

Bee Health Forum

October 3, 2014

AAFC Headquarters Conference Facilities, Ottawa, ON

Record of Decision

Participants

Chairs

1. Rod Scarlett (Industry Co-chair), Canadian Honey Council
2. Susie Miller (Government Co-chair), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Industry

3. Andrea Sarkic, Association of Equipment Manufacturers
4. Ashley St Hilaire, Canadian Organic Growers
5. Brian Gilroy, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (via WebEx)
6. Brian Innes, Canola Council of Canada
7. Bryan Rogers, Grain Growers of Canada
8. Cary Gates, Flowers Canada Growers (via WebEx)
9. Chris Nanni, Seed Corn Growers of Ontario (via WebEx)
10. Dave Carey, Canadian Seed Trade Association
11. David Jones, Canadian Horticultural Council
12. Dean Shoemaker, Flowers Canada Growers (via WebEx)
13. Debra Conlon, Grain Farmers of Ontario
14. Gerry McKee, Canadian Honey Council
15. Grant Hicks, Canadian Honey Council
16. Jack Hamilton, Oxfords Frozen Foods Ltd.
17. Jamieson Saab, Home Depot (via WebEx)
18. Jean-Pierre Chapleau, Canadian Honey Council
19. Jeff Wilson, Seed Corn Growers of Ontario (via WebEx)
20. Maria Trainer, CropLife Canada
21. Medhat Nasr, Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists
22. Pierre Petelle, CropLife Canada
23. Salah Zoghalmi, Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec
24. Victoria Wojcik, Pollinator Partnership (via WebEx)

Academia

25. Rob Currie, University of Manitoba (via WebEx)

Provincial Government

26. Anne Leboeuf, Ministère de l'Agriculture, des pêcheries et de l'alimentation du Québec (via WebEx)

27. Chris Maund, New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries (via WebEx)
28. David Feindel, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
29. Geoff Wilson, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture
30. Greg Douglas, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
31. Jason Sproule, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (via WebEx)
32. Kelly McAslan, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
33. Paul van Westendorp, British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture (via WebEx)
34. Rhéal Lafrenière, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

Federal Government

35. Connie Hart, Health Canada
36. Connie Rajzman, Canadian Food Inspection Agency
37. Lars Juergensen, Health Canada
38. Marcos Alvarez, AAFC
39. Steve Pernal, AAFC

Federal Government Support

40. Julie Acheson, AAFC
41. Justin Sugawara, AAFC
42. Mark Drouin, AAFC
43. Maxine Grier, AAFC
44. Stephen Page, AAFC

Federal Government Observers

45. Émilie de La Haye Duponsel, AAFC (via WebEx)
46. Farid Makki, AAFC (via WebEx)
47. Gilbert Arnold, AAFC (via WebEx)
48. Lucie Dubois, AAFC
49. Patricia Curry, Health Canada
50. Sheila Jones, AAFC

Meeting Objectives:

- *Receive and discuss interim reports, obtain feedback from members on progress, and agree on proposed path forward*
- *Discuss how to engage all Forum members on an ongoing basis, and opportunities for broader engagement.*

Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Agenda, and Member Updates

The Co-chairs welcomed members and observers of the Bee Health Forum (BHF) and reviewed the agenda. During the updates, Rod Scarlett shared a letter from the U.S. Honey Bee Health Coalition, expressing their interest in working with the Bee Health Forum. Member organizations that are already involved with the U.S. Honey Bee Health Coalition include the Canadian Honey Council (CHC), CropLife Canada (CLC), the Canola Council of Canada (CCC), and the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA). It was suggested that the Bee Health Forum organize a meeting with the U.S. Honey Bee Coalition.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) provided an update on this season's bee losses, noting that incidents have diminished from previous years; reduced losses may reflect implementation of new Best Management Practices (BMPs) required by PMRA this year. An update was also provided on PMRA's Hot / Cold study, which involves monitoring bee health and the impacts of pesticides in corn growing regions that have had bee death incidents (hot spots), as well as in other corn growing regions that have not had incidents (cold spots). The lab analysis is not complete, but there will be an interim report available soon that will provide a summary of the study.

National Controlled Pollinator Strategy

A draft Terms of Reference document was presented, as well as a strategy, which is intended to complement and integrate the existing Action Plan into five main objectives as described below:

Objective 1 - Mitigate losses; strengthen bee health, and increase bee population:

The tasks related to this objective are the development of two work plans – one for the control of Varroa mite, and another for reducing the impact of pesticides (inside and outside the hive) on bee health. Members recommended broadening the description for treating Varroa mite to include a range of control products, as well as including BMPs and methods for prevention among the options. Consideration was also given to widening the scope of the Varroa mite work plan to include other pests, but it was decided that the work needs to be broken down into manageable pieces and that a work plan for Varroa mite will serve as a good starting point for future work in other areas. Working groups were identified to establish these work plans.

