

National Bee Unit - South East Region

December 2009

This year's overview of the activities of the SE region team of bee inspectors

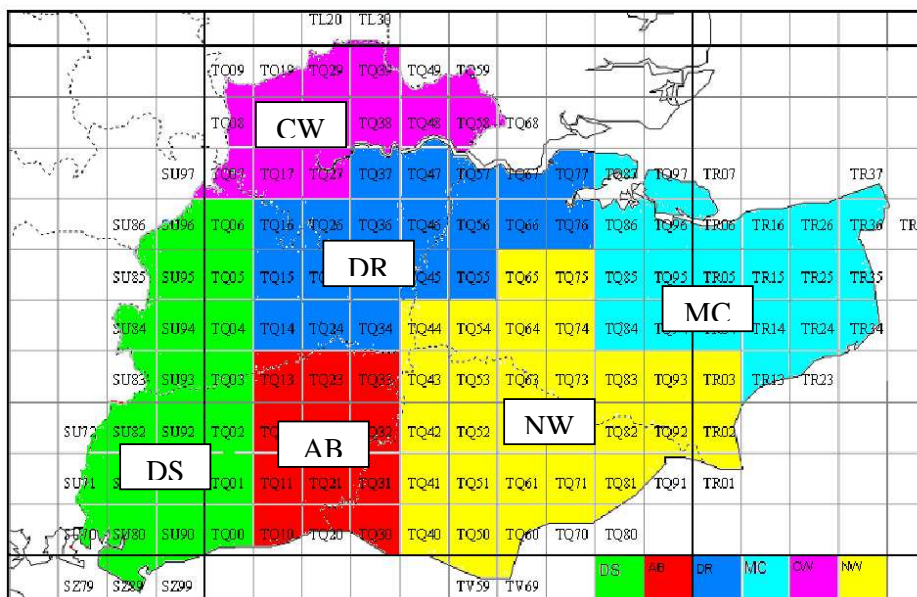
The South East Team

This season began on 30th March and there were some changes made to the team of inspectors. As was mentioned in last year's report, Bob Smith retired at the end of the 2008 season, so a replacement was needed. Michael Cooper successfully applied and was started as Seasonal Bee Inspector (SBI) for the Kent region. He lives centrally in the area and is now known to some of you who have had him visit. Also due to funding changes, I was able to recruit a new SBI to work in the west Sussex, west Surrey area, Diane Steele. With these new inspectors, I had to re adjust the areas in which inspectors work and, as far as I know, they will be working in the same areas this year. (2010)

The team consists of:

		<u>Telephone</u>
Nick Withers	East Sussex, south Kent	01883 722194
Caroline Washington	London, north of river	0208 209 0065
Diane Steele	West Sussex, west Surrey	01903 745667
Michael Cooper	East Kent	01622 981226
David Rudland	East Surrey, London, south of river	01883 622788

The areas can be seen on this map with the OS 10km square references:



Inspection Programme

This year a larger number of colonies were inspected, as we were fully staffed with one more inspector than previous seasons. A total of 3887 colonies/722 apiaries were inspected during the season. Of the 3887 colonies inspected, 128 were diagnosed with EFB. (approx 3.3% infection) As last year (2008), no AFB was diagnosed in the SE region. The number of colonies with EFB has risen in 2009 to 128 (96 in 2008) with an average of around 7% apiaries infected over the whole area.

Regional inspection and foulbrood summary

County Code	Colonies Inspected	EFB Colonies	%EFB Colonies	Apiaries Inspected	EFB Apiaries	%EFB Apiaries
ESU	331	12	3.63%	79	5	6.33%
GRL	916	34	3.71%	146	13	8.90%
KEN	1166	47	4.03%	206	16	7.77%
SUR	775	14	1.81%	165	7	4.24%
WSU	699	21	3.00%	126	11	8.73%
Totals:	<u>3887</u>	<u>128</u>		<u>722</u>	<u>52</u>	

As last year, I have shown the figures in terms of the numbers of beekeepers that have been visited:

	ESU	GRL	KEN	SUR	WSU	<u>TOTAL</u>
Number of beekeepers visited	72	220	149	175	104	<u>720</u>
Number of beekeepers with EFB colonies	5	15	11	7	6	<u>44</u>
Percentage of beekeepers visited with EFB colonies	6.94%	6.82%	7.38%	4.00%	5.77%	

If beekeepers check their colonies and are concerned and would like an inspector to visit and check their colonies, please contact me and I will make the necessary arrangements.

