

Preface

For the first time, an International Symposium of the ICP-BR Bee Protection Group was held in Italy. This was for us, as both organisers and participants, a great opportunity to contact excellent researchers and to share mutual experience and knowledge. The Symposium could not have been organised without the substantial assistance and the precious suggestions of the ICP-BR Chairman, Dr John Stevenson, of the Secretary, Dr Gavin Lewis, and of the vice-chairmen Dr Dietrich Brasse and Dr Pieter Oomen, to whom we are extremely thankful.

Many thanks are also due to Dr Edith Ladurner and Dr Bettina Maccagnani for their suggestions to the edition of this issue.

We would also like to thank the numerous sponsors for their financial support that allowed us to organise this meeting. We are most appreciative to the Greens in the European Parliament and to the Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca for their contribute to the sponsorship of the present issue.

Finally, special thanks are due to Prof. Stefano Maini, Managing Director of the Bulletin of Insectology, and to Davide Montanari, expert librarian, for their assistance and support during the preparation of the proceedings of the 8th International Symposium of the ICP-BR Bee Protection Group, to be published as the first 2003 issue of the Bulletin of Insectology.

All the papers published in this issue have been accepted by the Scientific Committee of the Symposium, and were not submitted to referees.

The comprehensive Symposium covered all the main topics of the Bee Protection Group, the widespread bee mortality problem and the imidacloprid effects. The very rich and varied presentations were assigned to specific sessions, which dealt with the different topics. Each session was followed by a lively discussion, and important considerations and conclusions emerged. In order to give an exhaustive answer to the bee mortality problem, more extended studies and multidisciplinary approaches are warranted.

New results and proposals were presented in the session "Test methodology and studies of effects of pesticides on honey bees". In order to evaluate and quantify sub-lethal effects of pesticides on bees, various researchers developed novel methodologies. The presentations on monitoring schemes and poisoning incidents gave a unique opportunity to share experiences from

various researchers. Situations among countries differ, and it was thus suggested to extend the monitoring experience of countries with consolidated practices, like Germany and the United Kingdom, to others. We hope that also in Italy, where the environmental monitoring can boast a twenty-year experience, an appropriate legislative support will enable the development of an adequate national monitoring net.

The numerous presentations on the effects of pesticides on non-*Apis* bee species reflect the importance of other pollinating insects, both wild and managed, as crop pollinators. It is necessary to stop population and species decline of non-*Apis* bee species, and to prevent their exposure to pesticides and pollution.

Two presentations dealt with the problem of bee parasitism. This topic, in particular the risk of resistance in *Varroa*, needs to be further investigated and discussed.

Finally, the necessity to update and extend the EPPO guidelines and protocols emerged from two presentations. The concerns about the registration of systemic insecticides, augmented by the "imidacloprid problem", show the importance of developing methods for assessing not only the toxicity, but also the sub-lethal and behavioural effects of these pesticides.

The Department of Agroenvironmental Sciences and Technologies of the University of Bologna and the National Institute of Apiculture of Bologna are very proud to have organised and hosted the 8th ICP-BR Symposium. The comprehensive working sessions and interesting discussions were held in the history-rich setting of S. Giovanni in Monte, in the city centre of Bologna. We chose this beautiful location in order to provide the proper atmosphere for moments of socialisation, and tried to give the researchers enough time for deepening both specific questions and reciprocal knowledge. Our best wish and sincere hope is that these contacts will produce profitable results in the future.

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