

3rd Bee Health Roundtable Meeting

March 5, 2015

AAFC Headquarters Conference Facilities, Ottawa, ON

Record of Decision

Participants:

<p><u>Co-Chairs</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rod Scarlett (Industry Co-chair), Canadian Honey Council2. Susie Miller (Government Co-chair), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) <p><u>Industry Members</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Kevin Nixon, Canadian Honey Council4. Calvin Parsons, Canadian Honey Council5. Lindsey Ehman, Grain Growers of Canada6. Dave Carey, Canadian Seed Trade Association7. Jeff Wilson, Seed Corn Growers of Ontario8. Pierre Petelle, CropLife Canada9. Debra Conlon, Grain Farmers of Ontario10. Greg Sekulic, Canola Council of Canada11. William Van Tassell, Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec12. Julia Dupuis, Canadian Organic Growers13. Medhat Nasr, Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists14. Howard Mains, Association of Equipment Manufacturers15. Grant Hicks, Canadian Honey Council16. Jack Hamilton, Oxford Frozen Foods Ltd (webex)17. David Jones, Canadian Horticultural Council18. Victoria Wojcik, Pollinator Partnership19. Cary Gates, Flowers Canada Growers20. Brian Gilroy, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (webex)21. Nathalie St-Pierre, Retail Council of Canada <p><u>Academia</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">22. Rob Currie, University of Manitoba (webex) <p><u>Provincial Government</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">23. David Feindel, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development24. Geoff Wilson, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture (webex)25. Rhéal Lafrenière, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Anne Leboeuf, Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (webex)26. Chris Maund, New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture & Fisheries (webex)27. Kelly McAslan, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food28. Debra Sikora, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food	<p><u>Federal Government</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">29. Steve Pernal, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada30. Connie Hart, Health Canada - Pest Management Regulatory Agency31. Manjeet Sethi, AAFC Pest Management Centre <p><u>Guest Speaker</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">32. Julie Shapiro, The Keystone Center (webex) <p><u>Industry Observers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">33. Maria Trainer, CropLife Canada34. Salah Zoghلامي, Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec <p><u>Federal Government Observers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">35. Ron Gerold, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch36. Sheila Jones, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch37. Farid Makki, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch (webex)38. Marcos Alvarez, AAFC Pest Management Centre (webex)39. Jennifer Stevens, Health Canada - Pest Management Regulatory Agency40. Michael Metson, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch (webex)41. Émilie de La Haye Duponsel, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch (webex)42. Maria Dilay, AAFC - Cabinet and Interdepartmental Affairs43. Elizabeth Sepulveda, AAFC - Food Safety, Plant and Animal Health Policy <p><u>Federal Government Support</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">44. Mark Drouin, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch45. Stephen Page, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch46. Maxine Grier, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch47. Amrane Boumghar, AAFC Market and Industry Services Branch
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Meeting Objectives:

- Receive and discuss interim reports, obtain feedback from members on progress, and agree on the proposed path forward.
- Discuss opportunities for broader engagement.

1. Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Agenda, and Member Updates

The Co-chairs welcomed participants and following introductions, the agenda of the Bee Health Roundtable (BHRT) meeting was reviewed.

2. Collaboration with the US

Julie Shapiro of the Keystone centre provided a thorough update on current work undertaken by the US Honey Bee Health Coalition. She identified key crosswalks between the BHRT and the Coalition and suggested specific opportunities for collaboration related to nutrition and forage, hive management, crop pest management, cross industry collaboration and reporting. She noted that despite the alignment between the two fora, different policy structures, preferences and practices may lead to a different set of solutions.

Regarding the involvement and role of the “US Coalition” during the implementation phase, it was clarified that the Coalition will remain active and no sunset is planned. The next steps for the coalition are to work on identifying metrics for each priority, and to monitor and measure impact of proposed solutions. Regular updates will be provided to the BHRT.

Pollinator Strategy & Products and Solutions Pillars

3. Control of Varroa Mite

A range of control methods/tools currently under use or evaluation were presented and discussed by the BHRT. Members were asked to prioritize identified varroa mite control methods and identify any gaps for further review.

