

National Bee Unit –Southern Region

February 2010

Firstly I would like to apologise for the lateness of this newsletter but it has been a hectic introduction for me to the role of RBI. I will certainly try to get this out earlier next year so it can be included in winter newsletters etc.

Southern Team

2009 was a year of great change in the Southern region. Early in the year Ian Homer left the role of Regional Bee Inspector (RBI) for the Southern region. His great experience has not been lost as he has moved to the role of Training & Extension Officer and will still be working with us on many projects. I wish him well in his new role and know that many of you will still see him from time to time as he continues with his lecture programme and working with the Healthy Bees Plan.

David Packham took over as acting RBI until I joined very late in the Year. I must thank David for caretaking the region in the transition period between Ian and myself.

2010 has already brought changes for the southern region. Sally Wadsworth, who was seasonal bee inspector (SBI) for Wiltshire, has decided to leave us as her expanding business of providing training courses on beekeeping takes off and I wish her well in that enterprise. David Packham was SBI for Dorset and is taking up an SBI role closer to home in the South West region, and he will be greatly missed from the Southern region due to his calm professionalism.

Southern region Counties 2010

Northamptonshire	Margaret Holland
Oxfordshire	Phil Spillane
Buckinghamshire	Julian Parker
Berkshire	Bob Loades
Wiltshire	Robert Carpenter Turner
Hampshire	Nigel Semmence and Fraser Young
Isle of Wight	Fraser Young
Dorset	-



These are rough areas and the borders of the SBI's regions don't tightly match counties. If there is ever any doubt please contact me and I will ensure you are contacted promptly by the appropriate person. Contact details are at the end of this document.

Recruitment

For the 2010 season we are currently entering a recruitment drive for Seasonal Bee Inspectors (SBI's). We are looking for experienced beekeepers with an in-depth knowledge of bee diseases and their control. Effective communication skills and strong practical beekeeping skills will be required. We will be particularly interested in anyone in the Dorset and South Hampshire regions. The advert will be found on the website from the News and Vacancies page of BeeBase www.nationalbeeunit.com. If you wish to discuss this further please give me a call.

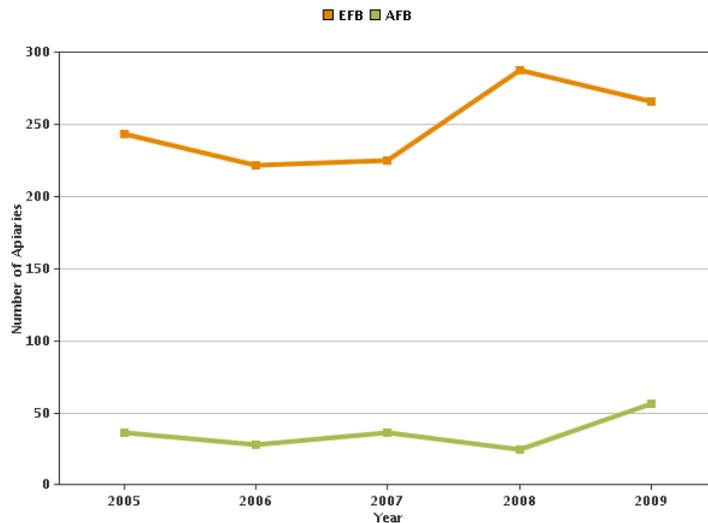
After the recruitment is complete I will be able to fix the regions and will send out an update informing every one of the coverage and contact details of all SBI's in the Southern region.

Inspection programme

Overall the total number of apiary visits in England and Wales has risen from an average of 4952 per year (between 2000 and 2008) to 9799 in 2009. This doubling (almost) of apiary visits has led to the number of colonies being inspected rising from an average of 25,188 per year (between 2000 and 2008) to 40,081 in 2009. This has been because of 50% increase in inspectors to a total of 65 posts in England and Wales bringing us back to the staffing levels of the 1980's.

Foulbrood Summary

The number of different apiaries with Foulbrood disease in England and Wales over the last five years is shown in the graph below.



In 2009 in England and Wales a total of 588 colonies were found with EFB and 93 colonies with AFB. The table below shows the number of hives with Foulbrood including recurrent ones occurring in each county of the southern region over the last four years.

