

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL BEEKEEPER'S FORUM

HELD FRIDAY 21ST AUGUST 2015-08-27

Julian Parker our Regional Bee Inspector for the S.E.Region introduced the day by giving information of a new National Bee Unit (NBU) website for an eLearning programme for beekeepers. The September edition of BBKA News has an article explaining the website. The first module is Honey Bee Pests Diseases and Viruses.

Candidates need only to log on to Bee Base and register as a beekeeper to access this learning tool.

Julian started by giving an overview of the structure of the Bee Inspectorate, which is incorporated into the Animal Plant Health Agency. (APHA) The Bee Inspectorate is to be integrated into the APHA field services.

Julian stated that the Regional Inspectorate deals with county events and an occasional branch level talk but there is funding uncertainty and they have to manage their resources accordingly. Because of the transition and integration of the inspectorate he stated that this resulted in 10,000 fewer inspections nationwide in 2015.

Julian gave a National overview of beekeeping activities to date.

10,032 queens were imported from the E.U.

2223 packaged bees were imported from the E.U. (a large % of these were from Italy)

120 nucleus hives were imported from the E.U.

16 full colonies were imported from the E.U.312 queens were imported from third countries (Argentina)

Italy gave discounted rates for their bees and UK beekeepers bought them (Italy has the small hive beetle)

These bees have to be checked when they come into the country at no cost to the importer and there is no extra funding for these checks. Exotic pest checks are given priority. There are three checks made at different time scales when the bees are imported. There was full screening given to the bees from Argentina.

Keeping track of beekeepers in the country relies on voluntary registration through Bee Base (this may change) but some beekeepers are under the radar and the inspectorate has to try and track them down especially when there are disease outbreaks. Disease outbreaks as of last Thursday 20th August 2015

European Foulbrood (EFB) 499

American Foulbrood (AFB) 34

The South East Region

EFB 56 (2015) 80 (2014)

AFB 2 (2015) 2 (2014)

Julian stated that some AFB was most likely picked up from empty jars of imported honey and as such were classified as 'novel' outbreaks.

This year there has been an increase in the incidence of Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus. It was thought that this was linked in the main to climatic conditions. Not much is known about this CBPV but that the main thing is to try and avoid drifting and to ensure there is sufficient space between hives. There is no known treatment. (Leaflets on viruses are available on the Bee Base site)

Karen Smith Seasonal Bee Inspector for Buckinghamshire gave an overview of the role of a Bee Health Advisor within an association.

This is a new initiative and relies on members of a local association volunteering for the role.

The Bee Health Advisor will provide advice to beekeepers on all notifiable diseases and good husbandry practices.

They will give local guidance to the inspectorate should notifiable pests arrive.

They will attend a one-day training course at county level for disease recognition.

They will be the rep. for the association not NBU. They will discuss beekeeper's concerns on the phone to try and identify problems. (receiving pictures can help to do this too)

They should visit only if requested.

They should give advice and if a notifiable disease is identified or if they are still unsure then it should be passed on to the Inspectorate.

If a beekeeper is still worried after sending photos to a Bee Health Advisor and then still after a visit, then the Inspectorate can be called out.

Question from the floor 'Who notifies the inspectorate?'

Answer 'by law it is the beekeeper's responsibility but the local association also needs to discuss and decide who should be notifying the Inspectorate. It becomes a discretionary matter and it may be a consent issue.

The Association needs to come to a view i.e. to inform members of the system they are adopting.

The question of record keeping arose and it was stated that as this was a voluntary role no record keeping was required. (again an association may choose to have some record keeping system)

A question was asked re the kind of penalties that are available to the inspectorate for those beekeepers who wilfully do not conform to the reporting system of a notifyable disease outbreak. It was stated that the penalty could be £5,000.00 but that the cases were difficult to prove.

The Role of the Bee Health Adviser

- They do not have any statutory powers
- To be a good example of good husbandry practices
- To be an example and be registered on Bee Base
- To encourage others to be registered on Bee Base
- Know the legislation regarding notifyable diseases
- Know and follow import/export regulations
- To be knowledgeable to give support to the members
- The BHA need to have attended a course

Q. How many Bee Health Advisers in an association?

A. 1:100 beekeepers

Q Who will be eligible to be a BHA?

