Honeybee news

Honeybee news is produced by our own Jill Hill and contains interesting snippets and links to articles from around the world that mention the honeybee.
This page is updated approximately 4 times per year with previous years available in our Library.

2022 (Part Four)

Mad honey

A young female bear cub was found in Turkey recently in an apparently intoxicated state after consuming “mad honey”. Nectar from the local rhododendron species contains the neurotoxin grayanotoxin and the honey produced from it is a red-brown colour with a sharp scent and bitter taste. The honey (the toxin it contains) causes the consumer to feel mildly euphoric or “high” and it is eaten in small quantities as a traditional treatment for high blood pressure. However, as the bear discovered, taken in larger quantities, it can cause very low blood pressure, nausea, fainting, fits, abnormal heart rhythms and even death. Luckily for the bear, it was treated by a local vet and released after a few days.
Click here to view the full article
It was the use of mad honey (or deli bal) which thwarted Pompey the Great, a famous roman general, when he prepared to attack Mithridates VI in 97 BC. Bowls of the honey were placed in the path of the invading army, which were feasted upon by the roman soldiers. Mithridates’ soldiers returned and finding the romans in a delirious state, killed them all.
Mad honey is produced in a small area of Turkey, the Kackar mountains, where the particular species of rhododendron which contains the toxin is found. It is expensive, costing about £260 per kg and apparently is a popular item bought by tourists!
Click here to view the full article

Bill Turnbull

Beekeepers were saddened by the news that broadcaster and keen beekeeper Bill Turnbull died on August 31st after a 5-year battle with prostate cancer. Bill was well known as a journalist, radio and TV presenter, and Strictly Come Dancing contestant among other things but he also kept bees for about 30 years, inspired after a swarm landed in his garden and was competently collected by a local beekeeper. His book The Bad Beekeeper’s Club was a joy to read, and many beekeepers may recognise the mistakes and mishaps he describes in his journey to become a beekeeper. He was patron of Bees for Development and was a great promoter for beekeeping through his involvement in local and national events, including running the London Marathon dressed in his bee suit.
Click here to view the full article

More on the healing properties of honey

Scientists at Manchester University have reviewed over 250 articles published since 1937 relating to the use of honey as a healing agent for wounds. Research is ongoing to identify what honey contains to give it its antimicrobial and healing properties, and to confirm the quantities needed, with a view to using honey to treat wounds and to reduce the reliance on antimicrobial drugs. Resistance to conventional therapies is an increasingly significant problem globally so the use of honey as an effective topical treatment for all types of wound is attractive.
Honey has been used in promoting healing since ancient times but only recently has science begun to identify why it works. It contains phenol, defensin-1 and methylgloxal, but its acidity, low water content and ability to generate hydrogen peroxide are important properties. Its consistency also acts as a barrier over the wound, keeping it moist and protected.
Honey on toast will never be the same!
Click here to view the full article

Treating antibiotic-resistant lung infections with manuka honey

People with long-term lung conditions like cystic fibrosis are vulnerable to a nasty infection caused by mycobacterium abscessus, resistant to many antibiotics. This infection can be treated by a combination of drugs which includes amikacin but only has a success rate of about 50% after a year of therapy. The treatment also comes with a raft of side effects: nausea and vomiting, hearing loss, liver damage, chronic skin infections and blood cell abnormalities. Research at Aston University has shown that combining manuka honey as an inhalable spray with amikacin meant the therapeutic dose of the drug could be reduced from 16mcg/ml to 2mcg/ml, which means the recipients were far less likely to suffer side effects.
Although methylglyoxal (MGO) is thought to be the magic antimicrobial ingredient which makes manuka so sought-

after, the researchers found using whole honey was more effective than MGO alone, suggesting there are other important ingredients in honey needed in the fight against infection.
Click here to view the full article

