



The Food and Environment
Research Agency

Mr MS Asplett
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March 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Provisional findings from the first year of the Random Apiary Survey

Thank you for being part of the largest honey bee apiary disease survey ever undertaken anywhere in the world. The project has been challenging to deliver, and although it is primarily a research project and not a diagnostic service, we have not been able to provide participating beekeepers with their personal results as quickly as originally planned due to technical issues. Please accept my apology for the delays in reporting these results. However, we can share some provisional findings from the first year of the project. Please find below information on the aims of the random apiary survey and some provisional findings.

The Random Apiary Survey is a two year project to estimate the pest, pathogen and disease prevalence in the known honey bee population across England and Wales. This is important information because it helps us to understand the risks associated with disease and assess how well the NBU are dealing with disease control. The survey is large enough to enable us to confidently detect uncommon diseases like American foulbrood (AFB). In total, 4,600 apiaries will be visited across England and Wales. Evidence for disease prevalence will be obtained via visual inspection of colonies by NBU inspectors and pathogen prevalence by testing a pooled sample of adult bees using genetic testing.

The survey began on 01/06/2009 and is due to run until 31/05/2011. Data collection and statistical analyses are obviously not yet completed, but we can give you some indications from the first year:

- The inspection programme run by the NBU inspectorate detected significantly more AFB and EFB than the random inspection programme, indicating risk based inspections are efficient at finding disease.
- The actual prevalence of brood disease in the honey bee population across England and Wales was found to be 24 cases in 10,000 apiaries for AFB and 112 cases in 10,000 apiaries for EFB.
- *Nosema apis* and *Nosema ceranae* both have a wide geographical distribution across England and Wales and were detected at half the apiary locations surveyed.
- The probability of an apiary testing positive for *Nosema apis* and *Nosema ceranae* changes depending on apiary size and region.

We have changed BeeBase to update your results as soon as they come off the testing machines. You can view these by logging into your BeeBase account. All your results will be completed by the end of August, but many will be available before, so please keep checking your account. Once more, please accept my apology for the delay in you receiving your personal results.

Dr. Giles Budge, Research coordinator, National Bee Unit.