

**Summary Note of the Bee Health Advisory Forum
26th meeting**

**The National Beekeeping Centre, National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
22nd November 2018, 12:00 – 16:00**

Present:

Belinda Phillipson	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) – Bee Health Policy
Louise Mount	
Frank Petherbridge	
Kevin Beattie	
Laura Stevens	Defra Plant and Bee Health Evidence & Analysis
Nigel Semmence	Animal & Plant Health Agency, National Bee Unit (NBU)
Rebekah Clarkson (BHAF Secretariat)	
Julian Parker	
Maureen Wakefield	Fera Science Ltd
Ellie Jones (Phone)	
Margaret Ginman	Bee Farmers Association (BFA)
Ged Marshall	
Margaret Murdin	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
Ken Basterfield	
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
John Bowles	
Dan Basterfield	National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB)
Chris Hartfield	National Farmers Union
John Hill	British Bee Veterinary Association (BBVA)
Kathleen Carroll	Welsh Government
Leyland Walker (Phone)	DAERA, Northern Ireland Executive
Steve Sunderland	Scottish Government
Norman Carreck	Sussex University

Correction: Dan Basterfield was also in attendance (it was highlighted at the 27th meeting that Dan had been omitted from the above list)

Apologies received from:

Anna Burrows	Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
Ian Fenn	Defra Pollinator strategy

WebEx videoconferencing and teleconferencing facilities were used.

1. Welcome and introductions

Belinda Phillipson in her first meeting chairing the BHAF as Head of Defra Bee Health Policy thanked the BBKA for hosting the meeting at Stoneleigh.

2. Asian Hornet Contingency Update

Nigel Semmence provided an update on Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina* during the 2018 season, in which there were nine confirmed sightings¹ of Asian hornets. Instead of repeat press notices, a rolling news page on gov.uk was updated each subsequent occasion *Vespa velutina* was officially identified. This was likely to be repeated in future outbreaks..

NBU requested a licence from NNSS to track and trace *Vespa velutina*. This allowed Bee Inspectors to release hornets legally.

The first confirmed finding was in April when an Asian hornet was discovered in a cauliflower. As well as trapping, 180km of hedgerows were walked in Lincolnshire and an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle was used to scan areas not easily observable from the ground. No suspect nests were identified and no further hornets were seen in the area.

On 3rd September, an Asian hornet was identified, caught in a homemade trap in an apiary in Fowey, Cornwall. Bait stations and line of sight were used to track the nest, which was found low in brambles on 6th September 2018. It was destroyed and recovered the following day. Further hornets were seen and a second nest was discovered high in a nearby tree on 18th September. This was destroyed on 20th September.

On 21st September an Asian hornet was seen by a member of the public in New Alresford. Again a bait station was used and a nest was discovered on 23rd September using line of sight to a nearby shrub.

On 25th September a member of the public observed Asian hornets in Brockenhurst, Hampshire. Again line of sight was used, although identifying the nest proved difficult due to dense woodland. Tree climbers, UAV and tagging techniques were used in the response; however, it was found by line of sight and by observing the nest from the ground. The nest was damaged, possibly due to strong winds from storm Bronagh.

Further dead Asian hornets were found in: Liskeard, Cornwall; Hull, East Yorkshire; Guildford and Dungeness; however, no nests were found in these locations despite extensive surveillance. Genetic analysis showed the Liskeard hornet was likely to have come from the Fowey nests. The Hull and Guildford hornets were likely to be hitchhikers, and the Dungeness hornets were probably blown over from the continent.

A dead *Vespa orientalis* was found by a member of the public in Hull after washing clothes following a trip to Cyprus.

Nigel explained there was a Beekeeper led AHAT meeting at the National Diploma in Beekeeping's headquarters on 28/11/2018.

Action no.	Required action	Action owner	Target date
1	Presentation to be circulated	RC	25/02/2019

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-uk-sightings-in-2018>

Maureen Wakefield from Fera Science Ltd described the analysis process once *Vespa velutina* material arrived at the laboratory at Sand Hutton, York. All nests were analysed to establish the number of combs and life stages present. The wet weight of adults was taken to determine whether any females present were likely to be queens. Molecular analysis was also carried out. Ten individuals per site are needed to form more robust conclusions from microsatellite analysis, a test which analyses DNA to look at the relatedness of individuals within recorded populations.

Key points of the analysis:

- Fowey nests were related; a primary and secondary nest.
- No haploid drones were present in either Fowey nest or the nest from New Alresford.
- Results indicated the Liskeard hornet was related to the hornets at Fowey.
- Analyses of hornets captured in 2018 indicated they are linked to the European population.
- No queens found in any nest.

