

**Minutes of the Healthy Bees Plan
Project Management Board
3rd Meeting 13th October 2009
Agriculture House, Stoneleigh**

Present:

Helen Crews	Food & Environment Research Agency [Fera] (Chair)
Helen Carter	Food & Environment Research Agency (Secretary)
Liz McIntosh	Healthy Bees Project Manager Fera
John Home	Bee Farmers' Association [BFA]
John Howat	Bee Farmers' Association
Chris Hartfield	National Farmers' Union [NFU]
Amy Byrne	Welsh Assembly Government [WAG]
Jacqueline Price	Welsh Assembly Government
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association [WBKA]
Dinah Sweet	Welsh Beekeepers' Association
Bob Smith	Amateur Beekeeper

Also in attendance:

Mike Brown	Food & Environment Research Agency
Richard Ball	Food & Environment Research Agency
Norman Houston	South Staffs College

1. Introduction. Note of 2nd meeting and implementation brief on Beebase

The Chair welcomed attendees to the 3rd meeting of the Project Management Board and thanked the NFU for hosting the meeting in Stoneleigh.

The Chair introduced Bob Smith who had agreed to join the Board to provide an amateur beekeeper's perspective.

The Chair also introduced Mike Brown (Head of the National Bee Unit) and Richard Ball (NBU Education and Extension Officer) from Fera and Norman Houston (Head of Curriculum) from South Staffs College.

Apologies were received from Scotland. They would aim to send an observer to the next meeting.

It was noted that the following were now available on Beebase:

- 1) The minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Healthy Bees Project Management Board.
- 2) Healthy Bees Implementation Brief including governance and terms of reference of the Project Management Board.
- 3) Letter from the BBKA to Adrian Belton notifying him of their withdrawal from the PMB.
- 4) Letter from Adrian Belton Fera CEO to BBKA in response to their withdrawal from the Project Management Board.

The Chair reported that she had attended a BBKA open forum on education on Saturday 3rd October in Stoneleigh. Ian Homer (NBU Education and Extension Officer) had informed the Chair that BBKA's Education Committee (of which he was a member) had recognised that they shared similar priorities as the (Healthy Bees Project Management) Board and wished to avoid duplicating activities on education and training. As Fera's main contact point with the BBKA, the Chair was continuing to keep a dialogue open with them.

There had been positive feedback from the 'BBKA News' and 'BeeCraft' regarding articles on the NBU and the Healthy Bees Plan (HBP) which the Chair had submitted. There was an opportunity for an additional article in 'BeeCraft' with a deadline of the end of this week and the Chair invited input to this article. The Board confirmed that they were content to be mentioned by name in this article. The WBKA suggested that we could also submit an article for 'The Welsh Beekeeper' which had a deadline of the end of October.
ACTION: Helen Crews and Liz McIntosh to draft articles for both 'BeeCraft' and 'The Welsh Beekeeper' and circulate to the Board for comments.

The Healthy Bees Implementation Brief was now finalised and available on the public pages of Beebase (<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase>). The Board was encouraged to let the Project Manager or the Secretary know of any further updates/changes for posting onto Beebase.

2. Location of future meetings

The Board agreed that Stoneleigh was a convenient location for them and that they were content for the fourth meeting to be held at Agriculture House in Stoneleigh. It was agreed that the fourth meeting would be convened at the beginning of December. The Chair also offered Fera in York as a possible suitable location for future meetings.

ACTION: 1. Helen Carter to arrange a convenient date for the fourth meeting in December. 2. Chris Hartfield to source a room.

3. Highlight report. Risks and issues log

The monthly Highlight Report (September report is attached at the end of this note - PMB 3/2_final) currently included risks to project delivery but the consensus was that the risks should be presented on a separate page of the Highlight Report. The November Highlight Report would include a financial forecast and the Chair would provide a financial breakdown for healthy bees expenditure at the fourth PMB meeting. The Board agreed that the Highlight Report and risk log should be made available on Beebase.

