

AHB TMG Minutes

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

Teleconference held on Tuesday 21st August, 2012

Attendees: Colin Grant DAFF (Chair), Vanessa Findlay DAFF, Louise Clark DAFF, Neil O'Brien DAFF Queensland, Russell Gilmour DAFF Queensland, Lindsay Bourke AHBIC, Trevor Weatherhead AHBIC, Stephen Ware AHBIC, Rod Turner PHA, Sam Malfroy PHA (Secretariat) Brad Siebert PHA and Jenna Taylor PHA.

Apologies: Glynn Maynard DAFF, Rick Symons DAFF Queensland and Greg Fraser PHA.

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 welcomed Vanessa Findlay to the AHB TMG as the new Chief Plant Protection Officer and stated that Dr Findlay would be chairing all future meetings of the AHB TMG till the program comes to a close in June 2013. The members welcomed Dr Findlay to the AHB TMG.

Item 2 – Discussion and acceptance of Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from Meeting 7 were tabled. The Chair stated these minutes were accepted out of session between the members of the AHB TMG and that they have since been placed on the AHB website. All members agreed that they provided a true and accurate record of Meeting 7.

Item 3 – Action items from previous meeting

The action items from Meeting 7 were tabled and discussed. The Chair stated that all of the action items from the previous meeting had been initiated and were progressing well. The Chair requested that by Meeting 9 AHBIC present proposals to the TMG on the best way to spend the remaining industry contribution for the AHB T2M.

The Chair also noted to the TMG that the summary of the program that was requested at Meeting 7 had been provided to the TMG as an attachment to this meeting. PHA stated that this summary had been placed on the AHB website after consultations with BQ.

Item 4 – Reporting from DAFF Queensland (Russell Gilmour)

Russell Gilmour provided an update on AHB activities in Queensland. This report is attached as attachment A.

Some of the key issues that BQ discussed with the TMG included:

- Since May 2007, there have been 720 detections of AHB nests and swarms
- There have been three recent significant detections at Port Douglas, Paddy's Green (west of Mareeba) and Atherton which have extended the known infested area
- BQ is currently in the process of collecting video footage of bee lining and AHB identification and AHB nest destruction
- BQ is continuing to assist external researchers who have been funded by the industry contribution and university students who are working on the AHB T2M
- The literature review has been completed and will be released in the near future to stakeholders and industry

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The Chair requested that BQ clarify the issue of liability to beekeepers that was raised at Meeting 7 of the TMG.

BQ stated that following feedback from the beekeeping industry about how to manage AHB in the future, it was agreed that beekeepers would not advise any person on how to destroy an AHB nest or swarm nor destroy AHB nests or swarms on behalf of T2M Program. Therefore there are no public liability issues for beekeepers. Also, any beekeepers helping external researchers are doing so at their own accord, not at the request of the T2M Program. Any industry volunteers that assist in the AHB T2M do so under supervision of the T2M Program following an extensive induction process. Volunteers are therefore covered for any public liability provided they follow BQ's T2M Program procedures and direction. The TMG accepted this explanation and the Chair thanked BQ for clarifying the public liability issue.

BQ also stated that they had distributed a researcher's report to both AHBIC and PHA that was conducted into the effects of the AHB eradication program on local beekeepers and farmers. The report could also be provided to SAG. This report was completed a few years ago by a visiting international student as part of a university degree and had been distributed at the request of AHBIC. BQ stated that aspects of this report were being picked by other documents being produced in the T2M Program, and placing this document on the AHB website may be of little value. The TMG agreed and stated that it would not be placed on the website. The Chair thanked BQ for following up on their action items.

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

The Chair of the SAG, Rod Turner, stated that a SAG meeting was held on the 12th of July and provided a summary of this meeting and the key issues that were discussed. This included:

- The SAG stated that the bee trap efficacy report provided by BQ demonstrated that this method of surveillance was not effective and that this method of surveillance should discontinue.
- The SAG recommended that BQ continue to work on the detection of *Apis cerana* DNA from bee eater pellets and trap liquor with these strategies of surveillance showing considerable promise.
- There was some conjecture in the SAG regarding the continuation of the microsatellite allele research in AHB, with some in the SAG believing that money should be diverted from other programs to continue this research. Others in the SAG believed that this research should not be continued, despite the interesting science, because money would have to be diverted from other more worthwhile projects and that the continuation of this project did not fall under the scope of a transition to management program.
- The SAG stated that the Remote nest treatment report prepared by BQ demonstrated the effectiveness of Fipronil, however, more work was needed to refine the process. The SAG also acknowledged the amount of work conducted by BQ to get these results. Other options to continue the trial, such as lowering the Fipronil dosage rate, as well as observation hives was discussed by the SAG. The Chair of the SAG stated that the Fipronil trials have ceased for now, pending further advice from the SAG.

The Chair of the SAG stated that two letters were written to the APVMA and BASF (the chemical company that owns the toxicological data package of Fipronil) regarding the potential registration of a product that could be used to remotely control AHB after the AHB T2M. The Chair stated that no response has yet been received.

It was discussed that once a response was received from both organisations, that a SAG should be called to discuss the response as well as the future of the remote nest treatment trials conducted by BQ. The Chair agreed with this course of action.

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Item 6 – Future Meetings

The Chair stated that PHA will follow up out of session with DAFF, AHBIC and Biosecurity Queensland regarding possible dates for future meetings of the AHB T2M. The Chair stated that the next TMG meeting would be held in late October, and then every 2 months in December, February and then monthly in April, May and June until the AHB T2M finishes on June 30 2013.

Item 7 – Summary and Close of Meeting

The Chair stated that the end of the AHB T2M is approaching and that only 10 months remain until the program comes to a close in June 2013. The Chair requested that all members continue to provide clear progress reports which list the achievements of the program and milestones that have been met.

The Chair explained that all of the program work needs to be documented and finalised by this date so that the community, the pest control industry, and the honey bee industry have the tools and information available to manage AHB into the future.

BQ stated that they will continue to provide detailed quarterly reports for the TMG, as well as reports for each TMG teleconference clearly documenting the progress on aspects of the AHB T2M.

AHBIC expressly thanked Dr Colin Grant for his considerable efforts in the AHB T2M and for being an effective Chair of the AHB TMG.

The Chair thanked the TMG for their contribution to the AHB T2M, the role that the members have played in progressing this program and closed the meeting.

Asian honey bee Transition to Management Program



Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry

AHB Transition to Management, August 2012 Progress Summary

Prepared for Transition management Group meeting on 21/8/12

Detections

As at 17 August 2012 detections since 1 July 2012 were

- Nests – 44
- Swarms – 19
- Foragers/PID's – 13

720 detections of AHB nests and swarms to date, since May 2007.

Significant detections that extended the known infested area (see Attachment A.) were at

- Port Douglas
- Paddy's Green, west of Mareeba
- Atherton

Public Reports

As at 17 August 2012 there have been 63 reports of suspect Asian honey bee since 1 July 2012, leading to the detection of 46 AHB nests/swarms.

Compliance

As at 17 August 2012 eleven "Movement" licenses have been issued since 1 July 2012. However most of these have been to AHB Program staff who were moving bees to shows and collecting swarms for research.

An "analysis of movement control efficiency, cost and compliance for the Asian honey bee incursion in Cairns" is currently underway with a report due to be finalised by end of August 2012.

HIGH LIGHTS

✓ Community Engagement

- The Asian honey bee website has been revamped with comprehensive information tailored at identification and what the public can do to help minimise the spread. This has a focus with stakeholders and what you can do if Asian honey bees are a nuisance in the community.
- A step by step guideline for industry has been developed and will be accessible via the web site suggesting the recommended methods in how to manage swarms or nests of Asian honey bees.
- The community focused Fact Sheet has taken the next step in transitioning to the community learning to live with Asian honey bees.
- A booklet, for national biosecurity agencies, of validated detection and destruction tools has been drafted and is being reviewed to include new

improvements through the T2M program's research. This will be finalised once the results and methods from the scientific efficacy trails are known (trials are being continuing over the coming months).

Workshops

- The first round of workshops in the Known Infested Area were successfully delivered and well received by critical stakeholders; beekeepers, indigenous rangers & traditional owners, QPWS rangers, Transport industries, pest controllers, and Local Government staff.
- Evaluation of these workshops has indicated that the consultation phase that preceded the development of training material resulted in the workshop content being highly regarded as relevant to their industries.
- All stakeholder groups were interested in attending with the largest interest being from the pest control industry with the session booked out.
- Stakeholder groups have requested another round of training sessions, which will be held around the outer edge area of the Known Infested Area.

Workshops consisted of:

- A presentation on the shift in the direction of the AHB program and what role these groups will play in the community.
- Identification training, quality photos were used to test people's knowledge on the differences between AHB and European honey bee. Live samples were contained in display hives with viewing sections so groups could see the see two species together.
- Trainees visited floral sources and shown how to identify feeding foragers and given multiple demonstrations in different situations of swarms and nest removal and destruction.
- Trainees were tested on their practical ability to demonstrate the capability of managing an AHB situation. Demonstrations of each workshop were tailored for each stakeholder.
- Trainees received education about eradication programs on the three tramp ant species and their areas of infestation with a focus on the ability of all the community to help out by reporting suspect ants. Live samples were used for identification training.
- Evaluation forms for AHB workshops were obtained from all key stakeholders that attended. These have been analysed and evaluated and will be used to record and improve delivery of future workshop sessions.

Key findings from the evaluation process of the 60 attendee during the first round of workshops found;

- attendees considered the live displays of both species to be indispensable regarding their confidence level in being able to identify the pest bee
- all stakeholders identified that they would like video footage available, covering multiple demonstrations of swarm and nest management techniques. This is in progress.
- The Pest industry in particular noted that material updates on new destruction products, developed through current scientific trails, need to be passed on to the industry.

District Agriculture Shows

- A joint effort between the AHB T2M team and the Cairns and Tablelands District Beekeepers Association attending six district shows in Far North Queensland proved to be successful and enhanced relations between the local industry and the program.

During these events the AHB team addressed close to 2,000 enquiries and conducted public demonstrations on AHB identification and management.

- The local club provided beekeeping equipment, a display hive of European honey bee and expertise in apiary issues.
- The two interactive displays of bees, Asian honey bee and European honey bee, helped Biosecurity Queensland and the local industry to engage with the community and lift the profile the Asian honey bee program. These tools were aimed to assist the community in identification of the pest bee and their options available to them when living along side with Asian honey bees.

✓ **Industry engagement**

- 21 volunteer beekeepers worked with the program at various times during July and August, the most we had at any one stage was 12. The significant number of inductions impacted on operations.
- Some of the volunteers expressed disappointment that the Transition to Management program was not an active eradication program and refused to conduct surveillance activities (as they wanted to be destroying AHB nests).
- As the program transitions from operations to more science and community engagement focus, it will be increasingly difficult to accommodate Industry volunteers.

✓ **Remote Treatment**

The progress report for the “Remote Treatment Trials provided to the TMG in June was also provided to the Scientific Advisory Group in July for consideration. Remote Treatment trials are suspended pending further advice.

✓ **Asian honey bee Literature review**

The Asian honey bee literature review has been completed and submitted for approval prior to release to stakeholders and industry.

✓ **Spatial and spread analysis**

- Computer modelling of AHB spread over time has commenced.

✓ **External researchers**

The program collaborated with and assisted visiting researchers: Dr. David Guez (University of Canberra); Dr. Dennis Anderson and Dr. John Roberts (CSIRO); Prof. Ben Oldroyd and Eloise Hinson (University of Sydney); and Dr. Caroline Gross (University of New England).

- The program commenced working with two James Cook University students who took up the opportunity to work under the supervision of our Senior Scientist for the program as part of their studies. A University of Queensland student spent two weeks working with the science team and provided valuable assistance.

✓ **DAFF Biosecurity**

The “High Intensity Surveillance” trial was reviewed as it has provided very few nests for testing. It was decided to increase the regularity of testing from fortnightly to weekly.

SIGNIFICANT FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- Cessation of response in the Known Infested Area – anticipated end September 2012.
- Validate efficacy of detection and destruction methods.
- Trial and improve bait/feeding station designs.
- Analysis of nests and swarms detected since 2007.
- Complete spatial analysis and spread analysis of current AHB infestation.
- Determine population dynamics and drivers of spread.
- Continue working with DAFF biosecurity regarding AG5 targets.
- Continue community and industry engagement activities and additional training sessions around the edge of the Known Infested Area.
- Continue to work with transporter businesses to ensure awareness and management information is in place to reduce the risk of spread.
- Complete and distribute Tools for responding to an AHB incursion – Standard Operating procedures for national biosecurity agencies.
- Video AHB techniques used in the program.
- Develop agreed management strategies to mitigate the impact of AHB on industry.

Attachment A.

