

Fifth Bee Health Roundtable
January 25, 2017, Ottawa, Ontario
Record of Decision

Opening Remarks

- Andrea Johnston and Rod Scarlett welcomed members, including two new youth representatives – Gabriela Sauer (4-H Canada) and Lauren Parks (Canadian Young Farmers).
- Rod Scarlett highlighted accomplishments over the past year, including collaboration with the US's Honey Bee Health Coalition (HBHC) work on screening of new varroacides and publication of new tools and resources produced by the Bee Health Roundtable (BHRT).

Recent Developments and Emerging Issues

- Connie Hart from the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) provided an update on the re-evaluations of the neonicotinoids Imidacloprid, Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam. Some members voiced concern that potential alternatives to neonicotinoids could pose a greater risk to bees. She also announced the release of the [*Canadian Bee Incident Reports 2012-2016*](#) on January 25, 2015 by PMRA which provides an overview of honey bee incident reports that were received by Health Canada between 2012 and 2016.

Next Policy Framework

- Industry members provided feedback on the NPF from a bee health and honey trade perspective. Some key points included:
 - Program approvals be accelerated and greater flexibility be provided for program funding.
 - Continuity between frameworks is critical to ensure continued funding.
 - Support for public trust initiatives not be at the expense of existing program funding.
 - Performance feedback be provided on the cost and benefits of program funding.More detailed comments can be found in Annex C.

Pollinator Strategy Pillar

- Rod Scarlett reported on the progress of the Control of Pesticide Exposure Working Group and proposed new actions to advance this work. Rod recommended that the Working Group review the Terms of Reference and refocus its mandate. Members agreed and also supported his suggestions that the Working Group identify options to develop a consolidated source of pesticide information; and that the Working Group explore avenues to encourage relevant research on bee health.
- Rod Scarlett reported that work relevant to control of Varroa Mite has been initiated through the US's Honey Bee Health Coalition. A 2016 publication from HBHC lists a number of potential compounds that have been screened in US labs, and the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA) has reviewed the materials from a Canadian perspective. Rod noted that, although PMRA has granted registration to Bayvorol flumethrin strips, screening additional compounds and finding a reliable solution is vital so that the bee population is not further impacted. He suggested that continued support from the BHRT to accelerate work will be valuable as potential compounds are identified.

- Dr. Stephen Pernal gave an update on the Canadian Honey Bee Surveillance Project. The objective of this national survey is to determine the incidence and distribution of pests, pathogens and parasites affecting honey bees and establish the presence or absence of exotic threats to the beekeeping industry. The results of the survey are intended to ensure that Canada has robust and systematically-collected data on bee health, employing methodologies similar to those used by other leading beekeeping countries in the world. Results from 2016 survey activities will be available in April 2017, with a final project completion date of March 2018.
- Dr. Medhat Nasr updated the BHRT on provincial monitoring strategies and CAPA's [2016 wintering loss report](#). CAPA and Provincial Apiculturists (PAs) publish this annual honey bee wintering loss report and share best management practices to beekeepers across Canada. In 2016, the national average colony winter loss was 16.8%. The overall national colony loss was one of the lowest since 2006/7.
- Industry members expressed satisfaction with the 2016 BHRT publication *Canadian Best Management Practices for Honey Bee Health*. Industry members agreed to assist with broad distribution of the guide across Canada and discussed a number of options to do this, including working with equipment retailers.
- Victoria Wojcik prepared a Pollinator Partnership summary report that was contracted by AAFC for the Habitat and Surroundings Working Group. The *Honey Bee Forage and Bee Habitat: Programs, Management Practices, and Gaps in Canada* report was well-received by the BHRT because it provides a variety of tools and advice for beekeepers. A communications plan will be developed by AAFC and the BHRT Communications Working Group to distribute the outreach materials. It was emphasized that promotional support from members to actively initiate projects should be part of the strategy.

Kevin Nixon reported that, while the Nutrition Working Group had a low profile in 2016, they are monitoring the development of a new beekeeper survey from the Honey Bee Health Coalition that will identify relevant knowledge gaps. Kevin has requested that Canadian beekeepers be part of the survey and is hoping the results will be available in spring 2017. Results of this survey could support priorities/indicators for this working group in 2017. Kevin also reported that Purina is researching and developing new products related to honeybee nutrition, and they would like to bring their knowledge of bee health up to the same standards as their other animal products.

Products and Solutions Pillar

- Leslie Farmer from AAFC's Pest Management Centre provided updates related to approvals of three new treatments for bee pests and diseases.
 - Lincomycin (antibiotic for American Foulbrood) is one of the priority projects under the Minor Use/Minor Species Veterinary Drug Program.
 - The HopGuard submission (Varroa Mite) is close to completion.
 - Apilife VAR (Varroa Mite) was recently identified as a priority by stakeholders. Leslie remarked that this product is of interest as the first to use natural oils such as thyme and eucalyptus.

- Brian Innes reviewed the status of six different Pest Predictor Models/Tools that are in current circulation for canola. Industry members were pleased with the variety of ongoing partnerships and cooperation among growers and beekeepers. Some provincial government representatives noted that there is a lot of provincial monitoring for threshold levels and that a new risk assessment tool will be available in Alberta in the next few months.

AAFC Science to Support the Sector

- Javier Gracia-Garza from AAFC's Science and Technology Branch provided an update on the department's science priorities as well as outlined a variety of departmental investments and projects that are specific to the Canadian bee health sector. Industry highlighted the importance of continued collaboration with AAFC's bee scientists and also encouraged AAFC to invest in human resources to maintain the work that is benefiting the bee health community.

Research Pillar

- Stephen Page and Victoria Wojcik proposed the next steps for a research strategy. They reviewed the research inventory and gaps from the 2016 research report prepared for the BHRT and recommended sharing it with three target organizations as the basis for discussion of possible projects/collaborations. It was agreed by the BHRT that priorities identified in the Research Strategy would be shared with CAPA, the Canadian Bee Research Fund, and Project apis m.

Knowledge Transfer /Communications Pillar

- Stephen Page provided an update on the development of an estimated projection of demand for pollination to the BHRT. A questionnaire will be circulated by email in spring 2017 that will seek sector expertise and feedback on the proposed projections per crop.
- Debra Conlon reported that in 2016 the Communications Working Group evaluated the direction of the Working Group and decided to focus on industry stakeholders as the main target audience. In 2017, the Working Group will assist in the creation of communications plans that promote BHRT products such as The Canadian Best Management Practices for Honey Bee Health and the Planting Forage for Honey Bees in Canada (planting guide). For example, the Working Group can provide advice and investigate partnerships with retailers to cover printing costs and provide potential vehicles for distribution.

Public Trust

- Andrea Johnston provided an update on the Public Trust initiative. Industry members expressed general support for the industry-led initiative called The Canadian Journey to Public Trust. Rod Scarlett reported the Canadian Honey Council has provided a small funding contribution to the public trust "Hub" to assist with the start-up but will not likely participate in the meetings due to financial considerations.

Bee Health Roundtable Strategic Planning

- Maxine Grier gave an AAFC presentation that demonstrated the progress made on the BHRT's Strategic Plan and suggested key directions moving forward. Since the initial March 2014 meeting with the Bee Health Forum, the BHRT has explored and initiated a variety of approaches to better understand and improve honey bee health in Canada. Members were asked to recommit to activities to complete the initial Action Plan; and to consider how directions and membership may/should evolve moving forward.
- All industry members agreed there was value in the VCRT because there are excellent opportunities for sharing information and collaborating across industry and government. All participants agreed that improving bee health is a long-term collective goal and they were committed to continued involvement in the roundtable. Given the operating environment has evolved from reactive and crisis-based, they noted there is now an opportunity to broaden the mandate to possibly include honey issues.

Conclusion

The next Bee Health Roundtable will be held on January 24, 2018 in Ottawa, ON.

Item #	Action Items	Responsibility	Timelines
5-1	Comments from the Bee Health Roundtable (BHRT) on the Next Policy Framework (NPF) will be shared with the NPF team.	AAFC	February 2017
5-2	The Communications Working Group, with support from AAFC, will lead development of a broader distribution and promotion plan for <i>The Canadian Best Management Practices for Honey Bee Health</i> and the <i>Planting Forage for Honey Bees in Canada</i> (planting guide).	AAFC / Industry	April 2017
5-3	The Habitat and Surroundings Working Group will work with the Communications Working Group to plan and execute dissemination of the planting guide and the program gap analysis report to their respective audiences and partners.	AAFC / Industry	April 2017
5-4	The Control of Pesticide Exposure Working Group will review the Terms of Reference and current work plan to ensure it is consistent with the BHRT's capacity. The working group will consider specific suggestions from the BHRT to create a consolidated source of pesticide information; opportunities for collaboration with the US; and avenues to encourage relevant research.	Industry	May 2017
5-5	Research priorities identified in the Research Strategy will be shared with three target organizations – the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists, the Canadian Bee Research Fund, and Project apis m.	AAFC	April 2017
5-6	Roundtable members will be engaged in further discussion of renewal of the Roundtable's Strategic Plan, including review of current Working Groups and priorities and consideration of how to integrate emerging issues into the plan. A survey will be circulated to get views and priorities from the membership.	AAFC / Industry	June 2017
5-7	The Review Group on Honey and Beekeeping Sector Issues will meet to review the Terms of Reference that were approved by the BHRT in November 2016 and develop a work plan leading to a recommendation for the BHRT.	Industry	April 2017

Co-Chairs

1. Rod Scarlett, Canadian Honey Council (CHC)
2. Andrea Johnston, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Industry Members

3. Kevin Nixon, CHC
4. Scott Plante, CHC (by phone)
5. André Talbot, CHC
6. Stan Reist, CHC
7. David Jones, Canadian Horticulture Council
8. Brian Innes, Canola Council of Canada
9. Cary Gates, Flowers Canada Growers
10. Debra Conlon, Grain Farmers of Ontario (by phone)
11. Lindsey Ehman, Grain Growers of Canada
12. Dave Carey, Canadian Seed Trade Association
13. Doug Miller, Canadian Seed Growers Association (by phone)
14. Howard Mains, Association of Equipment Manufacturers
15. Victoria Wojcik, Pollinator Partnership
16. Maria Trainer, CropLife Canada
17. Rob Currie, University of Manitoba (by phone)
18. Debbie Etsell, BC Blueberry Council (by phone)
19. Medhat Nasr, Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA)
20. Salah Zoghلامي, Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec (by phone)

Provincial Government Members

21. Paul van Westendorp, BC (by phone)
22. Marie Auger, NWT, (by phone)
23. Dave Feindal, AB
24. Geoff Wilson, SK (by phone)
25. Rhéal Lafrenière, MN (by phone)
26. Kelly McAslan, ON
27. Julie Ferland, QC (by phone, French line)
28. Chris Maund, NB (by phone)
29. Jason Sproule, NS (by phone)

Federal Government Members

30. Steve Pernal, AAFC
31. Leslie Farmer, AAFC (by phone)
32. Connie Hart, Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA)
33. Lindsay Hanson, (PMRA)
34. Connie Rajzman, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
35. Anita Gilmer, CFIA

Guests / Speakers

36. Gabriela Sauer, 4-H Canada (youth representative)
37. Lauren Parks, Canadian Young Farmers (youth representative)
38. Adam Arsenault, AAFC
39. Brooke Fridfinnson, AAFC
40. Javier Gracia-Garza, AAFC

Federal Support

41. Stephen Desroches, AAFC
42. Alex Sabourin, AAFC
43. Austin Mowat, AAFC
44. Mathieu Boucher, AAFC
45. Claudine Routhier, AAFC (Events Secretariat)
46. Christine Moses, AAFC

Provincial Government Observers

47. Paul Kozak, ON (by phone)

Industry Observers

48. Drew Black, Canadian Federation of Agriculture (by phone)
49. Jeff Wilson, Seed Corn Growers of Ontario (by phone)
50. Chris Nanni, Seed Corn Growers of Ontario (by phone)
51. Mike Scheffel, Canadian Seed Growers' Association

Federal Government Observers

52. Scott Kirby, PMRA
53. Sonia Roussel, PMRA
54. Stephen Page, AAFC
55. Maxine Grier, AAFC
56. Sheila Jones, AAFC
57. Farid Makki, AAFC (by phone)
58. Emilie de la Haye Duponsel, AAFC (by phone)
59. Chris Tolton, AAFC (by phone)
60. Alex Campbell, AAFC (by phone)

Programs

- Industry stressed the importance of maintaining the programs that are currently available.
- Small industry organizations recommended reimbursements be expedited quickly because it impacts/delays their budgets. It was also noted the application process can be cumbersome.
- Interested in seeing cost/benefit analysis on program results.
- Timelines are important, as continuity between frameworks and funding is critical.
- Many programs that are already in place are not always recognized fully for their value and the data. For example, surveillance in pest monitoring and winter loss reports.
- Provinces' priorities may not align with industry's priorities. For example, surveillance is important, but so is outreach and marketing.

Markets and Trade

- Market access/development activities are important because honey has issues with foreign produced/outsourced honey.
- Maintaining access to current markets is equally as important as accessing new ones, particularly on Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary issues. Industry encouraged flexibility within programs to address market access issues that arise.

Science and Innovation

- There was interest in tying the NPF to the broader Government of Canada Fundamental Science Review and ensuring the agriculture sector is represented on the panel.
- Industry requested information on the process for creating a new cluster. They also requested more funding be provided for smaller sectors, or allow for a larger ratio of in-kind contributions.
- There was interest in funding surveillance systems such as a project for invasive pest species.
- Surveillance programs should be funded by provinces, but their success affects the entire national system.

General

- Pleased to see the NPF consultation process has been significant and would be interested in seeing the survey results.
- It was noted that small organizations do not have the capacity to invest in all of the priority areas. They asked if there were ways to increase small sectors' participation or increase the ratio for in-kind contributions.

Public Trust

- Industry fully supports Public Trust initiatives, but not at the expense of other programs or priorities. There was interest in knowing if this would be new funding.
- NPF coincides with the Emergency Management Framework (plant/animal strategy) and CFIA has implied that funding would come from AAFC. It was noted that regulatory work cannot be funded under GF2.