ACTION: 1. The Board to let Liz McIntosh know of any further risks to add to the risk log. 2. Liz McIntosh to include the financial forecast in the November Highlight Report.

4. Draft Husbandry and Education workplan

The Chair welcomed Richard Ball, Education and Extension Officer to introduce this part of the meeting.

The Chair then reminded the Board that the budget for 2009/10 for educational and promotional activities was £180,000. We needed to agree activities/outputs for that budget as soon as possible. Richard then briefed the Board on current proposed priorities, set out in PMB 3/3, as follows:

Good husbandry templates

Richard presented two options for a framework on good husbandry to provide the structure for a new series of advisory leaflets and other training products which broadly covered the following topics: obtaining bee stock; handling and inspecting bees; disease recognition; equipment and storage; hygiene; honey processing. Each topic's advice and guidance notes could be packaged in a binder or manual on good husbandry practice, and added to, or updated over time. The Board agreed that the Extension Officers should proceed with the framework which set out a straightforward structure for the topics as this covered the areas well. The Board also agreed the following additions to the framework – (i) legislation/legal requirements, (ii) clear advice on key principles on owning bees, including responsibilities to neighbouring beekeepers and hives, and (iii) codes of good practice on importing and on selling bees.

The Board also agreed that:

- As the Healthy Bees Project Management Board, as a minimum, we have responsibility to provide practical advice on pests and disease control.
- We needed to draw out core principles for beekeeping irrespective of the way individuals do the job.
- We needed to get the message to beekeepers that they have a National responsibility and that their actions can directly affect others.
- New beekeepers needed a minimum level of knowledge in such areas as cleanliness of hives, condition of bees.

ACTION: Richard Ball to and Ian Homer to proceed with the framework (which presented a transparent link to the underpinning elements) and to focus on finalising 'Starting Right with Bees' and on the core principles in leaflet form.

Leaflets

Richard Ball confirmed that the new leaflet 'Starting Right with Bees' would also be available in Welsh. This needed to be finalised in time for the forthcoming pilot road-shows. Richard needed some good quality photographs for the leaflet such as: queen, drone, good sited apiary. Dinah Sweet offered to refer him to some relevant websites. **ACTION: Dinah Sweet to email website addresses to Richard Ball.**

Road-shows

Richard Ball and Ian Homer proposed four pilot road-shows to be run in the Southwest, Eastern, North West, and Welsh regions, all of which should be completed by the end of March 2010. The aim was to promote good

beekeeping practice with a particular focus on Varroa management and on attracting beekeepers who are new to the craft, and/or not members of local associations. They would be arranged by Regional Bee Inspectors and Seasonal Bee Inspectors and the cost for advertising and running them was to be borne by the Healthy Bees Plan. Recording of costs and time would be important for reviewing success. The Board agreed that:

- The pilot road-shows should proceed as proposed.
- We needed to involve those who were not members of local associations and needed to target advertising to capture them e.g. local radio. WAG offered to assist with advertising of the road-show in Wales.
- The road-shows would concentrate on a key theme e.g. varroa control although best practice advice on husbandry would be prominent too.
- Breaking up into small groups would be beneficial to enable attendees to interact more effectively.
- Performance feedback forms should be used to indicate how well the road-shows were received.
- We should consider whether attendance at a road-show meant that you would not have an inspection visit during the following year.
- They would be 1 day in length and free of charge to attendees who would provide their own lunch.
- To capture new beekeepers they should be held before the new season.
- The NFU suggested that a title of 'best practice' should be considered as this would get beekeepers interested.
- The draft husbandry framework and associated leaflets would be piloted at the road-shows.
- The WBKA (Wally Shaw) suggested 'Comb Management' as a good topic for the road-shows.
- The NBU had provided diseased combs for training courses in the past and these had been very well received. These could be provided at the road-shows.
- We should consider linking in with any regional meetings which bee farmers may already be holding.

ACTION: Richard Ball and Ian Homer to proceed with arrangements for the four pilots and to take on board the above suggestions.

