

PRESS RELEASE

from COLOSS



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Successful global COLOSS eConference defies Covid-19

The 16th Conference - and first eConference - of the COLOSS honey bee research association has now ended. Judged a great success by participants, this eConference had a record number of attendees, with 216 members from 41 countries taking part. This is a clear recognition that the COLOSS Membership (now in 102 countries) appreciate working together world-wide to make a sustained and valuable contribution to bee science.

Detailed updates were given on the COLOSS Core Projects: the *BEEBOOK* (standard research methods), B-RAP (Bridging Research And Practice) and colony loss monitoring; and of the COLOSS Task Forces: Apitox, nutrition, sustainable bee breeding, small hive beetle, varroa survivors, varroa control, *Vespa velutina* and viruses.

At the start of the year, and before the global Covid-19 crisis curtailed international travel, many constructive COLOSS workshops and meetings were held in a variety of locations. Notably, these included the well-attended first COLOSS Asia Conference, in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

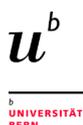
Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the Executive Committee were determined to keep the spirit and activities of COLOSS alive. In the several weeks prior to the main conference, workshops for the individual core projects and task forces were held virtually. Run at times to suit the locations of those involved, attendances were generally higher than at previous physical meetings. Participants discussed experimental results, planned publications and proposed future collaborative experiments.

eConference delegates heard that a number of important COLOSS publications had been published in 2020, including two definitive reviews on bee viruses, the latest results of the international colony loss monitoring surveys and the *BEEBOOK* chapters on honey and bee venom. In addition, the COLOSS survey to determine the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on bee research and extension activities had been published.

One novel feature of the conference was the addition of short video presentations of current work which replaced the normal physical poster presentations. The annual prize for the best student presentation was awarded to Birgit Gessler of the University of Hohenheim, Germany, for her poster on: "Detecting molecular markers for Varroa Sensitive Hygiene (VSH) trait in honey bees".

The COLOSS Executive Committee are particularly grateful to Dr Geoff Williams and his colleagues from Auburn University, USA., who hosted the eConference, and the conference sponsors: Auburn University, Alabama Extension, the Eva Crane Trust; the International Bee Research Association; Vétô-pharma; Vita (Europe); and the Ricola Foundation, Nature & Culture.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:-

1. COLOSS (Prevention of Honey Bee COLony LOSSes) is a honey bee research association formerly funded by the European Union COST Programme (Action FA0803) and currently by the Ricola Foundation – Nature & Culture, Veto Pharma, the University of Bern and the Eva Crane Trust, which aims to explain and prevent massive honey bee colony losses. COLOSS does not directly support science, but aims to coordinate international research activities across Europe and worldwide, promoting cooperative approaches and a research programme with a strong focus on the transfer of science into beekeeping practice. COLOSS has more than 1,500 members drawn from 102 countries worldwide. Its President is Prof. Peter Neumann of the University of Bern, Switzerland. Website: <http://www.coloss.org/>
2. The full proceedings of the first day of the COLOSS eConference can be viewed free of charge on the COLOSS FaceBook page: <https://www.facebook.com/COLOSS-Association-216713901804099/>
3. The paper: “Honey bee colony winter loss rates for 35 countries participating in the COLOSS survey for winter 2018–2019, and the effects of a new queen on the risk of colony winter loss” can be found here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00218839.2020.1797272>
4. The paper “Diversity and global distribution of viruses of the western honey bee, *Apis mellifera* can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.3390/insects11040239> and the paper “Bee viruses: Routes of infection in Hymenoptera” can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2020.00943>
5. The paper: “The COLOSS *BEEBOOK*: global standards in honey bee research” can be found here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00218839.2020.1739410>
6. The results of the COLOSS study on the impact of Covid-19 on research in apidology can be found here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00218839.2020.1799646>



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