

Healthy Bees Plan

Summary note of 1st Meeting of the Science and Evidence Advisory Group (SEAG)

20th April 2010 - Nobel House, London

Present:

David Aston		Stephen Martin	
Dan Basterfield		Liz McIntosh	
Mike Brown		Belinda Phillipson	Secretary of group
Giles Budge		Francis Ratnieks	
Norman Carreck		Wally Shaw	
Robin Dean		Mark Tatchell	Chair
Bernard Diaper		Maureen Wakefield	Invited presenter
Chris Hartfield			

No apologies

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed the group.

Liz McIntosh outlined the restrictions for civil servants during the pre-election period.

2. Summary and actions from the last meeting

The Chair introduced the summary and actions from the last meeting.

Action 1: Belinda Phillipson had contacted Francis Ratnieks and David Aston to provide a read-out of the meeting.

Action 2: Belinda Phillipson circulated minutes from the previous Programme Management Board and Communications Working Group meetings.

Action 3: The Group agreed and signed off the ToR.

Action 4: The Group were happy with the wider involvement of Scotland and Ireland as observers/corresponding members.

Action 5: See agenda item 5.

Action 6: A draft workplan has been developed and will be discussed under agenda item 3 (i).

Action 7: The work to review the draft indicators has been completed and will be discussed as agenda item 3 (iii).

Action 8: The Chair said that research priorities would be considered as part of agenda item 3 on the draft workplan. He noted that it was important for the work of SEAG to be linked to implementation of the Healthy Bees Plan (HBP) and its outcomes. Therefore any specific research priorities that are identified by SEAG should be linked to the HBP.

Action 9: Giles Budge outlined the progress with the Random Apiary Survey (RAS) and when the results would be available for further discussion by SEAG. Results from the first year of sampling, including preliminary statistical input would be available by the beginning of September and would be discussed at SEAG's next meeting. The full survey would be completed in June 2011. SEAG noted that only the results from the first year would be available to develop a preliminary national picture of pests and diseases for further consideration in the development of the business case for the next phase of Healthy Bees implementation.

The Chair summarised and noted that data from the first year would be available at the beginning of September, the Group would consider the data and present options to cover the issue of further data becoming available from the second year of the survey. **ACTION:** Giles Budge to give a presentation of the results from RAS at 3rd SEAG meeting. **ACTION:** The Group to discuss implications of RAS results and how these should be used to shape the business case.

3. (i) SEAG's draft workplan

The Chair introduced the draft workplan and reminded the Group that all the deliverables identified in the workplan should be linked to the outcomes of the HBP.

The Group discussed the priorities identified in the current work plan. Identifying high priority issues was difficult since all the issues/activities were important. Dan Basterfield suggested that one way forward could be to identify as a high priority activities related to problems that were not (yet) present in the UK, whereas activities related to problems that were already present should be considered as status quo (medium or low priority). In discussing this suggestion, the Group commented that problems in the UK were often affected by weather, resistance to drugs, for example and therefore problems were not always present at the same level.

The Chair crystallised discussions by suggesting that if a new problem arrived it would lead to a step change of how things were dealt with. Therefore dealing with problems that were not already present should be a high priority. The Group agreed that this was a useful way of identifying high priorities, and that the focus for SEAG should be on new threats and diseases. In light of this the Group reviewed the draft workplan, identified 5 high priorities, 2 high/medium priorities and made some suggestions for modification of the workplan including the agreement that communication issues should be discussed with the Communications Working Group. **ACTION:** Belinda Phillipson to redraft the workplan following the agreed modifications.

(ii) Detailed breakdown of workplan

The Group considered the more detailed breakdown of deliverable 1 (indicators which was discussed as next agenda item) and how the work to complete this deliverable had been done. It was felt that the formation of sub-groups and discussions by teleconference was a good way of carrying out this work. Therefore the Chair asked for volunteers to form sub-groups to cover the other high priority deliverables in the draft workplan. The following sub-groups will be established.

Activity No.	Deliverable	SEAG members to consider
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2.	Biosecurity	Stephen Martin, David Aston, Mike Brown, Norman Carreck
3	Contingency Plan	Mike Brown, Robin Dean, Chris Hartfield
4	RAS	To be discussed at 3 rd SEAG Meeting
5	New Medicines	Mike Brown, Robin Dean, Chris Hartfield
6	R&D projects on HBs ?	