Training/selection of trainers

The Board endorsed the plans for formal training of the Bee Inspectors in teaching methods and learning preferences (train the trainer). Training would be available (at least) to the Regional Bee Inspectors on teaching in the life-long learning sector for which suitable part-time courses were available at 41 colleges in England and Wales. The Board also suggested that funds from the Healthy Bees Plan could be used to pay for 'train the trainer' courses to beekeepers who regularly train beekeepers or who have previous experience in education and would like to train beekeepers. The Board agreed to this proposal and commented that selection of beekeepers to be trained would need to be considered carefully. Offering formally recognised 'train the trainer' courses covering practical as well as theoretical training would be important. It was also noted that beekeepers may be interested in shorter courses.

ACTION: Norman Houston would look at currently available (train the trainer) courses and inform the Project Manager.

NBU Regional apiaries

Richard Ball explained to the Board that the practicality and cost implications of setting up Regional NBU apiaries for training was being considered. These could be run as 'model' apiaries at a high standard, and as a result, the time input by the RBI and the regional team would be considerable. The BFA thought that it would be beneficial to work alongside apiaries currently held by agricultural colleges. Richard Ball and Mike Brown would discuss the feasibility of Regional apiaries and present a paper to the Board at the December meeting for them to consider whether to proceed with these as part of the education and training programme. **ACTION: Richard Ball to draft a paper.**

Audio visuals

The Board supported the use of audiovisuals as part of the training package and agreed that careful consideration was needed on how to take this forward. Norman Houston said that there are current interactive packages which could be developed in line with requirements and can involve learning/revision and testing. They can be held on a server and be accessed by as many people as necessary. The Board would need a detailed specification to consider and this would need to cover collaborative working with the BBKA. **ACTION: Ian Homer and Richard Ball to produce proposals for the Board (in early 2010) (subsequently agreed to be presented at the December meeting of the Board).**

Richard Ball invited the Board to offer any further comments on PMB 3/3 by email to him and copied to Helen Carter. **ACTION: Project Management Board.**

5. Updates on Husbandry and Education Working Group. Priorities for Science and Evidence Group and for the Communications Working Group

The Project Manager provided updates on progress with setting up the three working groups.

- i) Husbandry and Education Working Group - following the PMB's agreement on priorities for the Husbandry and Education Working Group we would now be able to make progress with the setting up of this group. The discussion partners had been identified by the Project Extension Officers and the Board had suggested Celia Davis and Margaret Thomas as members. The Project Manager asked the Board for suggestions for an independent Chair for this group. **ACTION: Project Management Board.**
- ii) Communications Working Group – the first meeting was on 26 October where the focus was a workshop to generate ideas and

proposals for a co-ordinated communications plan. It would be chaired by the Healthy Bees Project Manager and Trish O'Donnell, Defra's Strategic Communications Adviser for Food and Farming Group. The Project Manager invited the Board to review the suggested activities for this group as set out in the Healthy Bees Implementation Brief and send comments to her by email.

ACTION: Project Management Board.

- iii) Science & Evidence Group - we were aiming to establish and hold the first meeting during November/December. The Project Manager invited the Board to comment on this group's priorities and key activities either at the meeting or by email to her, drawing attention to the suggestions in the Healthy Bees Implementation Brief. The NFU requested an update on current membership of the group. The Project Manager had previously had suggestions as follows: Members: David Aston, Robin Dean, Dan Basterfield, Wally Shaw, Chris Hartfield. Chairs: Alan Teale, Mark Tatchell, Lord May, Stephen Hunter, Norman Carreck. The Chair endorsed Alan Teale as a possible chair given his strong science background and interest in bees through his Presidency of the Scottish Beekeepers Association. The Project Manager would update the Board on membership by email. **ACTION: 1. Project Management Board to email the Project Manager with priorities/key activities for this Group. 2. Project Manager to update the Board on membership of the group.**

6. Progress with Random Apiary Survey

Mike Brown updated the Board on the random apiary survey which had started in June 2009 and was due to be completed during 2010. Samples were retained which had given us a valuable resource for the future e.g. we could re-screen the samples if new pathogens were found. The aim was to survey 5,000 apiaries; of those 1,500 had been surveyed to date. Our approach of sampling a large number of apiaries was intended to provide us with a good chance of detecting as many diseases affecting bees as possible, even those which were rare. Sampling fewer apiaries could lead us to missing those diseases which were present but rare, some of which may be very serious.

