

AHB SAG Minutes

Meeting Ten of the Asian Honey Bee Scientific Advisory Group (AHB SAG)

Teleconference held on Tuesday 25th June 2013

Attendees: Rod Turner (Chair), Sam Malfroy (Secretariat), Glynn Maynard DAFF, Doug Somerville NSW DPI, Boris Baer UWA, Trevor Weatherhead AHBIC, Max Whitten FCAAA (the following attendees joined the meeting as observers), Mike Ashton DAFF Queensland, Russell Gilmour DAFF Queensland, Anna Koetz DAFF Queensland and Melanie Commerford DAFF Queensland.

Apologies: Simon Barry CSIRO

Item 1: Welcome and introduction by the Chair

The Chair welcomed the Members of the Asian Honey Bee Scientific Advisory Group (AHB SAG) to the teleconference.

Item 2: Industry project update

Mr Malfroy tabled CSIRO's final report into the pest and disease status of *Apis cerana* and *Apis mellifera* in the Cairns region. Mr Malfroy stated that this was an industry funded project and the results demonstrated that no new viruses and no parasitic mites were observed. Mr Malfroy stated that RIRDC wished to publish the report in the near future, and that any comments on the report should be forwarded to PHA and RIRDC by the 28th of June.

Mr Weatherhead discussed that he had some technical issues with the report and the Chair requested that Mr Weatherhead pass these onto PHA and RIRDC so that the author of the report can consider these comments.

Mr Malfroy also tabled the preliminary proposal which was submitted by AHBIC to RIRDC to hold a 2-day AHB training workshop in August in the Cairns region. Mr Weatherhead stated that Dr Denis Anderson and Professor Ben Oldroyd would be conducting the training and that this would form part of an accredited and competency based training program. Mr Weatherhead added that he would also attend the workshop. The Chair stated that this would be presented at the TMG meeting scheduled for the afternoon (25 June 2013) for endorsement.

Item 3: AHB T2M – Final science project reports from DAFF Queensland

Dr Koetz and Mr Gilmour tabled and discussed the below FINAL reports with the SAG:

- AHB Manual
- AHB Fact sheet
- AHB – Guidelines for destroying nests or swarms
- AHB destruction video
- North Queensland Apiarist Survey Report

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- Optimising AHB trap design and attractants
- Destruction efficacy of AHB
- Detection efficacy of AHB
- Ecology and Behaviour of AHB
- AHB Remote Nest Treatment
- AHB Spread Modelling

The SAG discussed the reports and approved their finalisation. The Chair stated that it was obvious that the most recently completed report, the spread modelling report, had not been circulated for a long period of time, and therefore, granted the SAG until COB on Wednesday 26th of June to provide any comments.

Mr Turner stated that all of the reports produced as part of the AHB T2M would be placed on the Asian honey bee website and that PHA would maintain this website into the future. Mr Turner also stated that PHA had been commissioned by RIRDC to develop a honey bee and pollination website and some of this information would also be used for that website. It was discussed that PHA could also re-develop and amend some of the reports into the future to meet the needs of particular programs, such as the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program.

The Chair deemed all reports final and stated that they would be presented at the AHB TMG meeting for approval.

Item 4: Future R&D Recommendations from the AHB SAG

The Chair outlined to the SAG that the AHB T2M would be finalised on 30th June 2013, and because of this, it was important to capture the thoughts of SAG members in proposing research areas where industry R&D should be focused on in the future. The Chair tabled the DRAFT Future R&D Recommendations Report for the SAG to provide comments.

Mr Weatherhead discussed that he would like changes made to R&D Priority area 1 which included studies on the hive biology and beekeeping methods of AHB. Mr Malfroy disagreed, and stated that a major impediment to research being conducted was the inability to collect and maintain hives for brood samples which arose from the lack of knowledge of the biology of this species of bee, hence the requirement of this project. Mr Weatherhead also added he would like recognition that Dr David Guez is currently conducting R&D into floral preferences of AHB and that any future work conducted in this area is dependent on this research. Mr Weatherhead also requested that Fipronil strength and concentration be included in R&D Priority area 3.

Mr Weatherhead requested that an update on Professor Carolyn Gross pollen analysis work is provided as well as the microsatellite work. Mr Gilmour stated that it was agreed in a previous SAG meeting that microsatellite would not go ahead. The Chair stated that they would investigate the pollen analysis research and possibly include in the R&D statement. The Chair accepted these recommendations and discussed that any further recommendations be forwarded to PHA by the end of the week.

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Item 5: Next steps for the AHB T2M

Mr Ashton informed the SAG that members of staff currently working on AHB as part of the AHB T2M in DAFF Queensland would be leaving their roles by 30th June and that management of the AHB in Qld would pass to the Animal Biosecurity and Welfare program in DAFF Queensland. Mr Ashton stated that responsibility for responding to reports of suspect AHB would rest with the apiary officers in DAFF Qld. Only reports of AHB in high risk areas such as around ports or transport hubs, or in new areas where the bee had not previously been detected, would be responded to. Reports of AHB in the known infested area (KIA) around Cairns would be the responsibility of the community to manage and, in the future, only reports that are deemed potential new incursions would be responded to in the KIA.

Item 6: Summary and close of meeting

The Chair informed the SAG that this would be the last meeting of the AHB SAG, however, the AHB TMG would continue to meet over the next year to discuss topical issues such as the RA and trade issues, as well as the progression of the industry funded research projects, to help keep communication channels open between governments and industry.

The Chair thanked the SAG for their extensive input into the AHB T2M and DAFF Queensland for attending the teleconferences and closed the meeting.