

AHB TMG Minutes

Meeting Three of the Asian Honey Bee Transition Management Group (AHB TMG)

Teleconference held on Tuesday 24th January, 2011

Attendees: Colin Grant DAFF (Chair), Lois Ransom DAFF, Glynn Maynard DAFF, Robyn Martin DAFF, Tegan Honing-Wassenburg DAFF, Kareena Arthy DEEDI, Jim Thompson DEEDI, Neil O'Brien DEEDI, Rick Symons DEEDI, Lindsay Bourke AHBIC, Stephen Ware AHBIC, Trevor Weatherhead AHBIC, Greg Fraser PHA, Rod Turner PHA, Sharyn Taylor PHA, Sam Malfroy PHA (Secretariat) and Jenna Taylor PHA.

Apologies: Nil

Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

The Chair welcomed the Members of the Asian Honey Bee Transition Management Group (AHB TMG) to the teleconference. The Chair commended the members of the TMG, the SAG as well as PHA and DEEDI for the progress made within the program and on finalising action items in the last month.

Item 2 – Update on Secretariat Activities: PHA

The Members agreed that minutes of Meeting two provided an accurate record and are to be uploaded to the Website.

All Members agreed that the Terms of Reference should be placed on the website.

Item 3 – Update on Project Activities: PHA

PHA advise that it has worked with DEEDI to finalise contracts for the 6 Australian Government (AG) Projects. Contracts have been put in place for 2 years, with payment in the second year contingent on satisfactory progress in completion of activities in the first year. The first payment had been made according to the contracts, and this payment had been received by Queensland. All Members agreed that the contract process had proceeded well.

DEEDI stated that (as listed in the contract) a progress report will be provided to PHA on the 1 February 2012. This report that will outline all activities that have been completed in accordance with the AHB T2M program and will be provided to the AHB TMG for comment to allow delivery and outcomes of the objectives of the AHB T2M program to be assessed.

Item 4 – Corporate Governance

Industry raised the issue of Corporate Governance in particular the implementation of *Section 5* of the Transition to Management Plan and with particular reference to *Section 5.2*.

Industry noted that under the terms of the agreement the Management Group consisting of senior representatives of each of the funding bodies was to oversee program establishment, monitor its delivery and consider any triggers arising that would necessitate a review of the program.

Further under *Section 5.2 iv* a series of indicators had been identified that highlighted when the program was at risk including: *Section iv Significant deviation from agreed budget including over-expenditure or savings against any program component or activity area.*

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Industry indicated that operational and financial information being provided did not allow them to make it a judgemental decision on whether or not progress was being made in accordance with the overall Transition to Management Plan.

Mr Colin Grant responded that the contracts required Biosecurity Queensland to manage operational and financial progress. The contracts between the Queensland and Commonwealth Government were confidential and would remain so.

It was further noted that this matter should be minuted so that Industry representatives were clearly aware of their corporate responsibility and accountability to the Transition to Management Plan.

Item 5 – Update on the SAG: Rod Turner (Chair of the SAG)

The Chair of the SAG provided an update regarding activities of the SAG including their 2-day visit to Cairns on the 18th and 19th of January. Major points that were noted included:

- a field trip throughout the Cairns region to assess the urban and natural environments in which AHB is present
- control and surveillance activities being undertaken
- a debrief from DEEDI staff working on the T2M program on operational activities and data collection
- a formal meeting of the SAG at the Cairns DEEDI office. From this meeting, the SAG provided seven recommendations to the TMG.

The seven recommendations arising from the SAG were outlined and discussed. Recommendations were;

SAG Recommendation 1: To contact RIRDC to put out a tender for research proposals that are specific to *Apis cerana* java strain and the objectives of the AHB T2M program. These research proposals are to be funded from the industry provision of \$400,000 and the SAG is to provide scientific advice and feedback on the research proposals received.

The TMG agreed with this recommendation and that PHA will meet with RIRDC to implement this process.

SAG Recommendation 2: To document and video the DEEDI staff expertise in bee lining, floral sweep netting, monitoring bait stations and traps, bee eater roosts etc. so that the techniques and expertise can benefit any future incursions or detections.

The TMG agreed with this recommendation and DEEDI stated that they have started documenting their techniques and processes. DEEDI will consider the possibility of recording these techniques on videos.

SAG Recommendation 3: That a rigorous and extensive scientific study be conducted on the usefulness and practicality of Fipronil in remote poisoning of Asian honey bee in the Cairns region.

The TMG agreed with this proposal and DEEDI stated that all possible information relating to this trial will be forwarded to the SAG for scientific feedback and advice. The Chair requested that the Chair of SAG follow this up with DEEDI.

SAG Recommendation 4: To undertake pollen analysis on the stored comb of previous nest detections which are freeze stored by DEEDI. This activity will enable

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assessment of what the bee is feeding on at specific times of the year. The SAG recommended that this become a component of AG Project 4 and to drop the nectar analysis as listed in AG Project 2, which would not provide as many answers as a pollen analysis.

The TMG agreed with conducting pollen analysis of stored comb instead of nectar analysis as listed in AG Project 2. It was requested that PHA and the SAG follow up on who could be appropriate to conduct this experiment.

SAG Recommendation 5: To drop the tomato dust experiment as listed in AG Project 2 and focus all efforts on remote poisoning experiments using Fipronil.

The TMG agreed to drop tomato dust from AG Project 2.

SAG Recommendation 6: To develop appropriate scientific methodology for floral sweep netting in the outer areas of the containment area in Cairns to gain greater confidence of absence or presence of the Asian honey bee.

The TMG agreed with implementing this improved surveillance method and DEEDI agreed to follow up with the SAG in regards to how to design and implement such a floral sweep netting program.

SAG Recommendation 7: For the AHB T2M program to undertake preliminary micro-satellite work to determine if differences can be observed between the Australian, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinean populations of *Apis cerana* Java strain. This information could be critical in determining if a new incursion is detected, or is in fact from the Australian population.

The TMG agreed with this proposal and DEEDI stated that this activity is already underway within the program.

Item 6 – Update from DEEDI: Neil O’Brien

Neil O’Brien provided an update to the SAG on project activities during the Cairns meeting and advised the Members that a full written report, as stated in the contracts, would be provided by the 1 February 2012 outlining the work that has currently been conducted in alignment with the objectives of the AHB T2M plan.

Item 7 – Future Meetings

The Chair outlined the list of future meetings (February – June 2012) that were listed in the agenda and stated that it is the objective to hold a monthly meeting until June 2012. The Members agreed that meeting times may be able to be reduced to thirty minutes.

Item 8 – Summary and Close of Meeting

The Chair again thanked all Members for their hard work in progressing the AHB T2M program and closed the meeting.