



## **National Bee Unit Northern Region Annual Report 2019**

Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Wirral, Lancashire, Cumbria, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Northumberland.

This is my second annual report as the Northern Regional Bee Inspector (RBI). The 2019 inspection season has flashed by, Halloween and Bonfire Night have been and gone, and at the time of writing Christmas is fast approaching.

Work has not finished for myself, nor for the Seasonal Bee Inspectors (SBIs) who have elected to continue during the winter months. I will be catching up on departmental duties and providing cover for any bee related issues, whilst across the country the aforementioned SBIs will be working with the Animal or Plant Health Teams.

From a personal beekeeping perspective 2019 has been another good year. One of my apiaries was surrounded by oil seed rape (OSR) for the first time in years, so the colonies expanded rapidly and produced a good surplus. Not next year though; I was chatting with the landowner and he told me that OSR is grown once in a four-or-five-year cycle on his land, it will be all wind pollinated wheat in 2020!

### **The 2020 Bee Inspection Season**

At the start of the year the inspection list for each of the inspectors will be compiled by the National Bee Unit (NBU). These lists are purely based on risk factors such as targeting areas where notifiable disease has recently been found, or near to places at high risk of exotic pest incursion.

We appreciate the cooperation given when contacting beekeepers to make inspection appointments. We do not have the inspector numbers to visit every beekeeper in the region during the season, so if you are contacted it's purely due to risk factors not for any other reason. A visit from a bee inspector should be welcomed as an opportunity to have a free health check of your colonies, and to discuss any beekeeping concerns or difficulties. We are not there to be critical or treat the visit as an assessment of the beekeeper, our role is to ensure that statutory diseases or pests are not present. Throughout the country the majority of statutory disease is found by bee inspectors, even in colonies managed by experienced beekeepers.

Beekeepers can also contact their RBI or SBI if they have concerns about bee disease or pests. If you see anything suspicious take a photograph, and in relation to insects try to take a sample. The photograph can then be sent via picture message or email to your SBI or

RBI, or you can contact us by phone to describe the problem. If we can't rule out it being a statutory disease or pest, we will arrange to visit free of charge. *Please note that it's a legal requirement to inform the NBU if you know or suspect a statutory disease or pest is present.*

At the beginning of April bee inspectors from across the county will attend a three-day technical conference at Sand Hutton, York. This is an opportunity to hear details of the latest research and trends relating to honey bees. At the time of writing the conference schedule is not finalised, but in previous years virus research, the strain mapping of bacterial disease, and Asian hornet genetic analysis have been delivered amongst many other subjects. This technical knowledge helps inform the delivery of the service throughout the coming season.

## **NBU Changes 2019**

Mike Brown, Head of the NBU for many years retired at the beginning of 2019. Mike made contributions to bee health around the world and is admired and respected by those who had the good fortune to work with him.

Julian Parker, formerly National Bee Inspector (NBI), has now taken on the responsibilities of Head of the NBU, with Sandra Gray, formerly RBI of South East Region taking on the NBI role.

Jenna Cook who worked at the NBU Office in York left us this summer to join the Health and Safety Executive. Jenna's knowledge of Beebase, field delivery iPads and virtually everything else about the administration side of the NBU was exceptional. Jenna also provided essential back up to inspectors, and gave advice to beekeepers over the telephone.

Jason Learner, NBU Technical Support, decided to make beekeeping his full-time profession leaving us just prior to the start of the 2019 inspection season. Jason Provided articles for BBKA News, Bee Craft etc. and provided technical assistance to beekeepers as well as helping in the NBU Office.

Mike, Jenna and Jason will be greatly missed.

Jenna and Jason have not been replaced at the time of this report due to financial constraints. To negate the reduced numbers of NBU office staff all bee related enquiries should be directed to your local SBI or myself, contact details are on page 4 in this report.

We still have Kate Wilson (Office Manager), Lesley Debenham (Admin and Support), Sarah Chadwick, (part time Admin and Support) and Rebekah Clarkson (Healthy Bees Plan Project Manager), all of whom work very hard to support inspectors and beekeepers across England and Wales.

## The Northern Region Team

Caroline Coughlin and Brian Murphy joined the team as SBIs in April 2019. Caroline is primarily responsible for the Greater Manchester and East Cheshire areas, whilst Brian is primarily responsible for the North East of England.