Further input is expected from members regarding priorities on other control methods and the Varroa Mite Control Working Group will prepare a summary that identifies specific control objectives along with specific questions and challenges requiring attention to facilitate discussion with stakeholders, particularly those in a position to provide research funding. In the long term, objectives and targets need to be better defined as a means to determine the most appropriate investments and to help obtain government and private funding in the future.

Action 1: BHRT Members to provide input and ranking for the most important methods and products identified by the Varroa Mite Control Working Group.

Action 2: The Varroa Mite Control Working Group to articulate a clear set of short and long term objectives for workable solutions to be presented to government, industry, and other stakeholders for consideration and support.

4. Update on New Active Ingredients

Without minimizing the difficulty of identifying varroa control products with no impact on the host, Maria Trainer presented updates on a number of US candidate products including a few products considered to be soft chemicals. Current efforts aim at identifying a source of funding to undertake data generation and screening in Canada and the US simultaneously to help Canadian beekeepers benefit from any progress made on the US.

On the same topic, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (AARD) informed the BHRT about ongoing efforts towards offering a US-based entity assistance to generate Canadian data for a number of new products.

5. Update on Plan to access Minor Use

In response to the BHRT's request to fast-track two products, PMC informed members that, HopGuard (a miticide) will be brought forward to the annual priority-setting meeting late March 2015; and that "Lincomycin" (antibiotic to treat American Foulbrood) will be discussed at that time including the need for further work and additional information.

6. Interim Results of the Honey Bee Health Surveillance Project

A presentation was given on the methodology and interim results from the first season of the Bee Health Surveillance Project which included samples from Manitoba and Alberta. Varroa infestation levels were found to be very high in some cases and infestation management varies from one stage to another.

Several members of the BHRT suggested that aggregate results at the regional level would help develop reliable management strategies. To that end, better sharing of data and collaboration with provincial apiculturists was requested. It was noted that the value of a surveillance project resides in information sharing and its capacity to generate conclusions and applicable solutions regionally. Legal advice, however, is needed to address privacy restrictions.

Regarding provincial participation beyond Alberta and Manitoba, British Columbia and Ontario seem to be enthusiastic. Additional provincial participation is being explored. There was discussion of collaboration with other labs as an option to be explored as a means to increase project resources. It was also suggested that increasing the scope of the project to include the capture of management data would be an incremental benefit to the value of the project.

7. Alignment of Provincial Monitoring Strategies and Activities

On behalf of CAPA, Medhat Nasr provided a summary of ongoing consultations and efforts amongst Provincial Apiculturists to explore harmonization of provincial activities towards a more nationally coordinated approach. Several provincial regulations related to disease notification and control measures, as well as sampling strategies and techniques were listed as impediments for providing comparable results at the national level.

Standardization of language and definitions, harmonization of dates of inspection, survey practices, sampling protocols and interpretation grids based on the type, size and nature of activity and losses, are some of the challenges being addressed. It was noted that more attention is needed to aspects such as the quality of the "Queen", implementation of best practices and treatments, etc. These approaches would require additional investment in order to identify problems earlier and anticipate major losses.

Members supported harmonization efforts as an important direction while noting the need to take into consideration regional differences in order to be in a position to provide the public with reliable data, especially in eastern Canada where there has been increased public scrutiny of reporting on bees. Reliable and transparent methodology is a key element to credibility and public trust. Communication wise, it is noted that some of the central questions could have been better anticipated in previous cases of major losses.

A producer organization representative pointed to the need to provide greater clarity related to the reporting of over-winter losses given the ongoing public scrutiny and its impact on the sector. As a means to better manage public trust and understanding following the release of the overwinter loss report and to allow industry sufficient time to be prepared to respond, it was requested that Roundtable members have embargoed access to the CAPA over-winter loss report prior to its official release.

Action 3: CAPA is asked to provide a consistent definition and interpretation of a "non-productive hive".

Action 4: CAPA is asked to provide the BHRT with the detailed methodology for the overwinter loss survey.