Following attendance at a European Meeting, Margaret Ginman explained how different approaches across the European continent had aided the hornet's spread. Some regions are working to eradicate but this is useless if another area is not. *Vespa velutina* requires a discretionary notification in France. There was general consensus that containment can only have a chance of success if there is a consistent approach. Mike Brown confirmed current Government policy is committed to the current eradication scheme. Nigel Semmence agreed, highlighting that the commitment is evident from this year's approach.

Concern was expressed including the need to agree a future approach. There are benefits to working in partnership and we need to find methods to investigate and agree what are our long term plans are going to be.

Congratulations was given on the contingency response which had been tremendous this year (2018), but it was noted by attendees that insects and their nests may have been missed. Questions were also asked about the human risk factor following an attack in France.

A further discussion was held on the benefits of mandatory registration, and whether this would positively affect the contingency response. It was stated that it is not clear from evidence that non beekeepers are the biggest risk factor. The potential for climatic limitations to Asian hornet establishment in UK was also raised, including whether this had been taken into account in UK models. The NBU confirmed that APHA's outbreak models include climate, which suggested the UK is suitable for AH to establish. The relatively small nests recorded in the UK may reflect either the lack of genetic diversity or be linked to climatic conditions.

Margaret Ginman noted that concerns were raised at the COLOSS meeting over the chemicals being used to eradicate *Vespa velutina*. NBU confirmed the use of bendiocarb to kill nests, a common insecticide. Powder is forced directly into the nest at sunset and the nest which is then removed in daylight.

Mike Brown explained there is ongoing research on life cycles. Diploid drones may or may not be related to inbreeding because of the lack of genetic diversity. A French paper stated that triploid drones are normally infertile.

Action no.	Required action	Action owner	Target date
2	Circulate paper regarding drone fertility.	MB	2019

Margaret noted a SOS *Vespa* Platform which is helping authorities in Europe track *Vespa velutina*; this was discussed at a recent COLOSS (Prevention of honey bee COLony LOSSes) meeting². Crop losses were reportedly being observed because of reduced pollination.

3. Minutes of 25th meeting – sign off and run through actions

Belinda thanked Frank for the minutes.

Actions were discussed and updated.

Action 25_5 closed. Kathleen Carol forward the Welsh Pollinator Strategy link :

<https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/conservationbiodiversity/action-plan-for-pollinators/?lang=en>

4. Healthy Bees Plan Review: Partnership working workshop

Rebekah Clarkson explained how the forum were to be split into three groups to discuss three key areas of partnership working to use as evidence for the Healthy Bees Plan Review :-

- Science (Belinda Philipson)
- Education & husbandry (Kevin Beattie)
- Communications & Policy development (Louise Mount)

Case studies had been sent prior to the meeting and the three groups were invited to discuss the prepared case studies or discuss other examples.

Note takers in each group recorded the answers discussed to form the basis of case studies showing how partnerships have evolved since the start of the Healthy Bees Plan in 2009.

After 20 Minutes, the groups returned to discuss their examples:-

Belinda Phillipson led the Partnership working workshop plenary discussion and the groups fed back their thoughts.

Partnership working workshop group discussion

Comms and policy development group

1. Scotland's links with the UK. (Foulbrood outbreak) NBU/ Tech training/queen rearing.
2. DASH scheme
3. Dispersal of courses, not working as well as hoped. Is the quality of course as important as the location?
4. CONBA: 2014 statement on importing bees. Everyone left differences aside to agree a joint statement.
5. Virtual platform invested to share
6. Asian Hornet; rolling news page and Asian Hornet Action Teams.
7. Husbandry and education group agreed education courses together.
8. NDB and BBKA worked together to develop the education scheme.

² https://coloss.org/publications/Proceedings_COLOSS_Velutina_Task_Force_Meeting_Spain_2018.pdf

Education group:

1. Train the trainer, to cascade training to more people increases the reach of education
2. Different levels of education has created a curriculum.
3. Apprenticeship scheme has increased the number of Bee Farmers by nearly 10%.

Science:

1. Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus. BFA, scientists and universities, Giles Budge, Defra.
2. Asian Hornet and a realistic contingency plan. Successfully cascading knowledge.
3. Network with Insect pollinator projects. BBKA challenged Government to find funding for science.
4. BBKA funds science in universities
- 5.
6. Science and evidence group had a number of scientists, were often in competition.
7. How can we better put current re. Synthesis for important aspects. Something that is important.
8. Practical EFB methodology underpinned by science
9. Historic random apiary survey.
10. Asian hornet science day

Note takers were to write up full notes to be used as case studies in the healthy bees plan review.