This takes the total number of SBIs to four. Julia (Hoggard) and John (Zamorski) are contracted to work four days a week, Caroline and Brian five days a week.

From April 2020 you can search via postcode on the NBU contacts page of Beebase for your appointed SBI, who then can be contacted on the numbers below.

I can be contacted for any issues relating to Merseyside and West Cheshire, and across the region when your SBI is not available.

<b>Regional Bee Inspector</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Mark McLoughlin	Merseyside, Wirral and West Cheshire	07500 891425
<b>Seasonal Bee Inspectors</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Caroline Coughlin (April to September)	Greater Manchester, East Cheshire	07500 891423
Julia Hoggard (April to September)	Cumbria	07900 394303
Brian Murphy (April to September)	Tyne & Wear, Northumberland, County Durham	07747 765934
John Zamorski (April to September)	Lancashire	07775 119446

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/Contacts/contacts.cfm>

## 2019 Inspection Season

The Northern Team visited 505 apiaries and inspected a total of 2,301 colonies for statutory disease and pests during 2019. As part of our duties we inspected imported queen consignments and package bees for any sign of exotic pest life stages.

The Northern Region currently has a total of 3,990 beekeepers registered as 'current' on Beebase, with 17,470 colonies in 5,088 apiaries. Additionally, there are 3,063 non-current beekeepers who have indicated they do not keep bees and will not be resuming their beekeeping activity in the future. These figures do not take into account of beekeepers, apiaries or colonies (including feral) not currently registered.

The statistics are broken down below so you can see the numbers for your county. *When compared to other regions we have the lowest number of registered apiaries and colonies, and second lowest for registered beekeepers.*

I'm sure the true numbers are higher but we are reliant on beekeepers registering and updating Beebase regularly in order to keep the statistics accurate. This includes non-current beekeepers updating Beebase should they resume keeping bees.

Why is this important? As resources are targeted to where there's the greatest need Beebase must truly reflect beekeeper and colony numbers to ensure an informed and correct allocation. *Please encourage any beekeepers who are not yet registered to do so, and ensure you visit your account regularly to update apiary and colony numbers.*

Region	County	Current beekeepers	No of Current Apiaries	No of Colonies	Beekeepers unknown status	Apiaries unknown status	No of Colonies	Non-Current beekeepers
Northern England	Cheshire	822	1114	3585	0	0	0	387
	County Durham	339	411	1405	0	0	0	247
	Cumbria	633	788	2481	0	0	0	676
	Greater Manchester	475	597	1976	0	0	0	330
	Lancashire	841	1020	2860	1	0	0	513
	Merseyside	361	485	1306	0	0	0	341
	Northumberland	324	421	3085	0	0	0	400
	Tyne & Wear	195	252	772	0	0	0	169
	<b>NORTHERN ENGLAND TOTALS</b>		<b>3990</b>	<b>5088</b>	<b>17470</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Beebase is a free and confidential service. Beekeepers can register on Beebase here <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/public/register.cfm>.

## Statutory Disease – Northern Region 2019

Only American Foulbrood (AFB) has been found in the Northern Region (Northumberland) during 2019 and both infected colonies were destroyed in accordance with legislation.

The exact locations of outbreaks are not disclosed as they would identify beekeepers and apiary locations. The 10km Ordinance Survey Map grid references are published to provide information about the wider area affected (see below link).

Northumberland	NU11	ALNWICK	1	July
Northumberland	NU11	ALNWICK	1	August

Northern SBIs have also been assisting the North East Region with inspections, and where necessary the destruction of diseased colonies due to a number of European Foulbrood (EFB) outbreaks. This joint working is to proactively help prevent spread of this disease into the Northern Region.

Details of the 10km squares where statutory disease has been found throughout England and Wales is available to the public on Beebase, along with other statistical information. This is of interest if you plan to move bees into our region. The page can be accessed via the following link.

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/BeeDiseases/diseaseIncidenceMaps.cfm>

The Bees Act 1980 and The Bee Diseases and Pests Control Order 2006 for England and Wales (as amended) are the legislation concerned with statutory disease and pests. Details can be found by following this link:

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=79>

The statutory brood diseases are American Foulbrood and European Foulbrood. The statutory pests are all life stages of small hive beetle (SHB) and tropilaelaps mites.

