



South West Region Annual Report 2017 National Bee Unit

The 2017 Season – An Overview

The 2017 season has not been the best in terms of honey production with many beekeepers reporting a crop of less than 20lb per hive. However those beekeepers who took their hives to the heather this year were rewarded with an excellent crop.

The Bee Inspectors have had another busy season. With high levels of European Foulbrood (EFB) in Somerset, it was necessary for the two Cornish Seasonal Bee Inspectors (SBI's) Eric James and Hazel Vallis to spend time in the county helping to control the outbreak. In other parts of the region we have continued with our usual program of Foulbrood inspections; Apart from EFB in Somerset, the incidence of disease has been similar to 2016 (see graphs below) with Cornwall having no cases of Foulbrood this season.

We have continued to deliver in partnership with the local Beekeeping Associations our 'Bee Health Days'. This season the Somerset Bee Health Day took place at West Buckland Village Hall and we were able to carry out demonstrations at the nearby Taunton and District Beekeepers teaching apiary at Heatherton Park. The Devon Bee Health Day was hosted by the Okehampton Branch, at Bow Village Hall near Crediton. We were grateful to the local beekeepers who allowed us to use their nearby apiaries for demonstration purposes.

The Inspectors also had a presence at the Somerset Lecture day in February, Avon's 'Spring Day School' in April and Cornwall's 'Bit of a Do' (BOAD) in September.

We have again been carrying out Exotic Pest Surveillance (EPS) inspections around risk points such as ports and airports to check for incursions of Small Hive Beetle (SHB), *Tropilaelaps* and Asian Hornet.

In addition to these inspections there are 17 Sentinel Apiaries around the region. This is where beekeepers that have an apiary near a risk point assist the National Bee Unit (NBU) by regularly monitoring their colonies for Exotic Pests and twice a year they send in floor debris samples to be tested. I am very grateful to the South West Sentinel Apiary Beekeepers for all of their help this season, they are an important part of the NBU's surveillance programme.

Part of our work each season is to monitor imports of queens and package bees from the European Union (EU) and Third Countries (Argentina, Australia and New Zealand). Again



this year we saw a large number of packages imported from Italy, some of which were bought by beekeepers in the South West (SW) region. These were inspected for SHB as they were decanted into hives and fortunately nothing was found (SHB was found in Southern Italy in 2014).

The SW Inspectors were again in the thick of it when Asian Hornet was found to be preying on bees in an apiary in North Devon, details of which are below.

Update on Asian hornet and Small Hive Beetle in Europe



Early this year surveillance for the Asian Hornet, *Vespa velutina*, was resumed and enhanced trapping was carried out in Gloucestershire and North Somerset following last year's discovery and destruction of a nest at Tetbury and individual hornets found in North Somerset. No further hornets have been found in those areas but an insect caught flying inside a large distribution warehouse near Glasgow, Scotland in March 2017 was confirmed as an Asian Hornet. It can only be assumed that

this hornet had travelled all the way from southern Europe inside a container and flew out into the warehouse when goods were unloaded. This is a stark reminder that Asian Hornet (and other exotic pests) could arrive almost anywhere in the UK given the vast volume of traffic and goods arriving in the UK from across the channel and other countries where exotic pests are endemic. The Scottish incursion could well have been a mated queen emerging from hibernation and if released into the open, may have been able to establish a nest. All beekeepers are advised to monitor for Asian Hornet using a suitable trap. These can be home-made and there are links to a leaflet (and a YouTube video) describing how to make one on BeeBase (see <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208>) Monitoring traps are advised in areas away from a confirmed outbreak as regular inspection will allow other beneficial insects to be released unharmed. Further sightings of Asian Hornets have been confirmed this year on the Channel Isles. In Jersey a primary nest was discovered in a bee hive quite early in the year, several more nests in various stages of development have been found there and were destroyed throughout the season.



