

Bee Health Forum

Bulletin for October 3, 2014

The second meeting of the Bee Health Forum was held in Ottawa on October 3, 2014. The day was dedicated to receiving and discussing interim reports and obtaining feedback from members on progress, and agreement on a path forward.

Participants adopted a national strategy formulated around five objectives and supporting actions that covered loss mitigation, innovation, cross-sectoral collaboration, consumer confidence and stakeholder engagement. Committees were formed to address two priority areas - control of pests with a focus on Varroa mite, and control of pesticide exposure inside and outside the hive.

A presentation was given on the bee pest survey project initiated by the Alberta Beekeepers Commission and the Manitoba Beekeepers Association, coordinated through the National Bee Diagnostic Centre. The four-year program will document the health profile of honey bee colonies in Canada.

A research strategy will be developed after an examination of existing and on-going research. There will also be a compilation of current Provincial Best Management Practices (BMPs) for beekeepers.

Additionally, the roundtable discussed how to access the Veterinary Drugs Program and Minor Use Pesticide Program. It was suggested that industry and provincial governments jointly present key issues at the Pest Management Centre's annual priority setting meeting in March 2015.

Updates were received by Forum members on other Forum initiatives including the development of pest predictor tools by the Canola Council of Canada and Grain Farmers of Ontario, and harmonizing bee health monitoring activities by provincial apiculturists.

A draft Bee Health Coalition Communications Plan was also presented. Members also agreed to provide to each other courtesy notice of forthcoming reports so that all stakeholders are prepared to respond to relevant questions.

A key outcome of the meeting was a decision that the Forum should be branded and managed as a Roundtable moving forward, which was seen as appropriate to the long-term commitment recognized by stakeholders as being required to address bee health challenges.

For more information on the Bee Health Roundtable, please contact Julie Acheson, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, at (613) 773-0916.