When a statutory disease is found all beekeepers registered on Beebase and within a 3km radius of the outbreak are notified. Bee inspectors then inspect nearby colonies to prevent the infection becoming established in the area.

Beekeepers who are not registered on Beebase may remain unknown, and if their colonies harbour disease they may continue to infect neighbouring apiaries. Also, the beekeepers who have not registered or updated their email contact details will not be alerted to local disease outbreaks.

Beekeepers, as mentioned above, regardless of registration status, must contact the National Bee Unit or their SBI/RBI if they suspect or know the whereabouts of a statutory disease or pest.

## **Varroa**

NBU advice is to 'monitor and control varroa using biotechnical methods and authorised products to keep them below the level where they cause significant harm'.

Inspectors continue to see varroa damage in colonies, often illustrated by Parasitic Mite Syndrome (PMS). Signs of PMS are damaged wings, stunted bodies, bees at the point of emergence dead in cells with proboscis extended, and mites running on the comb. Other symptoms can be sporadic bald brood and the chewing of pupae in their cells. A colony with PMS will usually be close to collapse, with the risk of infecting nearby colonies due to drifting and 'robbing'.

The Beebase website has pdf links to numerous free fact sheets including the 'Managing Varroa' booklet.

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

The list of those currently registered and approved for use by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is available on their website, together with the 'Summary of Product Characteristics' giving full details of use. For the full list select 'Bees' on the drop-down list of species in the product search link. At the time of writing this report no treatments have been added to the list of authorised products in 2019.

<https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/Search.aspx>

There's a legal requirement that the use of any treatments is recorded, and these records must be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Full details can be found on the below link.

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=110>

## **Exotic Pest Surveillance (EPS)**

We have 16 Voluntary Sentinel Apiaries (VSA) and 6 Enhanced Sentinel Apiaries (ESA) in the Northern Region, but we would like to increase these numbers.

Both voluntary and enhanced sentinel apiaries act as an early warning system to alert the NBU should exotic pests of honeybees enter the UK. Samples are taken from the varroa floor insert and beetle floor traps which are then sent to the APHA laboratory at Sand Hutton for analysis. If any part of an exotic pest is found a coordinated response will be triggered to contain and eradicate the outbreak.



*Tropilaelaps Mite*



*Small Hive Beetle oil trap in a hive*

Locating sentinel apiaries near to places of risk is key to maximise the chance of detecting an early incursion. Ports are deemed to be a very high risk and we have some of the busiest in the country (e.g. Liverpool and those in the Tyneside area). We also have container rail links from Europe into Manchester, and numerous depots for imported food and other goods.



*Julia collecting debris for laboratory examination*

In the future a sentinel apiary may just give us enough notice to identify and deal with an outbreak before it spreads.

The main difference between the sentinel apiary schemes is that the appointed bee inspector visits the enhanced sentinel apiaries to take the samples, but it's the beekeeper who does it at a voluntary sentinel apiary. Beekeepers who participate in the voluntary sentinel apiary scheme are issued with all they need to enable them to participate at no cost to themselves. Likewise, there is no cost to the beekeeper who participates in the enhanced sentinel apiary scheme.

I would like to thank all the beekeepers who currently take part, your involvement is highly valued and appreciated.

If you would like to join either scheme in 2020, or would just like to chat through what's involved please contact me by

email ([mark.mcloughlin@apha.gov.uk](mailto:mark.mcloughlin@apha.gov.uk)) or mobile phone (07500 891425).

## Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*)

When Asian hornets were found in Tetbury in 2016 the NBU made it a priority to inform beekeepers and the wider public about their potential impact on honey bees and other native insects.

I had assumed that with the speed of its spread across Europe we would get increasing numbers of nests in the UK year after year. This was reflected in talks given by bee inspectors across the country where we wanted to reinforce how serious a threat this predator can be, and to encourage beekeepers to be vigilant.

I remember talking to groups of beekeepers after the 'cauliflower hornet' was seen in Bury in April 2018 and in my usual animated way saying words to the effect of our bees were 'doomed' if we didn't treat this threat seriously, probably sounding a bit like Private Fraser from the TV series Dad's Army!

My concern now is that because the worst-case scenario has not yet manifested itself in the three years since Tetbury focus will be lost, and the annual warnings about Asian hornet will not be heeded.

I expected that in 2019 we would see significantly increased activity when compared to 2018, but this has proved to be wrong. However, it has been wet and cold this autumn and it may be fair to assume beekeepers have not visited their apiaries for as long, or as frequently as they would normally do thus reducing the chance of detection.

It may actually be that all the UK nests were found in 2018, *as all hornets discovered in 2019 were found to be genetically consistent with being new incursions from France*. However, there is a possibility that once the leaves completely fall the remains of undiscovered nests may be found. If so, numerous queens could be hibernating and ready to start colonies in 2020. Even if none are discovered evergreens such as conifers could continue to conceal nests, along with any hidden away in man-made structures.

Even 'dead' nests should be reported, a photograph and accurate location will be essential to speed up identification and response. If such a nest is found and confirmed as belonging to Asian hornet, the NBU will consider targeting the area for queens the following spring.

This year three Asian Hornet nests have been located and destroyed following sightings by members of the public. The first was near Tamworth, Staffordshire on 6th September.

On 4th October a nest was destroyed following the confirmed sighting of an Asian hornet near Christchurch, Dorset, and a further nest primary nest was destroyed nearby on 11th October. These nests were linked via genetic analysis.

In addition, there have been two confirmed individual sightings of Asian hornets. The first was on 3rd July of a female in New Milton, Hampshire. Based upon visual examination the hornet was likely to be a queen. A single hornet was also captured by a member of the public to the south west of Ashford, Kent, on 9th September.

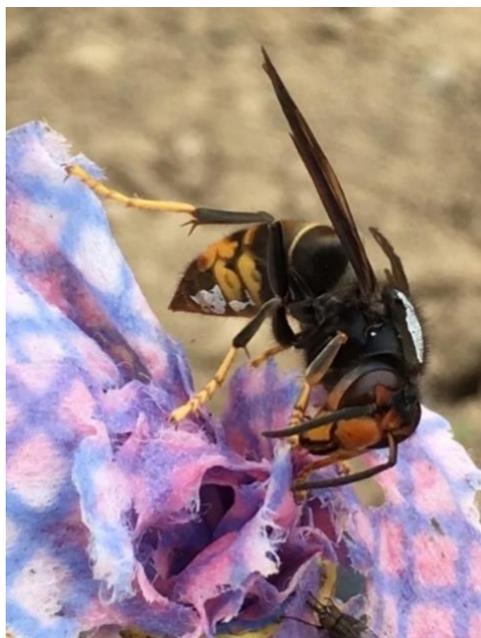
Surveillance continues in both areas. The NBU have sent out an alert to encourage all beekeepers and members of the public to watch for Asian hornets in their apiaries, on fallen fruit and on flowering plants such as ivy.

We ask beekeepers and the general public to remain vigilant and report any suspect sightings using the iPhone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch', by filling out an online report form or by emailing [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk) .

- The 'Asian Hornet Watch' app is available to download free from the Apple and Android app stores.
- Members of the public can also report sightings by email to [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk) . Please provide a photo along with where you found it and a contact number to reply to.
- Reports can be sent via the online submission form on the Non-native Species Secretariat website, again with a photo.
- Details on the identification of an Asian hornet can be found on the Bee Base guide or the NNSS Asian hornet ID sheet.

## Bee Inspectors Visit Jersey

In late summer John Zamorski and I were invited in our official capacity as bee inspectors to spend a week in Jersey, working alongside their volunteers as they searched for Asian hornet nests. I visited in September with SBI David Burns from the Eastern Region, and John in August with RBI Dhonn Atkinson from the North East Region.



*Asian hornet at the potato field bait station – photo David Burns*

Our experiences brought home how difficult it is to see Asian hornet nests when located in the tree canopy, and that tracking hornets back to the nest is a skilled and sometimes lengthy task.

Electronic tracking is being developed which may be used increasingly in the future, but for now the main method is to mark hornets at a bait station and record the compass bearing of their departure. Once a hornet is regularly visiting the bait station it can be timed to give an estimated distance to the nest.

The following illustrates how well hidden these nests can be.

On our third day in Jersey David and I were asked to

meet a team of volunteers in a car park near to a pub. We parked the car and joined them for an open-air briefing before everyone moved to bait stations some distance away. A few weeks after we returned to the UK, I discovered that they had found a nest (number 71 of 2019) high up in a sycamore tree directly behind where we had parked the car!



Destruction of nest 47

David and I were part of the team tracking hornets in the heavily wooded valley at Saint Peter. The nest was situated at the top of a conifer, and even with the team situated around the base looking up with binoculars it was hidden by foliage and couldn't be seen. Eventually it was spotted when someone on an upper valley trail stood in the only position it was visible. Literally, if you took a step either side of that position it was completely hidden from view. If you follow the Jersey Asian Hornet Group on a certain social media site it was nest 56 of the year.

After the nest was found and location coordinates supplied to the Jersey Authority, we moved about a kilometre away to track hornets previously seen visiting a potato field. David and I marked, tracked and timed the hornets but the resulting data suggesting they were from the nest our team had just

found.

Dhonn and John found nest 47 which was situated in a tree next to a road in Saint Brélade. The destruction took place on the day of our arrival so I was able to take the attached photographs.

Anecdotal information from the Jersey volunteers outline how hornets have landed on fishing boats and rocky outcrops out at sea. So, even if they destroyed every nest during the season it would probably not be too long before more arrived from France.

*It should be noted that handling or being close to Asian hornets, and especially the resultant destruction of the nest is very dangerous and should be left to the professionals with suitable protective equipment.*



Preparing to destroy nest 47

*It's not just the nest at the top of a tree or structure that can cause danger, often a primary nest which still contains brood and attendant hornets will be hidden nearby in undergrowth. If this is trodden on or otherwise disturbed, a potentially life-threatening event could be triggered.*

Hopefully we will not have the same issues with Asian hornets in the North of England anytime soon.



Professionals wearing protective clothing at nest 47

## Small Hive Beetle (SHB)



*SHB larva – photo  
Beebase*

The running contingency exercises in England and Wales is a key performance indicator in the bee health programme. In July 2019 the NBU in liaison with Welsh Government ran a contingency exercise to respond to a simulated outbreak of SHB. A 'Forward Operating Base' (FOB) was located at the Welsh Government Offices, Llandudno Junction. An incident command system (ICS) as used by the emergency services was put in place involving set roles of incident commander, sector commander, and command support. I was fortunate enough to be assigned the sector commander role.

The two-day exercise was designed to test procedures both in command and field activities, specifically –

- FOB operation with daily briefings, monitoring of field activity and handover procedures where spans of control and command are maintained.
- Daily reporting from FOB to NDCC (National Disease Control Centre) to LGD (Lead Government Department).
- Liaison with local beekeeping associations and beekeepers with apiaries in the area, booking and monitoring inspections in the field and reacting to unfolding events as a result of the inspections.

A total of 129 colonies in 28 apiaries were inspected during the exercise, requiring specific inspection procedures in line with the contingency plan for SHB which can be found at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=206>. Feedback was collected from participants and the major conclusions recorded for future implementation.

## Current situation in Italy

On the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019, the presence of SHB was again confirmed in eastern Sicily, in an apiary located in the municipality of Lentini in the province of Syracuse. Two adult beetles were detected in two different colonies at an apiary which had been under surveillance since May 2019.

