

AHB TMG - Minutes

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

Teleconference held on Tuesday 27th March, 2012

Attendees: Colin Grant DAFF (Chair), Glynn Maynard DAFF, Robyn Martin DAFF, Leanne Herrick DAFF, Neil O'Brien DEEDI, Rick Symons DEEDI, Lindsay Bourke AHBIC, Trevor Weatherhead AHBIC, Greg Fraser PHA, Rod Turner PHA, Sharyn Taylor PHA, Sam Malfroy PHA (Secretariat), Sophie Peterson PHA and Jenna Taylor PHA.

Apologies: Lois Ransom DAFF, Kareena Arthy DEEDI and Stephen Ware AHBIC

Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

The Chair welcomed the Members of the Asian Honey Bee Transition Management Group (AHB TMG) to the teleconference.

Item 2 – Approval of Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from Meeting 4 were tabled and changes were recommended by the Members before placement on the website. These included:

- That the issues surrounding an AHB nest in a National Park in the Cairns region were discussed in relation to the remote poisoning experiment. It was stated that the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) in Queensland had refused Fipronil be used to destroy the nest, and preferred the conventional method of localised insect spray to destroy the AHB nest.
- To clarify the SAG recommendations 3 and 4. Members stated that these recommendations should state that a pollen analysis is to replace the nectar analysis in AG Project 2 and that this pollen analysis is to be completed by the external research project conducted by UNE and CSIRO. This has already commenced with assistance from BQ.
- That the issue of volunteer beekeepers was raised in relation to assisting in the remote poisoning trials and that BQ had stated their willingness to continue to accept beekeeping industry volunteers to help in the AHB T2M.

PHA agreed to make these amendments out of session and place the minutes from Meeting 4 on the website shortly after the meeting.

Item 3 – Action items from previous meeting

The Action Items from Meeting 4 were tabled and discussed amongst the Members.

- BQ stated that the odour detection dog program had ceased following the BQ review and the advice received from the SAG.
- PHA stated that they are still looking at avenues for an expanded pathway analysis, which includes the feedback from the SAG, to be conducted.
- BQ confirmed that the nectar analysis project listed in AG project 2 has been dropped and replaced with the pollen analysis conducted by the joint UNE and CSIRO external project.
- PHA stated that the call for research proposals was well underway and that this would be addressed in the update from the SAG.
- Both BQ and PHA confirmed that a revised methodology for the remote poisoning trials of AHB nests had been provided by the SAG.
- PHA stated a sharepoint site had been established and that this would be covered in the update of project activities from PHA.

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The Chair and Members agreed that all action items have either been completed or are well underway.

Item 4 – Update on Project Activities: PHA

Plant Health Australia (PHA) provided an update to the Members of the TMG on the development of the Sharepoint site for Members of the TMG and the SAG. An explanation was provided on how the sharepoint site would work, what documents would be uploaded and how the site would be used over the course of the AHB T2M. PHA stated that they would send out user specific usernames and passwords, as well as instructions to each Member of the SAG and the TMG in the coming days to explain this process.

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

The Chair of the SAG stated that research proposals had been received by RIRDC on the four main areas of research that is to be conducted with the industry money. The Chair outlined that the four areas of research included:

- The development of an attractant specific to *Apis cerana* Java strain for the use in bait stations
- Determining the disease status of *Apis cerana* Java strain in the Cairns region
- The inter-specific mating potential between *Apis cerana* Java strain and *Apis mellifera*
- Developing a strategy to address concerns of countries that import Australian honeybees

It was stated that all of these proposals were considered at the recent RIRDC meetings in Melbourne of the Pollination Committee and the Honey Bee Advisory Committee. PHA stated that they have now received the research proposals and the feedback from the joint RIRDC meeting and that a teleconference would be held next week for SAG consideration of the research proposals. Once this is finalised, and agreement is made, full research proposals can be requested.

The Chair stated that PHA seemed to be handling this situation well and requested that once these projects linked to the AHB T2M are finalised, that information about the research and who is conducting them be placed on the website.

Item 6 – Update from DEEDI: Neil O’Brien

Neil O’Brien gave an update on AHB activities in Queensland. This report is attached as attachment A.

Item 7 – Future Meetings

The Chair stated that the next meeting was scheduled for the 10th of April. Members discussed that this was a short turnaround between meetings and requested that the next TMG meeting be delayed until the meeting scheduled on May 15th. PHA stated that issues relating to the SAG research proposals and other aspects of the T2M program needed to be discussed and approved by the TMG at the next meeting. It was proposed that these changes could be delivered out of session. The Chair and Members all agreed with this proposal.

Item 8 – Summary and Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked the Members of the AHB TMG for their participation in the teleconference and closed the meeting.

Attachment A

Asian honey bee Transition to Management Program



Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Queensland

Progress Summary

Prepared for Transition to Management Group meeting Tuesday 27 March 2012

Highlights

- **Operations** - Maintaining operational delivery, despite ongoing wet weather. Operational focus is: responding to public reports of swarms and nests, destroying all infestation, conducting surveillance around edge of known infested area.
- **Public reports** - continued high number of public reports - 266 public reports received in 2012. 46 resulted in the detection of an AHB nest or swarm. So far in 2012, 17% of all public reports have resulted in the detection of an AHB nest or swarm
- **Detections** - 46 detections of AHB nests and swarms to date for 2012. Since May 2007, a total 579 detections of AHB nests and swarms have been detected and destroyed.
- **Remote nest treatment** - progressing well. Trials on 7 nests. One destruction with 973 bees, 2 abandoned due to green ant attacks, 4 under ongoing monitoring as first treatment did not destroy. Trials are very labour intensive - total 260 hours in one month. Improved engagement with environmental agencies has increased their level of understanding the T2M Program and the remote nest treatment trials. Prepared an update report for SAG. Fact sheet prepared. Some media interest about the trials. Summary of trials has been placed on PHA website.
- **Community engagement** – increased engagement with environmental groups, indigenous groups, industry, pest controllers and transport industries.
- **Bee industry engagement** - the focus of bee industry engagement has been about their observed impacts of AHB on *A. Mellifera*, involvement in remote nest treatment trials, Restricted Area strategy, nest/swarm destruction when AHB program staff cannot attend, attending bee conference, and use of volunteers over winter.
- **Local DAFF engagement** – the focus has been on integrated operations, bee free zones/bee suppression zones, laboratory strategy, sweep netting process.
- **Strategies being documented** – movement of hives within and outside the Restricted Area, Restricted Area maintenance/timeframe and associated impacts on overseas trade, staged transition process with key deliverables.
- **Staffing** – 11.5 full time equivalent staff. Staff attrition and long term leave is delaying delivery of some projects. New recruitment processes underway for additional staff.
- **Finances** – staff attrition and delays in recruitment may result in a small surplus for end of June 2012.

AG1 – Limiting impact on Urban Communities

- AG1 A.(i) ✓ New website update approved and in process of being implemented
- (iii)
- AG1 A.(ii) ✓ Social media postings prepared for Toad Day out and planned for FNQ Pest Advisory Forum.
- ✓ An event calendar has been created to arrange regular social media postings and align with events in the AHB T2M program

- AG1 C. ✓ Web Customer Journeys being developed
- AG1 D.(i) ✓ Transition Phase strategy and Document developed and in process of being communicated/ placed on internet
- ✓ New AHB T2M Brochure approved and in process of being printed
- ✓ Remote Treatment Fact Sheet explaining Fipronil use developed and in use.
- ✓ Training packages for rangers, controllers and apiarists developed.

AG2 – Developing and making available a suite of control measures for AHB

- AG2 A. ✓ Literature review to better understand AHB almost completed.
- AG2 B. ✓ Meetings with local bee keeper organisations continue.
- ✓ AHB T2M Bee Industry Liaison committee formed and teleconference held.
- AG2 B.(i) ✓ Detection and destruction strategies have been documented
- ✓ Validation of rates of effort for all detection and destruction methods impacted by the Remote Treatment trials.
- ✓ Videoing of detection and destruction methods is underway.
- AG2 B.(iii) ✓ Bait station use and design documented
- ✓ Validation of effectiveness impacted by the Remote Treatment trials.
- AG2 C.(i) ✓ Remote Treatment trials in progress (See summary document)

AG3 – Limiting impact on honey production

- AG3 A(iii) ✓ Attended February meetings in Cairns & Townsville
- ✓ Attended and conducted a swarm treatment and collection session.
- ✓ Cairns Beekeepers have established a local AHB T2M Liaison committee that we are meeting with.
- ✓ Discussions held with industry re use of industry volunteers over winter
- AG3 D. ✓ Met with a number of stakeholders (apiarist, Biosecurity DAFF, DERM, Wet Tropics Management Authority & Indigenous rangers to discuss technologies to assist with the mitigation of AHB impacts.
- AG3. D.(i) ✓ Commenced collection of PCR samples for trials
- ✓ Collecting bee samples for bee disease research by Denis Anderson
- AG3 E. ✓ Meeting with apiarist locally and at state level discussed adoption and implementation of management strategies.
- ✓ Planning to attend NSW & Qld bee conferences

AG4 – Limiting impact on natural environment

- AG4 A. ✓ Continue to meet with indigenous groups and rangers (DERM rangers Mossman, Yarrabah, Jabalani Yabinji Aboriginal Corporation
- ✓ Training delivered to Yarrabah rangers on bee identification, destruction and beelining
- ✓ Meetings held with Department of Environment and Heritage and WTMA regarding AHB T2M Plan and role environment organisations can play. These meetings will continue.
- ✓ Collecting pollen from AHB nests to assist with UNE/CSIRO pollen analysis research

AG5 – Optimising early detection of new incursion of AHB

- AG 5 B.(i) ✓ Surveillance strategies and techniques documented
- AG5 B.(ii) ✓ Validation of surveillance techniques impacted by the Remote Treatment trials.
- ✓ Discussions regarding Surveillance strategies around Cairns Air and Sea ports have progressed with general agreement between QLD Biosecurity and DAFF Biosecurity. AHB Suppression Zone now being considered for the Cairns Seaport and strategies and procedures are being fleshed out
- AG5 C. ✓ Laboratory analysis of AHB detections within AHB Suppression Zones discussed and being progressed.

- AG5 D. ✓ QLD Biosecurity and DAFF Biosecurity have reached general agreement regarding an integrated surveillance strategy and are currently fleshing this out.

AG6 – Critical intervention to limit long distance spread

- AG6 A. ✓ Existing movement controls continue
✓ Strategies regarding the Restricted Area are being discussed with industry. Have identified that the trade implications have to be discussed with DAFF Biosecurity.
- AG6 B. ✓ Pathway analysis and strategy is ongoing
- AG6 C. ✓ Operations to minimise spread through pathways continue
✓ Strategy to minimise spread through pathways is being documented.
- AG6 D. ✓ Meetings with transport business and workers continue
✓ Met with TWU organiser, addressed Queensland Council of Unions monthly meeting, article in union journal resulted.

QG1 – Protecting Queensland’s social amenity and public assets

- QG1 A.(i) ✓ Operations to contain, suppress and destroy AHB continue
- QG1 A.(ii) ✓ Strategy to cease government intervention developed and being documented.
- QG1 B, ✓ Surveillance strategy to determine extent of infested area developed and being developed.

QG2 – Improving operational efficiency and effectiveness

- QG2 B. ✓ Detection and destruction strategies have been documented
✓ Professional videoing of techniques are currently underway
✓ Bait station use and design documented
✓ Validation of rates of effort for all detection and destruction methods impacted by the Remote Treatment trials.
✓ Validation of effectiveness impacted by the Remote Treatment trials.
- QG2 C. ✓ Spatial analysis has commenced with identification and verification of data. Discussions have commenced regarding the process to use.
- QG2 D. ✓ Spread analysis has commenced with identification and verification of data. Discussions have commenced regarding the process to use.
- QG2 E. ✓ Technical analysis of nests and honeycomb continue where possible