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Many reports of possible sightings in the UK have been received by the Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) and the NBU during the year. However only one in late September near Woolacombe in North Devon was identified as an Asian Hornet. Once a positive confirmation was made, the NBU Contingency Plan was activated and Bee Inspectors deployed in the area. Aided by lessons learned last year during the outbreak in Tetbury, the nest was quickly discovered and destroyed. The nest wasn't in a typical position, high up in a tree as in Tetbury, but hidden within a tall hedge. Cutting away the cover revealed a nest of about 50cms diameter. Surveillance in the area after destruction of the nest has shown no further hornet activity.





Leila Goss the SBI in North Devon is an expert with a sweep net, having worked at Exeter University studying bumble bees. Below is an Asian Hornet that she captured that was sent up to the NNSS for identification purposes at the beginning of the North Devon outbreak.

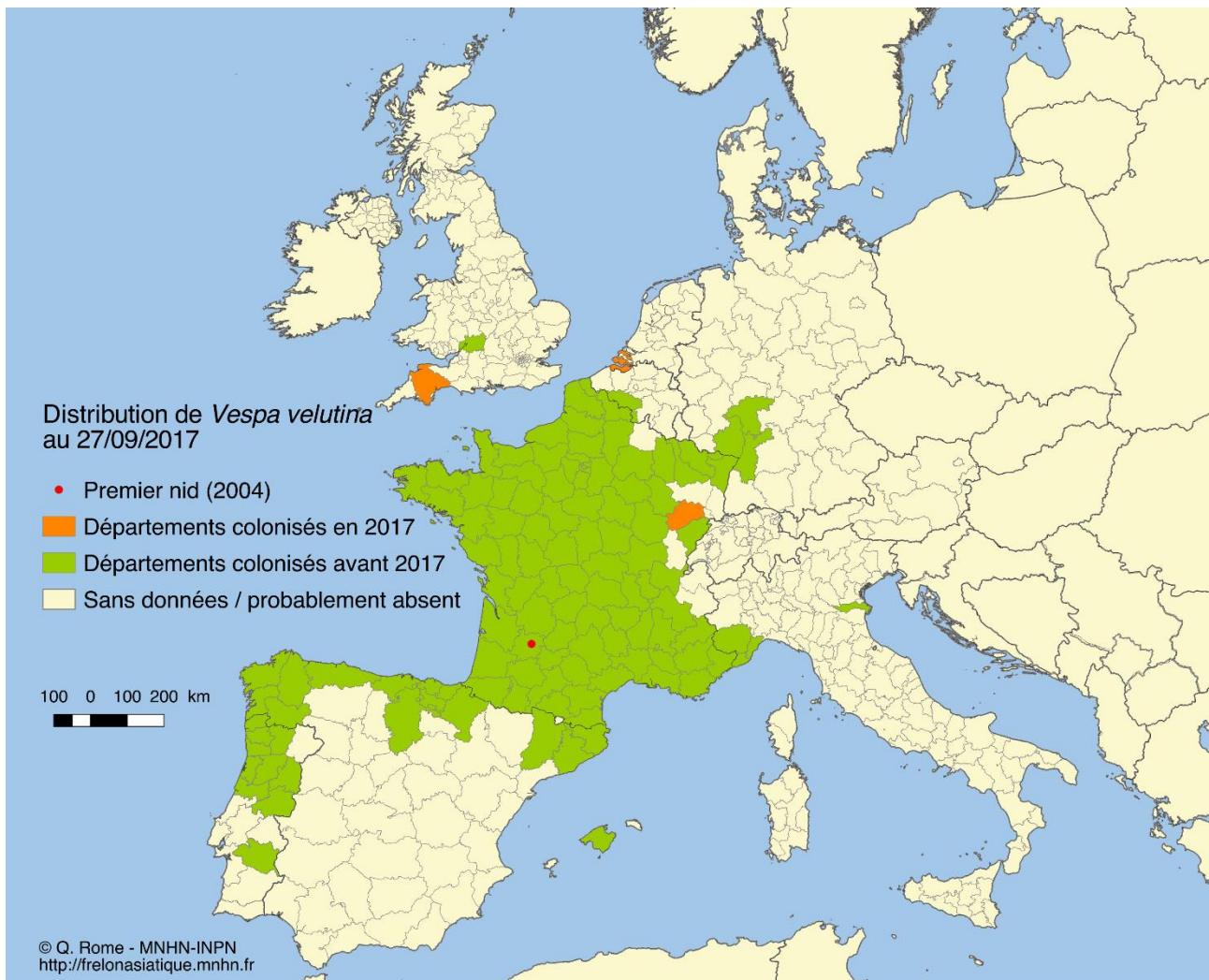


Initial laboratory examination and analysis of the nest indicate that this was a fresh incursion from the French Asian Hornet population and not directly related to the nest discovered in Tetbury last year. DNA tests on the brood show that reproduction had reached the stage of drone eggs only. As with other *Vespa* species, drones are produced



