



NSW Bee Biosecurity News

October 2017

You are receiving this newsletter because you are registered as a beekeeper with NSW DPI. If you have received this email from a friend, you can [subscribe here](#). You will need a [valid beekeeper registration number](#) to subscribe.



October: AFB Awareness Month

[American foulbrood](#) disease (AFB) is a fatal and incurable disease of honey bees. The disease can decimate an apiary. AFB spores are spread in contaminated honey and apiary products, hive parts and equipment. Robbing out of weak hives is a key means of spread. A single infected hive can quickly infect nearby hives as healthy bees rob out the contaminated honey. As more and more hives contract the disease, the cycle perpetuates leading to serious outbreaks that can impact entire regions.

AFB is particularly cruel because even a well-managed apiary can unwittingly contract the disease if another nearby apiary is poorly managed. Infected hives must be killed to prevent further spread.

NSW DPI is partnering with the Amateur Beekeepers Association, the North Shore Beekeepers Association, the NSW Apiarists Association and Steritech to promote [AFB Awareness Month](#) this October.

Together we are asking all beekeepers to INSPECT, TEST, NOTIFY and ACT. INSPECT your hives for signs of AFB. TEST any suspect symptoms. NOTIFY DPI if you confirm the disease. ACT to prevent the spread by euthanizing the affected hive and treating or disposing of it properly.



Beekeeper registration continues under Biosecurity Act

[Registration](#) is still compulsory for all people who keep honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), even if you only have one hive. Existing registrations under the Apiaries Act will continue under the new [Biosecurity Act](#). When your current registration expires, you will need to apply for a new registration with NSW DPI under the new Biosecurity Act.

Moving bees and hives into NSW

There are new statutory requirements for moving hives and bees into NSW. If a person knows or reasonably suspects that their hives are infected with AFB, they can't move them into NSW

unless they are treated by irradiation or hot wax dipping. The infected bees must be euthanised.

Moving bees and hives within NSW

Under the [general biosecurity duty](#), you have a responsibility to eliminate AFB in your hives. If the risk posed by AFB is not satisfactorily managed, NSW DPI may take action. Failure to comply may result in intervention by NSW DPI with associated costs and additional penalties recovered from the beekeeper.



Need to notify?

In NSW, you must notify NSW DPI of any suspected [exotic bee pest or disease](#) immediately by calling 1800 084 881. Exotic pests and diseases are those that come from overseas and are not present in Australia - for example Varroa mites and Asian Honey Bee.

You must also notify NSW DPI within 24 hours if you detect one of the following "notifiable" pests or diseases: chalkbrood, nosema, American foulbrood, European foulbrood and small hive beetle. These are pests and diseases that are present in NSW, but that need to be notified for market access purposes and to support surveillance. For example, notification of American foulbrood enables DPI to produce AFB Alerts that are emailed to beekeepers in areas impacted by AFB.

Please note, DPI and Industry are working together to review the [list of "notifiable" pests](#) in NSW in collaboration with the federal government.



Stung!

NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Officers conducted a targeted operation to investigate commercial apiaries in almond orchards throughout south western NSW and the Victorian border. In total 12 properties were visited over the five day period with a total of 7950 hives inspected within the Hillston and Sunraysia areas. Officers took several samples for suspected AFB of which some returned a positive result; investigations continue into these matters with enforcement action under the Biosecurity Act 2015 to be initiated. No commercial apiarists were found to be unregistered during this operation.

In other news, a conscientious member of the public from Raymond Terrace is congratulated for reporting suspected Asian Honey Bee in a rabbit hutch. The informant contacted DPI and reported "small bees" that had taken up residence in her backyard. Her quick thinking enabled DPI to kill the nest and remove the bees and comb for analysis. The bees and comb were analysed and found to be European Honey Bee, with no biosecurity threat present.

The Buzz with Rod Bourke

It has been a busy time for beekeepers in NSW, with hives building up fast and a lot of swarms being noted since the start of August. This early in the season the availability of commercially reared queens is still somewhat limited, so many beekeepers have been propping up failing hives with brood/eggs/young bees from their stronger hives until they can rear their own new queen or one can be bought. There is always a biosecurity risk when transferring frames of bees/brood/honey from one hive to another,



so please check the brood frames very carefully before undertaking this. Record the details accurately as, if either the donor or the recipient hive later comes down with AFB, you will definitely need to check the other one too.

Every hive in your apiary should have had a thorough brood check by now, with all bees shaken off the brood frames and a particularly careful [examination done for AFB](#). Finding just one cell of AFB means that hive needs to be removed from your operation, as the disease will get worse and other hives will get infected if you do nothing. Preventing any opportunity for further spread of AFB is a much more successful measure than initially doing nothing and then trying to cure it later once it has become a bigger problem for both you and any neighbouring bee hives.

Spring is also a great time to add new wax foundation frames to your brood box and remove the oldest ones. The use of irradiated pre-loved frames is also a very good option to promote good brood box health in your hives and these frames will be readily accepted by older/weaker queens and promote good egg laying, with absolutely no risk of spreading disease.

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Which Code do you practice?

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice is an important document for beekeepers both professional and recreational. The Code lays out the basics of how to ensure a healthy and biosecure honey bee population. Importantly the Code ensures that the risk posed by pests and diseases is minimized for both you and your neighbours.

Every beekeeper in NSW is strongly encouraged to adopt the Code whether they run one beehive or one thousand. Beekeepers who actively implement the Code and keep records to demonstrate this will be deemed to have met their [general biosecurity duty](#) (PDF, 456KB) under the [NSW Biosecurity Act 2015](#). [Copies of the Code](#) are available in English, Arabic and Greek.



Irradiating facts

This [table](#) (PDF, 407KB) provides some useful information to determine if certain types of plastic are suitable for irradiation. You should contact the manufacturer of your plastic hivesware to determine its suitability for irradiation.

Update your email address

Beekeepers should update their email addresses with NSW DPI to ensure they receive a copy of the Bee Biosecurity News. Please advise your friends and family to do so promptly. If you provide an email address you will also receive AFB Alerts telling you when AFB is detected in your area.

AFB Alerts will be rolled out later this year. Update your email address [here](#). You will need to provide your beekeeper registration number (brand).

Training available

Tocal College delivers nationally accredited courses in beekeeping mapped to the Cert III in Beekeeping. [Current course dates](#)

Tocal College delivers the Cert III in Beekeeping and the Beekeeper Traineeship. Enrolments for the Cert III in Beekeeping will be taken in February 2018.



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