ACTION: Following input from these sub-groups, Belinda Phillipson to produce a more detailed breakdown of each activity and circulate to other members of the group

4. Draft indicators

Giles Budge, who had been a member of the sub-group set up after SEAG's last meeting to discuss this deliverable, introduced this item. He explained that he and Mike Brown had redrafted the original paper as they felt that most of the draft indicators covered more than 1 outcome from the Healthy Bees Plan. The rest of the sub-group had agreed that this was a useful approach and the modified paper was the basis for discussions held on the 24th February. As a result of discussions the paper was modified (Draft indicators SEAG 1/3) and had been tabled for discussion by the Group at this meeting.

The Group discussed some of the metrics. David Aston suggested that the metric for 1(i) should be the number of beekeepers completing husbandry courses and also asked whether this was really a measure of improved beekeeping husbandry skills. There was a discussion of how to maintain beekeeping skills and encourage continual development. Bernard Diaper outlined the information that Bee Diseases Insurance had been collecting about comb condition and replacement. The Group discussed whether this could be used as a measure for 'Reduced incidence of foulbrood disease in the UK' and considered that it was potentially helpful. The Group agreed that the 'impact' column should be removed.

ACTION: BDI and the NBU to liaise with respect to the information that the Bee Inspectors collect with respect to colony size/quantity of combs etc to determine whether this can be used as a metric.

The Group discussed the benefits of increasing the transition of evidence from peer-reviewed journals into practical guidance for beekeepers, noting the delay that this causes. However, it was agreed that this ensures that the articles in the bee press were based on evidence. The Chair highlighted that this was one of the key deliverables for SEAG which would be covered in the workplan. The Group agreed that they were content with the draft indicators.

ACTION: Belinda Phillipson to tidy the 'draft indicators' taking into account the discussions between BDI and the NBU, and then send to the PMB for endorsement.

5. Risk assessment project on Small Hive Beetle

Maureen Wakefield gave a presentation on project (PH0510) – Development of an evidence based risk assessment for small hive beetle to provide input for the contingency plan. Bumble bees and feral colonies were identified as potential

problems for harbouring SHB. However Stephen Martin said that there were very low levels of feral colonies and Robin Dean suggested that commercial companies who produce bumble bees generally have very high standards of hygiene. The Group agreed that in the event of SHB introduction, early detection and eradication were essential. Mike Brown suggested that complete eradication is likely to be very difficult. The Contingency Plan needs to be updated with information from the Risk Assessment. Once this has been done the plan will be circulated to the Group for comment. The Group also suggested that it would be important to raise the profile of the Contingency Plan so that beekeepers were fully aware of the response and their role. The Group agreed that this would be for Communications Working Group to take forward.

ACTION: Mike Brown to update the Contingency Plan with evidence from the risk assessment. Once the Contingency Plan has been updated Belinda Phillipson to circulate the Plan to the Group and collect comments. Belinda Phillipson to circulate the final report from the risk assessment to members of the Group for comment.

6. Round table update of current bee research

Unfortunately time was running out so it was not possible to complete this. It was agreed that in future group members should send information in advance of the meeting and that it should be discussed earlier in the meeting.

ACTION: The Chair and Belinda Phillipson to consider the best format for discussing these results.

7. AOB

ACTION: Liz McIntosh to produce a 1 page summary of what is needed for a Defra business plan to facilitate discussions at the next meeting.

ACTION: Belinda Phillipson to circulate a doodle poll to find a date for the next meeting.

Healthy Bees Project Team
Fera

4th June, 2010

Action Number	Action	Person(s) responsible
1	To give a presentation of the results from RAS at 3 rd SEAG meeting	Giles Budge
2	To discuss implications of RAS results and how these should be used to shape the business case	All
3	To modify the workplan	Belinda Phillipson
4	To produce a more detailed breakdown of the deliverables in the workplan	Belinda Phillipson
5	BDI and NBU to liaise with respect to information from insurances claims to determine if these can be used as a metric for indicator 4. Finalised indicators to be sent to PMB.	Bernard Diaper, Giles Budge and Belinda Phillipson
6	To tidy the 'draft indicators' taking into account the discussions between BDI and the NBU, and then send to the PMB.	Belinda Phillipson
7	To update the contingency plan and circulate to group members for comment	Mike Brown, Belinda Phillipson and all
8	All members to send information about current areas of bee research and for this to be considered earlier in the meetings	All
9	To prepare a 1 page summary of what is needed for a Defra business plan	LM
10	To select a date for the next meeting and circulate a doodle poll	BP