



# National Bee Unit Western Region Autumn Update

Autumn 2011.

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## Inspection Work:

The following Inspections have been carried out in Western Region for the Beekeeping Season 2011

Activity	2010	2011	Registered	%
<b>Apiaries Inspected</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>4120</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
<b>Colonies Inspected</b>	<b>3319</b>	<b>3616</b>	<b>18543</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
<b>Beekeepers Visited</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>2981</b>	<b>17.3%</b>

Current known Beekeepers within Region: 2980 – (534 New Beekeepers have been identified in Western Region since spring 2011). Further surveys of Beekeepers will take place this autumn to continue the updating of regional records.

(Note in England approximately 20% of BBKA association members are NOT registered on Beebase – please encourage your members to register. There is a misconception that when a Beekeeper joins the BBKA, the BBKA automatically registers them on Beebase. This does not happen; individual members have to register on Beebase.)

Beekeepers can register on Beebase using <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/public/register.cfm>. Confidentiality is assured (<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=95>)

Most Beekeepers are extremely helpful and cooperative, thank you for that support.

## Foulbrood:

Disease	Colonies 2010	Colonies 2011
<b>European Foulbrood</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>American Foulbrood</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

Incidences of European Foulbrood for the 2011 season are up again on the 2010 season.

Also this year we have had to deal with nucleus suppliers, nationally, who have on occasion supplied stocks which on inspection have been found with Foul Brood. This has involved the tracing of some 800 beekeepers / 1000 Nucleus Colonies across all Regions – work which will continue next Season. The real worry is that these colonies go to beginners, then, in some cases are lost in the winter, becoming a source of disease in areas previously not at risk

## 2011 County Totals for Notifiable Disease:

County	EFB Colonies	EFB Apiaries	AFB Colonies	AFB Apiaries
<b>Avon</b>	10	4	0	0
<b>Cheshire</b>	21	8	0	0
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	13	7	0	0
<b>Herefordshire</b>	13	8	2	2
<b>Shropshire</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Staffs</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Warks</b>	9	4	0	0
<b>West Mids</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Worcs</b>	7	3	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

## 2011 EFB ‘County League Table’

Norfolk - 76 Cases  
Hampshire 56 cases  
Kent 55 cases  
Devon 46 cases  
West Sussex 43

### Exotic Pest Surveillance:

No Exotic Pests have been found and further surveillance work and liaison with Risk Premises will continue next season.

Samples of floor debris were also collected from various Apiaries around the Region for analysis at the National Bee Unit for Exotic Pests – all were negative.

<b>Exotic Pest Surveillance</b>	<b>Year 2009</b>	<b>Year 2010</b>	<b>Year 2011</b>
<b>Western Region Apiaries Visited</b>	32	58	66

In 2012 we need to establish more “**Sentinel Apiaries**” around the region and train Beekeepers to support the programme.

### Import Inspections:

Import Inspections of full colonies and also Queens from within the EU have been carried out this year. These constitute either full colony inspections, or inspection of Import Health Certificates which accompany the bees.

Third Country Imports = 420 queens from Australia

EU Imports: 500 Queens from Greece,  
164 Queens from Cyprus,  
50 Queens from Poland  
50 Queens from Italy

### Random Apiary Survey:

RAS inspections in the region from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009 to present time are 558 apiaries and 4480 apiaries country wide. Some results from Year One are already shown on Beebase and for Year 2 will start coming in this autumn and will also be available to be accessed on Bee Base.

### Summary

The season has been one of change for Western Region, Dave Sutton retired after many years as the RBI. Dave had been a familiar face around the region and had enormous knowledge about Bee Husbandry and Beekeeping.

I am undertaking the RBI role in an ‘acting’ capacity, it is expected that the NBU will appoint a permanent replacement for Dave Sutton early in 2012.

The Season got off to a flying start in March, catching lots of people out, with boxes and frames not built or equipment not cleaned and sterilised from last season. Mad panic! This early start and very good weather until June saw lots of Beekeepers running out of equipment, and having to go right to the back of their sheds to bring into use equipment and frames which had not seen the light of day in years. How clean was that equipment, I wonder? As Foul Brood can remain viable on old equipment for more than 20 years, it remains to be seen if this will result in an upward ‘blip’ of foul brood cases in the next couple of years.

Over the season the SBIs visited more apiary sites and inspected more colonies than in 2010, they also found more EFB and AFB. An 8.9% increase in colonies inspected and a 10.6% increase in EFB cases diagnosed. There is obviously more Foul Brood in the region to be found and treated. To do that effectively it is so important that Beekeepers are registered on Beebase, so that when a case of Foul Brood is found we can visit all the apiary sites in the risk area.

The NBU is not able to visit every Beekeeper each year, inspections are risk based, and therefore they concentrate in areas where disease incidence is present. To help us it is important that Beekeepers are better able to recognise these diseases. Therefore we will be arranging two disease days in May/June 2012. One will be in the North of the region the other in the South, places will be limited to 50 per day and will be booked on a first come first served basis. Look out for further details of these as it is expected places will be booked quickly.

Varroa has been a big problem this season.

Early in the season there were a number of colonies which came out of the winter with high levels of Varroa and consequently were very weak and either died or did not build up quickly. This was due to poor treatment in the autumn of 2010.

Then towards August time there were an increasing number of colonies suffering from the effects of high Varroa numbers, due in the main, to the Beekeeper having no Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan to control Varroa numbers. The NBU 'Managing Varroa' booklet is essential reading for any Beekeeper.

I see some weird and not so wonderful 'snake oil' treatments being used to try and combat Varroa. I always recommend that Beekeepers use the medicines that have been approved by the VMD and, in December/January, use Oxalic Acid as a hive cleanser. These together with some of the IPM methods during the active season should keep Varroa numbers in your colonies down to low levels. Remember that all Beekeepers are obliged to keep records of all treatments given to their Bees. You can find out more from Beebase on this link <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageId=309>.

I would ask that all Beekeepers report their 'over winter' colony losses. They can do that by either phoning the mobile number at the bottom of this newsletter or by sending an email to my email address. Seal up the hive and I will contact you about a possible visit to look at the hive and take samples if necessary.

Finally, work is continuing on The Healthy Bee Plan. You can keep up-to-date with progress by visiting Beebase <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?sectionid=41>