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# LINK ONLINE

Short webinars for environmental policy-makers and practitioners

## Wasp Busting Biocontrol – New agents to be released

The following questions were asked during our live webinar with Bob Brown but due to time restrictions, we were unable to answer these in the session.

### **When will you be going to the UK to collect these bio-controls?**

Either I will go this September/October, or I will ask colleagues in the UK to collect and ship the agents.

### **What is the natural altitudinal range of these two agents?**

Good question. I don't currently know the altitudinal maximum for either species. Observed ranges can be found by search each species at GBIF.org.

### **Will we be told of release locations so we as beekeepers don't poison them?**

Yes, we will notify beekeepers in the areas before we release any agents!

### **Do the planned parasitoids limit *Vespula* wasps in the UK?**

Yes, but it is difficult to tell by how much, as virtually all of the nests surveyed had at least one species of parasitoid present. I'm really looking forward to doing some trials here in NZ to learn about the efficacy these BCAs will have on wasps at the colony level and, most importantly, the community level.

### **Why would UK not give you access to the raw data?**

The main reason was to ensure privacy for the beekeepers.

### **Can this be successfully commercialised the same way that dung beetles has been?**

Yes, it could definitely be commercialized as long as there are enough people willing to buy them.

### **Are either of these agents likely to impact on *Polistes* spp?**

No, unfortunately not. These two agents are specific to the Vespinae. There are some very promising candidates for *Polistes* control, though!

### **In the UK, what is the likely impact on wasp populations? i.e., does it reduce them by 25% / 50% compared to what it would be without the biocontrol.**

It is difficult to say because unparasitized nests are so rare in the UK to do proper comparisons.

**What is the minimum number of bio control agents you'd like to collect to get a good range of genetic variation?**

As a starting point, I would want to have a minimum of 10 individuals each, from at least 6 nests, all from different localities. But more would be preferable.