before gynes (virgin queens) and so we can be fairly certain that this nest was destroyed before it reached the stage of releasing queens capable of setting up new colonies next spring.

The map illustrated below shows the further spread of Asian Hornet in 2017 (marked in orange on the map)





Please check BeeBase News items for regular updates and the dedicated page at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208> for further information including the Asian Hornet id. sheet, videos and useful links. Any suspect sightings of the Asian Hornet should be reported to the Native Species Secretariat at alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk and the NBU office or your Regional Bee Inspector.

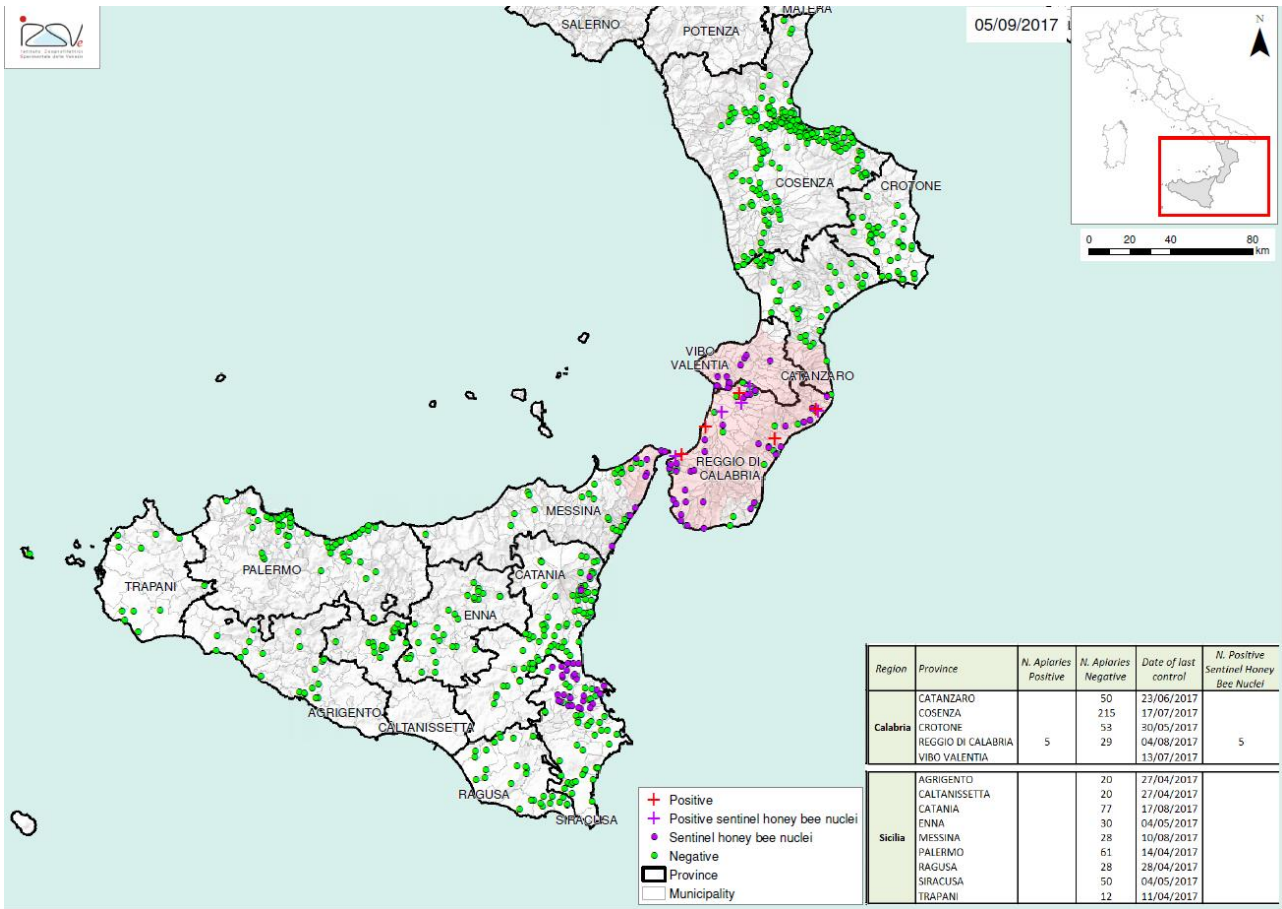
The image gallery on BeeBase <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/gallery/index.cfm> contains several pictures of Asian Hornet and Small Hive Beetle as well as other pests and pathogens and general beekeeping topics. All images are subject to © Crown copyright 2010 but may be used free of charge in any format for non-commercial research, private study or internal circulation within your organization. When reproducing images, please associate the phrase "Courtesy of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Crown Copyright" alongside each image.

