



Mr Patrick Murfet,
Bee Equipment Ltd and Patricks Bees NI Ltd,
The Pack House
Highland Court Farm
Coldharbour Lane
Bridge
Kent CT4 5HW

22nd March 2021

Dear Mr Murfet,

We represent the Ulster Beekeepers Association and the Institute of Northern Ireland Beekeepers.

Our members and supporters are alarmed at your plans to import 1500 packages of bees and queens into Northern Ireland for further distribution to Great Britain. This backdoor method is a totally inappropriate and unconscionable exploitation of the Northern Ireland Protocol following Brexit.

You are sourcing the bees from Puglia which is only a short distance from the Calabria area which has persistent outbreaks of Small Hive Beetle. This places Northern Ireland at great risk of establishment of this pest.

You intend to hive the package bees and allow them to fly before later shipment to GB. We take the position that this is totally unacceptable, not only from the SHB issue but also from the threat to the genetics of the bees in Ireland, North and South. Ireland has a unique population of the native Irish black bee, *Apis mellifera mellifera*. Over 90% of southern Irish beekeepers and large numbers of Northern Irish beekeepers have black bees. Careful selection and breeding over many years has maintained this productive and locally adapted strain of bee. Proportionately small numbers of other bee strains have entered Ireland but they have not disrupted the gene pool. Your 18 million bees will have a profound and unwanted effect on our bee population as they being imported at a time when local queen rearing starts and in the middle of our vital Spring Flow.

In the interest of beekeeping in Northern Ireland, we ask that you stop this importation. Please wait until such time as you will be able to import directly into Great Britain to satisfy the needs of your established customers in GB.

Our special bee population needs to be protected. We earnestly ask you to reconsider your importation of bees into our home country.

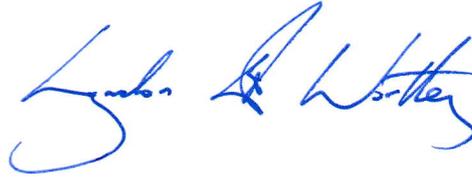
Yours sincerely



Dr John Hill MRCVS

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