The analysis would be available in the first part of 2010 and would inform priorities e.g. how many bee inspectors were needed in the future and training requirements in local areas based on disease incidence.

The Board suggested that it would be a good opportunity to discuss/promote training with those beekeepers involved in the survey. Mike Brown would build this into the information gathering during the survey visits during 2010. **ACTION: Mike Brown.**

7. Update on UK's Apiculture Programme 2011 – 2014

The Project Manger reported that the programme was to be reviewed in the coming months including consultation with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This programme was outside the remit of this group but the Board agreed that it was useful to be kept up-to-date on the EU context of the Healthy Bees Plan.

8. Lantra on accreditation options

The Chair welcomed Cathy Riley from Lantra (based at Stoneleigh) to the meeting and indicated that training and education was the key to improving husbandry standards. We were considering how best to proceed on accreditation and training.

Cathy then indicated that she was content to brief the Board on the options now and also attend any future meetings as necessary. Cathy was from the awards section of Lantra, the other part of Lantra being sector skills.

The options open to the HBP Project Management Board were as follows:

Light touch – preparing to teach in the life-long learning sector (PTTLS) . This was not curriculum specific so providers would be available in all regions.

National qualifications – once developed they were no longer under ownership of one group but instead the awarding organisation owned them and they were supported by central government. However, industry had minimum occupational standards and all training/accreditation needed to be based on these. Bees would sit in the Animal Health and Welfare area and provision would depend on demand. **ACTION: Cathy Riley would check whether there were currently any training courses relevant to bees.**

Customised provision – this could be a first step towards national qualifications. Training was owned by the organisation but was monitored/quality assured through the awarding organisation. Customised provision could be used to test the market for training.

The Board agreed that there was a gap in training on disease recognition and that this would not overlap with training currently offered by the BBKA. The Chair suggested that somebody from the BBKA should attend the next PMB meeting to give an overview of all training which they currently offered. The WBKA suggested Margaret Thomas. **ACTION: Helen Crews to discuss further with the BBKA Executive with the aim of inviting a BBKA representative to the December meeting.**

The Board agreed that training/accreditation options need to be jointly agreed with the BBKA to ensure that we are getting the best use from public money. **ACTION: Helen Crews to discuss with the BBKA.**

9. Any other business/date of next meeting

The NFU suggested that they could assist with circulation of road-show/training information to their 60,000 countryside members. **ACTION: Richard Ball to liaise with Chris Hartfield.**

Date of the next meeting – Helen Carter would contact the Board regarding a date in early December which would again be held at the NFU offices in Stoneleigh.

Fera
29 October 2009

Healthy Bees Implementation Project – Highlight Report

PMB 3/2_final

OVERALL RAG*

Amber

Monthly Update

September 2009

Overall Assessment: Good progress continues. The Project Management Board has signed off the Implementation Brief (PID) and agreed that improving husbandry standards through education and training is a key priority. The Board has identified priority activities for the NBU's Education and Extension Officers to develop into a draft workplan on education and training which will be discussed by the Board on 13 October. First meeting of the Communications Working Group on 26 October.

Summary of issues and concerns escalated for guidance or a decision:

Assigned to

Resolved

[nothing to report]

Completed Key Activities (September)

Upcoming Key Activities

Implementation arrangements (Project Management Board)

- 2nd meeting of Project Management Board (PMB) held on 8 September. Agreed terms of reference, implementation structure and workstreams. Minutes of 2nd meeting agreed with Board and posted on Beebase on 5 October along with the Implementation Brief.