<http://frelonasiatique.mnhn.fr/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2016/07/Carte-Vespa-velutina-Europe-Q-Rome-MNHN-e1469556132917.png>

Small Hive Beetle



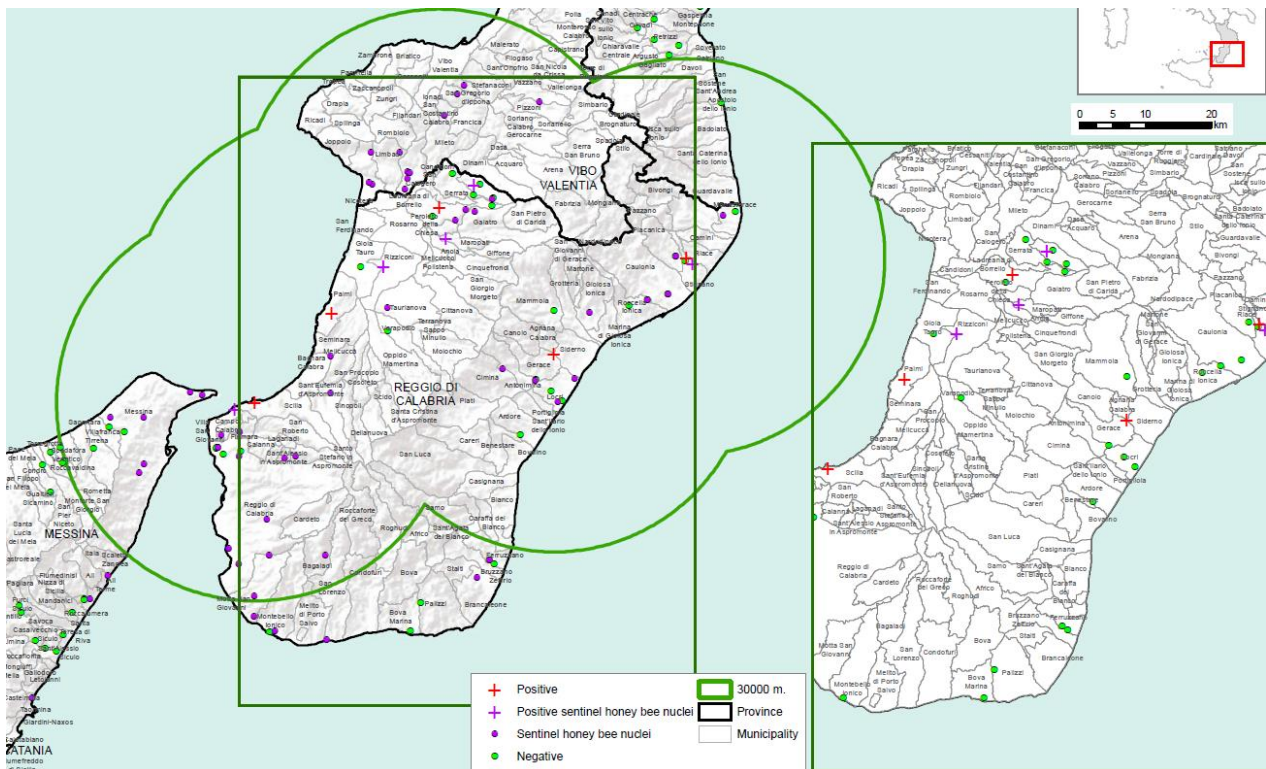
At the time of writing there have been a total of just 10 apiaries reported positive for Small Hive Beetle (SHB) in the province of Reggio Di Calabria in the region of Calabria, southern Italy. Two of these were in fact feral colonies and 5 others were sentinel apiaries set up by the authorities.