	European Foul Brood				American Foul Brood			
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2006	2007	2008	2009
Berkshire	8	7	2	2	0	0	2	0
Buckinghamshire	4	0	2	9	0	0	0	0
Dorset	44	36	111	41	0	0	0	1
Hampshire	26	35	57	40	0	0	0	3
Isle of Wight	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2
Northamptonshire	0	1	2	2	0	4	5	1
Oxfordshire	28	17	63	32	2	6	34	14
Wiltshire	8	0	21	2	2	0	0	0
Total	118	96	258	131	4	10	41	21

For those interested in seeing more details of disease incidence including maps and disease trends please visit www.nationalbeeunit.com from the home page click on Bee Diseases then select Disease incidence and maps.

Exotic Pest surveillance programme

This year the Southern team ran a contingency exercise jointly with the South eastern region. This was carried out over two days in the Petersfield area, to experience and rehearse what might happen if Small Hive Beetle (SHB) or Tropilaelaps was discovered in the UK. Twelve inspectors, assisted by local beekeepers, found simulated SHB infestation at one apiary and then proceeded to check all local apiaries. Much was learned about the organisation and logistics of such an operation.

Throughout the season 49 apiary inspections were carried out looking for exotic pests in the southern region. There will be more of these in 2010 especially around ports, honey packers and other sites where there is a risk of an exotic pest being imported.

Imports and exports

Several beekeepers import queens in the Southern area and they will receive a visit in 2010 to check that they have the correct paperwork and that the queens establish healthy colonies. Guidance for importing bees can be found on our website www.nationalbeeunit.com click on legislation and scroll down to Imports and Exports.

Random Apiary Survey (RAS)

The RAS aims are to investigate the national incidence of a range of bee disease and to investigate the factors that potentially the incidence of each disease. To this end over 5000 apiaries will be surveyed in 2009 and 2010 across England and Wales. The survey involves the taking of a small sample of bees (approximately 60) from each hive (up to a maximum of five hives per apiary). The bees are then sent to the NBU at Sand Hutton York and will be analysed for the range of bacteria, viruses and fungi which affect honey bees. So far nearly 1600 apiaries have been surveyed but please take into account that this work did not start until June 2009. This is obviously going to generate a large amount of data and when it has been collated individual beekeepers will be able to access their own results via BeeBase.

Beekeepers New and Old

Please could I take this opportunity to say that the basis of the inspection program is “risk based” meaning that we try our best to inspect all colonies within the locality of outbreaks as these are at the greatest risk of having disease. Therefore we are completely dependent on having a good knowledge of where hives are otherwise the system fails and disease will be spread from unchecked hives. To this end we use a database called BeeBase. Registering yourself on it can be done very easily by contacting the NBU office, contacting myself or your local SBI, or online from the home page of BeeBase. Once registered you can access your own inspection records and update apiary details etc.

Brochures

The NBU does a range of brochures all are available from the website www.nationalbeeunit.com in electronic format (details below) or in paper form by post from the National Bee Unit (NBU) office (contact details are at the end of this document).

National Bee Unit – Protecting the honey bee.

- From the website go to Background and click on download NBU Brochure.

Foul Brood Disease of Honey Bees - and other common brood disorders

Managing Varroa,

Tropilaelaps: parasitic mites of honey bees,

The Small Hive Beetle: a serious new threat to European apiculture

- From the website go to Advisory Leaflets and select the appropriate one.

If a local association wants multiple copies of any of these brochures (i.e. for training courses) please contact the NBU office to order them.

Events for 2010

In 2010 there will be two or three Bee husbandry days in the region, as well as a Southern region Bee Forum where members from each association will be invited to attend and offer their views and opinions on our service and any bee health related issues. All these events will be advertised and confirmed on BeeBase in the 'events' section, where you will also be able to book a place on the courses.

As in the past both the RBI and SBI's from the Southern region will be available for talks or demonstrations at events organised by beekeeping associations.

Summary

I must express my thanks to the whole Southern team who have put up with a difficult year of transition in an admirable way and have been very supportive to me.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and please feel free to pass it around. If you wish to suggest any improvements or suggested inclusions for future versions of this newsletter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Happy Beekeeping and Best Wishes for 2010.

Nigel Semmence

Contact details

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Seasonal Bee Inspectors (Available from 29 Mar to 01 Oct 2010)

Robert Carpenter Turner	Wiltshire
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Margaret Holland	Northamptonshire
Tel: 01327 857328	Mob: 07775 119465
Bob Loades	Berkshire
Tel: 01189 619631	Mob: 07775 119467
Phil Spillane	Oxfordshire
Tel: 01865 396383	Mob: 07775 119470
Julian Parker	Buckinghamshire
Tel: 01494 711782	Mob: 07775 119469
Fraser Young	South Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Tel: 01590 682977	Mob: 07775 119468

Regional Bee Inspector (Available all year)

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