

Annual Bee Report 2013 – Northern Region

(Covering Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the Wirral, Lancashire, Cumbria, Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Northumberland and Cheshire)

Foul brood Disease

American Foul Brood (AFB) has been found in the following 10km squares: -

- NU11 Alnwick, 1 colony, 1 apiary (Northumberland)
- NU10 Alnwick, 2 colonies 1 apiary (Northumberland)

European Foul Brood (EFB) has been found in the following 10km squares: -

- SJ-79 Altrincham – 1 colonies, 1 apiary (Greater Manchester)
- SJ -65 Nantwich – 3 colonies, 1 apiary (Cheshire)
- SJ -66 Winsford – 2 colonies, 1 apiary (Cheshire)
- SJ -55 Bunbury - 1 colony, 1 apiary (Cheshire)

As the National Bee Unit protocol, we have completed 3 km inspection sweeps around the infected apiaries and no further disease was found.

If you have apiaries in any of the above areas, can you please make sure they are registered on Beebase.

Varroa

Levels of Varroa in most beekeepers colonies were low during the 2013 season. This, I think, was probably due to good winter controls by the beekeepers using organic acids and thymol treatments, also the fact that there was a long brood break in spring due to the poor weather.

The new Varroa treatment Mite Away Quick Strip (MAQS) is now readily available. Some beekeepers have noted 'adverse effects' when the product was applied, i.e. some adult bee deaths and the queen not laying, please note these are common effects of the product, but if others are found, please contact the VMD at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk where you can register your findings.

Please note it is important to read and follow the manufactures instructions, strips should **not** be applied to any small colonies, less than 6 Langstroth brood frames of bees, this equates to around 8 to 10 of the National brood frames.

For more information on Varroa, please visit our website www.nationalbeeunit.com or read the 'Managing Varroa' leaflet produced by the NBU. This can be downloaded from the website.

Please remember Varroa and its associated viruses are still the biggest killers of honey bee colonies here, in Europe and throughout the World and regular Varroa monitoring is very important and should be done at least 3 or 4 times throughout the year.

Approved Bee Medicines

For your assistance, I list the current authorised bee medicines below. Please check the VMD website regularly (www.vmd.defra.gov.uk) or ring the VMD to confirm that products are still legal and currently in use.

Product	Active Substances
Apiguard Gel (25% Thymol) for Beehive Use	Thymol
Apilife Var Bee-Hive Strip for Honey Bees	Camphor Recemic, Eucalyptus Oil, Menthol
Apistan 10.3@ w/w Bee Hive Strip	Tau Fluvalinate
Bayvarol Strips 3.6 mg	Flumethrin
Thymovar 15g Bee-hive strips for Honey Bees	Thymol
MAQS Beehive strips 95% w/w	Formic Acid
Please note: Fumidil B is not licensed for use in the UK	

Treatments are approved for use in honeybee colonies in this country by the VMD (Veterinary Medicines Directorate) and not by the National Bee Unit.

Please note, it is a legal requirement to record all hive treatments used, i.e. when and where purchased, type and amount of treatment or product used, batch number and expiry date if applicable, when applied and when withdrawn. The product, again if applicable, should be disposed of as per the manufacturers' instructions. This information should be kept for 5 years.

Other treatments from Europe are available for use under the 'Cascade' system. Please visit the VMD website for information and import regulations, at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk

The 2013 honey season

2013 has generally been a poor season for gathering honey in the Northern region. This I believe has been due to the very poor prolonged spring weather and the poor late flow from the Himalayan Water Balsam.

In early spring, many rape fields had to be ploughed back in and in most areas in the Northern region it was not re-seeded. Although the summer months were warm and the bees seemed to gather lots of nectar and build up well, much of the gathered nectar was consumed in late July and August.

Surveying 32 beekeepers across the Northern region, the average main crop yield was lower than last season at 19lbs per honey producing colony. A few beekeepers reported 30 to 40lbs as their average crop, but this was due to their proximity to any re-seeded spring sown rape.

Crops in Cumbria were low, 0 to 10-lbs this being similar to last year. Crops through the Ribble Valley and on the Wirral were again similar around 10 to 15lbs. Heather crops were spasmodic, some areas producing 2 to 3 supers (60lb) per colony and some areas producing none

Honey prices remained around the same as 2012, flower honey retailing between £2.50 to £5 per lb dependent on demand and location.

Staffing changes

Sandra Kinchin has decided to return to North Yorkshire and will become part of the North East team again. At present there are no plans to replace her; therefore inspection cover in the Merseyside and Wirral will be by me, John Zamorski, Terry Ashley.

Imports of Queens, packages and nuclei

There was a total 8619 queen's imported into the UK in 2013. These came from Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, France, Hungary and Slovenia. The largest number came from Greece 3809, Italy 1125, Slovenia 1125 and 409 from Cyprus.