All the figures presented here can be found on the public pages of the National Bee Unit website, beebase, at www.nationalbeeunit.com click on Bee Diseases in the menu and then on Disease Incidence and Maps. I suggest that it becomes a regular practice to review this page, to assess whether there is any foulbrood disease in your area.

The following table shows 10 km squares where European foulbrood has been found in the 2009 season, in the South East area:

County	10 km squares where EFB has been found	Area name	Number of positive EFB diagnoses (including recurrences)
East Sussex	TQ31	BURGESS HILL	1
East Sussex	TQ41	N.E. LEWES	5
East Sussex	TQ42	UCKFIELD	1
East Sussex	TQ62	BURWASH	5
Greater London	TQ06	WEYBRIDGE	6
Greater London	TQ17	RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW	3
Greater London	TQ18	HARROW & EALING	6
Greater London	TQ27	S.W. LONDON	2
Greater London	TQ28	N.W. LONDON	9
Greater London	TQ29	BARNET & FINCHLEY	4
Greater London	TQ37	S.E. LONDON	2
Greater London	TQ39	ENFIELD	2
Kent	TQ63	WADHURST	2
Kent	TQ65	W. MALLING & HADLOW	2
Kent	TQ73	CRANBROOK	6
Kent	TQ74	STAPLEHURST & MARDEN	11
Kent	TQ75	MAIDSTONE	2
Kent	TQ83	TENTERDEN	4
Kent	TQ84	HEADCORN	4
Kent	TQ94	W. ASHFORD	1
Kent	TQ96	E. SITTINGBOURNE	10
Kent	TQ97	SHEERNESS	1
Kent	TR24	W. DOVER	4
Surrey	SU95	W. GUILDFORD/ WOKING	1
Surrey	TQ06	WEYBRIDGE	3
Surrey	TQ16	KINGSTON & ESHER	2
Surrey	TQ17	RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW	1
Surrey	TQ24	S. REIGATE & HORLEY	1
Surrey	TQ26	EPSOM & SUTTON	6
West Sussex	SU70	HAVANT	7
West Sussex	SU72	PETERSFIELD	2
West Sussex	SU80	CHICHESTER	2
West Sussex	SZ89	SELSEY	2
West Sussex	TQ10	WORTHING	1
West Sussex	TQ11	STEYNING	2
West Sussex	TQ21	HENFIELD	5

Nosema

Nosema spp. infections are continuing to be a cause of concern for beekeepers, posing an extra problem for colony survival. Some Associations have members who are sufficiently skilled with microscopes to do Nosema and Acarine checks and it would be a prudent and simple matter to arrange for bee clinics to check for the presence of these pathogens. Contact me if you would like some guidance on how to arrange these clinics or you want to arrange for a teaching session on microscopy.

Exotic pest surveillance programme

This year the SE team ran a contingency exercise jointly with the Southern region. We picked a location on the border of the two areas, Petersfield, Hampshire, to try to iron-out any difficulties that might arise in this sort of situation. Over two days 12 inspectors, each assisted by a local beekeeper, found a simulated Small Hive Beetle (SHB) infestation at one apiary and then proceeded to check all other apiaries within striking distance. Many lessons were learned about how to organise such an outbreak, which we hope will not be needed for a long time! As well as the contingency exercise all the SE inspectors were quietly getting on checking colonies throughout the region for the exotic pests SHB and *Tropilaelaps* spp. A further 99 apiary inspections were carried out especially to look for these. Please remember to check your colonies carefully for these pests and contact me, or the NBU, if you find anything suspicious. Details of what SHB or *Tropilaelaps* look like are available by leaflet or on www.nationalbeeunit.com

Random Apiary Survey

This year we completed the first leg of a two-year project to assess the health status of apiaries in England & Wales. Some of you may have had samples taken, some of you will be asked this coming season. It would be very much appreciated if you could give your assistance in this survey, as the results will inform the NBU about the spread of pathogens (not just foulbrood) across the region and what steps need to be taken to help control disease problems. The inspector will carry out a normal inspection and during that inspection will take a sample of approximately 60 adult bees from up to 5 colonies picked at random in your apiary. Results will be posted on your own page of beebase but this will not be until after the end of the survey, when the results are written up. (This is a research project, not a diagnostic service)