Beekeepers who are only in their first few years of beekeeping will be rejected to stand for the role. Module 3 is a good qualification to have.

BHA –expenses – not the Inspectorate’s responsibility.

The Inspectorate will give two lateral flow devices for the use of the BHA and replaced when used.

It is envisaged that the role of BHA will begin as from next season.

The next speaker was Brian McCallum a Seasonal Bee Inspector

He discussed Small Hive Beetle.

There are 10,000 hives moved in and out of Southern Italy annually into central Europe. Health certificates are issued and not challenged (we in the UK do challenge certificates) but there is free movement and free trade. The present ban will be lifted.

The link page for small hive beetle is

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=125>

Brian also showed a video on u tube of the small hive beetle from the Per Kryger department of Agroecology.

The Asian Hornet

The hornet was shown from a video taken after a visit in the Bordeaux region.

The hornet didn't go into the hive but hovered outside the hive facing towards the returning bees and took the returning foragers on the wing.

The bees in the hive were intimidated and reluctant to forage and therefore the hives were failing.

The hornet queen first sets up a primary hive and then starts a secondary hive near to food sources. They have a preference for urban areas and coastal regions. (they feed on the shoreline)

The stinger of the hornet is longer than that of a wasp or bee and can penetrate past the fat layer and enter the muscle layer.

The Bee Inspectorate has hornet traps in place but they rely on people being vigilant and reporting any sightings.

To destroy the hives, they had to wait for first light and used sulphur dioxide gas

In 2014 in the Bordeaux region 75 nests were destroyed.

Julian stated that in the Bordeaux region they only saw Asian Hornets and it appeared that the hornets had destroyed the wasp population.

The next speaker was Dr. Katherine Roberts

Katherine explained what research was being done to look at the sustainable management of resilient bee populations

The research was aimed at the discovery of resistant traits and genes and to give advanced knowledge transfer to beekeepers. They also are to carry out field trials to test local bee breeding, then dissemination through publicity organisations. They are looking at enhanced resistance through dietary regimes and to determine any future pathology threats.

She discussed the work looking at deformed wing virus and the link with varroa. The varroa transmit a very virulent strain of DWV and the varroa is full of the virus. They are carrying out experiments to look at the genomes that are more resistant to DWV

She stated that though the bees may not overtly demonstrate DWV it is still present and results in reduced foraging.

They are following a Performance Testing Protocol devised in Germany's bee breeding programme.

EFB strain types will be uploaded onto Bee Base. This will help the inspectors understand the spread of the disease.

Julian Parker's next session focused on what he described as the 10 most common mistakes beekeepers make regarding varroa. (he did say that these were his own pet hates and that others may have different ones or put them in a different order)

1. Using Thymol too late - 1st August it should start to be used
2. Can't see DWV therefore we won't bother to treat.
3. Believing Pyrethroid resistance no longer exists
4. Failing to keep veterinary medicine record cards
5. Failing to follow the correct procedure when obtaining Amitraz via the veterinary medicine's cascade. Beekeepers who obtain a supply correctly in bulk then pass on the medication are breaking the law. (All names of people being supplied the medication should be listed)
6. Using Amitraz year upon year without a break. (Not understanding resistance)
7. Overdosing with MAQS He said it was a lovely product but the bees are very sensitive to overdosing. Ventilation is crucial and the concern is that the bees can be 'burnt'. The manufacturers website on correct administration should be looked at.
8. Believing that every 'witches brew' and concoction available at trade shows is effective.
9. DIY oxalic and Thymol treatments – concentrations of these raw chemicals are variable and it is a concern how these are used. Re Oxalic acid, Api Bioxal is about to be approved by the EU as a legitimate treatment.
10. Believing vaporised oxalic fumigations is a good idea. The correct goggles and masks are needed and need to be kept in pristine condition. (a delegate stated that particular masks sold for this purpose and are not approved and are irresponsibly issued from a safety point of view. He said that LASSI recommend that inorganic acid vapour masks are the only correct masks to be used.)

Julian reiterated the need for Bee Health Advisors to volunteer for the role.

The session ended with questions from the floor.