

BDI ReViVe Research Funding Proposal – Update 1

After our first note about the BDI Research Funding Proposal sent out on 18th August I want to update our members about initial reactions from associations and answer some questions that have arisen. In addition I attach an update on the actual research project itself.

A quick reminder of the proposal

Full details of the proposal can be found here

<http://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/research/revive>

In this, BDI has invited associations to co-fund a research proposal looking the way in which some colonies around the world are able to co-exist with the varroa mite and not succumb to Deformed Wing Virus (DWV). This proposal takes forward some earlier research in which they feel they have identified the mechanism by which these colonies are surviving and will now look at ways in which this could be transferred to the wider bee populations.

BDI is funding £15,000 per year for three years and is asking associations to fund up to a maximum of £300 per annum for a maximum of three years. This would be scaled back if a large number of associations agree to participate.

We have asked associations to indicate their willingness to participate in an on line survey here

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7YPTPR9>

How has the proposal been received by associations?

Of the initial associations who have filled in the survey, the majority have said they are willing to participate in the funding of the project.

A number of other associations have emailed us indicated they will be proposing to their group meetings in September that the project is funded.

It is our branch is a member of BDI, but our County will decide on any research funding. How should we deal with this?

We have had a number of associations that have asked this question. In this case, if it is the branch/division that is the member of BDI but the county association that is providing the funding, then BDI will create an eReturn specifically for the county association to collect the contribution if the funds are going to be paid centrally from the county.

If the county decides that each branch will pay locally then we will administer this with their usual eReturn remittance in spring each year.

The indicative amount for a county to contribute would be to the maximum of £300 per branch, but we appreciate that some counties have branches with very small memberships. We would therefore ask you to indicate on the notes in the survey the maximum you are able to contribute. This would be scaled back in the same way as branch payments if most branches decide to join the funding proposal.

Is the survey a binding commitment to participate?

This is our intention. BDI is staffed by volunteers and this method enables us to deal with perhaps up to 200 groups in a simple and cost effective way. Similarly the collection of the funds via eReturn will simplify administration for all and therefore keep costs to an absolute minimum. We remain happy to answer specific local questions.

Is there any likelihood of being asked to contribute beyond the third year?

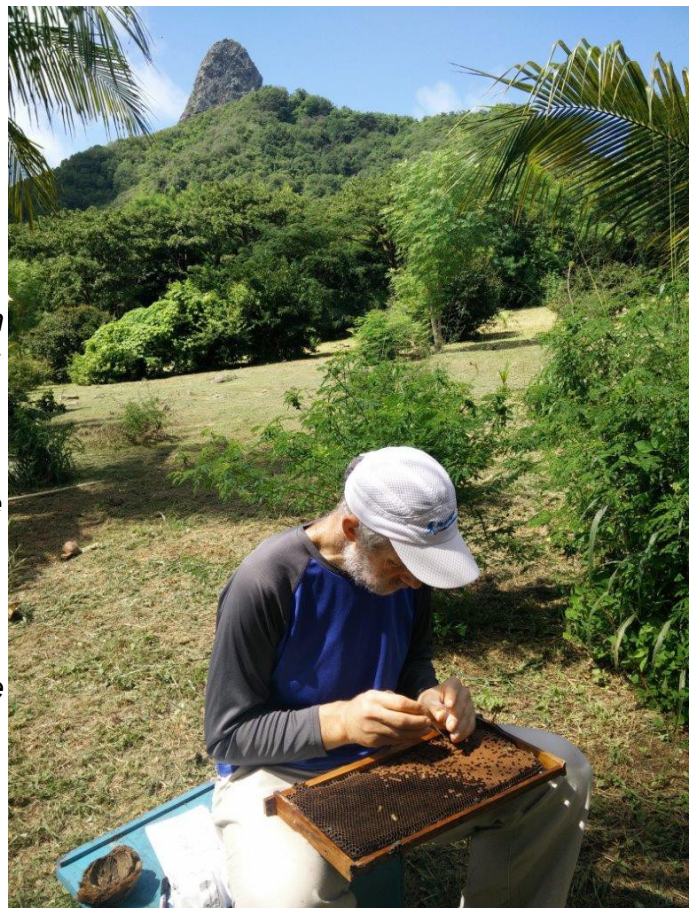
BDI and the associations who decide to co-fund would be committed for a three year period only. If the researchers were unable to complete their work in the time or wanted to extend it they would have to make a completely new case for such funding.

Research Project Update

As this project has the potential to be funded entirely by beekeepers in one way or another, the project leaders recognise that they will need to provide regular updates on the progress of the work. The preparatory work has indeed already started and we have received the following report

During July 2015, Stephen Martin and two Brazilian colleagues visited and collected samples from the honey bees on Fernando de Noronha Island in Brazil. This Island is home to the oldest European honey bee population that is tolerant to Varroa. 14 colonies from three beekeepers were sampled (adult bees and mites). Each colony was infested with varroa with an estimated mite populations of between 1000-3000 mites/colony. No deformed bees were seen, or have ever been seen. Colony losses are very low. Around 500 adult bees and 30 mites were killed and been stored at -80°C, awaiting viral analysis.

A summary of the initial research that has led up to this proposal was included in the BBJ supplement of the September BBKA News. We have also had confirmation that a paper entitled "Diversity in a honey bee pathogen: first report of a third master variant of the Deformed Wing Virus quasispecies" have now been accepted for publication.



What will happen to this research project if sufficient funds are not raised?

Enough funds are available to allow the initial sampling of the bees to be undertaken. If the entire project is unable to obtain sufficient funding, then it has been agreed that the

samples would be frozen and stored until the funding is obtained. Obviously we would prefer to get on with this important research as soon as we can and are hopeful that you will support this work to enable the work to carry on as we have initially planned.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Martin Smith

BDI President

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3rd September 2015