2114 packages, which are generally adult worker bees and a caged queen with no frames or comb, were imported. Other packages come without queens, which are transported separately. These came from Poland, Italy, France and the Czech Republic. Please note the majority of the packages were imported into Scotland, but some were distributed into England.

441 nucs were imported from Spain, Greece, and the Czech Republic and from Third countries (Note: 'Third countries' are countries other than Europe who are allowed to export queens to the UK), 1180 queens were imported, 940(420 of these went to Scotland) from New Zealand and 240 from Argentina.

Beekeepers who import queens, will normally receive a visit from a bee inspector. This is to check that the queens and nucs have arrived with the correct paperwork (A valid health certificate in English text) and to check that the queens have established healthy colonies.

If you wish to import or export queens or bees, then guidance notes and notification forms are available on our website at www.nationalbeeunit.com, select Bees & the Law and then select Imports and Exports from the menu. You can also now submit electronic import notification on Beebase. Select 'Add new Import' once logged in to the beekeeper pages.

Note: it is a legal requirement that you notify the nearest Animal Health Office of your impending import by sending a completed 'Bee 28' form (available on Beebase).

Beebase registration

There is a common misunderstanding that beekeepers who are members of Beekeeping Associations are automatically registered on Beebase, unfortunately this is not the case. Generally you are registered on Beebase if, you have had your bees inspected by an Appointed Bee Inspector, been added to the data base by an Appointed Bee Inspector or the office staff at the National Bee Unit in York (with prior permission from the you or your Beekeeping Association) or registered on-line yourself.

We are currently trying to encourage as many beekeepers as possible to register on Beebase. This will enable use to contact beekeepers for example, to undertake exotic pest surveillance work, to offer management advice and inspect their colonies for notifiable disease.

When notifiable disease is found, the Beebase 'sweep system' is used to search the area around the disease outbreak (normally 3km). This enables us to visit the beekeepers in the surrounding areas to make sure that their bees have not contacted the disease.

We then use our email disease alert system to make beekeepers aware that notifiable disease has been found in their area. To be alerted you must have a current email address on Beebase. If you are registered please make sure that your details and email address is current and up to date.

If you are not already registered on Beebase please register as soon as possible.

If you are unsure whether you are registered, or are having difficulty registering, please contact the NBU office on 01904 462510 or 01904 465692

Please note the National Bee Unit does not pass any of your personal information to third parties.

To access the site, please visit www.nationalbeeunit.com

Disease/ Good Husbandry Days

In 2014, the Northern inspection team will be organising four one-day 'Disease and Good Husbandry' events throughout the region. The locations, dates and contacts are:-

Stockport – Saturday May 17 th (contact Mr Roy Brocklehurst on 0161 480 2637 – no e mail)
Lancaster – Saturday June 28 th (contact Ms Alayne Robin on 01524221592 or 07766516327; e mail – alaynerobin@gmail.com)
Penrith – Saturday July 12 th (contact Dr Margaret Riches 01768894404 or 07957867324; e mail – mr4cnr@gmail.com)
County Durham – date to be confirmed, probably July. (contact Mrs Lynn Ramsay 01388527819 or 07969020508; e mail – lynnrmsay@hotmail.co.uk)

These events will be focused on:

1. **Varroa control/management**
2. **Good husbandry/hygiene/barrier management**
3. **Diseased and 'confusion' comb recognition**
4. **Nosema diagnosis and management.**
5. **Practical hands on examination of honeybee colonies for disease.**

Further information of timing and exact location etc. will be forwarded to your association in the early part of 2014. We will be asking associations to encourage 1st and 2nd year beekeepers on the course and particularly beekeepers that have not attended this type of training course before. Pre-booking to reserve a place will be required.

If there are any items in this report you would like to discuss, please feel free to contact me.

CONTACTS

Northern Regional Bee Inspector

Ian Molyneux.
10 Bramhall Ave,
Harwood,
Bolton.
BL2 4EL.

Tel: 01204 381186
Mobile: 07815 872604

Email: ian.molyneux@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Seasonal Bee Inspector Contacts

Merseyside/Wirral

Contact Regional Bee Inspector Ian Molyneux – details at end of this report

Cumbria/North Lancashire

Stewart Beattie (available April until end of September)
Works mobile: 07775 119443(works 3 days per week)
E-mail: stewart.beattie@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Lancashire and some parts of Greater Manchester

John Zamorski (available April until end of September)
Works mobile: 07775 119446(works 3 days per week)
E-mail: john.zamorski@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland

Mr Ian Wallace (available April until end of September)
Works mobile: 07775 119445(works 5 days per week)
E-mail: ian.wallace@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Cheshire

Mr Terry Ashley (available April to end of September)
Works mobile: 07775119472(works 2.5 days per week)
E-mail: terry.ashley@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Details of disease incidence, research and news updates are regularly placed on the NBU website on www.nationalbeeunit.com