



The British Beekeepers' Association

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STATEMENT

Response to launch of DEFRA'S Bee Health Strategy Consultation

The British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) welcomes the publication of DEFRA's draft Bee Health Strategy consultation document, launched today by Lord Rooker at the Ormskirk Beekeepers Association's apiary.

The BBKA is however concerned that despite its advice to DEFRA there are substantial short comings and omissions in the strategy.

As a stakeholder which has made a major input into its development over recent months, the BBKA has urged that more research is needed to understand the problems and to find solutions to the diseases which threaten to wipe out our honey bees. Once again, many beekeepers throughout the country are reporting higher than usual winter losses.

Most importantly the BBKA has no confidence in government's commitment to funding additional work and services needed to keep our honey bees healthy.

Pollination, largely by honey bees, contributes £165 million a year to the agricultural economy. Without pollination, many food crops will decline to an uneconomic level which will have a devastating effect on everyone's diet. Output of important industrial products such as oil seed rape will also be affected.

The BBKA has proposed a programme of research to Government with a budget of just £8 million over five years. during which period pollination, at today's rate, will have contributed more than £800 million to the agricultural economy.

Ends

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