Objective 2 - Ensure that apiculture is a valued and recognized component of agriculture:

Participants supported transitioning the Forum to a Roundtable structure as this was seen as an important step to ensure national coordination and recognizing the long-term commitment needed to achieve results. It was noted that Value Chain Roundtables operate on the basis of consensus and inclusiveness and this will guide communications and membership decisions in a Roundtable format. The National Strategy will provide the basis for the new Roundtable, including its Terms of Reference. It was noted that greater definition is needed of the “federal co-ordination” being sought to support strategy implementation.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) will continue to work on an economic analysis of the value of honey bees as pollinators, including available data and analysis on future pollination needs.

Objective 3 – Ensure that apiculture is a progressive and innovative industry in Canada:

The focus of the activities supporting this objective is to ensure that beekeepers and producers have the necessary tools, when they are needed. The development of a Research Strategy that includes an inventory of existing relevant research findings, and identifies and prioritizes gaps for future research will be key. A working group was established to begin developing a Research Strategy.

Objective 4 – Ensure industry expertise and secure consumer confidence:

The intent of this objective is to promote the sharing of information in order to maximize resources and secure consumer confidence. Members suggested reframing the title of the objective to replace “consumer confidence” with “public confidence” in order to better reflect the actions that it encompasses. Among related activities, AAFC will support a project for CHC to identify gaps and opportunities to harmonize existing BMPs for beekeepers. During the discussion surrounding this objective, provincial apiarists were also asked to think of ways to enhance surveillance using current available resources. Another suggested activity for this objective was the development of producer BMPs for the use of pesticides.

Objective 5 – Build trust and understanding among all stakeholders:

Activities under this objective are intended to more fully inform the public about the complexity of bee health issues and the breadth of engagement by stakeholders. Key messages will be developed for the use of all members to ensure consistency. It was also agreed that once the National Strategy is finalized, a press release should be published to announce the new national Roundtable format, as well as the member organizations that are working together to lead it. Members also expressed the need for advance notification before key reports are released by PMRA and other members, in order to be better prepared to respond. The Communications working group agreed that they would look into ways that the BHF could better communicate with stakeholders, and PMRA agreed to discuss opportunities for pre-

engagement with the BH Roundtable on key documents/reports. The group also discussed issues related to furthering public dialogue; it was decided that this will be further considered at the next meeting. A Communications working group was established to pursue these initiatives.

Honey Bee Surveillance in Canada

A presentation was given on the newly approved bee pest survey project initiated by the Alberta Beekeepers Commission and the Manitoba Beekeepers Association, coordinated through Dr. Pernal from AAFC and the National Bee Diagnostic Centre. Dr. Pernal presented an overview of the project and indicated that it is a four-year National Monitoring and Surveillance program to document the health profile of honey bee colonies in Canada, starting with Alberta and Manitoba. The project is not intended to explain the cause for bee deaths, but rather to give a snapshot of what is present in terms of pests and pathogens. The goal is to make this a long-term practice, beyond the four years of the project.

National Honey Bee Monitoring Strategy

During the discussion around honey bee monitoring, some provincial apiarists expressed a need for a standardized national inspection program to provide data for making more informed decisions regarding policy and regulation. It was noted that this program should be based on science and go beyond a single inspection. A systemic monitoring of endemic bee pests and diseases throughout the year would help determine the causes for bee deaths, and allow for quick response to outbreaks. Current resources are not adequate. It was suggested that provincial apiarists identify ways of enhancing surveillance using the current available resources, as well as working with beekeeper associations to develop ways for beekeepers to do the reporting themselves.

Integrated Bee Biosecurity and Food Safety Project

CHC presented and distributed its new biosecurity and food safety manual entitled Canadian Bee Industry Safety Quality Traceability (CBISQT). The manual includes 12 production practices and will be distributed through social media, the CHC's website, and seminars, as well as the Ontario Beekeepers convention and other appropriate venues.

Proposal for Gap Analysis Project

A proposal was presented for a project to collect, compare and evaluate BMPs for beekeepers, and to identify gaps and opportunities to harmonize them across regions, while allowing for climate and other regional differences. The project will run for ten weeks and cost \$25,000, which will be funded by AAFC through the BHF. The final document will be a "living" document that can easily be updated and will be published in HiveLights magazine, newsletters and websites, as well as being made available by provincial governments. The group endorsed the project.

Plan to access minor use / minor species drugs and pesticides

An approach was presented to better access the Veterinary Drugs Program and Minor Use Pesticide Program. It was suggested that industry and provincial governments jointly present key issues at PMC's annual priority setting meeting in March 2015. It was also noted that it would be beneficial to have representatives from the BHF at the meeting. It was suggested that a letter be sent to AAFC requesting that additional priority be given to certain proposals. A committee was formed to develop a work plan for accessing these programs.

Pest Predictor Model Tools

Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO) provided an update on a research project being done at Ridgetown College to create a pest predictor model for corn and soybeans in Ontario. GFO is also working with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) on a four-year project regarding soil pest predictor tools. The Canola Council of Canada (CCC) updated the group on plans for a half-day seminar being held on October 21, 2014 in Saskatoon to discuss what is known about pest prediction models and thresholds for treatments. The goal is to identify knowledge gaps needed to make better decisions regarding the application of insecticides. It was suggested that the seminar be used to ask growers to spray between 3pm-5am while bees are not active. Since the seminar will follow a workshop structure with breakout sessions, remote participation will not be available. However, a report of the meeting will be distributed to the public. CCC will share this report with the BHF. It was also noted that since the EU has banned the use of certain neonicotinoid pesticides, some reports suggest that they have experienced increased crop losses and engaged in more spraying.

Draft National Integrated Research Strategy

An approach to develop a research strategy was presented. Concern was expressed that the large scope is an issue and that prioritization is necessary. It was suggested that time would best be spent in the short term on gathering information on relevant research that has been done within the past five years on already-identified priorities and organizing current knowledge to identify gaps. A Research Working Group was established.

Communication Next Steps

A draft Bee Health Coalition Communications Plan was presented. The plan includes a list of eight deliverables: Bee Health content on AAFC's website; announcement of the re-branded coalition; release of the Action Plan; hosting of a public dialogue forum; sharing progress made toward the action plan; hosting of a reception at the next FPT Agriculture Ministers' meeting; presentations at annual general meetings of member organizations, and sharing of meeting highlights with the public.

The group then discussed how the Forum is being used and whether a separate coalition for industry members is necessary. Clarification was given regarding what information members can share about the Forum. It was agreed that all members use the Forum in various ways and that it is valuable. Having a communications plan

will play a vital role making sure that the public knows about the work of the BHF. It was suggested that members provide the Communications working group with a compendium of activities done to date in support of bee health. The Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA) and GFO will prepare a template for members to use in compiling this information.

Building on earlier discussions around the National Controlled Pollinator Strategy, participants confirmed their support for transitioning the Forum to a long-term Roundtable structure. It was also decided that the Communications working group would release an announcement of the new Roundtable, along with the draft Strategic Plan.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Bee Health Roundtable will be held in Ottawa, in mid-March 2015. There will also be a meeting of the Steering Committee in January 2015.

Members with suggestions on specific guest speakers were asked to communicate them with the Co-chairs.

Summary of Action Items

1. Prepare draft work plan for control of pesticide exposure inside and outside the hive affecting bees (Jean-Pierre Chapleau, Debra Conlon, Brian Innes, Maria Trainer, Dave Carey, Salah Zoghلامي, Kelly McAslan, Connie Hart, David Feindel, Rod Scarlett), and draft approach for work plan for Varroa mite control (Grant Hicks, Geoff Wilson, Medhat Nasr, Maria Trainer; PMRA and PMC will participate in an advisory capacity).
2. Continue work on the economic analysis of honey bees as pollinators, including context on the potential growth of demand for pollination with a provincial breakdown of projected pollinator needs and gaps, as well as a background section illustrating the evolution of the industry. (AAFC - HCSD, STB)
3. National Controlled Pollinator Strategy Working Group to define the proposed federal leadership role. (CHC, GFO, CLC, CSTA)
4. Research Strategy Working Group to develop a scope for a research strategy. (Stephen Page, Maria Trainer, Victoria Wojcik, Rob Currie, Steve Pernal)
5. Proceed with Harmonization of BMPs project. (AAFC, provincial apiarists, CHC)
6. Establish priorities to put forward to the Pest Management Centre during the prioritization meeting in March 2015. (Shelley Hoover, Geoff Wilson, Justin Sugawara; PMRA and PMC will participate in an advisory capacity)
7. Provincial governments to examine potential for a coordinated and standardized national approach to current monitoring and surveillance activities. (David Feindel, Geoff Wilson, Rhéal Lafrenière, Anne Leboeuf, Chris Maund, Kelly McAslan, Paul van Westendorp, Jason Sproule)
8. Federal and provincial governments to seek opportunity to present Bee Health Forum National Strategy at the next FPT Regulatory ADMs meeting. (AAFC)
9. Proceed with work associated with moving from a Forum to a Roundtable. (AAFC)
10. Communications working group to release announcement of the new Roundtable, along with the draft Strategic Plan. (Kelly McAslan, Debra Conlon, Rod Scarlett, Brian Gilroy, AAFC)

11. Communications group to develop key messages for use by Roundtable members about what the Roundtable is doing and a process for updating members. WG will gather and make use of existing material from members and other sources. (Kelly McAslan, Debra Conlon, Rod Scarlett, Brian Gilroy, AAFC)
12. Communications working group to identify best practices when releasing key reports in order to better prepare Roundtable members to be able to respond. (Kelly McAslan, Debra Conlon, Rod Scarlett, Brian Gilroy, AAFC)
13. Provide the Communications working group with a compendium of activities done to date in support of bee health. (all members) CSTA/GFO to prepare a template for members to use in compiling this information.
14. National Controlled Pollinator Strategy Working Group to integrate feedback received by Roundtable on National Strategy. (CHC, OMAF, GFO, CLC, CSTA)
15. Share meeting report on October stakeholder workshop in Saskatoon, once completed. (CCC)
16. Co-chairs to receive suggestions on specific guest speakers for next meeting, as well as potential new members. (all members)
17. PMRA will discuss opportunities for pre-engagement with the BH Roundtable on key documents/reports.