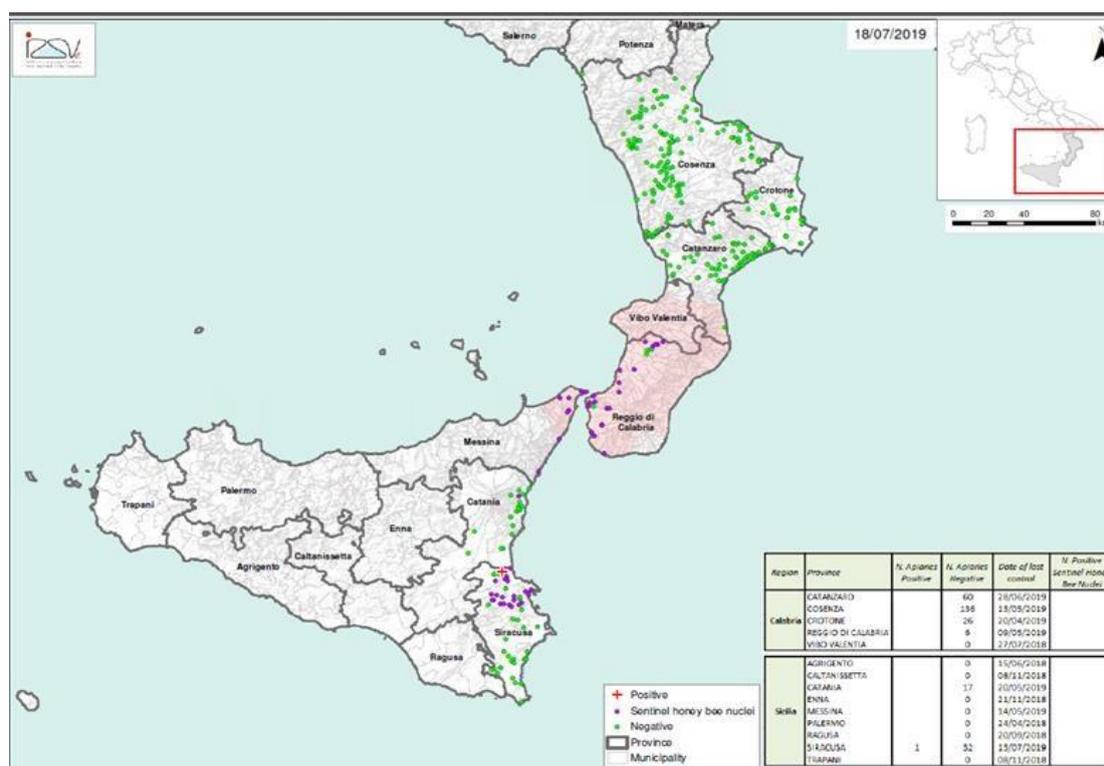
The authorities had intercepted a movement of 64 undocumented colonies from Sicily at the port of Villa San Giovanni on the Italian mainland. These colonies were sent back to the apiary of origin in Sicily. Several inspections were subsequently carried out at this apiary to look for SHB. During one visit 13 colonies of unknown origin were discovered and SHB was detected in two of them. Epidemiological investigations showed that these 13 colonies had been stolen on 9<sup>th</sup> June in the protection zone of Reggio di Calabria located on the mainland.

SHB had only been detected once in Sicily prior to this outbreak, on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014. SHB adults were detected in a migratory apiary in the municipality of Melilli, located approximately 35 km away from Lentini. At the time, the epidemiological investigation had shown that the colonies were present in Gioia Tauro between April and August 2014. Gioia Tauro is the municipality of the Calabria region where the first detection of SHB appeared. Following this outbreak, surveillance has been carried out every year with inspections in selected apiaries and sentinel apiaries.

As no new case had been discovered in the two years following this positive find, a Commission Implementing decision of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 had removed Sicily from the list of areas subject to protective measures in relation to SHB in Italy. A phylogenetic analysis was carried out on the specimens detected in June 2019. The results showed that the genetic profile of the specimens was similar to the one of other specimens previously isolated in the Calabria region, but different from the genetic profile of the specimens isolated in the previous outbreak confirmed in Sicily in November 2014. It confirms that the outbreak was due to an illegal movement of colonies from the protection zone of Reggio di Calabria and not a consequence of the spread of SHB in Sicily.

The infected apiary was destroyed on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 and the soil was treated with a permethrin solution. A protection zone of 5 km radius around the site was set up and inspections are being carried out at the 54 apiaries registered in the zone.

No new outbreaks have been reported in the protection zone of Reggio di Calabria the original outbreak site on the mainland, since November 2018 when the last detection occurred in a sentinel apiary. No new outbreaks have been reported in the province of Cosenza (situated in the North of Calabria) since September 2016.



The 100 km surveillance of SHB in Calabria and Sicily, dated 18th July 2019

## Imports 2019

At the time of this report we are still in the European Union.

Therefore, as I write the import or export of bees, (including queens, packages and colonies), is permitted only if accompanied by an Official European Union (EU) or Third Country Health Certificate.

