



18/12/2009

East Riding and North Lincs LCA
Haven House
Waterside Road
Barton upon Humber
North Lincs
DN18 5BD

Sustaining a healthy honey bee population – How you can help

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to ask if you could help us to raise awareness about BeeBase, which is an award winning and important tool in the control of honey bee pests and diseases. In particular we would like to request that you strongly encourage any beekeepers who keep apiaries on your land (ie. allotments, smallholdings etc.) to register on BeeBase. In the event that beekeepers are already registered you may wish to note their BeeBase registration number for your records. By raising awareness of BeeBase and the importance of registration you would be helping towards sustaining a healthy honey bee population.

If you could help by encouraging beekeepers who keep apiaries on your land to register whether they tend 1 or 100 apiaries, it would help us considerably in raising awareness of BeeBase. Please find enclosed a leaflet on BeeBase, which highlights the importance of registration and what beekeepers can expect to receive once registered.

Background

Through the recent media coverage on bees you will no doubt be aware our honey bees are facing challenging times. Honey bees contribute directly to local food production and make an important contribution, through pollination, to crop production. They are susceptible to a variety of threats, including pests and diseases, the likelihood and consequences of which have increased significantly over the last 5-10 years.

The National Bee Unit (NBU), which is based at the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera), manages BeeBase and uses it to identify apiaries at risk in the local area and as a result target inspection measures effectively. We need to know who is keeping bees and where they are kept to ensure any new or existing health problems are identified and to improve our chances of successfully controlling disease and any incursions of new pests. In return, once registered on BeeBase, beekeepers have access to a wealth of information such as; interactive maps of disease outbreaks, access to current legislation, up-to-date disease management leaflets, be alerted to pest



and disease outbreaks in their own area and will receive a free advisory apiary visit from their local bee inspector.

Fera is implementing the 'Healthy Bees Plan' on behalf of Defra and Welsh Assembly Government. The Plan was published in March 2009 and is a 10 year plan which aims to address the challenges facing beekeepers in order to help sustain the health of honey bees in England and Wales. A key early part of implementing the Plan is to identify and make contact with those beekeepers not already known to Fera and in particular the NBU, hence we are taking a number of steps to raise awareness about BeeBase and the importance of registration.

Many thanks for your time in reading this. Please would you be able to indicate whether you're willing to help us in this way. My contact details are below. I will also be in touch over the next few weeks to see if you are able to help us.

Kind Regards

M Holmes

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