Surveillance inspections in Sicily (326 apiaries) and in the more northern regions of Cosenza, Crotona and Catanzaro (318 apiaries) have all been clear. This indicates that the secondary outbreaks in Sicily in 2014 and Cosenza last year (the latter due to the illegal movement of colonies) may have been eradicated.

There has been a change in EU legislation

On the basis of information received from the Italian competent authorities relating to their experience with Small Hive Beetle occurrences in Southern Italy the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/2174 of 20 November 2017 has been passed, amending Annex E to Council Directive 92/65/EEC as regards the health certificate for trade in bees and bumble bees such that in respect of SHB, as well as meeting other measures, honey bee queen exports must originate from an area at least 30 km distance from the limits of a protection zone of at least 20 km in radius around confirmed occurrence(s) of the small hive beetle. The previous 100km exclusion zone remains in place in respect of *Tropilaelaps* sp. Mites and bee packages.



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

The map above indicates that SHB is now present right across the region of Reggio Di Calabria with three new positives in two of the eastern provinces.

The Italian experience does suggest that early detection and immediate action before SHB becomes established may enable a small localised outbreak to be eradicated and once again 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'. See the dedicated pages for SHB on BeeBase <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=125> for links to the leaflet, a video and much more detailed information.

There is also a new Fact Sheet on Beebase 'Contingency Planning Procedures' which covers Small Hive Beetle, Tropilaelaps and Asian Hornet <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

Imports 2017

Import or export of bees, (including queens, packages and colonies) is permitted only if accompanied by an Official European Union (EU) or Third Country health certificate issued by the competent authority where the bees originated. It is a **legal** requirement that you



notify the **National Bee Unit** of imports of bees from outside the UK. You can do this by completing the [Importer Notification Form](#) and posting, faxing or emailing it to us. Alternatively, if self-registered, you can log in to the Beekeeper pages of BeeBase and click the 'Import Notifications' link from the left hand index. It is of course illegal to import bees, queens or any bee-related products from within the SHB exclusion zone around the affected areas in southern Italy. Further details can be found on the Imports/Exports pages of BeeBase at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

The number of queens imported into England, Scotland and Wales from other EU countries continues to rise year on year. Import numbers for 2017 at time of writing are as follows (2016 figures in brackets for comparison):

- Queens imported from the EU 15,210 (13,924)
- Packages of Bees imported from the EU 1,776 (1,924)
- Of which from Italy 1,310 (1,354)
- Nucs imported from the EU 19 (23)
- Full colonies imported from the EU 0 (0)
- Queens from Third Countries 525 (Argentina) (335, also Argentina)

Varroacides

It is perhaps worth mentioning here that there have been some additions recently to the Varroa treatments available in the UK. The list of those registered and approved for use by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is available on their web site (<http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/Default.aspx>) together with the 'Summary of Product Characteristics' giving full details of use. For the full list select 'Bees' on the drop down list of Species in the product search link. Apivar is the most recent addition and Apitraz has now become available in the UK. Both of these are strips containing Amitraz as the active ingredient. Now that they are on general release they may be obtained from UK beekeeping suppliers and will no longer require a veterinary prescription. Oxuvar, an oxalic acid based treatment applied by the 'trickle' method was also approved late last year but is currently without a UK distributor. See the VMD list of approved products below.