This is issued by the competent authority where the bees originated. Importers must notify the NBU *at least* 24hrs in advance of imports of bees arriving from outside the UK. You can do this by completing the 'Importer Notification Form' and posting, faxing or emailing it to the NBU office.

Alternatively, if registered, you can log in to the Beekeeper pages of Beebase and click the 'Import Notifications' link from the left-hand index. It is of course illegal to import bees, queens or any bee-related products from within the SHB exclusion zone around the affected areas in southern Italy. Further details can be found on the Imports/Exports pages of Beebase, which also includes advice in relation to Brexit via the following link. <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

A considerable number of import inspections were carried out in the Northern Region throughout the 2019 season. Of these many were consignments of queens but there was also a considerable number of packages containing worker bees clustering around a queen pheromone insert. The charts below outline the number of 2019 and 2018 imports into mainland Britain from the EU. It can be seen that package bee consignments from Italy have greatly increased since 2018 whilst imports of nucleus colonies has reduced. Queen imports have also risen.



*Beekeeper decanting package bees*

### Imports 2019

Country of origin	Number of consignments imported	Batched number of queens	Batched number of nucleus	Batched number of packages	Batched number of Colonies	Number of consignments inspected
Bulgaria	1	3	0	0	0	1
Cyprus	18	318	0	0	0	10
Czech Republic	7	159	0	175	0	1
Denmark	43	2574	0	0	0	20
France	1	0	0	0	15	1
Germany	25	203	0	20	1	11
Greece	88	4928	0	0	0	18
Italy	85	3304	0	2428	0	57
Malta	36	3529	0	0	0	26
Netherlands	4	12	0	0	0	3
Poland	3	40	30	0	20	1
Romania	37	2806	0	0	0	11
Slovenia	65	2205	0	0	0	21
Spain	1	0	0	0	100	1
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>20081</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2623</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>182</b>

### Imports 2018

Country of origin	Number of consignments imported	Batched number of queens	Batched number of nucleus	Batched number of packages	Batched number of Colonies	Number of consignments inspected
Croatia	2	0	0	100	25	2
Cyprus	6	66	0	0	0	4
Czech Republic	9	142	0	345	0	4
Denmark	38	2014	0	0	0	16
France	2	0	0	360	0	1
Germany	20	302	0	0	1	7
Greece	107	5340	0	0	0	44
Ireland	1	2	0	0	0	0
Italy	53	2436	915	61	0	32
Malta	12	1055	0	0	0	11
Netherlands	3	9	0	0	0	0
Poland	5	0	59	130	0	5
Portugal	1	0	0	0	4	1
Romania	21	1570	0	0	0	5
Slovenia	75	3010	0	0	18	38
Sweden	1	0	0	0	4	1
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>15946</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>171</b>

## Bee Health Days

Bee health days (BHDs) are events arranged by beekeeping clubs or associations which are supported, free of charge, by their local bee inspectors in terms of lectures and subject materials.

A suitable venue is required which must satisfy certain criteria. For example, an insect-proof room for showing live foulbrood combs, and enough space for attendees and their parking needs. A suitable outside area is also required for colony inspection demonstrations which focus on pest and disease detection.

The arrangements to hold a BHD event requires a high level of organisational commitment by the club or association concerned and should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, a successful event provides an opportunity for attendees to learn more about pest and disease threats, and it also helps to raise the profile of the club or association hosting it.

The Northern Region Team and the Cheshire Beekeepers Association held a joint BHD at Norton Priory in May 2019. Due to staffing issues at that time we were only able to provide staff for the showing of diseased combs and the apiary inspections. Live foulbrood combs



*Setting up the Cheshire BHD  
Comb room*

were available for examination by attendees, and lectures were given by members of the Cheshire Beekeepers' Association.

We are currently in discussion with two beekeeping associations within the region about holding BHDs in June 2020. Further information will be circulated in due course.

If your association or club is interested in holding such an event in the future, please contact me or your local SBI for further information.

## Finally

I would like to thank Brian, Caroline, John and Julia our current SBIs for their dedication, commitment and hard work during the 2019 season. Also, thanks to all the beekeepers we visited during 2019 for their time and cooperation.

I wish everyone an enjoyable and productive 2020 beekeeping season.

Mark McLoughlin

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