- 3rd meeting of PMB on 13th October. Aiming to agree (i) draft workplan on education and training (ii) priorities for the Science and Evidence Group and for the Communications Working Group.

Education and husbandry workstream

- NBU's Education and Extension officers (job-share) have developed draft workplan to be discussed by PMB on 13th October.
- Project Manager has invited education specialist to join the working group for this workstream and is seeking further specialists to contribute. Has also invited Lantra to attend 3rd meeting of PMB to brief on accreditation options.
- PMB Chair (Fera) attended BBKA's Annual Forum (on education) on 3rd October.

- Subject to further input from, and agreement of draft workplan by PMB on 13th October, the NBU's Education and Extension officers will implement the plan and report on progress to the PMB (via Project Manager).
- Project Manager to identify independent Chair for this working group.

Science and evidence workstream (covers pests and diseases, medicines, biosecurity, and evidence base)

- 1300 apiaries have been sampled to date as part of (ongoing) Random Apiary Survey (aiming for 5000 to be sampled over 2009 and 2010).
- Project Manager has commissioned updated risk assessment from NBU on asian hornet and preparations for response, including other possible sources of detection (such as Natural History Museum) and liaison with local authorities.
- Tenders for 3 new projects on honey bee health have been submitted due to

- Science and Evidence Advisory Group to be established with independent Chair; aiming to meet in November/December to agree work programme.
- Draft plan on training Suitably Qualified Persons for prescribing bee medicines to be completed and circulated to stakeholders in October/November.

start in early November and be completed by end March 2010.						
Communications workstream <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some progress, eg, article about Project Management Board in October's BBKA News and in Beecraft, but awaiting steer on priorities and key activities from PMB. Members of Communications Working Group identified by PMB and invited to attend 1st meeting of this Group on 26th October. Editor of Beecraft has invited regular articles from Fera on PMB updates and other articles on specific topics. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm at 1st meeting of Comms Working Group on 26th October. Early priority is to develop and agree a communications plan, including consolidating the campaign for reaching new beekeepers and encouraging registration on Beebase. 				
Key Milestones (for the next 6 months)	Target date	Completion date	RAG	Comments	Owner	
Sign off HB Implementation Brief (PID) by PMB	End September 2009	2 October 2009	Closed		Liz McIntosh	
Education and husbandry work programme signed off by PMB	End October 2009		Amber/Green	Aim to sign off at 3 rd meeting of PMB on 13 October.	Richard Ball and Ian Homer	
First meeting of Science and Evidence Advisory Group to be held	End December 2009		Amber/Green	PMB to provide steer on priorities at 3 rd meeting on 13 October.	Belinda Phillipson	
First meeting of Communications Network to be held	End November 2009		Amber/Green	PMB to provide steer on priorities at 3 rd meeting on 13 October; 1 st meeting of Comms Group on 26 October	Liz McIntosh	
Agreed indicators of success and reporting against agreed baselines in place	End December 2009		Amber/Red	Science and Evidence Advisory Group to consider as early task and report back to PMB.	Steve Ashby	
Publish revised and updated Contingency Plan on exotic pests	End March 2010		Amber	Draft plan needs to be revised in light of updated risk assessment	Helen Crews	
Risks		Overall Status		Consequence		Status
		Now	Sept 09			
R.1. Delay in steers and advice from PMB		Amber	Amber	Possible delay in starting detailed work to implement key elements of the plan.		open
R.2. Insufficient samples from Random Apiary Survey due to priority given by inspectors to statutory disease control		Amber	Amber	Statistical robustness of survey may be weakened		open
R.3. Insufficient resources due to increase work (Ministerial profile increased).		Amber	Amber	Unable to deliver project on time.		open

***KEY: RAG**

Red - Situation poor / critical

Amber / Red - Situation potentially problematic

Amber – Situation potential risk

Amber / Green - Situation tolerable

Green - Situation fine

Closed - Closed