Product name	MA number	Company	Legal Category	Issued	Indications
Bayvarol 3.6 mg Bee-hive Strips for Honey Bees	00010/4090	Bayer plc	AVM-GSL	17/07/1992	For the diagnosis and control of flumethrin sensitive <i>Varroa jacobsoni</i> in honeybees.
Apistan 10.3% w/w Bee Hive Strip	17017/4000	Vita (Europe) Ltd	AVM-GSL	26/11/1998	Control of varroosis (<i>Varroa destructor</i> (formerly known as <i>Varroa jacobsoni</i>)) in honeybee colonies
Apiguard Gel (25% Thymol) for Beehive Use	17017/4002	Vita (Europe) Ltd	AVM-GSL	23/07/2003	Treatment of varroosis due to <i>Varroa destructor</i> .
Apilife Var Bee-Hive Strip for Honey Bees	23101/4000	Chemicals Laif S.P.A	AVM-GSL	24/06/2009	Treatment of varroosis due to <i>Varroa destructor</i> .
Thymovar 15 g Bee-hive Strips for Honey Bees	36234/4000	Andermatt BioVet GmbH	AVM-GSL	15/06/2010	Treatment of varroosis on honey bee (<i>Apis mellifera</i>) due to <i>Varroa</i> mite (<i>Varroa destructor</i>).
MAQS Formic Acid 68.2g Beehive Strips for Honey Bees	40476/4000	NOD Europe Ltd	AVM-GSL	26/02/2013	Treatment of varroosis caused by <i>Varroa destructor</i> in honey bees (<i>Apis mellifera</i>).
API-Bioxal, 886 mg/g powder for in-hive use	23101/4001	Chemicals Laif S.P.A	AVM-GSL	08/09/2015	Treatment of varroosis (<i>Varroa destructor</i> , parasite of <i>Apis mellifera</i>).
Apitraz 500 mg Bee-hive Strips for Honey Bees	20634/4009	Laboratorios Calier, SA	AVM-GSL	26/04/2016	Treatment of external parasitosis caused by <i>Varroa destructor</i> sensitive to Amitraz.
Oxovar 5.7%, 41.0 mg/ml Concentrate for Solution for Honey Bees	36234/4001	Andermatt BioVet GmbH	AVM-GSL	28/10/2016	Treatment of varroosis on honey bees (<i>Apis mellifera</i>) due to <i>Varroa</i> mites (<i>Varroa destructor</i>).
PolyVar Yellow 275 mg Bee-hive Strip	00010/4216	Bayer plc	AVM-GSL	07/03/2017	For the treatment of varroosis in honey bees caused by flumethrin sensitive <i>Varroa destructor</i> mites.