Manuka honey glut

Manuka honey has been big business in New Zealand in recent years, and since 2000, the number of hives in the country had rocketed from around 300,000 to nearly a million. Particularly during the pandemic, the honey with its apparent health benefits has been in great demand, pushing up prices for some types to 2,621 NZ dollars for a 230g pot. Unsurprisingly, this has led to a massive increase in people taking up beekeeping, but also hundreds of hives being stolen in a lucrative crime wave.
However, demand for manuka honey has dropped recently and this, coupled with a bumper harvest in 2020 when about 27,000 tonnes was collected in comparison to the average 19,000 tonnes, means New Zealand has a stockpile of honey. As a result, people are giving up beekeeping, with estimated hive numbers now down to about 720,000 this year. The price locally has dropped but is still too expensive for many New Zealanders, never mind the rest of us.
Click here to view the full article

Stuff of nightmares!

A horror story scenario happened to a 20-year-old man in Ohio in August. He was cutting branches, harnessed to the tree, when he inadvertently cut into a honey bees' nest. Family members who tried to help him were also attacked. Apparently, the poor chap looked like he had a black blanket over his head, neck and arms with the number of bees covering him and medical staff later estimated he had been stung about 20,000 times and had also swallowed about 30 of the insects. Such was the severity of the attack and his body's response to it, he needed to be put into an induced coma on a ventilator. After several days, he was woken up and was expected to make a full recovery despite experiencing extreme swelling and kidney failure.
The bees are thought to be a hybrid of western honeybee and east African lowland bee which are more defensive than other honeybees. You're not kidding!
Click here to view the full article

Telling the bees

The Daily Mail reported that royal beekeeper John Chapple complied with an old tradition by telling the bees that their mistress the Queen had died, and they now had a new master, King Charles 3rd. He knocked on each hive at Clarence House and Buckingham Palace and told them "The mistress is dead, but don't you go. Your master will be a good master to you". Apparently, if you don't inform your bees of a change in ownership, they will abscond and you won't get any honey!
Click here to view the full article

2022 (Part Three)

Bad news for Norfolk bees

Birdwatching "Twitchers" have been collecting in Norfolk where two pairs of European Bee-eaters have nested in a quarry near Trimingham. These birds are rare visitors with just a handful of birds nesting with various degrees of success in the last 50 years. Exciting for birdwatchers. Not so for virgin queens on their mating flights!
Click here to view the full article

Bees are fish

In 2018, 3 wildlife conservation groups petitioned for the protection of 4 species of bumble bee as their populations had declined significantly in the last decade. These are the Western bumble bee, Franklin's bumble bee, the Crotch bumble bee, and the Suckley Cuckoo bumble bee. The California Endangered Species Act is only relevant to vertebrates so could not be used to enable recognised protection powers. However, in May this year, California's Third Appellate District Court of Appeal ruled that bees could be protected by section 45 of the California Fish and Game Code which defines fish and includes, among other things, invertebrates. Hence the reports in the media that bees are fish!
Click here to view the full article

More evidence that glyphosate weedkiller harms bees

Glyphosate is a commonly used herbicide which has been available for the last 40 years. It is used to kill weeds and was not thought to harm animals, but recent tests have shown otherwise, including in 2019 some suggestion it could possibly be a human carcinogen and more recently, discovered to be commonly found in urine.
Click here to view the full article
Damage to bumblebees is particularly significant during low forage availability. As glyphosate is used to kill wildflowers identified as weeds in agricultural situations, lack of forage is common in farming areas.
Previously, safety tests have been performed on healthy well-fed bees and no damage was seen. However, recently

15 colonies of buff-tailed bumblebees were divided into 2 groups with one group exposed to the typical level of glyphosate that they would encounter in a field treated with the herbicide. The exposed bees were later found to be less efficient at maintaining their nest at the temperature required for brood development, which has implications for colony growth. Providing more forage for bees, such as planting wildflower meadows, can counteract this undesirable effect of glyphosate.
Click here to view the full article

We knew it-bees are intelligent and have feelings!

