

The British Beekeepers Association

BBKA – supporting bees and beekeepers



Lord de Mauley
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Defra
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
SW1P 3JR

13 June 2013

Dear Lord de Mauley

Firstly, please accept my apologies for the tardiness of this letter following our meeting on 21 May in your offices. However it is timely that I follow-up our meeting.

The situation post the introduction of the neonicotinoid restrictions was a major part of our discussions. Given that these will be imposed by the UK Government as per the Commission's dictat, we seek clarification as to their implications. We need to know which chemicals will be used on which crop during the moratorium. There indeed may be a shift in the crops farmers choose to grow but we can be certain that there will be a return to older chemistries, applied by spraying which causes us great concern. We need to see upgraded stewardship protocols in place to minimise damage from the use of sprays on crops foraged by bees. With the foregoing in mind, we urge you to initiate the production of a risk and impact assessment in relation to the new position.

We put forward to you the idea of a web-based spray-alerting system whereby farmers could log-on and warn beekeepers in their locale, that they would be using a product on a particular crop at a given location in the next say, 48 hours. The system would send-out an e-mail to all beekeepers in the vicinity of the spray target location. This would give beekeepers the chance to take defensive action where possible to help minimise colony losses. Such a scheme might involve the use of the BBKA's data base, BeeBase (providing motivation to register on BeeBase) and other associations' data bases, if they were to participate. The setting-up of this scheme should not be costly and could be funded by the crop protection industry, NFU and Defra. This invaluable approach would afford some very good PR for the industry, it being seen to do its best to mitigate the impact of potentially damaging spraying. We urge you to examine this possibility and set-up a task force with the key stakeholders as soon as possible.

The restrictions on neonicotinoids will of course make filling the gaps in our understanding of their effects on pollinators in the field virtually impossible to investigate properly, this being the very area in which considerable lacunae in our knowledge exist. Derogations on a farm by farm basis will not work given the very large area over which bees forage and a regionalised approach will result in biased data. Likewise a year on year comparison, before and after the restrictions is also problematic, as major variables such as weather will be impossible to control. We look forward to your thoughts on how this conundrum will be resolved.

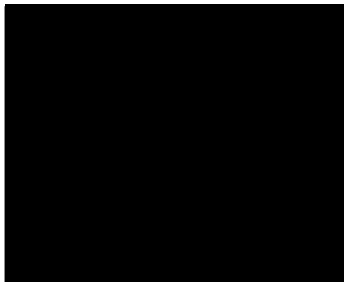
Registered address: The National Beekeeping Centre, National Agriculture Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LG
Telephone: 024 7669 6679 Fax: 024 7669 0682 E-mail: bbka@britishbeekeepers.com Website: www.bbka.org.uk

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We look forward to working closely with your staff to engage on the issues outlined here.

Yours truly



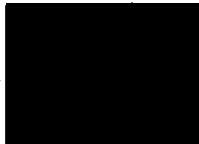
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Please reply to:



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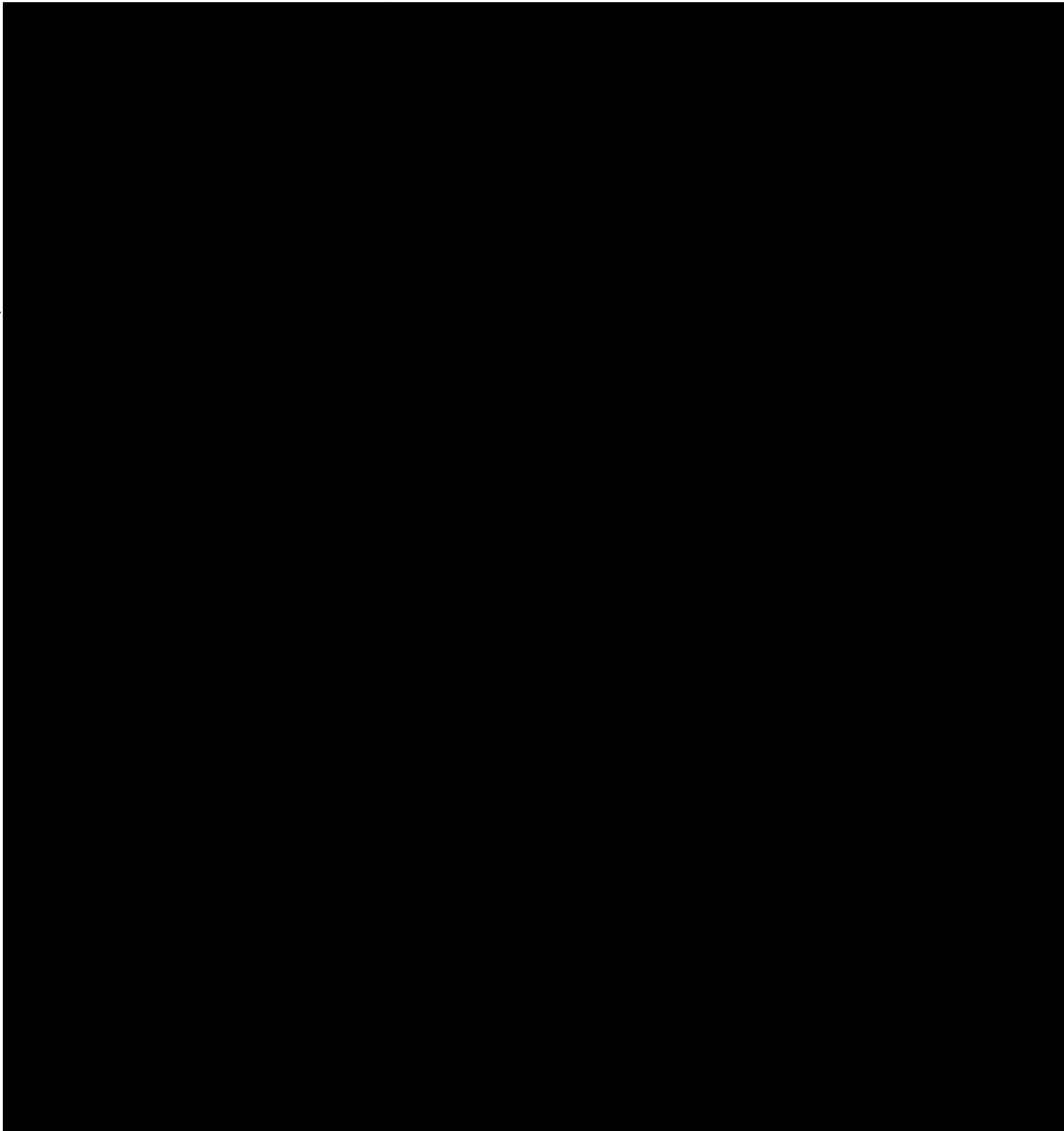
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About the BBKA:

The **BBKA** is a registered charity no 212025 www.bbka.org.uk. It has around 24,000 members who are amateur beekeepers.

Notes to Editors.....

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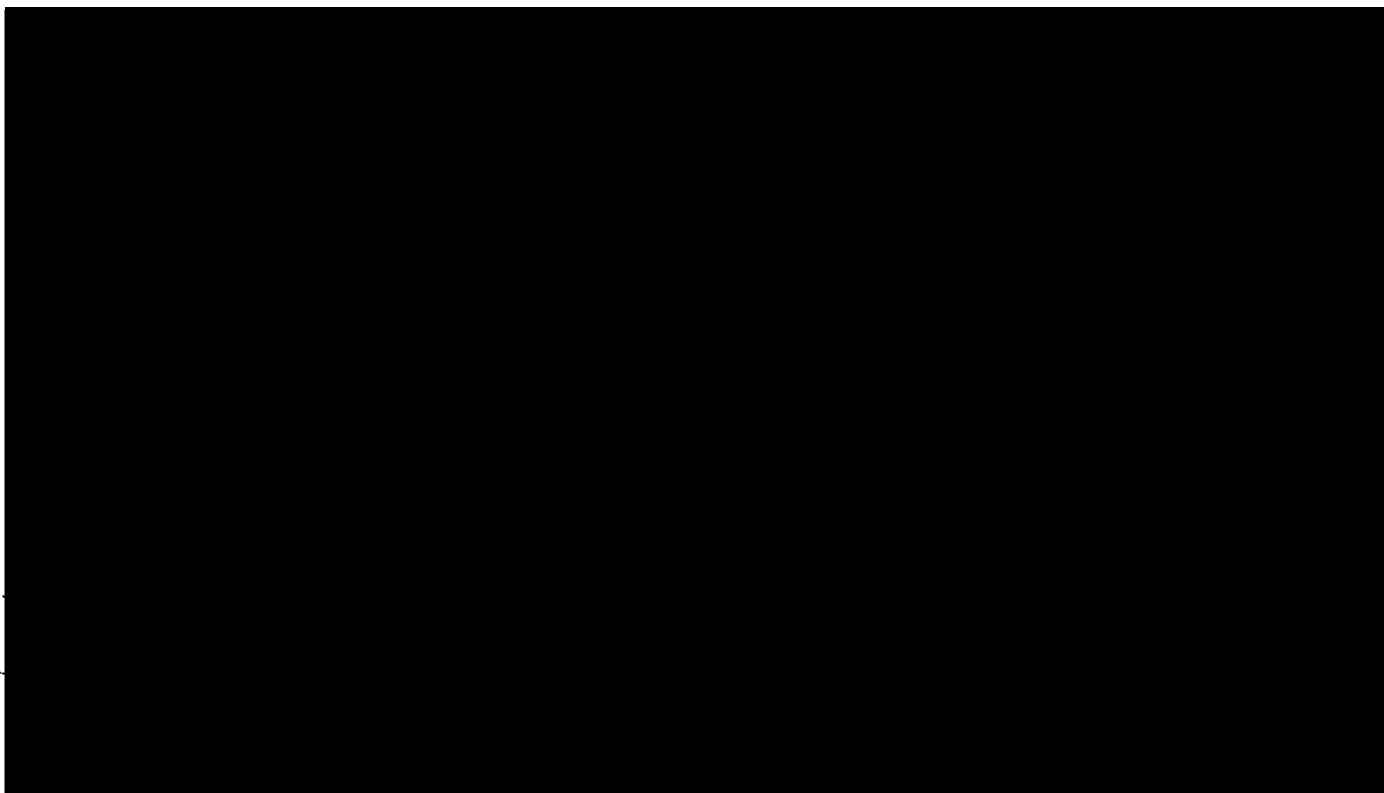
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