



# National Bee Unit Eastern Region Associations Winter Update

Winter 2012

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## Inspection Work:

The following Inspections have been carried out in Eastern Region for the Beekeeping Season 2012

Activity	2011	2012
Apiaries Inspected	1596	1378
Colonies Inspected	7883	6856
Beekeepers Visited	988	838

Current known Beekeepers within Region: 4767- (521 New Beekeepers have been identified in Eastern Region since spring 2012 336 self registered]

Further surveys of Beekeepers will take place this winter to continue the updating of regional records, which was commenced in 2005 and is now on-going each winter.

## Foulbrood:

Disease	Colonies 2011	Colonies 2012
European Foulbrood	152	169
American Foulbrood	3	12

Incidences of European Foulbrood for the 2012 season are up again on the 2011 season despite inspections being down and show a worrying trend; also it is worth noting that the numbers of cases of AFB are up on previous years. Both EFB and AFB were found in three areas where historically they had not been found for some considerable time within the region.

We have again this year had some nucleus suppliers whom have on occasion supplied bee stocks which on inspection have been found positive with Foul Brood. Sometimes this can be a considerable time after the stock was purchased. The worrying part is that is that these colonies often go to beginners, then, in some cases are lost in the winter, becoming a source of disease in areas previously not at risk, given that purchased stock is often transported far from source.

Make sure that the supplier you use has signed up to the National Bee Unit's standards - ask the supplier if they are supplying stock to those standards. Inspect before purchase and take an experienced beekeeper with you.

Follow this link and have a look at best practice guideline number 8 - entitled 'Guidance for the sale of Honeybee Nuclei'

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=167>

## 2012 County Totals for Notifiable Disease:

County	EFB Colonies	EFB Apiaries	AFB Colonies	AFB Apiaries
Norfolk	70	19	0	0
Suffolk	27	8	4	2
Herts	19	6	0	0
Cambs	4	3	2	2
Essex	24	9	5	3
Beds	0	0	0	0
Lincs	25	11	0	0
Leics	0	0	1	1
Rutland	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>

## 2012 EFB 'League Table'

*Somerset 130 Cases*

*Devon 127 Cases*

*Norfolk - 70 Cases*

*Kent 64 Cases*

*Herefordshire 40 Cases*

## Exotic Pest Surveillance:

Eastern Region has a higher risk status than most with its concentration of Ports and Military Bases, linked to other risks such as Imported Wax Refiners and Wholesale Fruit Merchants. 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.

Exotic Pest Surveillance	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012
Eastern Region Apiaries Visited	164	161	223

## 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. Within Eastern Region this constituted 18 Import Inspections of which most have been completed, with some paper checks being completed at the moment.

## Overview of the 2012 season:

The 2012 season turned out to be a very frustrating and for a lot of beekeepers disappointing. Reports from bee inspectors around the region, indicating they were seeing a large number of Queenless colonies as well as colonies that had swarmed themselves out.

Seasonal Bee Inspector Peter Heath reported in his area looking through some imported nucs to find both the old queen still laying in the colony as well as several virgins which due to the continuous rain had been unable to get out, and this was the trend around the region with the majority of stocks small or large swarming.

Starvation was also reported with a number of stocks living from day to day and beekeepers having to be continuously feeding them, shortages of pollen also did not help, with brood rearing suffering as a result.

The result of all this bad weather showed in the number of colonies with Drone laying Queens and I feel this is going to play a part in the number of colony losses at the end of the winter.

Disease in the Eastern region is showing a worrying trend up and despite the colony numbers inspected down due to the poor weather there has been a rise both in EFB especially in Essex and Hertfordshire. Beekeepers need to be so vigilant and keep a eye on their stocks. Please report any suspect disease to the bee inspector especially colonies that don't build up with signs of patchy brood, and unpleasant smells.

Colonies which die out over the winter should be reported to me if you suspect disease. Other colonies that die out should have the frames either melted down and cleaned in Soda water or burnt and the hive itself thoroughly scorched out. This being good barrier management and a way of keeping disease down to minimum.

Chronic bee paralysis was also reported this year by both inspectors and beekeepers some of whom had kept bees all their life and never seen it before, again something beekeepers need to be aware of. It's early signs may suggest 'Spray Damage' to the beekeeper, but closer examination will show that most of the dead or dying bees are within the hive unlike pesticide damage. Unfortunately there is no treatment or cure for this condition and the colony either recovers or dies out completely, when this happens the cleansing procedure for equipment outlined above should be carried out.

Further guidance: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=167>

And look for fact sheets on disinfection and hive cleaning and sterilisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both beefarmers and beekeepers as well as all the associations in Eastern Region for their continuing support over the year and also to my Seasonal Bee Inspectors who play a very important part in finding and dealing with disease, as well as giving a lot of support to me and to the beekeepers in the region.

**Finally..... let me wish everybody a much better season in 2013 with plenty of sunshine and honey.**

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