Professor Lars Chitta from Queen Mary's University in London has been studying bees for 30 years and has just published his latest book "The mind of a Bee". His research (and that of other scientists) shows that bees are very intelligent, are able to count and to recognise human faces, and can learn to use simple tools. They also have emotions and can plan and imagine things. He discovered some individual bees, which he calls "genius bees", are more curious and confident than other bees and can perform tasks better than other bees in the colony. Although he found that bees learn best by watching another bee complete a task successfully, Professor Chitta found bees are intelligent enough to recognise when a task is being completed inefficiently and they will modify their technique to do a better job of the task.
Evidence showing bees are intelligent and have feelings is probably not news to many beekeepers but it will justify why many of us talk to them when working through a colony!
Click here to view the full article

Microbes which can improve bee nutrition

Researchers at Indiana University have investigated the beneficial effects of Bombella apis, a microbe previously found to protect bees from fungal infection. It is unusual as it can grow in royal jelly despite the jelly's acidity, viscosity and presence of antimicrobial substances which inhibits most microbial growth. It not only survives, it enhances the nutritional value of royal jelly by increasing its amino acid content. Poor nutrition fed to larvae has important implications for the health and function of adult bees. As it can survive in syrup for up to 24 hours, the microbe can be easily added to a conventional feed during times of nutritional dearth.
Although this is good news, it seems like a clear case of treating the symptoms not the cause! The driver for this research is to counteract the poor nutrition available for bees in a country typically covered by huge swathes of land given to monoculture and wind-pollinated crops like corn. Lack of variety in diet is not good for humans and bees alike. Limited nutrition has been cited as a significant factor in the 40% loss of managed honeybee colonies between 2015 and 2016 in the USA.
Click here to view the full article

Rare bumblebee found alive and well in Wales

The Ruderal bumblebee (Bombus ruderatus) is one of the rarest bumblebee species in the UK and thought to be only found in South Kent and East Sussex. However, a Ruderal queen was recently spotted in Carmarthenshire, the first in Wales since 1973, by a conservationist working for the Welsh Government's threatened species project Natur am Byth! Further investigation located 9 queens in total, a testament to the farming methods and abundance of wildflowers in the area.
Click here to view the full article

Swarming season stories

It's been a busy swarming season and as usual at this time of year, the media is full of pictures of swarms in public places. This includes bees taking over traffic control lights in Manchester, covering a Betfred sign in Liverpool City Centre, invading a conference room at Police HQ at Wootton Hall Northampton during a Facebook live event about response policing and, my favourite, filling the jaws of a giant model of a Velociraptor at the Wingham Wildlife Park near Canterbury.
Click here to view the full article
One resourceful beekeeper in Sabden Lancashire took to social media to ask people to look for 20,000 bees which went AWOL from her hive in East Lancashire!
Swarming isn't always amusing though. 2 people in Tucson Arizona sustained hundreds of stings and required hospitalisation.
A woman in Bletchley who had bee sting induced anaphylactic shock last year had to move into a hotel for a few days while her local council removed a swarm of bees from her flat.

Varroa finally arrives in Australia

Australia has been the only continent in the world to be free of varroa destructor mites but that has now changed. The mites were found in hives in Newcastle, a port near Sydney in the middle of June which immediately triggered a honeybee "lockdown" to contain the spread of the mite. Unfortunately, by the end of June, it had already been found in colonies 100km away, with 7 sites identified in New South Wales. Movement of bees across the state has been banned, and all colonies within 10km of the affected locations will be destroyed, a total of 400 so far.

It has been estimated that if varroa spreads across the whole of Australia, it could cost the honey production industry

It has been estimated that if varroa spreads across the whole of Australia, it could cost the honey production industry about £39 million a year. It will impact on other agricultural industries such as almond, apples and avocado harvest which rely on bee pollination.
Click here to view the full article

2022 (Part Two)

Bee thefts are big business in California

Hiring out your beehives to almond growers in California is lucrative. About 2.34 million honey bee colonies are needed to pollinate 1.17 million acres in February when the trees are in blossom. A single beehive costs $200 to rent, compared to $50 a few years ago. It is not surprising therefore to learn that stealing beehives is big business. Organised gangs target the hives at night and quickly sell them on after removing any identification markers. 1036 hives and bees were stolen during the last almond blossom season, including 384 from one location in a single night. Beekeepers are having to invest in GPS tracking devices, surveillance cameras and other anti-theft technology to protect their bees.
The demand for migratory beekeeping to fulfil the pollinating needs of the almond industry has been acerbated in recent years by the decline in honey bee populations due to pesticide use, loss of habitat, and recent droughts affecting forage availability. Wild bees are unable to make up the shortfall with 25% of North America's 46 types of bumblebees in decline and at risk of extinction.
Click here to view the full article

Vandalised bees

As beekeepers, we all wait anxiously for spring hoping that our colonies have survived the winter and rejoice to see bees coming and going from their hive on an early warm spring day. Pity then the beekeeper in Shrewsbury who found the roof and straps had been removed from his hives in the middle of March and a chemical substance poured inside. Although the hives had only been open a few days when he discovered the vandalism, heavy rain followed by frosts as well as the chemical had killed the bees.
Understandably, the beekeeper was devastated, and his first reaction was to give up beekeeping. However, he set up a Crowdfunder to replace the bees and damaged equipment and within 6 hours, it had generated the sum of money he needed. A happy ending to a sad tale but also a reminder of the potential risk when keeping colonies in out-apiaries.
Click here to view the full article

Another use for bees: finding dead bodies

The Honey Bee Initiative and the Forensic Sciences Research and Training Laboratory at Georgia Mason University in Virginia are working together to investigate whether bees, and the honey they produce, can help in solving old crimes by identifying the location of long-buried corpses.
Apparently more than 600,000 people go missing every year in the USA. While most are found, many thousands remain missing and about 4,400 unidentified bodies are discovered each year. Honey contains proteins related to the plants on which the bees have foraged, including pesticides. Using this discovery has led to the hypothesis that chemical compounds from buried decomposing human remains could transfer to honey from flowers growing on top of them (urgh!). Experiments are being set up, using donated human remains, to explore this.
Click here to view the full article

Another use for bees: protecting trees

Illegal logging by villagers gathering firewood is being thwarted by the growing number of beekeepers in rural Zimbabwe. Beekeeping is a useful source of income for poor people living in rural areas, but environmentalists are encouraging the activity as it helps in the fight against deforestation. Bees are kept in hives perched in trees and local firewood collectors complain they are getting attacked by bees when they enter the forests to cut down trees. Deforestation is a concern in the country. The Timber Producers Federation states commercial forests declined from 120,000 hectares in 2019 to 69,000 hectares in 2020. 6 million tonnes of timber are consumed for fuel every year, which is about 1.4 tonnes more than the forests can sustainably replace. Farmers are therefore being encouraged to take up commercial beekeeping by the Agriculture Ministry as part of the strategy to reduce deforestation.
Click here to view the full article

Don't keep bees

Potential new beekeepers in Australia are being encouraged not to do so but instead plant flowers in their gardens. There are now over 28,000 recreational beekeepers in the country, a rise of 5,000 in the last few years. The urge to connect with nature during Covid lockdown, awareness of the dwindling numbers of bees, the relative ease of learning about this new hobby via YouTube videos, and the appeal of honey from the garden are some of the factors contributing to this increase. However, experts are concerned about the impact of so many amateur beekeepers.
The CEO of the not-for-profit charity for bees, the Wheen Bee Foundation, suggests those interested in beekeeping should consider first planting flowers. A lack of flower availability throughout the whole year not only reduces the health and survival of honey bees but also other pollinators including beetles, moths, wasps and native bees. As

