

American foulbrood

American foulbrood, or AFB, is caused by the bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae*. This disease of honey bees has been regulated by an Apiaries Act since 1906. In October 1998 responsibility for controlling AFB passed to the National Beekeepers' Association Incorporated (iNBA). The NBA developed a Pest Management Strategy (PMS), and became the management agency for the strategy. The PMS retained many of the provisions from the previous Apiaries Act 1969 plus some new ones. Key features of the PMS are:

- Every apiary must be registered and all hives inspected annually by an approved beekeeper, who must also report on the disease status of the hives.
- Any case of AFB must be reported within 7 days to the Management Agency
- To become "approved", beekeepers must submit a hive and AFB management plan to the management agency and agree to sit a competency test on AFB recognition and control.
- Beekeepers must submit samples of bees and/or honey for AFB testing if so requested.
- All hives with AFB symptoms must be destroyed although some equipment can be sterilized by heating in paraffin wax at 160 ° C for at least 10 minutes.
- Antibiotics cannot be used to control AFB in New Zealand.
- The AFB Strategy is funded by an apiary levy under the Biosecurity Act 1993. All beekeepers are required to contribute through a base fee of NZ\$20 plus \$8.50 per apiary (GST exclusive). Beekeepers with fewer than four apiaries, or fewer than 11 hives, pay the base fee plus one apiary fee. Those above the threshold are levied a base fee plus \$8.50 for each apiary registered on the 31st March, the date the levy is assessed.

Hive Inspection and Audit Programme to 30 June 2007

AsureQuality Limited collates beekeeping and AFB disease statistics at the end of June each year, which encompasses a full beekeeping season. For the year ending 30th June 2007, AFB was found and reported in 540 apiaries (2.8%) and 952 hives (0.30%). The corresponding figures for the 2005-06 year were 482 apiaries (2.5%) and 968 hives (0.32%).

As at the end of June 2007 there were 2068 beekeepers with DECA's and a Certificate of Inspection Exemption (79% of beekeepers). These are approved beekeepers and are able to inspect and report on the disease situation in their own hives. They can also inspect hives belonging to beekeepers who do not have a DECA and are therefore not approved beekeepers.

Apiary register and statistics

There were 2602 beekeepers, 19228 apiaries and 313399 hives on the 20th of June 2007. This compares to 2694 beekeepers owning 300728 hives on 18954 apiaries as at June 2006. The downward trend of beekeeper numbers appears to be leveling off with a net reduction of only 92 beekeepers to June 2007. For the year ending June 2006 there was a net reduction of 217 beekeepers. By comparison, both apiary and hive numbers continued to rise with an increase of 274 apiaries and 12671 hives. Most of this increase happened in the North Island (92% of the

i www.nba.org.nz

hive increase) and is due in part to North Island beekeepers managing varroa better and also buying hives from the South Island to make increase and replace losses. Around 1000 hives were moved to the North Island as part of an attempt to eradicate varroa after its discovery in Nelson on 15th June 2006, while thousands more came from other areas of the South Island. Prior to the varroa outbreak in Auckland in 2000 there were 4914 beekeepers, 21793 apiaries and 302988 hives (July 1999).

A National Varroa Pest Management Strategy (PMS) came into law on 18 February 2005 and beekeepers, in the South Island only, were subjected to a per hive levy of \$1.38 to pay for the strategy. Following the discovery and establishment of varroa in Nelson the Varroa Agency Incorporated took the decision to have the Varroa PMS revoked. Movement controls remain in place for risk goods from the North Island to the South Island and also out of the Nelson-Blenheim region. These controls are now administered by MAF Biosecurity New Zealand.

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more limited than what is available in the North Island. In Canterbury the small seeds industry is expanding and there are increasing opportunities for beekeepers operating in those areas. In the deep South, paid pollination opportunities are almost non-existent and the rapid expansion of the dairy industry is not helping much by reducing honey production potential in some areas. While there is lip service about the necessity to maintain bee colonies in pastoral environments for adequate nitrogen fixation, it will be interesting to see what happens once varroa has spread throughout the South Island and the situation settles down.

Review of IHS for Australian honey

At present the process of getting a review of the Import Health Standard for the importation of Australian honey in this country is still under way. At the time of writing the review panel has not been formed. However, there is concern from the NBA Executive Council about the way the terms of reference can be formulated. We have submitted our concerns to Biosecurity New Zealand, as we feel that they (the review panel) have no guidelines as to what they can or can't do. The review panel has no independence of action from the Director-General and the D-G is not obliged to accept their recommendations. In essence, the outcome of any review process depends on what mood the Director-General or his/her political masters find themselves in at the time.

Bee poisonings in Europe

As many of you will be aware, there has been a significant problem with insecticide-related deaths in Germany recently.

"Vast numbers of the insects were killed in the Rhine valley area of Germany's Baden-Wuerttemberg state by the chemical clothianidin, the Julius Kuehn Institute in the northern city of Braunschweig said." (The full article is available at <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3343248,00.html>)

This has resulted in the German authorities banning the use of a range of neonicotinoids in that country.

This issue is likely to be discussed at the conference, as this chemical family has been the source of much concern to beekeepers in this country for a number of years.

- Frans Laas



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AFB NPMS report

New website

Due to persistent confusion in the minds of many levy payers concerning the relationship between the NBA and its role as the Management Agency for the American Foulbrood Pest Management Strategy, the MA has decided to produce its own website independently of the NBA.

By the time this is published the website will be up and running at www.afb.org.nz

The NBA Secretariat regularly gets enquiries from levy payers who somehow seem to think that being a registered beekeeper means that they are automatically a member of the NBA. This is not so and has not been the case for quite a number of years, when under the now-defunct Commodities Act all beekeepers with more than 50 hives or more three apiary sites were obliged to pay levies and became members of the NBA by compulsion. Beekeepers below this threshold could join voluntarily.

I must thank Neil Farrer for his efforts in getting the website up and running. Any comments about the content and any suggestions for things that may be useful additions should be directed to the Manager, Rex Baynes. His email address is info@afb.org.nz.

Annual Report

The annual report of the AFB NPMS is prepared by our contractorsASUREQuality. This report will be published on the website.

A pleasing note is the substantially reduced number of ADR defaulters. Reminder notices have been sent out to those non-compliant beekeepers. The names of those who have not sent in their ADRs by the stated deadline will be forwarded to Biosecurity New Zealand with a recommendation for prosecution.

Unfortunately, the number of people who are required to complete and return their COIs and have not done so is still excessive, and it is likely that default inspections will be needed. These inspections are not done with levy payers' funds so in many instances it could cost these non-compliant beekeepers substantial amounts of money.

Compliance with the Strategy is the cheapest option in the long run.

NPMS Review

As many will be aware the Strategy expires on 30 September 2008. As far as we know, the Strategy will be rolled over while the rather belated review process is undertaken. This will be an opportunity for all levy payers to comment on the Strategy.

- Frans Laas
Chairman
Management Agency
American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy