

## Minutes AHB SAG

### **Meeting One of the Asian Honey Bee Scientific Advisory Group (AHB SAG)**

Face-to-Face meeting held at the Novotel, Brisbane, on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2011

**Attendees:** Rod Turner PHA (Chair), Sam Malfroy PHA (Secretariat), Colin Grant DAFF (Chair of the AHB TMG: left meeting at 1:15pm), Glynn Maynard DAFF, Denis Anderson CSIRO (left meeting at 2:15pm), Doug Somerville NSW DPI, Trevor Weatherhead AHBIC, Max Whitten FCAAA, Sharon De Wet DEEDI, Neil O'Brien DEEDI (left meeting at 1:15pm).

**Apologies:** Simon Barry CSIRO, Boris Baer UWA

### **Item 1 & 2: Welcome by the Chair and Members introduction**

The Chair welcomed the Members of the Asian Honey Bee Scientific Advisory Group (AHB SAG) to the meeting. The Members introduced themselves and gave their background and experience in regards to honeybees.

### **Item 3: Expectations of Asian Honey Bee Transition Management Group (AHB TMG) of the SAG – Colin Grant**

Dr Colin Grant, Chair of the Asian Honey Bee Management Group (AHB TMG), provided a brief background of what is expected of the SAG and how the role of the SAG fits in with the objectives of the AHB T2M program. It was discussed that the objective of the SAG is to provide technical advice to the AHB TMG on specific scientific issues as referred to it by the AHB TMG, as well as developing techniques/strategies that minimise the impact of AHB and to support the AHB T2M program. This advice would then be forwarded from the SAG to the AHB TMG for consideration.

### **Item 4: Terms of Reference**

Terms of Reference (ToR) for the SAG were discussed and the Chair agreed to send out the drafted ToR to the SAG and AHB TMG group for comment as soon as possible.

### **Item 5: Conflict of Interest**

There was recognition amongst all Members of the SAG to be aware of potential conflict of interests and that it is intended that Members of the SAG not be involved (directly or indirectly) in promoting personal or associated research that is being funded by the AHB T2M program.

### **Item 6: AHB Transition to Management Program Update – Neil O'Brien**

Mr O'Brien provided an update of the current situation of AHB in the Cairns region and stated that Biosecurity Queensland will need scientifically sound data that can inform the ongoing and future management of the Asian honey bee for the people of Queensland,

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industry, the environment and social amenity issues that may arise. There was agreement amongst the SAG to help provide clear guidance on the scientific and technical aspects of the AHB T2M program.

### **Item 7: Issues for consideration**

#### **Discussion: Communication with stakeholders and the public**

The issue of how the SAG communicates with the wider public and industry members was discussed. It was agreed that the Chair would be the contact point for the SAG to the AHB TMG. The Chair noted that SAG's do not provide commentary to outside parties, and that all communication regarding the AHB T2M program will come from the spokesperson of the AHBMG.

The finalised Minutes from each meeting were suggested to be placed on the AHB website once endorsed by the AHB TMG. All Members agreed with this avenue for communication with industry and the wider public.

#### **Discussion: Travelling to Cairns**

The proposal of travelling to the Cairns region was discussed amongst the Members. It was agreed that if the SAG decided to travel to Cairns for a field visit and meeting, then SAG Members would have to pay their own way in regards to accommodation and flights.

There was agreement amongst the Members of the SAG that a visit to Cairns would be very beneficial to see the variety of landscapes and situations that AHB occurs in and should be conducted as soon as possible. The Chair proposed the dates of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2012 for meetings and field visits at the Cairns DPI office. All Members present tentatively agreed to these dates.

#### **Discussion: Data analysis**

All Members strongly agreed that to enable recommendations on the technical aspects of the program, analysis of the previous data needs to be undertaken. This will aid in determining the value of the previous data collected as well as guide the type of data that are gathered in future detections.

The feasibility of eradication was discussed amongst the Members, however, it was agreed by all Members that until further data are gathered, or further information provides evidence that the likelihood success of eradication was technically feasible, then the only way forward is transition to management of AHB.

When discussing the current information regarding data collection, there was agreement amongst Members that additional details are required from Biosecurity Queensland's operational plan and strategy for conducting these operations. It was agreed details would be followed up with Biosecurity Queensland while in Cairns for the January meeting.

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### **Discussion: DEEDI issues for consideration**

The establishment of bee free zones was discussed, however all Members agreed that establishing such areas is intensive in terms of monitoring, eradicating and the use of chemicals such as Fipronil. All Members agreed that establishing such sites would be hard to establish and maintain.

Concern was raised by some Members over the issues for consideration listed by DEEDI, specifically that not enough effort is being focused on management options that beekeepers could use to manage AHB. It was identified by Members that there was a strong need to research various management options that beekeepers could use to manage AHB.

The current state of funding and research into viruses was questioned by the Members. It was recognised that there was a need for update by Denis Anderson on the situation of virus work on the AHB population, as well as any future projects outlined for Denis Anderson's CSIRO lab.

### **Discussion: Next Meeting**

There was agreement to hold a teleconference on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December to discuss the AHB T2M program as well as determine arrangements with the proposed trip to Cairns.