health and survival of honey bees but also other pollinators including beetles, moths, wasps and native bees. As honey bees are more efficient at foraging and exist in greater numbers, what flowers are available are accessed by them to the detriment of other pollinators. Pollination is more valuable than honey, worth $14.2 billion annually compared to $120 million for honey products.
Joining the crusade to increase the amount of forage for all pollinators are Cedar and Stuart Anderson, the creators of the Flow Hive. Critics argue that the perception that honey can be available just by turning on a tap on one of these devices has contributed to the rise of amateur beekeepers, and that poor management can lead to the spread of disease. However, in addition to producing an on-line beekeeping course, the Andersons have launched the Billions of Blossoms project (honeyflow.com.au/pages/blossoms) to support reforestation through the planting of a million trees, funded partly through the income generated from their beekeeping courses.
Click here to view the full article

Jersey prepares to fight Asian Hornets

8 Asian Hornet queens have already been destroyed in Jersey by the end of March. 3 were caught in traps by trained volunteers and another 5 were caught and killed by vigilant members of the public. Over a hundred islanders have agreed to have an Asian Hornet trap installed in their garden, supported by trained volunteers, to catch Asian Hornet queens before they are able to make a nest. Over a 100 queens were trapped in 2021 and 63 nests were found and destroyed.
Click here to view the full article

Neonicotinoids use likely to continue in the US

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expected to permit the continued use of imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, clothianidin and dinotefuran in America for at least another 15 years, despite the clear evidence of the damage it causes to insects. Neonicotinoids are used on 150 million acres of crops. Farmers in Florida have been allowed to spray clothianidin on 125,000 acres of citrus fruits under an “emergency request” for the 8th consecutive year, suggesting the emergency exemption criteria is being misused. A spokesperson for the EPA states it is “working aggressively to protect pollinators, including bees” but environmentalists are concerned about the lack of progress in banning these toxic chemicals
Click here to view the full article

Do bees like salty flowers?

Insects, like humans, require sodium ions for healthy cellular fluid balance and muscle function. Some beekeepers have noticed their bees seem to prefer dirty water to drink rather than clean fresh water and this may be because the former has a higher salt content. A team of ecologists at the University of Michigan investigated whether pollinators preferred flowers which produced nectar with a higher salt content. The study involved removing nectar from 5 species of flowers and replacing it with an artificial nectar. Half of the flowers for each species received nectar with 1% salt and the other half received a non-salty nectar. The flowers were placed in a meadow and the pollinators (bees, ants and butterflies) visiting the flowers were recorded.
For all 5 species of flowers, those with the salt-enhanced nectar attracted a greater number of insects than those with the unsalted nectar. The salty flowers also attracted a greater diversity of pollinators: twice as many.
The salt content of nectar varies from plant to plant so the study poses the question whether some plants actively increase salt content to attract pollination.
Click here to view the full article

Stingless bees: where is the fun in that?

There are 175 different species of stingless bees, also known as meliponine bees, in the Peruvian Amazon. The honey they produce is stored in round goblet-shaped cells rather than the combs which Western beekeepers are familiar with and has been harvested by the indigenous people for centuries. Apart from its property as a sweetener, the honey has an important role as a medicine and is used to treat skin conditions, burns, gastro-intestinal disorders, bronchitis, pneumonia and even cancer. The bees are also important pollinators for particular plants including the achiote which is harvested and used as a dye and to treat constipation, and the sangre de grado trees which are used to make medicine to treat diarrhoea and diabetes!
Until recently, the nests and the bees themselves were destroyed when the honey was collected but now local people are being trained to raise stingless bees in boxes so the honey can be harvested without harming the bees. Keeping these bees next to fields of the local crop camu camu has been shown to increase the yield by almost 50%.
Stingless bees are more docile than our honey bees and although they do not sting, they can inflict painful bites!
Click here to view the full article

