The 2016 honey season

Reports from beekeepers in the Northern region indicate that 2016 has been a very poor nectar gathering season. Indications from beekeepers in the region, say it was worse than 2015.

The Northern region average yield was well down on last season at around 20lbs per honey producing colony and a lot of beekeepers produced no excess honey. Some beekeepers reported a higher yield 30 to 50lb this was mainly due to their proximity to the high nectar yielding plants, Willow Herb and Himalayan Balsam. The Balsam started secreting a month late in my area and finished a few weeks earlier than normal. The Heather crop average was generally good due to the warm autumn weather at an average of 40lb per colony.

Due to the poor weather/crop, English honey is in high demand and prices have increased slightly on 2015 prices. Flower honey retailing between £4 to £6 per lb.



Animal & Plant Health Agency

Staffing

Ian Wallace, my Seasonal Bee Inspector for the North East of the Northern region (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham) decided to retire at the end of the 2016 season.

Ian was an excellent bee inspector and will be very difficult to replace.

He had great ability to communicate with beekeepers at all levels, had a good eye for disease and a great sense of humour. He will be greatly missed by both beekeepers and his colleagues.

We will be recruiting to fill Ian's post in late January 2017.

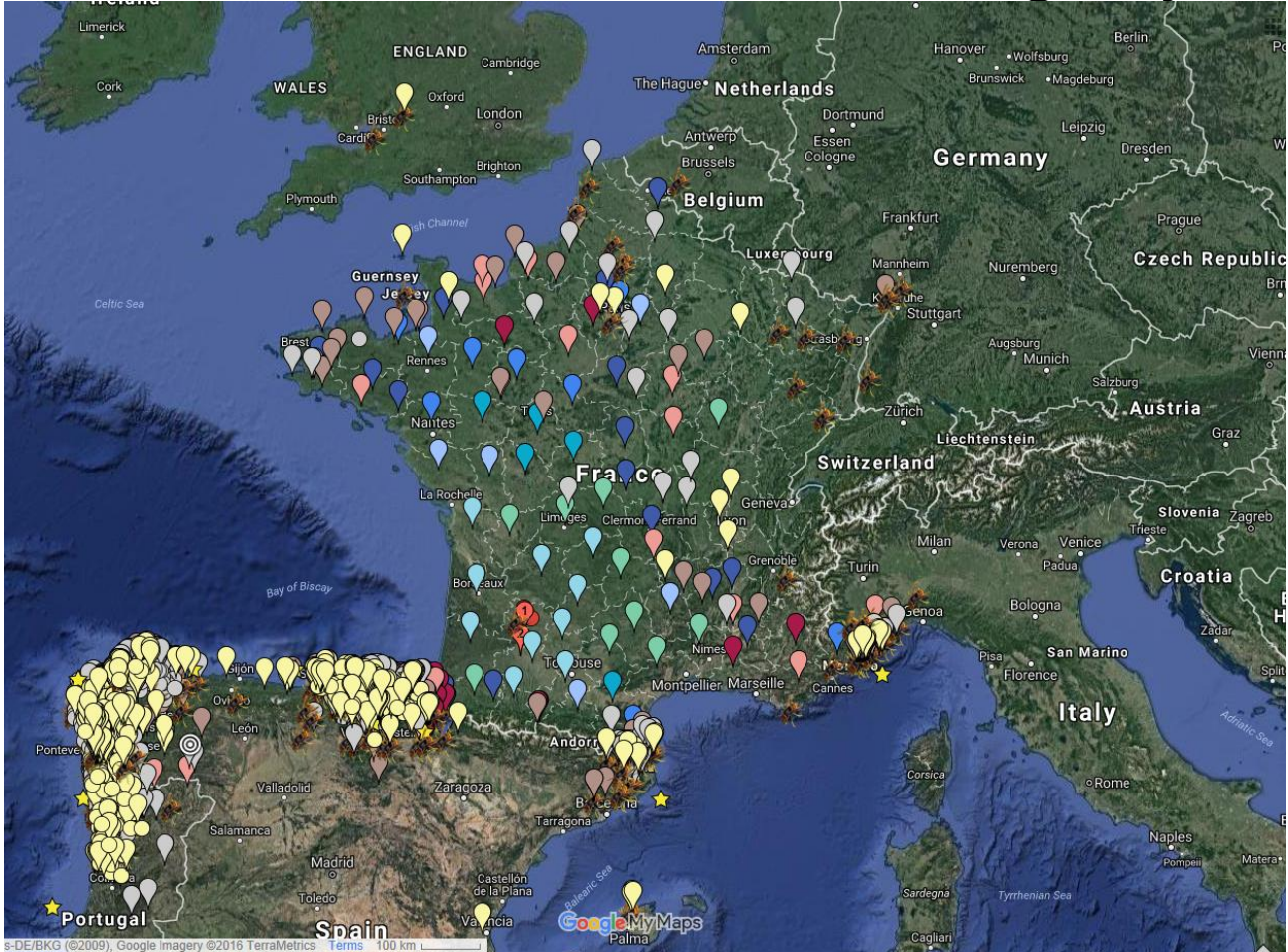
We have been fortunate to be able to recruit Mrs Julia Hoggard to the Northern team to replace Mr Stewart Beattie in the Cumbria/North Lancashire area. Unfortunately, due to recruitment issues/ formalities, Julia did not start working properly until August 2016, but she showed her ability to identify foul brood by finding American Foul Brood in the Sellafield area of Cumbria in September.

