

# Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association

## Newsletter for May 2009

### Colony Losses Survey 2009

23 members have responded to this year's survey of colony losses and the picture is very different from last year.

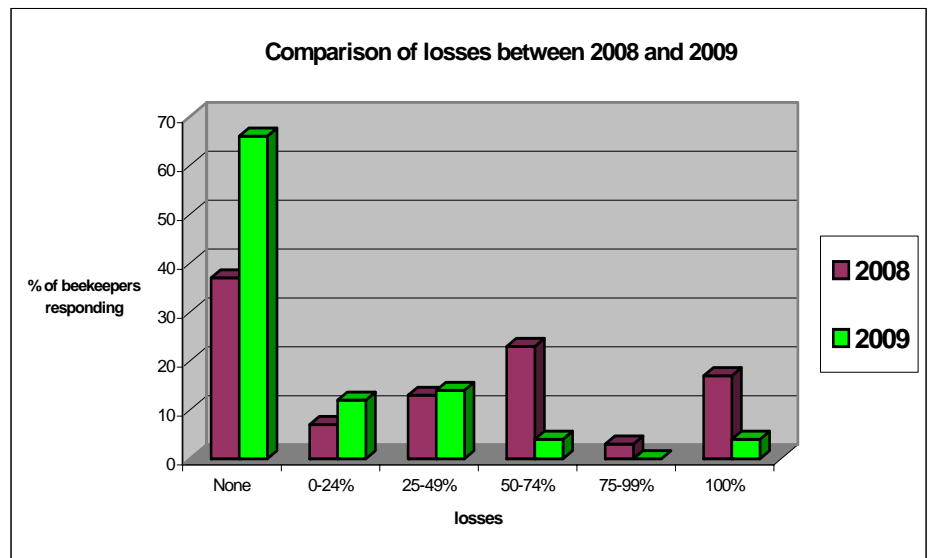
From a total of **94** colonies on the 1st November 2008, by 15th April this year only **11** were lost, giving percentage losses of just **11.7%**. Compare this with last year's overall losses of 35.6%!

No one lost more than 2 colonies and 15 out of the 23 beekeepers (66%) were able to report no losses at all.

The chart shows a comparison between 2008 and 2009. The red bars are the percentage of beekeepers in 2008 who reported losses at each of the levels between none and 100%. The green bars are the values for 2009.

The symptoms reported were also different. This year four members reported that their colonies had gone queenless by the spring, quite likely because of the poor summer last year. Two beekeepers also lost colonies due to Nosema and I am hoping that we shall be able to set up a monitoring service for this disease next autumn.

Any members who have not yet responded to the survey can do so by emailing me at [chairman@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:chairman@mbbka.org.uk). I will then update the figures and publish them on the web site.



### Dates for your diary

**Saturday 9th May, Sunday 17th May,  
Wednesday 20th May, Sunday 31st May**

Practical sessions for new beekeepers at the Association Apiary (see overpage)

**Monday 11th May, Monday 18th May,  
Monday 8th June, Monday 15th June**

Basic Assessment Tutorials at Wendover Library

**Sunday 23rd May and Monday 24th May  
Tring Canal Festival 10am-4pm**

We shall be having a stand on the Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday. Please come along to help if you can. If you have any honey to sell, bring it along with you.

Contact: Karen Dadswell 01296 624091

### Swarms

Last month I gave you a new phone number for **Sean Kirwan** our Swarm Officer.

We have had to make a change to a different number so please discard the one I gave you. The new number is:

**07850 085767**

Members who need swarms to increase their stock of bees should contact Sean, preferably by email at [sean@v2net.co.uk](mailto:sean@v2net.co.uk). Please give your phone number and say whether you can collect the swarms yourself.

More overpage ....

## Basic Assessment

Four tutorial sessions have been arranged to cover the syllabus for the BBKA Basic Assessment.

They will be held in the Meetings Room of the **Wendover library** on Monday evenings between 7:30 and 9:30. The dates will be:

Monday 11th May  
Monday 18th May  
Monday 8th June  
Monday 15th June

We can still take a few more people so, if you are interested, please come along to the first session. The only requirement is that you have been keeping bees for at least one season.

## Practical sessions for new beekeepers

This year there were a large number of people doing the beginners course so we have arranged the following extra practical sessions in the Association Apiary at Stoke Mandeville.

Saturday 9th May, 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
Sunday 17th May, 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
Wednesday 20th May, 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
Sunday 31st May, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Although aimed at new beekeepers and members who have not yet started keeping their own bees, **all members** are welcome to come along.

You don't need to book in advance unless you require the loan of a bee suit and gloves in which case please let me know by phone or email and I will make sure there is one available for you.

Everyone who comes should bring their own Wellington boots.

## Money for bee research

At last the Government has come up with some new money for research into the decline in honey bees and other pollinators.

In addition to the £2 million support for the National Bee Unit announced in January a further £8 million has been pledged jointly by the *Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council* (BBSRC), the *Natural Environment Research Council* (NERC), the *Wellcome Trust* and the *Scottish Assembly*.

The "sting in the tail" is that this "pot" of money will fund research projects for the next 10 years and will be for "all pollinators", not just honey bees. *continued...*

Full details of the announcement can be found at: <http://nds.coi.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=399092&NewsAreaID=2>

Details of the research programmes proposed by the BBKA can be seen at <http://www.britishbee.org.uk/files/bbka-research-concepts.pdf>

Welcome though it is, this money is still very small in relation to the scale of the problem so we must keep up the pressure to ensure that it is directed towards good honeybee research projects and is not subject to cuts as the recession bites further.

## Apiary Working Day

It was marvellous to see so many people at the apiary working day on 26th April.



We got a lot of work done. We stripped the old felt off the roof of the hut, cleaned up lots of hive parts, made up new frames, cut the grass in the apiary and did numerous other jobs.

You can see from the pictures how hard we worked! We even found exciting new uses for a hive tool around the barbecue.

The following Saturday another working party got together to re-board the hut roof and replace the felt. We have done a lot of work on the hut this year and we hope it will pay off by giving us many more years of service.



Many thanks to everyone who came and helped on both days and to Diane Oldfield for the photos.

## "Beekeepers' Question Time"

on **Wednesday 15th April**

This went really well and everyone said what a good evening it was.

Many thanks indeed to **Beulah Cullen**, **Bob Hunter** and **Roy Brunswick** who answered a wide range of questions with clarity and humour.

It is a format we shall certainly consider repeating in the future.

Frank Rickett

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