



Bee Health Advisors

Southern Region

Mar 2014

Bee Health Advisors (BHA's), previously known as Disease Liaison Co-ordinators (DLC's), are well known experienced beekeeper volunteers who can assist local beekeepers in the recognition and control of disease, and provide advice and help on good husbandry methods. They provide liaison between beekeepers and the National Bee Unit (NBU), and sometimes act as the first point of contact for local beekeepers to approach if advice is needed on the health of colonies.

Will BHA's replace Authorised Bee Inspectors (ABI's)?

BHA's DO NOT take the place of ABI's and do not provide a formal inspection service. They are simply there to help the beekeepers that need it, whilst indirectly helping the NBU target inspections more efficiently. If a local DLC can put a beekeepers mind at rest, say with a chalk brood problem or drone laying queen, it saves an inspector from having to break from higher priority inspections to arrive at the same conclusion.

Will BHA's be paid?

BHA's are unpaid volunteers and no reimbursement for time or expenses will occur from the NBU.

Will BHA's visit my apiaries?

BHA's only visit beekeepers apiaries if invited by the beekeeper, and then only if they feel able to do so. The visit is informal. BHA's have NO power of entry or examination and NO formal role as an authorised bee inspector.

What happens if foul brood disease is suspected?

If there is any suspicion that a colony has foul brood disease then the BHA will always contact an ABI to alert him or her to the suspected problem.

Will BHA's take samples?

The BHA will hold supplies of Lateral Flow Device's, for confirming foul brood, as well as supplies of sample bags, larval sample tubes, together with pre-paid address labels to enable the beekeeper to despatch a voluntary sample to the NBU.

What training is provided?

A one day course will be provided and will contain information on the role of the BHA and training in the recognition of foul brood. This will be run at the county level and will be organised by the RBI in collaboration with the County association. The course will be free and the NBU will pay for the venue but all travel costs will be paid for by the participants. These courses will be held in the summer when there are foulbrood combs available for demonstration.

Exotic pests.

In the event of an incursion by an exotic pest the BHA may be asked to help by providing local knowledge of the area to assist the NBU with dealing with the problem expediently.

For further details, please contact your Regional Bee Inspector Nigel Semmence at nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk or on 01264 338694.

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