Update on Asian hornet and Small Hive Beetle in Europe

A natural or assisted spread of the Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*, from mainland Europe into the UK had been anticipated for a few years and Contingency Planning has been put into place to deal with any confirmed outbreak. The Google map illustrated (updated November 2016) shows the continuing spread of Asian hornet in Europe, including the first incursion into the British Isles in the Crown dependencies of Alderney and Jersey and subsequent incursions in the UK in Tetbury, Gloucestershire and North Somerset in September.



Animal & Plant Health Agency



<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?msa=0&mid=1jRfoi4oF6GmiGRqbXuD71Qpbw8s&ll=46.60925415505642%2C2.689161067645273&z=6>

The recent DEFRA press release <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-outbreak-contained-in-gloucestershire-and-somerset> confirms the destruction of the nest found at Tetbury, Gloucestershire and no subsequent Asian hornet activity in this area or that of the two individual sightings in North Somerset (both dead specimens). Further details and pictures of the nest at Tetbury can be found on BeeBase 'recent news', <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/News/news.cfm#177>



Animal & Plant Health Agency



With the amount of traffic, both commercial and private, entering the UK from Europe further incursions are highly likely and as experience has shown, the hornet could occur anywhere in the UK and not just in the higher risk areas along the South and South East coasts. The NBU will be assisting beekeepers in placing hornet traps in the affected areas early next year, but all beekeepers are advised to put out monitoring traps with a sweet bait(not honey!) in apiaries in late winter. Experience in France has shown that these are highly attractive to queen hornets coming out of hibernation. These should be checked regularly, preferably daily, so that non-target species can be released, and any suspect sightings reported to the Non-Native Species Secretariat at alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk and the National Bee Unit office or your Regional Bee Inspector. A fact sheet detailing a suitable home-made monitoring trap can be found on BeeBase at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

An updated identification sheet for the Asian hornet and further information on the Asian hornet can also be found on the dedicated pages on BeeBase at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208>

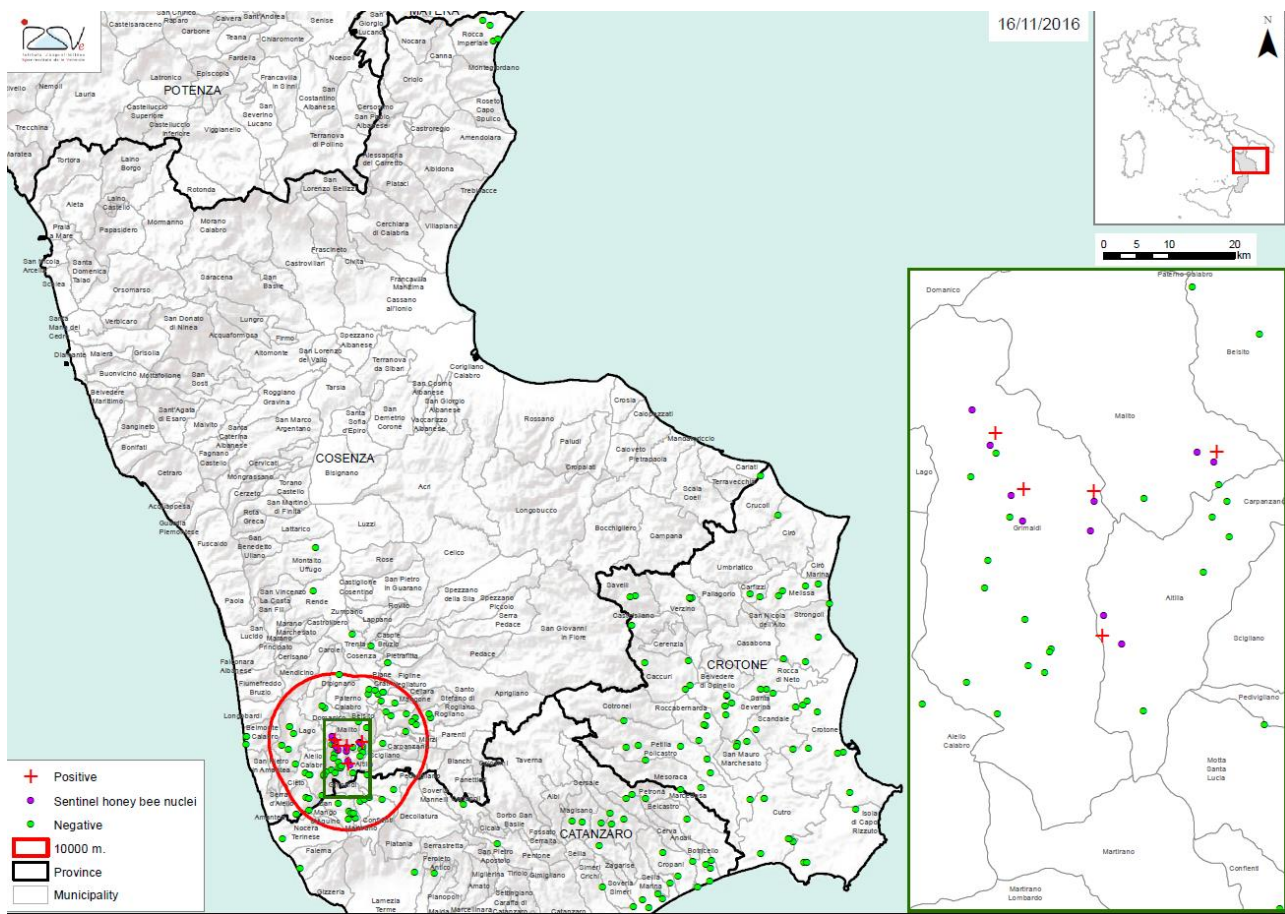


There are also some Asian Hornet videos available for viewing on the APHA YouTube channel which may be found here: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLouExecY1KnfANGcLUd2D6KkLRHen_-T

Small Hive Beetle

In July this year we had the unwelcome news of a further outbreak of Small Hive Beetle about 100km north of the original finding near Gioia Tauro in Calabria, South West Italy. It is understood that this outbreak was found after the Italian authorities became aware of and traced an illegal movement of a significant number of colonies from the restricted area to several apiaries in the province of Cosenza, Calabria.

All the colonies were destroyed and inspections of surrounding apiaries commenced. A small number of adult beetles have since been found in one other apiary close by. Only time will tell whether the prompt action has eradicated SHB from this area as (so far) appears to be the case for Sicily where colonies were moved just before the first outbreak was discovered.

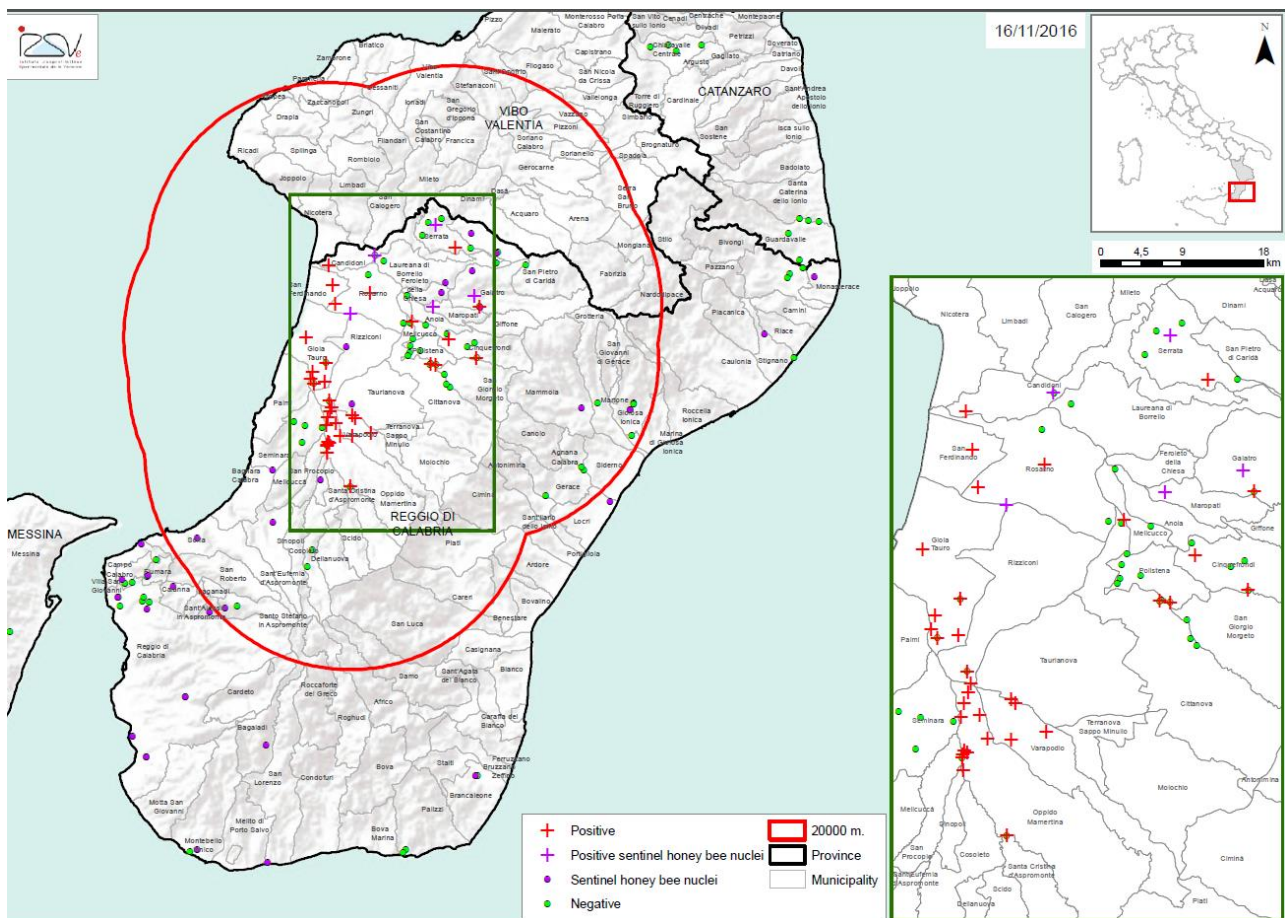


A large number of sentinel apiaries have been set up in Calabria and Sicily, near apiary sites where SHB has been previously found and to monitor for any spread into other areas. Once



Animal & Plant Health Agency

again this year there was little found until late summer, apart from some adult beetles and one larva picked up in a small number of sentinel colonies in Calabria. However, since September and to date (16/11/16) another 34 apiaries within the original protection zone have been found to be infested with a significant cluster to the south of Gioia Tauro.



See <http://www.izsvenezie.com/aethina-tumida-in-italy/>

Despite considerable effort it is apparent that the Italian authorities have not yet managed to eradicate SHB from Southern Italy, demonstrating the absolute necessity for the earliest detection of an incursion for this to be possible. The NBU continues to step up monitoring for SHB under the exotic pest surveillance programme at apiaries within England and Wales near to identified risk points for incursion. I am thankful to those beekeepers who add to the surveillance effort by being part of the National Bee Unit's Sentinel Apiary Programme, but I would encourage all beekeepers to make themselves aware of the signs of SHB and monitoring techniques as described in the NBU leaflet, 'The Small Hive Beetle – a serious threat to European apiculture', available as a download from BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com or as a hard copy.