Further progress on finding the holy grail of beekeeping: varroa-resistant bees

A paper published in Scientific Reports at the beginning of April describes the results of comparing a stock of bees specifically bred for varroa resistance with commercial Italian colonies. The research was carried out across the states of Mississippi, South Dakota and California. “Pol-line” bees demonstrate enhanced varroa-sensitive hygiene behaviours (such as the removal of mite-infested brood and the removal of phoretic mites by allo-grooming) but otherwise have the same traits as conventional Italian bees (large colonies, docile behaviour, and prolific honey producers). Previously, the apparently “varroa-resistant” bees have been associated with small colonies and with a

producers). Previously, the apparently "varroa-resistant" bees have been associated with small colonies and with a tendency to frequently swarm, not traits which are favourable to commercial bee-farming.
Survival of the Pol-line bee colonies was twice that of conventional colonies. Interestingly, the research conclusions included the loss of colonies was not primarily because of varroa-vectored viruses (Deformed Wing Virus A and B, and Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus). The actual damage inflicted by the mite on the larvae and adult bee when feeding on the fat bodies, important organs associated with numerous functions including immunity and food storage, has been under-estimated.
Varroa is implicated in many colony losses so any progress in the emergence of bees which can survive the presence of this ectoparasite, with a reduced need for chemicals, is good news. In 2018-2019, there was a 37.5% mortality in commercial beekeeping operations in the USA alone.
Click here to view the full article

Vegan honey

Melibio, a company based in San Francisco, has secured $5.7 million in investments to produce bee-free "honey". The company uses microbial fermentation technology to produce a product which appears identical in taste, viscosity, and texture to conventional honey in blind testing, and also in molecular make-up. Melibio states its aim is to reduce the impact that the $10 billion global honey industry has on native bee species. Of course, it also opens the market to allow the increasing number of people following a vegan diet to enjoy the taste of honey.
Click here to view the full article

Weeds can be good news

A study led by Dr Balfour and Professor Ratnieks from the University of Sussex has shown that 3 native wildflowers currently classed by the Weeds Act 1959 as "injurious weeds" actually attract a greater number and variety of insect pollinators than the plants designated by DEFRA as pollinator-targeted agri-environmental plants like red clover and wild marjoram. The 3 species include ragwort and two types of thistles and produce four times the amount of nectar sugar than those plants recommended by DEFRA.
About £10 million is spent on controlling weeds by bodies such as local councils, Natural England and Highways England, and about £40 million on the pollinator-targeted agri-environmental flowers in the UK. Ragwort is viewed in the same way as the invasive Japanese Knotweed despite attracting the most conservation-listed insects in the study. The Sussex team are hoping that the Environmental Land Management Scheme which is due to be introduced at the end of 2024 will provide incentives to land managers to tolerate weeds.
Click here to view the full article

2022 (Part One)

Hobby beekeepers are big business in Australia

Concerns about declining bee populations, the popularity of the Flow Hive, and restrictions imposed during Covid lockdowns are contributing to a recent surge in amateur beekeeping. There are now more than 28,000 hobby beekeepers registered in Australia, and they are proving to be big business. They spend about $72 million each year on equipment, clothing, and training courses and in total, amateur beekeeping is worth about $173.5 million per annum. Commercial beekeeping, which includes honey production and pollination services, is worth $264 million pa. Registration is mandatory in Australia, the exception being Tasmania. Beekeepers are encouraged to join a local club and get training with the Chair of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council commenting "You don't buy a new car and keep driving it and driving it without servicing it"
Interestingly, there appears to be surprise that women are taking up beekeeping and have different needs from male beekeepers, with one area forming a women-only "Sister Hives" group!
Click here to read the full article

One way of getting your message across!

