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BBKA Strategic Review & The Plant Protection Industry

As an educational charity, the BBKA is primarily concerned with the health and welfare of honey bees and seeks to educate, inform and influence all parts of society including beekeepers, the public and industry about honey bees. Over time, a number of arrangements has been made between the BBKA and third parties, who have been attracted to entering into relationships with the BBKA for a variety of reasons, but all of which have been agreed on the basis they will deliver benefits to honey bees. It is necessary to review strategically the appropriateness of these relationships from time to time to ensure that they continue to be relevant, effective and indeed do deliver the intended benefits.

Usually such arrangements have meant the granting or licensing of the use of the BBKA logo (which is a registered trade mark) on the literature and goods of the third party. The BBKA strategic review intends to assess the options and opportunities available to it to develop its brand name and to develop others.

One such strategic relationship has been the BBKA policy of actively engaging with the plant protection industry in an attempt to improve stewardship of pesticides and agricultural practice to minimise damage to honey bees and to ensure that the views of beekeepers are taken into account in the development of pesticides and their application in the field.

This relationship started in the 1980's and has taken a number of forms, including sponsorship of the BBKA's presence at the Royal Show and more recently, the BBKA has agreed to allow its logo to be used on four synthetic pyrethroid based products. These products on the basis of evidence provided and in conjunction with the stewardship activities of the supplying companies, appear to offer reduced risks for harm to honey bees when used correctly. The BBKA has received modest payments for these endorsements part of which covers the costs of administration and meetings held to engage with the companies.



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Positive developments that have come from this policy have included the inclusion of the BBKA 10 point guidelines into the UK Pesticide Guide, the so-called 'Green Book', published by BCPC and most importantly, significant reductions in bee colony losses attributed to pesticides, from the 100 or so per annum in the 1990s to the current negligible figures.

The four products currently subject to BBKA endorsement are today of declining commercial importance and the development of new classes of pesticide and application techniques means that the relationship with the plant protection industry should be reviewed. The way in which the BBKA will engage with the industry as a whole and individual companies will vary, but an example of the wider approach to be pursued is the co-operation over the production of the recently published Crop Protection Association (CPA) leaflet 'Bee Safe, Bee Careful' which bears the BBKA and NFU logos.

As a first step in the overall review of strategic relationships the BBKA Trustees have decided that it is time to broaden the range of engagement with the crop protection industry beyond the narrow focus of endorsing certain products; rather to contribute more directly to the development of new regulatory criteria for pesticide approval with the Chemicals Regulatory Directorate (CRD) and to further support the industry in the general move to improve countryside stewardship. For example, this might include promoting specific initiative such as nectar bars, tree planting and restoration of hedgerows.

Following discussion with the companies involved, the BBKA Trustees have decided that endorsement and related product specific payments will cease as soon as practically possible.

The Trustees do not preclude accepting funds in the future from either the crop protection industry in the guise of the CPA or individual companies nor other organisations involved in horticulture and agriculture, which are beneficiaries of honey bee activity. The Trustees have no specific funding proposals in mind at present, but for the sake of clarity do not



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wish to be constrained by any notion of working with one particular industry on a 'free' basis, whilst accepting funding from individual and other corporate members to fund its

activities. For example the Trustees may wish to invite companies to fund a future research colloquium, to exhibit at the BBKA Spring Convention or make a contribution to the BBKA Research Fund.

As part of its strategic review the BBKA is developing a range of other products, including literature, a distinctive house style, sponsorship, logos and devices and wishes to be able to further develop these to maximise their impact and financial benefit. It is essential that any that any contractual arrangements made meets the requirements of the BBKA strategy for the coming years, with the overall aim of encouraging society to take measures which will help honey bees.

Martin Smith

BBKA President

16th November 2010