Varroa

As always, varroa remains the biggest threat to colony survival and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. Keep checking the mite drop regularly and carry out varroa control as necessary. A further product, Apilife var. has now been registered in the UK and is available for the fight against varroa. Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is keen to assist beekeepers with the fight against varroa and is offering 'reciprocal registration' to all suppliers of varroacides in the EU and Apilife var. was registered under this scheme. So far Laif, who manufacture this product, are the only company who have taken up this offer. Check out the VMD website for more information: www.vmd.gov.uk/VetSQP/Bee/bee.htm

Imports and Exports

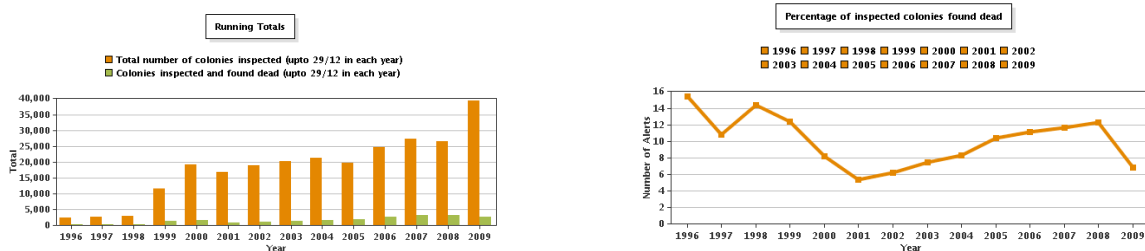
A number of beekeepers import queens in the South East area and these beekeepers will receive a visit to check that they have the correct paperwork and that the queens establish healthy colonies. If you wish to import queens to the UK, guidance notes and forms are available on our website at www.nationalbeeunit.com click on Legislation and scroll down to Imports and Exports.

You may be interested to know how many queens have been imported to England and Wales this season:

From the EU – 5606 queens were imported from Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Poland & Slovenia. 10 nucs were imported from France

From 3rd countries – 5222 queens were imported from Australia, Hawaii & New Zealand

Colony Losses



The above graphs show colony losses against colonies inspected since 1996. This year (2009) a total of 39414 colonies were inspected and of these 2704 were found to be dead, making a 7.4% loss of colonies inspected.

Honey

As always, I would like to thank all the 250 beekeepers that have given data about honey crops and prices. This year the average honey crop per colony in the SE is 35lbs, which is 10lbs lower than last years average. A reasonable spring was followed by a cool, wet summer and, for many a very sharp cessation of the honey flow early in July. In many areas of the South East no further nectar was collected, although Ivy did produce in some places. For further details please check the Honey Survey 2009, which I published recently.

Again this year I have concerns about winter stores. Many colonies stopped collecting nectar early and have been living on their stores since that time. Check your bees and ensure they have enough food to pass the winter, if they are low on stores then feed candy but remember once you start feeding you will have to carry on until the bees can fend for themselves in the spring.

Educational events

This season we were active at 63 events, which comprised, amongst other things, apiary tours for Associations, talks, apiary demonstrations, IPM days, Bee Health workshops and Organic acid workshops. We also ran workshops on microscopy for Nosema and Acarine. Talks are on a wide range of beekeeping topics including; Nosema, Inspecting a colony, Shook swarming, Basic beekeeping, Varroa management, Healthy bees, Swarming and many more. We also had a presence at Bee auctions in the South East area.

All these events are an opportunity for us to meet beekeepers and, likewise, for you to meet with bee inspectors. I very much hope that they form a bridge to the inspectorate that makes working together easier. I, personally, enjoy meeting with beekeepers and building relationships with Associations.

Please contact me if you would like an inspector to give a talk or demonstration to your Association, or to be involved in any of the above activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Seasonal Bee Inspectors who make up the SE team for all their hard work during the season: Caroline Washington, Diane Steele, Nick Withers, Michael Cooper & David Rudland.

If you are interested in working as an inspector in the South East please contact me.

Alan Byham

For further information please contact:

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