

Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee

Implementation Group Meeting held in Room 935, Dundonald House on Wednesday 9 March 2011 at 10.30am

Present: Seamus Hughes, Farm Policy Branch, DARD
Paula Magill, Farm Policy Branch, DARD
Jim Crummie, Quality Assurance Branch, DARD
Tom Williamson, Quality Assurance Branch, DARD
Kevin O'Donnell, CAFRE
Archie Murchie, AFBI
Sam Clawson, AFBI
Michael Young MBE, INIB
Tom Canning, INIB
David Wright, UBKA
Susie Turner, UBKA
Sonya Verschuur, Farm Policy Branch, DARD

Apologies: David Gillespie, Countryside Management Delivery, DARD

1. Welcome / introductions

Seamus Hughes welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Implementation Group to take forward the Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee.

Everyone around the table introduced themselves.

2. Publication of the strategy / background

The strategy had been published in February 2011.

3. Key outcomes going forward

The strategy sets out four key outcomes –

- effective communications and relationships operating at all levels
- effective surveillance and monitoring to minimise risks from pests, diseases and undesirable species
- competency development in good standards of beekeeping and husbandry to minimise pests and disease risks and contribute to sustaining honey bee populations
- sound science and evidence base to underpin bee health policy and its implementation

The intention was that four sub groups would be set up to take forward the four key outcomes.

4. Agreement of Terms of Reference for the Implementation Group

All were content with the Terms of Reference setting out the role of the Implementation Group.

5. Agreement on sub groups including role, membership and work timetable

Seamus Hughes explained that DARD envisaged that the sub groups would be industry-led, with each sub group chaired by representatives from INIB / UBKA, with two or three members from INIB and UBKA and one representative from DARD / AFBI sitting on each sub group. Secretarial support to the sub groups would be provided by DARD.

It had not yet been decided who would represent DARD on each sub group.

It was agreed that sub group meetings could be held during the day, in the evenings or at weekends as necessary.

The Implementation Group would consider / approve proposals put forward by the sub groups.

Tom Canning suggested that sub groups should be kept small with additional people being co-opted on as necessary.

David Wright felt that sub groups should be allowed to evolve as circumstances developed.

Michael Young suggested that each sub group would need to meet up to six times in the first year or different sub groups might need a different number of meetings.

David Wright felt that he would need to take back any proposals put forward today to be considered and agreed by the UBKA Committee.

Michael Young confirmed that the INIB Committee would be content with the Terms of Reference and he would be keen to move on with the setting up of the sub groups as soon as possible.

Michael Young raised the point that education needs to be considered for those in NI and also for those from the border counties in ROI as there is considerable crossover.

Paula Magill explained that education would fall within the remit of the third key outcome - competency development in good standards of beekeeping and husbandry.

David Wright explained that training was fairly well developed with CAFRE.

Michael Young said INIB would be keen for the British system to be looked at.

Susie Turner said that a preliminary course is being trialed.

Seamus Hughes confirmed that, at the moment, money had been committed for CAFRE to continue to deliver training courses to bee keepers.

Tom Canning said that there was a problem in that a vast number of beekeepers didn't attend meetings, training, etc.

Tom Williamson said that the sub group dealing with effective communications and relationships could consider how to reach out to these beekeepers.

Tom Canning raised the issue that the biggest problem currently in beekeeping was chemicals and he asked if the key outcome effective surveillance and monitoring to minimise risks from pests, diseases and undesirable species could cover this. Seamus Hughes confirmed that he did not see any difficulty in this key outcome including insecticides.

It was agreed that there would be cross-over between the four key outcomes. Seamus Hughes confirmed that key outcomes could be interpreted as broadly or as narrowly as necessary.

6. Next steps

It was agreed that the composition of the sub groups could be agreed by early May 2011 in advance of the next meeting of the Implementation Group. Names of those being proposed to sit on the sub groups could be sent to Paula in advance of the meeting.

7. AOB

No items for discussion.

8. Next meeting

Next meeting of the Implementation Group to take place in Room 935, Dundonald House on Wednesday 18 May 2011 at 10.30am.