Action 5: The BHRT requests a technical pre-brief prior to the release of the CAPA annual report.

8. Control of pesticide exposure inside and outside the hive affecting bees

Rod Scarlett presented the proposed scope and terms of reference of the Control of Pesticide Exposure working group. It was noted that the scope of the WG's activities related to "control outside the hive" remains to be refined. Additional consultation towards building consensus among the industry is needed; and the BHRT agreed to the request to engage external expertise to help better define a detailed scope and a way forward.

Action 6: The BHRT supports the Pesticide Exposure WG request that a consultant be engaged to help develop a path forward and a work-plan.

9. Best Management Practices

Geoff Wilson informed the BHRT members that the consultant engaged for the Best Management Practices (BMP) project had reached out to specialists across the country. They provided information which is in the process of being synthesized and analyzed. The final report is to be completed by the end of March 2015 following review by provincial apiarists. It was agreed that once the report was final it would be sent to the communication working group for consideration.

Action 7: After the completion of the BMP report, it will be referred to the Communications Working Group for advice on how it can be used from a communications perspective.

10. Pest Predictor Model Tools / Pollinator Symposium

BHRT members received a report from the Agriculture and Pollinator Symposium hosted by the Canola Council of Canada (CCC) in October 2014 to discuss current knowledge and gaps pertaining to insect control for canola, cereals, and pulses in Western Canada (including pest predictor model tools). The focus was on action in areas where agriculture operations interact with the ecosystem. Particular attention was given to over use of pesticides, adherence to BMPs, knowledge gaps and the use of natural control tools on canola that work well. CCC drew attention to specific efforts to identify more beneficial insects in the prairies and to the need for research on key economic and ecology questions

RT members also learned that a report is expected very soon from a Pollinator Task Force sponsored by the Grain Farmers of Ontario which will include recommendations on habitat solutions. The report will focus on pollinator habitat and nutrition, honey bee pests and diseases, reduced pesticide exposure, and enhanced communication between beekeepers and other farmers. The report will also propose a reduction in quantity of neonicotinoid pesticide treatment used on corn and soya seed but will not include a numerical goal in contrast with the Ontario Government proposal of an 80% reduction.

Several members indicated that efforts to identify reliable pest predictor tools to help extrapolate a trend in terms of pesticide use were ongoing; the first multi-year results did not find a trend related to beneficial species and potential thresholds.

Industry members voiced the need for reliable data in this area and noted that more efforts are needed to make appropriate linkages.

11. BeeConnected Geolocator

Maria Trainer provided information on "BeeConnected Geolocator", a possible risk mitigation tool developed in Australia to support collaboration and information exchange between farmers and beekeepers as a means to minimize the occurrence of accidental bee poisoning incidents. CropLife Canada is considering bringing the smart phone Application to Canada on a voluntary basis and requested feedback from members of the BHRT. The tool operates by sending a message to all participants within a specific radius (10km); it is up to them to decide to make contact. A number of participants referred to the proposed tool as an equivalent to "Drift Watch" which already exists in Canada. It was suggested by some that despite the value-added of the tool, "Drift Watch" did not work nationally. "BeeConnected" may be less cost prohibitive than previous tools and if proven to be a workable solution for the industry, CLC expressed interest in launching the solution in partnership with the Canadian Honey Council.

Research Pillar

12. National Integrated Research Strategy

To date, the research working group has gathered current research inventories from CAPA, USDA and from the US and Canada based Pollinator Partnerships. The working group proposed to undertake a gap analysis of Canadian and US research as well as selected relevant international research. Further next steps include identifying available expertise to support the development of a bee health research strategy based on recommendations for addressing gaps.

Action 8: The Research WG will explore resources to undertake a Gap Analysis of the compiled research catalogue.

Knowledge Transfer / Communications Pillar

13. Economic Value of Bee Pollination

Stephen Page presented a draft update on the estimated economic value of pollination, and received feedback on its potential use and methodology. BHRT members discussed challenges related to the complex nature of estimating value of and demand for pollination, particularly with respect to factors including incremental increase of yields attributed to pollination and impacts of regional diversity and production models. Members were invited to provide advice to further refine the approach. It was suggested that given the complexities, it might be appropriate to identify a range rather than a specific value based on various scenarios. The next phase of work will look at estimating the demand for pollination services.

