

## **East Lancs BKA Weekly Hive Opening Report October 2018**

Apiary Sessions were suspended after the session on September 2nd but work in the apiary has continued as we prepare the colonies for winter.

### **Varroa treatment**

As mentioned in the last report, samples from three hives were sent off for analysis as part of the National Bee Unit's Sentinel Programme to be checked for Small Hive Beetle (SHB), *Tropilaelaps* and *Varroa*.

Although checks in March came back NEGATIVE for all three pests, this time *Varroa* came back POSITIVE and the other two NEGATIVE.

This isn't a surprise and although these checks don't determine the level of infestation, we know from our observations that the levels are probably low as we've not seen mites on adult bees. As the samples from all three colonies are mixed together, we don't know if all three are infected. However, the only safe course of action is to treat for *Varroa*.

This year, we're using Apivar. We change the treatment each year to guard against resistance building up to one treatment. Apivar is not temperature dependent, which gives you more flexibility in when to apply the treatment. Two strips are applied to each colony and left in place for 6 to 10 weeks depending on the size of the brood. We plan to leave them all in for 8 weeks.

Honey was taken off two of the hives and the Apivar strips were put in place afterwards. Bending the V-shaped lugs to secure the strips is a bit fiddly so a toothpick through the hole in the top of the strip was used to secure the strips, at least two frames apart.

All the queen excluders were removed at this point - we want nothing in the way to prevent them reaching any stores in the supers.

The strips are due to be removed on November 6th.

### **Feed and Fit Mouse Guards**

The staff at Offshoots have seen field mice in the gardens who may be looking for somewhere warm to sleep through the winter. The cosy area behind the entrance is ideal and there's a small furnace above at 34°C to provide the heat. So all the hives, apart from the polyhive now have mouse guards fitted. Payne's polyhive four-hole entrance block doesn't let mice in.



***Hive DIA with mouse guard fitted and feeder in top super***

At the same time we gave all the hives an empty super containing a rapid feeder into which we put 4 pints of ambrosia. In most cases, the bees were up and feeding from it before we put the roof on. Don't forget to trickle a bit of the syrup down the hole in the feeder to let them know it's there.



***One bee already feeding and others on their way***

A few of the colonies are not using all the supers so next week, when we check the food levels, we'll start removing them to make it easier for the bees to reach the feeders.

**Next steps**

Check the food levels and remove redundant supers.

Remove the Apivar strips on November 6th.

*Dave Parker*  
*Apiary Manager*