The incursion into Italy shows how essential it is that all apiaries are registered on BeeBase (as well as beekeeper contact details) so that we can identify apiaries at risk in the event of



Animal & Plant Health Agency

an incursion of SHB into the UK and target control measures effectively. Self-registration is free via the link at www.nationalbeeunit.com, or you can register by contacting the NBU office or your Regional Bee Inspector. It is also essential that all beekeepers abide by UK regulations for the import of bees from Europe and elsewhere, including submitting an Importer Notification Form, either on-line or to the NBU office so that we are able to follow up on imports. It is of course illegal to import bees, queens or any bee-related products from within the 100km zone around the affected areas. Further details can be found on the Imports/Exports pages of BeeBase at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

Beebase registration

There is a common misunderstanding that beekeeper's who are members of a Beekeeping Association are automatically registered on BeeBase, unfortunately this is not the case. Generally you are registered on BeeBase, if you have had your bees inspected by an Appointed Bee Inspector, are added to the data base by an Appointed Bee Inspector (without an inspection), or added by the office staff at the National Bee Unit in York (with prior permission from yourself or your Beekeeping Association) or you register on-line yourself.

As always, we try to encourage as many beekeepers as possible to register on BeeBase. This will enable us to contact beekeepers for example, to undertake exotic pest surveillance work, offer one to one advice and to inspect their colonies for notifiable diseases and pests.

When notifiable disease is found, the BeeBase 'sweep system' is used to search the area around the disease outbreak (normally 3km). This enables us to visit the beekeepers in the surrounding areas to make sure that their bees have not contacted the disease.

We then use our email disease alert system to make beekeepers aware that notifiable disease has been found in their area. **To be alerted you must have a current and correct email address on BeeBase.** If you are registered, please make sure that all your apiaries and your personal details are kept up to date.

If you are not already registered on BeeBase, please register as soon as possible.

If you are unsure whether you are registered, or are having difficulty registering, please contact the NBU office on 0300 3030094

Please note the National Bee Unit does not pass any of your personal information to third parties.

To access the site, please visit www.nationalbeeunit.com



Healthy Bee Days 2016 and 2017

I would like to thank both Manchester and District and Carlisle Beekeeper Associations for hosting and assisting with the 2016 Healthy Bee Days.

In 2017, the Northern inspection team is organising one 'Healthy Bee Day' in the region. This will be taking place at Myerscough College in Preston on Saturday 8th July and will be hosted by the Preston Branch of the Lancashire and North West Beekeeping Association and will be run by the National Bee Units Northern Inspection team

For further information and booking please contact info@prestonbka.org.uk, the Preston Beekeepers Association web site or Viki Cuthbertson on e mail v_cuthbertson@hotmail.co.uk

As before, we will be asking associations to encourage 1st and 2nd year beekeepers on the course and particularly beekeepers that have not attended this type of training course before. Pre-booking to reserve a place will be required.

These events will be focus on 4 of the following: -

1. **Varroa control/management**
2. **Good husbandry/hygiene/barrier management**
3. **Diseased and 'confusion' comb recognition**
4. **Nosema diagnosis and management.**
5. **Practical hands on examination of honeybee colonies for notifiable disease and pests**
6. **Exotic Pest recognition and management**
7. **Comb changing**

REGIONAL CONTACTS

Northern Regional Bee Inspector

Ian Molyneux.

Tel: 01204 381186

Mobile: 07815 872604

e mail: ian.molyneux@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Seasonal Bee Inspector Contacts

Merseyside/Wirral

Mar McLoughlin (available April until the end of September)



Works mobile: 07500 891425
e mail: mark.mcloughlin@apha.gsi.gov.uk
Working 3 days per week

Cumbria/North Lancashire

Julia Hoggard (available April to end of September)
Works mobile 07900 394303
e mail address: julia.hoggard@apha.gsi.gov.uk
Working 4 days per week

Lancashire and some parts of Greater Manchester

John Zamorski (available April until end of September)
Works mobile: 07775 119446
e mail: john.zamorski@apha.gsi.gov.uk
Working 3 days per week

County Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland

Contact Regional Bee Inspector please

Cheshire

Graham Royle (available April until the end of September)
Works mobile: 07500 891423
e mail: graham.royle@apha.gsi.gov.uk
Working 3 days per week

Details of disease incidence, research and news updates are regularly placed on the NBU website on www.nationalbeeunit.com

Finally, I would like to thanks my Seasonal Bee Inspectors for all their hard work in 2016 and wish you all a successful beekeeping season.

Kind regards,

Ian Molyneux.