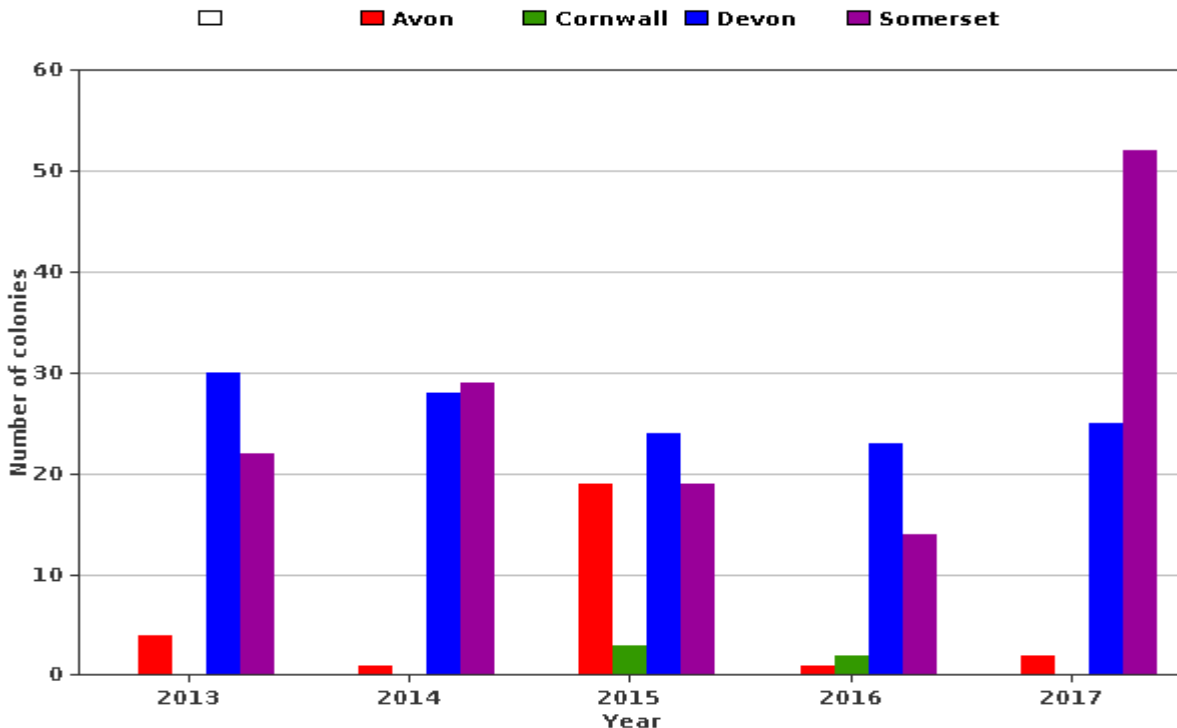


VarroMed 5 mg/ml + 44 mg/ml Bee-hive Dispersion for Honey Bees	EU/2/16/203/001	BeeVital GmbH	AVM-GSL	05/04/2017	Treatment of varroosis (Varroa destructor) in honey bee colonies with and without brood.
VarroMed 75 mg + 660 mg Bee-hive Dispersion for Honey Bees	EU/2/16/203/002	BeeVital GmbH	AVM-GSL	05/04/2017	Treatment of varroosis (Varroa destructor) in honey bee colonies with and without brood.
Apivar 500 mg Bee-hive Strips for Honey Bees	48004/4000	Veto Pharma	AVM-GSL	15/09/2017	Treatment of varroosis due to Varroa destructor sensitive to Amitraz in honey bees.

Foulbrood Diseases and Inspection Statistics for the South West in 2017

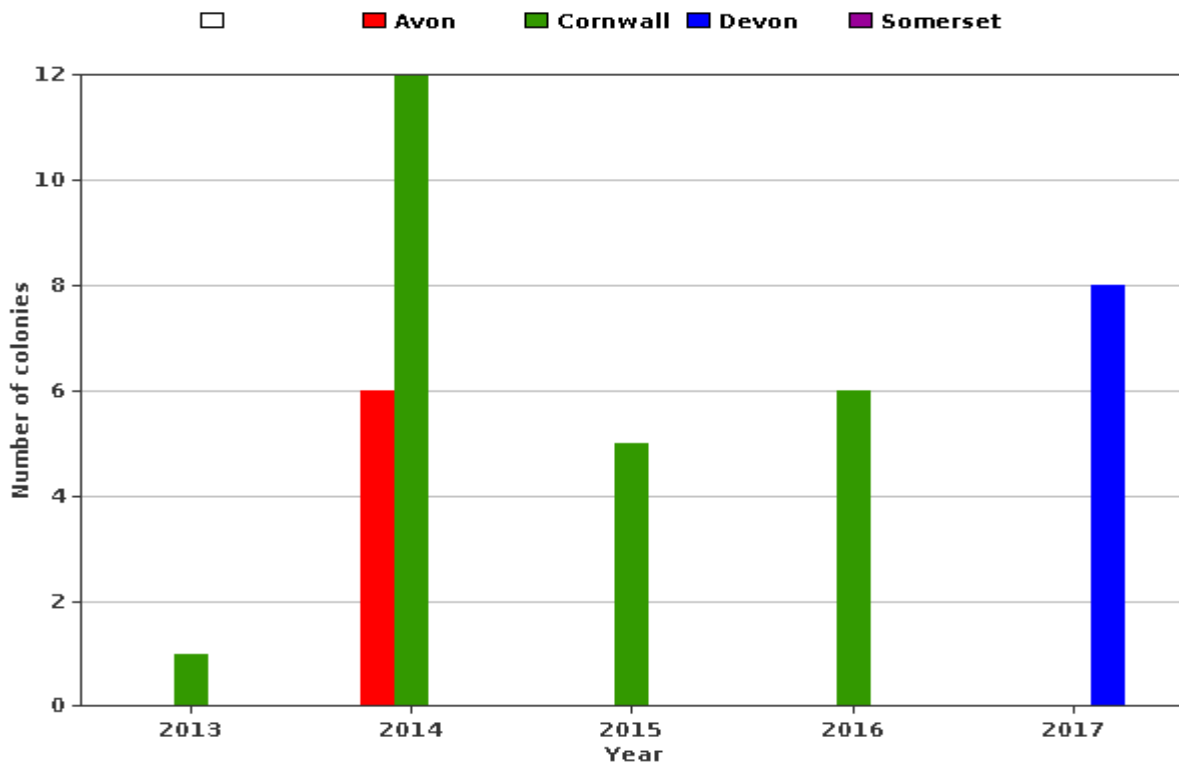
3454 colonies were inspected and 822 apiary visits made within the region, less than last year but good numbers considering staff availability. 4 cases of AFB were found all of which were in Devon. 53 cases of EFB were found, 2 in Avon, 21 in Devon and 30 in Somerset