There has been a prolonged drought in Chile which has reduced foraging opportunities for honeybees. As a result, the beekeeping industry has been struggling and asking for government support. To make sure the message was loud and clear, a group of them placed 56 hives outside the presidential palace in Santiago! Four of the beekeepers ended up getting arrested while at least seven of the police received stings.
Click here to view full article

Bees in the shower

When you are completely naked in the shower, you probably don't want some honeybees keeping you company. A beekeeper called Elisha Bixler, who runs a service called "How's Your Day Honey" was called to a house in Florida where the occupants had noticed an incessant buzzing noise in the bathroom along with a few bees regularly flying around. Elisha broke into the wall of the room to discover a 7ft wall of honey and brood comb along with an awful lot of bees-the stuff of nightmares (at least to non-beekeepers!) You can watch Elisha at work in the house on a video included in the link below:
Click here to read the full article

Another example of the resourcefulness of honeybees

Honeybees appear to be better at living with the effects of a volcanic eruption than humans. The continuing eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano on the Canary Island of La Palma has resulted in the loss of thousands of homes and the displacement of about 7,000 people. Not so the honeybees! Beekeepers returning to their apiaries nearly 2 months after the volcano began its devastating activity, found that bees had sealed up the entrances to their hives with propolis and had used their stores of honey to prevent starvation. They had survived despite being covered by a thick layer of volcanic ash. Knowing bees take cleansing flights rather than defaecating in the hive leaves me with a vision of bees with crossed legs! At least the survival of their bees gives the 100 or so beekeepers on the island a little bit of good news.
Click here to read the full article

Honey bees as pollinators: quantity not quality

Research recently published in the American Journal of Botany has shown that honeybees are not so effective at pollinating plants as some other types of bees. Scientists compared the effectiveness of a single visit pollination by a wide range of pollinators including birds, butterflies, beetles, ants, moths, and wasps. However, the honeybee, though a less effective pollinator at an individual flower visit, remains an important pollinator because of the huge number of honeybees and therefore the frequency of visits to flowers. A case of quantity, rather than quality perhaps?
Click here to read the full article

A backward step in the use of neonicotinoids?

In early December 2021, concern was raised about the sugar beet industry putting pressure on DEFRA to approve the use of thiamethoxam (also known as Cruiser SB). It claimed this pesticide was needed to protect seeds from a disease known as virus yellows, transmitted by aphids. Like all neonicotinoids, this insecticide binds to the receptors in the central nervous system of insects resulting in paralysis and death. When applied to a crop, most of it ends up accumulating in the soil from where it is taken up by the roots of wildflowers endangering pollinators. It also passes into rivers and streams, potentially endangering the thousands of species of freshwater invertebrates living there. The use of this pesticide was banned by the EU in 2017 except in extreme circumstances. The UK government pledged to uphold the ban despite Brexit.
Click here to read the full article (part 1)

However, by the middle of January 2022, the decision was made to allow emergency use of the pesticide by British Sugar despite the advice from the Government's own expert committee. It will be used in March if predictions of the virus hit a certain level. The environmental charities RSPB, Buglife, The Wildlife Trust and Friends of the Earth have expressed despair at the decision, calling it shameful and a betrayal. In a bid to reduce risk to pollinators, farmers using the chemical on sugar beet will be forbidden to grow flowering plants on or near the land used for sugar beet for 32 months.
Click here to read the full article (part 2)

Sulfoxaflor ban in California

A glimmer of light in the fight against pesticides. Sulfoxaflor is a pesticide which is similar to the class of neonicotinoids, with similar toxic effects on bees. Its use in California is no longer approved after a recent ruling by the Alameda County Superior Court. The president of the Pollinator Stewardship Council commented on the wide impact this decision will have on honeybees across the whole country as most commercial beekeepers move their bees to California for pollination services, particularly of almond orchards. The use of pesticides is one of the possible causes of the huge loss of bees to colony collapse disorder in USA.
Click here to read the full article

Sustainable honey production

Congratulations to Rhodri Owen and Richard Jones, beekeepers at Cilgwenyn Bee Farm in Llangennech, Carmarthenshire who were recently announced as winners of the Speciality and Fine Food Fair Rising Sustainability Star Award. They have introduced several initiatives to produce carbon-neutral honey including creating their own electricity from solar power, becoming plastic-free, and planting enough trees to offset the production of the recycled material used for the jars and lids that they use. They also find time to provide a free service training veterans to help cope with Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder.
Click here to read the full article

Site design
LFCNUTTER