Action 9: AAFC to refine the economic analysis of the value of pollination; and to report back on Phase 2 work (estimate of the demand for pollination) at the Fall BHRT meeting.

14. Communication Strategy, Activities and Tools

The terms of reference of the Communications Working Group were presented and extensively discussed by the BHRT. It was clarified that the mandate of the Communications Working Group was to develop content for use by the BHRT in support of its communication efforts with governments, media and the general public. Roles and responsibilities of members and affiliate organizations were clarified. It was agreed by all BHRT members that communications are subject to co-chairs formal approval, and the Industry co-chair was designated as the official spokesperson for the Roundtable. The need for a French speaking spokesperson was also raised and CHC was asked and agreed to identify someone.

Members identified objectives for a possible discussion with FPT Ministers at their forthcoming summer meeting. It was proposed that Ministers be informed of the extent of work being achieved by industry on bee health over the past two years; the critical nature of the varroa mite challenge and the need for resources to adopt new solutions; challenges and opportunities faced by the beekeeping industry; as well as the important use of communications for the education of decision makers and the general public.

Action 10: The BHRT confirmed the Industry Co-chair as the primary spokesperson and have asked CHC to suggest an additional French-speaking spokesperson for the BHRT.

Action 11: BHRT members support the proposed approach and principles proposed in the Terms of Reference of the Communications Working Group; the Communications Plan will be further developed on this basis. The Communications WG will meet to discuss upcoming events/milestones as identified by the BHRT, and to propose an appropriate communications response.

Action 12: BHRT members to provide their input for the compendium of Bee Health Activities to Debra Conlon by the end of March 2015.

Other Business

15. Creation of New Working Groups

Rod Scarlett suggested the creation of two new working groups to address the priorities from the Roundtable's original Action Plan, specifically "Bee Nutrition" & "Habitat and Environment". The Working Groups should define tangible objectives and a forward plan.

BHRT member agreed with the proposed approach and volunteers were invited to express interest in leading or being members of these working groups.

Action 13: The BHRT will create 2 new working groups - "Habitat and Environment" to be chaired by Cary Gates; and "Nutrition" to be chaired by Grant Hicks. The two working groups will report on proposed scope and mandate at the next BHRT meeting (Fall 2015).

16. PMRA Update

PMRA noted that monitoring of bee-death incidents will continue in 2015 and responses will be streamlined. It is expected that the value assessment segment of the neonicotinoid review will be released before the end of March 2015.

17. OMAFRA Update

OMAFRA reported the receipt of numerous comments on their consultation paper on environment and climate change. They also noted that Ontario's intention is still to have a regulation in place for July of 2015 regarding neonicotinoid use. Ontario also continues to develop a broader pollinator health plan in collaboration with Ministries of Natural Resources and Forestry. Further consultations will follow in the near future.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Bee Health Roundtable will be held in Ottawa, in October 2015. There will also be a meeting of the Steering Committee in May 2015.

Summary of Action Items

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2. The Varroa Mite Control Working Group to articulate a clear set of short and long term objectives for workable solutions to be presented to government, industry, and other stakeholders for consideration and support.
3. CAPA is asked to provide a consistent definition and interpretation of a “non-productive hive”.
4. CAPA is asked to provide the BHRT with the detailed methodology for the overwinter loss survey.
5. The BHRT requests a technical pre-brief prior to the release of the CAPA annual report.
6. The BHRT supports the Pesticide Exposure Working Group’s request that a consultant be engaged to help develop a path forward and a work-plan.
7. After the completion of the BMP report, it will be referred to the Communications Committee for advice on how it can be used from a communications perspective.
8. The Research WG to explore resources to undertake a Gap Analysis of the compiled research catalogue.
9. AAFC to refine the economic analysis of the value of pollination; and to report back on Phase 2 work (estimate of the demand for pollination) at the Fall BHRT meeting.
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