<i>Action no.</i>	<i>Required action</i>	<i>Action owner</i>	<i>Target date</i>
3	Invite an apprentice to the BHAF to present.	RC	2019

5. AOB/comm's news

5.1 Future meeting dates discussed. All agreed 25/02 for the next meeting.

27	25/02/2019	G18 Nobel House
28	06/2019	TBC
29	09/2019	TBC
30	12/2019	TBC

<i>Action no.</i>	<i>Required action</i>	<i>Action owner</i>	<i>Target date</i>
4	Send doodle poll for 2019-20 meetings	Rebekah Clarkson	March 2019

5.2 Queen Rearing

Kevin Beattie updated the Forum on how support for queen rearing will be considered as part of the future Healthy Bees Plan. He is looking to set up another meeting to discuss queen rearing in 2019. This will follow consideration of outputs from the SMARTBEES project.

Ken Basterfield said that BBKA planned to deliver training to 72 Beekeepers in 6 courses and for the NDB to train 40 trainers on queen rearing.

<i>Action no.</i>	<i>Required action</i>	<i>Action owner</i>	<i>Target date</i>
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5	Queen rearing working group	Kevin Beattie	September 2019
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5.3 Highlight report – Rebekah clarified that because this BHAF was earlier than normal the highlight report normally discussed would be circulated via email at the end of the reporting period.

5.4 Hive count update: numbers of returns

Rebekah Confirmed the numbers:-

Hive Count 2018 Stats (as at 14.11.2018)

This may be the highest number of hive count returns if there is another surge at the reminder point.

2606 of 2018 returns were on Day 1, 707 on Day 2, 535 on Day 3 then they slowly dwindle.

2018 (14.11.2018): 4834 returns

2017 (total): 5363 returns

2016 (total): 5326 returns

The hive count has the potential to offer insight into long term trends on the number of beekeepers on BeeBase, although several assumption form part of the calculation.

Consideration should be given to analysing whether the same beekeepers take part in the count year on year. It may be possible to work this out from the returns on BeeBase.

<i>ction no.</i>	<i>Required action</i>	<i>Action owner</i>	<i>Target date</i>
6	All to encourage members to fill in the hive count	All	Before 3 rd Dec
7	To investigate whether it's possible to work out whether repeat participants in Hive Count	Kevin Beattie	25 th February 2019

5.5 Technical note on no deal situation.

Louise confirmed there is a technical note on importing animals and animal products:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/importing-animals-and-animal-products-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/importing-animals-and-animal-products-if-theres-no-brexit-deal>

6. No further matters were raised and the Chair closed the meeting at 16:00.

Next meeting: 25th February 2018 Nobel House, London.

RAG STATUS; **Red: Target date cannot be met, Amber: Target date at risk, Green: On target**

Date Action log reviewed: 19-11-2018

Date Action Agreed	Action No.	Agenda No.	Required Action	Owner	Target Date	RAG	Progress Review/Action Completed
12/12/2017	22-3	3.2	Collate comments, provide a product journey plan and include points relating to Trade raised which were raised at the meeting in June 2017.	Louise Mount			ongoing
12/12/2017	22-10	10a	Prepare draft TOR incorporating comments to be discussed in March's meeting.	<i>Rebekah Clarkson</i>	2019		Complete over email
20/03/2018	23-5	3	Request questionnaire data regarding mentoring and passing on skills. Merged with 23-7action 5 request evidence and case studies where HBP impacted on Beekeeping. (As part of HBP review)	<i>Rebekah Clarkson</i>			ongoing
20/03/2018	23-6	5	Update HBP Indicators	Fera/ BBKA			Not received all yet
19/06/2018	24-5	4	Discuss BHAF query regarding reviewing/recording BHAF science input with Defra science and evidence team to understand best practice and report back to BHAF	<i>Rebekah Clarkson</i>	June 2019		
7/09/2018	25_5	5	Liaise with Defra Evidence Team re. any estimates of pollinator insect biomass	Ian Fenn	March 2019		Email request sent
22/11/2018	26_4	3	<i>Invite an apprentice to the BHAF to present.</i>	<i>Rebekah Clarkson</i>	2019		
22/11/2018	26_5.1	4	<i>Send doodle poll for 2019-20 meetings</i>	<i>Rebekah Clarkson</i>	March 2019		
22/11/2018	26_5.2	5	Queen rearing working group	<i>Kevin Beattie</i>	September 2019		
22/11/2018	26_5.4	7	<i>To investigate whether it's possible to work out whether repeat participants in Hive Count</i>	<i>Kevin Beattie</i>	25 th February 2019		