Regional trends of EFB- by county in South West England





Regional trends of AFB- by county in South West England



Further details and mapping can be found on the disease incidence pages of BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com. It is recommended that these are checked regularly to see if there is any foulbrood disease close by.

BeeBase Registration and Association Membership Lists



I would like to remind everyone how essential it is that all apiaries are registered on BeeBase so that we can identify any at risk of notifiable disease or an incursion of an exotic pest 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 on **033 303 0094** or your Regional Bee Inspector.



All beekeepers registered on BeeBase with a current email address will receive an automatic email alert if disease is found within 3km of the registered apiary. If you are self-registered, please ensure that you keep your apiary records up to date or contact me if you are unsure. Self-registration is recommended as it also gives beekeepers secure password protected access to personal details and inspection records.

Your association can send us their list of members if they wish, but can only do this if they satisfy the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The easiest way to do this is to amend the membership renewal form to contain the following phrase;

“Please note that a condition of membership is your agreement to membership details being held on a computer. This information will be used for the efficient running of the association by its officials, for the distribution of the BBKA magazine, for BBKA Insurance, for Bee Disease Insurance, and passed to the Regional Bee Inspector for inclusion on BeeBase to aid them in the control of notifiable bee diseases”.

These lists are very useful to us as they allow us to identify new beekeepers and to update contact details for existing beekeepers. **Secretaries** – if you currently have this in place, please email me your current membership list so I can ensure our records are as accurate and complete as possible. This is something that will be incredibly important if we are unfortunate enough to find Small Hive Beetle in the UK or Asian Hornet in our region in the coming season.

Education and Advisory Services

In 2018 the SW team would like to run our usual Bee Health Days around the region. It is good to see that Bee Disease Insurance (BDI) have agreed to reinstate their £100 grant to help the County Associations with the cost of running these events. If you are thinking of running a Bee Safari next season please contact me or the local Seasonal Bee Inspector as soon as possible as we get booked up very quickly. Because of time constraints there are a limited number of these events that we can run during the active season.

It has been quite a difficult year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team for all their support and hard work.



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The new season will start on 2nd April 2018 and from that date you can contact the SW team as follows:

Hazel Vallis – **Cornwall** - 07775119457- hazel.vallis@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Eric James- **Cornwall**- 07979119369- eric.james@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Martin Hann- **Devon**- 07979119377- martin.hann@apha.gsi.gov.uk

David Packham- **Devon**- 07775119463- david.packham@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Leila Goss- **Devon**- 07775119453- leila.goss@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Eleanor Burgess- **Somerset**- 07775119465- Eleanor.burgess@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Megan Seymour-**Somerset and Avon**- 07775119475- megan.seymour@apha

If you have any concerns prior to the 2nd of April then please contact me.

Simon Jones

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