NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

DR CONGO

Participants at the Training for Beekeepers Seminar held in Fait à Goma in May 2010. The meeting was organised by Centre de Promotion de l’Apiculture et de l’Agriculture au Nord-Kivu.

NIGERIA

Thank you for sending the resource box with training materials for our seminar held in December 2010. Please continue to support our sponsored subscription to BID Journal in 2011. Akinde Ayoade, Student Farmers Association, Osun State

Ed: For how to apply for Sponsored Subscriptions and Resource Boxes see page 16

THE GAMBIA

Beekkeeping and beetles
Jaisiut Beeking Organisation was established in February 2009. We started with two basket hives, then wooden hives and concrete hives. As a newly established organisation we have to sustain ourselves and we are seeking assistance from donor organisations to help us build a centre to process and store our honey and to offer teaching to others who need support.

We would like to contribute to the debate about beetles registered in BDU 95. We discovered the beetles in our hives in May 2010. They get into the hives through the entrance used by the bees. It is difficult to stop this because they are smaller than the bees. Once in the hive they feed on comb and become bigger. The comb is damaged and the bees move to another area of the hive and the beetles follow them. Although not directly harmful to the bees, damaged brood cells are prone to problems with wax moth. To keep beetles away, visit your hives two to three times each week, and do not allow water to touch the hives.

Sulayman Manjang, Banjul

RECENT RESEARCH

Self-destruct Varroa
Researchers from the UK National Bee Unit and University of Aberdeen have worked out how to ‘silence’ natural functions in the Varroa mites’ gene, with the potential to make them self destruct. Dr Alan Bowman from the University of Aberdeen said: “Introducing harmless genetic material encourages the mites’ own immune response to prevent their genes from expressing natural functions. This could make them self destruct. The beauty of this approach is that it is specific and targets the mites without harming the bees or, indeed, any other animal.” Dr Giles Budge from the National Bee Unit: “This is environment-friendly and poses no threat to the bees. With appropriate support from industry and rigorous safety testing, chemical-free medicines could be available in five to ten years.” In developing this, scientists have used the Nobel-prize winning method of RNA interference, which controls the flow of genetic information. So far the silencing process has worked with a neutral Varroa gene, which has no significant effect on the mite. Scientists now need to target a gene with the specific characteristics to force the Varroa to self destruct. Other scientists have shown the treatment can be added to food for bees, and the bees move it into food for their young, where Varroa also reproduce.

The full report is available at: www.parasitesandvectors.com/content/3/1/73

Jennifer Phillips, Office of External Affairs, University of Aberdeen