

BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT

SYLLABUS

1.0 MANIPULATION OF A HONEYBEE COLONY

The Candidate will be aware of:

- 1.1 the care needed when handling a colony of honeybees;
- 1.2 the reactions of honeybees to smoke;
- 1.3 the personal equipment needed to open a colony of honeybees **and the importance of its cleanliness;**
- 1.4 the reasons for opening a colony;
- 1.5 the need for stores.
- 1.6 the importance of record keeping.

The Candidate will be able to:

- 1.7 open a colony of honeybees and keep the colony under control;
- 1.8 demonstrate lighting and the use of the smoker;
- 1.9 demonstrate the use of the hive tool;
- 1.10 remove combs from the hive and identify worker, drone and queen cells or cups if present, and to comment on the state of the combs;
- 1.11. identify the female castes and the drone;
- 1.12. identify brood at all stages;
- 1.13. demonstrate the difference between drone, worker and honey cappings;
- 1.14. identify stored nectar, honey and pollen;
- 1.15. take a sample of worker bees in a match box or similar container;
- 1.16. state the number of worker bees required for an adult disease diagnosis sample;
- 1.17. demonstrate how to shake bees from a comb and how to look for signs of brood disease.

2.0 EQUIPMENT

The Candidate will be:

- 2.1 able to name **and explain the function of** the principal parts of a modern beehive;
- 2.2 aware of the concept of the bee space and its significance in the modern beehive;
- 2.3 able to assemble a frame and fit it with wax foundation;
- 2.4 aware of the reasons for the use of wax foundation;
- 2.5 aware of the spacing of the combs in the brood chamber and super for both foundation and drawn comb and methods used to achieve this spacing.

3.0 NATURAL HISTORY OF THE HONEYBEE

The Candidate will be:

- 3.1 able to give an elementary account of the development of queens, workers and drones in the honeybee colony ;
- 3.2 able to state the periods spent by the female castes and the drone in the four stages of their life (egg, larva, pupa and adult);
- 3.3 able to give an elementary description of the function of the queen, worker and drone in the life of the colony;
- 3.4 able to give a simple description of wax production and comb building by the honeybee;
- 3.5 aware of the importance of pollination to flowering plants and consequently to farmers and growers;
- 3.6 able to name the main local flora from which honeybees gather pollen and nectar;
- 3.7 able to give a simple definition of nectar and a simple description of how it is collected,

- brought back to the hive and is converted into honey;
- 3.8 able to give a simple description of the collection and use of pollen, water and propolis in the honeybee colony;
- 3.9 able to give an elementary description of swarming in a honeybee colony;
- 3.10 able to give an elementary description of the way in which the honeybee colony passes the winter.

4.0 BEEKEEPING

The Candidate will be:

- 4.1 able to give an elementary description of how to set up an apiary;
- 4.2 able to describe what precautions should be taken to avoid the honeybees being a nuisance to neighbours and livestock;
- 4.3 able to describe the possible effects of honeybee stings on humans and able to recommend suitable first aid treatment;
- 4.4 able to give an elementary description of the annual cycle of work in the apiary;
- 4.5 able to describe the preparation of sugar syrup and how and when to feed bees;
- 4.6 aware of the need to add supers and the timing of the operation;
- 4.7 able to give an elementary account of one method of swarm control;
- 4.8 able to describe how to take a honeybee swarm and how to hive it;
- 4.9 able to describe the signs of a queenless colony and how to test if a colony is queenless;
- 4.10 able to describe the signs of laying workers and of a drone laying queen;
- 4.11 able to describe a simple method of queen introduction;
- 4.12 aware of the dangers of robbing and how robbing can be avoided;
- 4.13 able to describe one method of uniting colonies;
- 4.14 aware of the reasons for uniting bees and the precautions to be taken;
- 4.15 able to describe a method used to clear honeybees from supers;
- 4.16 able to describe the process of extracting honey from combs and a method of straining and bottling of honey suitable for a small scale beekeeper;
- 4.17 aware of the need for good hygiene in the handling of honey for human consumption;
- 4.18 aware of the legal requirements for the labelling and sale of honey;
- 4.19 able to give an elementary account of the harvesting of beeswax;
- 4.20 aware of the need for good apiary hygiene;**
- 4.21 aware of the need for regular brood comb replacement.**

5.0 DISEASE, POISONING AND PESTS

The Candidate will be:

- 5.1 able to describe the appearance of healthy brood;
- 5.2 able to describe the signs of the bacterial diseases American Foul Brood (AFB) and European Foul Brood (EFB) and the fungal disease Chalk Brood and describe their effects upon the colony;
- 5.3 able to describe methods for detecting and monitoring the presence of varroa (a mite) and describe its effect on the colony including awareness of the effect of associated viruses;
- 5.4 aware of acarine (a mite) and nosema (**a fungus**) and their effect upon the colony;
- 5.5 able to describe ways of controlling varroa using **integrated pest management techniques**;
- 5.6 aware of the current legislation regarding notifiable diseases **and pests** of honeybees;
- 5.7 aware of the national and local facilities which exist to verify disease and advise on treatment;
- 5.8 aware where to obtain assistance if any poisoning by toxic chemicals is suspected;
- 5.9 able to describe how comb can be stored to prevent wax moth damage;
- 5.10 able to describe how mice and other pests can be excluded from the hives in winter.

(Bold lettering indicates changes in this revision)

BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT APIARY REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of the Apiary Manager and the candidate to ensure that the colonies and associated equipment meet the specified criteria:

Before conducting the Assessment the Assessor should determine, as far as reasonably practical, that the following equipment is to hand:

- a queen-right colony of bees having brood in all stages, with honey and pollen stores, and covering at least eight brood combs; colonies affected by foulbrood or seriously affected by any other disease are unacceptable;
- the component parts of a frame and a sheet of foundation together with the necessary nails and tools ready for assembly in front of the Assessor;
- a matchbox or similar container to hold a sample of bees ;
- a working smoker with spare fuel, hive tool(s) and any other items required to enable colony inspection;
- **clean** protective clothing and equipment.

Ideally the Assessment should be conducted at an apiary not belonging to the candidate because the Assessment should not take into account the condition of the colonies presented. Local association apiaries or apiaries belonging to the Assessor are best because the quality of the bees is known before the Assessment.

Normally a group of candidates (up to 4 or 5) should be instructed to attend a common venue at about hourly intervals. When there is only one candidate to be assessed then the candidate should travel to the Assessor. This is highly desirable on economic grounds as well as quality of bees.

On the occasions that the Assessor travels to the candidate then if the Assessor considers that the colony offered by the Candidate is unfit for inspection for the purposes of the Assessment, then the Assessor is entitled to ask the Candidate to propose a second colony explaining the reasons why.

In a situation where the Assessor is offered a substitute colony by the Candidate and this colony is also unsuitable the Assessor cannot proceed with the Assessment.

BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT

PROSPECTUS

AIM

To provide new beekeepers with a goal which will give them a measure of their achievement in the basic skills and knowledge of the craft. It is hoped that it will be a springboard from which to launch into the more demanding assessments.

A pass in the Basic Assessment is a prerequisite for entry into the next level of assessments.

1. Conditions of Entry

- 1.1 The Candidate shall have kept and managed at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months or have attended a course in practical beekeeping.
- 1.2 The entry form and fee shall have been received by the Local Examination Secretary, or the Secretary of the BBKA Examinations Board.

2. The Assessment

- 2.1 An Assessor, approved by the Board, is required to conduct the Assessment at any suitable apiary. Normally only the Assessor and Candidate shall be present at the Assessment. The Board may wish a trainee Assessor or member of the Board to be present as an observer, but prior written agreement of the Candidate shall be obtained.
- 2.2 The Assessment shall consist of three parts and the Candidate must achieve the pass mark in all three parts individually in order to pass the Assessment as a whole. The pass mark is 50% in each part. The parts are:
 - 2.2.1 Manipulation. Practical Assessment of the Candidate's ability to handle bees and beekeeping equipment and the ability to interpret what is observed. The requirements for this part of the Assessment are set out in Part 1 of the Syllabus.
 - 2.2.2 Oral questioning and Assessment of the Candidate's knowledge of Equipment (Section 2), the Natural History of the Honeybee (Section3) and Beekeeping (Section 4) as required in the Syllabus. This part of the Assessment includes the assembly of a frame and fitting it with foundation.
 - 2.2.3 Oral questioning on Diseases, Pests and Poisoning, as required in Section 5 of the Syllabus.
- 2.3 Scientific names, although useful, are not required.
- 2.4 The length of the Assessment should not normally exceed one hour.